



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, March 21, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK gave top play to a report on the Abe cabinet's approval this morning of a bill to amend the organized crime law to punish acts of preparation to carry out terrorism and other serious crimes. All commercial networks led with reports on the Seoul prosecutors' first questioning of former South Korean President Park over her alleged involvement in corruption.

INTERNATIONAL

DPRK hints at additional provocations

Nikkei reported online from Seoul on a statement issued on Monday by the North Korean Foreign Ministry concerning the recent Northeast Asian trip by Secretary of State Tillerson, who suggested that the Trump administration's new approach toward North Korea could include the use of military force. The ministry condemned the top U.S. diplomat by saying, "We will not succumb to pressure from the businessman-turned-U.S. official," and hinted at new rounds of provocations, such as the launch of ballistic missiles by saying, "The world will soon witness the significance of the victory that we achieved in our recent test of a high-powered rocket engine."

The daily separately took up press remarks this morning by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, who commented on the North Korean statement by saying: "We are collecting and analyzing information.... It is the government's responsibility to safeguard the people's lives and property under any circumstances. We are fulfilling this obligation while maintaining a high-level surveillance system."

Experts discuss how to respond to North Korea

NHK's "Nichiyo Toron" Sunday debate show aired a discussion by six scholars on how to respond to the nuclear and missile threat posed by North Korea. The panelists agreed that the North Korea threat has entered a new stage on account of its accelerated development of nuclear and missile technology. Some of the scholars paid special attention to Pyongyang's claim that the recent launch of ballistic missiles was conducted by a unit tasked with attacking U.S. forces in Japan. Concerning Secretary of State Tillerson's recent trip to East Asia, the discussants speculated that the Secretary conveyed to Japan and South Korea the Trump administration's determination to firmly confront Pyongyang. While agreeing that China will continue to hold the key to persuading the DPRK to refrain from conducting further provocations, the panelists expressed concern that the unstable political situation in South Korea will make it difficult for the U.S. and Japan to maintain their trilateral cooperation against North Korea. With regard to a discussion in Japan on whether the nation should possess the ability to attack enemy bases, the scholars acknowledged the need for discussion about the matter but argued that the issue should be discussed from the long-term perspective of Japan's security rather than in direct connection to defense against North Korea.

Aleppo – The worst humanitarian crisis of the 21st century

Sunday's "NHK Special" reported on the situation in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo that has been described as the worst humanitarian crisis of the 21st century. Aleppo became a key battleground in the internal conflict in Syria and was the site of a brutal standoff between rebel and Assad forces until the latter recaptured it last December. As journalists' access to Aleppo had been limited until then, its citizens recorded what was happening in the streets and the last remaining hospital, and disseminated their cries for help via social media.

- [Trump's "secret envoy" visited Tokyo in advance to lay groundwork for summit](#) (Shukan Asahi Online)
- [Gist of Japan-Russia joint press conference](#) (Mainichi)
- [High-ranking Russian government economic officials to visit Japan in March and April](#) (Mainichi)
- [Gist of Japan-German summit talks, joint press conference](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Japan-U.S. talks show signs of changing policy toward N. Korea](#) (The Mainichi)
- [PM Abe's trip abroad to mark record high of 52](#) (Asahi)
- [Secretary Tillerson declined South Korea's hospitality](#) (Asahi)

- [Amid North Korea threat, Tillerson hints that ‘circumstances could evolve’ for a Japanese nuclear arsenal](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Editorial: U.S. secretary of state’s visit affirms resolve for joint action on N. Korea](#) (The Japan News)
- [Japan, EU launching high-level talks on safe data transfers](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

ECONOMY

[Aso comments on G20 communique, U.S.-Japan economic dialogue](#)

NHK reported on remarks made to the press by Finance Minister Aso this morning, during which he commented on the recent G20 communique that left out the previously used phrase saying the G20 resists all forms of protectionism. Aso stated that he believes that the G20 nations understand the importance of free trade, as they agreed at the meeting of finance ministers to promote trade. He added that Japan will make efforts to create a win-win relationship with the U.S. at their economic dialogue to be held in April. The finance minister also stated that Japan is hoping to hold constructive discussions with the U.S. in order to deepen their trade and investment relations and establish under their leadership a free market based on fair rules in the Asia-Pacific region

- [GOJ’s improvisational handling of foreign labor carries risks](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan Inc. farmers finding success at last](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan courts charismatic Hitachi ex-chief for Tepco restructuring](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Aso warns against overreacting to G20’s handling of anti-protectionism](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Court ruling on nuclear disaster sends warning to state, TEPCO](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Ruling on Fukushima nuclear crisis a grave admonition of gov’t](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Robot makes foray into reactor 1](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Editorial: Labor, management should jointly promote work style reform, wage hikes](#) (The Japan News)
- [Tokyo weighs public-private alliance for Toshiba chip bid](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

- [Japan's Docomo to help farmers increase milk production](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 19-20](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on March 19](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on March 18](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on March 17](#) (Nikkei)
- [Ministry found to have played part in more illegal job placements](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Group with former SEALDs members launches, to focus on public political participation](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Turmoil involving Moritomo Gakuen must be ended by uncovering truth](#) (The Japan News)

OPINION POLLS

- [Approval rating for Abe cabinet drops 10 points to 56%, Yomiuri poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Opinion poll & results from Yomiuri Shimbun](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Opinion poll & results from Sankei Shimbun](#) (Sankei)

SECURITY

- [Editorial: Inada, SDF leadership come under fire again on S. Sudan PKO](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Logs concealed, secrecy maintained: Does Inada have control of ministry?](#) (The Japan News)
- [Anti-base Okinawa activist released after five months in detention](#) (The Japan Times)

SCIENCE

- [Japan, Germany join forces on standardizing IoT innovations](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

SOCIETY

Mother and son slowly overcome loss of family in 3/11

Monday's "NHK Special" highlighted a woman in Iwate whose husband was killed in the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami in 2011 when their son was only four years old. It has been difficult for her and her son to overcome their loss. However, her son has gradually picked himself up by participating in after-school activities, and his recovery has encouraged the mother to take a step toward a new life with him.

- [Ministry expands anti-bullying policy to include young evacuees, LGBT](#) (Asahi)
 - [MOJ to offer human rights hotline in six foreign languages](#) (Yomiuri)
 - [Record 2.38 mil. foreign residents living in Japan in 2016](#) (Kyodo News)
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