



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, December 28, 2016

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

All networks led with reports on Prime Minister Abe's visit to the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor with President Obama as well as the speeches delivered by the two leaders, highlighting Abe's pledge to never wage war again and his hope that Pearl Harbor will become a "symbol of reconciliation" between the U.S. and Japan. The network also said President Obama praised Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor by calling it "a historic gesture that speaks to the power of reconciliation."

## AMBASSADOR

### Ambassador Kennedy stresses significance of PM Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor

TV Asahi's "Super J Channel" on Tuesday evening reported on its interview with Ambassador Kennedy in Honolulu. The program said the Ambassador stressed the significance of PM Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor, saying: "Prime Minister Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor is an incredibly historic event for the American public. He will receive a very warm welcome. The reconciliation that the two countries have promoted together demonstrates the closeness of the partnership between the two leaders." When asked what she felt when she was standing behind President Obama, PM Abe, and FM Kishida at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, she was quoted as saying: "I felt that I was present at history in the making. I was also thinking about President Kennedy who worked hard on nuclear disarmament. I felt very lucky to be the Ambassador to Japan, which is such an incredible ally."

The Ambassador was also quoted as saying: "I think people will be moved by the power of Prime Minister Abe's gesture. to visit and by the fact that our countries became close friends and built an

alliance that is the strongest in the world after such a difficult history and a terrible war. I think this gives the entire world hope. I felt in Hiroshima that countries can reconcile and build peace, and I'm sure people will feel the same way tomorrow." Anchor Watanabe, who interviewed the Ambassador, said the Ambassador was very dignified and friendly, and added that the Ambassador also stressed that the strength of the bilateral alliance will remain unchanged even under the new U.S. government since the alliance has been strengthened over the last 70 years and both nations benefit from it.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **PM Abe, President Obama hold final summit**

All networks reported at noon on the final summit meeting between Prime Minister Abe and President Obama in Honolulu on Tuesday, saying that the two leaders spoke about Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor and Obama's visit to Hiroshima, and reaffirmed the commitment never to repeat the horror of war. According to Fuji TV, the two leaders also expressed concern about the Chinese aircraft carrier that sailed into the Western Pacific by saying it "needs to be monitored from a mid-to long-term perspective." Concerning the Osprey incident, Abe reportedly said it was regrettable and called for ensuring safety and sharing information. President Obama reportedly responded by promising to maintain close communications.

### **A/S Russel speaks on U.S.-Japan relations**

BuzzFeed Japan published on Wednesday a recent [interview](#) with Assistant Secretary of State Russel ahead of Prime Minister Abe's historic visit to Pearl Harbor, which he said marks an "important step forward in what's been an extraordinary process of reconciliation." He said U.S.-Japan relations are "in great shape – better than they've ever been." The U.S. official projected that the excellent partnership between Tokyo and Washington will probably continue under the incoming Trump administration because even though the president of the United States will change on Jan. 20, "the interests of the United States – the national security and economic priorities of the United States – don't change by and large." Asked for his advice to Japan, Russel reportedly stated in Japanese: "The most important resource for any country today is its people. Women make up half of Japan's population. I'm wondering if Japanese society, businesses, and politics are fully utilizing women. My personal advice is that Japanese companies should hire female employees with the intention of turning them into CEOs. I hope that the government quickly implements such measures as establishing more daycare centers."

### **TV pundits view leaders' Pearl Harbor messages as warnings to President-elect Trump**

Daytime infotainment shows reported extensively on the remarks delivered at Pearl Harbor by Prime Minister Abe and President Obama, paying special attention to such phrases as "spirit of tolerance," "power of reconciliation," and "alliance of hope" that the premier used repeatedly. Commentators speculated that the Japanese leader wanted to remind President-elect Trump of the importance of

the trans-Pacific partnership, as his controversial and divisive language about the U.S.-Japan alliance and world affairs on the campaign trail raised serious doubts about the future outlook for the bilateral relations. One panelist on TV-Asahi took up President Obama's statement: "Even when hatred burns hottest, we must resist the urge to demonize those who are different," wondering if it was directed at his successor, who sometimes resorts to inflammatory rhetoric.

While welcoming the premier's speech as highlighting the power of reconciliation to turn adversaries into the closest of allies, several pundits pointed out that Abe has failed to achieve genuine reconciliation with Japan's immediate neighbors, such as China and North Korea. Claiming that Japan has been "subservient" to the U.S. in the name of reconciliation, a TV-Asahi reporter urged the Abe administration to take steps to "reconcile" with Okinawa by heeding the southernmost prefecture's desperate calls for the cancellation of the Heonoko relocation plan.

- [\*\*U.S.-Japan relations are "in great shape – better than they've ever been," says prominent American official and Japanophile Daniel Russel\*\*](#) (BuzzFeed)
- [\*\*Editorial: Japan must remain vigilant over Chinese aircraft carrier maneuvers\*\*](#) (The Japan News)
- [\*\*Akiba placed in charge of consultations on "joint activities" with Russia\*\*](#) (Yomiuri)
- [\*\*Editorial: Japan should have backed U.N. arms embargo on South Sudan\*\*](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [\*\*Editorial: U.N. arms reduction talks should aim for world without nuclear weapons\*\*](#) (The Mainichi)
- [\*\*Japan, France to hold 2+2 meeting next month\*\*](#) (Yomiuri)

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **PM Abe's Pearl Harbor visit draws mixed reactions on social media**

Prime Minister Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor and his speech at Kilo Pier have met with mixed reactions from the Japanese public on social media. According to Yahoo Real Time Search, 23% of the comments posted on Twitter and Facebook from 6 a.m. today about Abe's visit or the speech were negative, while only 2% were positive. Some of the negative comments were apparently made in the context of the U.S. base issue in Okinawa, criticizing Abe for stressing the importance of "the power of reconciliation" during his speech while taking a hardline stance on the base issue in Okinawa. One person tweeted: "Say that to Okinawa, to the people of Okinawa!" Others criticized Abe's pro-constitutional revision approach. Keio University Professor Masaru Kaneko, an outspoken critic of Abe, tweeted: "PM Abe's creepy speech at Pearl Harbor is now being aired on TV. He said

he 'appreciates U.S. tolerance' and wants to demonstrate the 'reconciliation' between Japan and the U.S.' Does that mean PM Abe, who is obsessed with revising the Constitution, will stop criticizing 'the imposed Constitution'? Is he going to do the same for China and South Korea, which Japan invaded and colonized? What this man is saying is totally incoherent." Kaneko's tweet has been retweeted 955 times so far.

Meanwhile, many people hailed Abe's decision to visit Pearl Harbor, with one saying: "Hiroshima has become a symbol of peace. From today, Pearl Harbor will become a symbol of reconciliation. It is important for the world to shift to a future-oriented mindset because the war ended a long time ago. The people's mindset had not changed for the last 70 years, but history was changed today. Prime Minister Abe is amazing. This is good news for the end of the year." In response to a Jiji article about the visit that was carried by Yahoo! Japan News, one person posted the comment: "It's not about who's responsible or who should apologize. Why can't we look at this in a straightforward manner? Consoling the spirits of the deceased is wonderful. Why can't we leave it at that?" The comment has received 9,145 "likes."

## **SECURITY**

### **Pentagon releases statement welcoming resumption of Futenma relocation work**

NHK reported this afternoon that the Department of Defense released on Tuesday a statement welcoming the resumption of the Futenma relocation work in Henoko. The network reported that the statement says the USG will continue to work with the GOJ in promoting the plan to construct the Futenma replacement facility and that promoting the existing plan "is the only solution" to avoid the continued use of the Futenma base while maintaining the response capabilities of the U.S. Marines.

### **Tokyo and Okinawa on collision course**

Ryukyu Shimpo and Okinawa Times devoted numerous pages to the resumption of the FRF construction work in the vicinity of Camp Schwab on Tuesday afternoon after it was suspended for ten months, highlighting a meeting in Tokyo earlier in the day between Governor Onaga and Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga during which they both apparently refused to compromise on the Futenma relocation plan. Noting that Suga "acknowledged" Onaga's warning that he will have no choice but to take a hard line in order to derail the Henoko construction, Ryukyu Shimpo predicted that the confrontation between the central government and Okinawa will intensify as a result of the conclusion of the ten-month "ceasefire." Okinawa Times said Onaga renewed his determination not to allow the FRF construction because Suga categorically dismissed his call for continued discussions ahead of the resumption. The paper added, however, that some Okinawa municipal leaders are not necessarily in sync with Onaga in demanding that the construction work be halted,

pointing out that Ginowan Mayor Sakima again voiced his understanding for the Henoko plan yesterday..

## **POLITICS**

### **[Reconstruction Minister Imamura visits Yasukuni Shrine](#)**

NHK reported at 3 p.m. news that Minister for Reconstruction Imamura visited Yasukuni Shrine this afternoon, saying that he tossed money into a donation box and bowed deeply in front of the hall of worship of the main shrine. He was quoted as telling reporters after the visit: "I went there to report on my work this year and express my appreciation as well as to pray for the safety and prosperity of our nation. I visited as a citizen, a member of the Diet, and a member of the cabinet." He reportedly explained that he donated his own money. When asked by a reporter about the timing of his visit to the shrine, which coincided with Prime Minister Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor, he reportedly replied: "It's just a coincidence. I came here because today is the last business day of the year. There is no connection with the prime minister." The network added that Imamura also visited the shrine in August, right after he took office.

- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 26](#) (Nikkei)
- [Cartoon: 2020 Olympics](#) (Asahi)

## **ECONOMY**

- [Supporting large-scale farmers through agricultural reform](#) (Nikkei)
- [Nikai gets 3.7 trillion yen for "national resilience" plan](#) (Asahi)
- [Medical service fees to be next candidate for reform](#) (Mainichi)

## **SCIENCE**

- [Self-driving buses to be tested in March in Okinawa](#) (Yomiuri)