



Morning Alert - Monday, June 5, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning News

NHK and TV Asahi gave top play to reports on the terrorist incident in London on Saturday. The network said 12 people are in custody for their involvement in the attack. NTV led with a report that Ariana Grande held a benefit concert for the Manchester bombing victims in Manchester on Sunday. TBS and Fuji TV gave top play to reports on the World Table Tennis Championship in Dusseldorf, in which the Japanese mixed doubles team won the gold medal for the first time in 48 years.

Top stories in national dailies included the terror attack in London (Asahi, Yomiuri, Sankei); the discovery in Russia of a Japanese survivor of a Siberian labor camp (Mainichi); and a plan by the Japan Fair Trade Commission to draw up new antitrust guidelines on collecting big data (Nikkei).

INTERNATIONAL

U.S., Japan confirm cooperation over North Korea with ROK, Australia

All Sunday papers wrote that Secretary of Defense Mattis, Defense Minister Inada, and ROK Defense Minister Han held a meeting on Saturday in Singapore and issued a joint statement saying that North Korea's nuclear and missile programs pose an urgent threat to the region and the rest of the world. The three officials reconfirmed the importance of defense cooperation and information sharing between their nations. The defense chiefs also agreed to apply further pressure on Pyongyang to urge it to abide by UNSC resolutions.

The papers also wrote that Minister Inada held separate talks with Secretary Mattis and Minister Han ahead of the trilateral meeting. According to Mainichi, the U.S. and Japanese defense chiefs

confirmed that Article 5 of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty covers the Senkaku Islands and agreed to hold a 2+2 meeting at an early date. Inada and Han agreed that Japan and the ROK will steadily implement their general security of military information agreement.

Sankei and Yomiuri wrote that Secretary Mattis and Minister Inada also held a trilateral meeting with their Australian counterpart Payne and issued a joint statement condemning North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The three officials also expressed strong opposition to attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the South and East China Seas.

Defense Secretary Mattis regards DPRK as urgent threat, sends warning to China

All Saturday evening papers reported on an address delivered by Secretary of Defense Mattis at the Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore on Saturday. The papers wrote that the Secretary stated that North Korea is the most urgent and dangerous threat to peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region and that the United States will continue to increase diplomatic and economic pressure on Pyongyang until it finally and permanently abandons its nuclear and missile programs. In addition, the Secretary expressed the hope that China will further exercise its influence over Pyongyang.

Asahi wrote that with China's increasing activities in the South and East China Seas in mind, the Secretary stated that the United States "cannot accept Chinese actions that impinge on the interests of the international community and undermine the rules-based order." Yomiuri quoted Mattis as saying that Washington believes that Beijing will come to recognize North Korea as a strategic liability instead of an asset. Asahi wrote that the Secretary clearly stated the U.S. policy of keeping the North Korea issue separate from China's maritime advancement. However, Lieutenant General He Lei, vice president of China's Academy of Military Science and the head of China's delegation at the dialogue, said the Chinese government firmly opposes Secretary Mattis' remarks because military actions in the waters and airspace around Chinese islands are not within the scope of freedom of navigation. Mainichi wrote that the differences between Washington and Beijing were made clear at the Shangri-La Dialogue, as China expressed strong opposition to Secretary Mattis' remark that the U.S. remains committed to working with Taiwan. Nikkei speculated that by expressing a firm position on China, Secretary Mattis tried to dispel concerns that a "power vacuum" will be created in the Asia-Pacific region due to the Trump administration's "inward-looking" posture.

ASEAN countries reactions to Mattis' criticism of China mixed

Monday's Asahi wrote that although most ASEAN countries welcomed Defense Secretary Mattis' strong criticism of China for its activities in the South China Sea, some member nations expressed concern that his remarks could heighten tensions between the U.S. and China. Yomiuri wrote that the Secretary's statement gave Vietnam and other nations a sense of relief. Nikkei said that although the ASEAN countries welcomed the speech in which Secretary Mattis underscored the U.S.'s strong commitment to the region, his remarks did not completely dispel Asian nations' concern about the Trump administration.

Inada welcomes U.S. policy toward DPRK, indirectly criticizes China

All Saturday evening papers reported on a speech delivered by Defense Minister Inada at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore on Saturday, during which she expressed Japan's strong support for the Trump administration's expression through words and actions of its policy of putting all options on the table in dealing with the DPRK. She stressed the need to ratchet up the pressure on Pyongyang, saying that the DPRK must abandon its nuclear and missile programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. Without mentioning China by name, Inada expressed concern over China's increasing maritime activities in the East and South China Seas by saying that attempts to unilaterally change the status quo have continued.

Monday's Mainichi, Yomiuri, and Nikkei wrote that Inada held separate bilateral meetings on Sunday with her Malaysian and New Zealand counterparts. The Japanese and Malaysian defense chiefs agreed to strengthen cooperation in maritime security with China's increasing activities in mind, while Inada and the New Zealand defense minister discussed the possibility of concluding an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement.

UNSC adopts new sanctions resolution against North Korea

All Saturday evening papers front-paged reports on the UN Security Council's unanimous adoption on Friday of a fresh sanctions resolution against North Korea that will add 14 North Korean individuals and four entities to its list of those subject to a travel ban and asset freeze. This is the seventh resolution adopted by the UNSC since North Korea conducted its first nuclear test in October 2006 and the first since the launch of the Trump administration. Noting that both China and Russia agreed with the resolution, the papers wrote that the UNSC has demonstrated its unity against the DPRK. However, Sunday's Asahi wrote that although China expressed understanding for the U.S.'s desire to ratchet up the pressure on North Korea, differences remain between Washington and Beijing over how to deal with the DPRK because China is still stressing the need for dialogue with Pyongyang. Nikkei pointed out that the new resolution did not include stronger measures, such as an import ban on North Korean coal.

In a related development, Yomiuri wrote that during their teleconference on Saturday, Secretary of State Tillerson and Foreign Minister Kishida welcomed the new UNSC resolution and agreed that the U.S. and Japan will step up their bilateral and trilateral cooperation with South Korea and expand coordination with China and Russia. The paper wrote that the two officials also discussed the U.S. announcement of its decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, quoting FM Kishida as telling Secretary Tillerson that although the decision is regrettable, Japan will look for ways to cooperate with the U.S. in combating climate change.

Japan to step up inspections of DPRK-bound cargo

Monday's Asahi, Yomiuri, Sankei, and Nikkei wrote that Foreign Minister Kishida said on Sunday that the GOJ will tighten its cargo inspections to prevent the transfer of items and technology to

North Korea for use in its nuclear and missile development. In a speech in Kanazawa, Kishida said that he has ordered the work to enhance inspections to be completed by the end of this month or later. In line with UNSC sanctions resolutions on North Korea, the GOJ currently instructs the Japan Coast Guard to create a list of items related to nuclear and missile development and inspect ships which may be carrying such items. However, under the enhanced regulations, the coast guard will inspect suspicious items even if they are not included in the list.

U.S. official stresses need to isolate North Korea through sanctions

Saturday morning's Mainichi reported on its written interview with Acting Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation Eliot Kang, who attended a meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) held in Tokyo on June 1-2. The paper quoted Acting A/S Kang as saying that North Korea should not be allowed to become a nuclear power and that it is necessary to isolate the DPRK both economically and diplomatically through tightened sanctions in order to urge it to abandon its nuclear and missile programs.

In a related report, the paper wrote that the GICNT adopted a chairman's statement calling for legislative efforts to control nuclear material.

Kishida to visit U.S. to attend UN conference on sustainable development, eyes 2+2 meeting

Monday's Yomiuri wrote that Foreign Minister Kishida said during a speech in Kanazawa on Sunday that he is planning to attend a ministerial meeting of the UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal to be held in New York on July 17-19. The paper wrote that the GOJ is making arrangements with the U.S. to hold a 2+2 meeting of foreign and defense ministers in Washington around Kishida's planned visit to New York.

Disappointment spreads over U.S. decision to withdraw from Paris Agreement

All Saturday morning papers reported extensively on Japanese and international reactions to President Trump's announcement of the withdrawal of the U.S. from the Paris Agreement on climate change. Yomiuri wrote that the Trump administration has clearly become isolated as Japan, China, and European nations expressed their firm commitment to implementing the accord regardless of the U.S. decision. The paper wrote that Japan is hoping to prevent the unity of the G7 from collapsing, as the European leaders are becoming increasingly critical of the Trump administration. The paper also wrote that Japan plans to persuade the U.S. to remain in the accord at a G7 environmental ministerial to be held in Italy on June 11-12.

The papers wrote that China and the EU will likely try to take the initiative in combating climate change in the absence of the U.S. Mainichi wrote that international efforts to prevent climate change will inevitably be delayed. Nikkei wrote that the U.S.'s technological innovation in environmental protection may be delayed as a result of its withdrawal from the Paris accord and that the global

community may lose confidence in the U.S. Sankei wrote that since it will not be possible for the U.S. to actually withdraw from the agreement until after November 2020, the issue will probably be discussed in the campaign for the 2020 presidential election.

The papers also reported on reactions from Japanese business leaders, quoting Keidanren Chairman Sakakibara and Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chairman Mimura as saying that the U.S. decision to pull out of the accord was very disappointing because the agreement will likely be watered down without U.S. participation.

ECONOMY

U.S. trade deficit with Japan shrinks by 28% in April

All Saturday morning papers wrote that according to statistics released on Friday by the Department of Commerce, the United States' goods trade deficit with Japan decreased by 28% in April from the previous month to \$5.21 billion, partly due to a drop in imports of automobiles and auto parts. Despite the decrease, the U.S. deficit with Japan was the fourth largest following China, Mexico, and Germany.

SOCIETY

UN special rapporteur defends report on freedom of expression in Japan

Saturday morning's Sankei and Tokyo Shimbun front-paged reports on a news conference in Tokyo on Friday by David Kaye, UN special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Kaye stated that his report on freedom of expression in Japan, which voiced concern about the Japanese government's apparent pressure on the media, is based on factual investigation, not hearsay. The GOJ has criticized the report by Kaye as inaccurate and insufficient. Yomiuri and Mainichi ran similar inside-page stories.

Local governments plan to conduct evacuation drills in preparation for DPRK missile

Monday's Yomiuri wrote that an increasing number of local governments throughout Japan have conducted or plan to conduct evacuation drills involving their residents based on the scenario of a North Korea ballistic heading toward Japan. Akita Prefecture conducted a joint drill with the GOJ in March, and Yamaguchi, Yamagata, and Niigata Prefectures plan to carry out similar joint drills this month. Several municipalities also plan to conduct evacuation drills this month.

