



Morning Alert - Friday, August 19, 2016

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HEADLINES

Morning news

All networks and most national papers led with extensive reports on Japanese athletes' performance in the Rio Olympics. Saori Yoshida was beaten by the U.S.'s Helen Maroulis in women's wrestling, failing in her bid to claim the gold medal in four consecutive Olympics. [Nikkei's](#) lead item was a public-private initiative of some 20 companies and research institutions including Toyota and Riken to develop a core artificial intelligence technology.

SECURITY

GOJ to renovate Futenma base

Yomiuri front-paged a GOJ decision to modernize MCAS Futenma in order to ensure the safety of flight operations there and maintain U.S. military deterrence amid the prolonged delay in FRF construction off Camp Schwab. The GOJ will launch a field survey shortly to renovate some 20 facilities on the base, including antiquated hangars, with the goal of starting the work by the end of March 2017. The central government is likely to contribute several tens of billions of yen to this major upgrade. Okinawa will probably react strongly in the belief that the renovation initiative will lead to the installation becoming a permanent fixture. In a separate piece, the daily defended the GOJ project because it is intended to ensure the safety of local residents nearby, adding that the U.S. has strongly urged Japan to renew the aging facilities on the base.

U.S.-Japan ACSA likely to be updated

Nikkei front-paged a speculative piece projecting that the U.S. and Japan are likely to revise the bilateral ACSA to reflect Japan's comprehensive security laws. As a result, Japan will be able to offer

to the U.S. military an additional range of logistical support, such as providing ammunition and refueling aircraft, even if Japan is not attacked. Arrangements are being made for FM Kishida and Ambassador Kennedy to sign the new accord in late August or early September. Tokyo is also likely to start negotiations with Canberra on renewing their bilateral ACSA.

MOD to submit largest budget request ever

Sankei front-paged a plan by the Defense Ministry to submit to the Finance Ministry its budget request for FY2017, noting that it will seek R&D funding for a new surface-to-ship missile with a maximum range of 300 kilometers with the goal of deterring provocations and aggression in the vicinity of the Senkakus. Noting that the ministry is also expected to request money for procuring SM-3 Block II-A interceptors, the article said the defense budget request for next fiscal year will amount to a record 5.16 trillion yen. Nikkei published a similar story.

Obama's goal to adopt "no first use" policy appears elusive

Asahi carried a prominent inside-page article saying that President Obama's desire to adopt a "no first use" of nuclear weapons policy will probably not be realized due to strong opposition from the U.S. military and its allies, including Japan and South Korea, which are afraid that a unilateral declaration would weaken extended deterrence. The daily said, however, that some 40 former government officials of key U.S. partners, including former FM Kawaguchi and Australian FM Evans, issued a joint statement on Tuesday urging the Obama administration to adopt a no first use policy. Komeito Chief Representative Yamaguchi and DP President Okada also support the idea.

The daily published an editorial calling for PM Abe to support the idea, highlighting the view that the conventional weapons of the U.S. military are sufficient to deter North Korea and others. The paper added that endorsing no first use would raise Japan's moral standing in the international community and promote peace and stability in East Asia.

POLITICS

Nikai proposes extending LDP president's maximum time in office to 9 years

Yomiuri ran an interview with LDP Secretary General Nikai, who proposed revising the party rule on the president's maximum time in office. The current rule limits the party leader to two terms of three years. Nikai is calling for a revision that would allow the leader to be reelected twice for a total of nine years in office. While mentioning the rapid turnover in the nation's premiership until the early 2010s, Nikai indicated his support for extending Abe's party presidency to ensure "political stability."

Renho the only strong candidate in DP race

Asahi and Nikkei wrote that DP Acting President Renho appears to be the only strong candidate for the DP presidential election in September since no rival candidate has emerged yet. Although former

FM Maehara has been lobbying hard to enlist support for his possible candidacy on a conservative policy platform, Renho has been collecting support from across the political spectrum within the largest opposition party. The dailies said some 20 DP Diet members who used to belong to the Japan Innovation Party will perhaps hold the key to preventing the presidential election from becoming a “one-woman” race.

INTERNATIONAL

Japan, Russia to hold Northern Territories talks next Friday

Several papers wrote that Ambassador for Japan-Russia Relations Harada will visit Moscow for talks with Russian officials on the Northern Territories dispute on Friday next week. He is also expected to lay the groundwork for a summit between PM Abe and President Putin in Vladivostok on Sept. 2.



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