



Morning Alert - Wednesday, October 25, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK, NTV, and TV Asahi led with reports on the damage caused by Typhoon Lan, saying that another typhoon is expected to approach Japan over the weekend. TBS gave top play to a report that Koike's grip on power within the Party of Hope is weakening. Fuji TV led with a report on an accident in which a subway car window suddenly shattered while the train was in operation in Tokyo last night.

Major front-page items in national dailies included reports on Prime Minister Abe's teleconferences yesterday with his ROK, Australian, and Malaysian counterparts regarding North Korea, the conclusion of the Chinese Communist Party's Congress on Tuesday, the results of nationwide public opinion surveys on the general election, and a GOJ idea on carrying out noncombatant evacuation operations on the Korean Peninsula in close collaboration with the U.S. and other nations.

INTERNATIONAL

Japan eager to highlight personal bonds between PM Abe and President Trump

Nikkei took up an official GOJ announcement yesterday concerning President Trump's upcoming "official working visit" to Japan starting on Nov. 5, conjecturing that Tokyo is anxious to call global attention to the strong bonds between Prime Minister Abe and President Trump with the goal of putting pressure on China and Russia to rein in North Korea's nuclear and missile development. The article said that the Abe administration is pleased that the U.S. leader chose Japan as the first stop on his Asian itinerary and that there is a possibility that the U.S. leader will visit a Japanese destroyer with the premier in order to play up close collaboration between the SDF and the U.S. military. The daily added that the two officials will play golf together with a Japanese professional golfer in Saitama on the day of the President's arrival, noting that since the golf course is close to

Yokota AB and the Kantei, the GOJ has concluded that the recreational activity will not pose a problem in terms of crisis management.

ROK remains hesitant about ACSA with Japan

Asahi wrote that despite Japan's repeated calls for concluding a bilateral acquisition and cross-servicing agreement (ACSA), South Korea remains reluctant. The paper claimed that the ROK side did not offer any response to a comment made by Vice Foreign Minister Sugiyama on Tokyo's willingness to seal such a pact during the trilateral vice foreign ministerial talks with the U.S. held in Seoul on Oct. 18. The Moon administration's caution stems from the fear that the conclusion of an ACSA could have domestic political repercussions by giving the public the impression that Japanese troops would be allowed to carry out military operations on the Korean Peninsula.

Philippine leader to hold bilateral summit with Abe in Tokyo this month

Asahi projected that Philippine President Duterte will visit Japan next week probably beginning on Sunday for talks with Prime Minister Abe. The paper explained that Manila will host the ASEAN Plus summit in mid-November and the GOJ is hoping to enhance bilateral coordination with the Philippines on such issues as North Korea's nuclear and missile development and China's maritime advancement in the South and East China Seas.

POLITICS

Cabinet approval rebounds following election victory

Yomiuri front-paged the results of its latest public opinion poll that put support for the Abe administration at 52%, up 11 points from two weeks ago, and nonsupport at 37%, down 9 points. While almost half of respondents welcomed the ruling coalition's landslide victory in Sunday's general election, some 47% said the opposition camp should have won more seats. Voters aged 50 or over were relatively critical of the election results. About four out of five faulted the opposition bloc for allowing the LDP to win big by failing to field unified candidates and present viable policy alternatives. Some 53% disapproved of the idea of reassembling former Democratic Party lawmakers to launch a major opposition party.

Asahi's survey showed that a slightly over half of respondents were negative about the election results by saying the ruling coalition won too many seats. Cabinet approval rose 4 points from a week ago to 42%, whereas disapproval dropped by 1 point to 39%. Approximately half of the voters expressed high expectations for the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan. On the policy front, about 45% voiced opposition to Prime Minister Abe's desire to amend Article 9 of the Constitution to make the existence of the SDF explicit, while 36% were in favor of it.

In a related story, Yomiuri wrote that despite the ruling coalition's massive victory, Abe and other senior LDP leaders are trying to keep a low profile out of concern that support for the Abe administration will weaken considerably if the public views it as "arrogant." These officials have

acknowledged that the landslide victory does not necessarily represent voters' overwhelming confidence in the ruling coalition.

CDPJ cautious about opposition realignment

All papers reported on remarks made on Tuesday by Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan President Edano to party politicians who prevailed in the weekend general election, in which he expressed a cautious attitude toward mounting calls for opposition realignment voiced by Democratic Party Upper House lawmakers. Edano said his party should distance itself from such moves because its strong public support may fade quickly if it is seen to be preoccupied with securing enough seats for the sake of creating a strong opposition party while disregarding differences in political ideology and policies. The dailies said that although former Prime Minister Noda, former Foreign Minister Okada, and other Democratic Party politicians who won as independents in the latest election have been expected to take the initiative in realigning the opposition camp, they may not be able to form a joint parliamentary group with the CDPJ as the first step in reassembling former DP politicians.

LDP succeeded in winning one seat in Okinawa

Yomiuri reported on an LDP candidate's victory in District No. 4 in Okinawa in the general election, noting that all ruling party politicians had been defeated in the southernmost prefecture in the two previous national elections. The latest victory is likely to boost the LDP's election campaigns in the Nago mayoral and the gubernatorial races next year, in which the FRF construction initiative will probably be the main campaign issue. Okinawa Governor Onaga categorically dismissed the central government's view that the LDP's successful performance even in one single-seat constituency victory points to the erosion of local opposition to the Futenma relocation initiative by underscoring that the LDP candidates were defeated in the three other single-seat districts.

SECURITY

Two U.S. flattops now deployed in Western Pacific

NHK reported this morning that the U.S. military announced on Tuesday that the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt and its escorts arrived in the Western Pacific, adding that the U.S. military now has two aircraft carriers in the Western Pacific since the USS Ronald Reagan is operating in waters near the Korean Peninsula. The Theodore Roosevelt reportedly left its home port of San Diego at the beginning of this month. The network said the U.S. military is increasing pressure on North Korea through such moves as flying a B-1 bomber in international airspace east of North Korea last month and conducting joint military training with the ROK forces near the Korean Peninsula this month.

U.S. military provides explanation on helicopter accident in Okinawa

Mainichi took up the disclosure by a GOJ source that regarding the recent accident involving a Futenma-based helicopter in Okinawa, the U.S. military has explained to the GOJ that the main

cause of the mishap was a malfunction in one of the aircraft's engines and that there is no problem with operating other CH-53Es. The Defense Ministry is not satisfied with this explanation and has been calling for the U.S. military to provide additional information.

Japan to evacuate its citizens on Korean Peninsula in coordination with U.S.-led coalition

Sankei said in its lead story that the GOJ envisages that if Japanese citizens in South Korea need to be evacuated during a contingency on the Korean Peninsula, such operations would be carried out in coordination with the U.S., Australia, Canada, and other friendly nations. Given that the South Korean public would probably react strongly if SDF planes were mobilized for noncombatant evacuation operations under a bilateral arrangement, the GOJ has come to believe that ROK opposition to the SDF deployment could be mitigated if it were done under a multilateral framework involving the U.S. and other Western countries.

U.S., Japan, ROK conduct missile detection drill

Most dailies wrote that four Aegis warships from the U.S., Japan, and South Korea commenced trilateral training yesterday to enhance their joint capabilities to detect and intercept ballistic missiles launched by North Korea. This is the fifth time for such training to be conducted with the previous training having been conducted in March.

