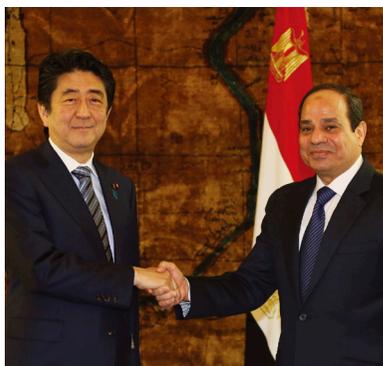


PRIME MINISTER SHINZO ABE'S VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST

Prime Minister Abe visited the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the State of Israel, and Palestine from January 16 to 21. The overview is as follows. Along with affirming the traditionally friendly relationship with major countries in Middle East, this visit strengthened the broad-ranging cooperative relationship in political and economic areas. Additionally, Prime Minister Abe engaged in encouraging the realization of peace between Israel and Palestine, which is indispensable for the stability of the Middle East region. In connection with measures to contend with ISIL, which poses a serious threat to the stability of the Middle East and international order, Prime Minister appealed for cooperation with neighboring countries.



Visiting Egypt

On January 17, Prime Minister Abe held a meeting with H.E. Mr. Abdel-Fattah, President of Egypt.



Visiting Jordan

On January 18, Prime Minister Abe held talks with H.E. Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour and His Majesty King Abdullah II, who expressed his support for the security policies of Japan.



Visiting Israel

On January 19, Prime Minister Abe paid a courtesy call on H.E. Mr. Reuven Rivlin, President of Israel, and met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. During a visit to Yad Vashem, he said: "I express my determination to prevent the recurrence of such tragedy on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz."



Visiting the Palestinian Authority

On January 20, Prime Minister Abe held a meeting with Dr. Mohammad Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, and discussed humanitarian and reconstruction support for Gaza.



STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER ABE OF JAPAN REGARDING THE HOSTAGE INCIDENT INVOLVING JAPANESE NATIONALS IN SYRIA

On February 1, Mr. Abe issued an official statement as the Prime Minister of Japan regarding the taking of hostages by the Islamic extremist group ISIL in Syria. He said: "Japan will never give in to terrorism. We will further expand our humanitarian assistance in the Middle East in areas such as food and medical care. Japan will steadfastly fulfill its responsibility in the international community combatting terrorism. I wish to express my heart-felt gratitude to the people around the world who have kindly extended their strong solidarity against these acts of terrorism and cooperation toward the release of the hostages."