



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, April 27, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

NHK led with a report that President Trump held a meeting with all 100 U.S. senators at the White House on Wednesday to explain the North Korea situation. TV Asahi led with a report that the USG test-launched an ICBM on Wednesday. Other top stories included a report that Prime Minister Abe and his wife Akie left for Moscow this morning. The network said PM Abe and Russian President Putin are expected to agree to launch a joint survey for the implementation of joint economic activities in the Northern Territories.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Suga welcomes Trump administration's stance on North Korea

NHK reported this afternoon that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga spoke to reporters this morning on PACOM Commander Admiral Harris's remarks before a congressional hearing on Wednesday that the USS Carl Vinson will continue to head north and that its carrier-borne aircraft are capable of reaching the Korean Peninsula within two hours. Suga said: "While I will refrain from commenting on the operations of the U.S. military, Japan and the U.S. are indeed working closely together. It is extremely important to ensure U.S. deterrence since the security environment is becoming extremely severe." Suga also said, "The government welcomes the U.S. stance that all options are on the table.... The basis of our North Korea policy is dialogue and pressure and action for action. It is extremely important to enhance the deterrence and response capabilities of the U.S.-Japan alliance

through close cooperation between Japan and the U.S. as well as Japan, the U.S., and South Korea."

### **President Trump to place emphasis on tightening economic sanctions against DPRK**

NHK reported at noon that President Trump held a meeting with all 100 U.S. senators at the White House on Wednesday, during which the President, Secretary of State Tillerson, Secretary of Defense Mattis, and National Intelligence Director Coats explained the North Korea situation. According to the network, a senior USG official said that during the closed meeting, the senators were told about how North Korea has become a serious threat to the U.S., Japan, and South Korea, and about the options the Trump administration may take. The network said the Trump administration is planning to place importance on strengthening economic sanctions against the DPRK while at the same time increasing pressure through diplomatic means to persuade North Korea to give up on its nuclear and missile programs. The senior USG official was quoted as saying: "We have prioritized diplomatic efforts in the past. From now on, we will focus on economic measures and continue our military preparation at the same time." The network said the Trump administration's policy is to focus on enhancing economic sanctions and increasing pressure on North Korea through diplomatic means so that North Korea will give up on its nuclear and missile programs.

In a related development, Asahi and Yomiuri reported online on a joint statement on North Korea issued on Wednesday by Secretary of State Tillerson, Secretary of Defense Mattis, and Director of National Intelligence Coats. In the statement, the Trump administration's top security trio called North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons "an urgent national security threat and top foreign policy priority," noting that past efforts have failed to halt its nuclear and missile programs. They stressed that Washington will pressure Pyongyang into dismantling its nuclear, ballistic missile, and proliferation programs by tightening economic sanctions and pursuing diplomatic measures with Japan and South Korea. The three senior officials also underscored that the U.S. remains prepared to defend itself and its allies.

- [Japan, China to hold finance dialogue in May in Yokohama](#) (Kyodo News)
- [South Korea conducted maritime survey near Takeshima Islands in January](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Both military and diplomatic pressure must be enhanced toward N. Korea](#) (The Japan News)

## **SECURITY**

**Peace activists in Okinawa to organize rally to block FRF construction**

Today's Okinawa Times front-paged a report saying that anti-base activists in Okinawa are considering holding a "prefecture-wide" rally either in Okinawa City or Nago City possibly in June to oppose the FRF construction off Camp Schwab. The organizers are hoping to draw tens of thousands of participants from across the prefecture like they did for a demonstration last May to protest the murder of a local woman by a U.S. civilian base worker at Kadena AB.

- [\*\*U.S. eyes moving 4,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam from 2024\*\*](#) (Kyodo News)
- [\*\*For Japan and U.S., joint drills could signal the start of a new 'normal'\*\*](#) (The Japan Times)
- [\*\*Experts conduct simulation of Senkaku crisis scenarios\*\*](#) (Yomiuri)
- [\*\*Local governments near U.S. Atsugi base oppose takeoff, landing exercises\*\*](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [\*\*Editorial: Start of seawall construction marks important step for Futenma's return\*\*](#) (The Japan News)
- [\*\*Editorial: Henoko must not become 'sea of conflict' as works begins on U.S. base\*\*](#) (The Mainichi)
- [\*\*Editorial: Heavy-handed Tokyo again disregards Okinawa voices\*\*](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [\*\*U.S. Marines join local residents in beach clean-up in Nago City\*\*](#) (Okinawa Times)

## **ECONOMY**

### **GOJ establishes new taskforce to win U.S. understanding for Japan's contributions to U.S. economy**

Nikkei wrote that the GOJ established at the Kantei on Wednesday a new taskforce aimed at "strengthening U.S.-Japan relations from the grass roots." The move is intended to actively publicize Japanese firms' contributions to the U.S. economy through campaigns in the U.S. to counter the Trump administration's criticism of U.S trade deficits with Japan. Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hagiuda will chair the panel and senior officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Trade and the JETRO chairman will participate as members. The panel will make efforts to reduce anti-Japanese sentiment in the U.S. Hagiuda expressed the hope that if Japan can win the understanding of the American public, it will have a positive impact on discussions at the federal level. A senior METI official said that Japan is making preemptive moves to directly appeal to the American public before the U.S. and Japan launch in-depth negotiations at their economic dialogue.

However, it remains to be seen whether such efforts to “lay the groundwork” will be successful because USTR-nominee Lighthizer has stated that Japan is the primary target of U.S. trade talks.

- [The long and frustrating quest for free trade in Asia](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Think the RCEP is about free trade? Think again](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan Post’s poor performance clouds 3/11 reconstruction efforts](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan-U.S. consortium to bid for Toshiba chip unit](#) (Kyodo News)
- [39% of companies to increase base pay, FY2017 MOF survey](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Rescue fund signals recovery at Japan’s Renesas with 20% share sale](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

## POLITICS

- [Kantei’s decision to pursue the TPP without the U.S.](#) (Nikkei Business)
- [Prime minister’s schedule on April 26](#) (Nikkei)
- [Cartoon: Anti-conspiracy legislation](#) (Akahata)
- [Editorial: Arrogance and complacency hallmarks of Abe’s leadership](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Nikai criticizes the media: “Must you always be out to get us?”](#) (Mainichi)
- [Nikai eager to endorse two independent lawmakers in next Lower House election](#) (Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: Nikai and the LDP](#) (Asahi)
- [Kake Education Institution given 44 billion yen of nation’s hard-earned tax money from cozy relationship with the Abes](#) (Shukan Bunshun)

## SCIENCE

- [Gov’t to compile rules on anticancer drug treatment for elderly](#) (Kyodo News)

## SOCIETY

[Europe sees surge of fake news on Internet](#)

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported that fake news articles, such as those saying that French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron is backed by Al-Qaeda, are being disseminated across Europe via the Internet. The program reported on local media teams in France that are monitoring fake news, saying that an increasing number of news articles combine both fake and real news. In addition, some fake news stories even include videos of completely different incidents that occurred in other nations, adding that these stories are being fabricated according to what people want to believe and are spread instantly via social media. The program also reported on moves in Germany to penalize social media companies that fail to take effective measures to prevent fake news, saying that the public is split over the idea.

- [Lawson tops in empowering women](#) (Mainichi)
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