



Morning Alert - Monday, October 30, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that an NPO survey found that one in five people who undergo fertility treatment had to leave their jobs, saying that the NPO expressed the view that the government and companies should help create an environment where people can continue to work during treatment. All commercial networks led with reports on the inclement weather in the Tokyo area on Sunday due to Typhoon Saola.

Major front-page items in national papers included Mainichi's story on the Osprey accident rate released by the U.S. Marine Corps.

## AMBASSADOR

### Ambassador calls for direct investment in the U.S., says U.S. goal is denuclearization of DPRK

Saturday morning's [Asahi](#) ran on its international page an exclusive interview with Ambassador Hagerty, which was conducted on Oct. 27 ahead of President Trump's visit to Japan. The paper wrote that the Ambassador expressed eagerness to reduce the U.S. trade deficit with Japan and stressed that he will encourage Japanese companies to make more direct investments in the U.S., such as increasing manufacturing plants in the U.S. The daily also wrote that the Ambassador made clear that the goal of the U.S. administration for North Korea is denuclearization, and said that the U.S. and Japan will strengthen the security relationship with Australia and India.

The paper wrote that the Ambassador has met one-on-one with approximately 70 CEOs of Japanese companies since he became ambassador in August, saying he stressed that the U.S. economy is growing and the Trump administration is making efforts toward deregulation and

corporate tax cuts. The Ambassador reportedly expressed the view that the President will encourage Japanese firms to make more direct investment in the U.S. when he visits Japan. He also reportedly expressed hope for Japanese investment in such projects as LNG, clean coal, nuclear energy, and bullet trains, adding that there is room for improvement in automobile, pharmaceutical, medical equipment, and agricultural trade. The Ambassador reportedly said President Trump will meet with Japanese business leaders while in Japan.

On North Korea, the Ambassador rejected the view that North Korea should be recognized as a nuclear power and emphasized that the strengthening of economic sanctions has been effective. He also said that “the full range of options, both conventional and nuclear, are available.” On the extended deterrence, the Ambassador stressed: “I am very confident and comfortable in the fact that our extended deterrence remains our policy, and the President has indicated no change in that position.”

### **Ambassador Hagerty comments on U.S.-Japan relations at Mt. Fuji Dialogue**

Nikkei reported on Saturday on Ambassador Hagerty’s remarks delivered on Friday during the Mt. Fuji Dialogue, in which he commented on the relationship between the United States and Japan by saying: “It is an alliance based on common values, interests, and friendship. The two nations are bound together by common security concerns.”

## **SECURITY**

### **Osprey accident rate surges in recent years**

Monday’s Mainichi gave top coverage to data compiled by the Marine Corps regarding the accident rate of the Osprey MV-22, noting that it stood at 2.97 for the past 14 years, 50% higher than the rate that the GOJ cited prior to the tilt-rotor plane’s deployment at MCAS Futenma in October 2012. Noting that the Osprey accident rate, which was calculated based on the frequency of “Class A” mishaps per 100,000 flight hours, was higher than those of other Marine aircraft, the daily said the figure contradicts the central government’s explanation to Okinawa at the time that the Osprey is safer than other U.S. aircraft. The accident rate has surged in recent years with the shallow water landing in Okinawa last December and the crash in Australia in August this year. A Marine spokesperson reportedly told the daily: “Potential risks are normally associated with military airplanes. Safety steps and precautionary measures are in place at every level in order to maintain a high level of safety.” An MOD official said: “Accidents may occur for reasons other than aircraft malfunction, such as pilot error.... We ask the U.S. military to pay consideration to flight safety at all times.”

### **Top U.S. military official in Okinawa agrees to study request for suspension of helipads**

Saturday morning's Tokyo Shimbun took up a meeting held at the Okinawa prefectural government office on Friday between Vice Governor Tomikawa and Okinawa Area Coordinator Nicholson, noting that the Marine general apparently accepted the OPG's request for him to visit the government office to apologize for the recent mishap involving a Futenma-based CH-53E on the condition that the press would not be present during his visit. According to the vice governor, Lt. Gen. Nicholson indicated that he will carefully study the prefectural government's request for suspending the use of three of the six helipads at the Northern Training Area by saying: "We will look into it, such as the possibility of using other platforms, so as to ease the anxiety of local residents."

### **Three U.S. aircraft carriers to conduct training in Western Pacific**

Saturday morning's Mainichi published a Jiji report on the disclosure by a U.S. military source that the USS Ronald Regan, the USS Theodore Roosevelt, and the USS Nimitz will conduct a joint drill in the Western Pacific in mid-November to deter North Korea and that MSDF warships may participate. According to an unnamed senior U.S. military official, training involving three nuclear flattops is extremely unusual.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **President Trump taps Randall Schriver as assistant secretary of defense for Asia-Pacific**

Sunday's Asahi reported on the White House announcement on Friday that President Trump intends to nominate Randall Schriver as assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific affairs, saying that he will be in charge of with dealing with North Korea's nuclear and missile development and China. The daily said Schriver would formally take up the post after being officially nominated and approved by Congress. The paper wrote that senior positions responsible for Asian affairs have been vacant both at the State Department and the Pentagon since the launch of the Trump administration. Noting that Schriver has strong ties with Taiwan and has been negative about China's military expansion and foreign policy, the daily said the nomination reflects the administration's plan to take a hardline stance against China.

### **Japanese, Chinese defense officials hold dialogue**

Saturday morning's Asahi and Mainichi reported the governments of Japan and China held a security dialogue in Tokyo on Friday, during which officials discussed North Korea and a maritime and aerial communication mechanism that the two nations hope to start at an early date. The papers said Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Akiba and Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou participated in the meeting. According to Asahi, Kong met with Foreign Minister Kono prior to the meeting and told reporters afterward that they talked about the trilateral summit that Japan is hoping to host within this year and Kono's planned visit to China. Kong reportedly said, however, that no specific dates have been set for these meetings.

### **GOJ welcomes decision to shelve UNESCO listing on comfort women**

Saturday morning's Asahi reported that the listing of documents on comfort women in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register is likely to be shelved. The application was filed by a consortium of civic groups from eight nations, including Japan, China, and South Korea. The paper said the GOJ welcomes the decision, quoting Foreign Minister Kono as saying: "It is necessary to avoid escalating political tensions."

### **New ROK envoy to Japan acknowledges Japan's position on comfort women statues**

Saturday morning's Nikkei reported on a press conference held by newly appointed South Korean Ambassador to Japan Lee Su-hoon on Friday in Seoul, who spoke to the Japanese press about the comfort women statues installed in front of Japanese diplomatic missions in South Korea. Lee reportedly said that South Korea must be mindful of international norms for protecting foreign missions, indicating his understanding of Japan's position on the matter. Lee also reportedly said, however, that he would like to convey the South Korean people's sentiments once he arrives in Japan. Lee reportedly said the ROK government will decide on its official stance on the 2015 comfort women agreement, but added that he will talk to Japanese politicians and government officials in order to prevent the issue from hampering the development of a future-oriented relationship.

### **UNHCR Report calls for punishment of those responsible for violating "comfort women's" human rights**

Saturday morning's Sankei reported that a report on Japan by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was released on Friday. The report will be used to assess the human rights situation in Japan during a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council slated for November in Geneva. According to the paper, the report calls for an investigation into human rights violations concerning the comfort women issue and punishment of the perpetrators. A working group session to assess the human rights situation in Japan is planned for Nov. 14 and a recommendation is likely to be issued by the end of November. The paper said although the recommendation will not be legally binding, it may be used to criticize Japan.

### **Japan's nuclear disarmament leadership being questioned despite adoption of UN resolution**

All Saturday evening and Sunday papers reported extensively on the adoption at the UN General Assembly on Friday of a non-binding motion submitted by Japan calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, noting that a total of 144 nations supported it, 23 fewer than the previous year and the lowest number since 2003. The dailies said fewer UN member states were in favor of this year's resolution due to Japan's failure to mention the Nuclear Weapons Convention, explaining that the GOJ chose not to refer to the international pact in response to strong opposition from the U.S. and four other nuclear powers. Some papers voiced concern that Japan's leadership on nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation may decline as a result.

### **Cabinet Office poll shows Japanese less interested in Senkakus, Takeshima**

Saturday morning's Asahi reported that the Cabinet Office announced on Friday the results of its opinion poll on Senkaku Islands and Takeshima (Liancourt Rocks), which found that the number of people who expressed interest in the Senkakus and Takeshima was the lowest since the survey began in 2013. Only slightly more than 50% of those who were aware of the existence of Senkakus knew that they belong to Okinawa. According to the paper, 62.2% expressed interest in the Senkakus, down 12.4 points from the last survey held in 2014, while 34.8% did not, up 11 points. Regarding Takeshima, 59.8% expressed interest, down 7.6 points, and 37.2% did not, up 6.5 points.

### **GOJ to give used helicopter parts to Philippines**

Sunday's Mainichi reported that a GOJ official disclosed on Saturday that the GOJ has decided to hand over used parts from GSDF UH-1H helicopters to the Philippines. The daily said Japan and the Philippines are planning to sign an agreement when the ASEAN summit is held in the Philippines in November. The daily wrote that the agreement is aimed at supporting the nation's patrol and monitoring activities to keep China in check. The paper said the transfer of used defense equipment became possible when the SDF law was revised in May, adding that the GOJ has also agreed with the Philippines to transfer five MSDF TC-90 aircraft to the nation next March.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Vice President Pence's aide calls for new trade and investment rules**

Sunday morning's [Nikkei](#) reported that Tom Rose, a top aide to Vice President Pence, said in a speech at the Mount Fuji Dialogue held in Tokyo on Saturday that the U.S. "wants balanced economic relations" and said the two nations should set new rules on trade and investment. He also reportedly acknowledged that the complex U.S. tax system has become an obstacle to business investment, and that the Trump administration is committed to addressing tax reform and deregulation. He also said the U.S. will continue to deploy its most advanced military assets in Japan.

### **U.S. likely to urge Japan to correct trade imbalance**

Monday's Nikkei projected that when President Trump visits Tokyo next week, he is expected to press Japan to reduce its trade surplus with the U.S., speculating that Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and Commerce Secretary Ross will accompany the President to negotiate concrete steps to increase U.S. exports in such areas as autos, beef, and pharmaceuticals. The three U.S. officials may also ask Japan to agree to launch bilateral FTA talks.

### **GOJ officials' views differ on possible U.S.-Japan trade deal**

Saturday morning's Nikkei wrote that with President Trump's visit to Japan now only a week away, GOJ officials' nerves are on edge over the U.S. position on a bilateral FTA with Japan. The paper wrote that although GOJ officials explained to reporters after the U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue on Oct. 16 that Vice President Pence expressed "strong interest" in a bilateral trade deal, they are now beginning to say that the Vice President only touched upon the idea during the dialogue. The paper also reported on remarks by Deputy Prime Minister Aso, who said he does not recall the U.S. side

making a strong request. The daily said business groups are perplexed by the different explanations provided by the government, adding that Keidanren will send a delegation to the U.S. starting on Oct. 29 to gauge U.S. intentions. Nikkei wrote in a separate article that the delegation will meet with federal government and congressional officials as well as governors to explain Japanese companies' contributions to the U.S. economy and discuss bilateral trade issues and economic cooperation. The daily said the difference in interpretation probably stems from a difference in views on a bilateral FTA among ministries, explaining that while the Finance Ministry and Agriculture Ministry are against a bilateral trade deal, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry believes that the option should be kept open based on the view that the rulemaking on trade should be led by the U.S. and Japan.

### **GOJ to impose 1,000 yen departure tax on those leaving Japan**

Asahi reported on Sunday that the government has decided to impose a 1,000 yen departure tax on anyone leaving the country, including foreign tourists and business travelers. The paper said the GOJ will include the plan in the tax system reform proposals for fiscal 2018 and aim to introduce the new system from fiscal 2019. The daily said about 40 million people departed Japan in 2016 so the levy is expected to initially bring in 40 billion yen annually. The paper noted, however, that the tourist industry is likely to oppose the plan.

## **POLITICS**

### **Prime Minister Abe to retain all current members in new cabinet**

All Saturday morning papers reported that Prime Minister Abe decided on Friday to reappoint all the members of his current cabinet when he is reelected as prime minister on Nov. 1 during a special Diet session. The papers said the members of the current cabinet who were appointed on Aug. 3 will resign en masse at a special cabinet meeting to be held before the special Diet session.

### **Oshima to be reappointed as Lower House speaker**

Sunday morning's Sankei reported that the LDP and the Komeito Party decided on Saturday to reappoint Tadamori Oshima as the speaker of the Lower House. The daily also said Prime Minister Abe has decided to retain the current LDP leadership, including Secretary General Nikai. Noting that the premier has also decided to retain all of the current cabinet members, the paper said Abe's fourth cabinet will be launched with no new faces.

### **Maehara to resign as Democratic Party leader, Okada likely to take over**

Saturday morning's Mainichi reported that Democratic Party President Maehara has officially expressed his intention to step down at the general assembly of the party's lawmakers on Friday. Maehara reportedly withdrew his plan to merge with the Party of Hope and confirmed that the party will maintain its headquarters and local organizations. The daily wrote that the party will hold a general assembly again on Monday to pick a new leader, adding that Katsuya Okada, who won the Lower House election as an independent, is likely to be chosen.

POTUS-VISIT ITEMS FROM AFTERNOON ALERT

- [Trump's Asian tour puts spotlight on legacy of Obama 'pivot'](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
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