



Morning Alert - Wednesday, January 25, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report on President Trump's fifth day in office, saying that he met with the "Big 3" U.S. automakers and urged them to build factories in the U.S. to create jobs. All commercial networks led with reports on record snowfall in Tottori Prefecture, with TBS saying that more than 700 cars were temporarily stranded on a state road.

All national dailies other than Sankei gave top play to reports on President Trump's criticism of Japanese automakers and signing of an order to end U.S. participation in the TPP. Sankei led with a report on the Chinese tourism administration's call on Chinese travelers to boycott hotels run by the Tokyo-based APA Group after it placed in its hotel rooms a book denying that the 1937 Nanjing Massacre took place.

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump targets auto trade with Japan

All papers reported on President Trump's criticism of auto trade with Japan as "not fair" on Monday, saying that there is growing concern in Japan that "trade friction" between Washington and Tokyo could reemerge. Asahi wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga said during a TV interview on Tuesday that it is necessary for Japan to explain to the Trump administration the reality of U.S.-Japan auto trade during a summit meeting and ministerial talks because President Trump's criticism of the Japanese auto market is apparently based on misunderstandings. Mainichi wrote that the Trump administration may call for Tokyo to hold bilateral trade talks in order to urge Japan to open its farm and auto markets more than under the TPP. Yomiuri wrote that the TPP signatories are

closely watching China's moves in response to President Trump's order to withdraw from the TPP. Nikkei wrote that with possible bilateral trade talks with Washington in mind, the GOJ will reorganize the existing TPP taskforce and establish a new cross-agency unit in charge of trade strategy. The paper speculated that pressure from U.S. auto manufacturers is behind the President's criticism of Japan.

Abe dismisses possibility of Japan participating in U.S.-led operation against ISIL

Asahi wrote that Prime Minister Abe stated in the Upper House on Tuesday that the Abe administration is not considering the possibility of Japan participating in military operations against ISIL or providing logistical support for the operations. The premier made this remark in response to a question from Democratic Party leader Renho, who asked about the possibility of Japan providing support for the U.S. military in connection with President Trump's proclamation that he will make defeating ISIL and other radical Islamic terrorist groups his administration's top foreign policy goal. Abe added that this is an issue on which Japan should make its own decision and that he will explain Japan's position to the Trump administration.

Concerning President Trump's argument that Japan should pay more for the stationing of U.S. troops, Abe stated that the U.S.-Japan security arrangement is not a framework that benefits only one side and that the spending should be appropriately borne by the U.S. and Japan.

Japanese Communist Party leader Shii criticized the Abe administration's acceptance of the resumption of aerial refueling training for Futenma-based Ospreys as a "shameful action that gives priority to the U.S.-Japan alliance over the safety of local residents." The premier responded by saying that the resumption made sense because effective measures to prevent further mishaps had been taken.

SECURITY

Secretary of Defense Mattis to visit Japan, ROK on first overseas tour

NHK and Fuji TV reported this morning that Secretary of Defense Mattis is planning to visit Japan and South Korea in early February on his first official overseas trip. Fuji TV reported that the new defense chief is expected to visit the two nations from Feb. 2 to 4. NHK said if the plan is confirmed, it will be the first trip to Japan by a cabinet member of the Trump administration. NHK reported that Secretary Mattis said in a statement addressed to Pentagon officials that he will work on strengthening America's relationships with its allies, adding that he also spoke by phone with his counterparts in the UK and Canada and highlighted the importance of the alliances. Noting that President Trump insisted during his election campaign that he would call on Japan to pay more to host U.S. troops, the network said some members of the GOJ think the Trump administration will urge Japan to bear a greater financial burden in the security sector. The network speculated that the

new defense chief is also aiming to demonstrate his stance of attaching importance to the bilateral alliance, adding that a Pentagon official told the network that the new U.S. defense chief will visit Japan “to reaffirm the strong alliance with Japan.”

Kyodo News ran a similar report.

Defense Ministry launches its first satellite

Most papers reported on the successful launch on Tuesday of an H-2A rocket carrying the Kirameki-2 defense communications satellite. The first-ever communications satellite to be operated by the Defense Ministry is expected to improve the communication capabilities of the SDF by facilitating direct communications among its three forces. The SDF had previously relied on civilian satellites. The ministry plans to launch two more satellites by the end of fiscal 2020.

ECONOMY

Australian leader, Chilean official comment on possibility of TPP without U.S. participation

Tuesday evening’s Yomiuri wrote that according to the Australian Associated Press, Australian Prime Minister Turnbull told reporters on Tuesday there is a possibility that the United States will change its policy on the TPP in the future. He also indicated the possibility of moving forward with the TPP agreement without Washington’s participation. When asked by a reporter whether China’s participation in the TPP would be desirable, Turnbull reportedly said that China might participate in the regional trade pact. Tokyo Shimbun ran a Kyodo report saying that the Australian leader said he has spoken with Prime Minister Abe and the leaders of several TPP signatories about the possibility of moving forward with the TPP without the U.S.

In a related development, several papers this morning wrote that that Chilean Foreign Minister Munoz told reporters on Monday that his country is inviting ministers of other TPP signatories and China and South Korea to a meeting in March in Santiago to seek ways to establish a new framework without U.S. participation. The papers speculated that Chile made the move in response to President Trump’s decision to withdraw the U.S. from the TPP.

TPP chief negotiator Oe leaves post

Mainichi and Yomiuri wrote that the GOJ announced on Tuesday that Chief negotiator for the TPP Oe and domestic coordinator for the TPP Miyauchi left their posts and returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance, their respective original agencies, on the same day. Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hagiuda said that the personnel changes are not related to President Trump’s order on withdrawal from the TPP. The government is still discussing the selection of their successors.



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