



Morning Alert - Wednesday, May 17, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning News

All broadcasters gave top coverage to reports that Princess Mako, the Emperor's granddaughter, is expected to be engaged to Kei Komuro, whom she met at university. According to the reports, the wedding will be held sometime next year.

Mainichi, Yomiuri, and Sankei gave top play to Princess Mako's expected engagement, while [Nikkei](#) led with a GOJ plan to take countermeasures against cyberattacks on key infrastructure such as power plants and railroads. Asahi gave top coverage to documents prepared by the Education Ministry indicating Prime Minister Abe's "interest" in Kake Educational Institution's plan to establish a veterinary science department at its school.

## INTERNATIONAL

### UN Security Council strongly condemns North Korea

All Tuesday evening papers reported on a [press statement](#) released on Monday by the UN Security Council condemning the DPRK's missile launches on April 29 and May 14. The council warned North Korea that it will take further significant measures, including sanctions, if the nation continues to pursue nuclear and missile development. Although the press statement has no binding power, it demonstrates the council's unity on the matter because all 15 members, including China and Russia, endorsed it. The council plans to hold an emergency session on North Korea on Tuesday in response to a request from the U.S., Japan, and South Korea.

### Japan-India civilian nuclear pact clears Lower House

All papers wrote that the Lower House approved on Tuesday a bill granting consent for a civilian nuclear cooperation pact between Japan and India despite opposition from the Democratic Party and four other opposition parties. The bill is likely to be enacted during the current Diet session after deliberations at the Upper House. Asahi wrote that although the pact is expected to pave the way for Japan to export nuclear power equipment and technology to India, Japan's nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation policy will be at a crossroads because India is not a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

### **Top Chinese diplomat to visit Japan**

Nikkei and several other papers wrote that Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi, who has the rank of vice premier, indicated he will visit Japan in late May. Yang is expected to lay the groundwork for a potential summit between President Xi and Prime Minister Abe on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Germany in July.

## **SECURITY**

### **Abe, PACOM commander confirm cooperation against North Korea**

All papers reported on a meeting between Prime Minister Abe and visiting PACOM Commander Harris at the Kantei on Tuesday, saying that the two officials agreed to strengthen U.S.-Japan cooperation in responding to North Korea, which launched another ballistic missile on Sunday. Abe reportedly told the commander that the missile launch was absolutely unacceptable because it posed a grave threat to both the U.S. and Japan, and that it is necessary for them to cooperate in applying pressure on Pyongyang. Admiral Harris reportedly echoed Abe's view by saying that North Korea's provocations are absolutely unacceptable. Abe added that the SDF's joint drills with the USS Carl Vinson Strike Group in April demonstrated the two nations' determination to ensure peace and stability in the region. The premier and the admiral also discussed the South and East China Seas, where China has been increasing its activities. Admiral Harris also held meetings with Foreign Minister Kishida and Defense Minister Inada.

### **North Korea may be behind global cyberattack**

Tuesday evening's Asahi and several Wednesday morning papers wrote that the Internet security firm Kaspersky said on Monday that a hacking group linked to North Korea might be behind the recent cyberattack around the globe. Kaspersky said that a portion of the virus used for the WannaCry ransomware is similar to viruses used in the past by the Lazarus Group, which is suspected of being linked to North Korea. According to the Reuters, Symantec also suspects North Korea's involvement. However, both security firms said that it is too early to determine whether North Korea was actually involved in the attack.

## **ECONOMY**

## **Trade Minister Seko to hold talks with USTR Lighthizer**

Tuesday evening's Nikkei wrote that Trade Minister Seko told a regular press briefing on Tuesday that he plans to hold bilateral talks with USTR Lighthizer on the sidelines of the APEC trade ministers' meeting to be held in Vietnam from May 20. Wednesday morning's Mainichi and Sankei ran similar reports, with Sankei speculating that the U.S. official may call for Japan to further open its markets to rectify its trade imbalance with the U.S. during his upcoming meeting with Seko.

## **Aso negative about Japan's possible participation in AIIB**

Yomiuri wrote that in response to LDP Secretary General Nikai's positive stance on the possibility of Japan joining the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) at an early date, Finance Minister Aso expressed a negative view during a regular press briefing on Tuesday by saying that there has been no change in Japan's position on the matter. The paper speculated that Prime Minister Abe will decide whether to participate in the AIIB by closely observing whether the bank establishes fair governance and how the U.S. responds to it.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Private sector tests to be used to gauge English proficiency of college applicants**

All papers wrote that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) announced its draft guidelines for a new standardized exam for university applicants to replace the current test administered by the National Center for University Entrance Examinations from the 2020 academic year. The guidelines include a plan to use private sector tests, such as Eiken and TOEIC, to gauge the applicants' English reading, listening, speaking, and writing abilities. The ministry plans to decide by June whether to ask universities to adopt the proposed plan or allow them to use tests prepared by the center until the 2023 academic year.

