



Afternoon Alert - Friday, January 20, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most networks gave top play to reports that MEXT officials have been involved in helping several retired colleagues secure high-profile jobs in the private sector. NHK said Prime Minister Abe has instructed his cabinet members to check for similar practices at other ministries and agencies. TBS led with a report on Trump's inauguration.

INTERNATIONAL

Japanese firms wary of Trump's protectionism

NHK reported this morning on the economic policy of the incoming Trump administration, saying that Japanese companies are concerned that protectionism will not only be bad for the U.S. but also for the world. The network reported on the results of its survey of 100 Japanese firms this month, which showed that a total of 18 companies said Trump's economic policy will be either "positive" or "somewhat positive" for their own business, while 11 firms said it will be "somewhat negative" because of Trump's protectionist policy. The network said 56 firms said they didn't know, speculating that they are eager to ascertain what kind of policies Trump will actually adopt. Reporting on trade friction between the U.S. and Japan in the past, especially during the 80s and the 90s, the network quoted former Administrative Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Mitoji Yabunaka, who was in charge of trade negotiations at the time, as saying in an interview: "It was intense. There was a atmosphere of being at war.... Looking back, I think we should have made stronger arguments and pointed out problems in the U.S. The Japanese people are not good at this. We tried to be defensive." Concerning President-elect Trump, who promotes "America-first" policies, Yabunaka said: "I feel

there is the danger of protectionism and also fear. This time, the president himself is heading in that direction, so it is dangerous...I think we have entered a historically dangerous time." He also said: "We should continue to reiterate that Japanese investment is creating jobs in the U.S. Instead of asking for U.S. understanding, it is important for us to thoroughly explain our views, our situation, and the fact that the U.S. is wrong about this."

Exclusive interview with Syrian President Assad

TBS's "News 23" reported on its 30-minute exclusive interview with Syrian President Assad conducted in Syria, saying that it was the president's first media interview since the ceasefire agreement was reached. When interviewer Hiroshi Hoshi asked whether "human tragedy" was necessary to liberate Aleppo, President Assad said: "Those that are criticizing Russia or Syria about bombings and war crimes are nations that are supporting terrorists, such as America, the UK, France, Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. They support terrorists through media and politics. They are sending them weapons, money, and providing logistical support. They have no right to raise their voices for the Syrian citizens. They are the reason why innocent Syrian citizens have been killed over the last six years.... Second, in terms of the constitution, law, and ethics, our role as a government is to free Syrian citizens from terrorists. Terrorists are taking over parts of our nation, killing citizens, destroying everything, and forcing on them the hateful concept of Wahhab. Do you think the government will be allowed to stand by and watch? Of course, any war comes with casualties. All wars are bad. There is bloodshed and killing, and there is no such thing as a good war. However, if you have to fight against terrorists, unfortunately, there will be casualties. We did our utmost to minimize the number of casualties. Those who are raising their voices for the Syrians, do they have any evidence that Syria or Russia killed ordinary citizens? Is it ethically possible for the government to kill its own people? If we were killing our own people, do you think that, as the government, the military, or the president, we would be able to endure the past six years? This is not logical. It is not realistic. We are here because we have public support....We really want to end this war. This is the only way to save the Syrians."

On President-elect Trump, President Assad expressed expectations for him by saying that Trump's top priority is to fight ISIS, and expressed hope that he will truly translate his words into action. He also expressed hope that Trump will build a "true" and "realistic" coalition, which includes Syria, to fight against terrorists. On Japan, the Syrian president criticized the Abe administration for calling on the president to step down and participating in the international economic sanctions against Syria. He called on Japan to return to being a "fair" nation that had been supporting the development of Syria and other nations in the Middle East for many years in the past.

- [**Abe hails Japan-U.S. ties in Diet speech ahead of Trump inauguration**](#) (Kyodo News)
- [**Kishida expresses regret over "comfort women" statue in S. Korea**](#) (JIJI)

- [Japan says isle name on S. Korea Olympics website “unacceptable”](#) (Kyodo News)
- [How Trump will handle Henoko issue remains unknown](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- [Japan needs to build trade, security networks with incoming U.S. administration](#) (Yomiuri)
- [How should Japan deal with Trump’s foreign policies?](#) (Shukan Ekonomisuto)
- [Cartoon: Inauguration of a new era](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Trump should discuss vision of U.S.](#) (Sankei)
- [Interview with U.S. expert on Trump administration’s Asia policy](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Japan-U.S. alliance to remain unchanged under Trump: Komura](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Brexit task force meets](#) (Mainichi)
- [Thermal power giving rise to new business opportunities in Vietnam](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gap between time and space in U.S. creates endless stream of surprises](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan decides to ask UNESCO to list remote islands, Christian sites](#) (Kyodo News)

SECURITY

Leaders of three Henoko districts express readiness to cooperate with GOJ

Okinawa Times wrote that the GOJ hosted its fourth round of economic development talks with the leaders of the three districts near the FRF construction site – Henoko, Toyohara, and Kushi – on Thursday at the Ministry of Defense. The participants discussed the use of the government subsidies provided directly to the districts. The central government has allocated 105 million yen for such subsidies in fiscal 2017, up by 27 million yen from fiscal 2016. A senior ministry official offered an apology for causing concern among local residents over the emergency landing by a Futenma-based Osprey last year and stressed that the ministry will continue to call on the U.S. to ensure the safety of aircraft operations. In response to the ministry’s call for cooperation with the relocation work, the Henoko district leader said they will continue to provide support unless any unexpected situation arises.

- [U.S. to start moving carrier-based aircraft to Iwakuni base in Nov.](#) (Kyodo News)
- [S. Korea, U.S., Japan hold drills to counter N. Korea missile threat](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan to carry out tabletop exercise for possible China-Taiwan clash](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Mixed reaction to northern Okinawa's inclusion in proposed World Heritage site](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [MIC to set up IoT security working group](#) (Mainichi)
- [Okinawa Defense Bureau notifies media outlets of off-limits area](#) (Okinawa Times)
- [Concern about stress on children due to noise in Henoko](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 19](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of Prime Minister Abe's policy speech](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Commentary: Opposition parties seem to use Emperor's abdication for political maneuvering](#) (Sankei)
- [Internal Affairs Ministry committee orders disclosure of documents on collective defense right](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: How will opposition parties dispel criticism of 'unity of convenience'?](#) (The Japan News)
- [Cartoon: DP-JCP united front](#) (Asahi)
- [Outline of a bill aimed at increasing female legislators](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Japanese politics still very much a man's world](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: PM's office, Imperial Household Agency should improve communication](#) (The Mainichi)

ECONOMY

- [METI to pilot telecommuting program to reduce late night overtime](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Aso seeks balanced growth in graying Japan, swift budget passage](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Lure inbound cruise visitors through privately funded port upgrades](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [Japan ratifies TPP despite bleak outlook under Trump](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Aso says no need to fret about every currency move](#) (Kyodo News)
- [MLIT to upgrade ports to lure cruise ships](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [Toshiba racing against time to secure path to revival](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Nuclear Regulation Agency to urge all nuclear plants to inspect pipes for corrosion](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Delivery of MRJ delayed up to two years](#) (Yomiuri)
- [JAL to start operating Haneda-NY route on Apr. 1](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [JAL to join in international flight competitions](#) (Asahi)
- [Patrick Harlan: Trump presidency is a chance for giving fresh thought to Japan-U.S. relationship](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Gov't to subsidize daycare expenses for stay-at-home moms receiving job training](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan eyes monthly overtime cap at 60-80 hours](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan Post stock sale hinges on market staying strong](#) (Nikkei)

TV PROGRAMS

What's behind President-elect Trump's extreme remarks?

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" looked closely into the "extreme" remarks made by President-elect Trump, focusing on his statements on economic and foreign affairs. The program said although there are expectations that Trump will be able to increase jobs in the U.S., his tweets attacking specific companies are facing criticism. The program said the U.S. is divided over his plans to invest \$1 trillion in infrastructure and deport illegal immigrants. Economist Tatsuhiko Yoshizaki said Trump appears to be trying to protect the "old economy" made up of manufacturers and go up against

the "new economy" made up of technology companies and Silicon Valley. On foreign affairs, the program said Trump demonstrated that he is eager to mend ties with Russia by nominating Rex Tillerson, who is close to President Putin, as secretary of state. The program also reported on Trump's hardline policy toward China. Kumi Yokoe, a senior visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation, said that since Trump also advocates "America-first" policies in foreign affairs, he will need to stand up to China, which is stealing jobs from the U.S., adding, however, that Trump has no intention to actually clash with China. Lastly, Yoshizaki said Japan needs to increase its "options" for dealing with the new Trump administration, such as making further efforts to defend itself and holding dialogue with Russia.

