



Afternoon Alert - Friday, June 23, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most commercial networks led with reports that former TV announcer Mao Kobayashi died from breast cancer at the age of 34 on Thursday. NHK and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election was officially announced today.

SECURITY

U.S., Japan to hold “2+2” meeting on July 14

TV Asahi reported at noon that the first "2+2" meeting of foreign and defense ministers of the U.S. and Japan under the Trump administration will be held in Washington on July 14. The network said the ministers will discuss concrete ways to enhance the U.S.-Japan defense system in order to respond to the North Korean nuclear and missile issues. The ministers will also discuss measures to deal with China, which continues its advancement in the East and South China Seas.

Iwakuni mayor accepts relocation of carrier-borne aircraft

NTV, TBS, and Fuji TV reported at noon that Iwakuni Mayor Fukuda announced today that he will accept the relocation of carrier-borne aircraft from NAF Atsugi to MCAS Iwakuni as part of the realignment of U.S. forces. TBS said 61 carrier-borne aircraft from Atsugi will begin moving to Iwakuni next month, adding that when the relocation is finished, Iwakuni will be the largest U.S. base in the Far East with about 120 U.S. aircraft. The network added that the mayor made the decision after taking into consideration the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance amid increasing tension on the Korean Peninsula.

Japanese defense policy at crossroads

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on Japan's defense policy, saying that in light of the changing security situation surrounding Japan, including North Korea and China, the LDP's Security Research Council drafted a proposal suggesting that Japan should possess the ability to attack enemy bases and increase its defense budget. While Japanese Communist Party policy chief Kasai said that Japan's possession of guided missiles is a clear violation of the constitution, Democratic policy chief Ogushi warned that trying to settle issues by force is not a real solution. MIT Senior Fellow Yukio Okamoto pointed out that since 1956, it has been the government's unified stance that possessing the capability to attack enemy bases is within the scope of the Constitution. He also stressed the importance of deterrence, warning that anything could happen in the region. Keio University Professor Yoshihide Soeya pointed out that further discussion is needed to assess whether possessing the capability to attack enemy bases would actually serve as a deterrent. The program also reported that some LDP members, such as former Defense Minister Nakatani, are claiming that Japan should increase its defense budget to 2% of Japan's GDP from the current level of around 1%. Okamoto said that although increasing the budget to 2% of GDP would be quite difficult, the GOJ should discuss ways for the SDF to work more closely and effectively with the U.S. military.

Fitzgerald accident victim's mother calls for thorough investigation

Ryukyu Shimpo wrote that the mother of one of the seven sailors who perished in the collision between the USS Fitzgerald and a container ship is an Okinawan woman who currently resides in California. Ritsuko Douglass explained that her son, Shingo Alexander Douglass, grew up both in San Diego and Okinawa, and went to Kubasaki High School, a DOD-run educational institution for military dependents, for three years before joining the Navy in 2014. "Shingo loved Japan and Okinawa very much," said Ms. Douglass. "I would like to thank the Japan Coast Guard and Japanese people for their search and support I hope a thorough investigation will be conducted to find out why this tragedy happened."

- [Aircraft carrier USS Nimitz enters Western Pacific](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Tokyo to choose cheaper Aegis option to beef up missile defense](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Transfer to add 60 aircraft, 3,400 troops to Iwakuni air base](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [LDP calls for easing requirements on defense equipment transfer](#) (Nikkei)
- [U.S. forces strengthening base in Saitama Prefecture](#) (AERA)
- [Okinawa marks 72nd anniversary of fierce WWII ground battle](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Cartoon: Okinawa Memorial Day](#) (Akahata)

ECONOMY

[Lighthizer comments on U.S.-Japan economic dialogue](#)

Nikkei reported online on a congressional hearing on Thursday with USTR Lighthizer, in which he said the U.S.-Japan economic dialogue may potentially “lead to a free trade agreement in the future.” During his testimony at the House Ways and Means Committee, Lighthizer said, however, that Japan is not prepared to enter into FTA talks right now. The top U.S. trade official complained again about the huge trade deficit that the U.S. has logged with Japan and urged Tokyo to make “unilateral concessions” to import more U.S. beef.

[Foxconn chief criticizes GOJ for intervening in sale of Toshiba Memory](#)

Asahi reported from Taipei on a press conference on Thursday by Foxconn Chairman Terry Gou, during which he blasted a senior METI official for “obstructing” his firm’s bid to purchase Toshiba’s semiconductor division. The daily said the Taiwanese business tycoon is extremely displeased with Toshiba’s selection of a U.S.-Japan-ROK consortium that was orchestrated behind the scenes by METI as the preferred bidder for Toshiba Memory. Gou said he was “harassed” by the same Japanese official when the Taiwanese electronics giant bought Sharp last year. Another Foxconn executive reportedly said the GOJ has no right to complain about the Trump administration's "protectionism."

- **[MRJ contemplates enlisting foreign management to navigate stormy skies](#)** (Sande Mainichi)
- **[JA Zenchu presidential candidates seek to check gov’t farm reform push](#)** (Mainichi)
- **[Regulator urges background checks on students using reactors](#)** (Kyodo News)
- **[Farm Minister Yamamoto’s planned visit to Europe criticized in LDP](#)** (Mainichi)
- **[Editorial: Questions remain over gov’t role in Toshiba’s chip unit sale](#)** (The Mainichi)
- **[Editorial: Toshiba must settle conflict with WD over sale of chip unit soon](#)** (The Japan News)
- **[Japan’s consumption uptick convincing no one](#)** (Nikkei Asian Review)
- **[Opinion poll & results from Asahi Shimbun poll of 100 major companies](#)** (Asahi)

INTERNATIONAL

ROK to launch panel to examine comfort women pact with Japan

Nikkei and Yomiuri reported online on a South Korean media article claiming that the Moon administration is planning to establish in the Foreign Ministry a panel tasked with reviewing the process leading to the conclusion of the comfort women agreement with Japan in December 2015. The Japanese dailies said although the Moon administration is hoping to verify whether the opinions of the victims were addressed properly during the negotiations, it may not necessarily seek renegotiation.

- [Japan considering lowering beef tariffs to win concessions on cheese in EPA talks with EU](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Don't let North Korea buy time](#) (Sankei)
- [PM Abe confirms plan to cooperate on Turkey's nuclear power plant project](#) (Mainichi)
- [Costa Rica seeks FTA with Japan](#) (The Japan News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on June 22](#) (Nikkei)
- [CCS Suga might lose job for blunder in handling Kake Gakuen scandal](#) (Shukan Asahi)
- [Opposition seeks Deputy CCS Hagiuda's dismissal for possible retaliation against bureaucrats](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Nippon Ishin expels Yoshimi Watanabe](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Political atmosphere in Tokyo an indicator of national politics](#) (Asahi)
- [Second election is the challenge for politicians elected riding on leader's popularity](#) (Asahi)
- [Govt's new human resources project focuses on tuition-free education](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Abe must heed demand for extra Diet session under Article 53](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Cartoon: The Constitution](#) (Asahi)

SCIENCE

- [Gov't to support companies aligned with "SBT" initiative combating global warming](#) (Asahi)

SOCIETY

- [Businesses, support groups aim to lend hand to single mothers](#) (Kyodo News)
- [16% of theaters, concert halls reject guests with service dogs: survey](#) (Mainichi Evening edition)

