



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, May 18, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most networks gave top play to reports that the U.S. Justice Department appointed former FBI director Robert Mueller as special counsel to investigate possible coordination between President Trump's associates and Russian officials.

INTERNATIONAL

ROK envoy conveys president's wish to resume "shuttle diplomacy"

All networks reported at noon that South Korea's special envoy Moon met with PM Abe at the Kantei this morning, saying that Moon relayed President Moon's message that he would like to resume "shuttle diplomacy" between the two nations. NHK quoted the premier as telling Moon: "I welcome your early visit to Japan as a sign of your nation's focus on the Japan-ROK relationship. South Korea is our most important neighbor with which we share strategic interests. I hope to build a future-oriented, bilateral relationship with President Moon and his administration." In response, Moon reportedly said: "The two nations share things in common mainly in two areas. One is the fact that we are geographically close and two of the few nations in Northeast Asia that share the values of a market economy and liberal democracy. The other area is security, as we must work together to resolve the issue of North Korea's nuclear program." Moon also reportedly said: "President Moon is also hoping to hold a summit at an early date. I have a message and letter from the president saying that frequent meetings between the leaders will help deepen understanding between the two nations. The president is hoping for the resumption of shuttle diplomacy."

Japan lodges protest over South Korea's maritime research around Liancourt Rocks

Asahi reported online on a MOFA announcement that Vice Foreign Minister Sugiyama phoned the South Korean ambassador to Japan this morning and filed a protest against research conducted earlier in the day by an ROK ship in Japan's EEZ near Takeshima (the Liancourt Rocks) in the Sea of Japan. The vessel in question reportedly conducted research the previous day as well without seeking Tokyo's permission, which prompted MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director Kanetsugu to lodge a protest.

- [Interview with LDP chief on relations with China, Japan's membership in AIB, more](#) (Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: President Trump and Russian Foreign Minister](#) (Asahi)
- [Ferry on 1st N. Korea-Russia service arrives in Vladivostok](#) (Kyodo News)

SECURITY

- [U.S. Pacific commander calls for "far stronger sanctions" on N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Take basic protection measures against cyberattacks](#) (Nikkei)
- [Working group on burden-reduction in Futenma area holds first meeting in nine months](#) (Asahi)
- [Okinawa citizen out on bail to speak at UN Human Rights Council](#) (Okinawa Times)

ECONOMY

- [TPP renegotiations may provoke backlash in Japan](#) (Yomiuri)
- [METI eyes introducing law to realize the fourth industrial revolution](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan to open center for international business arbitration](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [BOJ Governor Kuroda to maintain ultra-easy monetary policy](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japan's nuclear watchdog gives green light to uranium enrichment facility](#) (Mainichi)

- [Osaka chamber of commerce to help attract SMEs to Japan-backed Thilawa](#) (Kyodo News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on May 17](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gov't, ruling parties mulling extension of Diet session](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Gist of interpellations at Lower House committee on Kake Gakuen issue, May 17](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [LDP to draft constitutional revision proposals in 2017 for submission to Diet in 2018](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan's justice minister faces no-confidence motion](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Commentary: Farewell to the DP; the dominoes will continue to fall](#) (WiLL)

SCIENCE

- [Gov't, industry, academia team up to commercialize AI robots](#) (Nikkei)

EDUCATION

- [Thirty years of JET: countless treasured memories and priceless gaffes](#) (The Japan Times)

SOCIETY

Wild animals in Fukushima

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported on wild animals living near the crippled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant because people have evacuated the area. The animals include boars, raccoons, and foxes. Although the evacuation warning has been lifted in parts of the area, there is now the problem of wild animals. The program said some people have given up returning home because of the wild animals.

- [Japan bar assn. urges prison to respect rights of Muslim inmates](#) (Kyodo News)
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