
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, January 18, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NTV, TBS, and Fuji TV led with reports that a man jumped to his death from the ninth floor of a hotel in Fukuoka this morning after taking a female hotel employee hostage. TV Asahi gave top play to a report that Samsung Electronics Co. Vice Chairman Lee Jae-yong reported to the Seoul Central District Court this morning for a hearing. NHK reported that State Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Yoshiie said at an LDP meeting that several MEXT officials are being questioned about their possible involvement in "amakudari," the practice of giving high-profile positions to retired bureaucrats.

AMBASSADOR

- [See you again, Caroline! U.S. Ambassador Caroline Kennedy to leave Japan today](#) (Asahi)
- [Ambassador Kennedy: Until we meet again!](#) (Asahi Evening edition)
- [My Japanology: Hope, history rhyme in Hiroshima and Pearl Harbor](#) (The Japan News)
- [As Kennedy steps down from ambassador post, observers see a mixed legacy](#) (The Japan Times)

INTERNATIONAL

Hiroshima mayor sent letter to President Obama

Jiji Press reported this afternoon that Hiroshima Mayor Matsui said during a press conference today that he sent a letter addressed to President Obama dated Dec. 16 to express his appreciation for the President's visit to Hiroshima last May. Matsui reportedly wrote in the letter that the President "touched the citizens by taking into account the voices of hibakusha, and gave them great hope by stressing the importance of a future-oriented relationship based on the experience of the atomic bombing." Jiji wrote that the Hiroshima mayor also called on President Obama to continue to work toward a world without nuclear weapons even after he steps down and to deepen the cooperation between the Mayors for Peace organization and the Barack Obama Foundation. According to Jiji, the letter was handed to Ambassador Kennedy when the chief of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation met her on Dec. 20. The Ambassador reportedly said that the President will take the wishes of Hiroshima seriously.

Former UN Ambassador Bolton proposes transfer of U.S. Marines in Okinawa to Taiwan

Jiji Press reported this morning that former U.S. Ambassador to the UN Bolton said in an article he contributed to the Wall Street Journal on Tuesday that the U.S. Marines in Okinawa should be transferred to Taiwan because that would "enhance the U.S.'s East Asia military posture." Jiji said that while Bolton did not mention the scale of such a transfer, he pointed out that "Taiwan is geographically closer to East Asia's mainland and the South China Sea than either Okinawa or Guam, giving U.S. forces greater flexibility for rapid deployment throughout the region should the need arise." He also reportedly explained that it would help resolve the U.S. base issue in Okinawa by saying: "Washington might also help ease tensions with Tokyo by redeploying at least some U.S. forces from Okinawa, a festering problem in the U.S.-Japan relationship."

Jiji wrote that although there is little chance that such a proposal by the hawkish Bolton would be considered, it is certain to draw a strong reaction from China and could have major repercussions for China and Taiwan. Noting that he had once been considered a possible candidate for secretary of state under the Trump administration, Jiji wrote that he apparently still influences Trump's foreign policy.

SECURITY

U.S. military to operate F-35s at Futenma Air Station

Today's Okinawa Times reported on the U.S. military's plan to operate at MCAS Futenma the F-35s to be deployed semi-permanently at MCAS Iwakuni starting this month. According to the Marine authorities in Okinawa, the advanced stealth aircraft will use Futenma on a temporary basis as frequently as the Iwakuni-based FA-18s that have occasionally flown to Okinawa for training. The F-35s will also reportedly use Kadena AB and Ie Jima Auxiliary Airfield when conducting drills in and around Okinawa.

- [Security: Trump's biggest surprise may be a nuclear Japan](#) (SAPIO)
- [GSDF deployment to become issue in Miyakojima mayoral election](#) (Yomiuri)
- [MOD to launch a panel on THAAD](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Think tank releases recommendations for Japan's defense](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Ex-Hiroshima Mayor Akiba hopes for assurance of no nuke use in letter to Trump](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Full text of ex-Hiroshima Mayor Akiba's letter to Trump](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: Incoming president to hammer Japan over trade](#) (Asahi)
- [Abe emphasizes "Indo-Pacific" on four-nation tour in message to India](#) (Sankei)
- [Philippine president allegedly turned down Abe's offer to provide missiles](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Abe visits Southeast Asia, Australia in preparation for his U.S. visit](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Comfort woman statues to bring shame on South Korea](#) (Sankei)
- [Russia, Japan dismiss U.S. influence to improve bilateral ties: Russian foreign minister](#) (Mainichi)
- [Russia displeased by Japan's economic cooperation with China](#) (Nikkei)
- [State Minister for Foreign Affairs to visit Russia](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Fukushima to host Pacific island summit in 2018](#) (Asahi)

ECONOMY

LDP policy chief Motegi explains need for TPP to Senator Wicker

NHK reported this afternoon that visiting LDP policy chief Motegi met with Senator Wicker, who is well-versed in security policy, in Washington on Tuesday. During the meeting, Motegi explained the necessity of the TPP by saying it is "more productive" to discuss free trade "in a bigger framework." The Republican senator reportedly said that although he is well aware of the TPP's importance, it will be "difficult" to make a move since President-elect Trump has announced that he will withdraw the U.S. from the deal once he is inaugurated. Concerning Trump's plan to

have Japan pay more to station U.S. troops in Japan, Motegi reportedly explained to Wicker that Japan is already paying more than 70% of the cost.

- [Japan lagging behind in labor standards](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Incentivize agricultural materials industry reform with tax breaks, low-interest loans](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Masayoshi Matsumoto tapped as next chairman of Kansai Economic Federation](#) (Mainichi)
- [Ministry announces easing of permanent residence visa requirements for skilled foreigners](#) (Yomiuri)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 17](#) (Nikkei)
- [Members of conservative party Kokoro return to LDP's fold](#) (Asahi)

SCIENCE

- [Opdivo could be more effective with co-administration of mitochondria activator](#) (Asahi)

EDUCATION

- [Earning foreign universities' degrees at Japanese schools](#) (Yomiuri)

SOCIETY

- [Female execs at 3.4%, far off 30% target](#) (The Japan News)
- [Illegal employment in agriculture rising](#) (Mainichi Evening edition)
- [New emperor's ascension on Jan. 1 'difficult' due to events: agency](#) (The Mainichi)

TV PROGRAMS

[Search for extraterrestrial intelligence continues](#)

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" on Tuesday evening reported on an ongoing plan by researchers around the world to explore outer space in search for extraterrestrial intelligence. The program reported on an international scientific research program called "Breakthrough Listen," in which researchers search for signals from outer space using giant radio telescopes. A Russian radio telescope reportedly picked up a mysterious signal last year, causing rumors that it was coming from aliens. While it was concluded that the signal was just noise, the program said there are already heated discussions on how to "respond" to contacts from extra-terrestrial intelligence.

