



Morning Alert - Tuesday, November 7, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

All networks gave extensive coverage to a banquet held in honor of President Trump at the Akasaka Palace on Monday evening, noting that he will leave for South Korea this morning.

All national papers led with yesterday's summit between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe, focusing on their agreement to apply "maximum pressure" on North Korea.

## PRESIDENT TRUMP'S VISIT TO JAPAN

### U.S., Japan agree to put "maximum pressure" on DPRK

All papers gave prominent front- and inside-page play to yesterday's summit between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe, during which they agreed to step up sanctions against North Korea to the maximum extent possible in order to press the defiant regime to relinquish its nuclear and missile ambitions. Abe explained his administration's plan to apply unilateral economic sanctions on additional DPRK individuals and entities, while the President conveyed Washington's idea of putting Pyongyang back on its list of state sponsors of terrorism. The President reaffirmed the U.S. defense commitment to Japan through the nuclear umbrella and other military means. They agreed to enhance their bilateral cooperation and trilateral coordination with South Korea so as to encourage China to rein in North Korea. According to Nikkei, President Trump and PM Abe discussed the possible military options that the U.S. could take, but did not take up the issue of evacuating American and Japanese citizens from South Korea in the event of a contingency.

The two leaders also agreed to promote the joint initiative of creating a "free and open Indo-Pacific" region with China's maritime advancement in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean in mind.

On the economic front, although the President demanded that Japan reduce its trade surplus with the United States, he did not mention a bilateral FTA. They agreed to have Vice President Pence and Deputy Prime Minister Abe continue to explore measures to rectify the trade imbalance at the U.S.-Japan economic dialogue.

### **U.S., Japanese leaders in agreement on security, disagree on trade**

All papers wrote that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe appeared to be completely in sync on the diplomatic and security fronts, hence successfully highlighting the strong bonds between the two allies. They agreed to increase pressure on North Korea, and Abe was responsive to the President's call for Japan to procure more U.S.-made defense equipment. The two leaders also agreed to jointly pursue the "free and open Indo-Pacific" initiative that was originally proposed by the premier, with Yomiuri saying it is unusual for a U.S. administration to endorse a foreign policy strategy formulated by the Japanese. Nikkei conjectured that the two nations are anxious to pursue this initiative to address concern about declining U.S. presence in East Asia compared with China. While quoting an unnamed senior White House official as saying "it is wrong to assume that this initiative is meant to contain China," Mainichi said the Trump administration does not want to provoke China ahead of the President's trip to Beijing where he would like to elicit Chinese cooperation in deterring North Korea.

The papers said, however, that the President was not conciliatory at all on the economic front, emphasizing that he has repeatedly complained about the bilateral trade imbalance during his visit to Tokyo. He was quoted as saying in his meeting with American and Japanese businessmen yesterday: "Our trade with Japan is not fair and it's not open." He also said in a press conference with Abe: "We seek equal and reliable access for American exports to Japan's markets in order to eliminate our chronic trade imbalances and deficits with Japan." However, Mainichi said GOJ officials heaved a sigh of relief as the President did not refer to an FTA this time. Asahi speculated that the U.S. leader elected not to mention an FTA perhaps based on the judgement that doing so would undermine the U.S.-Japan alliance at a time when tensions are rising on the Korean Peninsula. However, the GOJ is afraid that the President will eventually put strong pressure on Tokyo to make concessions on the trade front in exchange for offering greater security cooperation.

In a related story, Asahi wrote that the Japanese business community represented by the participants in the business roundtable with the President at the Ambassador's residence on Monday morning is alarmed by the Trump administration's steadfast hard line on the trade front despite its considerable investment and job creation in the United States.

### **President Trump urges Japan to purchase more U.S. defense equipment**

Asahi reported that some Japanese officials were surprised by President Trump's strong "sales pitch" for American weapons systems, including F-35 fighters, during their press conference on Monday. As Prime Minister Abe stated in response that Japan "will be buying more from the United States," the daily said the Abe administration appears to be going along with the Trump administration's "Buy

American” campaign. A Defense Ministry source expressed apprehension that specific demands for procuring American defense hardware will be made one after another. Nikkei and Sankei ran similar stories, with the former saying that some GOJ officials are not eager to procure more U.S. defense equipment because it is very expensive.

### **U.S., Japan to strengthen cooperation in energy exports**

Yomiuri wrote that the governments of the U.S. and Japan strengthened cooperation in the energy sector through the latest meetings between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe. According to the paper, the U.S. and Japanese leaders agreed on Monday to establish a strategic energy partnership under which the U.S. and Japan will strengthen their cooperation in exporting technology on energy infrastructure development to emerging nations in Asia and Africa. The Abe administration will support the United States’ efforts to expand shale gas exports through infrastructure development based on the view that expanded exports of shale gas will help reduce U.S. trade deficits. Nikkei and Mainichi ran similar reports.

Yomiuri also wrote that in response to the United States’ dissatisfaction with auto safety standards in Japan, Tokyo made concessions at the bilateral meeting on Monday on such issues as safety standards and tax relief measures for environmentally friendly cars. Japan also said it would carefully review its plan to reduce pharmaceutical prices in Japan in response to the U.S. call to maintain them. According to the paper, differences remained between the U.S. and Japan over U.S. beef exports to Japan. The paper wrote that the U.S. may ask Japan to open its market further to reduce the bilateral trade deficit because Washington is not completely satisfied with Japan’s concessions.

### **Two governments’ readouts on Abe-Trump meeting differ**

Tokyo Shimbun wrote that there were discrepancies between the two government’s readouts on the U.S.-Japan summit. While the Japanese document mentioned that Prime Minister Abe conveyed to President Trump Okinawa’s concern about accidents and incidents caused by the U.S. military, no reference to this topic was made in the U.S. announcement. With regard to economic issues, the U.S. side explained that the President underscored the importance of correcting the trade imbalance, but the Japanese side only said that it is “confident that a correction will be made.”

### **President Trump pledges support to resolve abduction issue**

All papers front-paged reports on President Trump’s meeting with the families of the Japanese abductees at the Akasaka Palace on Monday. The papers wrote that during their 30-minute meeting, the President pledged to make efforts to help bring Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea back home by saying that he heard very sad stories from the families and that he will work closely with Prime Minister Abe to bring the abductees back to their loved ones. The President referred to the abductions during a joint press conference he held with the prime minister after the meeting with the abductees’ families by saying: “Now the spotlight is on and perhaps we can have some very

good luck.... If Kim Jong Un would send them back, that would be the start of something very special.”

According to the people who attended the meeting, President Trump shook hands with each of the 17 family members, including Sakie Yokota, the mother of Megumi Yokota, who was kidnapped at the age of 13, and listened closely to their stories. Hitomi Soga, an abductee who was returned to Japan in 2002 but has not seen her mother since they were abducted together in 1978, also took part in the gathering. This was the first time for a U.S. president to meet with a returned abductee.

The family members held a news conference after their meeting with President Trump and expressed gratitude to the President for sympathizing with their suffering and expressed hope that progress will be made on the issue.

Mainichi wrote that efforts by NSC Senior Director for Asian Affairs Pottinger to urge the President to meet with the abductees’ families helped realize the meeting on Monday. According to the paper, when he met with Takuya Yokota, the brother of Megumi Yokota, on Sept. 13 in Washington, Pottinger promised him that he would convey Yokota’s desire for President Trump to meet with his parents by citing the Marines’ motto, “No One Left Behind.”

### **Emperor has “very amicable” meeting with President Trump**

All Monday evening papers reported on Monday’s meeting between President Trump and Emperor Akihito, noting that the two enjoyed a “very amicable” conversation, according to the Imperial Household Agency. The President reportedly expressed respect to the Emperor by saying: “As I am told that you are deeply admired by all people, I am greatly honored to be able to meet you today.” In reply to a question from the Emperor about his trip to Japan, the President said: “It has gone very well. I’ve had in-depth discussions with Prime Minister Abe on a range of issues, such as North Korea, U.S.-Japan defense cooperation, and trade. The current U.S.-Japan relations are better than ever.” During the 20-minute meeting, the Emperor also reportedly offered condolences for the victims of Sunday’s mass shooting at a Texas church.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Trade Minister Seko meets with USTR Lighthizer**

Asahi and Nikkei reported that Trade Minister Seko and visiting USTR Lighthizer held talks on Monday and exchanged views on trade and investment rules in the Asia-Pacific region and “measures to rectify unfair trade practices by third countries.” According to the Japanese politician, the issue of a bilateral FTA did not come up.

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