CHAPTER 1: Overview

International Situation and Japanese Diplomacy in 2007

In 2007, Japan intensified its Asian diplomacy based on the solid Japan-US alliance. Japan also geographically expanded and deepened the scope of its diplomacy and actively worked towards the resolution of global issues as a member of international society. Through such efforts, Japan has further reinforced its diplomatic foundations towards the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in May and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July, both of which Japan is to host in 2008.

In 2007, under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s administration, Japan succeeded in further strengthening the Japan-US alliance while significantly advancing Asian diplomacy through improving and developing its relations with China and strengthening its relations with India. In late 2007, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda proposed a “synergy” between the policies of the strengthening of the Japan-US alliance and the promotion of Asian diplomacy. The Prime Minister embodied this “synergy diplomacy” through visiting the United States and attending the Third East Asia Summit (EAS) in November and visiting China in December.

As for the Asian front, in particular with China, frequent high-level dialogues were held, including the visit of Premier of the State Council Wen Jiabao to Japan (April), the visit of Prime Minister Fukuda to China (December), and the Japan-China High-Level Economic Dialogue (December), at which Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura and five other Japanese Ministers of State attended. As a result, prospects for further advancement in the “mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests” between Japan and China were enhanced. Japan also strengthened its relationship with India, a South Asian country undergoing rapid development, across a broad range of fields, including politics and securi-

Prime Minister Fukuda meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao in Beijing
(December 28, Beijing, China: photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)
Overview

CHAPTER 1

...ty, economics, and human, cultural, and academic exchanges through active high-level visits, most notably Prime Minister Abe’s visit to India in August. Japan achieved closer relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) through the conclusion of negotiations for the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP) Agreement and Prime Minister Fukuda’s announcement of further support for ASEAN integration at the ASEAN-Japan Summit in November. There was a certain degree of progress with regard to North Korean issues, such as the implementation of the “Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement,” agreed in February at the Six-Party Talks, and the “Second-Phase Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement” in October. However, future progress towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula remains unpredictable, insofar as North Korea has yet to take the denuclearization actions that it had committed to implementing before December 31, 2007, in particular not providing a “complete and correct declaration” of all its nuclear programs. Furthermore, Japan demanded concrete actions towards the resolution of the abduction issue but North Korea did not respond to it. Asia-Pacific regional cooperation progressed steadily. In addition to progress at both the EAS and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in efforts addressing energy issues and climate change and other environmental challenges, in the area of trilateral cooperation among Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea (ROK), three leaders reached the common recognition at the Japan-China-ROK Summit, which Prime Minister Fukuda attended in November, to consider holding a trilateral Summit at an appropriate time in one of the three countries, separately from the associated meetings at the ASEAN Summit. As for Russia, which is now deepening its interest in the Asia-Pacific region, Japan proposed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia. Japan and Russia held high-level bilateral talks and continued negotiations towards the conclusion of a peace treaty, with a view to elevating the Japan-Russia relations to a higher level.

Japan’s diplomacy experienced a pronounced geographic expansion and deepening during 2007. Specifically, the relationship with regard to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) deepened, when Prime Minister Abe made the first visit to NATO headquarters as a Japanese Prime Minister in January, and NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer visited Japan in December. Progress was also made in the area of concrete cooperation with NATO, such as through reconstruction assistance in Afghanistan. In a speech entitled “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” (delivered in November 2006), Foreign Minister Taro Aso stated his intention to make much of dialogue and cooperation with countries moving towards democratization and market economies, and in 2007 tangible steps were taken in...
this regard. Foreign Minister Aso visited several countries in Central and Eastern Europe in January and he attended the Second V4 plus Japan Foreign Ministers Meeting in May (“V4” being the “Visegrad 4” nations, comprising the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and the Slovak Republic). The year 2007 also saw a series of visits to Japan by heads of state from Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as the first and second “GUAM plus Japan” Meetings, in June and December respectively (“GUAM” standing for the nations of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova). With regard to relations with South Asia, Japan participated for the first time in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit Meeting as an observer, represented by Foreign Minister Aso. As for Mekong region countries, Prime Minister Fukuda attended the Japan-CLV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam) Summit Meeting, an associated meeting at the ASEAN Summit in November, and Foreign Ministers’ Meetings of the CLV and Japan were held twice. In January 2008, Foreign Minister Koumura chaired the first Japan-Mekong Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, which was convened in Tokyo.

In 2007 Japan continued to be actively involved in international peace cooperation and the resolution of global issues. Specifically, Japan intensified its efforts for engaging in the fight against terrorism, reconstruction assistance for Iraq and Afghanistan, advancement of the Middle East peace process through measures such as promoting the concept of the “Corridor for Peace and Prosperity,” and launching a program to develop human resources in the field of peacebuilding. With regard to climate change, an issue requiring prompt responses from international society as a whole, Japan has been asserting leadership towards the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit, such as by taking a leading role in discussions at the G8 Heiligendamm Summit based on the “Cool Earth 50” proposal that was set out in May. Likewise, at the 13th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP13) held in December, it was decided to launch the process on negotiations in which all major emitters will participate, a result in line with Japan’s initial proposal. In January 2008, Prime Minister Fukuda, in his policy speech to the 169th session of the Diet, announced his intention that Japan would play a responsible role in the international community as a “Peace Fostering Nation” which contributes to peace and development in the world. Japan has clearly shown its stance of further strengthening its support for peacebuilding and other international peace cooperation, in the lead-up to TICAD IV and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit.

Asia and the Pacific

Asia is experiencing dynamic and positive changes, such as the remarkable growth of China and India, progress in ASEAN integration, the enhancement of cooperation under the East Asia Summit framework, and the development of increasingly close free trade and economic partnership networks both bilaterally and multilaterally. Yet at the same time, the region is faced with numerous challenges, including traditional security issues such as those on the Korean Peninsula and across the Taiwan Strait as well as common issues for the region, such as natural disasters, terrorism, piracy, infectious diseases, and energy. To forge an Asia that is prosperous, stable, and open, Japan has been engaged in various efforts to promote concrete regional cooperation based on shared fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, and basic human rights.

Japan has enhanced its dialogues with China, as neighboring countries with the ability and responsibility to be influential to both the region and the entire world, at a wide range of levels, including at the head of state level, with a view to creating a “mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests.” In China, the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was convened in October, at which Chinese President Hu Jintao launched his next administration after being reappointed as the General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee. In addition, with regard to external relations, China has been working to create a stable relationship with the US. It has also become vigorously engaged in multilateral diplomacy, such as through its active participation in the East Asia Summit, interregional cooperative frameworks such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the Six-Party Talks, while also conducting proactive diplomacy towards not only neighboring countries but also the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Japan welcomes China’s positive approach to engage itself in the resolution of problems that international society is facing. At the same time, with regard to the extent of the modernization of China’s military forces, its provision of economic assistance to other countries and other issues, Japan urges China to ensure transparency and act in
accordance with the rules and standards of the international community.

The Republic of Korea, geographically Japan’s closest neighboring country with which Japan shares fundamental values, held a presidential election in December, in which Mr. Lee Myung Bak was elected. Prime Minister Fukuda attended President Lee’s inauguration ceremony on February 25, 2008 and the two leaders shared the common recognition of the importance of building a “new era” in Japan-Republic of Korea relations.

Japan made tireless efforts to resolve the outstanding issues of concern with North Korea in coordination with relevant countries. While a certain degree of progress was seen regarding the nuclear issue, North Korea did not implement the denuclearization that it had committed to implementing before December 31, 2007. In particular, it did not provide a “complete and correct declaration” of all its nuclear programs. Moreover, there was no tangible progress regarding the abduction issue, despite tenacious diplomatic efforts by Japan.

In November, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Charter, which upholds respect for universal values. Japan welcomed this development and, to provide strong support for ASEAN’s integration efforts, announced several cooperation initiatives, including assistance towards narrowing development gaps within the ASEAN region. In Myanmar in September, demonstrations by monks and citizens were suppressed with force by government authorities, resulting in a large number of casualties, including the death of a Japanese journalist. The Government of Japan has at various levels made protests to the Government of Myanmar and demanded a full accounting of the death of the Japanese national. Japan urged Myanmar to promote democracy as well as improvement of human rights situation.

In August, Prime Minister Abe visited India, the world’s largest democracy, and with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced the Joint Statement on the Roadmap for New Dimensions to the Strategic and Global Partnership between Japan and India. The Roadmap includes, among other key topics, studying a future course of cooperation in the security field between the two countries and working for trade expansion towards an annual volume of US $20 billion by the year 2010.

Japan-Australia relations have entered a new stage, becoming a “comprehensive strategic relationship” that moves beyond the trade- and economics-focused relationship existing until now to include political and security matters, as evidenced by the issuing of the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in March and the subsequent rapid development of a closer security relationship, as well as by the holding of the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue among Japan, Australia, and the US.
North America

The United States and Japan are allies and the Japan-US alliance is the cornerstone of Japanese diplomacy. Japan and the US share fundamental values and interests and both countries cooperate to work on a broad range of political, economic, and security issues. As there still exist areas lacking transparency and certainties in East Asia today, the Japan-US alliance, with the Japan-US Security Arrangements at its core, plays an indispensable role in both the peace and security in Japan and stability and development in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, both countries cooperate to address not only bilateral issues but also issues facing the international community, in cooperation with the international community, taking advantage of various opportunities at various levels. Under the Abe administration, Japan and the United States cooperated closely on the issues facing Asia and the world. Also, under the Fukuda administration inaugurated in September, the two countries are engaged in close policy coordination under a consistent principle of further strengthening the Japan-US alliance.

Japan and Canada cooperate closely in various fields as partners of countries of Asia and the Pacific sharing fundamental values and also as members of the G8.

The Middle East and North Africa

Ensuring peace and stability in the Middle East region is an issue directly linked to the peace and prosperity of the international community as a whole and is also important for the energy security of Japan, since Japan imports some 90% of its crude oil from this region. However, the Middle East region continues to face numerous issues affecting the stability of the region, including the Middle East peace process, the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Iranian nuclear issue.

In light of this situation, Japan is proactively engaged in the Middle East diplomacy, pursuing its main goals of ensuring peace and stability of the region in cooperation with the international community and enhancing Japan's energy security.

From late April to early May, Prime Minister Abe visited five countries in the Middle East—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar, and Egypt—to strengthen bilateral relations, maintain Japan's energy security, and expand cooperation for peace and stability in the Middle East. Foreign Minister Aso attended the International Ministerial Conference of the Neighboring Countries of Iraq, Egypt and Bahrain and the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council and the G8 held in Egypt in May and announced proactive efforts to address the situation in Iraq. In August, Foreign Minister Aso visited Israel, the Palestinian territories, and Jordan, and in Jericho, Japan held the Ministerial-Level Meeting of the Four-Party Consultative Unit for the Concept of the “Corridor for Peace and Prosperity,” which Japan has been promoting.

Europe

With the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in January 2007, the European Union (EU) now has 27 member states and it has expanded to a population of some 490 million people in total with a gross domestic product of approximately 14.6 trillion US dollars. In December, the EU’s new treaty, the Treaty of Lisbon, was signed, aiming at entry into force in January 2009. This represents a further deepening of EU integration. Within such a context, and with a view to Japan playing a leading role in promoting the stability and prosperity of the international community, it is more important than ever that Japan advance its political dialogue and cooperation with Europe, a strategic partner with which it shares fundamental values.

In line with this recognition, the year 2007 began with Prime Minister Abe’s visit to Western Europe as well as to the EU and NATO and Foreign Minister Aso’s visit to Central and Eastern Europe in January. Meetings with leaders of European countries and heads of organizations took place continually throughout the year, making 2007 a year in which the cooperative relationship between Japan and Europe was reinforced across a wide range of areas, such as politics, economics, and culture.

As for Japan’s relationship with NATO, active political dialogues took place, notably Prime Minister Abe’s visit to NATO and a visit to Japan by NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer in December. Moreover, Japan-NATO cooperation was steadily intensified through the sharing of knowledge in the fields such as peacebuilding, nation building, and disaster relief, as well as through humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan in cooperation with NATO Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). With regard to the EU, in January Prime Minister Abe met with President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, and in June the Japan-EU Summit took place, with Federal Chancellor of Germany
Angela Merkel also in attendance in her capacity as President of the European Council.

Japan also strengthened its relations with countries in the process of democratization and transition to market economies, which Foreign Minister Aso mentioned in his “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity” speech, leading to various political dialogues taking place, including the V4 plus Japan Foreign Ministers Meeting, “GUAM plus Japan” Meetings, and the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue.

Japan has further advanced cooperation with Russia across a broad range of fields for building a “partnership based on common strategic interests.” Intensive negotiations took place regarding the Northern Territories issue during two summit meetings and a Foreign Ministers’ meeting. Furthermore, as Russia made a decision to focus on the development of the Russian Far East and East Siberia and to let the region participate in the integration process of the whole Asia-Pacific region, Prime Minister Abe proposed the “Initiative for Strengthening Japan-Russia Cooperation in the Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia” at the bilateral summit meeting held in June and received the support of President Vladimir Putin.

Africa

Japan has three policy objectives towards Africa, specifically: (i) making appropriate contributions towards the resolution of global challenges concentrated in Africa, as a responsible member of the international community; (ii) strengthening diplomatic foundations by enhancing relationships with the countries in Africa, which comprise approximately 30% of the United Nations member states; (iii) deepening its economic relations with Africa, which is rich in resources and is expected to be a large market in the future. With a view to these objectives, Japan has been actively developing its diplomatic policy towards Africa, with the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process at the core. TICAD is among the largest policy fora on African development in the world, and in 2007, as part of the TICAD process, the TICAD Fourth Africa-Asia Business Forum was held in Tanzania in February and the TICAD Ministerial Conference on Energy and Environment for Sustainable Development was convened in Kenya in March.

As part of the preparations for TICAD IV, convening in Yokohama in May 2008, regional preparatory meetings were held for Southern and East Africa in Zambia in October, and for North, West, and Central Africa in Tunisia in November, under the theme of “Towards a Vibrant Africa.” These meetings succeeded in deepening the dialogue on the Conference’s major themes.

In January 2008, Foreign Minister Koumura visited Tanzania, the first visit by a Japanese Foreign Minister in 29 years. This visit impressed African countries by demonstrating Japan’s emphasis on Africa.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Japan identifies the Latin American and Caribbean countries as “partners that share common benefits,” as they are consolidating their democracy and market economies and thus achieving stable development. Japan intends to intensify its relations with the countries in the region, taking advantage of the mutual confidence traditionally built up by the grace of 1.5 million Japanese descendants, as well as historical exchanges of visits, trade and investment, and Japan’s assistance to the region by means of Official Development Assistance.

In July, Foreign Minister Aso delivered a policy speech on Japan’s diplomacy towards Latin America and the Caribbean, in which he highlighted the three pillars: (i) strengthening economic relations between Japan and Latin America and the Caribbean; (ii) contributing to the stable development of the region; and (iii) cooperating in the international arena with the countries of the region. Foreign Minister Aso visited Mexico and Brazil in August and had in-depth discussions regarding measures to enhance economic relations and efforts to address climate change. He and his counterparts also concurred in their views towards cooperation in the issues of the United Nations Security Council.

Efforts to Foster Peace

The peace and prosperity of Japan would not be attained without the peace and prosperity of the world. In his January 2008 policy speech to the 169th session of the Diet, Prime Minister Fukuda stated that Japan would contribute more proactively to the peace and prosperity of the world as a “Peace Fostering Nation.” Foreign Minister Koumura also delivered a policy speech entitled “Japan: A Builder of Peace.”

Since the terrorist attacks in the United States of America on September 11, 2001, the international community has been engaged in concerted efforts in
the fight against terrorism. It is one of the core issues to ensure Afghanistan not to become a hotbed of terrorism again, and Japan has been contributing actively as a member of the international community. Specifically, Japan has provided over 140 billion yen in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in Afghanistan. In the Indian Ocean, Japan’s Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) conducted refueling operations in support of maritime interdiction activities underway by vessels of various countries, based on the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law. These refueling activities, which Japan conducted for six years, were suspended upon the expiry of the Law in November. In order to continue to fulfill its responsibilities for the eradication of terrorism in solidarity with the international community, Japan resumed refueling activities by the MSDF in the Indian Ocean in February 2008, after the enactment of the Replenishment Support Special Measures Law on January 11, 2008. Japan is also carrying out air transportation assistance by the Air Self-Defense Force in Iraq to contribute to its national reconstruction process.

The issue of United Nations Security Council reform is critical, given the Council’s crucial role in the maintenance of international peace and security. With the purpose of enhancing Japan’s contributions to the international community, Japan will continue its vigorous diplomatic engagement towards the goal of reforming the Security Council at the earliest possible time and becoming a permanent member of the Council.

As of February 29, 2008, Japan is dispatching a total of 51 personnel to two United Nations Peacekeeping Operation (PKO) and other international missions. Japan has also been dispatching election observer missions and has provided assistance in kind to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Furthermore, Japan considers peacebuilding to be one of the priorities in ODA, and in reflection of this, Japan has supported peacebuilding in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Africa, among other areas, through its ODA. With a view to enhance the capability of Africa to maintain peace, Japan has also decided to support PKO centers around Africa through non-ODA financing. Moreover, Japan has been serving as the Chair of the UN Peacebuilding Commission since June of 2007 while enhancing its active participation in peacebuilding. It has also launched the Pilot Program for Human Resource Development in Asia for Peacebuilding.

In order to maintain and enhance the peace and stability of the international community, Japan, as the only country to have ever suffered the devastation of atomic bombings, has been actively engaged in disarmament and non-proliferation consistently since the end of the Second World War. In 2007 Japan continued to work toward maintaining and strengthening the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. For instance, Japan submitted the resolution “Renewed Determination towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons” to the United Nations General Assembly, which was adopted with widespread support. Further, it was the Japanese Chair who led the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to its successful conclusion.

Transnational organized crime (international organized crime) is an issue to be addressed through the concerted efforts of the international community, insofar as it destroys the security of civil society and the rule of law. Japan has been actively engaged in policies to address human trafficking as well as measures to address drug issues in the Asian region.

Climate Change and the Environment

Environmental issues, including climate change, are major challenges that the international community—both developed and developing countries—face, and for this reason it is a matter of great urgency to strengthen concerted efforts by the international community. In particular, discussions on the framework after the Kyoto Protocol’s first commitment period, which ends in 2012, have been the major focus regarding climate change. In 2007, the United Nations High-Level Event on Climate Change held in September and the 13th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP13) held in December attracted significant international interest. Japan has been actively engaged in international discussions on the framework beyond 2012, with a view to asserting leadership in the discussions. In May, Japan presented the “Cool Earth 50” proposal which addresses climate change, emphasizing the need to set a long-term target of cutting global emissions by half from the current level by 2050 as a common goal for the entire world. Prime Minister Abe presented “Cool Earth 50” at the G8 Heiligendamm Summit in June to the heads of states and governments, thereby participating proactively in the discus-
Overview

CHAPTER 1

Japan took a leading role in international discussions by putting forth a proposal to establish a negotiating process in which all major emitters participate and to discuss the long-term target, mitigation measures, and so forth, thereby contributing to the adoption of a decision to launch a new Ad Hoc Working Group. Prime Minister Fukuda proposed the “Cool Earth Promotion Programme” in his address at the World Economic Forum (the Davos Conference) in January 2008, in which he expressed Japan’s intention to set a quantified national target for greenhouse gas emission reductions to be realized from now on and to establish a new financial mechanism, the “Cool Earth Partnership,” on the scale of US $10 billion to assist developing countries.

Official Development Assistance (ODA)

The Overseas Economic Cooperation Council (headed by the Prime Minister) was established in April 2006 and the International Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was launched in August of that year. Since then, international cooperation undertaken by the Government of Japan has been experiencing significant change to become increasingly strategic and effective in implementation. The International Cooperation Planning Headquarters was established within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to set forth principles for extending assistance for each region, sector, or issue, taking into account directions in overall diplomatic policy. In 2007 the Headquarters formulated for the first time a set of “Priority Policy and Regional Priority Issues for International Cooperation” for each fiscal year. This set out the following five areas as priorities: (i) to address environmental issues and climate change (utilizing economic cooperation towards the formulation of a post-2012 framework based on “Cool Earth 50”); (ii) to realize economic growth in developing countries and economic prosperity in Japan (improving the trade and investment climate, promoting economic partnerships, securing natural resources and energy); (iii) to foster democracy and market economies (assisting in creation of legal frameworks, supporting human resource development, placing an emphasis on human rights, etc.); (iv) peacebuilding and the fight against terrorism; and (v) the establishment of human security (contributing to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, etc.).

Japan’s official development assistance (ODA) has been decreasing in recent years, and in 2006 Japan ranked third among Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries behind the United States and the United Kingdom for the first time in the 24 years since 1982. Japan has been actively engaged in international cooperation despite its challenging financial situation in order to steadily fulfill its international commitments announced at G8 summits and other occasions.

International Economics and International Economic Approaches

The global economy in 2007 was characterized on one hand by the increasingly strong presence of the emerging market economies, including China, India, and Russia, with the continued expansion of trade and investment accompanying globalization. On the other hand, there was a growing sense of uncertainty as a repercussion of the surge in petroleum prices and turbulence in the financial markets, starting from the sub-prime mortgage loan problem in the United States.

In order to maintain and reinforce the multilateral trading system, which is one of the cornerstones of the Japanese economy, Japan has been participating actively in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Round negotiations, which resumed in earnest in January. In July, the chairs’ draft texts on modalities (formulas for cutting tariffs) for agriculture and non-agricultural market access were circulated, after which vigorous negotiations were undertaken in each area, with a view to the early conclusion of negotiations.

Japan has been trying to advance negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) to supplement the WTO. EPAs were signed with Brunei in June and with Indonesia in August, and entered into force with Chile in September and with Thailand in November. In addition, the conclusion of negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with the ASEAN countries was announced at the ASEAN-Japan Summit in November – an agreement which is expected to further strengthen production networks throughout Japan and the ASEAN region.

Japan depends on other countries for a large portion of the resources that form the basis of its economy. In this light, securing a stable supply of resources in a sustainable way in the midst of dwindling global energy, mineral, fishery, and agricultural
resources, among others, is an issue of critical importance from the perspective of economic security. With regard to energy in particular, against the backdrop of surging crude oil prices, Japan has been working to ensure a stable supply through the diversification of both the countries of imports and the types of energy sources it uses, while also ensuring the security of its sea lanes. Taking advantage of the EAS and other diplomatic opportunities, Japan is working in cooperation with the international community to improve energy efficiency and promote energy-conservation technologies in emerging economies.

Furthermore, Japan possesses cutting-edge science and technology that the world seeks. Japan will advance its “science and technology diplomacy” by using these to the fullest to address various issues the world now faces in the areas of the environment, energy, and development.

Public Diplomacy

In promoting foreign policy, much attention is given to efforts in public diplomacy, through which messages are conveyed directly to the citizens of other nations rather than only to their governments. Japan is striving not only for obtaining deepened understanding of Japan but also for increasing the degree of trust it enjoys internationally through the expansion of exchanges with the citizens of other countries, public relations regarding the principles and objectives of major diplomatic policies, and communicating to other countries the attractiveness of Japanese culture. In particular, in recent years, anime, manga, and other types of Japanese pop culture have enjoyed extremely high popularity. In light of this, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been proactively engaged in the promotion of cultural exchange utilizing modern Japanese culture, such as through the creation of the International Manga Award. The spread of pop culture has contributed to an enhanced image of Japan throughout the world, as seen in the steadily growing number of Japanese language learners and in the results of various types of public opinion surveys.

The international media, which plays an intermediary role between Japan and people in other countries, holds increasing influence over public opinion and is extremely important in accurately communicating what Japan is actually like as well as in conveying Japan’s policies.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working to improve the image of Japan by providing information and assistance for coverage of Japan by the international media, refuting press reports based on misperceptions of facts, and holding invitation programs for journalists of other countries.

Diplomacy and the Japanese Nationals

Today, with some 17.5 million Japanese nationals visiting abroad annually, there is an even greater call for the enhancement of consular services including safety measures to support the activity of overseas Japanese nationals. Given the importance of consular services for the lives of overseas Japanese, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers them to be one of the two pillars of its task along with diplomatic affairs. The Ministry is proactively reinforcing its consular structure in order to enhance its consular services, such as dissemination of safety information abroad, protection of Japanese nationals involved in accidents and incidents, reception of documents involving family registration and nationality matters, issuance of certificates and passports, and management of overseas voting.

For Japan’s diplomacy to serve its people, it is indispensable to be engaged in two-way communication with them on a regular basis and gain their understanding and support. For that reason, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs engages in such efforts as providing accurate information to the media and cooperating with media arrangement coverage, holding lectures on foreign policies, uploading information promptly to the MOFA website, and soliciting comments from the public through a variety of methods.

In addition, supported by Japan’s abundant “citizens’ power,” the Ministry of Foreign Affairs promotes partnerships at home and abroad with local authorities and facilitates their roles as important diplomatic players through various types of international activities.

To ensure these, it will be essential to reinforce Japan’s diplomatic infrastructure, including by establishing new diplomatic missions abroad, increasing the number of Ministry personnel to levels comparable to other major developed nations, and strengthening capabilities in information gathering and analysis. The Ministry will continue to work on the basis of the trust of the Japanese people as it engages in diplomacy together with the people.