



Morning Alert - Monday, January 30, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK and Fuji TV gave top play to reports on the nationwide protests in the U.S. against President Trump's immigration executive order that suspends the entry of immigrants, refugees, and foreign nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries. NTV and TBS led with reports on the start of the official campaign of the Tokyo Chiyoda Ward mayoral election on Sunday, which has become a proxy war between Tokyo Governor Koike and members of the LDP's Tokyo chapter. TV Asahi gave top play to a report that Japanese swimmer Ippei Watanabe broke the world record in the men's 200-meter breaststroke on Sunday.

Asahi, Yomiuri, and Nikkei gave top play to reports on the confusion created by President Trump's executive order banning the entry of travelers from seven Muslim-majority countries. Mainichi led with a report claiming that the U.S. informed Japan of potential problems with the MV-22 Osprey in 1996. Sankei gave top coverage to a GOJ plan to update the National Defense Program Outline earlier than scheduled.

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump, PM Abe agree to hold summit on Feb. 10, confirm importance of alliance

All Sunday papers front-paged reports on a telephone conversation between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe late Saturday evening (Japan Time), saying that the two leaders agreed to hold bilateral talks on Feb. 10 in Washington and confirmed the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Abe told reporters afterward that he confirmed with the President the importance of the bilateral

alliance in addressing economic and security challenges and that he hopes to hold candid and productive discussions on economic and security issues during the upcoming meeting. According to a GOJ briefing, President Trump told Abe that the United States considers Japan to be an important partner and that the alliance between the two countries is very important. The President reportedly recommended that Abe discuss security issues with Defense Secretary Mattis when he visits Japan later this week. Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aso and Foreign Minister Kishida will probably accompany Abe on his trip to Washington.

The papers wrote that Abe explained to the President Japanese automakers' contributions to the U.S. economy, but the two leaders did not discuss specific issues related to the TPP or NAFTA. The issue of Japan's spending for the stationing of U.S. forces was not discussed during the phone conversation.

Asahi wrote that President Trump may call on Japan to hold bilateral trade negotiations and make specific requests, such as restricting auto exports or removing what the U.S. refers to as "non-tariff barriers" in the Japanese auto market. Mainichi wrote that auto trade will likely become the Trump administration's major target in its trade talks with Tokyo. The paper also wrote that the GOJ is concerned that possible friction between Tokyo and Washington over trade could have a serious impact on overall relations between the two nations. The paper added that there is a view within the GOJ that China or North Korea may take provocative actions to test the strength of the U.S.-Japan alliance if differences arise between Washington and Tokyo. Nikkei wrote that although Abe is hoping to reconfirm the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance during his meeting with President Trump on Feb. 10, Japan may run into difficulties responding to U.S. requests related to trade or spending on U.S. troops in Japan.

Monday papers ran follow-up reports on the telephone conversation between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe. Asahi wrote that the two leaders discussed a wide range of economic and security issues during their 40-minute conversation and the GOJ interpreted the President's reference to Secretary of Defense Mattis's upcoming visit to Tokyo as a demonstration of the new administration's policy of attaching importance to the U.S.-Japan alliance. The paper added, however, that it will be necessary for the Abe administration to make sufficient preparations for the premier's meeting with President Trump on Feb. 10 especially on trade issues because the President made no response to Abe's explanation on Japanese automakers' contributions to the U.S. economy. Yomiuri wrote that the Abe administration is alarmed that the Trump administration may make difficult requests of Japan in auto trade and other sectors in the future. According to the paper, Keidanren has decided to set up a working group in February or later to develop strategies for business with the U.S. Nikkei wrote that it learned from a GOJ source that President Trump called for Japanese automakers to cooperate further in creating jobs in the U.S. during their telephone

conversation. The paper wrote that Abe plans to reemphasize Japanese firms' employment of American workers and investments in the U.S. during their meeting on Feb. 10.

U.S. may request currency manipulation provisions in trade talks with Japan

Saturday morning's *Asahi* wrote that currency manipulation provisions may become a major issue in future trade negotiations between the U.S. and Japan following President Trump's statement on Jan. 26 that he will make strong controls over monetary manipulation and devaluation part of trade talks. *Nikkei* wrote that a GOJ official in charge of trade was shocked by this remark because inserting safeguards on currency manipulation into a trade deal would be unprecedented, as trade negotiations usually focus on tariff cuts and related rules.

U.S. auto imports already receiving preferential treatment in Japan

Saturday morning's *Yomiuri* wrote that the GOJ is already giving special treatment to automobiles imported from the U.S. based on an agreement regarding safety inspections reached in negotiations in 2016 that ran parallel with those for the TPP agreement. Under the agreement, U.S. automobiles that comply with U.S. safety standards are deemed to also have met Japan's safety requirements when the Transport Ministry deems those U.S. safety standards to be stricter than Japan's. The paper wrote that although President Trump criticized the Japanese auto market, the special treatment given to imported U.S. automobiles reaffirms Japan's position that "there are no entry barriers for U.S. cars."

In a related development, Saturday's *Yomiuri* wrote that the Japanese auto industry is becoming increasingly alarmed by President Trump's plan to move forward with bilateral trade negotiations out of fear that Washington may make unreasonable requests for Japan to open its market or create jobs in the U.S.

More than 280 people affected by Trump's executive order on immigration

All Monday papers reported extensively on their front and inside pages on the confusion and concerns created by the executive order signed by President Trump on Friday that suspends the entry to the U.S. of travelers from seven Muslim-majority countries – Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Iran, and Libya – for 90 days and refugees from any country for 120 days. More than 280 travelers were denied entry to the United States or barred from boarding U.S.-bound flights as a result of the order. The papers reported on demonstrations at airports and other sites throughout America on Saturday. *Asahi* said that the U.S. is creating "walls in the air."

The papers reported on opposition and concerns expressed by European leaders and the heads of such major IT companies as Apple, Google, Microsoft, and Facebook, which hire talented engineers from around the world. *Asahi* wrote that more than one million foreign students are studying at

American universities and that colleges such as Cornell and Stanford are stepping up their communication with international students on the matter.

Asahi wrote that according to the Transport Ministry and Japanese airlines, no problems have been reported at airports in Japan as of Sunday evening. Under Ministry of Justice guidelines, the Japanese government cannot stop travelers from embarking unless they are restricted by the Emigration and Immigration Management and Refugee Recognition Law and does not stop people from embarking based on U.S. policy.

Poll: 83% of Japanese concerned about “America First” policies

Most Monday papers reported on the results of a Kyodo News survey conducted Saturday and Sunday, in which 83.8% of respondents expressed concern that the Trump administration, which advocates “America First” policies, could create global instability. Some 13.1% said they are not concerned. Regarding the possibility of Japan holding bilateral trade talks with the U.S., some 52.6% approved of the idea and 36.4% said it is not necessary. Some 54.6%, up from 37% in the November survey, said they think that U.S.-Japan relations will deteriorate, while 34.4% said they will remain the same and 4.5% said they will improve.

Yomiuri reported on the results of its nationwide survey conducted on Friday through Sunday, which showed that 70% of respondents expressed concern about the future of U.S.-Japan relations, marking a 12-point increase since the previous survey was conducted right after President Trump won election in November.

A Nikkei poll conducted on Jan. 27-29 showed that 53% of respondents expect that U.S.-Japan relations will deteriorate under the Trump administration, up 19 points since the question was asked after President Trump’s victory in the election in November. The paper wrote that concern about the future of U.S.-Japan relations is spreading in response to President Trump’s pressure on Japanese firms operating in the U.S.

ROK government issues instructions not to install comfort woman statue on Takeshima

Saturday morning’s Asahi wrote that the South Korean government has issued instructions to groups attempting to erect statues symbolizing the comfort women not to do so at sites that could have political or diplomatic repercussions. According to a source connected to Japan-ROK relations, the instructions are preventing these groups from erecting statues on Takeshima (also known as Liancourt Rocks or Dokdo) and other historically sensitive sites. The paper wrote that although the ROK government hopes that this and other efforts, including Foreign Minister Yun’s statement on Jan. 13 that the installation of statues in front of foreign missions is “not desirable,” will help improve the strained ties with Japan, the government is having difficulty dealing with growing calls at home to nullify the comfort women agreement with Japan.

Curriculum guidelines to specify Senkakus, Takeshima as Japan's inherent territory

Saturday morning's Yomiuri wrote that the Education Ministry is planning to clearly state for the first time that the Takeshima Islands in Shimane Prefecture and the Senkaku Islands in Okinawa Prefecture are an "inherent part of the territory of Japan" in the revised curriculum guidelines for social studies at the elementary and junior high school levels. Currently, these islands are already described as part of Japanese territory in all social studies textbooks, but including the description in the new curriculum guidelines would make it legally binding.

SECURITY

U.S., Japan to confirm that Senkakus fall under bilateral security treaty

Sunday's Yomiuri gave top play to a report saying that it learned from several sources connected to U.S.-Japan relations on Saturday that Secretary of Defense Mattis will likely confirm the U.S. position that the Senkaku Islands fall within the scope of Article 5 of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which defines the United States' defense commitment to Japan, during his planned meeting with Defense Minister Inada on Feb. 4 in Tokyo. The paper speculated that the move is intended to demonstrate the Trump administration's commitment to the defense of the Senkakus in view of China's escalating activities in waters around the disputed islands. The paper also conjectured that the defense chiefs of the U.S. and Japan will agree to steadily move forward with the Futenma base's relocation to Henoko and confirm the two nations' strengthened missile defense cooperation against the DPRK's nuclear and missile development. The paper added that the Secretary plans to pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Abe during his visit to Japan.

Saturday morning's Yomiuri and Nikkei wrote that Secretary Mattis is not planning to ask Japan or South Korea to pay more for the stationing of U.S. troops, quoting Pentagon spokesperson Davis as saying on Thursday that the purpose of the Secretary's visit to Japan and South Korea is to strengthen the relationships with these two nations, not to give them a list of requests. Sankei wrote that the visit to Japan by Secretary Mattis, an expert on security, will be a good opportunity for Japan to explain its security policy.

U.S. showed Japan document pointing to potential problems with Osprey in 1996

Monday's Mainichi led with a report claiming that although the U.S. mentioned problems with the MV-22 Osprey in an internal report before it agreed with Japan on the SACO report in December 1996, it omitted any reference to the Osprey in the final SACO report.

ECONOMY

Japan to resume beef exports to Australia

Sunday's Nikkei wrote that Australia will likely lift a 16-year ban on imports of Japanese beef by the end of this year after confirming that Japanese beef is safe for human consumption. The GOJ has set a goal of increasing the value of exports of agricultural products to 1 trillion yen in 2019, a 30% increase from 2015 levels, and Japanese beef holds the key to reaching this goal. Australia halted imports of Japanese beef in 2001 due to a BSE outbreak in Japan, and the GOJ has been pressing Australia to resume imports ever since. Australian government officials will inspect Japanese slaughterhouses as early as summer as a final procedure for resuming the imports.

