



Morning Alert - Tuesday, October 25, 2016

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK and TV Asahi gave top play to follow-up reports on a former SDF officer who committed suicide by setting off explosions in Utsunomiya, Tochigi, on Sunday. Other networks led with reports that a teenager was found stabbed to death with his mother who had committed suicide in Osaka.

Main front-page items in national papers included Philippine President Duterte's meeting yesterday with the Japanese press, a plan by the Abe administration to encourage local companies to allow their employees to telecommute and have second jobs, and the Education Ministry's policy of mandating school authorities place top priority on preventing bullying.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Philippine leader expresses hope for Japanese support

Most papers reported in front- or inside-page articles that Philippine President Duterte met with the Japanese press on Monday ahead of his visit to Japan starting today. Regarding the Court of Arbitration ruling dismissing China's territorial claims to most of the South China Sea, the Philippine leader said it is "legally binding." However, he also said that now is not the time to bring up the court case with the Chinese. On his meeting with Prime Minister Abe tomorrow, Duterte predicted that the two will spend "a considerable amount of time discussing freedom of navigation and maritime security." He went on to say: "Ships intrude into the South China Sea every now and then. However, we have to resolve this in a peaceful manner through dialogue. I would like to cooperate with our Japanese friends. Japan, Indonesia, Vietnam, and many other countries have problems. I want to find multilateral solutions."

As for his recent call for a “separation from the United States,” Duterte said: “Relations with the U.S. will remain the same. I am a man of my word.” However, he also stated that all military cooperation with the U.S., such as joint training, “must be stopped.” Yomiuri interpreted these remarks to mean that he is determined to distance his country from the U.S., projecting that Tokyo may be forced to conduct a review of its policy of supporting Manila in coordination with Washington to counter Beijing’s militarization of the South China Sea.

### **Japan hopes to affirm respect of “rule of law” with Philippines**

On the summit meeting tomorrow between PM Abe and Philippine President Duterte, Mainichi quoted Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga as telling the press on Monday: “The two governments will work on further advancing a bilateral strategic relationship.... The issue of the South China Sea has a direct bearing on regional peace and stability, and it is a matter of mutual concern for the international community, including Japan.” Sankei stressed that Abe needs to capitalize on Duterte’s pro-Japan sentiment to prevent him from stepping up overtures toward China because tripartite coordination among Washington, Tokyo, and Manila is indispensable for defending freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

### **U.S., Philippines reaffirm close bonds**

Most papers highlighted a meeting held yesterday in Manila between Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Yasay and visiting Assistant Secretary of State Russel, after which Russel disclosed that the two confirmed that “there is a deep wellspring of respect and affection” between the U.S. and the Philippines. He also stressed that the U.S. remains a “steady and trusted partner, and strong ally.” However, he also noted that he conveyed to the top Philippine diplomat Washington’s concern about the controversial remarks being made repeatedly by President Duterte. As for Duterte’s summit with Chinese President Xi last week, Russel said: “The U.S. welcomes a relaxation in tensions between Beijing and Manila. It’s a mistake to think that improved relations with China must come at the expense of good relations with the U.S.”

### **Japan, Russia to establish consultation committee on energy development**

Tokyo Shimbun wrote that the Japanese and Russian governments are likely to set up a bilateral committee tasked with discussing mutual cooperation on energy development when METI Minister Seko visits Moscow in November. In the committee, the participants are expected to exchange opinions on LNG development and wind power generation in Russia. The Abe administration hopes to win Russian concessions on the Northern Territories dispute by playing up Tokyo’s readiness to expedite technological cooperation in the energy sector to which Moscow is attaching great importance.

### **Suga voices regret over comfort women statue in Shanghai**

Most papers took up press remarks yesterday by CCS Suga, who expressed displeasure with the installation of a statue of two girls symbolizing the comfort women at Shanghai Normal University by

saying: "It does not contribute to the improvement of Japan-China relations. It is extremely regrettable."

## **SECURITY**

### **SDF training for assisting aid workers disclosed to media**

All papers reported extensively that the GSDF on Monday disclosed to the press a special drill for personnel bound for South Sudan on a UN peacekeeping mission to carry out operations to go to the defense of aid workers in the event that they come under attack. The training, which took place in Iwate Prefecture, did not involve the use of weapons apparently in order to mitigate potential public opposition. Asahi said Defense Minister Inada observed similar training that actually involved the use of rifles at the same location a day before. The daily projected that the administration will officially decide by late November whether or not to assign this mission to Sudan-bound SDF members. However, an unnamed senior GSDF official said: "In the event that the enemy had overwhelming power, we would not go to the defense of foreign personnel even if assistance were requested by the UN." According to Yomiuri, a senior MOD official said there is almost no chance that the SDF will actually carry out such missions there.

### **Ospreys fly over Kisarazu for first time**

Most Monday evening papers reported that two MV-22 Ospreys flew over the vicinity of GSDF Camp Kisarazu in Chiba on Monday. According to Tokyo Shimbun, CCS Suga told the press that conducting regular maintenance for Ospreys used by both the U.S. and Japan at the base will further strengthen the bilateral alliance and help reduce the base-hosting burden on Okinawa.

## **POLITICS**

### **Ruling coalition determined to pass TPP legislation at Lower House this month**

All papers reported that the ruling coalition decided yesterday to hold a hearing today at a Lower House special panel to listen to opinions on the TPP from private-sector experts, with the goal of putting the TPP legislation to a committee vote on Friday. The Democratic Party and the Japanese Communist Party will probably boycott the session given that the ruling coalition has refused to promise that the bill will not be put to a vote on Friday without their consent.

### **DP under fire over electoral cooperation with other opposition parties**

Most papers wrote that the Democratic Party leadership led by President Renho has been put in a difficult position following its candidates' dismal performance in Sunday's by-elections in Fukuoka and Tokyo. The Japanese Communist Party and two other small opposition parties attributed the defeat of the DP contestants to the largest opposition party's lukewarm attitude toward mutual electoral cooperation, while its biggest supporter, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (Rengo),

remains highly critical of the DP leadership moving toward allying closely with the communist party. Discontent with Renho is also mounting as she is rumored to be planning to run in the next general election as a candidate in proportional representation. Her critics insist that she should seek a Lower House seat in a single-seat district.

## SCIENCE

### Japan to underscore necessity of research whaling at IWC

Several papers reported on the opening of the annual International Whaling Commission conference in Slovenia on Monday, projecting that although Japan plans to present legal and scientific justification for its position on conducting research whaling, most other members are unlikely to subscribe to Japanese arguments. New Zealand and Australia have already submitted a joint motion calling for a ban on research whaling. Mainichi expressed pessimism about the commission holding “consultative discussions” due to the sharpened opposition between the pro and anti-whaling camps.

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