



Morning Alert - Tuesday, July 24, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

All networks and most national papers continued to give extensive top coverage to the severe heat wave in Japan.

INTERNATIONAL

Hundreds of U.S. military volunteers assist disaster relief effort in Yamaguchi

Nikkei wrote that about 490 U.S. Marines from MCAS Iwakuni have voluntarily engaged in disaster relief for flood victims by helping them clean up and restore areas severely damaged by torrential rains. Personnel from the U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka also participated in cleanup efforts in Kurume City on July 19. Prime Minister Abe reportedly expressed his gratitude for America's generosity by tweeting that the bonds between the two nations will grow even stronger through overcoming such difficulties. The paper said the U.S. military has been committed to assisting Japan whenever it was hit by major natural disasters, including the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake and the 2011 triple disasters in Tohoku. According to the article, the USG has told the GOJ that it is ready to offer additional support if necessary to deal with the flooding. The daily stressed that it will be easier for the bilateral alliance to operate smoothly if more Japanese gain a deeper understanding of U.S. military operations, including their disaster relief activities in Japan.

Foreign Minister Kono conveys gratitude for ROK's donation for disaster victims

Mainichi and Sankei wrote that Foreign Minister Kono met with the South Korean ambassador on Monday and conveyed Japan's appreciation for the donation of \$1 million that the ROK government has pledged for the relief of people in western Japan affected by severe flooding. Kono told the ROK diplomat that the money will be used to help the affected communities recover quickly.

USFK commander doubtful about North Korea's commitment to denuclearization

Nikkei and Sankei took up remarks made on Saturday by Gen. Vincent Brooks, the commander of United States Forces Korea, in which he reportedly said that North Korea's nuclear "production capability is still intact." In televised remarks to a security symposium held in Aspen, Colorado, the USFK commander said: "There has to be demonstrable action in that direction, or we cannot be satisfied and we probably can't be friends and we probably won't be at peace. Thus far, those steps have not been taken."

In a related development, Nikkei and Sankei focused on a commentary posted on a DPRK government website on Monday, in which the Kim regime voiced frustration with what it viewed as the United States' refusal to issue a declaration on ending the Korean War. The commentary also reportedly criticized South Korea for failing to urge Washington to make such a declaration even though this was agreed upon during the April summit at the DMZ between Kim Jong Un and President Moon. Nikkei claimed that in reply to Pyongyang's complaint, the ROK government has stepped up lobbying of the Trump administration to finalize such a declaration by the three parties in September.

ECONOMY

G20 ineffective in combating protectionist sentiment

All papers reported extensively on the conclusion of the G20 finance ministers' meeting in Buenos Aires on Sunday, noting that the participants issued a joint statement confirming the need for enhanced "dialogue and action" to counter protectionism. Asahi expressed concern that the G20 framework may be "emasculated" in the face of protectionism, while Mainichi opined that the G20 was "powerless" in heading off a trade war.

The dailies said global attention is now focused on the proposed U.S. tariffs on foreign autos and also projected that the currency issue may develop into a source of friction between Washington and many other G20 members, highlighting President Trump's renewed criticism on Twitter of "currency manipulation" by China and the European Union.

SECURITY

MOD renews lobbying for deploying Ospreys in Saga

All papers wrote that Defense Minister Onodera visited Saga Prefecture yesterday and held talks with Governor Yamaguchi on his ministry's plan to deploy GSDF Ospreys at Saga Airport. The minister reportedly asked for local understanding for the proposal by explaining that most of the mishaps involving the tilt-rotor planes operated by the U.S. military have been due to human error and that there are no safety issues with the aircraft itself. The governor reportedly remained noncommittal toward the minister's request for local consent and said he will take the minister's explanation under consideration. While noting that the ministry's lobbying for the prefectural

government concerning the planned deployment had been suspended following the crash of a GSDF helicopter in Saga in February this year, it considers the stationing of the Ospreys at the airport indispensable since it is close to a GSDF camp in Nagasaki where amphibious troops and vehicles are located for possible deployment in the East China Sea.

Yamaguchi official requests briefing on Aegis Ashore deployment

Asahi reported that a deputy mayor of Hagi, Yamaguchi Prefecture, visited the Defense Ministry on Monday and called for a briefing to be held for local residents concerning the planned deployment of an Aegis Ashore battery at a local SDF base.

GSDF to be in charge of defending MSDF, ASDF facilities

Yomiuri reported that the GOJ is considering tasking GSDF troops with protecting the bases used by the MSDF and the ASDF so that these branches can use their personnel for more pressing missions involving the deployment of aircraft and warships to defend against possible aggression by China or nuclear and missile provocations by North Korea. By introducing a “cross-service” system to defend some 900 MSDF and the ASDF facilities, the two branches will probably be able to assign several hundred of their personnel to other critical missions. Transportation services for the two branches may also be transferred to the GSDF in the future.

