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# JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Monday, August 28, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

Top items on Monday morning's TV news programs included the arrest on Sunday of a Tokyo doctor and five others in connection with the illegal sale of umbilical cords, the arrest of a man who allegedly attacked two policemen with a knife in Kanazawa last night, and an update on a fatal traffic accident in Tokushima over the weekend.

Top stories in national dailies included the arrest of the six individuals in connection with the sale of umbilical cords (Asahi, Yomiuri); an informal decision to appoint Chen Min'er, a Communist Party secretary of Chongqing, as a successor to President Xi Jinping (Mainichi); and a plan by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications to encourage private firms to use personal data in their business (Nikkei).

All networks and newspapers reported on the victory of an LDP-backed candidate in the Ibaraki gubernatorial election on Sunday. Kazuhiko Oigawa, a former trade ministry official, defeated the six-term incumbent Masaru Hashimoto. The LDP made a great effort to back Oigawa, seeing the election as a prelude to three Lower House by-elections scheduled for October.

## INTERNATIONAL

### North Korea fires 3 short-range missiles

All Saturday evening and Sunday papers reported on North Korea's launch of three short-range missiles early Saturday morning. According to PACOM, the missiles were fired between 6:49 a.m. and 7:19 a.m. toward the Sea of Japan from the eastern province of Gangwon. Two of them flew about 250 km on a northeastern trajectory and the third one appeared to have blown up almost immediately after the launch. This was North Korea's first missile launch in 29 days. The papers

speculated that the DPRK fired the missiles in response to the ongoing U.S.-ROK joint exercise Ulchi Freedom Guardian and to mark the anniversary of the start of military-first policy on Aug. 25.

However, Mainichi and Nikkei reported on Monday morning that South Korea's Yonhap News Agency said on Sunday that the ROK government issued a comment on Saturday saying that the projectiles may have been artillery rockets fired from a 300-mm-caliber multiple-rocket launcher. But on Sunday an ROK government source was quoted as saying that the projectiles probably were a new type of missile, given that they apparently flew at an altitude of 50 km, which is lower than the altitude of a short-range ballistic missile.

#### North Korea behaved with "restraint"?

Asahi wrote that the fact that North Korea fired only short-range missiles, not an ICBM or a mid-range missile, may indicate that it exercised "restraint." The paper wrote that according to White House Press Secretary Sanders, President Trump was briefed on the missile launches and that the administration is monitoring the situation. However, the U.S. did not issue a statement condemning North Korea. Mainichi wrote that the DPRK did not fire a ballistic missile toward Guam in order not to overly provoke the U.S. Yomiuri conjectured that the DPRK intentionally lowered "the level of provocation" by firing short-range missiles in order to avoid an inevitable confrontation with the U.S. The paper wrote that the Trump administration is reacting calmly to the missile launches and watching closely for any possible escalation of North Korean provocations. Nikkei wrote that the latest missile launches poured cold water on recent U.S. expressions of a readiness for dialogue.

Monday's Mainichi and Sankei wrote that Secretary of State Tillerson said during a Fox News program on Sunday that the firing of the short-range missiles is a violation of UN Security Council resolutions and a provocation directed at the United States and its allies. The Secretary added that the U.S. will continue a "peaceful pressure campaign" against North Korea by working with its allies and China.

#### Japan to maintain high-level alert

Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters that the missiles did not fall within Japan's territory or exclusive economic zone and did not have a direct impact on Japan's security. According to Suga, Prime Minister Abe instructed him to remain on a high level of alert to protect the lives and property of the Japanese people. Defense Minister Onodera told reporters that Japan will continue monitoring moves by North Korea and maintain a high level of alert in close coordination with the U.S. and South Korea.

#### **Special advisor Kushner may visit China**

Sunday's Yomiuri wrote that it has learned from several sources connected to U.S.-China relations that senior advisor to President Trump Jared Kushner has decided to visit China in September. His wife Ivanka and their children will probably accompany him. The paper speculated that the President

will decide whether to travel to China during his visit to Asia in the fall after Kushner's trip to Beijing.

### **War-time forced labor remains a thorn in Japan-South Korea relations**

All Saturday morning papers reported extensively on a teleconference held between Prime Minister Abe and South Korean President Moon on Aug. 25. Although the two leaders agreed to develop a forward-looking relationship between their nations, they apparently remained apart over the issue of South Koreans seeking compensation for forced labor during Japan's colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula. Abe told Moon that the issue was resolved in the 1965 bilateral agreement, and Moon expressed the view that the issue has been settled between the two governments. However, Asahi and Mainichi wrote that the issue remains a source of dispute between Tokyo and Seoul because the ROK leader stated earlier that individuals should still have the right to sue Japanese companies for compensation.

### **Japan-ROK accord on military information sharing extended**

Saturday morning's Asahi wrote that South Korea's Defense Ministry announced on Aug. 25 that the nation's general security of military information agreement (GSOMIA) with Japan that was concluded in November 2016 has been automatically extended for another year because neither Japan nor South Korea expressed an intention to end the agreement by the Aug. 24 deadline. Mainichi and Nikkei wrote that Defense Minister Onodera told the press on Aug. 25 that it has been decided to extend the accord until November 2018 and that Japan will strengthen defense cooperation with South Korea.

### **Kono pledges high-quality assistance to Africa**

Saturday morning's Yomiuri wrote that at a ministerial meeting of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) held in Maputo, Mozambique, on Aug.25, Foreign Minister Kono expressed Japan's plan to provide African nations with high-quality support in infrastructure and human resources development. The paper wrote that although Kono stressed the high quality of Japan's assistance to counter China's massive investment in the region, it appears difficult for Japan to demonstrate its presence in the region due to China's overwhelming presence there.

### **Kono pledges maximum support for South Sudan**

Sunday's Yomiuri wrote that Foreign Minister Kono held talks with South Sudan's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Alor in Mozambique on Aug. 25. In view of the GSDF's withdrawal from the UN Peacekeeping Operation in the nation, Kono stated that Japan will continue to provide maximum support for South Sudan's efforts to achieve peace and stability and improve human rights.

<b>SECURITY</b>
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### **Japan to conduct PAC-3 drills at U.S. bases**

Saturday morning's Nikkei and Sankei wrote that the Ministry of Defense announced on Aug. 25 that the ASDF will conduct drills involving the PAC-3 missile interceptor system at U.S. military bases in Yokota and Iwakuni on Aug. 29 and at Misawa on Sept. 7. According to the ministry, this will be the first time for Japan to carry out such training at U.S. bases. The ASDF will practice moving the system from its nearby bases to the U.S. bases. The papers wrote that the planned exercises are intended to demonstrate U.S.-Japan coordination against the threat posed by North Korea. Defense Minister Onodera told reporters that the drills will contribute to further strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance.

### **Japan mulls export of C-2 transport aircraft to UAE**

Sunday's Nikkei front-paged a report saying that the GOJ is considering exporting the ASDF's latest transport aircraft, the C-2, to the United Arab Emirates. In response to a request from the UAE, Japan has been providing specifications and other related information about the aircraft to the Gulf state. Japan and the UAE will begin shortly talks for concluding a treaty regarding the transfer of defense equipment and technology that is essential for the planned export. Since Japan has never exported finished defense equipment to a foreign country, this will be the first such case for Japan. The paper wrote that the C-2, developed by Kawasaki Heavy Industries, has a cruising range of 7,600km, roughly twice that of Lockheed Martin's C-130 Hercules, which the ASDF also uses. In addition, the C-2 can carry a payload of 20 tons, four times that of the C-130.

### **Japan hopes to export air defense radar system to Thailand**

Sunday's Sankei wrote that the Ministry of Defense plans to participate in a tender in Thailand in September for the nation's procurement of a new air defense system. Japan plans to tender a bid for the sale of the J/FPS-3 system used by the ASDF. The paper wrote that Japan may be able to keep China in check if it can export to Southeast Asia a key defense system used by the SDF, but there is concern within the GOJ that Bangkok may hesitate to import the Japan-developed system out of deference to Beijing.

## **AMBASSADOR**

### **Ambassador Hagerty, CCS Suga confirm close coordination against North Korea**

Saturday morning's Mainichi wrote that Ambassador Hagerty and Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga held talks at the Kantei on Aug. 25 and confirmed close coordination between the U.S. and Japan in responding to North Korea. Suga reportedly asked the Ambassador to cooperate in reducing the base-hosting burden on Okinawa. The paper wrote that the Ambassador told reporters afterwards that this was the beginning of a long and friendly relationship and that he looks forward to working with the Chief Cabinet Secretary. Nikkei, Jiji Press, and NHK filed similar online stories.

### **William Hagerty, a businessman-turned-envoy with deep understanding of Japan**

Saturday morning's Nikkei ran a profile of Ambassador Hagerty. The paper wrote that Ambassador Hagerty has been active since his arrival in Tokyo as the 30th U.S. ambassador to Japan on Aug. 17,

noting that he has already held talks with Prime Minister Abe and Foreign Minister Kono and visited such places as Meiji Shrine and the Suntory Museum of Art with his family. The paper quoted Koichi Hori, who worked with Ambassador Hagerty at the Boston Consulting Group in the late 1980s, as saying: “He is mild-mannered, sincere, and trustworthy.” State of Tennessee Japan Office Representative Yamaguchi was quoted as saying that Ambassador Hagerty, who served as the commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development for the State of Tennessee from 2011-2015, was successful in inviting Japanese investment in the state with his deep understanding of Japan’s business culture.

## **SOCIETY**

### **GOJ survey shows 74% of Japanese satisfied with their current lives**

Sunday’s Mainichi and Sankei wrote that 73.9% of the respondents said in a GOJ survey conducted from June through July that they are more or less satisfied with their current lives. This was 3.8 points higher than the results of last year and the highest since the Cabinet Office launched its annual “Public Opinion Survey on the Life of the People” in 1963. Some 51.3%, up 3.2 points, said they are satisfied with their income levels, while 46.9%, down 2.7 points, said they are dissatisfied.

Yomiuri and Nikkei wrote that when asked what kind of issues they want the government to work on, 65.1%, up 0.7 points, cited medical care and social security. Some 36.2%, up 4.3 points, mentioned national defense and security. The paper speculated that concern over the situation on the Korean Peninsula led to the increase in public interest in security issues.

## **OPINION POLLS**

### **Cabinet support increases 4 points to 46%**

Monday’s Nikkei front-paged the results of its nationwide opinion survey conducted on Aug. 25-27. Support for the Abe cabinet has recovered to 46%, up 4 points from a survey earlier this month, and nonsupport declined 3 points to 46%. The paper wrote that despite an improvement in cabinet support, independent voters and women remain dissatisfied, with only 19% of non-affiliated voters and 40% of women approving of the cabinet, while the rate of approval among men rose 5 points to 51%. When asked whether they would like Prime Minister Abe to win a third term as the LDP president in the LDP leadership race in September 2018, 40% said yes but 52% said no.

