



Afternoon Alert - Monday, April 24, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TBS led with reports that Prime Minister Abe and President Trump spoke by phone this morning on North Korea. NTV, Fuji TV, TV Asahi gave top play to reports on the French presidential election, saying that Le Pen and Macron will face off in the runoff set for May 7.

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump, PM Abe speak by phone on North Korea

All networks reported at noon that President Trump and Prime Minister Abe held a 30-minute teleconference this morning, during which they agreed to strongly urge North Korea to exercise restraint. The networks quoted Abe as telling reporters after the talks: "I had an in-depth discussion on North Korea with President Trump. I strongly welcomed the President's stance to demonstrate through words and actions that all options are on the table. We completely agreed on the need to strongly call for restraint on the part of North Korea, which continues to carry out dangerous provocations." Abe also said: "The issue of North Korea's nuclear and missile programs is an extremely grave security threat not only to the international community but also to Japan. Joint exercises between the USS Carl Vinson strike group and the MSDF began yesterday, and we hope to continue to work closely with the U.S. and respond resolutely by maintaining high-level monitoring and surveillance activities."

"The Trump era" – Part 1: First 100 days of Trump administration

Saturday's "NHK Special" reported on the first 100 days of the Trump administration, including the sudden military strike on Syria and the deployment of a nuclear carrier to the Western Pacific to put

pressure on North Korea. The program said since the launch of the Trump administration, the number of public demonstrations and conflicts over domestic politics and foreign affairs has increased in the U.S., causing growing turmoil in the nation. The program also focused on the Trump administration's relations with Russia, saying that CNN and other media outlets that have been critical of President Trump over Russia were barred from attending White House press briefings. The program also pointed out that out of 119 senior State Department positions, only three have been approved by Congress, and that out of 554 senior positions across all departments, only 22 have been filled. Due to the President's extreme remarks and failure to implement many of his election pledges, public approval for the President had declined to a record low at 35% in March. The program said New York Times CEO Mark Thompson pointed out in an interview that President Trump makes factually inaccurate remarks and is inconsistent in his actions, and the world has entered an unprecedentedly unstable era. NHK's Washington Bureau chief said the President's behavior is based on the "America First" policy, reflecting the frustrations of the "forgotten people." The program also focused on the 11 million illegal immigrants in the U.S., saying that the President's immigration policy is also dividing the nation. Program host Okoshi said that although President Trump does not enjoy the overwhelming support of the public, he continues to receive strong support from those who feel "left behind." He said it appears as though President Trump spent his first 100 days struggling to deliver promises to these supporters while at the same time realizing how difficult it is.

“The Trump era” – Part 2: Europe and the rise of Le Pen

Sunday's "NHK Special" reported that President Trump's "America First" policy is also affecting Europe and disrupting the power balance in the world. The program focused on the presidential election in France, where ultra-right National Front leader Le Pen is gaining popularity. The program also reported on Germany, where Chancellor Merkel is being criticized for accepting more than 1 million refugees. The program said an anti-immigrant party is gradually gaining popularity in Germany, although many citizens continue to support accepting refugees out of lessons learned from the Holocaust. The program said European nations created the EU with the determination never to repeat the tragedy of war, adding that Europe is seen as the last stronghold of the spirit of freedom and tolerance. However, the program said it remains to be seen which route France and Germany will take, adding that the results of the French presidential election will be a key factor in the future of Europe.

Policy chiefs discuss North Korea, U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue, anti-conspiracy bill

NHK's "Nichiyo Toron" Sunday debate show aired a discussion by policy chiefs of the ruling and opposition parties, during which they discussed North Korea, the U.S.-Japan economic dialogue, and the "anti-conspiracy bill." LDP Policy Research Council Chairman Motegi stated that although diplomatic efforts should be made first, Japan welcomes the U.S.'s stance of taking a comprehensive approach to the DPRK by displaying its military strength to put an end to North

Korea's provocations. Komeito policy chief Ishida also welcomed the Trump administration's policy of putting all options on the table and urged China to play a greater role. Democratic Party (DP) policy chief Ogushi insisted that it is necessary to strike a balance between dialogue and pressure in dealing with the DPRK, expressing concern that the escalating tensions could lead to an unforeseen incident on the Korean Peninsula. Kasai from the Japanese Communist Party stated that the tensions should be resolved through diplomacy.

Concerning the U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue, Motegi said progress will be made in the talks between the two nations under the leadership of Vice President Pence and Deputy Prime Minister Aso. Regarding the bill to revise the Act on Punishment of Organized Crimes to criminalize acts of preparation to commit terrorism, the ruling parties argued that it is necessary for Japan to enact the bill to ratify the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. However, the DP and JCP panelists responded by saying that the existing domestic laws should be sufficient for Japan to join the convention.

- [Japan, Russia confirm progress in economic cooperation](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Stay alert for Russia's disruption of international unity against North Korea](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Deepen understanding between Japan, U.S. for stable foreign exchange](#) (The Japan News)
- [INSIGHTS into the WORLD / History tells us more than just who to blame](#) (The Japan News)

SECURITY

Local citizens react sharply to parachute drop drills at Kadena AB

NHK reported at noon that a parachute training exercise were held at Kadena AB this morning, saying that local citizens are protesting the exercise since the U.S. and Japanese governments agreed that parachute training would be held at an airfield on the remote island of Iejima. According to the network, eight U.S. service members jumped from a military plane and conducted parachute training. The training reportedly lasted for about 90 minutes. According to the report, this was the first time for parachute drop drills to be conducted at Kadena since 2011, adding that the U.S. forces informed the local municipality through the Okinawa Defense Bureau that the drills planned for Iejima were cancelled due to bad weather. The network said there have been many problems regarding U.S. parachute training drills in the past, such as service members or objects being dropped in civilian areas. In 1965 a child of primary school age was accidentally killed during such a drill. The Kadena mayor was quoted as saying: "It is extremely regrettable that the military drills were carried out. The U.S. forces gave priority to military training and disregarded local residents."

Osprey may take part in Okinawa Marines' joint exercises with GSDF in Hokkaido

NHK's Hokkaido station reported on Saturday that the U.S. Marines in Okinawa are making arrangements to send Osprey aircraft to joint exercises with the GSDF Northern Army to be held in Hokkaido in the summer. The network said this would be the first time for the Osprey to participate in joint exercises in Hokkaido, but the details regarding which bases the aircraft will use are still under discussion. The broadcaster added that in view of the accidents involving the Osprey, including the crash landing in shallow waters off Nago in December 2016, Hokkaido residents may express opposition to its participation in drills there.

Okinawa Marine arrested for DUI

Okinawa Times wrote that the police arrested a Marine staff sergeant belonging to Camp Foster on Sunday on suspicion of violating the Road Traffic Law by driving under the influence of alcohol. The alcohol level detected on his breath was more than four times the permissible level. The suspect said he thought he was no longer under the influence of alcohol when he was driving.

ECONOMY

- [Japan will exceed its annual quota for catch of Pacific bluefin tuna weighing under 30 kg](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Japan must lead the way in free trade by implementing TPP without U.S.](#) (The Japan News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 23](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on April 22](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on April 21](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of interpellations at Lower House Committee on Judicial Affairs](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Making Yasukuni visit a diplomatic issue doesn't make sense: CCS Suga](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan moving toward 2018 abdication for emperor](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Cartoon: Poles quit LDP over scandals, others may follow](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

OPINION POLLS

- [73% say gaffes and infidelity scandal are “signs of slackness on part of gov’t,” Kyodo News poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [64% say countries “should enhance diplomatic efforts in relation to North Korea,” Mainichi poll](#) (Mainichi)
- [Opinion poll & results from Mainichi Shimbun](#) (Mainichi)
- [Clear disparity in views on whether Japan can be trusted, six-nation poll](#) (Asahi)

SCIENCE

- [Japan looks to AI to simplify patent screening](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan to propel private sector’s liftoff into space](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

EDUCATION

- [The cost of convenience in Japan: when foreign students work instead of study](#) (The Japan Times)

SOCIETY

- [Japan failing to protect victims despite rise in domestic violence](#) (Mainichi)
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