



Morning Alert - Friday, February 17, 2017

The following information reflects the reporting of the cited news media and does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Japan Media Highlights is intended for USG use only and should not be forwarded. Visit the website [here](#). For more information, contact TokyoMATT@state.gov.

HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that Lee Jae-yong, the de facto head of Samsung, was arrested this morning on suspicion of bribery and other charges. Most commercial networks continued to carry follow-up reports on the murder of Kim Jong Nam, the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Top stories in national dailies included the Justice Ministry's explanation about the scope of "conspiracy" under a new bill to criminalize acts of preparation to commit terrorism (Asahi); a follow-up report on the assassination of Kim Jong Nam in Malaysia (Mainichi, Sankei); an estimate by the 2020 Olympics Organization Committee that it will cost 43.7 billion yen to construct related facilities in six prefectures other than Tokyo (Yomiuri); and a joint plan by Nippon Life Insurance and Nichii Gakkento to establish about 100 childcare centers throughout Japan (Nikkei).

Yomiuri and Nikkei ran extensive front-page reports on Secretary of State Tillerson's first meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in Bonn, Germany, on Thursday, saying that the two officials discussed Ukraine and Syria.

INTERNATIONAL

Foreign ministers of U.S., Japan, ROK confirm close cooperation on North Korea

NHK reported this morning that Foreign Minister Kishida met with Secretary Tillerson and ROK Foreign Minister Yun on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministerial Meeting in Bonn, Germany, on Thursday. According to the network, Kishida stressed at the meeting that the three nations should

unite and lead the international community in taking a decisive stance against North Korea. The network said Secretary Tillerson reiterated the continued U.S. defense commitment to Japan and South Korea. The three ministers issued a joint statement in which they agreed to strongly urge North Korea to refrain from provocations and abide by the UNSC resolutions. They also agreed to boost security cooperation to respond to North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. Kishida was quoted as telling reporters: "[The joint statement] says that Japan, the United States, and South Korea will work closely for the security of the Asia-Pacific region. It was good timing to have the meeting right after North Korea's ballistic missile launch." The network said the three ministers also exchanged views on the murder of Kim Jong Nam.

Abe to visit Germany, France next month

Yomiuri wrote that final arrangements are being made for Prime Minister Abe to visit Germany and France on March 19-21. The paper speculated that Abe plans to discuss with President Hollande and Chancellor Merkel their nations' concerns about the Trump administration's foreign policy and Japan's economic partnership agreement with the EU.

Japan supports "two-state solution" for Israel-Palestinian conflict

Mainichi wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga stated during a news conference on Thursday that there has been no change in Japan's policy of supporting a "two-state solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Concerning President Trump's statement earlier this week that he is open to ideas other than the two-state solution, Suga commented that Japan will keep a close eye on the steps to be taken by Washington with regard to the Middle East.

Japan acknowledges Malaysia's announcement of Kim Jong Nam's death

Nikkei wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told a news conference on Thursday that Japan takes at face value the Malaysian government's announcement that it has confirmed that the man killed at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Monday was Kim Jong Nam, the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Suga added that the investigation is still underway and there has been no official announcement of the details of the incident.

Japan to use U.S., Australian documents to recover remains of war dead

Asahi wrote that from next fiscal year the Ministry of Health and Welfare will begin searching for the remains of the war dead at 12 locations including Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands by referring to documents in U.S. and Australian archives. The ministry is taking this step because of the difficulty of finding remains more than 70 years since the end of the war.

SECURITY

Abe comments on government funding for military research

Asahi reported on remarks made by Prime Minister Abe at a Lower House plenary session on Thursday that the Defense Ministry's funding for university researchers will be limited to their basic research and will not be directly used for the development of defense equipment. The premier made the statement in response to a question from a Japanese Communist Party lawmaker. The paper wrote that there is concern in the Japanese academic community that increasing government funding for military research could pose a threat to academic freedom in Japan. The paper also noted that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe agreed in their joint statement on Feb. 10 that the two nations will strengthen their bilateral technological cooperation on defense innovation to meet the evolving security challenges. Abe ruled out the possibility of Japanese scientists' research being used for U.S.-Japan defense technological cooperation.

