



Afternoon Alert - Friday, December 2, 2016

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TBS gave top play to reports that the voting for the bill to legalize casino gambling in Japan will be carried out this afternoon, saying that Komeito has decided to allow its lawmakers to choose whether to vote for or against the bill. Other top news included reports on inclement weather in northern Japan.

INTERNATIONAL

President-elect Trump to nominate Gen. Mattis as secretary of defense

NHK reported this morning that President-elect Trump delivered a speech in Ohio on Thursday, during which he disclosed his plan to appoint retired Marine Gen. James Mattis as his secretary of defense. The network said Gen. Mattis led a task force in anti-terrorism operations in Afghanistan and a division in the Iraq war, adding that his nickname is "Mad Dog" and he has plenty of combat experience and a deep knowledge of security. The network also said he was criticized in 2005 when he said: "It's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot" bad people in Afghanistan. Noting that President-elect Trump has already decided to appoint retired Army Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn as his national security adviser, the network said his national security team strongly reflects his policy to eradicate terrorist organizations, including ISIL.

Japan strengthens unilateral sanctions against DPRK

Most networks reported at noon that following the adoption of a new sanctions resolution against North Korea by the UNSC, the GOJ has decided to strengthen its unilateral sanctions against the North. According to the network, the GOJ will expand the re-entry ban currently imposed on North Korean officials in Japan and foreigners in Japan who have nuclear or missile expertise, and also ban the entry of Japanese ships that have called at North Korean ports, effectively banning all vessels that have called at DPRK ports, including even ships that visited the ports for humanitarian purposes. In addition, the GOJ will expand the asset freeze from the current 43 organizations and 40 individuals to 54 organizations and 58 individuals.

Ambassador Sasae talks about Abe-Trump meeting

TBS reported at noon that Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. Sasae said during a panel discussion hosted by the Heritage Foundation on Thursday in Washington that Prime Minister Abe and President-elect Trump "held candid discussions on a broad range of issues, including the regional situation and the economy." He said that they agreed on the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance and that there is more to be done. Sasae also reportedly said he got the impression that Trump "listens to what people say and tries to digest many views." Concerning the TPP, Sasae reportedly expressed hope to persuade the new Trump government not to withdraw from the pact. Kyodo carried a similar [article](#). NHK also reported the news at 3 p.m., quoting Sasae as also saying: "We still believe that the TPP is the best means in terms of the strategic interest of the United States as well as its economic interest."

- [**Abe, Trump agreed to boost alliance in Nov. talks: Japan envoy**](#) (Kyodo News)
- [**Abe makes pitch for Singapore-Malaysia high-speed rail project**](#) (Asahi)
- [**Pakistani envoy calls for Japan's cooperation on nuclear power**](#) (Asahi)
- [**Postwar "worst" Russia-U.S. relations may affect Japan-Russia negotiations**](#) (Shukan Ekonomisuto)
- [**Russian capitalism: Putin's connections extend beyond natural resources**](#) (Ekonomisuto)
- [**Russia's shift to east accelerates energy project cooperation with Japan**](#) (Ekonomisuto)
- [**30 companies that may benefit from Japan-Russia economic cooperation**](#) (Shukan Ekonomisuto)
- [**Editorial: Prolonged turmoil inevitable for ROK after Park's resignation ploy**](#) (The Japan News)

POLITICS

Bill to legalize casino gambling passes Lower House committee

NHK reported at 1 p.m. that the bill to legalize casino gambling in Japan, known as the “IR promotion bill,” passed a Lower House committee today amid protests from the Democratic Party. LDP and Japan Innovation Party committee members voted for the bill. They were joined by one Komeito lawmaker, with two members of the ruling coalition’s junior member voting against the legislation. The network also said an additional resolution to drastically strengthen measures against gambling addiction and to build the world’s toughest regulations for casino operations was also passed with votes from the LDP, Komeito, and the Japan Innovation Party committee members.

- [Prime minister’s schedule on December 1](#) (Nikkei)
- [Total income for major political parties in 2015](#) (Asahi)
- [DP drafts campaign pledges with focus on children, foreign investment, local economy](#) (Nikkei)
- [Kantei controls bureaucrats by “grading” their performance](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Bureaucrats’ personnel decisions made at CCS Suga’s office](#) (Yomiuri)
- [LDP tax commission’s nine ‘core’ members at watershed of keeping influence on taxation reform talks](#) (Nikkei)
- [Opposition alliance could have cost Abe his supermajority](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Emperor’s childhood friend details discussion on abdication](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Cartoon: Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko](#) (Sankei)

SECURITY

U.S., Japan discussed Osprey deployment in Okinawa in 1997

Ryukyu Shimpo gave top play to a report saying that the Defense Facilities Administration Agency submitted to a meeting with the U.S. in October 1997 a document referring to the possibility of deploying Ospreys in Okinawa. The paper wrote that although the U.S. and Japan had discussed the idea of mentioning Osprey deployment in the final SACO report on Dec. 2, 1996, until right before the report was issued, the two nations left it out of the report at the request of the Japanese side. The paper claimed that although the GOJ did not officially announce until 2010 its plan to deploy Ospreys in Okinawa, the agency’s document shows that Japan discussed Futenma

relocation with the U.S. in 1997 based on the premise that Ospreys would be deployed in Okinawa. The paper wrote that the document was submitted to a technical meeting with the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo and the USFJ on October 6, 1997, at which the two nations discussed the details of the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF), citing the introduction of the MV-22s and decks for the combat aircraft loading area and field carrier landing practice as areas of concern. According to a source connected to the issue, the U.S. and Japanese sides confirmed at the meeting that the runway at the FRF should be at least 1,500 meters long for use by Ospreys. However, although the SACO report stated that the facility would be approximately 1,500 meters long, it did not state that the Osprey deployment was the reason for the length.

GOJ to shorten tax breaks for Okinawa

Asahi reported online that the Abe administration and the ruling coalition are likely to shorten tax breaks for alcohol and other selected items for Okinawa from the present five years to two years when the current arrangement expires next year. Noting that this favorable tax treatment has been renewed every five years since the island prefecture reverted to Japanese administration in 1972 and that the prefectural government and the local business community have been insisting on an additional five-year extension, the daily said the central government is inclined to stop favoring Okinawa in view of Governor Onaga's opposition to Futenma relocation. A GOJ source said the fact that there are currently no LDP Diet members from the southernmost prefecture may be a factor that is prompting Tokyo to stop giving favorable tax treatment to Okinawa.

- [277 islands to be registered as national property](#) (Sankei)
- [Seiron Column: Raising the exercise of the right to collective self-defense to a realistic level](#) (Sankei)
- [Suga stresses results produced by SACO final report](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- [U.S. concerned about delay in Henoko relocation](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)

ECONOMY

- [Gist of interpellations at Upper House special committee on TPP, Dec. 1](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [JCP lawmaker claims U.S. forcing Japan to deregulate aluminum food additives under TPP](#) (Akahata)
- [Cartoon: TPP bill](#) (Akahata)
- [METI seeks to have TEPCO Fuel & Power's technologies adopted as global standards](#) (Sankei)

- [LDP, Komeito tax commissions agree to raise spousal tax deduction threshold](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Cartoon: National pension](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japanese companies team up to fund infrastructure exports](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Cartoon: Casino bill](#) (Asahi)

SCIENCE

- [Universities start operating fastest supercomputer in Japan](#) (Mainichi)
- [Canon joins Japan's new space race](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

TV PROGRAMS

Popularity of freshwater eel leads to “eel laundering”

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" on Thursday reported on surging prices for freshwater eel in Japan due to an increase in the price of young glass eels, which are required for eel farming in Japan. The program said since there are not enough glass eel in Japan, they are imported in volume from Hong Kong. However, many of the glass eels imported from Hong Kong are actually caught in Taiwan and smuggled into Hong Kong for export to Japan because Taiwan banned glass eel exports to Japan in 2007 to conserve the species. The program referred to this as "eel laundering." Since the Japanese custom of eating eel on the Midsummer Day of the Ox is apparently one of the reasons behind the surging prices, some eel farmers no longer increase output in anticipation of a surge in consumption on that day. Likewise many restaurants have given up using the Day of the Ox to promote eel dishes.