


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Monday, November 6, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

All networks and most papers gave extensive coverage to reports on President Trump's arrival in Japan on Sunday. The networks reported on his speech to U.S. troops at Yokota AB, lunch and golf with Prime Minister Abe at the Kasumigaseki Country Club, and dinner in Ginza. The networks said the President will hold a summit with PM Abe and meet with the families of the Japanese abductees today.

Asahi and Tokyo Shimbun led with reports on research conducted by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) for the "Paradise Papers" claiming that Commerce Secretary Ross has profited from business dealings with a Russian gas firm close to President Putin via several Bermuda-based shell companies. Since the Russian enterprise's major stockholders include a businessman subject to U.S. financial sanctions and Secretary Ross can exercise influence when applying sanctions to foreign individuals and entities, the ICIJ insists that the allegation constitutes a serious conflict of interest on the part of the billionaire-turned USG official.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S VISIT TO JAPAN

DPRK to loom large in today's U.S.-Japan summit

All papers projected that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe will hold in-depth discussions on how to deter North Korea at their official summit meeting today, noting that the two leaders are expected to emphasize mutual coordination on ratcheting up the pressure on the defiant regime. The premier is likely to talk about Japan's policy of stepping up its unilateral sanctions. The two leaders will also pledge mutual efforts to resolve the abduction issue. Quoting a GOJ source as saying, "It is

important for us to prompt the President to state once again that the U.S. is with Japan one hundred percent,” Nikkei speculated that the two leaders may exchange views on concrete military options against the DPRK.

In a related development, most papers took up press remarks made by President Trump yesterday while en route to Japan that his administration will make a decision soon on whether or not to put North Korea back on its list of state sponsors of terrorism. Meanwhile, according to a GOJ source cited by Nikkei, President Trump said to PM Abe while playing golf on Sunday: “The North Korea issue must be resolved. I will resolve it.” Several papers wrote that Japanese abductee Hitomi Soga will meet with the President today.

According to Mainichi, an unnamed senior USG official said yesterday that President Trump and PM Abe will discuss bilateral defense cooperation on North Korea, especially on how to counter cyberattacks. The two officials will also exchange views on trilateral coordination with South Korea on missile defense and anti-submarine warfare.

On issues other than North Korea, President Trump and PM Abe are set to discuss quadrilateral partnership by the U.S., Japan, Australia, and India to create a free and open Indo-Pacific region in order to deter China’s maritime advancement. Several papers noted that Japanese officials are bracing for the possibility of the U.S. leader mentioning the need to launch bilateral FTA talks. According to Nikkei, the President and the premier exchanged views on trade issues while playing golf yesterday. The daily said that although Abe is hoping to deflect possible criticism of the bilateral trade imbalance by highlighting Tokyo’s willingness to support U.S. energy and infrastructure exports, the President may still demand concrete measures for increasing U.S. exports to Japan in such areas as autos and agriculture.

President Trump, Prime Minister Abe showcase “unparalleled bonds”

All papers reported on the red carpet treatment given to President Trump by Prime Minister Abe, highlighting their golf game in the afternoon and teppanyaki dinner in the evening. Pointing out that President Trump and PM Abe will have four meals together during the President’s three-day stay in Tokyo, Nikkei said the prime minister’s “omotenashi” hospitality is tantamount to the U.S. leader being treated as a quasi-state guest. The paper added that Abe has been extremely eager to entertain the Trumps, noting that he also rolled out the red carpet for Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump a few days ago.

Asahi wrote that President Trump’s views toward Japan appear to have changed drastically, explaining that although he was very critical of Japan during the election campaign last year for its trade surplus with the U.S. and “unwillingness” to shoulder the cost of stationing U.S. troops, the President called Japan yesterday a “treasured partner and a crucial ally.” The daily attributed this change in attitude to the briefings on East Asia and Japan that his national security team has

provided and the close personal bonds that Prime Minister Abe has built with him. Ambassador Hagerty reportedly stated: “I think the two leaders have created and built the highest level of trust by playing golf together.” According to the dailies, professional golfer Hideki Matsuyama, who played golf with the two leaders, released a comment afterward saying: “I was extremely honored to be invited.”

Yomiuri claimed that the relationship of trust between the President and prime minister is unparalleled. It added, however, that some Japanese officials are worried that Abe’s excessive “tilt” toward the U.S. leader may backfire if miscommunications occur even on minor matters. Several papers took up concern raised among ruling and opposition parliamentarians about the extremely close bonds between the two leaders. Former LDP Secretary General Ishiba said: “We should acknowledge that the Trump administration has failed to obtain the solid trust of the American people.”

Top U.S., Japanese diplomats affirm stronger pressure on DPRK

All papers reported on visiting Secretary of State Tillerson’s dinner meeting with Foreign Minister Kono on Sunday, during which they confirmed their intention to step up the pressure on North Korea. They agreed that the pressure on the Kim regime has gradually produced results. According to the dailies, FM Kono separately held talks with USTR Lighthizer and Special Assistant to the President Kushner. According to Nikkei, the Japanese official told the press afterward that Lighthizer mentioned a bilateral FTA. Kono reportedly said: “The phrase was used while speaking about various options for building a U.S.-Japan economic order.” Kono also disclosed that they agreed to deepen discussions on such options in the bilateral economic dialogue.

First Lady Melania Trump visits Mikimoto Pearl store in Ginza

All papers wrote that First Lady Melania Trump visited the Mikimoto Pearl flagship store in Ginza on Sunday, saying that she was greeted by Prime Minister Abe’s wife, Akie, and two “ama” pearl divers in their traditional white costumes. The two first ladies received a tour of the shop and posed with staff during the brief visit.

SECURITY

Influential LDP lawmaker cites need for Japan to possess expertise on nuclear weapons

Yomiuri and Sankei reported on a speech delivered yesterday by former LDP Secretary General Ishiba, who said Japan should continue nuclear power generation for the time being in order to maintain nuclear-related technology. He also said: “Japan is surrounded by nuclear powers, including the United States, Russia, China, and North Korea. Japan should possess expertise on manufacturing nuclear weapons in the event that it elects to do so.” While emphasizing that he is not

advocating Japan's ownership of nuclear weapons, the influential politician said Japan cannot defend itself from nuclear weapons unless it possesses knowledge of them.

INTERNATIONAL

Man with knife arrested in front of U.S. Consulate in Osaka

Mainichi Broadcasting System reported online that a man believed to be in his 60s was arrested by riot police after brandishing a knife in front of the U.S. Consulate in Osaka at around 1 p.m. on Sunday. The network said that although the knife he was holding was fake, the police found a real knife in his bag and arrested the man on charges of violating the Firearm and Sword Control Law. The network said the man shouted "Apprehend America" and "I wanted to make a scene" when he was being restrained by the police. No injuries were reported.

