



Morning Alert - Wednesday, August 31, 2016

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report on damage caused by record rainfall in Hokkaido yesterday. All commercial networks led with reports that a 45-year-old man suspected of murder has barricaded himself in an apartment in Wakayama.

Top stories in national dailies included Russian President Putin's plan to visit Japan in December (Asahi, Mainichi), Mitsubishi Motors' falsified reports on fuel economy for eight models (Yomiuri), and Google's plan to launch a mobile payment service in Japan in the fall or later (Nikkei).

## INTERNATIONAL

### U.S.-Japan summit eyed on sidelines of ASEAN meeting in Laos

Mainichi wrote that it has learned from a source connected to U.S.-Japan relations that the U.S. and Japanese governments began on Aug. 30 making arrangements for President Obama and Prime Minister Abe to hold bilateral talks on the sidelines of ASEAN meetings to be held in Laos on Sept. 6-8. The paper speculated that the two leaders will demonstrate their nations' readiness to deal with China's advancement in the South China Sea and North Korea's missile development under the framework of the U.S.-Japan alliance. If realized, this will be the first bilateral meeting between President Obama and PM Abe since May, when they held talks on the margins of the G7 summit. Yomiuri ran a similar report, adding that Abe will probably ask Obama to accelerate domestic coordination for congressional approval of the TPP agreement.

### Putin to visit Japan in December

Most papers gave front-page play to Tass and Interfax reports saying that Russian President Putin's aide Ushakov told Russian reporters on Aug. 30 that Putin will visit Japan in December and that Moscow and Tokyo have agreed on the schedule. The Russian official added that Putin will discuss with Abe the agenda for his visit to Japan during their scheduled talks in Vladivostok on Sept. 2. Mainichi conjectured that the official's disclosure of the timeframe for Putin's visit to Japan is aimed at gaining as much economic cooperation as possible from Tokyo by demonstrating Moscow's positive position on strengthening ties with Japan ahead of the Abe-Putin meeting in Vladivostok.

Meanwhile, Asahi wrote that it has learned from a GOJ source that the Japanese and Russian governments are making final arrangements for President Putin to make an overnight trip to Japan in December and hold talks with Abe in his home prefecture of Yamaguchi. The paper speculated that the premier is hoping to make progress on Russo-Japanese negotiations on the Northern Territories by deepening his relationship of trust with the Russian leader.

### **Inada to visit South Sudan**

Yomiuri wrote that it has learned from a GOJ source that Defense Minister Inada has decided to visit South Sudan in mid-September. The purpose of the visit will be to observe the security situation in the nation in preparation for giving the SDF the new duty of rescuing UN staff and other civilians in the event they come under attack. Tokyo Shimbun ran a similar report, adding that Inada will probably visit South Sudan after her planned trip to the U.S. starting on Sept. 13.

### **Red Cross chief voices concern about humanitarian situation in South Sudan**

Tuesday evening's Mainichi ran an interview with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) President Peter Maurer in Nairobi on Aug. 29, during which he expressed concern about the humanitarian situation and deteriorating public safety in South Sudan, where Japan's SDF is participating in UN peacekeeping operations. Maurer refrained from directly commenting on the Japanese government's plan to expand the SDF's mission to include rescuing UN staff and other civilians in the event they come under attack based on the new security legislation, but said that the ICRC will work with the Ministry of Defense to have the nation abide by the International Humanitarian Law.

### **GOJ to allocate 6.5 billion yen for security measures at overseas missions, JICA offices**

Asahi wrote that in response to the terrorist attack in Dhaka in July that killed seven Japanese nationals who were involved in ODA projects in Bangladesh, MOFA has put together safety measures for aid workers and NGO members. The measures include yen loans to small and medium-sized companies involved in development projects to reduce their financial burden. In addition, the government has included a total of 6.5 billion yen in a second draft supplementary budget for fiscal 2016 to pay for satellite telephones, bulletproof vehicles, and other equipment to

strengthen security at Japanese embassies and JICA offices overseas. Mainichi and Nikkei ran similar reports.

## **SECURITY**

### **U.S. to deploy Navy Ospreys in Japan possibly from 2021**

Tuesday evening's Tokyo Shimbun ran a Kyodo report from Washington saying that an unnamed press official of the U.S. Navy told Kyodo on Aug. 29 that the U.S. military plans to deploy the Navy's CMV-22 Ospreys in Japan from 2021 to 2026. The CMV-22s are expected to replace the two aging C-2 Greyhounds attached to the U.S. nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan based at Yokosuka. The U.S. military has already deployed the Marines' MV-22 Ospreys at MCAS Futenma and plans to deploy the Air Force's CV-22 Ospreys at Yokota Air Base in 2017. Although the U.S. military stresses the reliability of the Osprey, there is strong concern in Japan about the safety of the aircraft due to its history of crashes.

At present, more than 50 fighters and other carrier-born aircraft, including the two C-2 Greyhounds, are based at NAF Atsugi, but the Navy Ospreys are likely to be stationed at MCAS Iwakuni because the U.S. and Japanese governments have agreed to transfer the C-2 Greyhounds and other aircraft to Iwakuni as part of their efforts to reduce noise at Atsugi. When the USS Ronald Reagan operates in the East and South China Seas, the Navy Ospreys will probably move to the carrier from the Iwakuni base for missions such as transporting personnel, goods, and supplies.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Sea Shepherd founder enters U.S.**

Sankei wrote that it learned from several sources on Aug. 30 that Paul Watson, the founder of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society who is on the ICPO's wanted list, entered the U.S. in late August. The paper speculated that the Japanese government will ask the U.S. government to transfer custody of Watson to Japan based on the bilateral extradition treaty. Japan and Costa Rica have issued arrest warrants for Watson. He had been living in exile in France since July 2014 under the protection of the French government, which has been refusing the Japanese government's request for his extradition. A source connected to the environmental group told Sankei that Watson recently entered the U.S.

In a related development, Asahi wrote that Sea Shepherd Global released a statement on Aug. 30 saying that it will send a high-speed patrol vessel called the Ocean Warrior to the Southern Ocean in December to block Japan's research whaling.

## **Kyoto University to offer new course to develop human resources for space exploration**

Tuesday evening's Yomiuri wrote that Kyoto University will offer in the 2017 academic year a new course to develop human resources for manned space missions. This is the first course in Japan aimed at expanding the scope of the use of space. Undergraduate students taking the course will gain comprehensive knowledge about space, and Takao Doi, the first Japanese astronaut to conduct a spacewalk in 1997, will be one of the lecturers.

## **ECONOMY**

### **MRJ's flight to U.S. to be delayed until late September**

Asahi and several other papers wrote that Mitsubishi Aircraft will likely wait until late September or later to fly its MRJ passenger jet to the U.S. after a problem with its air-conditioning system caused flights to be aborted twice. The company needs time to fix the system and obtain flight approval again from Russian aviation authorities as the aircraft plans to make a stop at an airport in Russia. The company is making arrangements to postpone its plan to open a flight test base in the U.S. on Sept. 9.

