



Morning Alert - Wednesday, February 22, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to updates on the murder of Kim Jong Nam, saying that the Malaysian health ministry held a press conference on Tuesday and disclosed that no external injuries were found on the body. All commercial networks also led with updates on Kim's murder, focusing on his eldest son, Kim Han Sol.

Top stories in national dailies included follow-up reports on the "amakudari" scandal involving the Education Ministry (Asahi, Yomiuri); the Trump administration's idea of imposing a border tax on goods from Mexico (Mainichi); plans by several Japanese companies to increase financial incentives for employees who develop patent-worthy technology on the job ([Nikkei](#)); and an estimate by the 2020 Olympic Organizing Committee that it will cost 160 billion yen to construct and manage 11 related facilities in six prefectures other than Tokyo (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

Japan welcomes appointment of McMaster as national security adviser

Tuesday evening's Nikkei wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented during a news conference on Tuesday on the appointment of Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster as National Security Advisor to the President, replacing Michael Flynn following his resignation over alleged contact with Russia regarding U.S. sanctions. Suga said that McMaster is a renowned military strategist with extensive experience in the field.

All Wednesday morning papers ran extensive reports on McMaster, with Mainichi speculating that the Trump administration's pro-Russia line may shift as a result of the appointment of the new

security advisor because he supports the United States' conventional policy of viewing Russia as a threat. Asahi and Nikkei wrote that attention will be focused on whether the Trump administration's policy toward Russia will change. Yomiuri wrote that although McMaster has mainly served in the Middle East and Europe, he probably understands the importance of the United States' alliances with Japan and South Korea as well as the security situation in Asia.

ROK foreign ministry posts video online that describes "Sea of Japan" as "East Sea"

Sankei front-paged a report from Seoul saying that the South Korean Foreign Ministry posted a six-minute video on its website on Monday both in Korean and English claiming that name "East Sea" has been used for the past 2000 years for the body of water known in Japan as the Sea of Japan. Japan's foreign ministry lodged a protest with its ROK counterpart on Tuesday saying that the claim made in the video is unacceptable because "Sea of Japan" is the only internationally recognized name for the body of water.

SECURITY

LDP to launch study group on missile defense

Sankei wrote that in response to North Korea's ballistic missile test on Feb. 12, an LDP study group on missile defense will hold its first meeting on Thursday to discuss the possibility of introducing THAAD and other missile defense systems. The group, which will be chaired by former Defense Minister Onodera, plans to formulate its opinion this spring. The paper noted that there are discussions within the LDP on the possibility of introducing Aegis Ashore and an early-warning satellite in addition to THAAD.

Opposition party to call for SDF's withdrawal from South Sudan

Mainichi wrote that the Democratic Party has decided to urge the GOJ to withdraw SDF troops participating in PKO operations in South Sudan, insisting that it is necessary for the government to ensure the safety of SDF personnel in view of the deteriorating security situation in the country. Nikkei quoted party policy chief Ogushi as telling reporters on Tuesday that the SDF troops should be pulled out of South Sudan because the nature of the PKO mission there has changed from nation building to the protection of local residents, which is something the SDF is not prepared to handle.

ECONOMY

Keidanren's Sakakibara to closely watch developments on U.S. border tax

Nikkei wrote that Keidanren Chairman Sakakibara told a news conference on Tuesday that he would keep a close eye on the development of discussions on the Trump administration's idea of imposing

a border tax because it could have a significant impact on Japan's trade. He also stated that protectionist policies are a cause for concern with regard to Japan's trade with the U.S.

