


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Friday, September 15, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

All broadcasters reported that the GOJ issued a J-ALERT warning at around 7 a.m. this morning saying that North Korea fired a ballistic missile toward the direction of the Tohoku region. The networks later reported on a GOJ announcement that a missile was fired from the west coast of North Korea toward the Tohoku region at about 6:57 a.m. The missile reportedly flew over Hokkaido to the Pacific Ocean at around 7:06 a.m. South Korea's Yonhap News reported that North Korea fired a missile from the vicinity of Pyongyang in an easterly direction, adding that the South Korean military is still gathering information. The GOJ later announced that the North Korean missile landed in waters about 2,000 km east of Cape Erimo in Hokkaido at 7:16 a.m.

Top stories in national dailies included a court order issued to Japan Post to reduce wage gaps for contract workers (Asahi); restrictions on economic activities between China and North Korea due to UN sanctions (Mainichi); a GOJ plan to promote exchanges between areas hit hard by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and participants in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics (Yomiuri); the increasing use of quantum computers by Japanese firms (Nikkei); and a plan by the UN Human Rights Council to discuss Japan's comfort women and forced labor issues in November (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

Abe, Modi agree to put “maximum” pressure on DPRK, cooperate on security and economy

All papers ran extensive front- or inside-page reports on Prime Minister Abe's talks with his Indian counterpart Modi in Gandhinagar, India, on Thursday. The two leaders issued a joint statement saying that Japan and India will raise their partnership to a higher level by sharing the common values of the rule of law, free trade, and freedom of navigation. The Japanese and Indian leaders also said in the joint statement that they will call on the international community to fully implement the UN Security Council sanctions on North Korea in order to apply maximum pressure on the nation.

Abe and Modi also confirmed the importance of cooperation on maritime security with China's increasing activities in the East China Sea and the Indian Ocean in mind, and agreed that Japan and India will strengthen their security cooperation through trilateral drills with the U.S. military. On the economic front, Abe pledged to provide about 190 billion yen in loans for high-speed railway and other infrastructure projects in India, and the two nations agreed to conclude an "open skies" agreement and set up a new working group to discuss Japan's exports of nuclear power technology to India.

President Trump says he will visit Japan, China, South Korea in November

Kyodo News reported that President Trump said on Thursday that he will visit Japan, China, and South Korea in November in a tour that may also include Vietnam and the Philippines for regional summits. Speaking to journalists on his way back to Washington from Florida, the President said that the trip will occur "sometime in November" and mentioned stops in "Japan, South Korea, possibly Vietnam with a conference." Asked about the inclusion of Japan, China, and South Korea in the itinerary, the President said: "Right now definite." The President also said he has been invited to the Philippines for ASEAN-related meetings, but could not confirm his attendance. Looking ahead to what will be his first trip to Asia since taking office in January, President Trump told the reporters: "It will be a busy 10 days, okay? Keep you guys busy." During planned meetings with Prime Minister Abe, President Xi, and President Moon, the President is expected to focus on North Korea's missile and nuclear weapons development as well as bilateral economic issues such as ways to reduce U.S. trade deficits with the three countries. An unidentified diplomatic source said earlier that Trump plans to visit Japan around Nov. 5 before traveling to Vietnam for an APEC summit and the Philippines for a U.S.-ASEAN summit and the East Asia Summit.

Foreign Minister Kono to visit U.S. next week

Yomiuri, Nikkei, and Sankei wrote that MOFA announced on Thursday that Foreign Minister Kono will visit New York from Sept. 17 through 23 to attend the UN General Assembly and other meetings. The papers wrote that arrangements are underway for Kono to hold meetings with his foreign counterparts, including Secretary of State Tillerson and the foreign ministers of South Korea, China, and Russia.

North Korea threatens to "sink" Japan

Sankei front-paged a report saying that a North Korean state agency said on Thursday that the Korea Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, which handles the country's external relations, released a spokesman's statement harshly criticizing the U.S. and Japan over the adoption at the UN Security Council of a fresh sanctions resolution on Pyongyang. It threatened Japan by saying: "The four islands of the archipelago should be sunken into the sea by the nuclear bomb." Concerning the U.S., the statement said: "Let's reduce the U.S. mainland into ashes and darkness. Let's vent our spite with mobilization of all retaliation means which have been prepared till now." During a news conference on Thursday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga strongly criticized the statement by saying that it is extremely provocative and outrageous.

Japanese, French defense chiefs discuss North Korea threat

Nikkei wrote that Defense Minister Onodera held a teleconference with his French counterpart Parly on Thursday and the two officials shared the view that North Korea's nuclear and missile programs pose a threat to the entire international community. Onodera called for cooperation from France in ensuring the implementation of UN Security Council sanctions to put pressure on Pyongyang.

South Korea considers providing \$8 million in aid to North Korea via UN agencies

Asahi, Mainichi, and Sankei wrote that South Korea's Unification Ministry announced on Thursday that it is studying the idea of providing \$8 million in humanitarian aid to North Korea via the World Food Program and the UN Children's Fund. According to Mainichi, Seoul has already informed Washington and Tokyo of its plan. Asahi wrote that the plan could cause a stir in the international community because the UN Security Council just adopted a resolution strengthening sanctions on North Korea.

SECURITY

Japan refuels U.S. Aegis ships under new security laws

All papers reported extensively on refueling operations being conducted by MSDF supply ships for U.S. Aegis ships in the Sea of Japan since April under the new security laws that took effect in March 2016. The U.S. Navy vessels are engaged in operations to observe North Korea's activities in the region. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told a news conference on Thursday that the GOJ acknowledges that the SDF is engaging in such operations. However, he refrained from discussing the details by saying: "I cannot comment on the issue because it will disclose the details of the operations of the SDF and the U.S. military."

