



Morning Alert - Friday, February 10, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

TBS and TV Asahi led with reports that Prime Minister Abe will arrive in Washington soon for his first summit with President Trump. TV Asahi quoted the premier as saying before his departure: "I will also explain my view and Japan's position on the TPP. The U.S.-Japan economic relationship has been a win-win relationship, and it will continue to develop as such." Other broadcasters led with the forecast for heavy snow and blizzards mainly in western Japan today.

Top stories in national dailies included opposition parties' calls for the resignation of Defense Minister Inada and Justice Minister Kaneda over their insufficient statements at Diet interpellations (Asahi), the Justice minister's consultation with a panel about lowering the age of criminal adulthood to 18 (Mainichi), a plan by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe to state in a joint document that the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty covers the Senkakus (Yomiuri), a plan by the Justice Ministry to study new measures to prevent abuse of shareholders' rights (Nikkei), and President Trump's planned telephone conversations with the leaders of Iraq, Qatar, and Kuwait to confirm coordination against ISIL (Sankei).

## INTERNATIONAL

### Abe departs for Washington

All papers front-paged reports on Prime Minister Abe's departure for Washington on Thursday evening. Abe told reporters before departing from Tokyo's Haneda Airport that he would like to send a message to the world through his meeting with President Trump that the U.S.-Japan alliance will

become stronger. The premier added that he will confirm with the President that the U.S. and Japan will strengthen their economic relations based on free and fair rules.

Yomiuri wrote that it has learned from several sources connected to U.S.-Japan relations that the governments of the U.S. and Japan are making final arrangements for a joint document to be agreed on by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe to state that the Senkaku Islands fall within the scope of Article 5 of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. The paper added that the document will also express concern over China's activities in the South China Sea to jointly send a warning to Beijing. Mainichi speculated that Abe is hoping to demonstrate strengthened deterrence to China and North Korea by displaying his personal bonds with President Trump.

### **U.S. reporter asks who will pay for Abe's stay at President Trump's Florida estate**

Thursday evening's Nikkei wrote that an American reporter asked White House Press Secretary Spicer during a press briefing on Wednesday who will pay the cost of hosting Prime Minister Abe at President Trump's Florida estate. Spicer said he would follow up and get back to the reporter. At issue is whether or not the expenses will be covered by American taxpayer money. The paper wrote that although it is not likely that the Japanese side will pay because Abe was invited to the estate by the President, if the Japanese government does cover the cost of the stay, it could raise constitutional questions.

### **President Trump sends letter to President Xi seeking constructive ties with China**

Most papers reported on the announcement on Wednesday by White House Press Secretary Spicer that President Trump sent to Chinese President Xi a letter saying that he "looks forward to working with President Xi to develop a constructive relationship that benefits both the United States and China." This was President Trump's first communication with President Xi since he received a congratulatory letter from the Chinese leader for his inauguration on Jan. 20. According to the press secretary, the letter did not mention issues of concern between Washington and Beijing. The papers noted that the President has criticized China's construction of military bases in the South China Sea and that China reacted strongly to the President's reference to the possibility of Washington reviewing its long-standing "one-China" policy. Asahi wrote that although President Trump sent a positive message to President Xi, U.S.-China relations may face difficulties in the future because there are major differences between the two leaders over such issues as trade, Taiwan, and the South China Sea.

### **Japanese, ROK foreign ministers may meet on sidelines of G20 foreign ministerial**

Nikkei wrote from Seoul that a South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Thursday that Tokyo and Seoul are studying the idea of Japanese and ROK foreign ministers holding a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of a G20 foreign ministerial meeting to be held on February 16-17 in Bonn, Germany. The foreign ministers are expected to discuss close coordination on North Korea and

efforts to resolve the issue of the comfort woman statue in Busan. However, the paper wrote that it remains to be seen whether the two nations will be able to achieve a breakthrough at such a meeting because the ROK government has made no specific steps to remove the statue from in front of the Japanese consulate general in Busan.

### **Japan, Russia may hold 2+2 meeting in first half of this year**

Mainichi wrote from Moscow that a senior Russian official told a Russian journalist on Thursday that Japan and Russia will probably hold a 2+2 meeting of foreign and defense ministers in the first half of this year. The two nations held their first 2+2 meeting in Tokyo in November 2013 but have not held another one since Russia's intervention in Ukraine in 2014. However, Prime Minister Abe and President Putin agreed last December to resume the meetings.

## **SECURITY**

### **Onaga calls for establishment of consultative body on U.S. military-related incidents**

Asahi wrote that Okinawa Governor Onaga visited the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs on Thursday and requested that the GOJ establish a three-way consultative body with Okinawa and the U.S. military so that the prefectural government will be able to directly convey its opinions to the U.S. side. However, Onaga was unable to meet with either the defense minister or the foreign minister, and State Minister of Defense Wakamiya, with whom the governor met, expressed a negative view about his request. Onaga has not been able to meet with any cabinet ministers since the Supreme Court ruled against his rescindment of the landfill permit at Henoko last December.

### **Court dismisses demand made by residents near Kadena Air Base**

Asahi and Tokyo Shimbun wrote that the Naha District Court dismissed on Thursday a demand by a group of 146 residents near the Kadena Air Base for a ban on night and early morning flights by U.S. military aircraft. The presiding judge said that the case is outside Japan's jurisdiction because a foreign military's sovereign acts can be exempted from local jurisdiction as long as the foreign military is deployed in Japan as per an agreement with the host country.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Former USTR Froman says that TPP will be base for U.S.-Japan FTA**

Asahi reported on its interview on Wednesday with former USTR Froman, during which he expressed the view that the TPP will be the base for future discussions of a U.S.-Japan FTA because the U.S. and Japan held detailed discussions and agreed on a wide range of issues during their TPP negotiations.

### **Japan ranks fourth in world intellectual property index**

Thursday evening's Nikkei wrote that Japan came in fourth out of 45 countries in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's latest ranking on intellectual property protection, moving up from ninth place a year ago. Japan was lauded for its efforts to improve its intellectual property protection by ratifying the TPP agreement and combating software piracy. The fifth annual International IP Index released on Wednesday evaluates six aspects of countries' intellectual property protection: patents, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets and market access, enforcement, and ratification of international treaties. The U.S. topped the ranking, followed by the UK and Germany.

### **U.S. expert says Fukushima radiation levels not soaring as some media claim**

Several Thursday evening papers ran a Kyodo report from Washington saying that the American Nuclear Society posted on its website a report by one its members saying that although a number of media sources have reported that "radiation levels are soaring" at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, these claims are demonstrably false. TEPCO announced on Feb. 2 that the radiation level inside Reactor No. 2 is estimated to be up to 530 sieverts per hour after it conducted a probe. Following the announcement, some media ran reports suggesting the radiation levels have risen recently or mentioned unnamed experts as calling the levels unimaginable. However, the author of the report says that this is not a "soaring" level, but actually just the first detection of the actual level at a place nearer to the damaged fuel.

In a related development, most papers reported this morning that TEPCO announced on Thursday that the radiation reading during robot operation inside Reactor No. 2 on Thursday was 650 sieverts per hour.

