


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Friday, December 1, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that the Imperial Household Council will meet for the first time in about 25 years today to discuss the date of the Emperor's abdication. All other networks continued to report on the assault case involving sumo grand champion Harumafuji.

Top stories in national dailies included potentially illegal political donations by eight firms in 2016 (Asahi); LDP lawmaker Sonoda's failure to report a 2 million yen political donation in 2013 (Mainichi); a GOJ plan to increase nursing-care benefits in FY 2018 (Yomiuri); temporary staffing agencies' negotiations with client businesses for an increase in fees for supplying general office workers (Nikkei); and a GOJ plan to increase Japan's defense budget to a record 5.2 trillion yen (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

U.S. urges all nations to cut off ties with North Korea

All papers reported on remarks made by Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley at an emergency UN Security Council meeting on Wednesday, during which she called on all countries to cut off all ties with North Korea while warning Pyongyang that its regime will be annihilated if war breaks out. Ambassador Haley also stated that China must demonstrate leadership by restricting oil exports to North Korea. However, China's Deputy Ambassador Wu Haitao and Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia stressed the need for the United States and South Korea to suspend their joint military exercises in exchange for North Korea's halt to its nuclear and missile development.

Sankei wrote that the gap between Washington and Beijing over how to deal with North Korea has not narrowed. Asahi wrote that although international pressure on China to do more to press the DPRK is building, China is concerned that a complete halt to the supply of oil to the North could

trigger the collapse of the Kim regime. Nikkei wrote that although the United States is considering the idea of proposing the inspection of North Korean ships as an additional sanction, China and Russia remain wary of the idea.

Foreign Minister Kono to chair UNSC meeting

Asahi wrote that Foreign Minister Kono will chair a ministerial meeting of the UN Security Council that will be held on Dec. 15 to discuss North Korea, as Japan will chair the council in December. According to the paper, UN Secretary General Guterres is making arrangements to visit Japan around Dec. 14 for talks with Prime Minister Abe. The paper also wrote that Japan will study additional sanctions of its own that will cut the flow of funds to North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

South Korea informs Japan of humanitarian assistance to North

Sankei wrote that the South Korean government notified Japan early this week that it has begun procedures for providing humanitarian assistance to North Korea. The ROK government decided on Sep. 21 to provide assistance worth \$8 million for the DPRK via the WFP and UNICEF. The paper wrote that the planned assistance to North Korea could undermine the trilateral cooperation between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea because Washington and Tokyo are calling on the international community to completely implement UNSC sanctions resolutions.

LDP committee discusses San Francisco's acceptance of donation of comfort women statues

Sankei wrote that in response to San Francisco's acceptance of a donation of a set of comfort women statues from a private organization, the LDP held a special committee meeting on Thursday. Committee chair Nakasone stated that it is necessary to preempt moves to erect such monuments in the United States and elsewhere and enhance PR efforts to correct misinformation.

White House mulling plan to dismiss Secretary Tillerson

All commercial networks reported this morning on a New York Times story saying that senior USG officials indicated that the White House is considering a plan to dismiss Secretary of State Tillerson within the next several weeks and replace him with CIA Director Pompeo. The networks said it is not clear whether the President has given final approval for the plan. NTV said while Secretary Tillerson places importance on dialogue with North Korea, Pompeo is reportedly positive about taking military action, adding that there is a possibility that the U.S. administration will take a harder line against the North should the Secretary be replaced. Most papers ran similar reports.

SECURITY

USFJ relaxes alcohol restrictions imposed after fatal crash in Okinawa

Sankei ran a Kyodo story saying that it has learned from a Stars and Stripes report that the USFJ on Thursday partly relaxed the tightened discipline measures imposed following the arrest of a Marine

over his alleged involvement in a recent fatal accident. The revised rules, which took effect at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, allow service members to purchase alcoholic beverages on base and drink them in their on- or off-base residences. But the purchase or consumption of alcohol off-base is still not permitted with the exception of service members' own residences.

