



Morning Alert - Tuesday, January 10, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that Toyota announced on Monday that it will invest more than \$10 billion in the U.S. over the next five years. Other top news included reports that Japanese Ambassador to South Korea Nagamine returned to Japan on Monday in protest of the installation of a new comfort woman statue in South Korea.

Top stories in national dailies included survey results showing that 40% of local governments are prepared to receive personnel and other assistance from other municipalities in the event of a major disaster (Asahi); the behind-the-scenes discussions between the GOJ and utilities on compensation for damage from the Fukushima nuclear accident in 2011 (Mainichi); a GOJ plan to enact a new law to promote the use of “big data” for the development of new drugs (Yomiuri); Toyota’s plan to invest \$10 billion in the U.S. over the next five years ([Nikkei](#)); and a GOJ plan to seek the abdication of the Emperor on Jan. 1, 2019 (Sankei).

## INTERNATIONAL

### Trump’s Toyota tweet jolts Japan

All Saturday morning papers highlighted the repercussions of President-elect Trump’s tweet criticizing Toyota’s plan to build an assembly line in Mexico, noting that many Japanese companies are deeply concerned that the next U.S. leader will take an “excessively protectionist” approach. The fact that an increasing number of American companies have chosen to take a second look at their overseas business plans apparently in response to Trump’s messages has made Japanese business leaders worried. Asahi said that Trump’s tweets pose the “greatest business risk” for Japanese enterprises.

Nikkei projected that trade friction may emerge between the U.S. and Japan depending on the Trump administration's policies, expressing concern that the incoming administration might unleash a wave of protectionist measures around the world that would cripple the global economy. GOJ officials are afraid that the next U.S. leader's "unabashed America-first" approach will undermine free trade. While claiming that the "border tax" mentioned by Trump in his Toyota tweet would probably be judged improper by the WTO, Yomiuri speculated that he could ignore such a ruling since it would not be legally binding.

Yomiuri said that if William Hagerty is tapped as ambassador to Japan as rumored, he might urge the GOJ to make concessions on the trade and other fronts as Trump will probably expect him to be a "tough negotiator" in dealing with Tokyo. Sankei said the GOJ is concerned that the Trump administration will seek a bilateral free trade accord instead of the TPP.

### **Abe's advisor meets with Michael Flynn**

Sunday's Mainichi, Yomiuri, and Nikkei wrote that Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Kawai held a meeting in Washington on Friday with National Security Advisor-designate Michael Flynn. Kawai told reporters after the meeting that he and Flynn agreed that it is important to arrange a summit meeting between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe at an early date after the inauguration on Jan. 20. The two officials also agreed that the value and importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance will not change under the Trump administration and that it is necessary to further deepen the alliance.

### **Aichi governor to attend Trump's inauguration ceremony**

Tuesday's Nikkei wrote that Governor Omura of Aichi Prefecture will attend President Trump's inauguration ceremony on Jan. 20 in Washington. The governor, as the leader of the prefecture where Toyota and other auto-related firms are based, plans to hold meetings with U.S. members of Congress in Washington to explain Japanese businesses' activities.

### **Japan, ROK relations bound to deteriorate over "comfort woman" statue**

Most Monday papers wrote that Prime Minister Abe stated during an NHK interview on Sunday: "Japan has already contributed 1 billion yen to the foundation for the comfort women based on the 2015 agreement. Now it's South Korea's turn to show its sincerity. We have confirmed that the agreement is final and irreversible. It is a matter of trust between the nations to implement the agreement regardless of the change of government in the ROK." The papers interpreted Abe's remark as a call for Seoul to remove the comfort woman statue in Busan. Foreign Minister Kishida also called for the implementation of the agreement on Friday in France.

According to Tuesday morning papers, Japanese Ambassador to South Korea Nagamine and Consul-General to Busan Morimoto returned to Japan on Monday in response to the installation of the comfort woman statue in Busan. The diplomats will brief the prime minister and the foreign minister today on the situation in South Korea and are expected to stay in Japan for a week or so.

Asahi wrote that there is no breakthrough on the issue in sight, but the GOJ is hoping that it will not seriously aggravate Japan's relations with the ROK in view of the need for cooperation against the DPRK. Calls for additional retaliatory measures may emerge within the LDP if the dispute becomes prolonged.

All Saturday morning papers reported heavily on the issue. The papers projected that the bilateral relations, which have slowly improved following the comfort women accord about a year ago, are bound to deteriorate again. The Abe administration decided to take a hard line even at the risk of undermining the bilateral ties so as to express displeasure with the Park administration for not only failing to remove a similar memorial in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul but also allowing another one to be installed in Busan. Yomiuri said Japan's measures were intended to remind the international community that South Korea is unilaterally violating the comfort women pact that stipulates the "final and irreversible settlement" of the history dispute. Mainichi explained that the GOJ is worried that similar memorials may be built across South Korea, adding that the Japanese measures are meant to convey the message that rising anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea cannot be overlooked. Asahi wrote that the GOJ took the countermeasures in order to head off the potential rise of calls at home for abandoning the comfort women pact, explaining that Tokyo exercised restraint by recalling the ambassador "only temporarily" and by suspending economic talks instead of cancelling them in order to prevent bilateral relations from being completely crippled.

### **Seoul hoping to maintain relations**

Saturday evening's Asahi reported on ROK Foreign Minister Yun's meeting with Japanese Ambassador Nagamine that followed Tokyo's announcement on the countermeasures. While expressing apprehension about the possible deterioration of public sentiments in both nations toward each other, Yun reportedly expressed Seoul's hope to maintain solid relations with Tokyo in order to deal with North Korea. The Korean official, however, stressed that it will be difficult for the Park administration to enforce the removal of the comfort woman statue in Busan. Mainichi predicted that Japan's steps could fuel anti-Japanese sentiment among Korean people and have an influence on the presidential election to be held this year.

### **U.S. calls for peaceful solution**

Sunday's Asahi reported that Vice President Biden spoke by phone with ROK Prime Minister Hwang on Friday and urged him to seek a peaceful settlement of the renewed tension between Tokyo and Seoul. Noting that the Vice President also spoke by phone with Prime Minister Abe on the same day, the daily said Washington is taking the growing schism between its two Asian allies very seriously. Asahi also wrote on Saturday that since the incoming Trump administration may not maintain the Obama administration's support for the Japan-ROK comfort women agreement, the momentum for increased trilateral coordination in dealing with North Korea and China may wane.

## **Idea of U.S.-Japan-ROK anti-submarine drills dropped due to Seoul's hesitancy**

Tuesday's Asahi wrote that it has learned from several sources that although working-level officials proposed during a trilateral meeting in Seoul on Dec. 16 conducting joint trilateral anti-submarine drills, the idea never materialized due to hesitancy on the part of South Korea. The source speculated that domestic criticism of the Park administration's conclusion of a GSOMIA with Japan and concern about the negative impact on the ROK's relations with China were behind Seoul's hesitancy.

## **Eight Chinese military planes fly over Tsushima Strait**

Tuesday's Sankei front-paged a report on an announcement on Monday by the Ministry of Defense that eight Chinese military aircraft, including six H-6 strategic bombers, were spotted flying over the Tsushima Strait on Monday and that Japan scrambled fighters against them. The Chinese aircraft entered Japan's air defense identification zone but did not violate Japan's airspace. Yomiuri and Nikkei ran similar inside-page reports.

## **Abe expresses readiness to visit Russia**

Most Monday papers wrote that Prime Minister Abe commented on Japan's territorial talks with Russia during a meeting on Sunday with a group of his supporters in his constituency of Yamaguchi. Abe reportedly said: "I am strongly determined to do my utmost to resolve the issue during my generation. I would like to visit Russia during the first half of the year for this purpose."

## **Japan, France hold 2+2 meeting**

All Saturday evening and Sunday papers reported on a 2+2 foreign and defense ministerial meeting between Japan and France held in Paris on Friday, during which the two nations agreed to launch negotiations on a bilateral ACSA with the goal of enhancing interoperability between them. Japan and France also confirmed the importance of resolving maritime disputes peacefully, with China's intense naval operations in the South China Sea in mind.

Monday's Asahi wrote that the GOJ is promoting defense cooperation by establishing cooperative frameworks with Australia and European nations, including France and the UK, with the aim of keeping China in check. The paper speculated that Japan is setting up such frameworks in view of the uncertainty of the Trump administration's policy toward Asia. The paper wrote that it remains to be seen, however, whether such efforts will produce the intended results because European countries are more interested in security issues involving the Middle East and Russia than China. The paper speculated that French Foreign Minister Ayrault gave consideration to China by stating at a news conference after the 2+2 meeting that Japan is France's second most important Asian partner.

## **Japan, Czech Republic agree on economic cooperation**

Tuesday's Mainichi ran a Kyodo report on Foreign Minister Kishida's meeting with his Czech counterpart Zaoralek in Prague on Sunday, during which the two nations agreed to strengthen

economic cooperation. They also agreed to expand cooperation in power generation, including nuclear. Zaoralek stressed during a joint press conference that altering national borders by force can never be allowed, an apparent reference to opposition to Russia's involvement in Ukraine and China's military moves in the South and East China Seas.

## **SECURITY**

### **U.S. military resumes Osprey refueling drills**

All Saturday morning papers reported that the U.S. military conducted aerial refueling training by the Futenma-based Ospreys on Friday for the first time since the December mishap off Nago despite strong opposition in Okinawa. According to Asahi, the U.S. military informed MOD that Friday's training was carried out "without any problems." Several Saturday evening papers quoted Defense Minister Inada as telling reporters in Paris on Friday that the U.S. military does not usually provide Japan with detailed information on its training, but it did so this time because the GOJ conveyed the Japanese public's strong interest and concern over the accident. Yomiuri wrote that Inada added that Japan will continue to call on the U.S. to make maximum efforts to ensure the safety of Osprey operations and minimize their impact on local residents.

### **Pentagon eyes Japan's commercial technology**

Monday's Tokyo Shimbun front-paged a report on its recent finding that the Department of Defense held a seminar in Tokyo in November for Japanese companies in order to study whether Japanese technology could be used for the U.S. military. This was the second time for the Pentagon to hold such a seminar in Japan, following one in 2014 when the GOJ adopted new principles on Japan's transfer of defense equipment and decided to allow the nation to exercise its right to collective self-defense. The U.S. military has previously looked into Japanese technology by providing funds to researchers at universities, but has now expanded the scope of research to include private firms. Sixty companies participated in the briefing, which was held in late November at METI. Individual follow-up meetings were held with 18 companies in December. A DOD official was quoted as saying that the purpose of the seminar was to identify, assess, and deploy technologies that enhance the capabilities of the U.S. military.

### **LDP to submit bill allowing survey of ownership of land around defense facilities**

Sunday's Sankei gave top play to a report on a plan by the ruling LDP to submit to the next Diet session starting on Jan. 20 a bill allowing the GOJ to conduct a survey of the ownership and use of land surrounding SDF and other facilities related to national defense out of concern over the growing foreign ownership of such land. The Komeito party may oppose the envisaged bill in view of the protection of free economic activities, but the LDP may seek support from Nippon Ishin in the event of Komeito's opposition.

## **ECONOMY**

### **First U.S. shale gas arrives in Japan**

All Saturday morning papers reported on Friday's arrival in Niigata of a tanker carrying the first shipment of U.S. shale gas, saying that since the bulk of the nation's energy imports come from the Middle East and Southeast Asia, Japanese energy companies are attaching high importance to U.S. shale gas imports, which are likely to increase in view of the incoming Trump administration's policy of supporting the development of shale gas at home.

## **POLITICS**

### **Over 650 crimes to be covered by conspiracy legislation**

Saturday morning's Asahi front-paged an outline of the conspiracy legislation that the GOJ plans to submit to the Diet for deliberations later this month, speculating that a total of 676 crimes, including murder and the smuggling of narcotics, could be classified as conspiracy if certain conditions are met. The daily said since the Komeito party has reservations about the bill, the Abe administration and the LDP will need to work out additional details, such as possibly narrowing the scope of crimes to be covered by the legislation, to ensure its passage in the upcoming Diet term. Yomiuri said the name "conspiracy legislation" will probably be changed to "legislation on premeditation for terrorism and other acts" in order to head off public criticism.

## **SCIENCE**

### **GOJ to create guidelines for defending space systems**

Saturday morning's Nikkei wrote that the GOJ plans to ask government ministries and agencies to draw up measures to defend Japanese satellites and other space systems from enemy attacks involving electronic jamming and communication disruptions.

## **AMBASSADOR**

### **Origami cranes made by President Obama donated to Nagasaki**

Most Saturday morning dailies wrote that Ambassador Kennedy presented two origami cranes made by President Obama to Nagasaki Mayor Taue when he visited the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo on Friday. In response to the "surprise gift," the Nagasaki leader asked the Ambassador to convey to the President his appreciation for promoting a "world without nuclear weapons." President Obama reportedly asked Ambassador Kennedy last November to deliver to Nagasaki two of the cranes that he made when he visited Hiroshima last May. Asahi added that a New Year's card that the Ambassador sent to the Nagasaki Peace Memorial Museum included a photo of the President and

the Ambassador folding origami cranes together. The cranes will be displayed at the museum from Jan. 7 through Mar. 31.

### **Ambassador Kennedy prepares to leave Japan**

Tuesday's Sankei wrote that Ambassador Kennedy will have a farewell audience with the Emperor and Empress on Tuesday in preparation for her departure from Japan in the near future. The paper said the Ambassador has been praised for her ability to coordinate between Washington and Tokyo over difficult issues, including the U.S. base realignment in Okinawa. According to the daily, her paving the way for President Obama's visit to Hiroshima in May last year was one of her major achievements as Ambassador. The paper also wrote that Ambassador Kennedy made several visits to the areas hit hard by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami and promoted study abroad and other grass-roots exchanges between the U.S. and Japan.

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