

Message from the Minister for Foreign Affairs

The purpose of Japanese diplomacy is to secure its national interests, or in other words, to secure the safety and prosperity of Japan and the Japanese people first and foremost. To that end, it is essential that Japan strives for the realization of peace, stability and prosperity throughout the entire international community.

Since my appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs in February 2002, I have devoted myself to implementing a diplomacy that is “strong,” “caring” and “straightforward.” “Strong,” in that we say what must be said and do what must be done; “caring,” in that we cherish understanding of those facing difficulties, as well as of different cultures; and “straightforward,” in that our diplomacy is easily understandable through the eyes of the Japanese people. Now that the international situation is going through momentous changes, I will take all possible measures to re-secure the lives and security of the Japanese people and put “creative diplomacy” based on such a “strong,” “caring” and “straightforward” diplomacy into practice through Japan’s further active involvement in the creation of an order and rules in the international community.

In order to implement diplomacy of this sort, it must be understood and supported by the people of Japan. This *Diplomatic Bluebook 2003*, which provides a summary of the international situation and Japan’s diplomacy over the past year, is published as part of the ministry’s efforts to gain the Japanese people’s understanding toward diplomacy. Reflecting back on the past international situations and efforts made by the international community, including Japan, is extremely important in considering the way the international community and Japanese diplomacy should be in the future.

This 2003 edition of the *Diplomatic Bluebook* begins with a general overview on the international situation in 2002 in Chapter I, summarizing the year in which the international community, including Japan, strived to strengthen cooperation within the international community to deal appropriately with the various challenges of significant magnitude it faced, such as the situation surrounding North Korea, the fight against terrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their delivery vehicles and sustainable development. In addition, it provides an overview of Japan’s active efforts toward the resolution of these issues in the international community to secure Japan’s own national interests. From Chapter 2 onward, the international situation by region and Japan’s diplomacy, the international situation by field and Japan’s diplomacy, and the diplomatic administrative structure for the implementation of such diplomacy are explained. Furthermore, one section in Chapter IV is devoted to the positive efforts being made in the area of ministry reform, based on our repentance over the scandals at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I sincerely hope that this 2003 edition of the *Diplomatic Bluebook* will contribute toward enhancing the Japanese people’s understanding of international affairs and Japan’s diplomacy, and that it will deepen their understanding of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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