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# JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Monday, December 4, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report on a CNN story that North Korea's new ICBM likely broke up upon re-entry into the atmosphere. NTV led with a report on Hawaii's resumption of its monthly testing of warning sirens on Dec. 1 amid fears of a North Korean missile attack. Other networks continued to give top play to reports on the alleged assault by Harumafuji.

Main front-page items in national papers included TEPCO's business restructuring plan and a GOJ idea to reduce the corporate tax for companies willing to increase wages and to invest in the Internet of Things and other innovative technology.

## INTERNATIONAL

### U.S., Japan defense chiefs agree to put "visible pressure" on DPRK

Saturday morning's Nikkei, Yomiuri, Mainichi, and Sankei reported that Defense Minister Onodera spoke by phone with Secretary of Defense Mattis for about 30 minutes on Friday following the ICBM launch by North Korea. Nikkei wrote that the two defense chiefs agreed to continue to apply "visible pressure" on North Korea, such as joint military exercises between the U.S. military and the SDF, to prevent North Korea from taking further provocations. Onodera also reportedly asked for U.S. cooperation in developing new defense equipment such as Aegis Ashore. Secretary Mattis reportedly responded by saying he would like to cooperate. The daily added that Secretary Mattis reiterated the U.S. position of defending Japan under "extended deterrence." The defense chiefs also reportedly confirmed close trilateral cooperation between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea.

### DPRK missile probably broke up upon reentry

Most Monday papers took up a CNN report on the disclosure by a senior Trump administration official that North Korea's latest intercontinental ballistic missile did not survive re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere after it was tested last week. The Japanese dailies explained that if this analysis is correct, North Korea probably has not been able to finalize the reentry technology that is critical when deploying long-range ballistic missiles on an operational basis.

### **U.S., South Korea to begin joint exercise to deter North Korea**

Monday's Nikkei and Mainichi wrote that the USAF and the ROK Air Force plan to conduct air battle training in South Korean airspace for five days through Friday, noting that since the major exercise will involve precision airstrike drills targeting mock DPRK missile launchers and artillery, North Korea is bound to react strongly. The DPRK Foreign Ministry issued a statement yesterday condemning the joint practice by saying that the U.S. and South Korea are pushing the Korean Peninsula closer to war.

### **North Korea proposed talks with ex-U.S. official on eight different occasions**

This morning's Sankei led with an interview with Vice President Douglas Paal of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who disclosed that he has been invited to visit North Korea or hold talks with DPRK officials in a third country by the Kim Jong Un regime via an intermediary on at least eight different occasions since January this year. Although Pyongyang was apparently interested in learning the Trump administration's DPRK policy from the former senior USG official, he has reportedly rejected the overtures.

### **Foreign Minister Kono calls on Chinese envoy to increase pressure on North**

Sankei reported on Saturday that Foreign Minister Kono met with Chinese Ambassador to Japan Cheng Yonghua at MOFA on Friday. During the meeting, Kono reportedly criticized North Korea for recently launching an ICBM, and called for China to play a constructive role in increasing pressure on the North. The Japanese foreign minister also apparently urged China to stop providing oil to the North. The paper wrote that although the Chinese ambassador expressed support for Kono's remarks, he also said China will seek to resolve the issue through dialogue. Meanwhile, the paper said the officials agreed on the need for North Korea's denuclearization and stronger cooperation between Japan and China. Yomiuri carried a similar story.

### **Komeito chief meets with Chinese President Xi**

All Saturday morning papers reported that Komeito Party Representative Yamaguchi met with Chinese President Xi in Beijing on Friday and handed him a letter from Prime Minister Abe. Yomiuri wrote that this was the first time for Yamaguchi to meet with Xi since October 2015, adding that he called for Chinese cooperation in resolving the North Korean nuclear and missile issues and a visit to Japan by President Xi next year. According to Yamaguchi, President Xi responded by smiling and nodding.

Yomiuri wrote that prior to his meeting with Xi, Yamaguchi met with Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang. According to Japanese officials who attended the meeting, Wang told Yamaguchi: "Although [China and North Korea] were bound by blood in the past, the positions of the two nations are in conflict over the nuclear issue." The paper said it is extremely rare for a member of the Chinese leadership to describe China's relationship with North Korea as "in conflict." The daily wrote that Wang's remarks demonstrate China's frustration with North Korea because it apparently has no intention to stop developing missiles.

### **GOJ devises guidelines on private sector's participation in China's "Belt and Road" initiative**

This morning's Mainichi wrote in a front-page article that the GOJ has put together a set of guidelines concerning Japanese companies' possible participation in China's "One Belt, One Road" transcontinental trade promotion initiative. According to the guidelines, Japanese firms are expected to offer support for Chinese business investment abroad in such sectors as the environment and product distribution.

### **South Korean foreign minister to visit Japan later this month**

Saturday morning's Asahi and Yomiuri reported that several sources disclosed that the governments of Japan and South Korea are making arrangements for South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha to visit Japan for the first time in late December. Asahi wrote that the ROK government is planning to announce sometime this month the results of an investigation into the 2015 comfort women agreement, in which the two governments agreed that the issue would be "finally and irreversibly resolved," adding that the South Korean foreign minister is expected to explain the process and government policy to the Japanese side. The daily added, however, that the results could create a rift between Japan and South Korea.

### **U.S. academic criticizes ROK for inviting former comfort woman to state banquet**

Saturday morning's Yomiuri carried a report from Washington saying that Columbia University Professor Emeritus Gerald Curtis strongly criticized South Korean President Moon for inviting a former comfort woman to the state banquet for President Trump on Nov. 7. He was quoted as saying at a symposium held in Washington on Thursday: "It was extremely inappropriate." According to the paper, Curtis bitterly criticized South Korea for what he called a "dirty trick that preyed on Japan's weakness." The daily wrote that former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Armacost also expressed discontent with the fact that the 2015 comfort women agreement has not been implemented. The symposium was organized by the Japan Institute of International Affairs on the topic of history perception.

### **Myanmar president to visit Japan this month**

Saturday morning's Nikkei reported that it learned from a diplomatic source on Friday that President Htin Kyaw of Myanmar will make an official visit to Japan to attend the UHC Forum 2017, an

international forum on health and medical policy to be held in Tokyo from Dec. 12 to 15. The paper wrote that President Htin Kyaw is a close aide to State Councilor Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's de facto leader.

## SECURITY

### **Foreign Minister Kono meets with Okinawa Governor Onaga**

Sunday morning's Nikkei, Mainichi, and Sankei reported on a meeting between Foreign Minister Kono and Okinawa Governor Onaga at the Okinawa Prefectural Office on Saturday. The papers said the governor asked Kono to give up relocating the Futenma base to Henoko and called for a drastic review of the SOFA. According to Mainichi, Kono responded by saying that the role of the USFJ is becoming more important in view of the North Korean situation and that he will work on reducing the "burden" on Okinawa. Sankei added that the foreign minister later met with Lt. Gen. Nicholson, the Okinawa Area Coordinator, at a Naha hotel.

### **SDF to join U.S. Air Force's outer space security exercise for first time**

Saturday morning's Nikkei and Mainichi reported that the GOJ has decided on Friday to have the SDF participate for the first time in a tabletop exercise on outer space security to be conducted by the U.S. Air Force in 2018. According to Nikkei, the exercise will be based on a scenario in which U.S. and Japanese satellites are interfered with or attacked in outer space. Mainichi wrote that MOD officials have explained that joining the exercise "is significant from the viewpoint of strengthening U.S.-Japan cooperation in outer space and enhancing Japan's space system functionality."

### **Second tranche of carrier-borne airplane transfer to Iwakuni completed**

Monday's Tokyo Shimbun wrote that the Defense Ministry has informed the Iwakuni municipal government that the relocation of some 30 carrier-borne aircraft, including FA-18s, from NAF Atsugi to MCAS Iwakuni was completed on Dec. 1. The daily said the latest transfer, which began on Nov. 28, was the second of its kind, noting that a total of 61 U.S. military planes will have been moved to the Marine base from Atsugi by next May.

### **GOJ to conduct evacuation training in Tokyo early next year**

Sunday morning's Sankei reported that the GOJ decided on Saturday to carry out an evacuation drill in the Tokyo area as early as next January based on the scenario of North Korea attacking Japan with a ballistic missile. This will be the first training of this type to be held in a populated area such as Tokyo. The daily said several GOJ sources said that the GOJ decided to conduct the drill in view of the need for training in urban areas that could become targets of missile attacks.

### **GOJ to introduce equipment to detect toxic agents from a distance**

This morning's Yomiuri front-paged a story claiming that the Abe administration has decided to procure devices that can detect poisonous gasses from a distance of five kilometers in order to head off terror attacks using chemical agents in preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. The

equipment involving an X-ray camera can detect as many as 50 different types of gasses, such as sarin.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Toshiba, Western Digital to reach out of court settlement**

Today's Asahi front-paged a finding that Toshiba and Western Digital have agreed to resolve a dispute over the former's plan to sell its lucrative flash memory division to a third party without resorting to court procedures, saying that both firms will withdraw lawsuits regarding the planned sale that each has filed against the other party. As a result of the out-of-court settlement, the beleaguered Japanese electronics giant will be able to proceed with the sale of Toshiba Memory to a tripartite coalition involving U.S. Bain Capital and South Korean SK Hynix and hence overcome the prolonged business crisis.

### **New Zealand minister voices hope for early TPP effectuation**

Monday's Yomiuri published an interview with New Zealand Minister for Trade and Export Growth Parker, who voiced hope for the early effectuation of a TPP pact that the leaders of the 11 members agreed to when they gathered in Vietnam last month.

### **Nippon Paint decides not to purchase American company**

Saturday morning's Asahi and Nikkei reported that Nippon Paint Holdings Co. terminated on Dec. 1 negotiations for the purchase of the U.S. company Axalta Coating Systems. Asahi wrote that the two companies were unable to reach an agreement on the purchase price, which was expected to be more than one trillion yen. The paper said Nippon Paint will continue to consider other major acquisition deals.

### **EU relaxes regulations on imports of Fukushima rice**

Saturday morning's Asahi, Yomiuri, and Sankei reported that the EU relaxed on Dec. 1 the import regulations it had imposed on Japanese agricultural products, including Fukushima rice, since the Fukushima nuclear accident. Asahi said following this move by the EU, the GOJ is planning to urge other nations and regions to lift their regulations. The paper wrote that nine nations and regions, including the U.S., Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, and South Korea, continue to prohibit imports of certain Japanese agricultural products.

### **Japanese megabanks ban loans to manufacturers of cluster munitions**

Saturday morning's Nikkei reported that Japanese megabanks will stop providing loans to companies manufacturing cluster munitions, which have been internationally criticized as inhumane. The daily said following Mitsui-Sumitomo Bank's announcement in September of a total ban on such loans, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group announced a similar ban on Dec. 1. According the paper, Mizuho Bank is also planning to ban loans to such manufacturers.

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