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Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, November 22, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most networks gave top play to reports that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga announced at a press briefing this morning that the GOJ will hold a meeting on Dec. 1 to decide on the date of the Emperor's abdication.

INTERNATIONAL

Treasury Department announces additional sanctions against North Korea

NHK reported this morning that the Treasury Department announced on Tuesday that it will freeze the assets of 13 additional entities, including Chinese firms, and one Chinese individual in the U.S. that helped North Korea obtain foreign currency. Among the entities targeted are three Chinese firms that have engaged in trade with North Korea worth about 84 billion yen in total over the past four years through August this year and a Chinese firm that is connected with a North Korean organization involved in weapons of mass destruction. Sanctions were also imposed on 20 additional North Korean ships. The network quoted Secretary Mnuchin as saying in a statement: "We are steadfast in our determination to maximize economic pressure to isolate North Korea from outside sources of trade." The network added that the Trump administration is set to further strengthen the pressure on North Korea following its relisting of the nation as a state sponsor of terrorism, saying that the move is also aimed at urging China to take further actions against the DPRK.

- [Chinese premier says ties with Japan "gradually improving"](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Cartoon: Relisting of DPRK](#) (Sankei)

- [Foreign Minister Kono and Palau vice president agree to increase pressure on North Korea](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)

ECONOMY

- [Japan business leaders seek a more investment-friendly China](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Nov. 21, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of Upper, Lower House representative interpellations, Nov. 21](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Abe stressing "humility" in Diet interpellations to pave way for constitutional revision](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Koike accepts request to serve as special adviser of Party of Hope](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Lower House Budget Committee to convene on Nov. 27-28](#) (Mainichi)
- [Rengo labor group keeping distance from realignment of opposition parties](#) (Mainichi)
- [Rengo to create new supra-partisan policy forum](#) (Yomiuri)
- [CDPJ chief to ask DP's regional politicians to decide whether to join his party](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Former Okinawa affairs minister suspected of receiving bribes](#) (Akahata)

OPINION POLLS

- [75% of newspaper readers voted in LH election based on info in newspaper, joint poll by 15 papers](#) (Yomiuri)
- [60% worried about encountering crime on Internet, Cabinet Office survey](#) (Tokyo Shimbun, Evening edition)

SCIENCE

- [Editorial: Japan's coal-fired power plant plans could sabotage climate image](#) (The Mainichi)

SOCIETY

- [Survey ranks Japanese children's problem-solving skills near world-best](#) (Kyodo News)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Interview with Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported on its interview with Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, who is currently visiting Japan. The program said Twitter has been criticized in Japan as the "dark side of social media," adding that a man who was arrested for his involvement in the murder of nine people in Zama used Twitter to find his victims. The program also said many people are falling victim to "hate tweets." Dorsey said Twitter needs to make sure that the platform is used in a healthy manner. But he also stressed the importance of allowing Twitter users to be anonymous because it allows them to speak freely without fear of being arrested by the governments of some countries. The program said the GOJ is having difficulty regulating hate tweets as it also needs to take freedom of speech and expression into consideration. The program also reported on the frequent use of Twitter by President Trump. Dorsey said although he generally is not supportive of the President's policies, he stressed the importance of the platform in enabling people to directly hear from national leaders.

SECURITY

- [Party of Hope policy chief positive on Japan acquiring enemy base attack capability](#) (Yomiuri)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

Abe dismisses need for SOFA review in Diet interpellation

Okinawa Times wrote that Japanese Communist Party Chairman Shii argued during Diet interpellation on Tuesday that the Status of Forces Agreement with the U.S. should be drastically reviewed because it stands in the way of Japanese authorities' onsite investigations into accidents involving the U.S. military. Prime Minister Abe responded by saying that the Japanese authorities conducted onsite investigations following the incident last month in which a CH-53 helicopter made a crash landing and burst into flames in Higashi Village, Okinawa. He explained that officials of the Defense Ministry, the prefectural police, and the prefectural government entered the site of the accident and confirmed that the level of radiation detected there was normal. Concerning the incident last December in which an MV-22 Osprey made a crash landing in waters off Nago, the premier said that the Japanese Coast Guard carried out the necessary investigations. The paper asserted, however, that Japanese authorities could not conduct sufficient investigations due to restrictions imposed by the U.S. side on Japanese access to the accident sites.

