



Morning Alert - Monday, July 30, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

All broadcasters led with reports on the damage caused by Typhoon Jongdari in several parts of Japan. After making landfall in Mie Prefecture early Sunday morning, the storm has now moved west of Kyushu.

Top stories in national dailies included a GOJ plan to reorganize Japan's 14 public-private investment funds (Asahi), GOJ approval of a Kyoto University project using iPS cell therapy for Parkinson's disease (Yomiuri, Sankei), a GOJ plan to extend up to four years its tuition assistance program for people who have already entered the workforce (Nikkei), and Kenya's efforts to reduce the use of plastic bags (Mainichi).

## ECONOMY

### Trade Minister Seko to visit Midwest to highlight Japan's contributions to U.S. economy

Saturday morning's Mainichi reported that Japan is facing difficulty dealing with the Trump administration's plan to potentially impose higher tariffs on auto imports. Although the U.S. has reportedly promised that it will not impose higher tariffs on autos from the EU for the time being, it remains to be seen how the U.S. will deal with Japan. The paper shared the opinion that the U.S. may leverage auto tariffs to urge Japan to agree to enter FTA negotiations at trade talks set to start in early August. The daily wrote that Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Seko is planning to visit Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan, where several major Japanese automakers and auto parts manufacturers have factories, from July 30 to Aug. 4 to exchange views with state governors and workers and highlight Japan's contributions to the U.S. economy through investment and job

creation.

### **Japan avoids U.S. pressure on beef as imports stay low**

Saturday morning's Nikkei reported that the Finance Ministry announced on Friday the amount of beef imported by Japan in June, showing that frozen beef imports from April to June 2018 were below the level for invoking safeguard measures. The daily wrote that there were concerns that the U.S. would step up its pressure on beef if the safeguards were invoked.

### **RCEP members reach agreement on two more sectors**

Nikkei, Yomiuri, and Mainichi reported on Saturday that the 16 RCEP nations, including Japan, China, India, and ASEAN members, concluded on Friday their chief negotiators' meeting in Bangkok. Nikkei wrote that the participants effectively concluded negotiations on two more areas covered by the RCEP free trade deal – government procurement and customs procedures and trade facilitation. According to the paper, the members are expected to accelerate their talks in order to reach an agreement by the end of this year.

### **GOJ sets up taskforce to increase food exports**

Monday's Yomiuri wrote that the agriculture and trade ministries have set up a joint taskforce with the goal of increasing the value of Japan's exports of agriculture, forestry, and fishery products to 1 trillion yen by 2019. The taskforce, which will hold its first meeting on Aug. 8, seeks to strengthen government cooperation with the private sector. Japan exported 807.1 billion yen worth of such products in 2017.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Vice President Pence to attend ceremony for return of U.S soldiers' remains from DPRK**

Sunday's Sankei reported on the announcement by the White House on Friday that Vice President Pence will attend a ceremony commemorating the return of 55 sets of remains of U.S. soldiers killed in the Korean War to be held on Aug. 1 in Hawaii.

The paper also pointed out that Defense Secretary Mattis told reporters on Friday that the return of the 55 sets of U.S. soldiers' remains is "the first step" toward the resumption of retrieving all the remains of the U.S. soldiers in North Korea. The Defense Secretary also reportedly disclosed that the Pentagon is considering sending an inspection team to North Korea. Concerning the fact that only 55 sets of remains of U.S. service members were returned even though North Korea originally announced that it would return 200, Secretary Mattis reportedly chose not to pursue the issue in order to show appreciation for the fact that North Korea is implementing the promises it made at the Singapore summit.

### **U.S. no longer using the term "CVID" in talks with DPRK**

Sunday's Asahi reported that it learned that the Trump administration has been avoiding using the term "complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization" (CVID) in its denuclearization talks with North Korea. The paper claimed that according to USG officials, instructions were given within the administration not to use the term CVID, adding that this was apparently aimed at showing consideration for North Korea because it does not like being pressured by the use of the term. The daily said that Secretary of State Pompeo and other cabinet members of the Trump administration have recently been using the term "final and fully-verified denuclearization" (FFD or FFVD) instead of CVID, noting that Secretary Pompeo reportedly explained at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 25 that CVID and FFVD mean the same thing.

The daily also wrote that the GOJ, which had been using the term CVID in coordination with the USG, has shown understanding for the U.S. approach of no longer using the term because it views this as part of U.S. efforts to lay the groundwork for facilitating talks with North Korea. While noting that the GOJ had been stressing the importance of CVID internationally and asking USG officials to urge North Korea to implement CVID for fear of the U.S. reaching a "halfway" agreement with North Korea, the paper said Japan has no choice but to go along with the American approach since it needs to rely on the U.S. in the denuclearization talks.

### **Lawmakers adopt resolution urging GOJ to seek diplomatic normalization with DPRK**

Saturday's Mainichi reported that a bipartisan group of lawmakers lobbying for the normalization of diplomatic ties with North Korea headed by LDP lawmaker Seishiro Eto adopted a resolution on Friday urging the government to seek diplomatic normalization with Pyongyang. However, the paper also wrote that a group of lawmakers close to PM Abe lobbying for the return of the Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea has expressed a cautious view toward the current reconciliatory mood, adding that the premier is apparently gauging the reactions of the public through the two parliamentary leagues.

### **Foreign Minister Kono to visit Russia, Singapore, Myanmar, Bangladesh**

Saturday morning's Yomiuri reported that Foreign Minister Kono announced on Friday that he will visit Russia, Singapore, Myanmar, and Bangladesh from July 30 to Aug. 8. The paper wrote that in Russia he will attend a "2+2" meeting of foreign and defense ministers together with Defense Minister Onodera to discuss North Korea's denuclearization and defense cooperation. This will be the third "2+2" meeting held between Japan and Russia. The daily said Kono will also attend the ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting from Aug. 2 to 4 in Singapore, adding that he will seek an opportunity to make contact with his North Korean counterpart Ri Yong Ho, who is also expected to attend some of the meetings there.

### **MOFA to establish blue ribbon panel on improving ties with South Korea**

Saturday's Nikkei reported that MOFA announced on Friday that it will establish a blue-ribbon panel

headed by former Cultural Affairs Agency Commissioner Seiichi Kondo under Foreign Minister Kono tasked with discussing how to expand cultural exchanges with South Korea in order to improve bilateral relations. The first meeting is expected to be held on Aug. 10. According to the paper, the panel will draw up proposals as early as October, which marks the 20th anniversary of the Japan-Republic of Korea Joint Declaration. Kono reportedly told reporters on Friday that he will not ask the panel to discuss the comfort women issue.

### **Japan to host African development conference on Aug. 28-30**

Yomiuri reported on Saturday that the GOJ announced on Friday that it will host this year's annual Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) from Aug. 28 to 30 in Yokohama.

## **SECURITY**

### **ASDF F-15 fighters conduct joint training with U.S. Air Force B-52 bombers**

Mainichi reported on Sunday that the ASDF disclosed on Saturday that six of its F-15 fighters held joint training with two nuclear-capable U.S. B-52 bombers over the Sea of Japan on Friday. The paper wrote that this was the first time for the ASDF to announce joint exercises with B-52 bombers. According to GOJ officials, the B-52 bombers were not carrying nuclear weapons during the training. The daily added that the joint exercises were aimed at maintaining vigilance against North Korea amid ongoing dialogue between the U.S. and North Korea.

### **U.S., Japan differ on how to recover remains of Pacific War dead**

Monday's Sankei ran an extensive report claiming that the United States and Japan have different views on how to cooperate in recovering the remains of American and Japanese soldiers who died in the Pacific War. The paper wrote that the Japanese side has been refusing a U.S. request to sign a memorandum of understanding on joint onsite research. The paper wrote that Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency Director McKeague visited the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery for War Dead in Tokyo on July 10 and stated that it is necessary for the United States and Japan to cooperate more in researching and analyzing the remains.

### **MOD mulls procurement of electronic warfare aircraft**

Sunday's Mainichi reported that the Ministry of Defense has begun considering procuring electronic warfare aircraft equipped with the ability to intercept enemy radar and communications, adding that the ministry is aiming to enhance the SDF's ability to respond to modern networked warfare. The paper noted, however, that since procuring electronic warfare aircraft might mean that Japan would acquire the capability to attack enemy bases, its consistency with Japan's exclusively defense-oriented policy is likely to be called into question.

### **MOD suspends development of next-generation armored vehicle**

Monday's Asahi and Nikkei wrote that the Ministry of Defense announced on Friday that it has suspended the development of a successor to the Type 96 armored personnel carrier (APC) in use

by the GSDF after learning that a Komatsu-developed prototype does not satisfy the performance requirements, such as being bulletproof and lightweight. Although the ministry extended the deadline for the development from fiscal 2018 to fiscal 2021, it has judged that completing the development by 2021 would be difficult.

### **Window falls from U.S. military helicopter at Atsugi base**

Saturday morning's Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri, Sankei, and Tokyo Shimbun wrote that a window fell off a U.S. Navy MH-53E helicopter on to the premises of the U.S. Naval Air Facility Atsugi, which is jointly used by the MSDF, at around 11:50 a.m. on Friday after taking off. No injuries were reported. Defense Minister Onodera reportedly told the press that this is a serious issue and that Japan has asked the United States to provide information, investigate the cause of the incident, and prevent such incidents from occurring in the future.

### **U.S. sailor arrested on suspicion of assault in Okinawa**

Monday's Yomiuri wrote that the Okinawa Police arrested a U.S. Navy petty officer second class on Sunday on suspicion of assaulting a man on the street in Chatan at around 4:00 a.m. The paper wrote that the man suffered a minor injury and the suspect, who was intoxicated at the time, has denied the allegation.

## **SOCIETY**

### **Percentage of female senior government officials remains low at 4.7%**

Saturday's Yomiuri reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga announced on Friday that the number of female senior officials with the position of deputy director-general or above in the central government as of this summer was 32, up one from last year, accounting for 4.7% of the total.