



Morning Alert - Tuesday, August 30, 2016

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HEADLINES

Morning news

All networks gave top play to reports that Typhoon Lionrock is likely to make landfall in the Tohoku region this afternoon.

Major front-page items in national papers included an LDP plan to review the tax deduction system for spouses to encourage housewives to find jobs, the Justice Ministry's plan to employ nursing care workers in prisons in response to an increase in elderly inmates; and the Transport Ministry's decision to lower landing fees for domestic flights between Tokyo and regional cities so airlines can reduce fares for foreign tourists bound for Japan.

SECURITY

Defense Minister Inada to visit U.S. in September

Mainichi reported on the disclosure by a GOJ source that Defense Minister Inada is considering visiting the U.S. in mid-September for talks with Defense Secretary Carter, projecting that they are likely to discuss North Korea, China, and other regional issues in addition to joint training between the SDF and the U.S. military following the effectuation of the comprehensive security legislation in Japan. Noting that Inada will also raise the issue of Futenma relocation and a review of the SOFA as it relates to the scope of the civilian component, the daily said she will visit Okinawa for talks with Governor Onaga before going to the U.S. She probably will not visit PACOM in Hawaii this time. Other papers ran similar stories.

Okinawa Minister Tsuruho visits Okinawa

Sankei said Okinawa Affairs Minister Tsuruho visited Okinawa yesterday and surveyed progress on local public works projects financed by central government subsidies and grants. He underscored to the press that the implementation of the GOJ budget for the Okinawa economy will be scrutinized in view of the planned reduction of some 14 billion yen in FY2017.

Retired SDF generals eager to rebut Trump's criticism of U.S-Japan alliance

Asahi took up a security symposium held in Tokyo in late July, during which three retired SDF generals who are conducting research in the United States highlighted the contributions the SDF has made in strengthening the alliance between Tokyo and Washington. They made the comments in response to Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's criticism that Japan and other U.S. allies have not paid enough to maintain the bilateral security ties. Former U.S. Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair reportedly advised the three former SDF generals to speak out on Japan's role in maintaining regional peace and security in cooperation with the U.S. military.

Israel anxious to market cyber-defense expertise in Japan

Yomiuri wrote in a prominent inside-page story that the Israeli government in January formed a partnership with seven domestic firms to export cyber-defense technology to Japan by taking advantage of the shortage of Japanese experts in the field. Following a summit between PM Abe and his Israeli counterpart Netanyahu in May 2014, the two nations have deepened their bilateral cooperating in preventing cyberattacks and terrorism. The Israelis are keen to market their cyber-defense expertise to Japan as it may become a primary target of cyberattacks ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. They see Japan as a viable market because exporting sensitive technology would not raise security concerns as Japan is a close ally of the U.S.

INTERNATIONAL

China eases patrol operations in Senkaku vicinity

Mainichi reported that the number of Chinese patrol boats operating in waters around the Senkakus has dropped, pointing out that no Chinese coast guard vessels were spotted in the vicinity on Sunday for the first time in four weeks. While speculating that the Chinese are perhaps exercising restraint prior to the G20 Hangzhou summit in early next month, the daily said Japan remains vigilant.

In a related development, Mainichi wrote that the Japan Coast Guard is seeking a 19% increase in spending for enhancing patrol operations around the Senkakus and other remote islands in the FY2017 budget, noting that some of the money will be used to procure high-speed boats.

GOJ having difficulty arranging summit between Abe, Xi

Sankei speculated that the GOJ is running into difficulty in arranging a meeting between PM Abe and Chinese President Xi on the margins of the G20 Hangzhou summit due to lingering tension over the Senkakus. Conjecturing that Abe is set to call for the Chinese leader to suspend unilateral

provocations in the East China Sea, the daily said even if the bilateral summit is held at the last minute, Xi is likely to dismiss the premier's demand.

China displeased with Abe's speech in Kenya

Mainichi published a Jiji report on remarks made on Sunday by a senior Chinese diplomat, who expressed displeasure with PM Abe's speech at TICAD in Nairobi, during which the Japanese leader said: "Japan bears the responsibility of fostering the confluence of the Pacific and Indian Oceans and of Asia and Africa into a place that values freedom and the rule of law." The Chinese official took issue with this remark, which was apparently made with China in mind, by saying that it is wrong for Tokyo to "meddle in the development of Africa by addressing the issues of different regions."

Tokyo Shimbun wrote that the Chinese government is alarmed that Japan held the TICAD in Africa for the first time, explaining that Beijing is stepping up its criticism of the Japanese initiative based on the judgment that Tokyo is extending overtures to Africa with the goal of undermining China's presence there and seeking African support for its bid to obtain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Park built in Seoul to honor comfort women

All papers wrote that an opening ceremony was held on Monday in Seoul for a park honoring the former comfort women, noting that several victims, the Seoul mayor, the leader of the largest opposition party, and others took part in the event. They expressed strong opposition to the comfort women accord between the GOJ and the South Korean government, stressing that they will never allow the comfort women statue to be removed from in front of the Japanese Embassy.

NHK-BS1 also carried a similar story this morning, saying that although South Korean government officials are saying that the park could be a possible site for the relocation of the comfort women statue in front of the Japanese Embassy, civic groups remain opposed to the removal or relocation of the statue.

Japan, UK to hold summit next month

Yomiuri wrote that coordination is underway for Abe to hold a summit with British PM May on the sidelines of the G20 summit to be held in Hangzhou in early September. Abe is expected to urge London to take proper measures to minimize Brexit's adverse impact on Japanese companies. The two leaders are also likely to exchange views on China's maritime advancement in the South and East China Seas.

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