



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, February 2, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

Most networks reported that Secretary of State Tillerson was officially sworn in on Wednesday, with Fuji TV saying that it remains to be seen to what extent the new Secretary will be able to exert his diplomatic skills vis-a-vis Asia, including North Korea. NTV gave top play to a report that President Trump is increasing his criticism of the media, highlighting his comments on Wednesday that the media is "so biased," that "so much of media is the opposition party," and that "they are dishonest people."

## INTERNATIONAL

### FM Kishida sends congratulatory message to Secretary Tillerson

NHK reported that FM Kishida sent a congratulatory message to Secretary of State Tillerson, who was just sworn in on Wednesday. According to the network, Kishida said: "Amid the increasingly severe regional security environment, the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance, which is the cornerstone of regional peace and prosperity, is increasing. I hope to meet you as soon as possible to frankly exchange views and further strengthen the unyielding bonds between the U.S. and Japan."

### Suga comments on upcoming visit to Japan by Secretary Mattis

NHK reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters that the visit by Secretary of Defense Mattis tomorrow is "significant" since it clarifies the U.S. commitment to the Asia Pacific region. He also reportedly said: "The government has repeatedly confirmed the position that the Senkaku

Islands fall under the scope of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty...We would like to confirm this with the new Trump administration at various opportunities. "

### **Experts voice hope for Japan tour by Secretary Mattis**

TBS's noontime infotainment program took up President Trump's assertion that Japan has engaged in unfair currency devaluation for years, bracing for the possibility that Prime Minister Abe will be pressed by the U.S. leader to raise the value of the yen and reduce Japan's trade surplus with America at their summit in Washington next week. Pointing out that U.S.-Japan relations often became strained when the USG focused on the economic arena, such as in the 1990s, and that they were in relatively good shape when security issues were high on the bilateral agenda, Visiting Professor Haruna of Waseda University expressed concern that the relationship might go through a stormy period in the next four years, as the new U.S. president's foremost concern with Japan appears to be autos and the trade imbalance. The journalist-turned academic and his Waseda colleague Associate Professor Hirabayashi noted, however, that the planned trip to Tokyo by Secretary of Defense Mattis will present the Abe administration with a good opportunity to remind President Trump of the important role that Japan can play on the defense front given that the former Marine general is probably fully aware of the significance of maintaining a robust alliance with Tokyo and that the President appears to be willing to heed his professional counsel, as evidenced by his decision to defer to the Secretary on the subject of waterboarding.

- [Japan, U.S. assembling ministerial dialogue team: source](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan not ruling out forex intervention as emergency step: Abe](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Who are the key persons in the Trump administration's Japan strategy?](#) (Shukan Toyo Keizai)
- [Japan's pension megafund to invest in US infrastructure](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Commentary: Trump's latest enemy? Monetary policy](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [US defense secretary to reaffirm alliance with Tokyo, Seoul](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Trump's criticism of yen devaluation casts dark shadow on strategy to end deflation](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: President Trump's "verbal intervention" causing confusion in economy](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Unjust U.S. "intervention" by criticizing yen devaluation is unacceptable](#) (Sankei)

- [\*\*Editorial: Abe must stand up against unreasonable auto trade demands from Trump\*\*](#) (The Mainichi)
- [\*\*Editorial: Trump administration must know: There can be no “alternative facts”\*\*](#) (The Japan News)
- [\*\*IHI may divest stake in Westinghouse\*\*](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [\*\*Editorial: Toshiba’s resolve to rebuild nuclear business put to the test\*\*](#) (The Japan News)
- [\*\*Giving up uranium enrichment operation in the U.S. cost Hitachi 70 billion yen\*\*](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

## **SECURITY**

### **Onaga tells American researchers that FRF construction will take more than 15 years**

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo front-paged reports on Governor Onaga’s meeting with a group of members of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) in Washington on Tuesday. The governor expressed his determination to stop the construction of a new base at Henoko by exercising his administrative authority despite his defeat in the court battle over his rescindment of the landfill permit. Onaga reportedly told the researchers: “Even if the central government forcibly moves forward with the construction, it will probably take 15 to 20 years because 70 to 80 percent of the people of Okinawa are opposed to it.” The governor is hoping that his statement will be reflected in future CRS reports.

### **Allowing Ospreys to perform aerial refueling runs counter to reducing base burden**

Okinawa Times gave top play to a report on its finding on Wednesday on a plan by the U.S. Marines to allow MV-22 Ospreys to conduct aerial refueling. The paper wrote that the Marines plan to begin in fiscal 2019 training for the Osprey to perform aerial refueling of the F-35B and other aircraft. The paper also wrote that although the training sites are not yet known, it is highly possible that the drills will start in Okinawa as early as the fall of 2018. The paper went on to say that training involving the Osprey and fighter jets, such as the F-35, may arouse concern among the people of Okinawa because the cause of the incident in which an Osprey landed in shallow waters off Nago during mid-air refueling training with an Air Force tanker last December has not yet been determined. The paper argued that allowing Ospreys to perform aerial refueling runs counter to efforts that made by the U.S. and Japanese governments to reduce the base-hosting burden on Okinawa since they agreed on the 1996 SACO Final Report .

- [First visit of Secretary of Defense Mattis who might hold alliance's future](#) (Sankei)
- [Abe hints he is ready to resign if SDF members killed, injured in S. Sudan](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Maintenance facility planned on Iwakuni base for U.S. carrier-based aircraft](#) (Akahata)
- [Confusion reigns in U.S. Forces Japan's battle against drunken driving](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Letter: U.S. military must not jeopardize Okinawan forest's bid for World Heritage status](#) (The Japan Times)

## POLITICS

- [Aso faction to become fourth largest in LDP](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 1](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of interpellations at Lower House Budget Committee, Feb. 1](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Abe remains cautious about commenting on U.S. immigration ban in Diet interpellation](#) (Nikkei)

## ECONOMY

- ["Negotiating mega FTAs is critical," interview with JETRO Chairman Hiroyuki Ishige](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japan begins work on 60-hour overtime cap](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Takeda signs licensing deal with U.S. firm on cancer drug](#) (Jiji Press)

## SOCIETY

- [MHLW to upwardly revise projection for total fertility rate](#) (Nikkei)
- [Child care support seen helping to drive influx of residents to Tokyo](#) (The Japan Times)

## TRENDING@JAPAN

- [Money can't buy love, but can love buy housework?](#) (Asahi)
- ["Pilgrims" crisscross Japan in search of anime landmarks](#) (Yomiuri)
- ["Wall of fourth grade" looms high for English education](#) (Yahoo!News Japan)

## TV PROGRAMS

### Harsh reality of freelance workers

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" reported that it is believed that one in eight Japanese workers will be freelancers by 2030. Although freelancing is said to be an ideal working style for the future, many freelancers work long hours for low wages. The program said most social security benefits are not guaranteed for freelance workers, adding that efforts are being made by companies as well as freelancers to protect the rights of such workers.

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