



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, December 14, 2016

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

Most networks led with reports that an MV-22 Osprey made an emergency landing off the coast of Nago on Tuesday evening, showing the wreckage of the aircraft drifting in shallow waters.

NHK and Fuji TV gave top play to reports that a fishing boat capsized in waters off Matsue this morning and all nine crew members remain missing.

## SECURITY

### Okinawa reacts sharply to Osprey incident

All networks reported at noon that an MV-22 Osprey made an emergency landing about 1 km off the east coast of Nago on Tuesday night, saying that all five crew members were rescued and two of them were injured. The networks showed the scattered wreckage of the Osprey floating in shallow waters off Nago. NHK said the U.S. military explained that the pilot had to decide whether to return to Futenma or make an emergency landing due to some kind of trouble while flying, judged that it would be safer to make an emergency landing, and made a controlled descent. TV Asahi pointed out that the site is only about a 10-minute walk away from a residential area.

All broadcasters reported that Okinawa reacted sharply to the incident. NHK quoted Nago Mayor Inamine as saying: "What we had been worried about has actually happened. People will not be able to feel safe." Okinawa Vice Governor Ageda told reporters this morning: "This is an outrageous accident. I feel there are problems with the safety of the Osprey." Governor Onaga also reportedly said the incident was "truly outrageous." NHK said Onaga summoned Okinawa Defense Bureau

chief Nakajima and MOFA Ambassador in charge of Okinawan Affairs Kawada to the prefectural government to lodge a protest and strongly urged the government to suspend Osprey flights and cancel the deployment of the aircraft. Kawada reportedly told Governor Onaga that the U.S. military explained that the accident occurred during an aerial refueling exercise and the pilot did not lose control of the aircraft. He also reportedly told Onaga that the U.S. side said that Osprey flights will be suspended until their safety is confirmed. An NTV reporter said the incident will definitely make the Okinawan people angry, adding that it is also likely to affect Futenma relocation and the return of the NTA.

### **PM Abe comments on Osprey accident**

All networks reported on remarks by Prime Minister Abe this morning on the emergency landing of an MV-22 Osprey last evening. The premier reportedly told reporters at the Kantei: "It is very regrettable that an Osprey had a major accident." He also reportedly said: "The defense minister strongly called on the U.S. side to conduct a thorough investigation into the cause of the accident and ensure safety. In any case, ensuring the safety of Osprey flights is a basic requirement." NHK also reported that Foreign Minister Kishida talked to Ambassador Kennedy over the phone this morning, quoting him as telling reporters: "Ambassador Kennedy said that as a result of consultations with the U.S. military, the U.S. has decided to temporarily suspend Osprey flights."

### **Okinawa enraged by Osprey "crash"**

Ryukyu Shimpo and Okinawa Times gave extensive front- and inside-page coverage to the emergency landing by an MV-22 Osprey in shallow waters off Nago last night, with the former calling the mishap the type of "crash" that many local people had been afraid of ever since the tilt-rotor planes were deployed at MCAS Futenma four years ago. The papers voiced outrage and dismay, underscoring that the accident proved that the state-of-the-art aircraft is dangerous because its unique features make it difficult to fly. They reported heavily on the anger and concern expressed by local residents, noting that the plane could have crashed in a nearby populated area. Okinawa Times said the accident occurred amid the escalating conflict between the central government and the island prefecture over the FRF construction off Camp Schwab, projecting that the tension may intensify ahead of the planned resumption of construction work at the U.S. installation on Thursday and a ceremony commemorating the reversion of the Northern Training Area next week.

### **MOD calls Osprey accident "unscheduled landing"**

Mainichi reported online that the Defense Ministry has chosen not to call the Osprey mishap in Okinawa a "crash" even though the airplane apparently broke apart, probably in an effort to prevent local concern about aircraft safety from escalating further. Instead, the ministry is calling it an "unscheduled landing" on the grounds that the U.S. side has described it as a "shallow landing" and the pilot did not lose control of the aircraft before it hit the water because the five crew members survived. Defense Minister Inada reportedly explained that the pilot maintained control of the aircraft and maneuvered it to land in the ocean. The daily stressed, however, that the ministry has not

obtained any evidence of its own to rule out characterizing it as a crash, projecting that it will probably not be able to conduct an independent investigation into the cause of the accident.

In an related story, Asahi's website reported that U.S. military authorities have not yet replied to a request filed by the Japan Coast Guard for its probe into the accident.

- [SDF to start defense operations for U.S. warships](#) (Mainichi)
- [Rift between Okinawa Gov. Onaga, leftist supporters](#) (Sankei)
- [Senior U.S. diplomat says Okinawa's likely loss in Henoko case "not surprising"](#) (Okinawa Times)
- [Japan to ramp up research spending on THAAD](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: Caution needed for GSDF's 'rush-and-rescue' missions in S. Sudan](#) (The Mainichi)

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **War of semantics raging in cyberspace over Osprey accident**

Tens of thousands tweets have been posted since a Futenma-based Osprey made an emergency landing in shallow waters in Okinawa last night, with many Twitter users engaged in a fierce debate over the appropriate term to describe what the U.S. military called a "shallow landing." Some of them took issue with the Japanese government and most media outlets for using the term "fujichaku" (unscheduled landing), emphasizing that the scattered aircraft wreckage shown on TV indicated that the tilt-rotor plane "crashed" after the pilot lost control. They argued that the GOJ and the Japanese media probably used the term "unscheduled landing" out of deference to the U.S.

However, other Twitter users, including some who apparently have extensive knowledge of aviation, claimed that although the aircraft may have made a hard landing, the pilot apparently was able to save the lives of the crew by maneuvering it to a spot over water so as to avoid hitting the ground. These Twitter users cautioned against attributing the accident to the Osprey's unique features because the exact cause is still unknown.

## **POLITICS**

### **Diet fails to address problems associated with casino bill**

TV Asahi's "Hodo Station" reported on the Upper House Cabinet Committee's passage of the integrated resort bill that legalizes casinos. The network insisted that although the upper chamber spent more time discussing the controversial bill than the lower chamber, such outstanding issues as

how to prevent gambling addiction have not yet been properly addressed. Projecting that Japanese casinos will most likely be operated initially by foreign companies such as Las Vegas Sands because Japanese companies have little experience in the casino business and that about 80% of the casino customers will probably be Japanese, the network expressed concern that foreign companies will "swindle" the financial assets of elderly Japanese. Pointing out that charging admission fees to enter casinos is viewed by bill proponents as a countermeasure against gambling addiction, the program said admission fees of several thousand yen are unlikely to discourage potential customers and instead may exacerbate their addiction as they attempt to offset the fees.

- [Cartoon: Renho](#) (Sankei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 13](#) (Nikkei)

## INTERNATIONAL

### **Joint statement unlikely following Abe-Putin summit**

Yomiuri reported online on remarks made to the daily by an unnamed senior Russian government official, who predicted that no joint statement will be issued upon the conclusion of the two rounds of summit talks in Japan between President Putin and Prime Minister Abe. Explaining that because the provisions of the bilateral joint statement released during Abe's visit to Moscow in April 2013 have not been implemented on account of the suspension of dialogue due to Japan's adoption of sanctions against Russia over the situation in Ukraine, the Kremlin official stressed that it does "not make sense" to draft a new statement.

### **Japanese official calls Rex Tillerson "best choice" for conducting energy diplomacy**

NHK's "News Watch 9" took up Secretary of State-designate Rex Tillerson. The program quoted former International Energy Agency Executive Director Nobuo Tanaka, who knows the ExxonMobile CEO well, as saying that Tillerson is well qualified for the job on account of his strong connections with Russian President Putin and other foreign leaders as well as oil executives around the world. Tanaka speculated that by tapping the leading petroleum company executive, President-elect Trump is hoping to use energy and natural resources as a diplomatic tool to mend ties with Russia with the ultimate goal of restoring stability in the Middle East. The Japanese official recalled a meeting with Tillerson in which the U.S. businessman expressed opposition to the U.S. enhancing sanctions on Russia by saying that continuing business with Russia serves not only corporate interests but also national interests. Tanaka added he was impressed and intrigued by Tillerson's extremely bold and straightforward management style.

- [Gist of Russian President Putin's interview with Yomiuri, NTV on Dec. 7](#) (Nikkei)
- [Ex-PM Mori on Northern Territories talks with Russia](#) (Chuokoron)
- [Gov't perplexed by Trump nomination of Tillerson as secretary of state](#) (Yomiuri)
- [PM's aide on trip to U.S. to set up Abe's meeting with Trump, Japan-U.S. relations](#) (Chuokoron)
- [Commentary: Putin limbering up for match with Abe](#) (The Japan News)
- [Putin would meet Trump 'any time'](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan aims to make progress in peace treaty negotiations with Russia](#) (Yomiuri)
- [No solution to isles row without trust: Russia official](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Cartoon: Trump, Putin, and Abe](#) (Asahi)
- [Japan, Thailand hold high-level economic consultations](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japanese Red Cross contributed 10 million yen for N. Korean flooding victims](#) (The Mainichi)
- [GSDf in South Sudan hobbled by constraints](#) (Mainichi)

## ECONOMY

- [GOJ calls on TPP member nation ambassadors to promote approval of trade pact](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)
- [EU leans toward nixing 80% of Japanese autoparts tariffs](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Mitsubishi Corp. plans big European offshore wind farms](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Malaysia, Singapore sign off on high-speed rail](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: Gov't should not water down abolishment of rice acreage reduction policy](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan, Russia to study feasibility of small-scale wind power generation projects](#) (Yomiuri)

- [JCCI chair questions personal spending triggered by wage hikes, calls for addressing anxiety about future](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Track record of safe operations needed to get N-plants back online](#) (The Japan News)

## OPINION POLLS

- [66% of Japanese say they feel “affinity with Taiwan,” poll](#) (Yomiuri)

## TV PROGRAMS

### [Many rural train lines on verge of extinction](#)

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" on Tuesday reported on an announcement by JR Hokkaido last month that it will be unable to maintain more than half of its lines in Hokkaido due to financial difficulties. The program said many train lines are faced with increasing deficits due to population decline, adding that not only train lines in Hokkaido but also many train lines across the nation are on the verge of being discontinued. The news sent shockwaves through the nation, especially among train enthusiasts, and some local communities are now making efforts to maintain their local train lines.