



Afternoon Alert - Friday, January 27, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NTV and Fuji TV led with reports that President Trump indicated on Thursday that he will impose a 20% tax on imports from Mexico to pay for the construction of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. TBS and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that a 38-year-old man in Tsushima, Nagasaki, was arrested today for causing a fire that resulted in the death of two people last December.

SECURITY

Defense Secretary Mattis not planning to urge Japan to pay more for hosting U.S. troops during visit

Jiji Press reported that Pentagon spokesperson Davis said on Thursday that the purpose of the visit to Japan and South Korea by new Secretary of Defense Mattis from Feb. 1 to 4 is "to meet with the leaders of the two nations and strengthen the relationships." He also explained that Secretary Mattis is not planning to ask Japan or South Korea to pay more for stationing U.S. troops by saying that the defense chief "will not bring a list of requests with him." Concerning President Trump's remarks during his interview with ABC that waterboarding of terrorists "works," the Pentagon spokesman stressed that Secretary Mattis "testified at the confirmation hearing that he will abide by the international or domestic laws" and pointed out that the defense chief has no intention to reinstate torture.

Senator McCain dismisses BRAC's impact on Okinawa bases

Okinawa Times wrote that although Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain expressed during a hearing on Tuesday the committee's readiness to study base realignment and closure (BRAC), he told the paper after the hearing that discussions on BRAC will have no bearing on U.S. bases on Okinawa. The paper wrote that the senator dismissed the possibility of BRAC plans affecting the construction of the Futenma replacement facility by saying that the purpose of BRAC is to reduce military spending and that Japan's contribution to the cost of stationing U.S. forces is not related to BRAC plans.

Okinawa government needs to review strategy for negotiation with GOJ

Okinawa Times wrote that it will probably be necessary for the Okinawa prefectural government to review its strategy for negotiations with the central government on Futenma relocation following the recent resignation of Vice Governor Ageda, who was Okinawa's key contact with the GOJ. The paper quoted a senior Okinawa official as saying that it will now be impossible for the prefectural government to hold behind-the-scenes negotiations with Tokyo as Ageda did with Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga. The paper wrote that the central government, however, expects that Ageda's departure will weaken Governor Onaga's confrontational approach toward Tokyo, noting that the loss of Ageda will deal another political blow to Onaga following the defeat of a candidate he supported in the recent Miyakojima mayoral election. However, a source connected to the Defense Ministry was quoted as saying that Ageda's resignation will benefit neither side.

- [Osprey accident first reported as 'crash,' designation later changed to 'emergency landing'](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- [Next GSDF unit to be sent to South Sudan to come from Obihiro, Hokkaido](#) (Asahi)
- [Hosei University bans researchers from applying for Defense Ministry funding](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

INTERNATIONAL

Top Japanese, Russian diplomats to hold talks on Feb. 1

TV Asahi reported at noon that Foreign Minister Kishida announced this morning that top diplomats of Japan and Russia will meet in Moscow on Feb. 1 to discuss the details of the agreed-upon launch of "joint economic activities" on the Northern Territories and expanded "visa-free" travel to the contested islets by Japanese journalists and others. Kishida reportedly expressed hope for a "constructive exchange of views."

President Trump likely to call for progress in bilateral trade deal with Japan

NHK reported at noon that according to Reuters, President Trump is planning to call on Prime Minister Abe to make rapid progress in a bilateral trade deal to replace the TPP when they meet early next month.

Concerning President Trump's plan to tax imports from Mexico to pay for the wall to be built at the U.S.-Mexico border, NHK reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told the press this morning: "The Japanese government will refrain from commenting on this because it is a matter concerning the two nations. We will continue to closely monitor how such a policy would affect Japanese companies." On President Trump's indication that he plans to pursue bilateral trade deals with TPP member states, including Japan, Suga reportedly said: "The U.S.-Japan alliance and bilateral economic relationship are extremely important. We hope to hold discussions with the new government at various levels on how to develop and deepen them." Meanwhile, Finance Minister Aso reportedly told reporters today: "In the planned summit, we need to explain how Japanese companies are creating jobs in the U.S."

- [**Editorial: Japan must sell Trump on worth of multilateral trade talks**](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [**Editorial: The horror of lies influencing reality in a 'post-truth' world**](#) (The Mainichi)
- [**Editorial: New Secretary of Defense's visit may signal new era of Japan-U.S. Security Treaty**](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

ECONOMY

- [**Gov't to create new body to overhaul trade strategy**](#) (Yomiuri)
- [**TPP's setback to affect other trade talks**](#) (Yomiuri)
- [**Despite complaints from President Trump, Japanese imports of foreign cars hit record high for four years**](#) (Nikkei)
- [**Fisheries Agency turned a blind eye to bluefin tuna "poaching"**](#) (FACTA)
- [**Gov't committee decides to hold power utilities liable for nuclear damage on unlimited basis**](#) (Mainichi)
- [**Japan's foreign workers topped 1m in 2016**](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [**Majority of 10,000 refugee status applicants in Japan may be seeking work**](#) (Yomiuri)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 26](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of Lower House Budget Committee interpellations, Jan. 26](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Three LDP factions see increases in membership](#) (Mainichi)

EDUCATION

- [Relocation of Tokyo universities to regional areas to be considered by expert panel](#) (Mainichi)

TV PROGRAMS

["EdTech" revolution makes Harvard seem outdated](#)

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" reported on the fundamental changes occurring in the world of global education, adding that Minerva, an innovative new university founded three years ago in the U.S., is attracting many talented students from around the world. The program said some students enroll in the school after rejecting offers from such prestigious universities as Harvard. Minerva does not have an ordinary campus and all of the courses are taught online. The "EdTech" revolution sweeping across the U.S. is reportedly fueled by surging university fees and the need to foster human resources who can support innovative technologies. Education using state-of-the-art technology also enables students to study at their own pace.
