



Afternoon Alert - Friday, January 13, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

All networks gave top play to forecasts of extremely cold weather and heavy snowfall over the weekend in Japan.

## SECURITY

### U.S., Japan to sign agreement on narrowing scope of civilian component early next week

Friday evening's Asahi reported that Foreign Minister Kishida disclosed at a press conference this morning that the governments of the U.S. and Japan are making arrangements to sign an agreement on narrowing the scope of the civilian component covered by the SOFA as early as early next week. The paper said the agreement will put into effect once it is signed. Kishida reportedly said: "We hope that this will help contain incidents involving civilian workers in Okinawa."

### U.S. military conducts parachute training without prior notification

This morning's Rukyu Shimpo gave prominent front- and inside-page play to an airborne drop drill conducted by the U.S. Air Force in waters off Uruma City on the east coast of Okinawa's main island on Thursday, noting that the training was performed without prior notification to the Okinawa Defense Bureau. While pointing out that for years the prefectural and municipal governments have been asking the local U.S. military authorities to conduct such drills only on Iejima Island in line with the SACO agreement, the paper said the U.S. military once again dismissed local pleas. The paper underscored that unannounced parachute training poses a danger to people on the ground,

speculating that the U.S. military may be planning to conduct similar training at Kadena AB next Tuesday.

- [Japan's major defense contractors](#) (Akahata)
- [Ex-defense chief Ishiba on Japan-U.S. alliance, security policy, more](#) (Sande Mainichi)
- [Defense Ministry conceals massacre near SDF camp in South Sudan](#) (Sentaku)
- [Suga behind cut in Okinawa's special tax rate extension, eyeing next gubernatorial race](#) (Sentaku)

## INTERNATIONAL

### [Secretary of Defense-designate Mattis says U.S. to continue to engage in Asia](#)

NHK reported at noon that Secretary of Defense-designate Mattis stressed during a confirmation hearing on Thursday that the U.S. will continue to engage in the Asia-Pacific region. According to the network, Mattis named Russia and China as security challenges that need to be addressed by saying that the international order "is under the biggest attack since WWII from Russia, terrorist groups, and with what China is doing in the South China Sea." In addition, Mattis also made clear that he will place importance on alliances by saying: "My view is that nations with allies thrive, and nations without allies don't."

While refraining from directly commenting on the remarks by Mattis, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga reportedly told the press this morning: "We hope to further strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance under a strong relationship of trust with the new Trump administration and further strengthen our ties."

### [Former UN chief calls Japan-ROK comfort women pact "insufficient"](#)

Mainichi took up press remarks on Thursday in Seoul by former UN Secretary General Ban, who is exploring the possibility of running in the planned South Korean presidential election later this year. On his statement made as the top UN official in December 2015 that he "welcomed" the signing of the Japan-South Korea agreement on comfort women, Ban said: "There has been a lot of misunderstanding. I welcomed the fact that an accord was reached on a long-standing dispute between Seoul and Tokyo. A perfect agreement must fulfill the standard of resolving the suffering of the victims."

- [Editorial: Trump's news conference fuels concerns of 'me first' politics](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Trump diplomacy: New U.S. administration will eventually turn pro-Japanese](#) (AERA)

- [Cartoon: The President-elect and protectionism](#) (Sankei)
- [Cartoon: The President and the President-elect](#) (Asahi)
- [Editorial: Obama struggled to achieve ideals during time in office](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Obama's 8-year tenure lacks balance between principles and actions](#) (The Japan News)
- [Column: Abe, Duterte differ in approach to China](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Abe pledges \\$8.7 billion public-private package for Philippines](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Japan, Russia to start talks on medicine, followed by energy](#) (Asahi)
- [Pro-Seoul group in Japan seeks removal of Busan "comfort women" statue](#) (Kyodo News)

## POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 12](#) (Nikkei)
- [LDP, Nippon Ishin agree to initiate talks on constitutional amendment](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Ban on Nippon Kaigi book imperils freedom of expression](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Is a "grand Kochikai" vision possible?](#) (Mainichi)
- [Renho expresses desire to talk to Tokyo Gov. Koike about joining hands in Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election](#) (Mainichi)
- [Okazaki, Kitamura tipped to be possible candidates for next deputy chief cabinet secretary](#) (Sentaku)

## ECONOMY

- [Tepco to remain a ward of the state for at least 3 more years](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [No agreement reached on tariffs in FTA negotiations between Japan, China, ROK after 4 years](#) (Asahi)
- [Editorial: Japan-U.S. Atomic Energy Agreement must be continued](#) (Sankei)

- [“TEPCO alone will restart Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant,” says METI](#) (Mainichi)
- [Biodrugs: Government-designated drug development on rise in Japan, U.S.](#) (Shukan Ekonomisuto)

## SCIENCE

- [Commercial use of microsatellites is expanding](#) (Asahi)

## EDUCATION

- [41 national universities see grant increases with MEXT redistribution of funds](#) (Mainichi)
- [Tokyo Governor Koike aims to double number of assistant language teachers](#) (Sankei)

## TV PROGRAMS

### **“In This Corner of the World” wins prestigious film award**

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" reported on a popular Japanese film called "Kono Sekai no Katasumi ni" (In This Corner of the World), which received Kinema Jumbo's prestigious award for best Japanese film in 2016. The program said the movie is an adaptation of a manga of the same title on the theme of WWII by Fumiyo Kouno, adding that the last time an anime was selected for the award was 1988 when Hayao Miyazaki's "Tonari no Totoro" (My Neighbor Totoro) was picked. The program said the film depicts in detail the daily lives of people in Hiroshima during and after the WWII through the eyes of a young woman called "Suzu." The program said audiences were able to sympathize with people living at the time who did not lose their sense of humor or give up on their pursuit of happiness even under harsh conditions. The program also said the film was produced through crowdfunding, which raised a total of 70 million yen from about 7,000 contributors.