



Morning Alert - Sunday, November 5, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK and all commercial networks led with reports on President Trump and the First Lady's departure from Hawaii for Japan.

Top stories in national dailies included follow-up stories on the arrest of a man on suspicion of killing nine people in his apartment in Zama, Kanagawa (Asahi, Mainichi, Sankei); a plan by Prime Minister Abe to take up during his talks with President Trump measures to evacuate Japanese nationals from South Korea in the event of an emergency on the Korean Peninsula (Yomiuri): and the global trend toward decoupling carbon emissions from economic growth (Nikkei).

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump to arrive in Japan today

All Sunday papers reported on President Trump's planned arrival in Japan this morning for a three-day visit. Mainichi wrote that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe will confirm close cooperation in applying greater pressure on North Korea and that the governments of the U.S. and Japan are making final arrangements for releasing a joint press statement on the strengthened alliance between the two nations that will supplement the comprehensive joint statement issued at the U.S.-Japan summit in Washington in February. Sankei wrote that the response to North Korea will be the top item on the agenda for the meeting between President Trump and PM Abe and that the two leaders will confirm cooperation in applying further pressure on Pyongyang.

Nikkei wrote that attention will be focused on whether during his visit to Japan President Trump will urge the nation to reduce its trade surplus with the U.S. and agree to negotiate a bilateral FTA. The paper wrote that the GOJ is paying keen attention to remarks to be made by President Trump

because although Japan is hoping that economic talks between Washington and Tokyo will focus on their cooperation in energy and infrastructure development, it will be difficult for Japan to dismiss the issue of a bilateral FTA if President Trump raises it at his summit meeting with Abe. Mainichi speculated that the President will likely call on the Japanese and Chinese leaders to reduce their nations' trade surplus with the United States during his visits to Tokyo and Beijing and that the President may ask Japan to launch negotiations on a bilateral FTA.

Friday's Mainichi also took up President Trump's Asia trip, projecting that North Korea's relentless provocations and the U.S. trade deficit with East Asian countries will be the two major discussion topics in his meetings with regional leaders, including Prime Minister Abe and Chinese President Xi. The daily said the U.S. leader intends to call attention to his administration's commitment to deepening engagement with Asia.

Saturday's Yomiuri ran a similar story, speculating that the U.S. leader chose Japan as the first stop on his East Asia trip to play up his strong partnership with PM Abe. Noting that President Trump made a number of comments discounting U.S. allies during the election campaign, the paper said the President is now emphasizing his administration's policy of strengthening the alliance relationships with Asian partners in the face of heightened tension on the Korean Peninsula.

In a related development, all papers reported that President Trump has decided to extend his Asia trip by one day to attend the East Asia Summit to be held in Manila on Nov. 14, conjecturing that the U.S. leader apparently responded to regional concerns that the absence of the U.S. from the major international conference would allow China and Russia to exercise leadership in the region.

U.S., Japan to strengthen cooperation with Australia, India

Sunday's Nikkei wrote that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe will agree during their talks in Japan to promote the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy," a vision presented by Abe in 2016 to achieve both growth and stability in Asia and across the Indian Ocean to Africa by focusing on fast-growing Asia and the high growth potential of Africa. The two leaders are also expected to confirm at their summit meeting in Tokyo the importance of a four-country framework with Australia and India to promote free trade and defense cooperation in view of China's growing influence in the region based on its "One Belt, One Road" initiative.

President Trump, PM Abe to discuss contingency evacuation of Japanese nationals from ROK

Sunday's Yomiuri gave top play to a report saying that arrangements are being made for Prime Minister Abe to take up measures to evacuate Japanese nationals from South Korea in the event of an emergency on the Korean Peninsula in his talks with President Trump in Tokyo. The paper wrote that the Japanese government is hoping that U.S. Forces Korea will help transport Japanese

nationals from South Korea because the nation is negative about the possibility of the SDF conducting operations in its territory.

President Trump tweets “Remember Pearl Harbor”

Sunday’s Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri, and Sankei wrote that President Trump posted a message saying “Remember #PearlHarbor. Remember the @USSArizona!” on Twitter after visiting the USS Arizona Memorial on Friday. Noting that “Remember Pearl Harbor” was a slogan used to inspire patriotism in the American people after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor during WWII, the paper wrote that the intention of the President in using this phrase is unknown because he did not refer to Japan in the message. Yomiuri noted that President Trump criticized President Obama’s visit to Hiroshima in May 2016 by saying: “Does President Obama ever discuss the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor while he’s in Japan?”

President Trump comments on Japan’s response to DPRK missiles

Sunday’s Tokyo Shimbun ran a Kyodo dispatch from Washington saying that it has learned from several diplomatic sources that President Trump told the leaders of several Southeast Asian nations over recent months that Japan should have intercepted North Korea’s ballistic missiles when they flew over Japan in August and September. The report said that although Prime Minister Abe is hoping to demonstrate close cooperation between Japan and the U.S. in dealing with North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs, the President may ask Japan to take tougher steps. According to the sources, the President expressed his dissatisfaction with Japan during his telephone and direct conversations with the Asian leaders by saying he did not understand why Japan did not shoot down the missiles that were flying over it because Japan is a “warrior nation.”

NSC Advisor McMaster comments on DPRK ahead of President Trump’s trip to Japan

NHK carried an exclusive interview on Friday with National Security Advisor McMaster, who noted that the United States will increase military pressure to deter further provocations by North Korea. He mentioned that the U.S. currently has three aircraft carriers deployed in the Western Pacific region. “The first thing to do is to make sure the North Korean regime knows that any aggression on its part will be met with an overwhelming response,” he was quoted as saying. “That’s what these carriers symbolize.”

Asked whether Washington would notify Tokyo if it decided to exercise military action, McMaster said the Trump administration “keeps open and transparent relations” with its allies, including Japan. He went on to say that the U.S. and Japan are “completely aligned with each other in terms of our assessment of security threats and what we can do together to address those threats and secure our citizens.” On President Trump’s plan to meet with the families of the Japanese abductees in Tokyo, McMaster stressed that the President will deliver a “message of sympathy and empathy.”

Most newspapers reported on McMaster's separate press remarks on Thursday in which he disclosed that the Trump administration is considering designating the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism as part of an overall strategy toward North Korea. He underscored that Washington is committed to isolating North Korea diplomatically and economically, and welcomed deeper security coordination between the U.S. and Japan by saying that Japan is improving its defense capabilities. McMaster indicated that the U.S. military will continue to conduct "freedom of navigation operations" in the South China Sea to ensure peace in the region.

President Trump visits Hawaii on way to East Asia

All Saturday evening papers reported that President Trump visited Honolulu on Friday and met with senior PACOM officials there. Commander Harris reportedly gave the President a briefing on the situation in North Korea, including the concrete "military options" that the U.S. military is considering in order to deter the DPRK.

President Trump urges China to act swiftly on North Korea

Saturday's Yomiuri and NHK reported on President Trump's interview with Fox News on Thursday, during which he warned China that unless it acts quickly to rein in North Korea, it will have a "big problem" with Japan, which he called a "warrior nation." The President said: "Japan is a warrior nation, and I tell China that you will have a big problem with Japan pretty soon if you allow this to continue with North Korea." Yomiuri said the U.S. leader indirectly demanded Beijing to step up pressure on Pyongyang by suggesting that Tokyo may have no choice but to increase its defense capabilities if the Kim regime's missile and nuclear ambitions cannot be curbed.

Japanese, U.S. leaders to sign memo on cooperation for U.S. shale gas exports

Friday's Yomiuri claimed in its lead item that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe will sign a memorandum on enhancing bilateral cooperation in the energy sector with the goal of exporting U.S. shale gas to Africa and Asia. Japan is aiming to export its thermal power generation technology to emerging economies so that they can tap American shale gas imports. Tokyo is hoping to deflect U.S. criticism of its trade surplus with America by highlighting its willingness to support U.S. energy exports.

Saturday's Nikkei ran a similar story, saying that financial corporations affiliated with the two governments will sign a memorandum on Tuesday on financing a solar power generation project in Jordan that is being pursued by U.S. and Japanese enterprises. This initiative is part of bilateral efforts to increase joint infrastructure exports to the Third World.

"Political honeymoon" between President Trump and PM Abe is double-edged sword

Friday's Asahi carried a prominent story on the strong personal bonds between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe, claiming that the U.S. leader has given weight to Abe's opinions on such issues as North Korea's nuclear and missile development and China's maritime push. The premier is

viewed by some USG officials as a “special assistant to the President on Asia.” The daily said while Tokyo is keen to play up the strong partnership between the two leaders when the President visits Japan, this political honeymoon may backfire as the President may ask Abe to make concessions on the trade front in exchange for offering a stronger defense commitment. The paper also expressed concern about a possible diplomatic deal by the President with China on starting dialogue with North Korea.

Japan bracing for possibility of President Trump mentioning FTA talks

Most weekend papers wrote that GOJ officials are afraid that President Trump will mention the need to launch bilateral FTA talks during his planned summit with Prime Minister Abe on Monday. The papers speculated that if the President actually refers to a bilateral FTA, Tokyo may be forced to conduct a review of its policy of seeking the U.S.’s return to the TPP. Asahi said the Trump administration appears to be adamant on pursuing the President’s “America First” policy, quoting an unnamed senior USG official as saying: “The President has made it clear that he prioritizes bilateral negotiations.” Yomiuri said since public approval of the Trump administration remains very low, the President may be tempted to take a hard line toward Japan on the trade front so as to please his base at home.

Ivanka Trump vows renewed efforts to empower women

All Saturday morning papers reported on remarks delivered during the World Assembly of Women (WAW!) conference in Tokyo on Friday by Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump, who called for enhanced efforts to promote women’s advancement by removing legal and cultural barriers. Expressing her willingness to use her influence and experience as an entrepreneur, Ms. Trump pledged to work harder to empower women. “It is my hope that by the time my daughter Arabella grows into a woman, she will ... simply be a woman afforded the same opportunities as her male peers and equipped with the education and support she needs to fulfill her unique potential,” she said.

In a related development, most Saturday papers reported that during the WAW! conference, Prime Minister Abe pledged \$50 million in financial contributions for a World Bank fund on female entrepreneurship promoted by Ivanka Trump. The premier said Japan will continue to exercise strong leadership in empowering women. The dailies added that Ms. Trump also held talks with Foreign Minister Kono and two other Japanese cabinet ministers and exchanged views on how to promote women’s empowerment.

Ivanka Trump given red carpet treatment

Saturday’s Sankei said the Japanese government rolled out the red carpet for Ivanka Trump in order to further reinforce the U.S.-Japan alliance ahead of President Trump’s visit in the belief that nobody can match Ms. Trump when it comes to exercising influence over the President in decision making

on key policies. The daily said Prime Minister Abe hosted a dinner for her in Tokyo on Friday evening.

Secretary Tillerson to hold talks with Kono

Saturday's Sankei said Secretary Tillerson will visit Japan and hold talks with Foreign Minister Kono on Sunday night, projecting that the two officials are expected to agree to enhance pressure on North Korea ahead of the U.S.-Japan summit meeting the next day. The two diplomats are also likely to discuss China's maritime push in the South and East China Seas.

SECURITY

B-1 bombers conduct training with Japanese, ROK air forces

Saturday morning's Yomiuri reported on the announcement made by the U.S. Pacific Air Force on Friday that two Guam-based B-1 bombers conducted drills with ASDF fighters west of Kyushu and ROK Air Force fighters in the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula. The article conjectured that the training was intended to remind North Korea of the strong U.S. defense commitment to the two regional allies on the eve of President Trump's trip to East Asia.

Space surveillance radar to be installed in Yamaguchi

Saturday's Sankei front-paged an MOD plan to deploy a radar platform at an existing SDF base in Yamaguchi Prefecture to monitor space debris and anti-satellite weapons being developed by the Chinese. The ministry is expected to notify the prefectural government of the plan later this month.

