



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, March 1, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and Fuji TV gave top play to President Trump's first policy speech before Congress on Tuesday, during which he stressed that he will put America first. NTV, TBS, and TV Asahi led with reports that the Malaysian authorities indicted two female suspects on murder charges this morning in relation to the death of Kim Jong Nam.

INTERNATIONAL

PM Abe expresses resolve to further deepen U.S.-Japan ties

NHK reported at noon that Prime Minister Abe said during a meeting of the Upper House Budget Committee this morning that he will further deepen U.S.-Japan security ties based on the strong alliance confirmed at the recent bilateral summit amid the increasingly uncertain regional situation, including North Korea's test launch of a new ballistic missile. In response to a question from an LDP member about the recent summit, the premier reportedly said: "North Korea's nuclear and missile development imposes a new level of threat, and there is no telling what the country will do next. It was the first time for the U.S. to clearly express in a joint statement its commitment to the defense of Japan using various types of military power, including nuclear weapons and conventional forces." Abe also reportedly said: "The bond between the U.S. and Japan has been strengthened. Through the security legislation, we have been able to demonstrate the resilience of an alliance under which two nations can help each other. I hope to capitalize on the successful summit and further deepen our ties with the U.S. in order to protect Japan and our national interests."

Acting ROK leader calls for stronger cooperation with Japan to deal with DPRK threats.

Nikkei and Yomiuri reported online from Seoul on a speech delivered this morning by South Korea's Acting President Hwang Kyo-ahn, who said Seoul would like to further enhance cooperation with Tokyo for peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia. He also commented on the comfort women pact with Japan by saying: "Both nations should honor and put into practice the essence and spirit of the agreement." He also called for mutual efforts to help restore the victims' honor and dignity.

- [**Cartoon: President Trump**](#) (Asahi)
- [**Former Home Affairs Minister Ishii scheduled to meet late Kim Jong Nam**](#) (Sankei)
- [**DPRK, Russian vice foreign ministers in China, possibly to counter Japan-U.S.-ROK talks**](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [**Editorial: Childish attacks on media won't save Trump from history's judgment**](#) (The Mainichi)
- [**Golden Opportunity to Enhance Security of the Senkaku Islands/East China Sea**](#) (Japan Forward)

SECURITY

Top U.S. diplomat in Okinawa suggests continued use of Navy ramp on Kadena

Okinawa Times took up remarks made on Tuesday to Okinawa municipal leaders by Naha ConGen Joel Ehrendreich, who indicated the possibility of the continued use of a Navy ramp on Kadena AB that the U.S. military had promised not to use any more based on the 1996 SACO agreement. In meeting with local politicians who filed a protest against the use of the Navy ramp by USAF aircraft in February, the U.S. official reportedly hinted at its continued use by saying, "We need to maintain balance" in the event that transient aircraft fly to the Air Force installation. In order to reduce the noise generated by aircraft arriving at and leaving Kadena, the Navy ramp was relocated in mid-January from the northern runway to the center of the base upon the construction of an alternate ramp financed by Japanese taxpayer money. Although Ehrendreich reportedly explained to the Okinawa officials that their request for the discontinuation of use would be relayed to the U.S. Embassy, the U.S. government, and the U.S. military, they were upset because the continued use runs counter to the wishes of local residents who are calling for a reduction in the base-hosting burden.

- [**U.S. Navy Japan refutes Tokyo Shimbun article on Atsugi FA-18s**](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

- [12.6 mil. personal info leak cases seen in 2016, card info targeted](#) (Kyodo News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 28](#) (Nikkei)
- [Excerpt of revision to Act on Punishment of Organized Crimes \(the anti-terrorism bill\)](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Gov't emphasizes merits of bill in preventing terrorism](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Gist of interpellations at Upper House Budget Committee, Feb. 28](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Gist of METI Minister Seko's press conference](#) (Sankei)
- [Ministers, business leader comment on locking of all METI office doors](#) (Mainichi)
- [DP forgoes including target year for eliminating nuclear power in activity report](#) (Mainichi)
- [Work style of ace diplomat Takeo Akiba](#) (Yomiuri Online)
- [Editorial: Was discount sale of state-owned land to Moritomo Gakuen made appropriately?](#) (The Japan News)

ECONOMY

- [New opportunities in Southeast Asia for Japanese automakers](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Trump takes aim at Japanese manufacturing](#) (Sentaku)
- [Traders help small producers beef up Japanese-food exports](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Asia needs \\$26tn for infrastructure through 2030: ADB report](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan, Central Asian countries agree on need to improve business climate](#) (Nikkei)
- [Number of port calls by cruise ships operated by overseas companies in 2016](#) (Mainichi Evening edition)

SCIENCE

- [Japan Exchange Group to use AI in investigations of unfair transactions](#) (Nikkei)
- [Honda to open new AI technology R&D center on Apr. 1](#) (Mainichi)
- [Support for regional investment in AI and IoT](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japanese scholars issue ethical guidelines on AI](#) (NHK Online)

SOCIETY

New measures to deal with inheritance issues

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" reported on an increasing number of inheritance problems in Japan, saying that the annual number of consultations with domestic courts has doubled over the past decade to more than 170,000. The program reported that the "family trust" system is becoming popular in Japan as a way to avoid inheritance problems.