



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, January 5, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TBS led with reports on the U.S. military's planned resumption of aerial refueling drills by the Futenma-based Ospreys. Other top stories included the first auction of the year at the Tsukiji Fish Market, during which a 212-kilogram bluefin tuna fetched 74.2 million yen.

SECURITY

U.S. military to resume Osprey aerial refueling drills on Friday at earliest

NHK and most commercial networks reported that the Ministry of Defense announced today that the U.S. military is planning to resume aerial refueling training by the Futenma-based Ospreys on Friday at the earliest. Following the emergency landing by an Osprey in shallow waters off Nago on Dec. 13, the U.S. military has taken measures such as ground-based simulation drills to prevent a recurrence. The ministry said the U.S. military's plan to resume the training on Friday or later is acceptable because a wide range of effective measures have been implemented. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga expressed a similar view during a news conference this morning, adding that Japan has confirmed that the U.S. military will conduct aerial refueling training only in offshore areas and will avoid airspace above residential areas. TBS quoted Okinawa Vice Governor Ageda as saying that the decision is unacceptable because the prefecture has not been provided with sufficient explanations about the cause of the accident. NTV said that Okinawa will likely react strongly to the resumption of the training.

Defense Ministry resumes offshore work at Henoko

Okinawa Times gave top play to a report on the resumption on Wednesday by the Defense Ministry's Okinawa Bureau of offshore work for the FRF construction at Henoko to place an oil containment boom in waters off Camp Schwab. The work, which had been suspended for 10 months, was conducted amid protests staged by residents on boats and canoes in the construction area. Eight of the protesters were temporarily detained by the Japanese Coast Guard.

- [U.S. to resume Osprey aircraft refueling training in Japan from Fri.](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Henoko work likely to start in February](#) (The Japan News)
- [Okinawa underestimates earnings to remain prefecture with lowest income](#) (Sankei)
- [Opinion: The silencing of an anti-U.S. base protester in Okinawa](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japan to hold large-scale anti-cyberattack drill for 2020 Tokyo Olympics](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Using domestic products to defend Japan's infrastructure](#) (Sankei)
- [Major gas company suffers cyberattack](#) (Yomiuri)

INTERNATIONAL

[Abe's advisor meets with aide to Trump](#)

NHK reported that Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Kawai held a meeting with Rep. Chris Collins, a member of the Trump transition team, in Washington on Wednesday. The two agreed that it is important to arrange a meeting between President Trump and Prime Minister Abe at an early date after Trump takes office on Jan. 20, confirming that the value of the U.S.-Japan alliance will not change under the Trump administration. The two aides also agreed that it is important for Trump to visit Japan and the Asia-Pacific region at an early date to assess the regional situation. According to Kawai, Collins told him that he will brief Trump on his conversation with Kawai in the near future. Kawai also plans to hold a meeting with House Speaker Ryan on Thursday to discuss the U.S.-Japan alliance.

[Japan to call on ROK to swiftly remove comfort woman statue in Busan](#)

NHK reported on a news conference this morning by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, during which he stated that the recent installation of a statue symbolizing the comfort women in front of the Japanese Consulate in Busan is extremely regrettable and that the GOJ will call on the ROK government and relevant groups to swiftly remove it. Suga said that the installation of the statue is very regrettable because the two nations agreed in 2015 to resolve the comfort women issue "finally and irreversibly." The government spokesman added that the statue issue is having a negative impact on the bilateral relations and violates the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

- [Trump eyes aide Hagerty as ambassador to Japan](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan foreign minister leaves for France to attend security talks](#) (Kyodo News)

- [Tokyo, Moscow to broaden foreign affairs talks](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: Pivotal moment for global economy, but no return to protectionism](#) (The Mainichi)
- [New “comfort woman” statue in S. Korea regrettable: Japan spokesman](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Trans-Java railway costs swell as Indonesia tacks on plans](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: Demonstrate power of reconciliation to Asian countries](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Japan’s Amano set to be re-elected IAEA chief unopposed](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Secret agreement between Japan, China on Yasukuni visits](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [As world closes doors to refugee surge, Aceh aid expert urges Japan to open up, play lead role](#) (The Japan Times)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister’s schedule on Jan. 4](#) (Nikkei)
- [Abe to keep putting “highest priority on economy” in 2017](#) (Kyodo News)
- [New Year’s Reflection by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe](#) (Kantei Website)
- [Major political events in 2017](#) (Mainichi)
- [Mainichi, Genron NPO rate Abe gov’t achievements at same level as last year](#) (Mainichi)

ECONOMY

- [Mazda CEO sees Mexican plant as key base amid unclear Trump policy](#) (Mainichi)
- [Tax break introduced for switching to OTC medication](#) (Mainichi)
- [METI promotes exchange between small businesses in Japan and Germany](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan eyes safety certification for AI tech](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Major AI research hub opens in Tokyo](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan trading houses eyeing more energy projects in Russia](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [More women taking up farming in Japan](#) (The Japan Times)

EDUCATION

- [Children in Japan struggle to break out of poverty cycle](#) (The Japan Times)

SOCIETY

- [Foreign fraud ring found to be operating in Japan](#) (Sankei)

OPINION POLLS

- [Highlights of the December 2016 Jiji Press Public Opinion Poll](#) (Jiji Press Public Opinion Poll Bulletin)
- [Older generation seeks military base reform, 2016 Ryukyu Shimpo poll of Okinawa residents](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)

TV PROGRAMS

Message from “Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind”

NHK’s “Close-up Gendai Plus” highlighted Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari’s “Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind,” which has been highly recommended by such distinguished leaders as President Obama, Bill Gates, and Mark Zuckerberg. Harari argues in the book that Homo sapiens can cooperate flexibly in large numbers because it has the unique ability to believe in things existing purely in its own imagination, such as nationhood and human rights. The program argued that the international bestseller offers hints on how mankind can survive the current times when it is facing such serious issues as expanding economic disparity, terrorism, and internal conflicts by creating a fresh imaginative landscape that will replace capitalism.

