



Morning Alert - Wednesday, October 19, 2016

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK, TBS, Fuji TV, and most national dailies gave top play to reports on a meeting between visiting International Olympic Committee President Bach and Tokyo Governor Koike in Tokyo on Tuesday, saying that the two officials agreed to set up a council comprising the Tokyo government, the IOC, the organizing committee, and the GOJ to discuss how to cut costs for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and hold the inaugural meeting as soon as possible. NTV and TV Asahi led with reports that Hiroshima Toyo Carp pitcher Hiroki Kuroda announced on Tuesday that he will retire at the end of this season.

## INTERNATIONAL

### UN Security Council issues press statement condemning North Korea

Most Tuesday evening papers wrote that the UN Security Council on Monday issued a press statement strongly denouncing North Korea for its failed ballistic missile launch on Oct. 14. The statement condemned the launch as a serious violation of the resolutions adopted by the council since 2006 and demanded that Pyongyang abide by the resolutions and not conduct any additional missile tests. The statement also called on all UN members to step up their measures to fully implement the resolutions. Yomiuri wrote that although the press statement is not legally binding, it demonstrates to the global community the council's strong resolve.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga welcomed the statement as an expression of the council's position of not allowing any additional missile launches by the DPRK. Foreign Minister Kishida told reporters that it is necessary for the international community to send a strong message to North Korea with a unified voice and urge Pyongyang to refrain from taking provocative actions. Defense Minister Inada

also welcomed the statement as demonstrating the council's unified position of not allowing additional missile launches by the DPRK.

### **GOJ mulling foreign ministerial with Russia in early December**

NHK reported this morning that MOFA is considering holding a foreign ministerial meeting with Russia in Moscow in early December in order to lay the groundwork for the planned summit between Prime Minister Abe and President Putin on Dec. 15 in Yamaguchi. The network also said Minister for Economic Cooperation with Russia Seko will visit Russia in early November.

### **Will progress be made on Japan-Russia talks?**

Mainichi wrote that attention is focused on whether Japan and Russia will be able to make progress in their peace treaty talks this year, which marks the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration in 1956. The declaration stated that the Soviet Union has agreed to hand over to Japan Habomai and Shikotan, the two smaller islands in the Northern Territories, after the conclusion of a peace treaty. Both Prime Minister Abe and President Putin have expressed willingness to resolve the territorial dispute and are hoping to produce positive results at their meetings to be held later this year. However, it remains to be seen whether the two leaders will be able to make progress because Japan and Russia have different approaches. Tokyo attaches importance to the resolution of the Northern Territories issue, while Moscow gives priority to Japan's economic cooperation. Yomiuri and Nikkei ran similar stories, with Nikkei commenting that Japan's talks with Russia may be affected by the international situation because the U.S. is concerned that Tokyo's approach to Moscow could undermine the international sanctions on Russia over its intervention into Ukraine.

In a related development, the papers wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented on the 60th anniversary on Wednesday of the 1956 Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration during a regular press briefing. Suga stated that this will be a good opportunity to re-acknowledge the

### **Communist party makes request to GOJ concerning peace treaty talks with Russia**

Asahi wrote that Japanese Communist Party (JCP) Charmian Shii made a request to Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga on Tuesday concerning Japan's peace treaty talks with Russia.

The JCP leader insisted that even if the two sides conclude a treaty based on an agreement to return Shikotan and Habomai, it should only be an "interim treaty," and Japan should not sign a full-fledged peace treaty until the territorial issue is finally resolved. Shii explained that "final resolution" means the return of all of the Northern Territories.

### **South Korea expresses disappointment with Japanese lawmakers' visit to Yasukuni**

Sankei wrote that the South Korean Foreign Ministry released a statement on Tuesday concerning a visit to Yasukuni Shrine by a group of Japanese lawmakers, saying that South Korea cannot help but feel deep concern and disappointment. The statement called on Japanese politicians to express through actions their sincere reflection on Japan's past history but did not mention Prime Minister Abe by name. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated at a press briefing on Tuesday that China hopes Japanese politicians will have correct perceptions about history and take actions that will promote reconciliation with Japan's neighbors.

### **Brazilian president stresses importance of ties with Japan**

All papers reported on visiting Brazilian President Temer's interview with the Japanese media on Tuesday, during which he expressed hope to maintain close economic and cultural ties with Japan by saying that Brazil is hoping for additional investment from Japan to support its economic growth.

## **SECURITY**

### **GOJ to accelerate return of NTA land to landowners**

Yomiuri wrote that it has obtained the Defense Ministry's draft plan for the reversion of part of the Northern Training Area (NTA). Under the plan, the vacated land will be handed over to local landowners 12 to 18 months after it is returned to Japan and cleared of unexploded shells and contaminants. Japan's return of land to its owners usually takes two to three years. The GOJ is hoping that the NTA land will be returned to Japan by the end of this year and the land will be handed over to its owners as early as next year. The paper speculated that the accelerated schedule is aimed at demonstrating the GOJ's efforts to reduce the base-hosting burden on Okinawa by heeding local citizens' requests for the early return of the land.

In a related development, Nikkei wrote that the MOD Okinawa Defense Bureau submitted to the Okinawa Prefectural Government on Tuesday its draft plan for the reversion of part of the NTA that includes the return of the land to Japan in December this year.

## **ECONOMY**

### **MRJ makes first test flight in U.S.**

Tuesday evening's Nikkei wrote that the first test flight in the United States by a Mitsubishi Regional Jet, a passenger jet developed by Mitsubishi Aircraft Corp., was conducted on Monday. The aircraft took off from Grant County International Airport in the state of Washington at around 1:20 p.m. and returned at around 4:40 p.m.

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