



Morning Alert - Wednesday, January 18, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report on the results of a meeting of experts held on Jan. 11 on the emperor's abdication, saying that experts pointed out many challenges if all future emperors will be allowed to abdicate and that many supported only allowing the abdication for the current emperor. NTV and TV Asahi led with reports on the first meeting held on Tuesday on the selection of the official mascot for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. TBS gave top play to a report that final arrangements are being made to form a new parliamentary group in support of Tokyo Governor Koike within the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly as early as this month. Fuji TV reported that Odawara City apologized on Tuesday for officials in charge of welfare who created uniform jackets bearing inappropriate messages.

All national dailies other than Nikkei gave top play to reports on British Prime Minister May's announcement that her country will make a clean break from the EU's single market for goods and services and take full control of immigration. Nikkei led with a report on a plan by Mizuho Financial Group and Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Holdings to integrate asset management banking.

## AMBASSADOR

### Ambassador Kennedy says bonds between U.S. and Japan shown in Hiroshima, Pearl Harbor

Yomiuri ran an exclusive interview with Ambassador Kennedy, during which she talked about her views on U.S.-Japan relations and her memories of Japan. The Ambassador commented on President Obama's visit to Hiroshima and Prime Minister Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor by saying: "First

of all, I think that both the President's visit to Hiroshima and the prime minister's visit to Pearl Harbor really show how far our two countries have come together, how strong the partnership between our leaders is, and really the strength and depth of the relationship between our peoples. To be able to be at both of those events during my ambassadorship, I feel so incredibly fortunate and privileged." The Ambassador added: "The President's visit to Hiroshima had great personal significance for me as nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were also issues that defined my father's Presidency. President Kennedy's proudest accomplishment was the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, so to accompany President Obama to Hiroshima will always be one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. And that privilege has given me a greater sense of responsibility to work for a more peaceful world."

Ambassador Kennedy also stated that reducing the impact of U.S. military bases while building support for the U.S. presence in a tense regional security environment has been a major aspect of her job over the past three years and that she was pleased that the U.S. returned 4,000 hectares in the Northern Training Area to Japan. Citing also the conclusion of a legally binding agreement to clarify the scope of the civilian component under the SOFA, the Ambassador expressed her hope that people will see these two developments as powerful evidence of the U.S. commitment to reduce the impact of the U.S. military bases.

When asked whether there is anything that she feels she is leaving unfinished, the Ambassador cited the TPP. She also discussed efforts in Japan to promote women's empowerment and expressed appreciation for the friendship extended to her by many people throughout Japan. When asked about her views about U.S.-Japan relations under the new administration, Ambassador Kennedy stated that it is important to remember that the U.S.-Japan alliance is a great achievement that has been built by generations of Americans, both Republicans and Democrats, and she is confident that work will continue under the next administration.

### **Ambassador Kennedy departs Japan today**

Asahi wrote that Ambassador Kennedy, who will leave Japan today, hosted a farewell reception at her residence in Tokyo on Tuesday evening and that Foreign Minister Kishida and other guests bid her farewell there. The paper wrote that since her arrival in Japan in November 2013, the Ambassador has served as a bridge between the U.S. and Japan through her strong personal bonds with President Obama. In her farewell video message, the Ambassador expressed her gratitude to the people of Okinawa and her hope to return to Japan in the future.

The paper's Tuesday evening edition also ran a retrospective piece on Ambassador Kennedy's three years in Japan, saying that the Ambassador has been loved by many people in Japan because she is well known as the daughter of President John F. Kennedy and on account of her friendly personality. The paper cited words of gratitude from a citizen in Yonezawa, Yamagata Prefecture; a Paralympic silver medalist who jogged with the Ambassador in Fukuoka; and a hibakusha in

Nagasaki. The paper also noted the Ambassador's participation in the Embassy's "koi dance" video and farewell video message to the Japanese people.

### **Ambassador hosts "karuta" competition**

NHK reported on Friday evening that Ambassador Kennedy held a "karuta" competition using an English translation of Hyakunin Isshu (One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets) at her official residence earlier in the day. The network said the Ambassador watched Japanese high school students competing against each other in the karuta games. The Ambassador was quoted as saying: "One of the priorities I had as the Ambassador was to learn as much as I can about the Japanese poetic tradition. I hope that all of you come to America and teach people about karuta."

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Japan protests plan to establish comfort woman statue on Takeshima**

Most papers reported on press remarks on Tuesday by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, during which he disclosed that Japan has lodged a strong protest with South Korea about a plan by a group of South Korean local assembly members to erect a comfort woman statue on the Takeshima Islands (also known as the Liancourt Rocks or Dokdo). Suga said that the plan is extremely deplorable and unacceptable in light of Japan's position on the sovereignty of the islands. Foreign Minister Kishida stated in a separate news conference that the plan is unacceptable because Takeshima is Japan's inherent territory both under international law and historically.

### **Chinese leader warns against protectionism at Davos forum**

All papers reported on remarks made by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland, on Tuesday, during which he expressed his determination to promote globalization and counter protectionism. The papers speculated that Xi made the remarks with Brexit and President-elect Trump's protectionist statements in mind.

### **Japan, Russia to conduct joint maritime exercises**

Nikkei and Sankei wrote that the MSDF announced on Tuesday that it will conduct joint exercises with the Russian Navy for search and rescue operations and ship inspections on Jan. 20-22 in waters off Maizuru in Kyoto Prefecture and Wakasa in Fukui Prefecture. This will be the first time in two years and three months for the two nations to conduct such training. Japan decided to go ahead with the training based on the judgment that military exchanges focusing on humanitarian operations would not undermine the G7 unity in imposing Ukraine-related sanctions on Russia.

## **SECURITY**

### **SDF to conduct training for rescuing Japanese overseas**

Most papers wrote that the Ministry of Defense announced on Tuesday that the SDF will conduct training for rescuing Japanese nationals for the first time in February in Thailand based on the new security legislation. Based on the training scenario, the U.S. military and the SDF will reciprocally rescue each other's citizens in line with the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines updated in 2015.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Japan, EU resume EPA talks**

Several papers wrote that in Belgium on Tuesday Japan and the EU began talks on an economic partnership agreement. Asahi wrote that although the two parties are hoping to reach an agreement before March when major elections will be held in Europe, the negotiations will probably be difficult because there are still wide gaps over tariffs on autos and

## **SOCIETY**

### **Imperial Household Agency says new emperor's ascension on Jan. 1 would be "difficult"**

All papers reported on remarks made by Vice Grand Steward Nishimura at a news conference on Tuesday, during which he stated that it would be "difficult" for Crown Prince Naruhito to begin his reign as the new emperor on Jan. 1, 2019, as has been recently reported by Japanese media, because Jan. 1 is an important day for the imperial family due to key events held every year on New Year's Day. The senior Imperial Household Agency official added, however, that this is the view of the agency, not Emperor Akihito.