



Afternoon Alert - Friday, April 14, 2017

The following information reflects the reporting of the cited news media and does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Japan Media Highlights is intended for USG use only and should not be forwarded. Visit the website [here](#). For more information, contact [TokyoMATT@state.gov](mailto:TokyoMATT@state.gov).

## HEADLINES

### Noon news

NHK gave top play to a report that today marks the first anniversary of the Kumamoto earthquakes. All commercial networks led with reports that a man was arrested this morning in connection with the murder of a 9-year-old Vietnamese girl whose body was found last month in Chiba Prefecture. The networks said the man was the president of the PTA at the girl's school.

## INTERNATIONAL

### White House official denies report that U.S. is prepared to launch preemptive strikes against DPRK

NTV reported on a NBC report saying that several senior USG officials disclosed that the Trump administration is prepared to launch preemptive strikes against North Korea if it becomes certain that the North is going to conduct another nuclear test. The network said the U.S. has deployed in waters 500 km from North Korea's nuclear test site a destroyer that is capable of launching cruise missiles, adding, however, that the U.S. would need consent from the ROK government if it were to launch a preemptive attack on North Korea. The network added that according to the NBC report, intelligence agencies have "moderate confidence" that North Korea is preparing to conduct another nuclear test.

However, NHK reported online this afternoon that a White House official told the network that the NBC report is "completely inaccurate." The network also quoted a Pentagon spokesperson as saying: "We do not comment on future military operations."

### Senior DPRK diplomat warns of possible nuclear test

NHK reported online on remarks made to AP this morning by DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Han Song

Ryol, who said the Kim regime is ready to conduct a nuclear test “pending a decision by the headquarters.” He also reportedly told the U.S. news agency in an interview conducted in Pyongyang on Friday that the Trump administration is more "belligerent" than any of its predecessors and that Pyongyang will "not keep its arms crossed" in the face of a U.S. preemptive strike. He also stressed that "it's not the DPRK but the U.S. and Trump that makes trouble."

- [Japan, China, South Korea fail to agree on tariff negotiation framework](#) (Mainichi)
- [Diet members make connections with people close to President Trump](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)
- [Veteran Diet member Kamei on PM Abe’s diplomacy with the U.S.](#) (SAPIO)
- [Cartoon: President Trump and Kim Jong Un](#) (Sankei)
- [Cartoon: Presidents Trump and Xi](#) (Asahi)

## **ECONOMY**

### **Apple interested in investing in Toshiba Memory**

NHK reported that Apple Inc. is considering investing hundreds of billions of yen in the semiconductor division to be sold off by Toshiba. According to the broadcaster, the U.S. firm is interested in acquiring a sizable share of Toshiba Memory stocks with the goal of ensuring a stable supply of the flash memory chips used in its iPhones and other high-tech devices. Although Apple is eyeing a tie up with Taiwan-based Foxconn to purchase Toshiba Memory, it is also hoping that Toshiba will retain shares in the company so that Japan's key technology base will be maintained by a U.S.-Japan consortium since the GOJ is concerned that the semiconductor operation may be controlled by a foreign firm possibly linked to China.

### **Commerce Secretary Ross to visit Japan**

NHK reported online this morning that Secretary of Commerce Ross will visit Japan to coincide with Vice President Pence's trip to Japan for the new U.S.-Japan economic dialogue to begin on April 18. The network said Secretary Ross is expected to hold meetings with Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aso and Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Seko. The network said the GOJ is hoping to set up a meeting with Secretary Ross to discuss ways to strengthen the bilateral economic relationship in addition to the economic dialogue. The network noted, however, that Secretary Ross has expressed the view that U.S. trade with Japan will be a top priority following the renegotiation of NAFTA in order to reduce the U.S. trade deficit, so attention will be focused on what kind of in-depth discussions will be held between Secretary Ross and the Japanese ministers

on bilateral trade.

## **POLITICS**

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 13](#) (Nikkei)
- [Deputy president's resignation portends Democratic Party's possible breakup](#) (Sankei)
- [Cartoon: Renho](#) (Mainichi)
- [Abe grilled over his support for U.S. attack on Syria](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [National Security Council suspected of excessive designation of state secrets](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

## **SECURITY**

### **ACSAs with U.S. and other nations endorsed by Diet**

NHK and most papers reported online that the House of Councillors approved the updated acquisition and cross-servicing agreements (ACSAs) with the United States and Australia. It also approved an ACSA with the UK. The GOJ reportedly plans to forge similar defense cooperation arrangements with France and Canada in preparation for a possible contingency on the Korean Peninsula.

- [Japan making plans for crisis on Korean Peninsula: sources](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Hurdles remain high for Japan to possess capability to attack enemy bases](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan to face ballooning maintenance costs for defense equipment](#) (Asahi)
- [DPRK one step away from placing Washington in range of its ICBMs](#) (Yomiuri)

## **SCIENCE**

- [Gov't to support AI development for medical treatment and nursing care](#) (Asahi)

## **SOCIETY**

### **Power of social media during Kumamoto earthquakes**

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported that the number of tweets on the Kumamoto earthquakes a year ago exceeded 26 million during the first week, which is 20 times more than in the same period after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. There was an "explosion of information" on the disaster, including messages about people who needed to be rescued. While many lives were saved thanks to the information posted on social media, it also created confusion among rescue personnel. The program reported on the danger of information being altered unintentionally in the process of dissemination, adding that sometimes the needs of the victims are not met as a result. The program said that while creating WiFi zones is essential, it is also important to create a system for obtaining necessary and accurate information from the vast amount of information available on social media.

- [\*\*NPA: Most Kumamoto earthquake victims trapped on 1st floors\*\*](#) (The Japan News)
- 

