


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Thursday, November 10, 2016

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HEADLINES

Morning news

All broadcasters and national dailies gave exhaustive coverage to Republican candidate Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election. Additional election coverage will be provided in a special supplement to be issued later today.



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INTERNATIONAL

Trump's victory stuns the world

All papers reported heavily on Republican candidate Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election, underscoring that shockwaves reverberated around the world since he was viewed as the underdog on account of his radical remarks on immigrants, foreign affairs, and other topics. The papers said Europe, Japan, and other industrialized economies in particular are deeply concerned about the Republican administration potentially becoming isolationist and protectionist. The papers

also voiced qualms about the prospects for the Paris Agreement on climate change that took effect recently.

The papers claimed that the defeat of Hillary Clinton represents American people's rejection of the current state of politics, with Nikkei explaining that Trump was successful in mobilizing voters who are dissatisfied with the establishment in Washington in view of growing economic disparities and a sharp increase in the number of immigrants. Pointing out that Clinton apparently failed to collect enough votes from young people and women, Nikkei also said her defeat demonstrates the "insurmountable political hurdles" in the U.S. that were believed to have been overcome when President Obama was elected the first African-American president.

Abe comments on Trump victory

On the results of the U.S. general election, all papers quoted Prime Minister Abe as telling the press on Wednesday evening: "I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations. The U.S. and Japan maintain an unshakable alliance that is bound by universal values. I would like to deepen these bonds further. I would like to address various challenges in the world in cooperation with the President-elect. I'm looking forward to working with him." He said in a separate released statement: "Japan and the United States will play a leading role in ensuring the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region."

GOJ troubled by prospect of Trump administration

All papers said the GOJ is troubled by the unexpected victory of Donald Trump because it had thought that the American public would not elect an extreme leader and that Hillary Clinton would be sympathetic to Japan. The prevailing view within the GOJ is that the businessman-turned politician does not understand the roles that the bilateral alliance and the U.S. forces in Japan play in maintaining regional peace and stability. Because Trump has repeatedly called for Tokyo to make greater financial contributions to hosting U.S. troops, the GOJ is bracing for him to step up this demand.

Tokyo keen to build bonds with Trump administration

Yomiuri claimed that PM Abe is hoping to visit Washington at an early date in order to explain to President-elect Donald Trump the importance of the trans-Pacific alliance. The premier instructed Special Advisor on diplomatic affairs Katsuyuki Kawai to travel to Washington as soon as possible so as to build communication channels with the incoming Republican administration. Although the LDP lawmaker is expected to depart for Washington on Nov. 14, Asahi said it is unclear whether Kawai will be able to meet with Trump's key advisors, with a close associate to the prime minister saying: "Who are we supposed to contact in the first place? Where should we call? Trump Tower?" Mainichi quoted an MOFA source as saying: "I'm disheartened by Trump's victory. We have no clue about who will assume which portfolios in the Trump cabinet."

U.S.-Japan alliance at a crossroads

Nikkei wrote that Donald Trump's election may signal the arrival of a new era in the U.S.-Japan alliance because the incoming U.S. leader is critical of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and has even mentioned the possibility of encouraging Japan to go nuclear. The paper said Japan can no longer dismiss as "absurd" his repeated insistence on the campaign trail that Tokyo should pay additional costs for defense, urging the GOJ to make efforts to swiftly confirm the importance of the alliance with the incoming U.S. administration. Trump's doubts about the alliance may also upset the power balance in East Asia because dealing effectively with China's maritime advancement and North Korea's nuclear and missile development hinges on the alliance's deterrence capabilities.

Mainichi took up concerns held by some GOJ officials that Trump might reject the Obama administration's policy of including the Senkaku Islands in the scope of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in order to prioritize economic ties with China. As Trump has said he "sees no problem" with meeting with DPRK leader Kim Jong Un, the daily also mentioned the possibility of the Trump administration holding dialogue with North Korea without properly consulting with Japan beforehand.

Prospects for TPP effectuation elusive

All papers forecast that the effectuation of the TPP has become extremely difficult following the election of Donald Trump, who has been highly critical of the regional free trade deal. Because the Abe administration regards the TPP as a key pillar of Abenomics, the GOJ may be forced to conduct a review of its pro-growth strategy. Asahi projected that the Abe administration may have little choice than to prioritize an EPA with the EU, a trilateral FTA with China and South Korea, and the proposed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade liberalization initiative with Japan's Asian neighbors. Because Trump has also criticized Japan, China, and other nations repeatedly for adopting "cheap currency" policies, the yen's appreciation against the dollar as a result of political turmoil in the U.S. may also deal a blow to Abenomics.

Uncertainty looms about U.S., world politics, global economy

The papers said the future direction of the U.S., which has been an economic and diplomatic superpower since the end of WWII, is unclear because Donald Trump's "America first" policy smacks of isolationism, as evidenced by his remarks on building a wall between Mexico and dismissing the TPP. The papers expressed doubts about whether the President-elect will retain the Obama administration's "rebalance to Asia" policy, worrying that China may step up military provocations in the South and East China Seas by capitalizing on a possible "power vacuum" as a result of Trump's isolationist approach. Because Trump is a very successful businessman who is probably good at cutting deals, Nikkei said he may prioritize "practical benefits" at the expense of principles and ideals, which could destabilize the existing global order.

"Trump risk" rattles global financial markets

All papers highlighted plunges in global stock prices and rapid fluctuation in the currency market as a result of the election of Donald Trump, noting that market players are becoming extremely nervous about the economic and forex policies to be pursued by the next U.S. administration. They are also concerned about the Trump administration advocating protectionism in the name of “defending American jobs.”

Embassy employees express concern about future

Sankei reported online on Wednesday evening that employees at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo were calm but could not hide their concern when it became evident that Donald Trump would become the 45th President of the United States. The paper wrote that around 5:30 p.m. after Trump delivered his victory speech, one Japanese male employee of the Embassy who was heading home was heard to say: “To be honest, I’m worried about what will happen in the future.” The daily also said as Ambassador Kennedy was appointed by President Obama, a Democrat, she will probably be replaced since the President-elect is a Republican. The daily added that an election results watch event was held at the Ambassador’s Residence earlier in the day, to which about 200 people, including government officials, were invited.

Japan, South Korea reach rough consensus on GSOMIA

Most papers reported from Seoul that GOJ officials exchanged views on Wednesday with their ROK counterparts on the proposed conclusion of a general security of military information agreement. According to a press statement issued afterward, they “forged a consensus on major issues.” Although the two sides hope to sign the pact this year, the ongoing political scandal engulfing President Park may make this scenario difficult. Three South Korean opposition parties reportedly decided yesterday to submit to the parliament a motion demanding the suspension of GSOMIA talks with Tokyo.

POLITICS

TPP bills to clear Lower House today

All papers reported that the GOJ-sponsored TPP legislation is set to obtain Lower House endorsement today, as the ruling coalition decided yesterday to convene a plenary session on Thursday despite strong protests from the opposition bloc, which is set to submit as a countermeasure a no-confidence motion against Farm Minister Yamamoto to hold him accountable for a series of gaffes. While referring to the election of Donald Trump, who is a staunch opponent of the TPP, Democratic Party President Renho told the press: “I am concerned that the GOJ’s accelerated moves to put the TPP bills to a vote is rude to the President-elect.”

SECURITY

LDP official calls for settlement this year of discussions on scope of civilian component

Most papers reported on a meeting between LDP Policy Research Council Chairman Motegi and selected Okinawa municipal leaders yesterday in Ginowan, Okinawa, during which he expressed hope for reaching an agreement with the U.S. soon regarding the scope of the civilian component to be covered under the SOFA. He said: "This issue should not be passed on to the next U.S. administration. It should be resolved this year." The LDP official also stressed that the scope of the civilian component should be defined in a legally binding pact that supplements the SOFA.

SCIENCE

Japan to increase research whaling catch

Most papers reported that the GOJ submitted on Wednesday to the International Whaling Commission a plan for the research whaling that it plans to conduct in the northwestern Pacific in FY2017 and beyond. The GOJ is set to increase the whale catch by about 100 to 314 annually. Anti-whaling nations are bound to react sharply to Tokyo's intention to expand its whaling program.

