



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, January 25, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All networks led with reports that today sumo wrestler Ozeki Kisenosato became the 72nd yokozuna and the first Japanese yokozuna in 19 years.

SECURITY

Defense Secretary Mattis to visit Japan in early February

Fuji TV reported at noon that Secretary of Defense Mattis will visit South Korea and Japan next week, saying that after visiting South Korea on Feb. 2, he will visit Japan on Feb. 3 and 4. The network said the new defense chief is expected to meet with Prime Minister Abe and Defense Minister Inada. Noting that President Trump has been insisting that Japan pay more to host U.S. troops, the network said the Japanese side is expected to explain to Secretary Mattis that it already pays 760 billion yen annually for the stationing of the USFJ. The network also said that following North Korea's announcement that it could launch an ICBM at any time, Secretary Mattis is expected to confirm trilateral cooperation among the U.S., Japan, and South Korea, and discuss THAAD with South Korea.

TV Asahi reported that Secretary Mattis is making final arrangements to visit Japan as early as Feb. 2 and meet with his Japanese counterpart Inada. The network said the two defense chiefs are expected to discuss the Futenma issue and measures to further strengthen the bilateral alliance. The network added that attention will be focused on what Secretary Mattis will say about the issue of

President Trump asking Japan to pay more to host U.S. troops. All other networks also reported on the defense chief's visit to Japan early next month.

Okinawa's Washington representative to be replaced

This morning's Ryukyu Shimpo wrote that Okinawa Governor Onaga is likely to tap Osamu Unten, an expert on U.S. base issues, as the director of the prefectural government's Washington office, projecting that he will replace the incumbent director, Hideo Henzan, in April. Unten has been heavily involved in base issues for years, having been the director of the Okinawa prefectural government's military affairs division since 2013.

- **Medical support for GSDF in South Sudan inadequate** (Asahi)
- **Defense Ministry mulls establishing medical care facilities in Okinawa for contingencies** (Akahata)
- **Gov't growing wary of impact of Okinawa vice governor's resignation on base issue** (Nikkei)
- **Tokyo police department conducts cyberattack response training with 63 companies** (Asahi)
- **Japan to launch intelligence-gathering satellite in March** (Kyodo News)
- **Tokyo police department to collect advance warnings of possible cyberattacks** (Nikkei Evening edition)
- **Cyberattacks on home front prompt new lines of defense** (Nikkei Asian Review)

INTERNATIONAL

Governor of South Korean province lands on Takeshima

NHK reported at noon that the governor of South Korea's North Gyeongsang Province, which claims jurisdictional authority over Takeshima (also known as Liancourt Rocks and Dokdo), landed on the islands this morning. The governor reportedly posted a video of himself greeting the security personnel on the islands on his Facebook page. The network said MOFA lodged a protest by saying that the visit is "totally unacceptable" in light of Japan's position on the jurisdictional authority over Takeshima, and that it is extremely regrettable that the governor landed on the islands. The network said the government of the province explained that the purpose of the governor's visit was to "directly confirm the state of alert and encourage the security personnel" since "the Japanese government has been repeatedly making false statements about the islands."

- **President slams Japan, China for trade practices** (The Japan News)

- [Questions over Japan-U.S. relations under Trump dominate Diet debate](#) (The Mainichi)
- [U.S. exit from TPP forces Japan to shift track](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Reformulate strategy for dealing with U.S. in level-headed manner](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Abe's false belief that Japan-U.S. alliance is unchangeable](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Government must adroitly manage ties with new U.S. administration](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Trump's ascent allows Japan to pursue own foreign agenda](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Survey of newspaper editorials on President Trump's inaugural address](#) (Sankei)
- [Japanese cars made in Mexico to lose competitiveness with 6% U.S. tariff: JETRO](#) (Mainichi)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media users dismiss President Trump's criticism of Japanese auto trade as anachronistic

Several thousand comments have been posted on social media in response to President Trump's remarks about Japan's auto trade, with an overwhelming number of Twitter and other social media users apparently disapproving of his view by saying it is reminiscent of the 1980s, when Japan logged a huge trade surplus with the U.S. Many of them argue that there is currently no problem with domestic legal regulations and other practices in terms of restricting American auto imports, pointing out the absence of import tariffs on foreign cars and the robust sales enjoyed for many years by a number of German and other European makers. They call on the Big Three to renew their efforts to market their products by manufacturing smaller cars with right-side steering wheels. The following message perhaps represents the prevailing sentiment among Japanese about the President's remarks: "It's wrong to force Japanese to adjust their preferences to American products. Instead, U.S. companies should try to customize their products to meet the needs of local users."

However, some Twitter users have shared an op-ed written for Yahoo! Japan News by auto analyst Mitsuhiro Kunizawa, in which he urges the GOJ to eliminate barriers to U.S. auto imports. He insists that Japan still maintains regulations and rules on emissions, lights, ignition keys, and other

components that prevent “attractive” American vehicles, such as camping cars and pickup trucks, from being imported. The analyst explains that it would probably cost Japanese importers thousands of dollars per unit to replace some components of imported models with those that comply with local regulations.

ECONOMY

Toyota to create 400 new jobs in U.S. Midwest

NTV and TV Asahi reported at noon that Toyota Motor Corp. has announced that it will invest about 68 billion yen in one of its plants in the U.S. and newly recruit 400 workers there as part of its plan to invest one trillion yen in the U.S. announced on Jan. 9. TV Asahi said the plant is located in Indiana, where Vice President Pence is from, adding that Toyota President Toyoda met with Vice President Pence on Jan. 10.

- [Japan’s auto exports to U.S. rise for 2nd straight year](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan criticized for its bluefin tuna fishing](#) (Nikkei)
- [U.S. withdrawal from TPP alarms Japan’s producers](#) (Nikkei)
- [President slams Japan, China for trade practices](#) (The Japan News)
- [Defer stricter punishment for overtime violations to avoid lawmaking delays](#) (Sankei)
- [Intellectual Property High Court determines scope of protection under extended patent](#) (Asahi)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister’s schedule on Jan. 24](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of representative interpellations at Upper, Lower House plenary sessions, Jan. 24](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Japanese opposition party’s battle plan falls short](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Free college education emerges as issue in constitutional revision](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Group of former JIP members in the DP to split up](#) (Mainichi)

EDUCATION

- [MEXT council proposes screening English audio materials used in elementary schools](#) (Asahi)

SOCIETY

- [Childhood poverty rates need redefinition](#) (The Japan Times)

TV PROGRAMS

Comfort women issue

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" reported on the repercussions of the "comfort woman" statue placed in front of the Japanese Consulate General in Busan in December 2016 by a group of student activists. Although one year has passed since Japan and South Korea reached an agreement on the comfort women issue, in which Japan offered a sincere apology and agreed to pay 1 billion yen in exchange for the ROK government's making efforts for the removal of a comfort woman statue placed in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul in 2011, the issue is escalating in South Korea. The program said public opinion in South Korea has changed over the last year, saying that while more than 43% expressed support for the agreement a year ago, a survey conducted in December 2016 showed that 59% think the government should nullify the agreement. The program interviewed the family of a former comfort woman, who said it is difficult to openly talk about receiving compensation from Japan. The family of another former comfort woman said the issue should be brought to an end since Japan has already paid compensation, and the statue should be removed. A former comfort woman expressed disappointment that public opinion is focused on nullifying the 2015 agreement instead of the suffering of the comfort women. The program said people began expressing opposition to all of South Korean President Park's policies following her political scandal, adding that South Korean opposition party members began to express support for the new comfort woman statue with an eye on the upcoming presidential election.

Meanwhile, some South Korean media are calling on the public to calm down, quoting the chief editor of an economic paper as saying: "Amid the political confusion ahead of the election campaign, we are seeing many extreme claims and such claims are being reported as is. If we respond without fully understanding this point, it could cause a more serious problem." NHK's Seoul Bureau chief Ikehata also said that South Korean media are beginning to argue that calling for the nullification of the 2015 agreement while ignoring the former comfort women is "irresponsible." He said, however, that both ruling and opposition party members are focused on obtaining public support rather than mending ties with Japan ahead of the election, and every party and candidate is moving toward populism. He said that in order to change this trend, South Korean politicians should refrain from using this diplomatic issue in their election campaigns.

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