

New Year Special

The Japan Times



THE JAPAN TIMES, REUTERS, AP

Big changes likely in '17

Increased global tensions have the potential to make 2017 unprecedented year of transformation

Ian Bremmer
SPECIAL TO THE JAPAN TIMES



A year of surprises has come to a close, but its unresolved questions will generate many more quakes in 2017. Where are the fault lines, what about President-elect Donald Trump, and what does all this mean for Japan?

The year 2016 will always be remembered as the year that voters in the U.K. and the U.S. shocked the world with demands to build new walls. In Britain, a majority voted to withdraw their country from the EU and to reclaim control of their country's borders following a surge of migrants from other EU countries in recent years. In the U.S., Hillary Clinton won the most votes, but Donald Trump won the election through the quirks of the U.S. electoral system. Much of Trump's support came from voters who agree that, as Trump repeatedly warned, "if we don't retake control of our borders, we won't have a country."

Turn the page to 2017 and the West faces critically important national elections in France and Germany that will be

run on many of the same themes — migration, borders, threats to jobs and security and the intense drive of anxious voters to beat back challenges they believe are created by globalization and regain control of their lives.

There are also important challenges in many other countries. Oil prices jumped on recent news that OPEC and non-OPEC members agreed to a modest cut in crude oil output that are to gradually take effect in early 2017.

A recent price rise has some in the countries hoping for much more. But this move isn't nearly enough to boost prices toward the \$100-plus barrel prices we saw as recently as 2014, because within a matter of months, new sources, particularly in North America, will come online to take advantage of prices above \$60. Exporters such as Saudi Arabia and Russia will continue to cope with longer-term fallout. Venezuela, a producer much closer to the edge of political upheaval, can expect violence in the streets this year.

There will also be important elections in Iran, Kenya and South Korea. ISIS militants, in disarray in Iraq and Syria, will try to fan out across the Middle East, North and East Africa, Southeast Asia, the Caucasus region of Russia, the heart of Europe and even into the U.S. to carry out attacks. Protests will likely continue in important emerging markets such as Bra-

zil and South Africa.

Brexit negotiations will begin. There will be an important leadership transition in China as five of seven members of the country's highest political body are due to be replaced.

But the year's biggest story is expected to come from Washington, where a new president promises to lead the world's sole superpower in an entirely new direction. Many believe that Trump could inflict lasting damage on many of the country's most important international partnerships.

In Europe, Trump's relatively friendly approach to Russian President Vladimir Putin will force NATO members to consider alternative security arrangements. The new president's open embrace of anti-EU populists across the continent will anger a number of governments. Trump's extreme unpopularity with EU voters will make it much more difficult for European leaders to cooperate publicly with Washington, even on projects of common interest.

In the Middle East, the Saudis fear that Trump's relationship with Putin and his willingness to see Syrian President Bashar Assad remain in power may further isolate their country. In Mexico, Trump's aggressive and insulting rhetoric could further undermine domestic support for the current government and could return the left to power following presidential elections in 2018.

Then there is Trump's angry rhetoric on trade. He claims that the North American Free Trade Agreement has gutted U.S. manufacturing and that he will shred the

yet-to-be-ratified Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the largest trade deal ever negotiated by the U.S. Trump probably won't follow through on threats to impose high tariffs on goods from Mexico (or China), but his administration will probably launch cases against dumping and intellectual property theft more often and more aggressively — as much for political as commercial reasons.

But it is U.S. relations with China that threaten to create the most friction in 2017. There are still pragmatists in both governments. Some of Trump's appointments, including Terry Branstad as U.S. ambassador in Beijing, signal an intention to maintain good communications to limit risk of conflict.

But if Trump wanted to insult and anger Chinese officials as quickly and forcefully as possible, he could not have chosen a better weapon than his recent comments on Taiwan. For decades, U.S. presidents

Continued on Page 30

Also inside today >

Looking ahead to 2017 PAGE 36

Farming sees more women involved PAGE 34

Activities to welcome year of the rooster PAGE 32

Taking aim at Mars exploration PAGE 31

New Year Special

More women taking up farming in Japan

Private groups, ministry working to bring more females into the fold

Hiroaki Ueda and Osamu Yoshimuta
KYODO

Farming in Japan is no longer a man's business. Women are increasing their presence in Japanese agricultural communities traditionally dominated by men. Struggling with male-centered values, some women farmers have joined hands to find ways to survive and prosper after taking over their family agricultural businesses or entering the industry on their own initiative.

Chika Yasumaru, 30, inherited her family farm and is growing melons in Kamifurano, Hokkaido.

Yasumaru had wanted to be a farmer ever since she was a child, and after she graduated from an agricultural university she returned to her hometown to take over the farm.

But the community awaiting her was one in which men play the central roles.

"They thought that at local farmers' meetings, women should be farmers' wives. They thought I came home not as the heir but just because I had failed to find a job and would stay only until I got married," she said.

Things changed four years ago when Yasumaru got to know Arisa Takagi, 28, a dairy farmer from Kamishihoro, southeast of Kamifurano, during a workshop organized for female farmers.

The two women hit it off instantly and shared their concerns and dreams. In December 2013, they formed "Harapeko" — a group whose sound and written characters indicate a meaning of "Hungry Girls" — together with about 20 other women farmers to encourage and support each other.

"What we first did was look for a man," Yasumaru said, stressing that it is an urgent issue for female farm heirs as the husband must be someone who is willing to be adopted into the wife's family.

The group organized matchmaking events and Takagi found her husband Hiroki, 26, at one of them held in Sapporo.

Takagi, the youngest of three sisters, decided to take over the farm that was founded by her grandfather after her elder sisters married into other families when



Above: Arisa Takagi and her husband Hiroki take care of calves at their farm in the town of Kamishihoro, Hokkaido, on Nov. 1. Left: Kaori Mitsumori works at her grape farm in Koshu, Yamanashi Pref., on Nov. 1.
KYODO

About a year ago Takagi married Hiroki, who was also raised on a dairy farm. He did not have to take over his family's farm because he was the second son. Typically the eldest son inherits the family business in Japan.

Aside from matchmaking, the Harapeko group has engaged in other activities, including arranging events to share their farming experiences with female students of an agricultural high school.

"If possible, however, I want the day to come sooner when it will make no difference whether you are a man or woman and a group like ours won't be necessary," she said. "But until then, we'll keep going."

The number of women who began farming in 2015 was less than 16,000, according to the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry.

To help women go into agriculture, Yukiko Iwatate, 29, plans to launch in March an online matchmaking site specifically for women interested in farming

she was a college student.

Takagi said she had never thought of inheriting the family business, but decided to do so after hearing her grandfather say sadly, "Well, we'll have to shut down our farm."

After beginning to farm, Takagi found it

harder than she had imagined. The reality was that she had to wake up before dawn every day to milk and feed cows and to stay in a shed for hours to take care of a cow that had gone into labor.

"In the first year, I was hardly able to find time to leave the farm," she said.

Recruiting Website by The Japan Times
Specialized in Bilinguals

Japan Times Jobs
ジャパントイムズ ジョブズ

<http://job.japantimes.com>



BUNKAHOSO Career Partners Co., Ltd. ■ Tel : 03-5776-3211 ■ Mail: jtj-usersupport@careerpartners.co.jp

IBEC Co., Ltd.
International Business Education & Consulting

A global provider of
business communication
and
language training



リーダーシップ ビジネススキル
ビジネス英語 TOEIC研修
ならアイベック

企業をサポートする 海外ビジネス提携などの
コンサルティングも行っております

Géminis II Bldg. 6F 1-33-6, Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0033
PHONE: 03-5842-6202 FAX: 03-5842-6208
<http://www.ibecjapan.co.jp/>

New Year Special

and male farmers struggling to find a spouse, by raising money via crowdfunding.

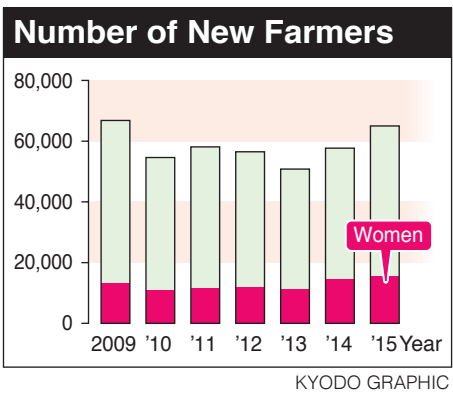
Iwatate, who used to work for a major securities firm, said, “I would recommend marrying a farmer” if a woman wants to make a living in agriculture. She herself liked farming and married a farmer, Masayuki, 36, in 2014.

She is currently assisting in matchmaking events in which men and women harvest vegetables together. An event held in November in Matsudo, Chiba Pref., was attended by about 30 men and women and produced three couples.

Takayoshi Enomoto, 61, the director of the nonprofit organization that organized the event, said, “The story of a woman like Ms. Iwatate who married a farmer is useful and I hope it will inspire other women to take a step forward.”

Elsewhere, women are teaming up to give a boost to local agriculture on the back of the drive to attract women into agriculture and encourage female farmers.

About 40 female farmers in Okayama



Prefecture work together in a group to produce and sell their vegetables and processed food.

“There is probably less rivalry among women than men as they would rather support each other,” Misa Fujii, 51, deputy director of the group called “Okayama Nogyo Joshi” (Okayama farmer girls), said.

Hisako Okamoto, 47, co-leader of Okayama Nogyo Joshi, said that farms are now mostly run by nuclear families and

support is needed for female farmers to take care of their children.

More than 500 members are currently taking part in the ministry’s “Farmer Girls” projects, compared with 37 when it started in 2013, according to the ministry.

“I suppose women understand consumers’ perspectives better than men,” a senior ministry official said.

The official’s assumption is supported by a Japan Finance Corp. study that found large-scale farming businesses tend to be more profitable if women join the management.

Kaori Mitsumori, 51, a grape farmer from Kosu, Yamanashi Pref., who is a member of a government advisory body, praised moves by female famers to empower themselves, noting that a kind of “feudalistic nature” remains in Japanese farming communities.

“What women need in farming is just an accumulation of experience,” she said.

“I hope they will encourage each other and grow together.”

(Ryuichi Kadota contributed to this story)



Yukiko Iwatate helps out at a farming-cum-matchmaking event hosted by an group run by Takayoshi Enomoto (left) in Matsudo, Chiba Pref., on Nov. 6.

KYODO

Kanpai with Sake

Why not celebrate the season with a cup of your favorite sake? Japanese put their hearts and souls into brewing sake, and people have enjoyed drinking it since ancient times. Today, sake's charm has spread worldwide, and many people around the globe enjoy its unique taste. We wish you good health and happiness in 2017.



Japan Sake & Shochu Makers Association

<http://www.japansake.or.jp>

● You must be over the age of 20 to drink alcohol ● Never drink and drive ● Pregnant women and nursing mothers should refrain from drinking too much

New Year Special

Getting out to ring in the new year

Mami Maruko
STAFF WRITER

New Year's is one of the best times of the year when one can relax with family and friends. But for those who prefer to go out and enjoy the festive season, there are numerous exciting events going on. Here are some ways to spend quality time in Tokyo during the New Year's holidays.

Roppongi Hills

On Jan. 1 from noon to 3 p.m., there will be *wadaiko* (Japanese drumming) and *shishimai* (lion dance) at the Roppongi Hills Arena. From 1 p.m., *furumaizake* (New Year's sake) will be offered to the first 200 visitors.

On Jan. 2 and 3, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., in addition to *wadaiko* and *shishimai* performances, people can enjoy listening to and playing *koto* and traditional Japanese games, including *kendama* (a Japanese ball-and-cup toy) and *otedama* (beanbags), for free. There will also be a workshop where guests can make *furoshiki*, a square cloth that has long been used in Japan for wrapping, storing and carrying items.

From New Year's Day to Jan. 3, *fuku gohan*, or good luck menus, will be offered at 14 restaurants in Roppongi Hills.

Between Jan. 1 and 15, many shops in Roppongi Hills will hold a winter sale with discounts up to 80 percent, while about 70 shops will offer *fukubukuro*, or lucky bags, each packed with stylish clothes and miscellaneous goods. The bags are usually on sale from Jan. 1 to 3.

Additionally, the trees that line Keyakizaka Street are illuminated with 1.2 million lights between 5 p.m. and 11 p.m. through Feb. 14.



Right: People can take on a sumo wrestler at Tokyo Skytree's observation deck from New Year's Day to Jan. 3. Above: On New Year's Day, there will be a *shishimai* (lion dance) performance at the Roppongi Hills Arena.

TOKYO-SKYTREE, ROPPONGI HILLS

Tokyo Skytree Town

Various events will be held at Tokyo Skytree through Jan. 8 to celebrate the fresh start of 2017, including a strength competition and a photo session with a sumo wrestler at the 350-meter-high observation deck between New Year's Day and Jan. 3. There is also *furumaizake* served by a sumo wrestler on Jan. 1 on the first floor of Tokyo Skytree Town.

A *shodo* (Japanese calligraphy) exhibition will be held at Tokyo Skytree Town, and a *kakizome* (first calligraphy of the year) workshop will take place at Tokyo Solamachi, both on Jan. 2 and 3.

There is also a skating rink on the fourth floor of Sky Arena until March 5. Additionally there will be sales at many shops with discounts up to 70 percent, and street performances will be held from New Year's Day until Jan. 3.

Sake & Shochu Information Center

Taruzake, sake poured straight from a wooden cask — will be offered to guests



for free on Jan. 5, at noon and 5 p.m., at the entrance of the Japan Sake & Shochu Information Center in Shinbashi.

The first 200 guests will receive a *masu*, a small wooden box that sake is served in, with a rooster carved on it. Some people are said to collect the *masu* every year as lucky charms and have *masu* collections of all 12 Chinese zodiac animals. *Kagami-biraki*, or sake barrel opening ceremony, will be performed on the day for visitors to celebrate the new year together.

For more information, visit www.roppongihills.com. Tokyo Skytree Town is connected to Tokyo Skytree Station (Tobu Skytree Line) or Oshiage Station (various lines). For more information, visit www.tokyo-skytreetown.jp/english. The Japan Sake & Shochu Information Center is three minutes from Toranomon Station on the Tokyo Metro Ginza Line. For more information, call 03-3501-0108 (Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association, PR Department), or visit www.japansake.or.jp/sake.



Since 1954

SUN REALTY
& INSURANCE CORPORATION

PRESIDENT: SHIZUKO TANI

Homat Royal Suite 101, 14-11, Akasaka 1-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052
Telephone: 81-3-3584-6171 Facsimile: 81-3-3505-0939
E-mail: sun@sunrealty.co.jp <http://sunrealty.jp/>

**Building Maintenance**
Residential Cleaning**TOKYO HOUSING SERVICE, INC.**

President: Tetsuhide Matsui

Dodo-Bldg. 2F, 4-4-18, Akasaka, Minato-ku,
Tokyo 107-0052, Japan
Tel.: 03-3582-2061 Fax: 03-3505-5096
E-mail: tokyohousingservice@ths1987.co.jp

**TOSHO PRINTING CO., LTD.**

3-10-36, Higashi-jujo, Kita-ku,
Tokyo 114-0001
TEL: 03-5843-9700 FAX: 03-5843-9701
URL: <http://www.tosho.co.jp/>



Management (Machine Operation)
Maintenance (Cleaning)
Major Repair (CAPEX)

TOYO BLDG. MAINTENANCE CO., LTD.

President Jiro Fukuda

1-12-15 Toranomon, Minato-ku, TOKYO
Tel 03-3580-1240 Fax 03-3580-1248
<http://www.tbm.co.jp>

Solution provider for
media content production

**Visual Processing Japan**

IT support for advertising, promotion, publishing and newspaper agencies

Visual Processing Japan, Inc.

MFPR Shibuya Bldg., 11th Floor, 1-2-5 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku Tokyo 150-0002 Japan
Tel. 81-3-6418-5110 Fax. 81-3-6418-5118 Url. <http://www.vpj.co.jp/>

<http://www.vpj.co.jp>**The Japan Times**

*A prosperous New Year to
all our business partners*

Crossmedia Sales Div.

Tel: 03-3453-5242 Fax: 03-3453-7085
Email: jtd@japantimes.co.jp
website: www.japantimes.co.jp



A celebration of Japanese traditions

STAFF REPORT

New Year's, or *shogatsu* in Japan, is a time when people can get a taste of traditional Japan. People generally take the time around the New Year's holidays to relax with their families and engage in traditional activities to remind themselves of their heritage.

Below are some New Year's main events and activities in Japan.

Hatsumode

Hatsumode is the first visit to a Shinto shrine of the New Year, although some people also go to Buddhist temples and call it *hatsumode*. People usually make their visit during *sanganichi*, or the first three days of the year, when many people take holidays.

During *hatsumode*, people throw *saisen*, or monetary donations, into a *saisen bako* (box) in front of a bell they ring by pulling a thick rope. They make a wish as they ring the bell.

Some shrines and temples attract millions of visitors during the first three days of the year. Meiji Jingu Shrine in Tokyo attracts the most people almost every year, with as many as 3 million visitors making the pilgrimage.

Hatsumode is a long-standing tradition that began when people welcomed the dawn into their house on Jan. 1 and then



Long wait: People line up to offer their prayers for the new year at Meiji Shrine in January 2012.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS / GERALD FORD

went to *ujigami-sama* (a nearby shrine) to pray for a good year. But as the rail system developed during the Meiji Era, people began traveling to popular shrines and temples.

Nengajō

Similar to Christmas cards in Christian countries, *nengajō* are simple postcards labeled — typically in red ink — with two

kanji characters reading *nenga* (new year) that are sold throughout November and December. Japanese have a custom of greeting their relatives, friends and coworkers on New Year's Day and thus send *nengajō* at the end of the year to have them delivered to the recipients on New Year's Day.

The greeting on *nengajō* reads, almost without exception, either *akemashite omedeto gozaimasu* or *kinga shinnen*.

The former is usually translated as "Happy New Year," but literally means "Congratulations for the Turning of the Year." The latter, consisting of four kanji characters, means the same.

Because of the many *nengajō* that are sent, the end of December and the beginning of January are the busiest times for Japanese post offices, creating an opportunity for many students to work part time sorting *nengajō*. It is advisable to post *nengajō* before Christmas so post offices are not too overwhelmed at the end of the year.

It is customary to not send *nengajō* when one has had a death in the family during the year. In such cases, a family member sends a simple postcard called *mochu hagaki* (mourning postcard), usually in November or December, to inform friends and relatives they will refrain from sending *nengajō* out of respect for the deceased. Because *nengajō* say *omedeto* (congratulations), it is considered inappropriate to send them to people whose family members have recently died.

DTP and Printing

Document System Co., Ltd.

HARUO SUZUKI
President

#1003, 1-3-8, Higashimatsudo, Matsudo-shi
Chiba, Japan 270-2225

現職英語教員研修と
グローバル人材育成のパイオニア

一般財団法人 英語教育協議会(ELEC)

〒101-0054 東京都千代田区神田錦町2-9 コンフォール安田ビル4階
Tel: 03-3219-5221 E-mail: info@elec.or.jp
URL: http://www.elec.or.jp

future

ANAB bsi 1549350

Create The Future by Software Technology
株式会社 フューチャ技研

〒101-0048 東京都千代田区神田司町2丁目6番地(司町ビル8階)
TEL: 03-5297-2521 FAX: 03-5297-2524
URL: http://www.futuregiken.co.jp

日刊スポーツ

Established in 1952
NIKKAN SPORTS PRINTING Co., LTD.

Katsuyasu Ochiai
President

7-10-13, NC Bld., Tsukiji, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0045
TEL: 03-5550-8210
FAX: 03-5550-8230
URL: https://www.nikkanst.co.jp/

株式会社 日新社

代表取締役 廣瀬 太一郎

〒451-0082 名古屋市西区大金町 1-34
Tel:052-522-0008 Fax:052-532-5746

Oji Paper Co.,Ltd.

HEAD OFFICE : Ginza, Tokyo PHONE.03-3563-7100

Omega Communications

インバウンド関連翻訳、パンフレット制作はおまかせください。
株式会社オメガ・コミュニケーションズ
〒113-0001 東京都文京区白山1-13-7
アクア白山ビル5階
Tel: 03-5689-2341
URL: http://www.omega-com.co.jp
E-mail: info@omega-com.co.jp

一般貨物自動車運送事業

株式会社 プレスサービス

山口県下関市田倉760番地
Tel: 083 (256) 1148
Fax: 083 (256) 1149

Mankind eyes Mars as next 'giant leap'

Nations and businesses vying to expand space exploration endeavors

Kota Ishikawa
KYODO

H mankind has cast an eye toward another "giant leap" forward nearly half a century after the United States' Apollo 11 spacecraft delivered humans to the moon for the first time.

The U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is planning to put a manned spacecraft into orbit around Mars in the 2030s, before sending humans to explore the red planet.

Similar in size to Earth, and relatively close, Mars is widely considered as the most promising and realistic candidate planet for manned space exploration.

The planet, however, is more than 50 million km away from Earth even when their orbits are at their closest. With a round-trip journey taking multiple years, a realistic approach to the journey calls for fuel and other required materials to be made available along the way.

NASA, therefore, plans to build a space station to put in orbit around the moon by the end of the next decade as a supply base for future journeys.

It is also developing a spacecraft, named Orion, which is capable of carrying a crew of four, and making preparations to build a Space Launch System, a powerful rocket to carry Orion into deep space.

Orion needs to be equipped with a variety of systems to support the long journey to Mars, which would take more than a year from a starting point in the moon's orbit.

NASA also envisions building a base on Mars for resource exploration.

The Mars program will be promoted in close cooperation with various aerospace companies. For example, Lockheed Martin Corp. is proposing to build a Mars-orbiting base, the Mars Base Camp, to accommodate six astronauts. Given the U.S. company's involvement in the development of Orion, it is considered likely that NASA would support this idea.

Space Exploration Technologies Corp., a U.S. aerospace venture business known as SpaceX, envisions developing a large-scale reusable spacecraft capable of carrying more than 100 Mars settlers per flight, the first of which is reportedly planned for 2022 at the earliest.

There are also space projects elsewhere. The International Space Station (ISS) orbiting around Earth at an altitude of 400 km will be privatized over time.

Bigelow Aerospace LLC, another American space technology start-up, is planning to create a private sector-run space station that will serve as a "space hotel" consisting of balloon-like modules for tourists from Earth.

There are a number of hurdles to overcome if the challenge of completing long space journeys is to be realized. Among the issues of vital importance is how to secure sufficient amounts of food, as spacecraft can only carry a limited volume of materials.

The production of vegetables in space was proved possible when Japanese astronaut Kimiya Yui grew lettuce using a light-emitting diode lamp, water and fertilizer during his stay of nearly five months aboard the ISS in 2015. Self-sufficiency may be achieved if a wide variety of food can be produced in space.

A system to allow the reuse of water



Digitally produced representations of the Orion spacecraft and the Space Launch System (left), both being developed by NASA for manned exploration of Mars. Top: An artist's rendering of an exploration base on Mars
NASA / VIA KYODO

Advances in 3-D printing technology are expected to be a boon for journeys between Earth and Mars because tools and parts to make repairs can be produced on demand.

and air is also a must. In addition, excrement can be processed into fertilizer for food production or into energy, using microorganisms, to run systems on a spacecraft.

Advances in 3-D printing technology are expected to be a boon for journeys between Earth and Mars because tools and parts to make repairs can be produced on demand.

The outer shell of a spacecraft also needs to be designed to reduce astronauts' exposure to harmful cosmic radiation, while robots may be developed to replace humans on dangerous spacewalks.

To ease the stress that comes with prolonged time in a close, isolated space, artificial intelligence is expected to play an important role as an "adviser" or "conversation partner" for astronauts.

Donald Trump's rise to the U.S. presi-

dency may also put the Mars program in jeopardy. Some worry that the huge cost involved in such a project, including funds for the ISS, may not be palatable to someone with his business background.

An international forum will be held in Japan in the latter half of 2017 to discuss manned space exploration.

Although Japan has yet to decide whether to participate in a joint international program for the manned exploration of Mars, the country has been promoting the development of necessary technologies.

In the absence of its own manned spaceship, Japan currently relies on Russia to send astronauts to the ISS. Japan, however, has accumulated technologies to develop such a spacecraft through activities in its "Kibo" experiment module attached to the ISS.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) is developing the upgraded model of the "Konotori" series of unmanned cargo ships for launch in fiscal 2021. The new transporter, code-named HTV-X, will be designed to be capable of unmanned flight.

"It is technologically possible to give spaceship-like functions to the transporter if it is equipped with a life-support system," a JAXA official said.

Together with a large H-3 rocket cur-

rently under development, the transporter is expected to help expand Japan's activities in space.

Russia, which has a proud history of space exploration and in 1961 was the first country to put a person into space, is planning to send humans to the moon by 2030 and build a lunar base.

China is looking to construct its own space station by around 2020. As part of preparations, the Asian power in October sent two astronauts to a space laboratory orbiting Earth for a 30-day stay and succeeded in lifting a large Long March 5 rocket into space the following month.

A Japanese expert familiar with China's space program said the heavy-lift rocket has given the world's second-largest economy "all it needs to build a space station."

Interest is growing about whether, or how, China will be involved in any potential exploration of Mars.

Humans are moving into another stage of space exploration, working toward a time when the indelible words of American astronaut Neil Armstrong (1930-2012) may again be truly apt to use.

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," said the commander of the 1969 Apollo 11 moon landing mission after climbing down the ladder to become the first person to set foot on the surface of the moon.

New Year Special

Japan set for key role in East-West relations

Continued from Page 36
have tried to freeze the status quo in cross-strait relations with a policy of ambiguity. The U.S. allows others to believe it would defend Taiwan against invasion, but that it will not support any move toward independence by Taiwan.

Trump said in an interview in early December that he doesn't "know why we have to be bound by" previous understandings on Taiwan's status. China's response was predictably angry, and some form of measured retaliation is likely.

These two countries aren't going to war over comments like this, but there is a risk that a consistently bellicose approach by Trump could create an antagonism that prevents cooperation between the two countries in resolving their disputes and from working together on crucial challenges of common concern such as climate change and North Korea.

Japan's relationship with Trump
If there is any U.S. partnership likely to remain on solid ground, it is the relationship with Japan. That might seem surprising, given Trump's promise to abandon the TPP, a deal so important to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Yet, many of Trump's other stated goals fit well with Abe's plans. Common concern over the implications of China's rise gives them plenty to talk about.

Trump's insistence during the campaign that U.S. allies should take greater direct responsibility for their own security may not play well with cash-strapped NATO partners or the increasingly anx-

ious Saudis, but it fits well with Abe's goal of redefining the role of Japan's Self-Defense Forces and investing more in their capabilities.

Further, Trump's early positive relations with Putin allow Abe to continue to try to improve Japanese-Russian commercial and political ties — and to make further progress on the future of the Northern Territories without undermining relations with the White House.

Abe's decision to meet with Trump quickly after the election was a shrewd choice that has already helped to build trust between the two leaders.

Yet, Japan is right to recognize that China's rise will continue, creating risks and opportunities that are much more likely than relations with Washington to define Japan's future.

Relative to China, Japan has crucial comparative advantages. The greatest of these is its innovative commercial culture. China's leaders face many challenges, and one of the most daunting of these is the construction of a social safety net capable of providing care for China's growing population of elderly citizens.

Japan, of course, has demographic problems of its own, and it has responded with state-of-the-art technology to provide older citizens with new leases on life. Building relationships with Chinese companies in this field provides a good example of the ways in which Japan can build stronger and more resilient commercial ties with its giant neighbor. Wherever possible, a focus on complementarity rather than competi-

tion will serve Japan, China, East Asia and the entire global economy.

Diversifying partnerships
More broadly, Japan's ability to continue its strategy of diversifying its political and commercial partnerships across East and Southeast Asia will be crucial. A commitment to deepen political, security, trade and investment ties with India, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines

Building relationships with Chinese companies in this field provides a good example of the ways in which Japan can build stronger and more resilient commercial ties with its giant neighbor.

will serve Japan well in the years to come. As Japan enters 2017, its citizens and elected leaders are well aware of the country's many problems. But whatever one thinks of Abe and his plans, his strong approval ratings, the super-majority his party enjoys in both houses of the Diet and the lack of any credible alternative to his leadership gives him a freedom to maneuver that is the envy of Western democracies paralyzed by populism and intense polarization.

There are certainly political limits on his most ambitious policy proposals, and most

of the decisions that will determine East Asia's future will likely be made in Beijing. However, Abe's ability to strengthen political and commercial relations with China, the U.S., India and many other countries creates important opportunities to build a stable and prosperous region. There is also a positive role to play in the geopolitical education of Trump. By moving quickly to build the personal relationship, Abe can earn the new president's trust.

Trump will need friends in the international arena, and Abe is better suited than most to offer that friendship. This can help Abe persuade Trump to trust the values that bind Japan and the U.S. Shared respect for democracy, rule of law and open markets unite the two countries. Lasting partnerships depend not just on warm relations between leaders, but on institutional cooperation based on common values.

Maybe Japan's experienced prime minister can help America's new president see the value in that principle.

Ian Bremmer is the president and founder of Eurasia Group, the leading global political risk research and consulting firm. He regularly expresses his views on political issues in public speeches, television appearances, and top publications. "G-Zero," his term for a global power vacuum in which no country is willing and able to set the international agenda, is widely accepted by policymakers and thought leaders. He has published nine books including the national bestseller "Every Nation for Itself: Winners and Losers in a G-Zero World."



Beyond the Boundaries



We Are Beginning the Next Era.

The Oji Group has survived various changes in era during its 140-year history. Today, global-scale changes in the economic climate have once again prompted us to make structural reforms in preparation for the next era. With an open mind free of conventional constraints and preconceived notions, we are promoting further globalization, developing high value-added products, cultivating new resources, and producing products that satisfy lifestyle and industrial needs through the customer-in approach, as we embark on a new journey into the future.





Plastic Fastener



Damper

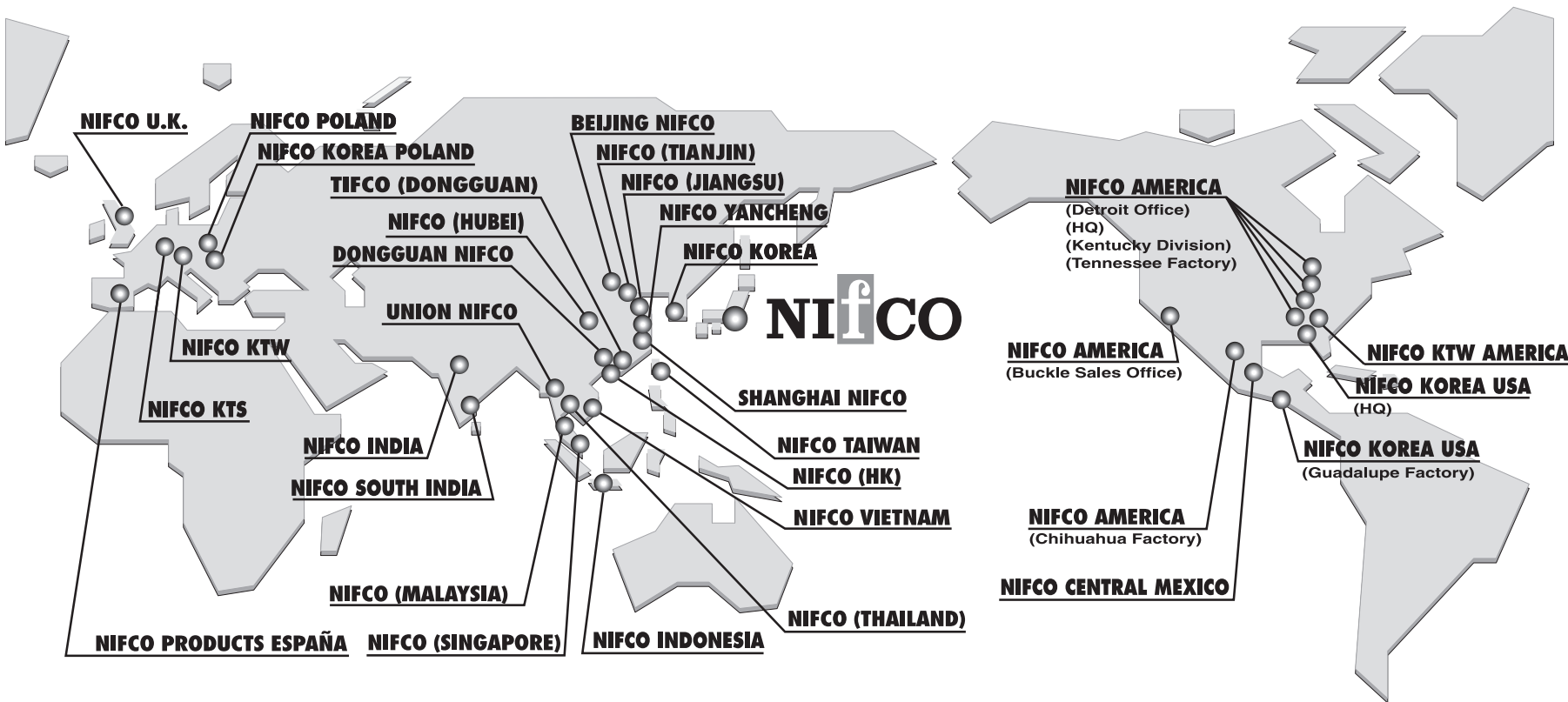


Buckle

Nifco

Using its fastening technology as a base, Nifco has successfully incorporated different fields, products and technologies into its business. Continually expanding by “connecting, bundling and joining” different technologies, Nifco has grown beyond its beginnings as a fastening company and is now a global player in many areas. Nifco’s principle of “Value Fastening” focuses on combining an array of existing values to create new value. With an increasing number of international customers, Nifco continues to overcome challenges and seek out new fields of business.

Nifco’s group companies span industrial and national boundaries.



Nifco Inc.

Head Office: 5-3 Hikarinooka, Yokosuka-shi, Kanagawa, 239-8560 Japan
Tel: (046)839-0255 Fax: (046)839-0227
Tokyo Headquarters: 4-5-4 Shibaura, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 108-8522 Japan
Tel: (03)5476-4850 Fax: (03)5476-4859

For more details...
**SEE OUR
WEB SITE**

Official Sites: [Japanese] <https://www.nifco.com/>
[English] <https://www.nifco.com/en/>

The Nifco Group, domestic subsidiaries and affiliated companies:

Nifco Yamagata Inc.
Nifco Kumamoto Inc.

The Japan Times, Ltd.
Simmons Co., Ltd.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/>
<http://www.simmons.co.jp/>