



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, March 16, 2017

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### Noon news

Most networks gave top play to reports that Defense Minister Inada promised at the Diet this morning to thoroughly investigate the issue of “daily reports” filed by a GSDF battalion deployed in South Sudan on UN peacekeeping operations, following media reports that the daily reports were retained by the GSDF even though the ministry once said the records had already been deleted. NHK said Inada reiterated that she has no intention to step down. TV Asahi led with a report that a federal judge in Hawaii issued a nationwide order on Wednesday blocking President Trump's new travel ban issued on March 6, saying the President is strongly criticizing the federal judge.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Secretary Tillerson, FM Kishida confirm stronger bilateral cooperation

NHK reported at 3 p.m. that visiting Secretary of State Tillerson met with Foreign Minister Kishida at Iikura Guest House in Tokyo this afternoon. The network quoted Kishida as telling the Secretary: "We are very pleased that you decided to choose Japan as the first destination of your Asia trip and your stance to value the U.S.-Japan alliance as well as Japan. At the last summit, Prime Minister Abe and President Trump delivered a strong message and a joint statement stating that the bonds between the two nations are unyielding, and indicated how the two nations will work together on issues." In response, the Secretary reportedly said the alliance is "the cornerstone of the Asia-Pacific region" and stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation between Japan and the U.S., as well as Japan, the U.S., and South Korea to address North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The network also said Kishida was hoping to receive briefings from the Secretary on the Trump administration's review of its North Korea policy. In addition, the network said the two officials were expected to exchange views on the situation in East and South China seas, and agree to hold a "2+2" meeting of foreign and defense ministers to discuss ways to further strengthen the alliance.

NHK aired live coverage of a joint press conference by Secretary Tillerson and Foreign Minister Kishida held after their meeting. The network said Kishida disclosed that the two officials exchanged views on the Trump administration's review of its North Korea policy and confirmed that the U.S., Japan, and South Korea will work closely to urge North Korea to refrain from provocations and abide by the UNSC resolutions. The network reported that the Secretary said the U.S. will continue to cooperate with Japan to implement sanctions against North Korea and that the two ministers also confirmed that the Senkaku Islands fall under the scope of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty.

### **Black market in North Korea**

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" reported on North Korea following its launch of four ballistic missiles toward the Sea of Japan earlier this month. The program focused on the nation's black market, including the smuggling of weapons from Southeast Asia to Africa. The program said North Korea is apparently sending agents as embassy officials or businessmen to nations in Southeast Asia, where they use local companies as cover to conduct arms smuggling and money laundering and procure state-of-the-art industrial goods.

The program also reported on the Trump administration's policy on North Korea, adding that Secretary of State Tillerson will probably urge China to increase pressure on North Korea during his visit to the region. Kwansai Gakuin University Professor Shunji Hiraiwa said the Trump administration may choose to use limited force against North Korea in view of the failed "strategic patience" adopted by the Obama administration. He also said that there is a slight possibility that the Trump administration will acknowledge North Korea as a nuclear power and negotiate with the country so that the situation doesn't get any worse. Hiraiwa also stressed the importance of China's role, adding that attention will be focused on Secretary Tillerson's visit to the region. He added that trilateral security cooperation among the U.S., Japan, and South Korea is crucial, saying Japan's role is becoming increasingly important given the upcoming presidential election in South Korea.

- [Japan invites Indian firms to join port project in Africa](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Seko to visit U.S. to lay groundwork for Japan-U.S. economic dialogue](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japan, Mozambique confirm importance of freedom of navigation](#) (Mainichi)

### **ECONOMY**

- [Trump wants Toyota to build new plants in US](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan braces for tough trade talks with old US hand](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Toshiba asks for loan rollover by offering new collateral](#) (The Mainichi)

- [Kanto region still struggles with nuclear waste](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Efforts made to support work style reform in shunto talks](#) (The Japan News)

## POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 15](#) (Nikkei)
- [Top court rules investigation using GPS without warrant illegal](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Top court's ruling on GPS investigation requires police to conduct review](#) (Mainichi)
- [Commentary: Legislation on GPS investigations must quickly be created as Japan readies for Olympics](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Pros and cons of GPS investigations need to be discussed](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Cabinet members respond to Diet questions in tenuous manner](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Defense minister's false statements in Diet unacceptable](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: Moritomo scandal](#) (Asahi)
- [Suga says gov't to craft guideline for supporting Akie Abe](#) (Nikkei)
- [DP intraparty group composed of former JIP members splits](#) (Mainichi)

## SECURITY

### **GOJ will not seek another permit for destroying rock reefs at Henoko**

Ryukyu Shimpo front-paged a report saying that the Defense Ministry's Okinawa bureau informed the Okinawa Prefectural Government on Wednesday of its decision not to seek an extension of the permit for destroying rock reefs for constructing the FRF at Henoko that is set to expire at the end of March. The ministry made the decision based on the judgment that another permit will not be necessary because local fishermen have already relinquished their fishing rights in the area. Insisting that another permit will be necessary, the prefectural government is considering taking legal action against the central government if it continues the construction work after March. Governor Onaga issued a statement on Wednesday saying that the defense bureau's insincere response is very regrettable. Okinawa Times ran a similar story on an inside page.

- [Okinawa gov't threatens injunction over U.S. base relocation](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Personnel shortage delays CV-22 Osprey deployment to Yokota base](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Osprey's deployment to Yokota postponed](#) (Mainichi)
- [Supreme Court again denies bail to leading anti-base activist in Okinawa](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Commentary: Gov't needed track record of security legislation in South Sudan](#) (Asahi)
- [New Okinawa vice governor visits central government](#) (Okinawa Times)

## EDUCATION

- [Investigation launched into 20 biomedical research fraud cases](#) (Yomiuri Evening edition)

## SOCIETY

- [Crime syndicate members fall below 20,000 for 1st time in 2016](#) (Kyodo News)

## OPINION POLLS

- [90% say East Asian security environment is "harsh," MOFA public opinion poll](#) (Mainichi)
- [Infographic: Abe cabinet support rate, Kyodo News poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)