



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, March 28, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All networks gave top play to follow-up reports on an accident in which seven high school students and a teacher were killed by an avalanche in Tochigi Prefecture on Monday.

INTERNATIONAL

U.S. congressional group holds meeting on strengthening U.S.-Japan relations

NHK reported online that Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. Sasae stressed the need for the U.S. and Japan to strengthen cooperation in dealing with North Korea during a meeting on Monday of a group of U.S. members of Congress dedicated to promoting U.S.-Japan relations. Representative Castro, one of the co-chairs of the caucus, reportedly said that President Trump reconfirmed America's security commitment to Japan during his meeting with Prime Minister Abe, and this is very significant in view of recent moves by Pyongyang. Castro added that the economic ties between the U.S. and Japan will remain strong no matter what happens, despite Washington's withdrawal from the TPP.

Former Osaka mayor calls for U.S. pressure to change Japanese people's security perception

NHK reported online that Toru Hashimoto, a legal and policy adviser to Nippon Ishin and former mayor of Osaka, stated in a speech he gave in Washington on Monday that he hopes the Trump administration will apply strong pressure on Japan to help its people realize their nation's responsibility under the U.S.-Japan alliance. "The U.S. is facing a difficult fiscal situation and the Trump administration is calling on Japan to pay its fair share to maintain the alliance. It is necessary for Japan to do whatever is necessary to contribute to the alliance," said Hashimoto. "I hope that America will apply strong pressure on Japan. If President Trump tells Japan that it needs to be

responsible for its own defense and that the U.S. might withdraw its troops from Japan, the people of Japan would think more seriously about national defense.”

Nikkei ran a similar online story, quoting Hashimoto as saying that the joint statement issued at the recent U.S.-Japan summit was a “farce” because although the two nations confirmed that the Senkaku Islands fall under the scope of Article 5 of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, it is doubtful whether the U.S. is ready to shed its soldiers’ blood for such small islands.

Japan decides not to participate in talks on Nuclear Weapons Convention

NHK reported this morning that Japan declared that it will not participate in the negotiations on the Nuclear Weapons Convention that began at the UN headquarters in New York today. The U.S. and 20 or so other nations are also abstaining from the talks. Japanese Ambassador

Takamisawa delivered a speech at the opening session in which he said "it would be difficult for Japan to participate in this conference in a constructive manner and in good faith" since it is essential for the nuclear and non-nuclear powers to cooperate on nuclear disarmament. The network said the talks highlighted the differences between not only the nuclear and non-nuclear powers but also within the non-nuclear states over the issue of nuclear disarmament, adding that it remains to be seen whether the talks will mark a step toward nuclear arms reduction.

Foreign Minister Kishida told reporters this morning that the talks might have "adverse effects" by further deepening the conflict between the nuclear and non-nuclear powers. He also reportedly said it would be more "realistic" to continue making tenacious efforts within a framework made up of both the nuclear and non-nuclear powers, and that this would be the shortest route to achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

- [Japan-Philippine infrastructure committee holds first meeting](#) (Mainichi)

SECURITY

Governor Onaga decides to order Okinawa Defense Bureau to stop relocation work

NHK reported on its website that Okinawa Governor Onaga decided to order the Okinawa Defense Bureau to stop the offshore construction work in Henoko given that it is not following the conditions set when Okinawa granted permission to destroy the rock reefs. According to the network, while Okinawa asked the bureau for an explanation on why the size and location of the concrete blocks used in the construction are different from those specified in the plan submitted to the prefecture, the bureau replied by saying that there is no change from the existing plan. The network said the governor has decided to call for the cancellation of the work given that the Okinawa Defense Bureau has failed to fulfill the requirement to provide the necessary information in response to an inquiry from the governor about the progress of the work. The network added, however, that the Okinawa

Defense Bureau is expected to disregard the prefecture's order on the grounds that Okinawa's permission is no longer necessary because the local fishermen have already relinquished their fishing rights in the area.

- [Subsidies for realignment of U.S. forces in Japan to be extended for 10 years](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan's security posture shifting toward Nansei Islands](#) (Asahi)

ECONOMY

- [Mitsubishi Aircraft Corporation to hire additional foreign engineers to meet handover schedule](#) (Sankei)
- [MAFF to support construction equipment makers' entry into farm sector](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Electric vehicle charging time slashed to a third with revised standard](#) (Nikkei)
- [Westinghouse bankruptcy filing just the start for Toshiba](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Wage hike won't fix staff shortfall at day care centers: survey](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Corporate Japan wants to invest less in Mexico, JETRO survey](#) (Nikkei)
- [Higher court cancels injunction halting Takahama reactors](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Enhance TEPCO's earning capacity to advance Fukushima revitalization](#) (The Japan News)

POLITICS

- [With budget done, Japan's Diet moves on to bigger battles](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan's new budget puts focus on women, children](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Opposition seeks to keep heat on Abe over school scandal](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- ['Indecisive' Tokyo governor draws fire from ruling party](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Prime minister's schedule on March 27](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of interpellations at Upper House Budget Committee, March 27](#) (Tokyo Shimibun)
- [Key events on the political calendar](#) (Asahi)
- [Nukaga faction failing to make presence felt in LDP](#) (Yomiuri)

OPINION POLLS

- [Gov't called on to explain Moritomo Gakuen affair, Nikkei poll](#) (Nikkei)
- [43% say "under 100 hours" is appropriate ceiling for overtime work, Nikkei poll](#) (Nikkei)

- [Opinion polls after Kagoike's Diet testimony show public is critical of gov't](#) (Sankei)

SOCIETY

- [Law passed to improve education for children with developmental disorders](#) (Asahi)
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