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Afternoon Alert - Monday, September 11, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK led with a report that a new draft sanctions resolution will be put to a vote on Monday at the UN Security Council. NTV gave top play to a report that North Korea again threatened to attack the U.S. this morning amid moves to adopt a new sanctions resolution. TV Asahi led with a report that a disabled man in his 20s suffered a serious injury at a home for people with disabilities in Utsunomiya, explaining that he was likely abused. Fuji TV reported on an Odakyu Line train that caught fire while operating on Sunday.

INTERNATIONAL

Onodera says North Korea may have capability to be recognized as nuclear power

NHK's "Nichiyo Toron" Sunday debate show aired an interview with Defense Minister Onodera, during which he commented on North Korea's sixth nuclear test conducted on Sept. 3 by saying: "The nuclear test by North Korea could have involved a hydrogen bomb because it may have generated an explosive yield of 160 kilotons of TNT. The country's technology appears to be improving steadily. This poses a serious threat, and the North may have the capability to be recognized as a nuclear power. If Pyongyang's ultimate goal is to mount a nuclear warhead on a missile capable of reaching the U.S. mainland, it may be planning to test an ICBM next. We are on constant alert because the next missile may fly over Japan." When asked for his view on President Trump's position of not ruling out military action, the defense minister stated that Japan will carefully study how to respond to whatever option Washington decides to take.

Japanese abductees' family members to visit U.S.

Fuji TV reported at noon that amid growing tension over North Korea, a group of family members of

the Japanese nationals who were abducted by North Korea left Narita Airport for the U.S. this morning. Takuya Yokota, the younger brother of abductee Megumi Yokota, told reporters before their departure: "Not only Japan but the entire world feels the threat of North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. The human rights issue, the abduction issue, remains unresolved. We will visit and meet with key figures in the U.S. to tell them that these issues must not be left unresolved."

- [Chinese major banks suspending N. Korean transactions](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Senior Chinese diplomat says next DPRK missile might fly over Tokyo](#) (Nikkei)
- [N. Korea may possess nuclear weapons for war use: Japan minister](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, Jordan vow to steadily implement U.N. sanctions on N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Kono broadens presence during tour to Middle East](#) (Yomiuri)
- [JBIC creates joint fund with Russian state-run fund](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Should Japan remain quiet in the face of Russia's intimidating remarks on Northern Territories?](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Abe's failure to convince Putin on North Korea disappointing](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Sanctions should tightly cut off N. Korea's foreign money sources](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Russia's cooperation must be pursued to toughen sanctions against N. Korea](#) (The Japan News)
- [N. Korea to push arms program, top official tells Japanese lawmaker](#) (Kyodo News)
- [East China Sea still thorn in Sino-Japanese ties 5 years on](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: 5 years after Senkaku crisis, it's time to reset Japan-China ties](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Dinner parties and cultural exchange critical to establishing friendship between nations](#) (Nikkei Evening edition)

SECURITY

U.S. report says Osprey accident due to pilot error

NHK reported at noon that the Defense Ministry released a final report by the U.S. on the crash involving an MV-22 Osprey in shallow waters in Okinawa last December, which concluded that the cause of the incident was that the pilot raised the engine output too high due to tough climate

conditions, making it difficult to maintain a certain distance from the refueling plane and causing the right propeller of the Osprey to strike the refueling line. The pilot reportedly considered it difficult to continue flying safely and intentionally made a controlled emergency landing in the water. The network said Okinawa Deputy Governor Tomikawa visited Camp Foster on Monday to hear the outcome of the investigation from Lt. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson, the top commander of U.S. forces in Okinawa. He was quoted as telling reporters after the briefing: "There was no formal apology.... The explanation was that the incident was a result of the skill of the pilot and not the aircraft itself. Of course, I am not satisfied."

Nuclear weapons in Okinawa

Sunday's "NHK Special" reported on Okinawa, which had been the U.S. military's "nuclear base" in Asia until Okinawa's reversion 45 years ago. The program said the Pentagon officially admitted for the first time in 2015 that nuclear weapons were once deployed in Okinawa. Many classified documents on nuclear weapons in Okinawa have been declassified since then, revealing that about 1,300 nuclear weapons were deployed in Okinawa and it became the front line every time tensions between the East and the West heightened under the Cold War. The program reported on a nuclear missile accident in 1959 that had been kept secret, and described how Okinawa was on the brink of total disaster when nuclear weapons in Okinawa were nearly launched against China during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

- [Boosting arms sales to Japan, ROK may signal change in U.S. stance on alliance with Japan](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan's deterrence insufficient against North Korean missile threat](#) (Sankei)
- [33-nation coast guard commandants' meeting to open in Tokyo on Sept. 14](#) (Tokyo Shimbun Evening edition)
- [Fisheries Agency to update patrol boats for illegal fishing crackdown](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Part of Atsugi base to be returned to Japan on Sept. 30](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)
- [Nuke plants could be 'missile targets': ex-PM Koizumi](#) (The Mainichi)

OPINION POLLS

Public approval for PM Abe exceeds disapproval

NTV reported on Sunday that its weekend survey found that public support for the Abe cabinet rose 6.5 points from last month to 42.1%, exceeding the disapproval rate for the first time in four months. Nonsupport dropped 6.3 points to 41.0%. When asked how North Korea should be persuaded to stop its nuclear and missile development, 29.4% answered dialogue, 49.7% said diplomatic pressure

such as economic sanctions, and 10.6% chose the use of force. On North Korea's missile program, 49.7% said they see it as a major threat and are concerned, while 41.4% said they feel the threat is not imminent. With regard to new Democratic Party leader Maehara, 33.4% said they have high expectations for him and 52.9% said they do not.

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Sept. 9, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Sept. 8, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [LDP election committee chief cites five options for Lower House dissolution](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Five DP lawmakers mull leaving party](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [DP chief Maehara threatens to field "assassin" candidates against party defectors](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [DP deals with internal disagreement over campaign tie-up with JCP](#) (Yomiuri)
- [LDP retains goal of submitting constitutional revision motions in 2018](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Career ambitions trigger infighting in METI](#) (Sentaku)

ECONOMY

- [Commentary: The TPP and global power](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japan offers aid package for ASEAN to promote free trade](#) (Jiji Press)
- ['Work reform' bill outline includes white-collar exemption, overtime cap](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Labor ministry asks panel for advice on planned legislation for work style reform](#) (The Japan News)
- [Opdivo approved for use in gastric cancer](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Quotas for Pacific bluefin tuna](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japan's April-June GDP cut to 2.5% rise on weaker-than-expected capex](#) (Kyodo News)

SOCIETY

- [Enforcement measures eyed to settle child custody battles](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Court rejects American father's request that son be returned to him](#) (Nikkei)

SCIENCE

Mega Crisis – Part II: Super typhoons

Saturday's "NHK Special" reported on efforts to protect people from "super typhoons" and torrential rains, saying that global warming is making it more likely for storms to suddenly develop into extremely powerful typhoons near the Japanese archipelago. The program said if a super typhoon were to hit Tokyo or another major city, as many as one million people would be forced to evacuate due to flooding and this would create massive confusion. The program reported that it is becoming extremely difficult to accurately predict the paths and strengths of typhoons because they are more likely to suddenly become much stronger than predicted right before making landfall due to rising ocean temperatures near Japan.

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

Repaired Osprey returns to Futenma

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo front-paged reports saying that the MV-22 Osprey that made an emergency landing at Oita Airport on Aug. 29 and underwent repair work there returned to MCAS Futenma on Sept. 9. The aircraft flew from Oita to MCAS Iwakuni on Friday before returning to Okinawa on Saturday. The papers wrote that Okinawa Governor Onaga, Ginowan Mayor Sakima, and other local officials and residents expressed displeasure and concern over the operations of Ospreys, saying that the U.S. military returned the aircraft in question to Futenma without providing a sufficient explanation about the cause and details of the emergency landing.
