



Morning Alert - Tuesday, September 12, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

All broadcasters reported this morning that the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a new sanctions resolution against North Korea, explaining that the final resolution does not include a total ban on crude oil exports. An NHK reporter said the fact that the member states came together and unanimously adopted a new resolution in just one week should be commended, adding, however, that they now bear a heavy responsibility for thoroughly implementing the new resolution.

All national dailies other than Nikkei gave top play to reports on the amended UN Security Council resolution, while Nikkei led with a report on China's plan to ban production and sales of gasoline-powered vehicles.

INTERNATIONAL

UN sanctions resolution on North Korea includes oil export cap

All papers front-paged reports on the amended sanctions resolution arising from North Korea's sixth nuclear test on Sept. 3. The resolution places restrictions on exports of crude oil and petroleum products to North Korea for the first time, but was watered down from an earlier U.S. draft that called for a total ban on oil exports. The resolution imposes an annual limit on crude oil exports to Pyongyang by prohibiting the level from exceeding that of the previous 12 months and capping the annual supply or export of refined petroleum products at 2 million barrels. It also prohibits Pyongyang from exporting textiles as originally planned. However, an earlier plan to impose an asset freeze and travel ban on Kim Jong Un was not reflected in the revised draft.

The papers wrote that the U.S. made major concessions on the resolution to give consideration to China and Russia, which are cautious about imposing further sanctions on Pyongyang.

North Korea sends warning ahead of vote on sanctions resolution

All papers reported that North Korea's foreign ministry issued a statement on Monday saying that it will stage further provocations if the UN Security Council adopts a fresh resolution on sanctions on Pyongyang. North Korea said that the U.S. will pay a "due price" and that it will take a series of actions tougher than the U.S. has ever imagined. Yomiuri wrote that the most likely scenario for North Korean provocations following the adoption of the resolution would be an ICBM launch, adding that the U.S. is worried that the UNSC resolution will have a negative impact on Pyongyang's treatment of the three American citizens currently detained in North Korea. Asahi wrote that while the U.S., Japan, and South Korea are on full alert for the possibility of another missile launch by North Korea, Pyongyang may be considering cyberattacks on government agencies and private businesses in these nations.

DPRK official tells Japanese lawmaker North Korea will continue nuclear development

Asahi and Sankei wrote that Japanese wrestler-turned-lawmaker Antonio Inoki told reporters upon his arrival at Haneda Airport on Monday evening after a five-day visit to Pyongyang that Ri Su Yong, a vice chairman of the Workers' Party of Korea, told him that North Korea will continue to conduct and raise the level of its nuclear and missile tests as long as the U.S. and the international community keep applying pressure on it.

Foreign Minister Kono meets with Middle East counterparts

Monday evening's Asahi wrote that Foreign Minister Kono held bilateral talks with his Jordanian counterpart in Amman on Sunday. Kono welcomed Jordan's efforts to accept some 660,000 Syrian refugees and defeat ISIL, and offered Japan's financial assistance for these endeavors.

Kono held separate talks with his Kuwaiti counterpart later in the day. Concerning the thousands of North Koreans currently working in the nation, the Kuwaiti official told Kono that it has stopped issuing new visas for North Korean laborers. The Japanese official welcomed the move by stressing the need for international pressure on Pyongyang. Kono also welcomed the efforts by Kuwait to mediate between Qatar and several Middle Eastern nations, including Saudi Arabia, and expressed Tokyo's readiness to help resolve the conflict. After visiting Kuwait, Kono held a meeting with his Saudi Arabian counterpart and urged him to swiftly resolve the standoff with Qatar.

SECURITY

Okinawa governor calls for SOFA revision

Mainichi wrote that Okinawa Governor Onaga submitted to Defense Minister Onodera on Monday his prefecture's requests for revisions to the status of forces agreement (SOFA) with the U.S., including giving Japanese authorities access to off-base sites of incidents and accidents involving the U.S. military. This is the first time in 17 years for the prefectural government to compile requests for SOFA revision. Tokyo Shimbun ran a similar story, adding that Onaga also submitted the requests to U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Young on Monday.

ECONOMY

Abe calls for local-level U.S.-Japan exchanges in meeting with Midwest governors

Nikkei wrote that during a meeting at the Kantei on Monday with the governors of five Midwest states, Prime Minister Abe told the guests that he is proud of Japanese companies' contributions to the local economy through investment and employment. The paper wrote that the premier expressed hope that Japan's relations with U.S. states will deepen further and the U.S. and Japan will promote local-level exchanges to strengthen their ties.

RCEP nations to make maximum efforts to reach agreement by year-end

Asahi and Yomiuri wrote that the economic ministers of 16 Asia-Pacific nations negotiating the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement concluded their meeting in Manila on Sunday by issuing a joint statement saying that they will make maximum efforts to produce important achievements by the end of this year. Asahi wrote that regardless of the statement, it will probably be difficult to reach an agreement by year's end. The paper wrote that major differences remain among the RCEP member states on such issues as tariffs, e-commerce, and intellectual property rights, and they will continue discussions until November when the leaders of the 16 nations plan to meet in Manila.

OPINION POLLS

Cabinet support rebounds to 50%

Yomiuri front-paged the results of its nationwide poll conducted over the weekend that showed that 50%, up 8 points from a month ago, supported the Abe cabinet, while 39%, down 9 points, did not. Asahi also reported on its survey results showing that 38%, up 3 points, approved of the Abe cabinet, while 38%, down 7 points, did not.