



Morning Alert - Monday, September 26, 2016

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that the extraordinary Diet session will be convened today, saying that although the GOJ and the ruling parties are hoping to swiftly obtain Diet approval for the TPP bill, the opposition parties are set to block it on the grounds that the bill does not defend national interests. All commercial networks led with reports that an 88-year-old patient at a Yokohama hospital died from poisoning on Tuesday after he was given an IV solution that may have contained a foreign substance.

Top stories in national dailies included delays in local governments' drafting of evacuation guidelines for volcanic eruptions (Asahi); the Cabinet Legislation Bureau's inadequate preparation of documents on the new security legislation (Mainichi); the GOJ's development of a system to alert residents of torrential rain using small meteorological radars (Yomiuri); a plan by GE to work with TEPCO to operate power plants more efficiently by using the "Internet of Things" (Nikkei); and a plan by the Defense Ministry to file with the Okinawa police a report on an incident in which a ministry official was injured by protesters at the helipad construction site in the Northern Training Area (Sankei).

## INTERNATIONAL

### U.S. considers unilateral sanctions on firms dealing with North Korean workers

Saturday morning's Asahi front-paged a report saying that it has learned from a source connected to the U.S. government that as part of its unilateral sanctions against North Korea's fifth nuclear test, the U.S. government is studying the idea of imposing sanctions on companies in third-party nations, with China in mind, that accept or dispatch workers from the DPRK or are involved in transactions of

mineral resources from the country. Sanctions related to North Korean workers were not included in the United States' February bill on the DPRK or the UNSC resolution in March. According to statistics compiled by a South Korean research institute, about 50,000 North Korean workers in foreign countries are earning a total of \$200-300 million annually. The U.S. is considering the idea of freezing the assets of companies involved in hiring and dispatching North Korean workers and banning dollar transactions by them. Under the current UNSC resolutions, imports of mineral resources for commercial use are allowed, but Washington is hoping to ban all imports of such resources. Some 90% of the firms involved in trade with North Korea are believed to be Chinese.

### **Former CIA chief predicts advancement in DPRK's nuclear missile development**

Sunday's Sankei gave top play to an interview with former CIA Director Michael Hayden, during which he expressed the view that North Korea may obtain the capability to fire a missile loaded with a nuclear warhead to Seattle in three to five years. Hayden added that it is necessary for the U.S. and Japan to consider hardline measures in addition to continued diplomatic pressure on Pyongyang.

### **UN human rights expert comments on abductions**

Sunday's Yomiuri ran an interview with Tomas Quintana, an Argentine lawyer who assumed the post of UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in North Korea in August. Calling the abductions of Japanese nationals a serious human rights issue, Quintana stated that the UN Human Rights Council will discuss at its meeting next March specific measures to hold the DPRK responsible for such human rights violations under international law. His predecessor asked the UN Security Council to refer the issue to the International Criminal Court, but the council failed to take action. Quintana expressed hope to meet with the families of the abductees during his planned visit to East Asia, including Japan, in November.

### **Foreign policy advisor comments on Trump's remarks on U.S. troop withdrawal from Japan**

Sunday's Mainichi ran a recent interview with Joseph Schmitz, a foreign policy advisor for Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. Concerning Trump's remarks hinting at the possibility of the United States withdrawing its troops from Japan and South Korea, Schmitz said that Trump intends to strengthen the mutual defense accords with Japan and the ROK by making them better for both parties. The advisor added that Trump's rhetoric is sometimes aimed at extracting concessions from a negotiating partner.

### **Japan sounds out China, South Korea on trilateral summit in December**

Monday's Yomiuri wrote that Japan has sounded out China and South Korea on the idea of holding a trilateral summit in early December. Although Seoul has responded positively, Beijing has been withholding its response due to its displeasure over Japan's response to the South China Sea issues.

### **Chinese fighter jets fly over strait in Okinawa**

All Monday papers reported on the announcement on Sunday by the Defense Ministry that it has confirmed that two aircraft believed to be Chinese fighter jets, four bombers, and two spy planes flew over the strait between Okinawa's main island and Miyako Island on Sunday. This was the first time for Chinese fighter jets to fly over the area. Japan scrambled a fighter jet against the Chinese aircraft, which did not enter Japan's airspace. The Chinese Air Force announced on Sunday that more than 40 aircraft, including fighter jets and refueling planes, flew over the Miyako Strait to conduct a drill over the western Pacific.

### **Poll: 91% of Japanese have negative views of China**

Saturday morning's Asahi and Mainichi wrote that according to a survey jointly conducted by Japanese NGO Genron NPO and the China International Publishing Group from Aug. 13 through Sept. 4, 91.6% of the Japanese respondents, up from 88.8% a year ago, said they have unfavorable views of China. Some 64.6% cited tensions over the Senkakus as a major reason for their negative views. Only 8%, down from 10.6%, said they have favorable views of China. Regarding the Chinese respondents, 76.7%, down from 78.3%, said they have unfavorable views of Japan.

### **Gallup poll: 58% of Koreans support possession of nuclear weapons**

Sunday's Nikkei and Saturday's Asahi reported on the results of a recent survey conducted by Gallup Korea. Following North Korea's fifth nuclear test, 58% of the South Korean respondents supported the idea of their nation possessing nuclear weapons, while 34% opposed it.

### **Japan to strengthen ties with Cuba**

All Saturday morning papers reported on Prime Minister Abe's visit to Cuba on Sept. 22-23, during which he expressed Japan's strong desire to strengthen its ties with the nation at a meeting with President Raul Castro by presenting a 13-point economic assistance package for Havana. During the meeting, Abe expressed strong concern over North Korea's nuclear and missile development and called on Cuba to apply pressure on Pyongyang to resolve the abduction issue. Abe held a separate meeting with former President Fidel Castro at his residence in Havana, during which they agreed on the goal of seeking a world without nuclear weapons.

### **UN Security Council adopts resolution on nuclear test ban**

All Saturday morning papers reported on the UN Security Council's adoption on Sept. 23 of a U.S.-led resolution calling for the early effectuation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and urging nations to refrain from conducting nuclear tests. The resolution was adopted with 14 votes in favor and one abstention by Egypt. Although the U.S. had originally included in the draft resolution language indicating strengthened legal binding power, it was omitted in the final resolution due to opposition from China and Russia.

### **Suga stresses Japan's policy on Northern Territories unchanged**

Saturday morning's Sankei wrote that Chief Cabinet Suga dismissed a Yomiuri report claiming that the GOJ is shifting its position to having two of the four islands of the Northern Territories returned

as a minimum requirement for resolving the territorial dispute with Russia. Suga clearly stated that the report is not true.

## **SECURITY**

### **Defense minister, Okinawa governor remain apart over Futenma relocation**

All Sunday papers reported on Defense Minister Inada's meeting with Okinawa Governor Onaga on Saturday at his office. Onaga submitted to Inada a written request for the removal of the Futenma base out of Okinawa and criticized the recent court ruling that backed the Henoko plan by saying the ruling is unfair and tramples on the feelings of the Okinawan people. Inada said in reply that there will be no change in the Abe administration's policy on Futenma relocation. She added that the GOJ is making serious efforts to reduce the base-hosting burden on Okinawa and it is important for the central and Okinawa governments to exchange views in addition to carrying out court procedures.

Concerning the ongoing helipad construction at the Northern Training Area, the governor criticized the GOJ for using helicopters to transport heavy machinery to the site by saying that the operation is unacceptable because there are no legal grounds for it.

Prior to the talks with Onaga, Inada met with Maj. Gen. Charles Chiarotti, deputy commander of U.S. Forces Japan, in Nago and asked the U.S. to conduct a thorough investigation into the cause of the recent crash of an AV-8 Harrier and take effective steps to prevent similar accidents from happening again. She said that the incident was regrettable because it could have caused a catastrophe if it had happened in a residential area.

### **U.S. Marines temporarily suspend operations of Harrier jets in Okinawa**

Most Saturday morning papers wrote that the U.S. Marine Corps announced on Friday it will temporarily suspend operations of all Harrier jets in Okinawa following the crash by an AV-8 Harrier in waters off Okinawa on Sept. 22. Okinawa Vice Governor Ageda visited Camp Zukeran on Friday to file a protest against the incident and requested the suspension of Harrier flights until the cause of the accident is clarified. Meanwhile, Defense Minister Inada held a meeting with the leaders of base-hosting municipalities in Okinawa and stated that it is regrettable that the incident caused anxiety among local residents and that she has called on the U.S. to conduct a thorough investigation.

### **Okinawa files appeal with Supreme Court over ruling in favor of central government**

All Saturday morning papers wrote that the Okinawa Prefectural Government filed an appeal with the Supreme Court on Friday against the recent ruling by the Naha Branch of the Fukuoka High Court that backed the central government's plan to transfer the Futenma base to Henoko. Governor Onaga issued a statement saying the ruling is unfair and unacceptable because it disregards the local autonomy that is guaranteed under the Constitution.

## **GOJ to submit to Diet bill to approve updated ACSA with U.S.**

Saturday morning's Yomiuri wrote that the GOJ decided on Sept. 23 to submit a bill to approve the updated Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement with the U.S. to the extraordinary Diet session to be convened on Sept. 26. Following Japan's enforcement of the new security laws in March, the new agreement will allow Japan to provide the U.S. with logistical support, including providing ammunition, even when Japan is not under direct attack. The governments of the U.S. and Japan plan to sign the new agreement on Monday.

## **Japan-bound F-35A unveiled**

Sunday's Sankei front-paged a report on an unveiling ceremony at Lockheed Martin's Fort Worth plant in Texas on Sept. 23 for the first F-35A to be deployed by the ASDF. Japan plans to deploy a total of 42 F-35As at the ASDF's Misawa Base from 2018 through 2024 to replace its aging F-4s. State Minister of Defense Wakamiya said at the ceremony that Japan's deployment of the aircraft symbolizes the strong U.S.-Japan alliance. ASDF Chief of Staff Sugiyama said that the F-35A's highly sophisticated systems will be a game changer for air operations. Saturday evening's Asahi and Mainichi ran similar inside-page reports.

## **ECONOMY**

### **G7 transport ministers vow to take lead in promoting self-driving vehicles**

All Sunday papers reported on the joint declaration adopted on Saturday at the G7 Transport Minister's meeting in Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture. The G7 ministers agreed to cooperate and exercise leadership to support the early commercialization of automated vehicle technologies and reinforce international cooperation in creating safety regulations for automated cars. The ministers also agreed to create guidelines to prevent cyberattacks on self-driving vehicles. The papers wrote that despite the agreements at the summit, there are differences between the U.S., Japan, and Europe over safety standards for automated vehicles because the U.S. is more supportive of innovation in the development of self-driving cars than Japan and Europe, which are still cautious about complete automation. The papers speculated that the U.S. compromised with Japan and Europe on establishing international safety regulations in view of growing safety concerns following the fatal accident involving a Tesla car in May.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Poll shows decline in public interest in climate change**

Monday's Nikkei reported on the results of a Cabinet Office survey conducted from July 28 through Aug. 7, in which 87.2%, down 5 points from a similar survey in 2007, said they are interested in environmental issues, including climate change. Some 39.5% said they didn't know about the Paris Agreement.

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