



Afternoon Alert - Friday, August 19, 2016

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK led with a report on an earthquake in Kumamoto this morning with an intensity of upper 4 on the Japanese scale. All commercial networks gave prominent coverage to Japanese athletes' performance in the Rio Olympics, highlighting Japan's first gold medal in badminton.

INTERNATIONAL

DP leader Okada criticizes Biden's remark on Japanese Constitution

Sankei reported online on Aug. 18 on a press conference by Democratic Party President Okada, during which he criticized Vice President Biden's recent remark that America "wrote Japan's Constitution." The opposition leader was quoted as saying: "In the end the Constitution was created after discussions at the Diet. It is extremely inappropriate for the Vice President to say that America wrote the Constitution." Okada stressed that Japan should not possess nuclear weapons. While pointing out that the nation's supreme law does not have an article that specifically prohibits Japan's possession of nuclear weapons, Okada said: "I don't think the Vice President made the comment with a specific constitutional article in mind.... What is more important than the fact that [the SCAP] drafted the Japanese Constitution is that the Japanese people have nurtured the Constitution over the past 70 years."

- [Editorial: Japan as A-bombed country concerned about 'no first use'](#) (Sankei)
- [Abe to support Japanese firms' inroads into Cuban market](#) (Nikkei)

- [China's Foreign Ministry differentiates between trilateral ministerial meeting and bilateral visits](#) (Mainichi)
- [Putin picks Japan-hand diplomat as his chief of staff](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Round-table discussion: Developing a new vision for Japan-Russia economic ties](#) (Gekkan Keidanren)

SECURITY

[**Hundreds gather to protest against helipad construction**](#)

Ryukyu Shimpo carried an online story saying that some 400 people assembled in front of the main gate of the Northern Training Area early this morning to protest the planned resumption of helipad construction work that has been suspended for five days during the Obon holiday period. The base opponents formed a convoy of about 180 cars and then staged a sit-in rally to block trucks and other vehicles from entering the construction site.

[**Mayor of Okinawa's Higashi Village calls for LDP support in seeking direct GOJ subsidies for Takae**](#)

Ryukyu Shimpo front-paged a report that Mayor Iju of Higashi, Okinawa, made a written request to LDP prefectural assembly members on Aug. 17 for their support in establishing a new framework in which the GOJ directly compensates the village for noise and other problems in the Takae district caused by helicopter operations at the Northern Training Area. The mayor also requested that the helicopters' flight routes be changed and their night operations be suspended. This is the first time for the village to seek GOJ subsidies in connection with the construction of landing zones in Takae. The local assembly members plan to relay the mayor's requests to the LDP headquarters and the GOJ next week. Local residents' dissatisfaction with Ospreys' operations at the helipads and the confusion created between the GOJ and protesters over the resumption of construction at the training area are behind the mayor's requests.

[**DP leader criticizes Abe's alleged opposition to "no first use" policy by U.S.**](#)

Concerning a recent media report that Prime Minister Abe conveyed to PACOM Commander Harris in July Japan's opposition to President Obama's purported desire to adopt a policy of "no first use" of nuclear weapons, TBS reported that DP President Okada criticized the GOJ on Aug. 18. Okada said that the Japanese government should cooperate with President Obama's efforts to pursue his goal to achieve a "world without nuclear weapons," adding that the significance of the President's visit to Hiroshima will be diminished if Japan fails to support his efforts. Okada also stated that Abe should tell the Japanese people whether he actually conveyed Japan's opposition to the U.S.

In a related development, Nikkei wrote that Komeito Chief Representative Yamaguchi stated at a news conference on Aug. 18: "We would like to watch with positive expectancy what kind of steps

President Obama will take toward his goal of a world without nuclear weapons. There are many ways to reconsider the role of nuclear weapons.” The paper interpreted this remark to mean that Yamaguchi is hoping that the U.S. will adopt a “no first use” policy from the viewpoint of nuclear disarmament.

Tokyo Shimbun ran a Kyodo report on press remarks today by Hiroshima Mayor Matsui, during which he commented on a U.S. media report on Prime Minister Abe’s alleged opposition to a “no first use” policy by the U.S. Matsui expressed his hope that President Obama will address the issue by giving consideration to the A-bombed cities. The mayor said that MOFA has told him that it is not true that the issue of “no first use” was discussed at the talks between the prime minister and the PACOM commander.

Okinawa mayor to endorse plan to relocate Makiminato storage to Kadena ammunition depot

Okinawa Times wrote in a front-page article that Okinawa Mayor Kuwae decided on Aug. 18 to endorse a plan to relocate storage facilities at the Makiminato Service Area to the Chibana area of the Kadena Ammunition Storage Area. If the GOJ agrees with the city’s request for relieving traffic congestion associated with the relocation and additional subsidies for the construction of a multi-purpose arena, the mayor will convey his approval of the relocation plan at his meeting with State Minister of Defense Wakamiya scheduled for today.

- **[U.S. unresponsive to lawsuit over Kadena noise pollution](#)** (Okinawa Times)

POLITICS

- **[Prime minister’s schedule on August 18](#)** (Nikkei)
- **[Legislation on increasing female politicians running into difficulties due to discord between ruling, opposition parties](#)** (Yomiuri)
- **[Editorial: No charges, but Amari still faces test on qualities as a lawmaker](#)** (The Asahi Shimbun Online)
- **[Chinese Communist Party invites Nikai to G20-related meeting](#)** (Nikkei)

ECONOMY

- **[Japan’s trade shrinks in July, exports sink 14 percent](#)** (The Mainichi Online)
- **[GOJ models new college sports organization after NCAA](#)** (Nikkei)
- **[Cartoon: Negative interest rates](#)** (Mainichi)

EDUCATION

- [New short-answer exam questions may burden universities](#) (Asahi)
- [Government aid to private schools is widely accepted as “constitutional”](#) (Mainichi)
- [Hawkish education chief Matsuno to uphold government line on “comfort women”](#) (The Japan Times)

SCIENCE

- [MHLW to approve cutting-edge medical devices earlier](#) (Yomiuri Evening edition)
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