



Morning Alert - Wednesday, April 12, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning News

NHK, NTV, and Fuji TV gave top play to reports that there were three explosions on Tuesday in Germany near a bus transporting the Borussia Dortmund soccer team including Japanese player Shinji Kagawa. TBS and TV Asahi led with reports that there is speculation in South Korea that the U.S. will launch airstrikes against North Korea on April 27.

All national dailies other than Sankei gave top play to reports on Toshiba's submission of its earnings report without its auditor's approval. Sankei led with a report quoting a Daily Telegraph story saying that the U.S. has notified Australia and other allies that it is ready to shoot down a North Korean ballistic missile. According to the paper, MOFA issued on Tuesday a travel advisory urging Japanese nationals who are in South Korea or planning to visit there to exercise caution on account of the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

INTERNATIONAL

GOJ asks U.S. to give prior notice of military action against North Korea

Nikkei front-paged a report saying that it has learned from a GOJ source that the GOJ has asked the U.S. to hold talks with Japan before taking any military action against North Korea. According to the paper, the U.S. has expressed its intention to accept Japan's request. Japan is hoping that the U.S. will not immediately take military action but instead make a final decision after discussing the situation with Japan if diplomatic efforts do not produce any positive results.

President Trump says U.S. is ready to deal with North Korea without China's help

Mainichi and Yomiuri wrote that President Trump said in a Twitter post on Tuesday: “North Korea is looking for trouble. If China decides to help, that would be great. If not, we will solve the problem without them.” The papers wrote that the message was aimed at reiterating the U.S.’s readiness to deal with North Korea on its own if China refuses to help.

MSDF mulls joint drills with USS Carl Vinson

Asahi front-paged a report saying that the Ministry of Defense is making arrangements with the U.S. Navy for MSDF ships to conduct joint exercises with the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson in the East China Sea or waters west of Kyushu later this month. The paper wrote that the envisaged drills are aimed at jointly sending a strong warning to North Korea. According to a GOJ source, the ministry is discussing the details of the MSDF participation, including the schedule and number of ships, following the Kantei’s approval of the plan. When asked about the possibility of the MSDF carrying out joint drills with the Carl Vinson at a press briefing on Tuesday, MSDF Chief of Staff Murakawa stated that there is a possibility that the MSDF will conduct joint exercises with the U.S. Navy if it has the opportunity, but refrained from commenting on whether it will conduct joint exercises with the carrier strike group this time.

U.S. deploys surveillance aircraft to Kadena

Nikkei wrote that earlier this month the U.S. military deployed the Constant Phoenix WC-135 aerial collection aircraft to Kadena AB in Okinawa to step up preparations in anticipation of further North Korean nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches.

G7 foreign ministers express understanding for U.S. attack on Syria; urge Russia to use influence

All papers reported on the two-day G7 foreign ministers’ meeting held in Italy, during which the G7 nations issued a joint communique saying that the U.S.’s missile attack on the Assad forces in Syria was a carefully calibrated and limited response to prevent the proliferation and use of lethal chemical weapons. The communique also urged Russia to use its influence to bring an end to the internal conflict in Syria. Mainichi wrote that the G7 nations expressed their intention to jointly support the U.S., which is at odds with Russia over Syria. The paper added, however, that although the G7 nations agreed that Assad should be ousted, they failed to reach a consensus on sanctions on Russia. Yomiuri wrote that the G7 nations did not include their discussions on sanctions on Russia in the joint communique because Italy and Germany stressed the need for dialogue.

The G7 foreign ministers also agreed that responding to North Korea’s nuclear and missile development is a top priority. Foreign Minister Kishida told reporters after the meeting that the G7 nations shared the view that North Korea’s provocations have entered a new stage and that it is necessary to urge China to play a greater role. Yomiuri wrote that Japan achieved a certain level of success in forming an international coalition against the DPRK because the joint communique stated

that the G7 nations condemn North Korea's nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches, which pose a new level of challenge.

Syrian envoy slams U.S. missile attack

Mainichi wrote that during a news conference in Tokyo on Tuesday, Syria's Charge d'Affaires ad interim Warif Halabi criticized the U.S. military's missile attack on a Syrian airfield by saying that the move violated the UN Charter and was an invasion of a sovereign nation.

G7 communique welcomes Japan's efforts to join UN convention on transnational crime

Asahi wrote that the joint communique released by the G7 foreign ministers welcomed Japan's ongoing efforts to become a state party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). The paper wrote that although the statement did not specifically mention the bill to revise the Act on Punishment of Organized Crimes to criminalize acts of preparation to commit terrorism, the GOJ gained indirect support from the other G7 nations for its efforts to enact the bill.

PM Abe meets with U.S. congressional delegation

Nikkei wrote that Prime Minister Abe met a group of U.S. lawmakers led by Senator Pat Roberts at the Kantei on Tuesday. The premier stressed the need for cooperation with the U.S. in dealing with North Korea. Concerning the U.S.-Japan economic dialogue to be held in Tokyo on April 18, Abe stated that it is necessary for the U.S. and Japan to take the initiative in establishing free and fair rules. The paper quoted Senator Roberts as expressing his hope for progress in U.S.-Japan economic relations.

ECONOMY

U.S., Japan to establish three working groups at economic dialogue

Nikkei front-paged a report saying that the U.S. and Japan are expected to agree to create three vice-ministerial-level working groups on macroeconomic cooperation, economic partnerships, and trade frameworks at their economic dialogue set for April 18 in Tokyo. The paper wrote that the two nations will discuss specific programs for economic partnerships on infrastructure development and other issues ahead of President Trump's possible visit to Japan later this year. The paper also wrote that attention will be focused on whether Japan will be able to deflect Washington's pressure on Tokyo to hold bilateral FTA negotiations.

G7 energy ministers fail to release joint statement

Tuesday evening's Asahi wrote that the G7 meeting of energy ministers ended on Monday without adopting a joint statement. The Italian minister, who hosted the meeting, told a news conference that the U.S. withheld its opinions because it is still reviewing its energy policy.



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