
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, April 26, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All broadcasters gave top play to reports on Prime Minister Abe's de facto dismissal of Reconstruction Minister Imamura yesterday, adding that the premier apologized to the public this morning for appointing him.

SECURITY

GOJ starts bank protection work at Henoko amid strong local opposition

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo gave prominent top play to reports on the start on Tuesday of bank protection work for FRF construction at Henoko, highlighting strong reactions from Governor Onaga and local residents.

Okinawa Times wrote in an editorial: "The Abe administration's decision to push ahead with the landfill work at Henoko while refusing to hold discussions with Okinawa is a reflection of its arrogance.... The reclamation of Oura Bay to construct a new base is folly.... The argument that the Marines need to be stationed in Okinawa is groundless. The construction of a new base is unfair, unjust, and discriminatory because it forces Okinawa to make sacrifices. If the GOJ continues to push forward with the construction, the U.S.-Japan security arrangements could be undermined because the rift between the people of Okinawa and mainland Japan may deepen. It is necessary for the prefectural government to swiftly take legal countermeasures, including an injunction to suspend the work and the cancellation of the landfill permit, with strong determination if the central government continues to refuse to hold discussions with Okinawa and to take a hardline stance."

Ryukyu Shimpo wrote in an editorial: "The central government's failure to develop concrete measures to reduce the base-hosting burden on the citizens of Ginowan while adhering to its agreement with the U.S. to construct a new base is unacceptable.... Although human rights are being infringed on in Okinawa due to the presence of U.S. bases, the GOJ, which aims to maintain its alliance with the U.S., has failed to treat the people of Okinawa fairly. We must express our firm opposition to the central government's insincere attitude toward Okinawa.... Governor Onaga should immediately revoke the landfill permit to fulfill his campaign promise. The people of Okinawa are waiting for him to make a decision."

SDF's F-15s and U.S. FA-18s to hold joint exercises

NHK and several other networks reported at noon on an ASDF announcement that SDF fighters and U.S. carrier-borne aircraft will conduct joint exercises this afternoon. According to the networks, two ASDF F-15 fighters belonging to Naha base, two FA-18 fighters assigned to the USS Carl Vinson, and two MSDF escort ships will participate in the joint drills over the Pacific Ocean east of Okinawa. NHK said the USS Carl Vinson is currently heading north toward the Korean Peninsula while participating in the joint exercises with the MSDF, adding that joint drills with the ASDF are aimed at keeping North Korea in check.

- [Internal document shows Mitsubishi Heavy planning to export F-15 fighter parts to U.S.](#) (Akahata)
- [Henoko residents divided in response to start of embankment work](#) (Yomiuri)
- [What would the Japan Coast Guard do in a contingency on the Korean Peninsula?](#) (Sankei)
- [MOD plans to conduct three Osprey drills outside of Okinawa in FY2017](#) (Okinawa Times)

INTERNATIONAL

Increasing tensions on Korean Peninsula

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on North Korea, which has been taking a more outwardly adversarial stance against the U.S. A South Korean expert said the North Korean leader believes that if North Korea develops ICBMs that can reach the U.S. mainland, it can prevent U.S. military intervention. Another South Korean military expert said North Korea has increased the performance of its scud missiles to where they can now reach the Japanese mainland. He also said the North has developed solid-fuel missiles that can be deployed in a very short period of time and carry nuclear warheads, adding that North Korea could attack South Korea and Japan not just with missiles but with nuclear missiles and that the people of both nations are becoming "hostages" of the DPRK. The program said North Korea is currently developing ICBMs. Nanzan University

Professor Shunji Hiraiwa said while North Korea regarded its nuclear and missile programs as a bargaining chip in the past, it has clearly changed its stance and now regards them as necessary means to maintain the regime.

On the Trump administration's policies on North Korea, former Senior Director for East Asian Affairs at the National Security Council Dennis Wilder pointed out the difficulty of the U.S. launching military strikes on the DPRK, saying that there is a "clear difference between North Korea and Syria's air force base" because there are American and South Korean citizens and American troops within the range of North Korea's ordnance. He also reportedly said: "If President Trump plans a military strike on North Korea, he would need to be prepared for the risk of retaliation. That is a big risk." The program said the Trump administration is now striving to get China to increase its pressure on the North. A Chinese diplomat said the relationship between China and North Korea is becoming more strained, pointing out the fact that the two leaders have never met. He said although the threat posed by North Korea must be contained, it will be impossible to subdue North Korea, even if China stops its provision of food or oil to the DPRK.

Sasakawa Peace Foundation Senior Fellow Tsuneo Watanabe said members of the Trump administration are using President Trump's "unpredictability" as a card against China and North Korea, adding that the Trump administration has so far been successful in making China think that the U.S. is "serious" this time. Hiraiwa said China is in a dilemma because although it is aware of the need to increase pressure on North Korea, it is afraid of enraging North Korea or prompting it to find a new partner such as Russia.

- [**New Zealand spied on Japan to help U.S. at 2007 whaling confab: media**](#) (Kyodo News)
- [**China launches 1st domestically built aircraft carrier**](#) (Kyodo News)
- [**Japan, U.S. security officials agree to cooperate closely on DPRK**](#) (Sankei)
- [**Aso rules out concessions that go beyond TPP**](#) (Mainichi)
- [**Argentine president to visit Japan from May 18-20**](#) (Kyodo News)
- [**Japan for 1st time says N. Korea has entered 'new stage of threat'**](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [**Diplomatic Bluebook: Gov't to seek to end N. Korea's provocations**](#) (The Japan News)
- [**Editorial: Japan's diplomatic skills called into question as tensions rise over N. Korea**](#) (The Mainichi)

ECONOMY

- [Tuna catch to soon exceed limit](#) (The Japan News)
- [Utility seeks to restart two reactors in Fukui from mid-May](#) (Kyodo News)
- [TEPCO to use cosmic rays to examine Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant's No. 3 reactor](#) (Nikkei)
- [METI survey shows 30% of companies expect shortage of managers in five years](#) (Nikkei)
- [In job market, 2018 graduates have upper hand](#) (Asahi)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 25](#) (Nikkei)
- [Profile: Yoshino known for dedication to rebuilding disaster-hit hometown](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Seven Tokyo lawmakers bolt Democratic Party](#) (Yomiuri)
- [All witnesses at Lower House committee favor accession to UN organized crime convention](#) (Yomiuri)

EDUCATION

- [Fiscal, economic policy council proposes restructuring of Japanese universities](#) (Mainichi)
- [Summary of student recommendation guidelines for high school admission with financial aid](#) (Yomiuri)

SOCIETY

- [NPO distributes LGBT-related teaching materials for middle school ethics classes](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Gov't to set target of cutting suicide rate by 30% over next 10 years](#) (Asahi)

OPINION POLLS

- [71% are in favor of “equal pay for equal work,” Yomiuri poll](#) (Yomiuri)
 - [Opinion poll & results of Yomiuri nationwide public opinion poll on “working style”](#) (Yomiuri)
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