



Morning Alert - Friday, April 7, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning News

Most networks gave top play to reports that the U.S.-China summit has begun at Mar-a-Lago in Florida, speculating that President Trump will urge President Xi to thoroughly comply with the UNSC resolutions against North Korea. TV Asahi led with a report that a 62-year-old Japanese woman was arrested in Thailand for allegedly running a pyramid investment scheme in Japan.

Top stories in national dailies included the start of Diet deliberations on the “anti-conspiracy bill” (Asahi, Yomiuri); a plan by Yamato Transport to end same-day delivery services for Amazon (Nikkei); the GOJ’s consultations with several scholars in deciding the name of the next era under a new emperor (Mainichi); and Morimoto Gakuen’s alleged receipt of some 20 million yen in public funds through falsified cost estimates for constructing an elementary school in Osaka (Sankei).

## INTERNATIONAL

### President Trump, PM Abe share concern over North Korea

All Thursday evening papers gave top play to reports on a telephone conversation between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe on Thursday morning (Japan time). The papers wrote that the President told the prime minister that “all options are on the table” in dealing with North Korea. The papers also wrote that Abe expressed Japan’s desire for the Trump administration to urge China to take a tougher approach to Pyongyang by saying that Japan is closely watching to see how China will respond to North Korea’s provocations.

Most Friday papers ran follow-up reports, with Mainichi saying that the U.S. and Japan applied pressure on Chinese President Xi through the conversation between their leaders ahead of Xi's visit to the U.S. on April 6-7. Noting that the 35-minute teleconference took place at the request of Tokyo that the talks were held ahead of the U.S.-China summit, Yomiuri conjectured that the GOJ was afraid that Washington and Beijing would "strike a deal" without Japan's knowledge.

### **Vice President Pence to travel to Japan on April 18**

Mainichi, Yomiuri, Nikkei, and Sankei wrote that the White House announced on Thursday that Vice President Pence will travel to South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Australia, and Hawaii from April 15-25 on his first official trip to the Asia-Pacific region since becoming vice president. He will travel to Tokyo on April 18 to hold a meeting with Prime Minister Abe and attend the first round of the U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue. The Vice President will also participate in a meeting of the U.S. and Japanese business community, and tour the USS Ronald Reagan and give remarks to U.S. military and SDF service members.

Mainichi speculated that in addition to strengthened economic cooperation between the U.S. and Japan, Washington and Tokyo will discuss issues related to trade, infrastructure development, and energy in the dialogue. The paper also conjectured that a framework for bilateral trade may be taken up for the dialogue because the Trump administration, which has expressed its intention to withdraw from the TPP, is interested in bilateral negotiations.

## **SECURITY**

### **Pacific Fleet commander comments on idea of Japan acquiring enemy base attack capability**

Jiji Press reported on a briefing to a group of journalists in Tokyo on Thursday by Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral Swift, quoting him as saying that the U.S. and Japanese forces would be able to make adjustments if the Japanese government chose to acquire the capability to attack enemy bases. He was also quoted as saying that he would not be surprised if some people in Japan were discussing what kind of options Japan should obtain other than the existing defense measures and that he would not also be surprised if the discussion on the matter were to mature going forward in view of the clear and present threat posed by North Korea's missile launches. Concerning how to deal with the DPRK's nuclear and missile development, Admiral Swift reportedly commented that it is important to discuss the issue from the viewpoint of the entire government, not only from a military point of view. He added, however, that there have always been military options.

Nikkei also reported Admiral Swift's remarks on the idea of Japan acquiring the capability to conduct preemptive strikes against enemy bases. The paper quoted the admiral as saying that North Korea poses a clear and present threat and he would not be surprised if Japan were to consider

alternatives to the current measures that have apparently been unsuccessful in deterring North Korea.

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