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# JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Morning Alert - Friday, April 20, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK gave top play to the eruption of a volcano on the border of Kagoshima and Miyazaki prefectures on Thursday. All commercial networks continued to give top play to reports on Vice Finance Minister Fukuda's denial of a sexual harassment allegation against him despite his announcement that he intends to resign. Opposition parties are reportedly calling on Finance Minister Aso to resign as well. All national dailies gave top play to the U.S.-Japan summit.

## U.S.-JAPAN SUMMIT

### U.S. and Japanese leaders meet, differences over trade remain

All national dailies gave extensive top play to the two-day summit between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe at Mar-a-Lago, focusing on their second day of talks and the post-summit joint press conference.

Asahi wrote that although the two leaders agreed to establish a new framework to discuss trade led by USTR Lighthizer and Economic Revitalization Minister Motegi under the U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue, Japan did not achieve its reported goals of exemption from the steel tariff and the U.S.'s return to the TPP. The paper highlighted the President's remarks at the joint press conference saying: "I don't want to go back into TPP.... I like bilateral better. I think it's better for our country, I think it's better for our workers and I much would prefer a bilateral deal. A deal directly with Japan." Asahi also quoted Ambassador Hagerty as telling reporters on Wednesday: "Japan has entered into trade agreements already with the TPP-11 and with the European Union. We do not want to be in a situation where U.S. companies are placed at a disadvantage." The paper wrote that although the

prime minister was successful in winning the President's agreement to raise the abduction issue at his planned talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, he was unable to narrow their differences over trade.

Yomiuri opined that Prime Minister Abe was able to divert market-opening pressure from the United States for now through agreement on the establishment of a new framework within the Economic Dialogue to discuss trade, but it was made clear that there are major differences between the two nations because Washington wants to open the Japanese market through bilateral negotiations and Japan is hoping that the United States will return to the TPP. Meanwhile, the paper wrote that Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Nishimura told reporters after the summit that the two leaders did not discuss currency issues.

Nikkei, noting that Prime Minister Abe spent more than ten hours with President Trump in total on April 17 and 18, claimed that although he was able to demonstrate his close relationship with the President, there are clear differences between the two leaders on trade. Nikkei added that President Trump stated at a joint press conference: "We're exploring ways to expedite the sale of American military equipment to Japan." The paper conjectured that this remark indicated the President's aim to urge Japan to expand its procurement of defense equipment from the United States by shortening delivery time.

Mainichi, running the front page headline "U.S. Prefers Bilateral Trade Deal with Japan," wrote that the President, while agreeing to cooperate closely on the denuclearization of North Korea, expressed strong dissatisfaction with the U.S. trade deficit with Japan. The paper predicted that Japan may face tough negotiations in the future, including calls for bilateral negotiations on farm products and autos.

Sankei wrote that through the new trade negotiation framework the United States and Japan will hold specific discussions on bilateral trade that will benefit both nations by overcoming their differences regarding the TPP and a possible bilateral trade agreement. The paper conjectured that although the two nations avoided a serious confrontation over trade by establishing the new framework, they are merely deferring action and the trade dispute between the two nations may intensify if Washington and Tokyo fail to produce tangible results.

Concerning North Korea, Asahi wrote that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe demonstrated their strong cooperation, saying that in addition to the abduction issue, one of Japan's major concerns was whether it would be able to win a U.S. commitment to demand that the DPRK abolish its short- and mid-range missiles capable of reaching Japan.

### **President Trump tough on trade in U.S.-Japan summit**

All Thursday evening papers reported heavily on the second day of the U.S.-Japan summit. Nikkei projected that Tokyo will probably be put in a difficult position since Washington is likely to put

pressure on it to present concrete measures to correct the trade imbalance. Mainichi and Tokyo Shimbun wrote that the Trump administration appears to be impatient to obtain concessions from Japan very quickly on the trade front ahead of the November midterm elections, adding that the GOJ may try to deflect U.S. pressure under the new forum by patiently explaining the merits of the CPTPP.

### **Ambassador Hagerty on the summit**

In addition to Asahi and Yomiuri, Kyodo News, NHK, and NHK WORLD reported on remarks made by Ambassador Hagerty to Japanese reporters at Mar-a-Lago, with NHK quoting the Ambassador as saying: “The two leaders had very deep and thoughtful discussions about topics including the DPRK and our strategy in negotiations that are upcoming between the President and Kim Jong Un.” Commenting on the announced talks between USTR Lighthizer and Economic Revitalization Minister Motegi under the aegis of the Economic Dialogue, Ambassador Hagerty said he expected quick progress but that there was a lot of work to do, according to Bloomberg. South Korea’s Yonhap and other regional outlets also covered Ambassador Hagerty’s press engagements.

### **President Trump, PM Abe reaffirm Senkakus covered by Article V of bilateral security treaty**

Yomiuri wrote that the White House announced on Wednesday that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe reaffirmed at their summit that Article V of the U.S.-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security covers the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea and that they oppose any unilateral action that seeks to change the status quo.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Senior U.S. diplomat to visit Japan, South Korea**

Thursday evening’s Nikkei published a Kyodo report from Washington saying that Acting Assistant Secretary of State Thornton will visit South Korea and Japan beginning on April 22, noting that during her six-day trip to East Asia, she is expected to confirm trilateral coordination toward North Korea ahead of President Trump’s planned summit with Kim Jong Un. She is also likely to exchange views on mutual cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **FM Kono to propose at G7 a framework to discuss chemical weapons**

Asahi wrote that it has learned from a MOFA source that in response to the suspected use of chemical weapons in Syria, Foreign Minister Kono plans to propose at the G7 foreign ministerial meeting to be held on April 22 the idea of setting up under the UN Security Council a new international framework to identify users of chemical weapons. The GOJ envisages that the team will consist of law enforcement officials as well as chemical and medical experts, and will work with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

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