



Morning Alert - Wednesday, February 8, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that President Trump said he is ready to take the court case over his executive order on immigration to the Supreme Court if necessary. TBS, Fuji TV, and TV Asahi reported that former Tokyo Governor Ishihara is likely to be summoned to a hearing as an unsworn witness over soil issues at the Toyosu fish market. NTV led with a report on the cold weather throughout Japan on Tuesday and the forecast for snow in Tokyo on Thursday.

Top stories in national dailies included the “amakudari” scandal involving senior education ministry bureaucrats (Asahi, Yomiuri), the U.S. Air Force’s provision of a total of 800 million yen in research funds to 128 Japanese researchers (Mainichi), a GOJ plan to promote transparent competition in smartphone sales in Japan (Nikkei), and anti-Japanese campaigns in South Korea through a film and children’s book (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

Abe’s souvenir for President Trump to be American jobs

Asahi reported that the ministers of finance, foreign affairs, and trade will accompany Prime Minister Abe on his trip to Washington for a summit meeting with President Trump on Feb. 10. The paper noted that it is unusual for so many key cabinet ministers to accompany the prime minister on an overseas trip, claiming that this shows the Abe administration’s determination to express its position of attaching importance to U.S.-Japan relations. The Abe administration is putting together a draft package of economic cooperation programs entitled the “U.S.-Japan Growth and Employment Initiative” as a souvenir for the President. The paper speculated that Tokyo is taking this approach

out of concern that President Trump's criticism of the TPP and Japan's money-easing policy could have a direct impact on the Abenomics growth strategy. The paper added that the GOJ has been closely analyzing a paper titled "Scoring the Trump Economic Plan" that was co-authored last September by National Trade Council Charmian Peter Navarro and Commerce Secretary-designate Wilbur Ross.

President Trump says "playing golf with PM Abe would be wonderful"

Most papers wrote that the GOJ officially announced on Tuesday that Prime Minister Abe will visit the U.S. from Feb. 9 through 13 and hold a summit meeting with President Trump on Feb. 10 in Washington.

In related stories, most Tuesday evening papers wrote that President Trump disclosed during a radio interview on Sunday that the prime minister of Japan will visit the White House and play golf with him in Palm Beach in Florida later in the week, adding that he said playing golf together would be wonderful.

Secretary Tillerson expresses hope for improvement in Japan-ROK relations

Asahi wrote that during a telephone conversation with ROK Foreign Minister Yun on Tuesday, Secretary of State Tillerson stressed the importance of trilateral cooperation between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea and expressed hope that the ties between Tokyo and Seoul will improve.

China reacts to Tillerson's statement that Senkakus fall under security treaty

Nikkei wrote that a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson commented on Secretary of State Tillerson's statement during his telephone conversation with Foreign Minister Kishida on Tuesday that the Senkaku Islands fall within the scope of Article 5 of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty by saying that the Senkakus are an integral part of China.

Japan sets up new body studying joint economic activities in Northern Territories

Most papers wrote that the GOJ established a new interagency panel on Tuesday tasked with working out the details of "joint economic activities" in the Northern Territories. Japan and Russia plan to hold the first official meeting on the matter in Tokyo on March 14.

ECONOMY

Japan had second-highest trade deficit with U.S. in 2016

Most papers front-paged reports on the data released by the U.S. Department of Commerce on Tuesday showing that the United States' goods trade deficit with Japan totaled \$68.94 billion in 2016, outranking Germany for the second-highest amount among countries with which the U.S. generated a trade deficit. The papers wrote that although the deficit with Japan was nearly flat from the 2015 level, the issue will probably be taken up for discussion at Prime Minister Abe's meeting with

President Trump on Feb. 10, and Washington may increase its pressure on Tokyo because the President has criticized Japan over its trade imbalance with the U.S.

SECURITY

Inada says SDF will not participate in “freedom of navigation” operations

Asahi wrote that Defense Minister Inada stated at a news conference on Tuesday that Japan has no plan to make a political decision for the SDF to participate in the U.S. military’s “freedom of navigation” operations in the South China Sea.

U.S. Air Force provided 800 million yen in funding to Japanese researchers over 5 years

Mainichi gave top play to a report saying that it has learned from documents made available by the U.S. Air Force that it provided a total of 128 Japanese university and other researchers with about 750 million yen in research funds and an additional 50 million yen as expenses for traveling to the U.S. from fiscal 2010 through 2015. In addition, 11 scholars at Kyoto University and Osaka University received a total of 200 million yen in research funds from the U.S. Air Force and Navy from fiscal 2010 through 2016. The paper quoted Air Force spokesman Daryl Mayer as saying that the purpose of providing research funds to Japanese scholars was to gain important knowledge that was not available in the U.S. The paper wrote that although there is no legal issue with Japanese researchers receiving funds from the U.S. military, the Science Council of Japan issued a statement in 1967 banning military research. The paper also wrote that although the scholars who received funds from the U.S. military have explained that their research was for peaceful purposes, there is a possibility that the U.S. military will use the results of their research for military purposes

Defense ministry acknowledges existence of activity logs of GSDF troops in South Sudan

Asahi and Tokyo Shimbun front-paged reports on the Defense Ministry’s announcement on Tuesday that it has found the daily activity logs of GSDF troops in South Sudan from between July 7 and 12, 2016, when a large-scale clash between government forces and rebels erupted in the nation’s capital of Juba, retracting its earlier explanation that all the logs had been discarded. Defense Minister Inada stated at a news conference on Tuesday that the ministry found the digital data of the daily reports at the Joint Staff office when it expanded the search in response to a request from LDP lawmaker Taro Kono. Inada stated that the ministry’s earlier response was insufficient, but denied any intention to conceal information. Asahi wrote that the logs suggest that the ministry was aware of the potential risk of GSDF troops becoming involved in a dangerous situation in South Sudan.

Onaga criticizes start of offshore construction at Henoko

Nikkei wrote that Okinawa Governor Onaga criticized on Tuesday the GOJ's offshore construction work at Henoko that started on Tuesday by saying it is very regrettable that the central government is moving forward with the project.

