



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, April 19, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

TV Asahi led with a report saying that visiting Vice President Pence delivered a speech on the USS Ronald Reagan in Yokosuka. The Vice President was quoted as saying: "North Korea is the most dangerous and urgent threat. The era of strategic patience is over. The United States will stand with our allies and stand up to our enemies." NHK gave top play to a report that the first group of SDF troops deployed to South Sudan for peacekeeping returned to Japan today. NTV and TBS gave top play to reports that a Japanese woman was arrested this morning on charges of running a pyramid scheme. Fuji TV led with a report that full-fledged deliberations on legislation to penalize acts of preparing to commit terrorism began at the Diet today.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Vice President Pence sends strong warning to North Korea

All networks reported that Vice President Pence delivered a speech to American and Japanese service members aboard the USS Ronald Reagan in Yokosuka this morning. NHK said the Vice President issued a strong warning to the DPRK by stressing that "North Korea is the most dangerous and urgent threat to the peace and security of the Asia Pacific." He went on to say, "We will defeat any attack and meet any use of conventional or nuclear weapons with an overwhelming and effective American response." TBS quoted him as saying, "The United States once again will stand with our allies and stand up to our enemies," while Fuji TV quoted him as saying, "The era of strategic patience is over." All networks reported that the Vice President stated that the Senkaku Islands fall under the scope of Article 5 of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty.

## **FM Kishida stresses importance of diplomacy to resolve North Korea issue**

NHK reported this afternoon that in response to Vice President Pence's remark to Prime Minister Abe on Tuesday that "peace comes through strength," Foreign Minister Kishida stressed today that although he welcomes the Vice President's remarks as deterrence, resolving the North Korea issue through diplomacy is the basic policy. He was quoted as saying: "We assume that the remarks represent part of the U.S. review of its North Korea policy. In the sense of deterrence, our nation welcomes the stance that all options are on the table." Kishida also reportedly stressed the need to maintain close communication with the U.S., saying: "However, we must affirm that the basic policy is to protect peace through diplomacy. It will be important to make sure that the policies of the U.S. and Japan are aligned."

## **U.S. easing hard line on North Korea to allow China to exercise influence**

TV Asahi's Hodo Station reported that the Trump administration is relaxing its tough approach toward North Korea with the goal of encouraging China to step up its diplomatic efforts to press the defiant DPRK regime to put an end to its missile and nuclear provocations. The broadcaster highlighted the "slow" movement of the USS Carl Vinson strike group, which appears to be in waters near Indonesia even though it could have entered the East China Sea by now. The network also said the U.S. may delay or cancel the planned deployment of a THAAD platform in South Korea that China vehemently opposes, quoting an unnamed senior White House official as saying: "This is something that should be decided by the new ROK president. The deployment is up in the air." The show conjectured that these two developments point to Washington's policy of prodding China to use its influence to convince Kim Jong Un to discontinue provocations. An analyst predicted that the Trump administration may step up its pressure on Beijing to take such measures as cutting back on petroleum exports to North Korea by possibly imposing financial sanctions on some 800 Chinese companies that benefit from trade with Pyongyang.

## **Ambassador Haley says U.S. military action depends on North Korea**

NHK reported this afternoon that U.S. Ambassador to the UN Haley sent a strong warning to North Korea by telling reporters after a UNSC meeting on Tuesday that it is up to North Korea whether the U.S. will take military action against it. She was quoted as saying: "There's one message to North Korea. The United States is not looking for a fight, so don't try and give us one."

## **Vice President's wife observes art therapy session in Japan**

NHK reported early this morning that Mrs. Karen Pence and her daughter Audrey, who are currently visiting Japan with Vice President Pence, called at a Tokyo hospital on Tuesday and met with children undergoing art therapy there. The network said Mrs. Pence was an elementary school art teacher for 25 years and is currently promoting art therapy through a fund she established. The network showed Mrs. Pence drawing pictures with the children. Mrs. Pence was quoted as saying: "It's just a way to really deeply get in touch with what you're struggling with and help you through that."

In Japan, they just started an organization for art therapists. There is a lot of collaboration going on right now."

- [Gist of meeting between PM Abe, Vice President Pence](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Gist of joint news conference by Deputy PM Aso, Vice President Pence](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Analysis: First step in Japan-U.S. economic talks exposes deep gulf](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Make the most of consultations between number two leaders](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Mutual benefits should be achieved through economic dialogue](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Make the Economic Dialogue propel structural reforms in Japan, U.S.](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Maintain anti-protectionist stance in Japan-U.S. Economic Dialogue](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Press the U.S. to uphold the principles of free trade](#) (Asahi)
- [Editorial: Do not forget the bigger goal in the Japan-U.S. Economic Dialogue](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Japan, U.S. should cooperate to find peaceful solution to North Korea issue](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [U.S. Second Lady Karen Pence stresses the importance of art therapy](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japanese envoy meets with ROK's vice defense minister](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Cartoon: North Korea](#) (Asahi)
- [Editorial: Growing tension on Korean Peninsula calls for strong trilateral cooperation](#) (The Japan News)

## SECURITY

**USS Carl Vinson was not heading toward Korean Peninsula**

NTV and TV Asahi reported at noon on a New York Times story saying that the USS Carl Vinson had not been heading toward the Korean Peninsula to deter North Korea, but was steaming toward the Indian Ocean to participate in joint exercises with the Australian Navy. The networks said that the Carl Vinson is now traveling northward and is expected to arrive in the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula sometime next week. TV Asahi said some people are saying the nuclear carrier's movements are part of President Trump's strategy of putting pressure on North Korea while gauging the prospects for diplomatic efforts by China.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Vice President Pence dismisses Japan's attempt to deflect U.S. trade pressure**

TV-Asahi's Hodo Station took up Vice President Pence's talks with Deputy Prime Minister Aso in Tuesday's bilateral economic dialogue that was proposed by the Japanese side to deflect U.S. pressure on the trade front with the goal of "sidelining" President Trump, who is highly critical of Japan due to the trade imbalance. The GOJ was hoping that the Japanese side would be able to seize the initiative in bilateral economic discussions if the U.S. side were led by the Vice President, who has an affinity for Japan because his home state of Indiana hosts a large number of Japanese companies. The program also said the Abe administration is aiming to convince Washington to rejoin the TPP by moving forward with effectuating the free-trade pact without the participation of the U.S. Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Ishihara met with Australian Trade Minister Ciobo on the same day and they agreed to explore ways to implement the landmark regional free trade deal when a TPP trade ministerial meeting is held in Hanoi next month. The program underscored, however, that this Japanese attempt was effectively dismissed by the Vice President, who told the press after his meeting with Aso: "President Trump truly does believe that it's in the interests of the United States of America to negotiate trade agreements on a bilateral basis....The TPP is a thing of the past for the United States of America. The Trump administration has made a decision and taken steps to formally withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and that will be our policy going forward."

### **NRA gives green light to uranium enrichment plant**

TBS and TV Asahi reported that the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) decided this morning that the uranium enrichment plant located in Rokkasho in Aomori meets the new regulatory standards, adding that the plant is expected to officially pass the safety screening after soliciting the opinion of the Minister for Economy, Trade, and Industry. The networks said this is the first time for a nuclear fuel cycle facility in Rokkasho to meet the standards.

### **As anxiety over future grows, so does popularity of personal investment**

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on the increasing popularity of personal investment in Japan due to growing anxiety over the future. Due to market uncertainty caused by the advent of the Trump administration and concerns over the nation's pension system, a growing number of people feel they

need to increase their financial reserves. The program reported on various ways to protect household assets.

- [Sharp mulls jointly investing in Toshiba chip unit with Hon Hai](#) (Kyodo)

## **POLITICS**

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 18](#) (Nikkei)
- [Nikai, Koike dine together at invitation of former PM Koizumi](#) (Sankei)
- [Commentary: Can gov't put end to "Moritomo" scandal?](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Don't block questions in Diet about Moritomo Gakuen scandal](#) (The Mainichi)

## **SCIENCE**

- [METI's draft report says patents for items created by AI belong to humans](#) (Mainichi)