



Morning Alert - Wednesday, June 13, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

All TV networks and national dailies led with extensive reports on the U.S.-DPRK summit held in Singapore on Tuesday.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Kim reaffirms commitment to denuclearization, but specifics lacking

All papers gave prominent front-and inside-page play to yesterday's landmark meeting in Singapore between President Trump and Kim Jong Un, highlighting their signing of a joint statement in which the DPRK leader reaffirmed his "firm and unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" in exchange for the President's pledge to provide regime guarantees. The articles noted that the statement did not mention the phrase "complete, verifiable, and irreversible" denuclearization, lacked specifics on the scope and speed of denuclearization, and did not mention a verification mechanism. The papers also commented the joint statement did not refer to bringing an end to the Korean War or address other issues such as North Korea's biological and chemical weapons and ballistic missile programs.

The President told the press in Singapore after the summit that such details will be worked out by lower-ranking officials. The U.S. leader stated that the existing economic sanctions will remain in place. He added that he will travel to North Korea at an appropriate time in the future and that Kim has accepted his invitation to visit the White House. As for the abduction issue, the President said: "I brought it up. Absolutely. And they're going to be working on that.... We didn't put it down in the document, but it will be worked on."

### President Trump briefs Abe on talks with North Korean leader

All papers reported that President Trump phoned Prime Minister Abe Tuesday evening while en route to Washington to brief him on the outcome of his summit with Kim Jong Un, including their conversation on the abduction issue. According to a GOJ source cited by Yomiuri, Kim's response to the President's reference to the abduction issue was "not negative." Asahi quoted a source close to the premier as saying: "The President brought up the abductions in conjunction with economic support." While declining to disclose Kim's reaction to the President's reference to the issue, PM Abe reportedly told the press after the call: "As for the abductions, I am determined to deal directly with North Korea and resolve the issue with strong support from President Trump.... It is significant that Kim Jong Un clearly promised President Trump that North Korea will completely denuclearize." The prime minister separately expressed support for the joint statement earlier in the day by saying: "It is a first step toward a comprehensive settlement of the outstanding issues involving North Korea."

### **"Homework" still needs to be done to achieve denuclearization**

All papers asserted that the U.S.-DPRK joint statement on the Singapore summit was light on details on denuclearization and there is still a lot of homework to be done by working level officials led by Secretary Pompeo and National Security Advisor Bolton to draft a detailed roadmap to realize a nuclear-free North Korea. The dailies commented that Japanese officials and others were disappointed that the President did not obtain a commitment from Kim to denuclearization in a "verifiable and irreversible" manner. According to Sankei, an unnamed high-ranking GOJ official called the joint statement "bad" when it comes to the nuclear and missile issues since the President "made concessions." Mainichi reported that Japanese officials are still skeptical of Kim's commitment to denuclearization in the absence of a detailed roadmap that includes a timetable and a verification mechanism.

The papers conjectured that as the U.S. leader announced the discontinuation of U.S.-ROK exercises, which he said are "tremendously expensive" and "provocative," because he was keen to dispel North Korea's lingering concern about its security. While noting that the two leaders were apparently eager to play up reconciliation to end the mutual hostility that has lasted since the start of the Korean War in 1950, Nikkei expressed concern that the Kim regime may try to delay denuclearization in the absence of a concrete roadmap. The daily asserted that it is hard to imagine that Kim Jong Un would start the denuclearization process before the U.S. presidential election in 2020.

Mainichi's foreign news editor wrote in a front-page article that the fact that Kim personally expressed a firm commitment to denuclearization is very significant since he is the supreme ruler of North Korea. The author also said it is good that the two leaders will no longer exchange bellicose rhetoric and have successfully established mutual trust. However, he voiced concern that the President may have been too soft on North Korea. Yomiuri acknowledged the importance that the DPRK leader, who has pursued nuclear programs relentlessly, has changed course to move toward

denuclearization, speculating that the President prioritized building personal bonds and confidence with his North Korean counterpart before going into specifics on denuclearization. While voicing misgivings about the President's conciliatory line toward Pyongyang, Sankei opined that the President's statement in the press conference that the existing sanctions will remain in place for the time being is encouraging.

### **Allies worried about President Trump's reference to discontinuation of military drills**

Asahi highlighted President Trump's remarks to the press in Singapore that joint exercises between the U.S. and South Korean militaries will be halted. Together with his separate reference in the same press event to his desire to pull U.S. troops out of the Korean Peninsula and hesitancy about deploying strategic assets such as nuclear bombers based in Guam to the region, the President's intention to discontinue the exercises with South Korea was projected to raise concerns among regional allies, including Japan, since the U.S. military presence in East Asia could weaken amid China's rapid military expansion. Mainichi filed a similar story, predicting that Japan's security would be seriously affected in the event of a withdrawal or reduction in the approximately 20,000 U.S. troops in South Korea because it would greatly upset the military balance in Northeast Asia.

### **Japan begins seeking contact with DPRK**

All dailies projected that the GOJ is likely to launch diplomatic outreach toward North Korea to urge it to come to the negotiating table with the goal of resolving the abduction issue, speculating that Japanese diplomats will seek contact with DPRK officials who are expected to take part in an international conference to be convened in Ulaanbaatar later this week. According to the papers, the premier may try to arrange a brief conversation with Kim Jong Un in the event that the two leaders choose to attend an international economic forum to be hosted by Russian President Putin in Vladivostok in mid-September. Nikkei added that the GOJ may be put in a very difficult position if North Korea offers to return only a few of the 12 certified abductees, adding that the Japanese people would probably not be enthusiastic about providing massive economic aid under such a scenario.

## **SECURITY**

### **Landfill work to begin off Camp Schwab in mid-August**

All papers wrote that the Okinawa Defense Bureau on Tuesday notified the Okinawa prefectural government that it plans to commence on Aug. 17 the work of pouring dirt and sand into waters off Camp Schwab for the construction of the Futenma replacement facility. The landfill operation will run through March 31 next year. Governor Onaga reportedly commented on this development by saying: "I will withdraw the landfill permit without fail or hesitation" if any major problems related to environmental protection occur as a result of the landfill work.

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