



Morning Alert - Wednesday, October 12, 2016

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

TBS, Fuji TV, and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that Democratic Party leader Renho and Tokyo Governor Koike are waging a proxy war in the by-election for Tokyo constituency No. 10. NTV led with reports that the Japanese men's soccer team tied with Australia in the World Cup final qualifiers on Tuesday. NHK led with a report on meetings between Tokyo Governor Koike and Kumamoto Governor Kawashima on Tuesday and Miyagi Governor Murai today over the boat and canoe facilities for the Tokyo Olympics.

Main front-page items in national dailies included Samsung's decision to suspend sales of Galaxy Note smartphones; the official kickoff of the campaigns for Lower House by-elections in Tokyo and Fukuoka; and reports on Donald Trump being increasingly cornered due to his controversial remarks on women.

## POLITICS

### Tokyo, Fukuoka by-election campaigns kick off

All papers reported extensively on the official kickoff yesterday of the two Lower House by-election campaigns in Tokyo and Fukuoka, noting that the results will have a major impact on Prime Minister Abe's purported desire to dissolve the chamber in early January for a snap election and the largest opposition Democratic Party's position on electoral cooperation with the Japanese Communist Party. Nikkei said if the LDP candidates win both elections, Abe may choose to go ahead with the political gambit as the results would probably signify voters' disapproval of the newly elected DP President Renho. On the other hand, if DP candidates prevail in either of the races, it will be a significant boost for Renho. If the DP candidates defeat their LDP rivals in both prefectures, electoral cooperation

between the DP and the JCP will pick up momentum and the opposition will step up its anti-TPP campaign in the Diet.

### **Ruling coalition committed to obtaining swift Diet approval of TPP legislation**

Yomiuri and Mainichi reported that following the enactment of the FY2016 supplementary budget bill on Tuesday, the Abe administration and the ruling coalition are expected to do their utmost to ensure the passage of the TPP legislation before the current Diet session ends on Nov. 30. Although the ruling parties hope to begin deliberations on Friday, the opposition bloc is determined to thwart Diet approval by raising such issues as the lack of transparency in trade of imported rice and controversial GOJ legislation on pensions.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Trump advisor meets with opposition lawmaker**

Several papers wrote that Michael Flynn, a foreign policy advisor to Donald Trump, held talks with Democratic Party lawmaker Nagashima in Tokyo yesterday and commented on the Republican presidential candidate's election strategy by saying: "Sensational remarks may be necessary to win the race. If he is elected, he will stop making such remarks." As for Trump's repeated calls for Japan to pay more for the stationing of U.S. troops, the former DOD official said: "We will not overturn what has been built up." Regarding Japan's rapprochement with Russia, Flynn said: "Russia is a tough negotiator that we have to deal with. We understand Japan's position." On Trump's opposition to the TPP, he said: "We don't favor a multilateral approach. We would like to build diplomatic ties through a bilateral approach."

According to Asahi, Flynn also delivered a speech on cybersecurity during an LDP meeting on information technology. He told the press ahead of the session: "I'm honored to speak about threats to national security."

### **Philippine leader to visit Japan starting Oct. 25**

Yomiuri reported that Philippine President Duterte will visit Japan from Oct. 25 through 27 and hold talks with PM Abe and meet with Emperor Akihito. Although some GOJ officials were cautious about arranging a session with the Emperor on account of strong criticism raised by the U.S. and others of Duterte's draconian crackdown on drug dealers, the Abe administration chose to go ahead with the meeting to maintain bilateral friendship. Mainichi said GOJ officials are perplexed by Duterte's anti-American posture, which has already strained relations with the Obama administration, out of concern that it will weaken international pressure on China over the South China Sea. The GOJ hopes to capitalize on the Philippine leader's pro-Japan position to serve as an intermediary between Manila and Washington by emphasizing the importance of deepening security cooperation with the U.S.

## **South Korea to deploy Marines on outcrop close to Liancourt Rocks**

Several papers wrote from Seoul that the ROK military plans to deploy on a rotational basis a Marine unit on Dagelet Island located some 90 km northwest of the Liancourt Rocks starting in 2018 in order to prepare for possible aggression by the DPRK. Sankei speculated that the deployment is also meant to hold Japan's territorial claim to the disputed islet in check.

## **Russia asks for Japanese help in wide range of economic areas**

Tokyo Shimbun reported on a list of 68 requests that it claimed the Russian government has submitted to the GOJ in seeking Japanese economic assistance, including assistance for the construction of pipelines connecting the Sakhalin Peninsula and Japan, the establishment of wind power generation plants in the Russian Far East, and greater exports of Russian agricultural products to Japan. The GOJ has already responded negatively to some of the requests, such as the development of underwater natural resources in the Caspian Sea, infrastructure development on the Taman Peninsula across from Crimea, and the extension of the Siberian railway to Hokkaido because they are "politically sensitive."

## **SECURITY**

### **GOJ stresses South Sudan is safe**

Several papers took up discussions in the Diet yesterday on the security situation in South Sudan, noting that PM Abe and Defense Minister Inada, who traveled there over the weekend, dismissed concern about the deterioration of law and order cited by opposition lawmakers probably because the administration is considering assigning SDF personnel to be deployed there in the near future the additional mission of going to the defense of foreign troops in the event that they come under attack. As for a major conflict in the capital city of Juba in July, in which several hundred people were killed, the two GOJ officials insisted that it was a "clash" and not "combat," which under the GOJ's five-principles on UN peacekeeping operations might have forced the GOJ to withdraw SDF troops for safety reasons.

### **Onaga clarifies remarks "welcoming" return of Northern Training Area**

Yomiuri and Sankei wrote that Okinawa Governor Onaga on Tuesday clarified his earlier comment made over the weekend "welcoming" Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga's explanation that the GOJ will negotiate with the U.S. to realize the return of the Northern Training Area this year by saying "it was not appropriate." Base opponents, most of whom are strong supporters of Onaga, were displeased that the governor seemed to be endorsing the construction of helipads, which is a prerequisite for the agreed-upon reversion.

## **ECONOMY**

## **South Korea likely to join TPP**

Tuesday evening's Yomiuri reported from Seoul on a meeting on Monday between the South Korean trade minister and visiting Keidanren Chairman Sakakibara, during which the ROK official asked for Japan's support as his country "plans to make a decision shortly on taking part in the TPP." The Japanese businessman also paid a courtesy call on President Park, who responded positively to his request for the early conclusion of a tripartite FTA by Japan, South Korea, and China by saying: "I would like to see more corporate activities to expand trade volume in a wide range of areas."

In a follow-up report this morning, the daily said the Japanese business community is pleased that Seoul will participate in the regional free trade deal since it will help expand mutual trade. While noting that by joining the TPP, the Park administration hopes to revive the moribund South Korean economy, the daily said opposition to trade liberalization remains very strong in the ROK among farmers in particular.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Japan desperate to ratify Paris Agreement**

Most papers reported on the Abe cabinet's endorsement on Tuesday of legislation seeking parliamentary approval of the Paris Agreement, stressing that due to its delay in ratifying the accord, Japan will probably not be able to take part in an international conference scheduled to take place in Morocco in early November to establish implementation rules for the landmark pact on climate change. While blaming the GOJ for failing to predict that the EU would swiftly decide to ratify the accord, the dailies said the administration is set to expend more political capital to expedite Diet deliberations. Mainichi quoted an unnamed senior Environment Ministry official as saying: "The conference will open with a great deal of fanfare. Whether or not Japan can ratify it by then will make a huge difference."