



Morning Alert - Thursday, June 8, 2017

The following information reflects the reporting of the cited news media and does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Japan Media Highlights is intended for USG use only and should not be forwarded. Visit the website [here](#). For more information, contact TokyoMATT@state.gov.

BREAKING NEWS

DPRK apparently fires surface-to-ship missiles

NHK reported at 7:40 a.m. on a South Korean media report saying that North Korea launched a projectile this morning and that the South Korean military is gathering information. The network said the GOJ is also collecting information, presuming that the North has launched another missile. Meanwhile, Kyodo News reported that according to Yonhap News, North Korea fired multiple surface-to-ship missiles.

HEADLINES

Morning News

Most networks gave top play to follow-up reports on the murder of a mother and her two children in Fukuoka. NTV led with a report that the Japanese national table tennis team returned to Japan from Germany on Wednesday.

Major front-page times in national papers include the deadly ISIL attacks on the parliament building and Ayatollah Khomeini's tomb in Iran and a nuclear accident in Ibaraki on Tuesday in which five workers at a nuclear research facility were exposed to radioactive material when a bag containing plutonium burst.

INTERNATIONAL

Senate Foreign Relations Committee approves nomination of William Hagerty

NHK reported this morning that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved on Wednesday the plan to appoint William Hagerty as the new U.S. Ambassador to Japan. The network said that after obtaining the approval of the full Senate, Hagerty is expected to arrive in Japan as early as this summer. The network quoted Chairman Corker as saying in a statement: "There is no one better suited to fill this important role than Bill Hagerty." The network said Hagerty is well-versed in trade policy, noting that during a congressional hearing held last month, he said he will seek to open up the Japanese market in order to reduce the U.S. trade deficit. Hagerty also stressed in the hearing that he will work closely with Japan to increase pressure on North Korea to abandon its nuclear and missile programs.

ROK foreign minister nominee expresses doubt about comfort women pact

Most papers reported from Seoul on a parliamentary hearing for South Korean Foreign Minister-nominee Kang Kyung-wha, who criticized the comfort women agreement with Japan by saying: "The core issues are victim-centered legal responsibility and compensation. Since these elements were ambiguous, I suspect the pact may have been insufficient." The former UN Secretary General advisor also said the document is "not legally binding," and called for dialogue with Tokyo to discuss the matter. However, she also stated: "It's a fact that the agreement exists. The practice of the international community is to honor an agreement."

Nikai to visit South Korea

Mainichi wrote that LDP Secretary General Nikai is planning to visit Seoul on Saturday and is likely to meet with President Moon on Monday to deliver a letter from Prime Minister Abe, who is hoping to hold a bilateral summit with him at an early date. Nikai is also expected to hold talks with Prime Minister Lee.

Russian envoy comments on joint economic activities on disputed islands

Mainichi ran an interview with Russian Ambassador to Japan Afanasiev, who commented on the proposed "joint economic activities" on the Northern Territories by saying: "It will be possible to reach a solution if both sides take a flexible approach." Pointing out that the two governments must resolve such issues as legal jurisdiction before launching joint economic activities, the daily took the envoy's remarks to mean that the two sides will be able to forge a deal through continued dialogue. The ambassador said First Deputy Prime Minister Shuvalov is considering visiting Japan for talks with Foreign Minister Kishida and Economic and Trade Minister Seko. While criticizing North Korea's continued provocations, Afanasiev called for dialogue between the U.S. and the DPRK to resolve the standoff.

Diet endorses nuclear cooperation pact with India

All papers reported on the parliamentary approval of the Japan-India civil nuclear cooperation pact on Wednesday, noting that it will take effect in July at the earliest after domestic procedures have been completed in both nations. The dailies said the opposition bloc remained highly critical of the

accord since India is not an NPT signatory. Mainichi and Nikkei said although the pact was pursued by the Abe administration, which considers the export of nuclear power plants to be a key element of Abenomics, Japanese nuclear plant manufacturers are not necessarily optimistic about the potential for businesses opportunities in India. They said Westinghouse's plan to build six atomic power plants in India is growing elusive due to the company's bankruptcy and its parent firm Toshiba's financial difficulties.

ECONOMY

Western Digital's decision will determine buyer of Toshiba Memory

Yomiuri wrote that Western Digital appears to hold the key to Toshiba's planned deconsolidation of its lucrative semiconductor division. The paper noted that if the U.S. manufacturer continues to insist on maintaining at least a majority stake in Toshiba Memory, the cash-strapped electronics giant may be prompted to sell the subsidiary to the Broadcom-Silver Lake team. If Western Digital chooses to make a compromise and agrees to a substantially lower stake and joins hands with the consortium led by U.S. equity fund KKR and the Innovative Network Corporation of Japan, Toshiba Memory may be sold to this alliance since it is also backed by the Japanese government.

U.S. panel to examine possible sale of Westinghouse

Mainichi reported from Washington that the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) is set to scrutinize on national security grounds the possible sale of Westinghouse by Toshiba if the buyer is a foreign enterprise. The daily speculated that the U.S. government panel is apprehensive about the possibility of the U.S. nuclear plant manufacturer being acquired by the Chinese.

TPP members to review some elements of agreed-upon items

Sankei wrote that the 11 TPP members are considering conducting a review of some of the agreed-upon items, including the protection period for pharmaceutical development data and the rule of origin for textiles and apparel, both of which were added at the time in response to strong pressure from the United States. Some of the members are hoping to modify those agreements following the U.S. departure. While predicting that discussions for the proposed review may be conducted during an upcoming chief negotiators' meeting to be held in Hakone in mid-July, the daily expressed concern that calls for a major review of other aspects of the free trade pact may emerge if modifications are made to the proposed items.

POLITICS

Diet session to be extended

Mainichi wrote that the Abe administration and the ruling coalition have informally decided to extend the present Diet session by about 10 days through late June to ensure the enactment of the anti-conspiracy bill, as the opposition block is set to up the ante to derail the controversial legislation by submitting a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Abe and a censure motion against Justice Minister Kaneda. The Kantei is cautious about extending the Diet term through July or beyond out of fear that the opposition will step up its criticism of the administration over the Kake Educational Institution scandal. Sankei ran a similar story, adding that the session may be extended by about two weeks.

SECURITY

Okinawa leader discloses plan to file suit to thwart Futenma relocation

All papers took up yesterday's press conference in Naha by Okinawa Governor Onaga, in which said he plans to sue the central government to block the ongoing FRF construction work off Camp Schwab pending the prefectural assembly's endorsement of a related motion to be submitted by the prefectural government later this month. The legislature is likely to approve the motion on July 14. The governor said: "I cannot accept the central government's efforts to establish a fait accompli by proceeding with reclamation work no matter what." The governor took issue with Tokyo's failure to obtain a permit for destroying rock reefs, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told the press yesterday: "There is no problem. We are handling the matter appropriately." GOJ officials are confident that the court will dismiss the case.

SCIENCE

Japan unveils plan for research whaling

Several papers reported that the Fisheries Agency has submitted to the IWC a plan for research whaling in the northwestern Pacific for the period from FY2017 through FY2028 with the goal of producing a catch estimate for future commercial whaling. This year's plan will begin this month with the goal of a catch of 304 whales per annum, 87 more than under the last plan.