



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, March 7, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most networks led with reports that North Korea's state media announced this morning that the DPRK successfully test fired four ballistic missiles by troops tasked with attacking U.S. forces in Japan in a contingency. NHK said PACOM began deploying THAAD to South Korea in an effort to boost the defense capability against North Korea, quoting Adm. Harris, the PACOM commander, as saying in a statement: "Continued provocative actions by North Korea, including Monday's launch of multiple missiles, only confirm the prudence of our alliance decision." Fuji TV gave top play to reports that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe held a teleconference this morning following North Korea's missile launch, during which they agreed to hold a "2+2" meeting at an early date.

INTERNATIONAL

Defense chiefs confirm close cooperation

NHK reported that Defense Minister Inada held separate teleconferences with Defense Secretary Mattis and South Korean Defense Minister Han in response to North Korea's launch of ballistic missiles on Monday. The defense chiefs agreed to further boost the deterrence of the alliance and trilateral cooperation. The network quoted Inada as telling reporters: "It has become clear that the North Korean threat has entered a new stage. We will collect information, conduct warning and surveillance operations, and take all possible measures with a sense of urgency." The network said the U.S., Japan, and South Korea will call for an emergency meeting of the UNSC to seek the adoption of a statement condemning North Korea's missile launch and strongly urging member states to thoroughly implement sanctions resolutions.

NHK quoted Foreign Minister Kishida as telling reporters today: "What is important is for nations to thoroughly implement the sanctions resolutions. We must strongly urge them to do so." Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters: "Holding a teleconference between the leaders of the U.S. and Japan immediately after the ballistic missile launch was extremely significant in demonstrating the strong bond between the U.S. and Japan at home and abroad.... We would like to build a system under which the U.S., Japan, and South Korea as well as the international community, including China and Russia, can respond."

President Trump, PM Abe agree to hold “2+2” meeting at early date

NHK reported this morning that Prime Minister Abe and President Trump held a teleconference at around 8 a.m. today in response to North Korea's ballistic missile launch on Monday. The premier reportedly told the President: "The fact that the leaders of the U.S. and Japan can talk immediately after the ballistic missile launch proves that the two nations stand together." Noting that North Korea announced that it was a ballistic missile launch drill for troops charged with attacking U.S. forces in Japan, the premier said: "It is a clear provocation against the security of Japan, the region, and the international community, including the U.S., and it is totally unacceptable." In response, the President reportedly said: "North Korea's outrageous behavior is unforgivable. The United States stands by Japan one hundred percent and supports Japan one hundred percent. Please convey this to the Japanese public. The U.S.-Japan alliance remains solid, and the U.S. commitment to Japan is unwavering."

In addition, the premier also reportedly said Japan will strongly urge North Korea to refrain from further provocations and abide by the UNSC resolutions. The two leaders also reportedly agreed to hold a "2+2" meeting of foreign and defense ministers between the U.S. and Japan, promote talks at the UN, ask for China's cooperation, and conduct close cooperation between the U.S. and Japan as well as the U.S., Japan, and South Korea.

- [Japan eyes railway, resource development as key topics with U.S.](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Sources say Chinese assistant foreign minister to become next ambassador to Japan](#) (Sankei)
- [Government, LDP, other parties react to North Korea's missile launch](#) (Sankei)
- [LDP members calling for tougher sanctions on North Korea after missile launch](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Trump's snub of WTO rules poses threat to global free trade](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Commentary: Increase vigilance against technology transfer to North Korea](#) (Yomiuri)

- [Commentary: North is projecting attack capability against the U.S. military in Japan](#)

SECURITY

U.S. Army, Navy discuss disaster-response cooperation with Kanagawa Prefecture

Asahi's Kanagawa edition reported on a meeting held between the leaders of U.S. Army Japan (USARJ), U.S. Naval Forces Japan (CNFJ), and Kanagawa Prefecture at the prefectural government office on Monday, during which they discussed ways to deepen their cooperation in responding to natural disasters. While pointing out the need for improvement in cooperation with the prefecture in such areas as communications and first aid, the U.S. side proposed the use of Ospreys. The U.S. forces have participated in the prefecture's disaster drills since 2007. Senior officials from the Ministry of Defense and the SDF also took part in the meeting. This was the first time for the Kanagawa governor to discuss disaster-response cooperation with the U.S. military and the SDF.

USARJ Commanding General James Pasquarette proposed the idea of designating a unit at Camp Zama as a liaison with the local government. CNFJ Commander Matthew Carter stressed the need for the military's cooperation with the public and private sectors. The U.S. Navy proposed the idea of having Ospreys participate in the drills by saying that the aircraft is effective for disaster response and relief due to its transportation capacity and mobility. However, Kanagawa Governor Kuroiwa said in response that he would like to study the offer carefully, and a Defense Ministry official stated that local citizens have concerns about the safety of the Osprey. The governor told reporters after the meeting that it will not be possible to conduct the drills smoothly unless the local citizens are comfortable hosting the aircraft.

Concerning the relocation of carrier-borne aircraft from the Naval Air Facility Atsugi starting in November, the U.S. military officers stated that the strategic importance of the facility will not change.

Ginowan mayor calls for GOJ cooperation in suspending Futenma operations

Okinawa Times wrote that Ginowan Mayor Sakima held separate meetings with Foreign Minister Kishida and Defense Minister Inada at their offices on Monday to deliver a written request that the GOJ take tangible steps to reduce the base-hosting burden by realizing the suspension of operations at MCAS Futenma by February 2019. Kishida reportedly reiterated the GOJ position that local people's cooperation in relocating the base to Henoko is a prerequisite for the suspension of Futenma operations. The foreign minister also told the mayor that he has confirmed with Secretary of State Tillerson that Henoko is the only solution for removing the danger at Futenma as soon as possible while maintaining the U.S. military's deterrence. Defense Minister Inada reportedly told Sakima that she is fully aware that preventing the Futenma base from remaining in its current location permanently is the fundamental issue concerning Futenma relocation.

The mayor told reporters after his meetings with the foreign and defense ministers that he feels a sense of crisis after listening to Prime Minister Abe state in the Diet that it will probably be difficult to stop Futenma operations within five years due to Governor Onaga's stern opposition. The mayor also said that it is necessary for the GOJ and the prefectural and municipal governments to work together, adding that Governor Onaga has made no progress toward the suspension of Futenma operations in his two years in office.

- [Okinawa governor says new vice governor to be in charge of military base issues](#) (Okinawa Times)
- [Kanagawa governor cautious on Ospreys' participation in disaster drill](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Will anti-terrorism bill be used to punish protesters at military bases?](#) (Okinawa Times)
- [Court annuls Okinawa's move to disclose agreement over U.S. military](#) (Kyodo News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 6](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of interpellations at Upper House Budget Committee, March 6](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Diet probe needed to get to bottom of Moritomo Gakuen land deal](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: Moritomo Gakuen scandal](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [Editorial: LDP convention must be 1st step in grappling with long-term tasks](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

ECONOMY

- [Keidanren chairman hopes to seek agreement with Rengo on overtime limit](#) (Mainichi)
- [Corporate profits result in increased dividends, but not wages](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Japan's imported car sales up in February for eleventh consecutive month](#) (Mainichi)

SCIENCE

- [SCJ draft report says genome editing not permissible in reproductive medicine](#) (Asahi)

EDUCATION

Aoyama Gakuin University track team aims for Olympics

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" on Monday reported on the head coach of Aoyama Gakuin University's track team, who has led the team to three consecutive victories in the Hakone Ekiden race. The coach said he is aiming to have one of his team members win the marathon in the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 and talked about his strategy for competing against top athletes from around the world.

SOCIETY

- [Over half of LGBT people in Japan bullied in school: survey](#) (The Mainichi)
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