


JAPAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Afternoon Alert - Monday, December 5, 2016

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and most commercial networks led with reports that Italian Prime Minister Renzi has resigned after suffering a major defeat in a referendum on his plan to reform the constitution.



POLITICS

Abe becomes fourth longest-serving premier

All networks reported at noon that Prime Minister Abe today became the fourth longest-serving Japanese premier in the postwar era after serving 1,807 days in office, surpassing former Prime Minister Nakasone's 1,806 days in office. The networks quoted Abe as telling reporters this morning: "I look up to former Prime Minister Nakasone, so I am deeply moved... Just like former Prime Minister Nakasone, I would like to keep calm and devote all my energy each and every day to achieving results with humility."

- [Prime Minister's schedule on Dec. 4](#) (Nikkei)

- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 3](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 2](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan Mulls Record 97-T.-Yen Budget for FY 2017](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Membership figures for LDP factions](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Abe equals record for 4th longest-serving postwar PM](#) (The Mainichi)

SECURITY

Onaga says he didn't "approve" helipad construction at NTA

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo front-paged reports on remarks made to the press on Dec. 2 by Okinawa Governor Onaga, during which he insisted that when he said "this is an agonizing choice" on Nov. 28 about the ongoing helipad construction at the Northern Training Area, he did not mean that he approved of the construction. Onaga said: "I used the words 'an agonizing choice' to describe the difficult situation in which I have to steer the prefectural government by choosing between opposing the return of some 4,000 hectares of land at the NTA and approving the construction of helicopter landing zones to be used by Ospreys." Ryukyu Shimpo wrote that although Onaga stated that he does not approve of the helipad construction, he did not express clear opposition to it. When asked whether he will attend a planned ceremony on the return of the NTA, Onaga said that he would refrain from commenting because he had not yet received an invitation.

U.S. military uses NTA for training to prevent drug smuggling

Ryukyu Shimpo gave top play to a report saying that a U.S. military official told a group of Higashi Village assembly members during their visit to the Northern Training Area on July 27 that at the NTA the U.S. military conducts training to prevent drug smuggling. The paper quoted the official as telling the local legislators that the U.S. military conducts the training to prevent the smuggling into the U.S. mainland of large volumes of narcotics that usually originate in jungles in Latin America. The official added that the training being conducted in the jungle is not combat training, but is based on a scenario of a country producing narcotics for smuggling to the United States. The paper wrote that there is concern about the "enhanced functions" of the NTA, because training to prevent drug smuggling goes beyond the scope of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which stipulates Japan's hosting of U.S. bases for the defense of Japan.

- [SDF set to hike danger pay for rescue-ready troops in South Sudan](#) (The Japan Times)

- [Mattis' appointment as defense secretary may mean reinforcement of U.S. bases in Okinawa](#) (Okinawa Times)
- [20 years after SACO agreement, Okinawa base plans languishing](#) (The Japan News)

INTERNATIONAL

- [Obama administration opposed to Abe-Trump meeting](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Govt eager to learn Mattis' Japan views](#) (The Japan News)
- [Gist of remarks by Kishida, Lavrov at their meeting, joint news conference on Dec. 3](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japan, Russia to create 100 bil. yen fund to boost economic ties](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Special economic zone mulled in Northern Territories](#) (Mainichi)
- [Gist of remarks by FM Kishida, Putin on Dec. 2](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)
- [Tokyo mulling giving Akita dog to Putin during his visit to Japan](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Ex-PM Noda airs concern over Abe's approach to Russia](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Analysis: Trump election unlikely to help Abe in isle row with Putin](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan-China maritime talks to begin on Dec. 7](#) (Asahi)
- [Japan names new ambassador to EU](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: After sanctions, step up human rights pressure on N. Korea](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Sanctions must deprive N. Korea's nuclear, missile programs of funds](#) (The Japan News)

ECONOMY

- [Japan lawmaker holds hope Trump could still say 'yes' to TPP](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Tax revenue for FY '16 likely to fall; gov't may issue deficit-covering bonds](#) (The Mainichi)

- [Growing expectation for IR with economic effect worth 2.1 trillion yen](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Scrupulous Diet debate a must on bill to lift ban on casinos](#) (The Japan News)
- [Tokyo seeks cost swap on nuclear compensation](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Vet drug price system to keep it healthy](#) (The Japan News)

OPINION POLLS

- [57% are opposed to allowing casinos, Yomiuri poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [53% say Japan should “first achieve partial return of Northern Territories and then continue negotiations for remaining islands,” Yomiuri poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Highlights of the November 2016 Jiji Press Public Opinion Poll](#) (Jiji Press Public Opinion Poll Bulletin)

SCIENCE

- [JAXA to test method for clearing space debris](#) (Nikkei)

TV PROGRAMS

Ruling, opposition lawmakers discuss pension reform, TPP, casino bill, Abe-Putin meeting

During NHK’s “Nichiyo Toron” Sunday debate show, LDP Deputy Secretary General Nishimura, Komeito Deputy Secretary General Saito, and Secretary General Nakano of the Party for Japanese Kokoro stressed the need to enact the bill aimed at making Japan’s pension system sustainable that was endorsed by the Lower House on Nov. 29. While supporting the bill, Nippon Ishin Secretary General Baba stressed the need for drastic reform of the existing pension system. However, Democratic Party (DP) Deputy Secretary General Tamaki, Japanese Communist Party (JCP) Secretariat Head Koike, and Social Democratic Party (SDP) Secretary General Mataichi expressed opposition to the bill.

Concerning the TPP ratification and related bills, the ruling lawmakers emphasized that it is necessary for Japan to demonstrate to the international community its determination to uphold free trade by approving the TPP agreement. The panelists from Nippon Ishin and the Party for Japanese Kokoro supported the Abe administration’s efforts to ratify the accord. However, the panelists from

the DP and SDP argued that Japan should suspend its decision on ratifying the TPP agreement until President Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20. The JCP's Koike expressed opposition to the TPP.

With regard to the integrated resort bill aimed at legalizing casinos that cleared a Lower House committee on Dec. 2, the DP's Tamaki called for additional Diet deliberations, while the JCP's Koike expressed opposition to the bill. The participants from Nippon Ishin and the Party for Japanese Kokoro expressed support for the bill. Komeito's Saito admitted that there are different views on the bill within the party.

About the upcoming bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Abe and President Putin, the LDP's Nishimura expressed hope that progress will be made in their talks on a peace treaty. The DP's Tamaki insisted that Japan should not compromise on its claim to all four islands before it provides economic assistance to Moscow.

Battleship Musashi

Sunday's "NHK Special" reported on the "Musashi," the largest battleship in history. The Musashi was a "top secret" project of the Japanese Navy that was designed to be unsinkable, but did in fact sink in the Pacific Ocean following attacks by U.S. military planes during the Pacific War. The Musashi was found in deep waters off the Philippines last March. The program aired video of the ship filmed by an American project team, including footage never before released, saying that the video showed critical flaws in the ship's structure that probably caused it to sink after being attacked by torpedoes and bombs. Out of the 2,399 crew members, only 430 members ultimately survived, as many of those who were rescued later died in land battles.