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# JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Monday, August 7, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

All broadcasters gave top play to reports on powerful Typhoon Noru, which is expected to make landfall in Shikoku soon, saying that evacuation orders or advisories have been issued in six prefectures in Kyushu and Shikoku.

Top stories in national dailies included the 72nd anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima (Asahi); a GOJ plan to strengthen joint operations by the three branches of the SDF (Mainichi); the UNSC's adoption of a fresh sanctions resolution on North Korea (Yomiuri); the development by 16 Japanese firms of a new method to mass-produce platelets using iPS stem cells (Nikkei); and the Metropolitan Police Department's investigation into the Yamanashi mayor's alleged involvement in unfair hiring practices (Sankei).

## SECURITY

### Futenma-based Osprey crashes in waters off Australia

Sunday's Asahi (front page), Mainichi (front page), Nikkei (page 5), Yomiuri (page 2), and Sankei (page 7) as well as NHK, TBS, and Fuji TV reported on an accident involving a Futenma-based MV-22 Osprey in waters off Australia. Nikkei and Sankei carried a Kyodo report saying that the U.S. Marines in Okinawa announced on Saturday that three U.S. Marines were still missing on Saturday after a MV-22 Osprey aircraft crashed off the eastern coast of Australia and that search and rescue operations were underway. Nikkei wrote that although the details of the incident are still unknown, several local media outlets in Australia reported that the Osprey "crashed" and that the accident could be fatal. The paper wrote that the Osprey that went down is deployed at MCAS Futenma, adding that MV-22 Ospreys deployed at the base are scheduled to conduct night flight training with the GSDF in Hokkaido in August. The daily added that 23 of the 26 crewmembers have been

rescued and that the accident occurred during routine operations. Although an investigation is currently underway, Nikkei wrote that the local media are speculating that it occurred while the Osprey was trying to land on a U.S. carrier.

#### Accident triggers concern in Okinawa, Saga, Hokkaido

Mainichi wrote on page 28 that the latest accident has caused concern to grow about Ospreys not only in Okinawa but also Saga because the SDF is planning to deploy Ospreys at Saga Airport. Monday's Asahi ran a similar inside-page report. Noting that Saga Governor Yamaguchi just announced in July his intention to accept the Osprey deployment, the paper said fishermen who operate in the Ariake Sea are growing increasingly concerned, quoting one as saying: "When accidents occur one after another like this, I think there is a problem with the aircraft, not the pilot." He also said: "If the SDF uses the aircraft, the chances that it will crash in many places in Japan will increase. If the aircraft is deployed in Saga and crashes in the Ariake Sea, it could have a serious impact on the cultivation of *nori* (seaweed)."

Meanwhile, Jiji reported that Okinawa Vice Governor Tomikawa told the news agency on Saturday evening: "It is said that Ospreys have a high risk of crashing, so I wasn't surprised. It is extremely regrettable." Jiji wrote that Tomikawa received a call from the Okinawa Area Coordinator, Lt. Gen. Nicholson, on the same day and was briefed on the accident and told it was a crash. Jiji said the Okinawa Prefectural Government is planning to officially lodge a protest and call for reductions in its base-hosting burden once the details of the accident have been disclosed.

#### **Defense Minister Onodera asks U.S. to suspend Osprey flights in Japan**

All Monday papers reported that following the Osprey accident in waters off Australia, Defense Minister Onodera told reporters on Sunday that he has requested that the U.S. suspend Osprey flights in Japan. According to Nikkei, Onodera also asked the U.S. to provide Japan with information about the accident and take steps to prevent a recurrence. On a U.S.-Japan joint exercise planned for Aug. 10-28 in Hokkaido, in which six Ospreys are scheduled to participate, Onodera said: "We will consult with the U.S. side about the participation of the aircraft in the training."

On his plan to visit Okinawa on Aug. 14 or later, Onodera stated that he is hoping to go there as soon as possible irrespective of the accident. Sankei wrote that the defense minister plans to brief Governor Onaga about the accident when he visits Okinawa.

#### **Abe has "no plan" to consider acquiring enemy base attack capability**

All Monday papers wrote that Prime Minister Abe told reporters in Hiroshima on Sunday that he has no plan at this point to specifically consider having Japan acquire the ability to strike enemy bases. The premier also stated that it will be necessary for Japan to review its defense program guidelines in view of the increasing need to defend Japan's southwestern islands, to defend against ballistic missiles, and to defend against attacks in space and cyberspace.

## **Defense Ministry to consider acquiring capability to attack enemy bases**

Saturday morning's Nikkei gave top play to a report that the Ministry of Defense will soon begin discussions on the possibility of Japan acquiring the capability to attack enemy bases, saying that it will consider the option as a deterrent against North Korea's nuclear and missile programs in time for the scheduled review of the National Defense Program Guidelines at the end of next year. The paper added that the plan is likely to draw opposition not only from neighboring nations but also within Japan. According to the daily, if the ministry officially looks into the possibility, debate may emerge at home and abroad on whether the capability exceeds the scope of the exclusively defense-oriented policy. Nikkei wrote that some members of the government and the ruling parties are calling for the deployment of U.S. Tomahawk missiles under a Foreign Military Sales (FMS) agreement. The paper also wrote in a separate article that there are many challenges to overcome, including securing sufficient funds and coordination with the U.S.

## **Relocation of U.S. carrier-borne aircraft from Atsugi to Iwakuni to begin**

Saturday morning's Yomiuri reported that the Chugoku-Shikoku Defense Bureau informed Yamaguchi Prefecture and Iwakuni City on Friday that the relocation of U.S. carrier-borne aircraft units from Atsugi AB to MCAS Iwakuni will begin around Aug. 6. According to the bureau, five E-2D early warning aircraft will be relocated to Iwakuni first, followed by the phased transfer of 61 aircraft in total. The paper said 48 FA-18 airplanes will be transferred to Iwakuni this November and next May, adding that after the relocation, 120 U.S. aircraft will be stationed at MCAS Iwakuni, the largest number in the Far East.

### **POLITICS**

## **Ishiba ranks highest as possible successor to Prime Minister Abe**

Saturday morning's Nikkei wrote that the results of the latest opinion poll found that 22% of respondents selected Shigeru Ishiba as a possible successor to Prime Minister Abe, exceeding Abe himself. According to the paper, 17% chose Abe, 11% picked Shinjiro Koizumi, 9% selected Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, and 9% chose former Foreign Minister Kishida. The paper said that among LDP supporters, Abe took first place at 32%, followed by Ishiba at 21% and Kishida at 13%. Nearly 40% of Democratic Party supporters also chose Ishiba. Concerning the possibility of Abe being reelected for a third term, 54% expressed opposition, while 36% expressed support. Even among LDP supporters, 30% expressed opposition.

## **Abe hints at postponing submission of constitutional revision proposal to fall**

Saturday morning's Sankei gave top play to a report that while Prime Minister Abe had previously said that he wanted his party to submit proposals on constitutional reform so they could be discussed during an extraordinary session in the fall and that he hoped the resulting amendment would come into force in 2020, the premier hinted on an NTV program on Friday that the plan will be postponed and the proposals will be submitted in the fall. The premier reportedly said: "I have

explained my idea. It is now up to the party. I hope that discussions will deepen.” The premier also stressed that it is not necessary to adhere to a schedule in conducting debate on the Constitution.

### **Kono says his views differ from his father’s**

Saturday morning’s Asahi reported that Taro Kono has followed in the footsteps of his father, Yohei Kono, and assumed the post of foreign minister. The paper said that while China and South Korea have welcomed his appointment as foreign minister, he will be in charge of foreign affairs for the cabinet of Prime Minister Abe, whose political views are different from his father’s. The paper said FM Kono’s father is a known dovish politician who issued the Kono Statement in 1993 in which he expressed his “sincere apologies and remorse” over the comfort women issue, adding that while FM Kono also attaches importance to Japan’s ties with China and South Korea and is against PM Abe visiting Yasukuni Shrine, he is supportive of constitutional revision to specify the existence of the SDF, unlike his father. He has also advocated allowing Japan to exercise its right to collective self-defense. According to the paper, Kono said to MOFA officials on Friday: “Yohei Kono and Taro Kono are completely different in terms of both human nature and views. Please set aside your past experiences [working under Yohei Kono] and work with Taro Kono.”

### **Internal Affairs Minister Noda not planning to visit Yasukuni this year**

Saturday morning’s Asahi reported that Internal Affairs Minister Noda told reporters on Friday that she will refrain from visiting Yasukuni Shrine on the anniversary of the end of WWII on Aug. 15 as she has in the past even while serving as a cabinet minister. She reportedly said: “It is an important time for the LDP, so I would like to be careful not to act on my own.”

### **Kono hints at running for LDP presidency**

Saturday morning’s Yomiuri reported on page 4 that Foreign Minister Kono said at a press conference on Friday that he will “take one step at a time” in thinking about the LDP presidential election slated for next September, hinting that he may run in the election. Noting that the appointment of Kono as foreign minister was a major highlight of the cabinet reshuffle, the paper wrote that if Kono succeeds in becoming a strong presence in foreign affairs, he may be able to participate in the “post-Abe” race.

### **Hosono to leave Democratic Party**

Saturday morning’s Asahi, Yomiuri, Mainichi, and Sankei reported that Democratic Party member Goshi Hosono told reporters on Friday that he intends to leave the party. He reportedly said: “I would like to leave the party with the resolve to establish a new leading party.” He reportedly explained that he had been feeling uncomfortable about the party’s policies on security and constitutional revision. Asahi wrote that Hosono will tender his resignation by Aug. 21 when the party leadership election will be announced, adding that although there are no apparent moves among other DP members to leave the party with Hosono, his departure could trigger a domino effect as there are no prospects in sight for the party to regain momentum.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **UNSC adopts fresh sanctions resolution on North Korea**

All Monday papers front-paged reports on the unanimous adoption by the UN Security Council on Saturday of a new sanctions resolution on North Korea in response to its two ICBM launches. The U.S.-drafted resolution completely bans North Korea from exporting coal, iron, lead, and seafood so as to restrict funding sources for the Kim Jong Un regime's nuclear and missile programs. Prime Minister Abe issued a statement welcoming the adoption of the resolution and urging Pyongyang to refrain from conducting nuclear and missile tests and to take concrete actions toward denuclearization.

The papers wrote that whether the new sanctions will become effective depends on whether China will implement them strictly. Mainichi speculated that the resolution was adopted as a result of the growing view that North Korea's ICBMs pose a threat beyond Northeast Asia. The paper added that Pyongyang may conduct further provocations in response to the U.S.-ROK Ulchi-Freedom Guardian joint military exercise starting on Aug. 19.

### **Hiroshima holds 72nd peace memorial ceremony**

All Monday papers front-paged reports on the annual memorial ceremony held in Hiroshima on Sunday to mark the 72nd anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing. In his "peace declaration," Hiroshima Mayor Matsui called on the Japanese government to support the conclusion of a treaty banning nuclear weapons by being a bridge between nuclear and non-nuclear powers. Prime Minister Abe stated in his speech at the ceremony that he will strive to steadily move forward with efforts to seek a world without nuclear weapons, but did not refer to the nuclear ban treaty. The ceremony was attended by representatives of 80 nations, including such nuclear states as the U.S., Britain, France, and Russia. China, however, was absent.

### **ASEAN foreign ministers issue statement condemning North Korea**

Saturday morning's Nikkei reported on page 5 that the foreign ministers of ASEAN nations met in Manila and issued a statement condemning North Korea's ICBM launch in an effort to keep North Korea in check ahead of Monday's ASEAN Regional Forum, in which North Korea will participate. The statement condemned North Korea's ICBM launch and two nuclear tests conducted last year by saying they pose a serious threat to the peace and stability of the world and the region.

### **China replaces special representative to Six-Party Talks**

Saturday's Nikkei, Yomiuri, and Mainichi reported that several diplomatic sources disclosed that Wu Dawei will step down as China's special representative for Korean Peninsula affairs after serving as Beijing's senior representative to the Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear issue. The papers wrote that Assistant Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou has been appointed to the post.

### **Foreign Minister Kono to make diplomatic debut in Philippines**

Saturday morning's Yomiuri reported on page 4 that Foreign Minister Kono told reporters on Friday that he will visit the Philippines from Aug. 6 to 8 to attend the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting. The paper said Kono is making arrangements to hold a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov during his stay in the Philippines. He will also reportedly attend a trilateral foreign ministerial meeting with the U.S. and Australia, and meet with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi and South Korean counterpart Kang Kyung-wha.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Toyota, Mazda announce capital alliance deal**

All Saturday morning papers reported heavily on the announcement on Friday by Toyota Motor and Mazda Motor that they have signed an agreement on a business and capital alliance. According to Asahi, Toyota will take on a 5.05% stake in Mazda worth 50 billion yen and Mazda will buy Toyota shares of equal value, which translates to a 0.25% stake in Toyota. Asahi wrote that one of the reasons for the alliance is to respond to the U.S. market, adding that they are planning to set up a joint-venture plant in the U.S. with an annual capacity of 300,000 cars, aiming to create 4,000 jobs and start operations in 2021.

Sankei said the plan to build a new auto plant will be good news for the next U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue to be held as early as October, adding that it will represent a major achievement for the President and could soften the stance of the U.S., which is calling for the elimination of non-tariff barriers on auto trade to reduce the trade deficit with Japan. According to the paper, President Trump welcomed the announcement and tweeted on Friday: "A great investment in American manufacturing!"

### **U.S. officially announces intention to leave Paris accord**

Saturday evening's Nikkei reported from Washington that the USG officially notified the United Nations of its intention to pull out of the Paris climate agreement on Friday. The paper said the move is in line with President Trump's announcement in June that the U.S. would withdraw from the Paris accord, adding, however, that a statement issued by the State Department said that it is "open to reengaging" in the pact if the terms could be more favorable toward U.S. industry, workers, and taxpayers.

## **OPINION POLLS**

### **Support for Abe cabinet increases after cabinet reshuffle**

Saturday morning's Nikkei carried on its front page the results of its joint opinion poll with TV Tokyo held on Aug. 3 and 4, which found that public support for the Abe cabinet rose 3 points from the last survey conducted in late July to 42%. Nonsupport dropped 3 points to 49%. According to the paper, 42% of respondents welcomed the new cabinet lineup, while 36% did not. The daily wrote that the cabinet approval rating, which had been dropping due to such issues as the Kake Gakuen scandal,

has recovered following the cabinet reshuffle. Public approval also rose 6 points to 42% in the Yomiuri survey and 9 points to 35% in the Mainichi poll. Sankei carried the results of a Kyodo poll, also showing that the public support rate has increased to 44.4%, up 8.6 points from last month's survey.

Mainichi wrote that although the Abe government is relieved that public support for the cabinet has increased, the GOJ and ruling parties are not optimistic that the approval rating will continue to rise. The paper quoted a LDP official as saying: "We just managed to stop a landslide." According to the daily, the general feeling within the ruling parties is that Prime Minister Abe's decision not to appoint his "friends" to his cabinet proved to be effective. Internal Affairs Minister Noda also reportedly said: "I think the prime minister's sincerity struck a chord." The paper also projected that if any problems related to members of the cabinet surface, the government will suffer a major blow. It also wrote, however, that since the support rate has bottomed out, there are calls for an early dissolution of the Lower House for a snap election, with one veteran lawmaker saying that if public support continues to improve, the prime minister may be able to dissolve the Lower House in time for the by-elections to be held in Aomori and Ehime prefectures on Oct. 22.

Monday's Asahi also reported on the results of its weekend poll, which showed that 35%, up 2 points from the previous survey in July, supported the Abe cabinet. Nonsupport was 45%, down 2 points. Based on these results, the paper concluded that the cabinet reshuffle has had little impact on public support for the Abe administration.

