



Afternoon Alert - Friday, September 9, 2016

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All networks gave top play to reports that North Korea apparently conducted its fifth nuclear test today, which marks North Korea's National Foundation Day. Tremors that were different from those of a normal earthquake were reportedly detected at around 9:30 a.m. near Poongkye-ri missile site in the northeast of North Korea. According to the networks, the South Korean military believes that the test was North Korea's most powerful nuclear test to date. NHK said Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters this afternoon that Japan will consider imposing additional unilateral sanctions against North Korea. North Korea later announced that it successfully tested a nuclear warhead for the first time.

INTERNATIONAL

President Obama, PM Abe reaffirm close trilateral cooperation

NHK reported this afternoon that following North Korea's nuclear test, President Obama and PM Abe held talks over the phone and reaffirmed trilateral cooperation between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. According to the network, PM Abe told President Obama that it is essential for the international community to firmly criticize North Korea's action and send a strong message, and for the UNSC to swiftly hold an emergency meeting and adopt a new resolution. In response, the President reportedly expressed hope for close cooperation between the U.S. and Japan as well as with South Korea. The President also reportedly said the U.S.-Japan alliance remains firm and the U.S. commitment to Japan's security is strong. The two leaders also reportedly agreed that the U.S., Japan, and South Korea will work closely toward the swift adoption of a tough resolution against North Korea, including a new sanctions resolution by the UNSC.

The network also reported that FM Kishida and Ambassador Kennedy met this afternoon at MOFA and agreed to take a tough stance toward North Korea. The network said the UNSC is planning to convene an emergency meeting early tomorrow Japan time at the request of the U.S., Japan, and South Korea.

GOJ alarmed by North Korea's progress in nuclear development

An NTV reporter said the GOJ is extremely alarmed by North Korea's progress in nuclear development, quoting PM Abe as telling reporters this morning: "It is likely that North Korea conducted a nuclear test. If it did carry out a nuclear test, it is simply unacceptable. We must lodge a strong protest." The premier also expressed the view that Tokyo will work closely with the U.S. and South Korea as well as the UN. The network said the GOJ has convened a National Security Council meeting to analyze the information and discuss measures. A senior MOD official reportedly said the power of the nuclear test was probably two to three times greater than the last nuclear test conducted in January. The reporter also quoted another MOD official as saying: "Although it is unknown how much progress North Korea has made in nuclear development in addition to its progress in missile development as seen in the successful launch of the SBLM, it will become a grave threat if North Korea makes progress in the development of nuclear weapons to the extent that they can be mounted on missiles." Meanwhile, a GOJ official lamented that there is "nothing to be done" since North Korea has been ignoring criticism from the international community.

DPRK missile technology might outperform Japan's interception capabilities

TV-Asahi "Hodo Station" reported on Thursday that Japanese defense officials are alarmed by the rapid advancement of North Korea's ballistic missile capabilities, as the three projectiles that were launched on Monday were apparently guided accurately to land in the same area in the Sea of Japan at the same time. A retired MSDF general emphasized that Japan's four Aegis warships equipped with SM-3 interceptors would not be able to detect and shoot down North Korean missiles if they were fired simultaneously in large numbers from mobile platforms. He said enhancing missile defense coordination with the U.S. and South Korea is imperative.

ROK official stresses need to obtain public understanding before sealing intelligence pact with Japan

Nikkei reported from Seoul that a South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesperson disclosed yesterday that Prime Minister Abe and South Korea President Park discussed the possibility of signing a bilateral accord to protect the integrity of shared defense intelligence at their summit meeting in Laos on Wednesday. The spokesperson said, "It will be necessary to obtain full understanding and cooperation from the parliament and the public" in signing a general security of military information agreement (GSOMIA). He suggested that the ROK leader indicated to her Japanese counterpart that it would be difficult for her government to conclude such an accord with Tokyo anytime soon.

- [Interview with CCS Suga on Japan-Russia relations, security, and domestic political issues](#) (Yomiuri)
- [PM Abe says additional sanctions against North Korea might be needed](#) (Mainichi)
- [RCEP leaders give up on concluding pact in 2016](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Japan, Philippines must stay watchful over China's maritime expansion](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Japan-S. Korea solidarity vital in unpredictable Northeast Asia](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

ECONOMY

House Speaker Ryan comments on TPP

Nikkei reported online that U.S. House Speaker Ryan predicted on Thursday during a press conference that Congress would reject the TPP legislation if it were to put a vote now and that the Obama administration needs to revise it in order to obtain congressional endorsement. He said: "I don't think you should bring up a bill that is going to go down.... We don't have the votes. The White House has to fix it and it hasn't done that."

- [Reforms announced by JA Group inadequate](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Public pension reserve rose to eight-year high of 203 trillion yen in fiscal 2014](#) (Nikkei)
- [Shutting down Tokai reprocessing plant expected to take 70 years](#) (Asahi)

SECURITY

- [Editorial: North Korea's upgraded ballistic missile technology must be dealt with](#) (The Japan News)
- [Interviews with experts: How capable are N. Korea's subs, missiles?](#) (The Japan News)
- [Government to require electricity providers to take cyberdefense measures](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan condemns N. Korea over nuclear test, eyes more sanctions](#) (The Mainichi)

POLITICS

- [Gist of PM Abe's remarks in Laos](#) (Asahi)
- [Prime minister's schedule on September 7-9](#) (Nikkei)

EDUCATION

- [MEXT to analyze impact of educational policies](#) (Mainichi)

SOCIETY

- [Survey shows high rate of suicidal ideation among women, young people](#) (Asahi)

TV PROGRAMS

[Hiroshima Toyo Carp on its way to victory](#)

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" on Thursday reported on Japanese professional baseball team Hiroshima Toyo Carp, which is on the verge of winning its first Central League pennant in 25 years. The program reported on how the team, which began as a citizens' team with no corporate sponsorship, transformed itself into a strong contender. The team's transformation can apparently be attributed to its ability to train players steadily and diligently with limited funds and the strong bond between the team and its fans.

