



Morning Alert - Friday, January 6, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK led with a tweet posted by President-elect Trump, who warned Toyota against building a plant in Mexico by saying: "Toyota said it will build a new plant in Baja, Mexico, to build Corolla cars for U.S. NO WAY! Build plant in U.S. or pay big border tax." The network quoted a Toyota spokesman as saying: "We are planning to build a new factory in Mexico, not move one from the U.S. The current level of production and jobs in America will not be reduced. As we maintain 10 plants and 136,000 employees in America, we are looking forward to working with the Trump administration." The Japanese auto industry is reportedly alarmed that the next U.S. leader is shifting his criticism to it.

Most commercial broadcasters gave top play to an international manhunt for a Chilean male who allegedly killed a female Japanese college student in France.

Top stories in national dailies included a proposal to define "elderly" people as those aged 75 or older (Asahi); disparities in housing support for voluntary evacuees from Fukushima (Mainichi); a GOJ plan to develop an "integrated defense strategy" for a possible contingency over the Senkaku Islands (Yomiuri); plans by three Chinese telecom carriers to invest \$43 billion in the 5G network (Nikkei); and a GOJ plan to adopt a "ticketless entry system" for the 2020 Olympics (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

Hagerty likely to be tapped as U.S. envoy to Japan

Asahi and Mainichi ran reports on President-elect Trump's apparent intention to nominate William Hagerty as ambassador to Japan. Asahi wrote that although Trump probably chose Hagerty in the expectation that he will utilize the skills he has demonstrated in business, it remains to be seen whether he has the ability to work as a diplomat to deal with foreign affairs and security issues such as China's maritime advancement and North Korea's nuclear and missile development. Mainichi wrote that Japanese businesspeople in the U.S. are welcome the possible appointment of Hagerty as ambassador because he is close to the Republican mainstream, which advocates free trade. The paper speculated that Hagerty's selection is intended to send a message to Japan and other nations that the U.S. welcomes their investment.

Japanese diplomat calls for removal of comfort women statue in Busan

NHK reported this morning that Vice Foreign Minister Sugiyama met with his ROK counterpart Lim in Washington on Thursday and called for the immediate removal of the comfort women statue recently installed in front of the Japanese consulate in Busan by saying: "As the installation signifies that the South Korean side is unilaterally undermining the foundation of the bilateral accord confirming the final and irreversible settlement of the comfort women dispute, we cannot accept it." In reply, the South Korean diplomat said his government's commitment to implementing the pact steadily remains firm and that the Japanese request will be conveyed to relevant parties in the ROK without fail.

LDP's Komura to visit Iran

Sankei and Nikkei wrote that LDP Vice President Komura will visit Iran from Jan. 9-13 as an envoy of Prime Minister Abe. Komura plans to hold talks with President Rouhani and will probably urge the nation to thoroughly implement its nuclear agreement with the U.S. and Europe.

SECURITY

Onaga opposes planned resumption of Osprey aerial refueling drills

Asahi front-paged Okinawa Governor Onaga's reaction to the U.S. military's planned resumption today of aerial refueling training by the Futenma-based Ospreys. Onaga told reporters that he is outraged by the GOJ's policy of giving priority to requests from the U.S. military while saying that it is taking into consideration the feelings of the Okinawan people. The paper speculated that the GOJ accepted the planned resumption out of concern that it would not be a good idea to cause trouble with the U.S. ahead of the inauguration of Trump, whose comments on the U.S.-Japan alliance have been ambiguous. Yomiuri and Nikkei ran similar reports.

GOJ to develop "integrated defense strategy" for possible Senkaku contingency

Yomiuri gave top play to a report saying that it has learned from several GOJ sources that the GOJ is planning to develop by this summer an "integrated defense strategy" involving the SDF based on the scenario of Japan and China clashing over the Senkaku Islands. According to the paper, Japan

also plans to separately develop a “joint operation plan” with the U.S., under which the U.S. military and the SDF will work together to defend the Nansei Islands.

U.S. to start moving carrier-based aircraft from Atsugi to Iwakuni

Asahi and Yomiuri wrote that the U.S. Navy announced on Thursday that in the second half of this year it will start relocating its carrier-based aircraft in phases from Naval Air Facility Atsugi in Kanagawa Prefecture to MCAS Iwakuni in Yamaguchi Prefecture. This is in line with the agreement between the U.S. and Japanese governments to relocate the aircraft by around 2017. The governor of Kanagawa and the mayors of Yamato and Ayase, which host the Atsugi base, welcomed the announcement as a “step forward” in reducing the noise pollution at the base.

POLITICS

Abe expresses readiness to submit “conspiracy bill” to next Diet session

Most papers wrote that Prime Minister Abe expressed his readiness to submit to the upcoming ordinary Diet session to be convened on Jan. 20 a bill aimed at criminalizing conspiracy to commit illegal acts such as terrorism. Although the government has submitted similar bills in the past, they have been scrapped. The government views the introduction of the legislation as a prerequisite for Japan to ratify the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga stated at a news conference on Thursday: “The government views the legislation as a measure to counter terrorism. The Tokyo Olympics are only three years away. It is necessary to take all possible measures to prevent organized crime, including terrorism.”

Kishida becomes second-longest serving foreign minister

Yomiuri wrote that today Foreign Minister Kishida becomes the second-longest serving foreign minister since WWII by serving 1,473 days, following Shigeru Yoshida, who served 1,909 days.

SOCIETY

American arrested for smuggling marijuana

Thursday evening’s Yomiuri wrote that the Kanagawa Police have arrested a 36-year-old U.S. citizen on suspicion of violating the Cannabis Control Law by smuggling from the U.S. via international mail some 200 marijuana candies weighing 1.5 kilograms in total and 7.5 grams of marijuana in November last year. The suspect has reportedly admitted to the charges.

