

Preface to the Diplomatic Bluebook 2021

While “the past and nature” are unchangeable, we have the power to change “the future and our society.” It is with this belief that I continued to do all my best to promote “diplomacy with a sense of caring and robustness” in 2020.

The greatest challenge in 2020 was, above all, responding to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while analyzing the situation on the global spread of COVID-19, has exerted every possible effort, such as providing relevant information including the Travel Advice and Warning on Infectious Diseases in a prompt and attentive manner, reinforcing border control measures; and offering assistance to Japanese nationals overseas who had difficulties in leaving other countries or returning to Japan, which started from the operation to repatriate Japanese nationals from Wuhan, China. Moreover, even when there are limits on in-person diplomacy, I had video conferences and telephone calls 112 times in total with other foreign ministers and resumed overseas visits in August, engaging actively in diplomatic activities both in-person and remotely.

The international community is now confronting three major transformations and challenges. The first is how to overcome the crisis stemming from the global spread of COVID-19 and the difficult situations involving challenges to human security. The second is the challenge against the universal values and international order that have so far underpinned the peace and prosperity of the international community posed by such developments as protectionism and unilateral attempts to change the status quo. The third is the emergence of common challenges facing the international community, including globalization, digitalization and climate change, together with emerging challenges such as those in new domains, including outer space and cyberspace, as well as economic security. In the face of these epoch-making changes, Japan will uphold its respect for multilateralism and take on a greater leadership role in establishing a free and fair order and rules on the economic front, looking ahead to a post-COVID-19 world.

This year, we substantially reorganized the structure of The Diplomatic Bluebook. To begin with, Japan’s responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are covered extensively as the opening special feature. Chapter 1, “International Situation in 2020 and Japan’s Diplomatic Outlook” provides an overview regarding international developments, including those surrounding the U.S. and China that captured much attention in 2020. In the following Chapter 2, “Japan’s Foreign Policy by Region,” newly introduces in its Section 1 our cross-regional initiatives to achieve a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” that Japan promotes. Chapter 3, “Japan’s Economic Foreign Policy to Promote National and Global Interests,” is in a new independent chapter which covers Japan’s leading efforts since the TPP11 to expand a free and high-standard economic zone as well as to promote international rule-making, including in the digital domain. The efforts previously covered in Chapter 3, such as in security and ODA, are discussed in Chapter 4, “Japan’s Growing Presence in the International Community.” Lastly, Chapter 5, “Japan’s Diplomacy Open to the Public,” elaborates on the subjects including the protection of Japanese nationals.

It is my sincere hope that this Diplomatic Bluebook will be of help in presenting Japan widely at home and abroad as a country that demonstrates leadership toward a post-COVID-19 international community and contributes more than ever to global peace and stability.

Minister for Foreign Affairs
MOTEGI Toshimitsu



In principle, Diplomatic Bluebook 2021 describes an overview of the international affairs and Japan's diplomatic activities between January 1 and December 31 of 2020; however, some important events that occurred until April 2021 are also included.

This book consists of the opening special features, Chapters 1 to 5, and some reference materials. The opening special feature contains comprehensive coverage regarding the response to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Chapters 1 to 5 offer concise overviews of Japan's diplomatic activities throughout 2020, and also include special features explaining specific foreign policy themes in an easy-to-understand manner and column articles contributed by people with global experiences.

This year's and past years' Diplomatic Bluebooks are available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Summaries of Diplomatic Bluebook 2021 in French and Spanish are also due to be available on the website by autumn 2021.

For more details with respect to Chapter 4, Section 2, "4 Disarmament and Non-proliferation and the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy," and Chapter 4, Section 3, "Japan's International Cooperation," please refer to MOFA's publications, *Japan's Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy*, and *White Paper on Development Cooperation Japan's International Cooperation*. They are also available on the MOFA website.

Please note that the titles of persons and names of countries appearing in this book are those as of the events. The contents and views expressed in contributions from individuals and organizations do not reflect the position of MOFA. The maps in this book are simplified and may not necessarily be drawn to scale.

Previous Diplomatic Bluebooks:
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/index.html>



Japan's Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy
(only in the Japanese language)
https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/gun_hakusho/index.html



White Paper on Development Cooperation
Japan's International Cooperation:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page_000017.html

