



Morning Alert - Wednesday, December 7, 2016

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that the integrated resort bill to legalize casinos passed the Lower House on Tuesday, saying that the ruling camp was divided over the bill. Other top news included reports on a traffic accident in Tokyo on Tuesday and the death of Fuji TV reporter Makiko Muto.

Top stories in national dailies included NHK's decision to name former Mitsubishi Corp. Vice President Ryoichi Ueda as its next president replacing incumbent President Katsuto Momii, who will step down on Jan. 24 (Asahi); the Lower House's passage of the integrated resort bill (Mainichi); the results of a 2015 international assessment test showing that Japanese students' reading comprehension dropped to eighth place from fourth place in 2013 (Yomiuri); a plan for a business tie-up between Idemitsu and Showa Shell (Nikkei); and South Korean President Park's likely resignation in April 2017 (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

White House welcomes Abe's planned visit to Pearl Harbor

All Tuesday evening papers front-paged reports on a press briefing on Monday by White House Press Secretary Earnest, during which he welcomed Prime Minister Abe's announcement on his plan to visit Pearl Harbor later this month by saying it will further underscore the benefits of pursuing peace and reconciliation. When asked about U.S. veterans' response to the prime minister's visit to Pearl Harbor, the press secretary said that most Americans would warmly receive Abe's statement expressing his resolve to never repeat the tragedy of war. Earnest added that although some veterans may feel embittered, many will set aside their own personal bitterness, not because they are satisfied by the words of the prime minister, but because they recognize how important the visit

will be for the United States. Hawaii Governor Ige told Yomiuri that he believes that this will be a great opportunity to demonstrate the strong ties between the U.S. and Japan.

This morning's Yomiuri wrote that attention will be focused on the language to be used by Abe in the statement he issues at the USS Arizona Memorial. The paper wrote that although the GOJ does not plan to include an expression of apology because the visit is for the purpose of remembering the victims of Japan's attack in 1941, it is possible that calls for an apology will increase in the U.S., especially from veterans.

MOFA dismisses Kyodo report on planned Abe-Trump meeting on Jan. 27

Sankei wrote that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dismissed on Tuesday a Kyodo report saying that arrangements are being made for Prime Minister Abe to meet with President-elect Trump around Jan. 27 by saying that the report is inaccurate. Kyodo quoted a source close to U.S.-Japan relations in its report filed on Tuesday.

Trump asked GOJ not to disclose the details of his meeting with Abe

Asahi wrote that in response to a question from a Democratic Party lawmaker, the Abe cabinet issued a written answer saying that the GOJ did not publicize the details of Prime Minister Abe's meeting with Trump on Nov. 17 in accordance with a request from the President-elect. According to the written answer, Trump told Abe during their meeting in New York that their talks should not give the impression that there are two presidents in the United States, and Abe and Trump agreed not to disclose the details. Sankei wrote that the answer states that the GOJ did not produce a record of the talks because the meeting was unofficial.

SECURITY

Defense Secretary Carter, PM Abe discuss Pearl Harbor visit, NTA

Most papers reported on visiting Secretary of Defense Carter's meeting with Prime Minister Abe at the Prime Minister's Official Residence on Tuesday, during which the premier stated that he will visit Pearl Harbor later this month to remember the victims of Japan's attack in 1941 and express his resolve to never repeat the tragedy of war. The papers quoted the defense secretary as saying in reply that President Obama is looking forward to Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor and that the prime minister's visit to the USS Arizona Memorial together with the President will be a sign of joint commitment to peace and reconciliation between the United States and Japan.

Carter and Abe confirmed the plan to return to Japan some 4,000 hectares of land at the Northern Training Area on Dec. 22. Nikkei quoted the Pentagon chief as saying that this will be the first large land transfer in the history of the U.S-Japan alliance and promising that the plan will be achieved. The paper wrote that with the upcoming government transition in the U.S. in mind, the two leaders

also agreed that the U.S. and Japan will strengthen their cooperation for the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region. According to the paper, Carter reiterated the United States' position that Article 5 of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which stipulates the United States' obligation to defend Japan, applies to the Senkaku Islands. Abe expressed Japan's gratitude to Secretary Carter for his contributions to strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance together with President Obama, and Carter reportedly stated in reply that the bilateral alliance is the strongest it has ever been.

POLITICS

LDP's Nikai says it's too early to discuss snap election

Most papers wrote that LDP Secretary General Nikai told reporters on Tuesday it is too early to discuss or prepare for the possibility of the Lower House being dissolved for a snap general election. Nikai made the statement in response to a reporter who asked whether Prime Minister Abe is planning to dissolve the Lower House early next year by taking advantage of the diplomatic achievements to be produced at his meetings later this month with President Putin and President Obama. However, Yomiuri wrote that there continues to be speculation that Abe will dissolve the Lower House in January.

