
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, July 19, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most networks led with reports that the Japan Meteorological Agency announced this morning that the rainy season officially ended in the Chugoku, Kinki, Tokai, and Kanto-Koshin regions today.

INTERNATIONAL

Senior US military official says North Korea's ICBM capable of reaching U.S.

NHK reported this morning that Gen. Paul Selva, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated during testimony at a Senate hearing on Tuesday that while the accuracy and reliability of North Korea's ICBMs have not been substantiated, they do have the capability to reach the U.S. He also reportedly expressed strong alarm over the progress of North Korea's technology and added that the U.S. will strengthen its surveillance. The general also reportedly expressed the view that North Korea has increased its ability to disguise or conceal the movements of its missile system and that it has become difficult to detect signs of ballistic missile launches. He reportedly stressed that the U.S. military will continue to enhance its missile defense capability.

LDP's Nikai and Rep. Thornberry agree on increasing pressure on North Korea

NHK reported this afternoon that LDP Secretary General Nikai and House Committee on Armed Services Chairman Thornberry met in Washington and agreed to boost cooperation toward increasing pressure on North Korea as the threat posed by it is increasing. On North Korea's recent announcement that it successfully test-fired an ICBM for the first time, Thornberry reportedly said: "Concerns are also growing in the U.S. over the North Korea threat. The United States is planning to further enhance sanctions, but we cannot expect results by imposing

sanctions alone. We need to take all policy measures, including military options." He also reportedly said: "We can raise China's interest and make it play a role through our missile defense and naval presence. It is important for the U.S. and Japan to respond jointly and move things forward." In response, Nikai reportedly said: "It goes without saying that Japan and the U.S. need to work together closely. Japan will continue to do whatever it can."

LDP's Nikai, Senator Hatch agree on close cooperation in dealing with DPRK

NHK reported this morning that LDP Secretary General Nikai and U.S. Senate President Pro Tempore Orrin Hatch met in Washington and agreed on the need for the U.S. and Japan to work more closely to strengthen pressure against North Korea, which is repeatedly launching ballistic missiles. According to the network, Nikai told Hatch: "The importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance is increasing in the face of the North Korean issue. It is important to promote exchanges between our lawmakers and between our political parties in order to maintain good bilateral relations." In response, Hatch reportedly said the North Korean issue is "not only a regional issue but also an international one" and expressed hope to maintain strong relations with Japan and China, which has a strong influence over North Korea. In addition, Hatch, who is an advocate of the TPP, reportedly said: "Japan is playing a key role in the TPP. I hope that President Trump will become more interested in the agreement."

- [Renegotiation of "comfort women" deal possible: S. Korean gov't](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Moon's proposed N. Korean talks must not affect partnership](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Survey of newspaper editorials on North Korea's ICBM launch, related issues](#) (Sankei)
- [Mori reports on his meeting with Putin to Abe](#) (Nikkei)
- [METI Minister Seko to visit Kazakhstan](#) (Mainichi)
- [METI Minister Seko expresses intent to strengthen partnership with Abu Dhabi](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan to export expertise in national land planning](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan conveys "concern" over China gov't ships sailing thru straits](#) (Kyodo News)
- [China "begging" Japan to save cash-strapped AIIB through Aso](#) (THEMIS)
- [Govt eyeing push to export waste systems](#) (The Japan News)
- [GOJ draws up action plan for grassroots exchanges with U.S. local](#)

[governments](#) (Nikkei)

POLITICS

Inada denies media report that she approved decision to withhold info on GSDF activity logs

All networks reported at noon that Defense Minister Inada denied a [Kyodo report](#) on Tuesday saying that she approved a decision to withhold the fact that some daily activity logs of the GSDF in South Sudan existed even though the ministry had said they had been discarded. She said: "I did not approve of concealing or withholding it." NHK said Administrative Vice Minister of Defense Kuroe also denied the report. The network also said Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told a press briefing this morning: "I checked with Minister Inada over the phone, and she denied the media report and said she had told the press that." Suga also reportedly said: "The Inspector General's Office of Legal Compliance under the direct control of the minister has been thoroughly investigating the case from its highly independent position since March 17. I would like to refrain from commenting on the case at this point." When asked whether Minister Inada needs to be dismissed or resign, Suga reportedly said: "I will refrain from commenting on assumptions. In any case, I would like Minister Inada to investigate the case and continue to do her job in good faith."

Government bureaucrats beginning to distance themselves from Abe cabinet?

Commercial networks' infotainment shows took up the latest uproar engulfing Defense Minister Inada over the daily activity logs kept by the GSDF unit in South Sudan. The panelists all expressed the view that the embattled minister will have to resign if the allegation is true. Speculating that the source of the reports might have been MOD bureaucrats, political analysts explained that some civil servants at the ministry may have chosen to leak information that is damaging to the minister and the Abe cabinet. Noting that when dealing with the Kake Gakuen scandal, the Abe administration was hit hard by information apparently leaked by sources connected to the Education Ministry, these pundits said some bureaucrats who were dissatisfied with the administration but maintained a low profile in view of the Kantei's strong influence are now probably tempted to undermine it by capitalizing on the weakening of Abe's grip on power triggered by growing public distrust.

- [Prime minister's schedule on July 17-18](#) (Nikkei)
- [Distance from Abe: Shigeru Ishiba active in campaigning for leadership](#) (Nikkei)
- [Liberal Party's Ozawa calls for new opposition merger in next Lower House election](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Disclosure of citizenship documents not helping DP's Renho boost her leadership](#) (Mainichi)

- [Interview with DP's Matsuno on constitutional revision, party reform](#) (Sankei)
- [Cartoon: Abe's support rate](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [Cartoon: Abe's support rate](#) (Sankei)

OPINION POLLS

- [Komeito supporters wary about constitutional revision under Abe, Kyodo News poll](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [57% of LDP supporters unconvinced by gov't explanation of Kake scandal, Kyodo News poll](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)

SECURITY

Abe mulls Okinawa visit to attend ex-governor's funeral

Asahi claimed in an online article that Prime Minister Abe is mulling visiting Okinawa on July 26 to take part in the funeral service for former Governor Ota perhaps in an attempt to showcase his administration's policy of attaching importance to Okinawa amid escalated tension between the central government and Governor Onaga over Futenma relocation and growing public discontent with his leadership.

- [Part of Atsugi base to be returned to Japan](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [New missiles eyed for ASDF F-2 fighters](#) (The Japan News)
- [MOD budgetary request to exceed 5 trillion yen for fourth consecutive year](#) (Nikkei)
- [Browser-specific cyberattack detected in Japan](#) (Sankei)

ECONOMY

- [GOJ says "legalizing casinos is possible"](#) (Mainichi)
- [World regaining appetite for Japanese wagyu beef](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Ex-farm minister says gov't needs to aggressively support farmers to expand EU markets](#) (Mainichi)
- [The benefits of economic partnership agreements](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan must shift from defense to offense in adopting agricultural policies](#) (Sankei)

- [Keizai Doyukai calls on gov't to increase sales tax as scheduled](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan still far from envisioned FY 2020 primary budget surplus](#) (Kyodo News)

SCIENCE

- [Intl hubs eyed for regional universities](#) (The Japan News)

SOCIETY

Preventing child suicide due to bullying

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported that although a law to promote measures to prevent bullying was enacted four years ago, the number of children committing suicide due to bullying is on the rise. A total of 14 children reportedly committed suicide probably because of bullying in 2016, marking the highest level in the last decade. Despite the new law, there are many cases in which schools do not admit that bullying took place. The program reported on efforts by Otsu City, Shiga Prefecture, where teachers tasked solely with preventing bullying are stationed at every public elementary and middle school in the city.

- [Over 40% of mentally disabled residents remained at care facilities for 25 years or longer](#) (Mainichi)
- [American Airlines crew member brought 30 bullets to Japan](#) (Kyodo News)