



Morning Alert - Wednesday, April 4, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK and Fuji TV gave top play to reports that four people were injured after a woman allegedly opened fire at YouTube's headquarters in California on Tuesday afternoon. TBS and TV Asahi led with reports on the discovery of daily activity logs of GSDF logistical operations in Iraq despite the MOD's earlier explanation at the Diet that no such reports existed. NTV reported on comedian Takeshi Kitano's decision to leave the agency that he founded in 1988.

Top stories in national dailies included a survey showing that there are more than 2,200 makeshift cafeterias for disadvantaged children in Japan (Asahi, Mainichi); a plan by JR East to install security cameras in trains as part of measures to step up security ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics (Yomiuri); a plan by Japanese online broker Monex Group to take over Coincheck, a Japanese cryptocurrency exchange that suffered a hacking attack recently (Nikkei); and an agreement reached between the LDP and Komeito Party on casino legislation (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

South Korea to seek denuclearization declaration in summit with DPRK

Mainichi wrote from Seoul that an official of the presidential office of South Korea disclosed on Tuesday that South Korea is making arrangements to adopt a denuclearization declaration at its summit with North Korea scheduled for April 27. The official reportedly said that it is a "matter of course" to seek such a declaration because denuclearization and peace building are the most crucial items on the agenda for the summit. Nikkei ran a similar report speculating that the idea is intended to demonstrate that Seoul is playing a key role as a mediator by paving the way for denuclearization ahead of the proposed U.S.-DPRK summit in May. Sankei wrote that South Korea is apparently

caught between the United States and the DPRK because Washington is demanding complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization, while Pyongyang is seeking steps toward denuclearization in stages.

U.S. think tank questions Kono's remark on DPRK's preparation for nuclear test

Mainichi, Yomiuri, and Nikkei wrote that the U.S.-Korea Institute of Johns Hopkins University said on its 38 North website on Monday that Foreign Minister Kono's remarks on March 31 that North Korea appears to be making preparations for another nuclear test are not supported by recent information obtained from commercial satellite imagery. Kono reportedly said in a speech in Kochi on Saturday that North Korea appears to be making active preparations for a nuclear test by removing soil from the tunnel at the nuclear test site, but did not cite the source of the information. According to the three papers, Kono reiterated on Tuesday that North Korea's activities at the test site appear to be continuing based on available information. Nikkei speculated that Kono's remarks were intended to emphasize the need to maintain the sanctions and international unity against the DPRK. However, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson expressed displeasure with Kono's remarks, saying at a press conference that Beijing hopes nothing will hinder recent efforts to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

SECURITY

U.S. to deploy Ospreys at Yokota by summer

All dailies wrote that the U.S. Forces in Japan announced on Tuesday that five Air Force CV-22 Ospreys will arrive at Yokota Air Base later this week. They will be officially deployed by summer after conducting training over the next few months, and the U.S. military plans to deploy a total of 10 Ospreys and about 450 personnel to the air base in stages over the next several years. The Ospreys' arrival comes 18 months earlier than the original plan to deploy them between October 2019 and September 2020. The Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a joint statement on Tuesday saying that Japan will work with the United States to give maximum consideration to safety and minimize the impact of the deployment on local communities. This will be the first time for Ospreys to be deployed in Japan in a location outside Okinawa.

MSDF refueled U.S. Navy ships 17 times last year

Asahi wrote that it has learned from multiple GOJ sources that MSDF replenishment vessels provided a total of about 5,536 kiloliters of fuel and other supplies on 17 occasions from May through December 2017 to U.S. Navy Aegis ships operating in the Sea of Japan and other areas for warning and surveillance operations against North Korea's ballistic missile launches. The paper wrote that the MSDF provided the fuel to the U.S. Navy ships as part of a new mission based on the acquisition and cross-servicing agreement between the United States and Japan that was revised in April 2017 under Japan's new security laws that went into force in March 2016. Asahi claimed that these operations demonstrate deepening cooperation between the U.S. military and the SDF.

ECONOMY

LDP, Komeito agree on casino bill

All national dailies reported on an agreement reached on Tuesday between the LDP and Komeito Party on legislation on implementing “integrated resorts” (IR) featuring casinos. Under the bill, Japanese and foreign residents of Japan will be charged an admission fee of 6,000 yen to enter the facilities while foreign visitors will be allowed to enter free of charge. The two parties plan to submit the bill to the Diet later this month and the government hopes to enact it by the end of the current Diet session on June 20. The bill will also include a plan to build IR facilities in up to three locations and limit casino visits by Japanese residents to three times a week and ten times a month. Nikkei wrote that competition among local governments to host IR facilities will now begin.

