



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, June 13, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

TBS led with a report that a camera installed in a North Korean drone found near the border of the two Koreas contains hundreds of photos, including about ten photos showing the U.S. THAAD system deployed in South Korea. NHK gave top play to a report that telephone counseling began today for former residents of public housing sprayed with asbestos. NTV led with a follow-up report on the the birth of a giant panda cub at Ueno Zoo. Fuji TV and TV Asahi reported that MEXT will question 20 more people on the existence of a document suggesting that Prime Minister Abe influenced the ministry to allow Kake Educational Institution to create a new department.

INTERNATIONAL

Under Secretary Shannon, Yachi agree to increase pressure on DPRK

NHK reported online that Shotaro Yachi, head of the National Security Council's secretariat, met with visiting Under Secretary of State Shannon at the Kantei this afternoon. The two officials reportedly agreed to apply more pressure on North Korea since it would pose a global threat if North Korea succeeded in developing an ICBM or nuclear weapon. They reportedly confirmed that the U.S. and Japan should work together closely at such venues as the United Nations to increase pressure on North Korea and ask China to play an active role in persuading North Korea to abandon its missile and nuclear programs. According to the network, Under Secretary Shannon told reporters after the meeting that the planned "2+2" meeting is important and that he hopes the schedule will be decided after he returns to Washington.

GOJ rebuts UN council's claim that it pressures press

Fuji TV reported at noon that in response to a speech delivered by UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur David Kaye in which he expressed concern that Japanese government officials might exert pressure on the media and that the media might become intimidated by the state secrecy law, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters this morning: "With regard to media independence, freedom of expression and the right to know are fully protected under the Constitution of Japan. The government has never illegally applied pressure on media. This [the allegation pressure was applied] is completely untrue. We are arguing back against each point." Suga also reportedly said Japanese Ambassador Ihara has explained Japan's position on the matter and stressed that "freedom of speech and freedom of the press form the foundation of democracy and Japan honors them to the fullest extent."

Dennis Rodman to visit North Korea today

Fuji TV reported that CNN and other media outlets are saying that former NBA player Dennis Rodman is currently in Beijing and will visit North Korea today. The network said Rodman has visited North Korea four times in the past, adding that he is believed to have a close relationship with Kim Jong Un. Although the purpose of the visit is not known, the network said Rodman has appeared on a TV show together with President Trump and said during a speech in March 2017 that he would immediately visit North Korea if asked to conduct basketball diplomacy because he thinks that sports are the only thing in the world that can mend relationships. The network said four Americans are currently being detained in North Korea, adding that a DOS official told CNN that Rodman is not visiting North Korea in any official capacity.

- **[Japan, U.S. officials affirm need for China to act on N. Korea](#)** (Kyodo News)
- **[Ex-NBA star Rodman leaves for N. Korea to "open door"](#)** (Kyodo News)
- **[Time needed to solve comfort women row, Moon tells Japan](#)** (Nikkei Asian Review)
- **[Japan weighs lower tariff on EU pork for trade deal](#)** (Nikkei Asian Review)
- **[6 major countries vow to implement Paris pact without U.S.](#)** (Jiji Press)
- **[Japan asks Russia not to conduct survey in EEZ without permission](#)** (Kyodo News)
- **[China's vice premier hails Japan's changing stance on Silk Road plan](#)** (Kyodo News)
- **[Japan, rights expert trade barbs at UN body over Tokyo's record on freedom of expression, secrecy law](#)** (The Japan Times)
- **[How should Japan respond to changes in Trump's foreign policy?](#)** (Mainichi)

- [Abe welcomes visiting Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan will remain on guard during trade negotiations with the U.S.](#) (Bungeishunju)

SECURITY

PAC3 drills to be carried out from June 15

NHK reported that Defense Minister Inada told reporters today that in view of North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches, the MOD will hold drills involving the deployment of PAC3 interceptor units at four locations across Japan starting on June 15. According to the network, Inada said: "It is extremely important to enhance our strategic capability against ballistic missiles in light of North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches." The network said the drills will be held at the SDF's Komaki Base in Aichi, Camp Fukuoka in Fukuoka, Camp Asaka in Tokyo and Saitama, and Camp Kita-Kumamoto in Kumamoto. The network added that interceptors will not actually be fired during the drills, saying that although the ASDF has been carrying out similar exercises, it is the first time for such drills to be disclosed since October 2013. Inada also reportedly said: "At a time when people are feeling insecure, it is extremely significant to maintain the SDF's capability to respond to ballistic missiles as it gives people peace of mind." She also disclosed that the SDF is planning to hold joint drills with the U.S. military.

U.S. military to conduct parachute drop training at Kadena

Ryukyu Shimpo front-paged a report saying that the U.S. military notified the Defense Ministry's Okinawa bureau on Monday of its plan to conduct parachute drop training at Kadena AB on Wednesday by saying that it has become necessary to conduct the drill at Kadena because it probably will not be possible to do the training at the Ie Jima Auxiliary Airfield as planned due to weather conditions. The paper wrote that following the parachute training conducted at Kadena in April and May despite local opposition, local municipalities and residents have been calling on the U.S. military not to conduct any more parachute training there. According to the paper, the defense bureau said that it has not yet reached a conclusion on whether the planned training falls within the scope of the "exceptions" approved by the GOJ, and that it is very regrettable that the training will be carried out there for three months in a row. Okinawa Times ran a similar front-page article.

- [Japan plans series of drills to improve missile defense readiness](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Future plan for Japan's own stealth fighter remains uncertain](#) (AERA)
- [Opponents of Futenma relocation arrested in succession](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

POLITICS

GOJ not planning to prepare English translation of anti-conspiracy bill

Tokyo Shimbun took up press remarks made on Monday by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, who said the GOJ does not plan to prepare an English translation of the anti-conspiracy legislation in response to a request from UN special rapporteur David Kaye, who has expressed qualms about the legislation's possible violation of people's right to privacy. The daily pointed out that in response to the UN official's request, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Sato told the Diet last week that the GOJ will "act appropriately from the standpoint of explaining Japan's position accurately," while stating concurrently that the legislation will not be translated into English "word for word."

- [Prime minister's schedule on June 11-12](#) (Nikkei)
- [Cartoon: Image manipulation](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [Depopulated Kochi village exploring direct democracy](#) (Kyodo News)
- [A female scribe takes a look behind the Abe-controlled Kantei](#) (Seiron)
- [Cartoon: Anti-conspiracy bill](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Aso and Pence like peas in a pod](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

OPINION POLLS

- [48% support Abe cabinet, 36% do not, NHK public opinion poll](#) (TV / Social media)
- [56% interested in Tokyo assembly election, 37% are not, NHK public opinion poll](#) (TV / Social media)
- [Japanese, South Koreans differ in views on bilateral relationship, Yomiuri-Hankook Ilbo poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Yomiuri-Hankook Ilbo joint opinion poll & results](#) (Yomiuri)

ECONOMY

- [Japan aims to boost yen's status with direct currency trading](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Ivanka Trump fashion brand halted talks on deal with Japan firm](#) (Kyodo News)

SCIENCE

Many public housing residents were exposed to asbestos

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported on the issue of asbestos used in old buildings in Japan. Although the use of asbestos was banned in 2006, the program said it found from a survey carried out with NPOs and support groups for asbestos victims that a large number of people who lived in public housing across Japan were exposed to asbestos. Asbestos was used in more than 22,000 public housing units in Japan, and more than 230,000 people are believed to have lived in buildings insulated with the material. According to the program, asbestos spraying was conducted intensively for about 10 years starting in the late 1960s. Since the symptoms of asbestosis generally take 20 to 30 years to develop after initial exposure, many people might contract such diseases as mesothelioma and lung cancer in the future.

EDUCATION

- [Japan high schools hosted record number of overseas students in 2015](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Record 35,000 foreign students need Japanese language training](#) (Kyodo News)

SOCIETY

- [Nifco to sell Japan Times to PR firm News2u Holdings](#) (Kyodo News)
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