



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, January 26, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All networks gave top play to reports that President Trump signed an executive order to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, saying that some media outlets are reporting that Mexican President Pena Nieto is considering cancelling his meeting with President Trump slated for Jan. 31.

INTERNATIONAL

PM Abe making final arrangements for summit with President Trump

All networks reported at noon that Prime Minister Abe said during a Lower House Budget Committee meeting today that he is making final arrangements to hold a summit with President Trump as soon as possible. The premier also said that the U.S.-Japan alliance plays an essential role as a cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and provides benefits to both nations. He also expressed hope to hold candid discussions with the President on how to respond to issues the region faces.

Concerning the TPP, the premier reportedly said that although Tokyo still plans to make vigorous efforts to persuade the U.S. to participate in the TPP, this does not mean that the two nations will not be able to negotiate a bilateral EPA or FTA. He also expressed hope to hold discussions with Washington on economic cooperation

Court orders statue stolen from Tsushima be given to ROK temple

All networks reported at noon that the Daejeon District Court in South Korea approved today a request by Buseoksa temple in Yeongju city to take possession of an ancient Buddhist statue of

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, which was stolen by a group of South Korean thieves from a Japanese temple on Tsushima Island, Nagasaki, in 2012. The networks said the South Korean temple has claimed rightful ownership of the statue, claiming it was stolen by the wako, Japanese pirates, in the 14th century. NHK said attention will be focused on whether the ROK government will challenge the ruling. A former master of the Japanese temple was quoted as saying in an interview: "The justification of theft is disappointing.... I think our relationship with our neighbor will be questioned." Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters today: "It is extremely regrettable. We will call on the South Korean government to take appropriate measures to have the statue swiftly returned to Japan."

- [Japan bracing for heftier defense tab in Trump era](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [New US defense chief sets out to reassure Asian allies](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Armitage: Mattis to be key person in formulating Trump administration's Asia policy](#) (Nikkei Online)
- [Hagerty is politically savvy, pro-Japanese](#) (Shukan Ekonomisuto)
- [TPP paralyzed after U.S. pullout, but Abe stands by deal](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [USTR removes information on TPP from website](#) (Jiji)
- [Japan: Trump ignores facts in claiming 'unfair' auto industry](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [For Japan's automakers, no easy choice on US investment](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [TPP headquarters faces govt reordering after U.S. pullout](#) (The Japan News)
- [Trends in Japan's trade surplus with the U.S.](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Step up global cooperation in the face of "America first"](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [On Northern Territories, Abe must deal with enemies in MOFA as well as Putin](#) (Bungeishunju)
- [Editorial: Trump's attitude is anachronistic in review of U.S. trade policies](#) (The Japan News)
- [Cartoon: Japan bashing](#) (Asahi)

- [A senior Japanese diplomat met with governor of Sakhalin region](#) (Sankei)
- [Russian bombers fly near Japan, prompt ASDF scramble](#) (Kyodo News)
- [S. Korean provincial governor visits disputed islets](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Japan sees opportunity in Saudi economic reforms](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

SECURITY

Okinawa paper claims Senate discussions on base realignment may affect Okinawa

Ryukyu Shimpo wrote from Washington that Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services John McCain stated during a hearing on Tuesday that the committee is seriously studying the issue of base realignment and closure (BRAC). The paper interpreted this remark as an indication of readiness to work on BRAC procedures in the United States and other nations. Saying that the committee will probably discuss the issue during deliberations on the 2018 defense budget, the paper conjectured that the issue may affect U.S. forces in Okinawa if BRAC moves forward. The paper added, however, that Senator McCain did not cite any specific bases as targets for BRAC and that realignment and closure has been carried out mainly at bases in the U.S. after the end of the Cold War in line with recommendations by the BRAC Commission.

- [Japanese insurers expand cyberattack policies](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [MPD to introduce supercomputers for cybercrime investigation](#) (Sankei)

ECONOMY

- [Japan's fiscal health hopes grow dimmer still](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan logs 1st trade surplus in 6 yrs in 2016 as imports slump](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gov't mulls establishing new organization for trade negotiations](#) (Japan Agricultural News)
- [Fisheries Agency to take steps to deal with illegal Chinese fishing boats](#) (Sankei)
- [Gov't to require firms to report overtime exceeding 100 hours to occupational physicians](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)
- [Nikken Sekkei designs Vladivostok urban redevelopment plan](#) (Nikkei)

- [Japan launches body to oversee foreign trainees' work conditions](#) (Kyodo News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 25](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of Upper House representative interpellations, Jan. 25](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Cartoon: Conspiracy bill](#) (Akahata)

EDUCATION

- [Education in Japan in 2016: new solutions and age-old problems, from teaching English to bullying](#) (The Japan Times)

TV PROGRAMS

Japan's "excessive" customer service about to change

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" reported on the complete and often excessive customer service offered in Japan, such as 24-hour family restaurants and convenience stores, as well as supermarkets and department stores that are open on New Year's day. Although Japanese companies are said to offer the most convenient services in the world, people working in the service industry are often overworked. Noting that some think that such convenient services are often "redundant and unproductive," the program said some companies are beginning to change their services. The program showed employees of Hotel Okura in Tokyo discussing ways to streamline services while increasing the quality amid the increasingly fierce competition from foreign hotels.