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 **JAPAN MEDIA  
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, December 26, 2017

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#### HEADLINES

##### Afternoon news

NHK and all commercial networks led with reports on the strong blizzards in northern Japan.

#### INTERNATIONAL

##### **ROK foreign minister says government lacked communication with comfort women in reaching agreement with Japan**

NHK reported that South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha commented on the results of the ROK government's review of the process of reaching a comfort woman agreement with Japan by saying that the government significantly lacked communication with the former comfort women. The governments of Japan and South Korea reached in 2015 an agreement to finally resolve the issue, but the Moon administration launched a working group to review the process and the panel is set to announce the results of its review on Wednesday. The minister made the remark one day before the announcement by the panel. Pointing out that 70% of the South Korean people are not supportive of the bilateral agreement, Kang said that it is necessary for the government to hold sufficient communication with the former comfort women and their support groups in deciding on the government's position by having all options on the table.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga said that the GOJ will not comment on the remark made by the South Korean foreign minister and that it is Tokyo's understanding that the results of the review have not yet been officially released. Suga added, though, that the agreement was a promise by the two countries' leaders to the international community and that it is extremely important for them to implement it on the basis of trust.

##### **South Korean media reports on possibility of North Korean "satellite" launch**

NTV, Fuji-TV, and TV Asahi reported that South Korea's JoongAng Ilbo reported on Tuesday that North Korea is apparently planning to launch in the near future a satellite installed with a camera and

communication equipment. TV Asahi said the South Korean newspaper learned of the potential launch from an unspecified ROK government source. The networks also said that North Korea may use a mobile platform to launch the satellite, named Kwangmyongsong-5, and that the South Korean military and intelligence authorities are closely monitoring the situation. Noting that Pyongyang has been insisting on its right to peaceful development of outer space, TV Asahi speculated that the planned satellite launch is probably intended to test an intercontinental ballistic missile. The ROK military said in response that it has detected no unusual signs indicating the possibility of a satellite launch by North Korea but is monitoring the situation closely.

### **Foreign Minister Kono holds meetings with Israeli, Palestinian leaders**

NHK reported that Foreign Minister Kono held talks with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in Jerusalem on Monday. Kono told the Israeli leader that there has been no change in Japan's position that it supports a "two-state solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and that problems between the Israelis and Palestinians, including the status of Jerusalem, should be settled through negotiations between the parties concerned. In response, Netanyahu expressed the view that it is important to resolve the conflict through negotiations.

Kono later held talks with President Abbas and Foreign Minister Malki of the Palestinian Authority. Kono explained Japan's position on the issue of Jerusalem and its readiness to beef up its projects to help the Palestinians achieve economic independence. Abbas said to Kono in reply that he does not see violence as a solution and that instead he is interested in dialogue and negotiations. An NHK reporter said that Kono stressed to the Israeli and Palestinian leaders that there is a role Japan can play in achieving peace in the Middle East in view of its friendly relations with both parties. TBS and Fuji-TV also reported on Kono's talks with the Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

- [U.S. eyes multilateral defense ministers' meeting on N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan foreign minister embarks on Middle East tour](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Jerusalem issue should be settled through negotiations: Japan minister](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japanese, Chinese ruling parties hold talks amid improving relations](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Ruling party officials' China trip aims at laying groundwork for leaders' visits](#) (Nikkei)
- [CCS Suga predicts new developments in North Korea situation "in the next few months"](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan, S. Korea envoys for 6-party talks agree to press Pyongyang](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: UN Jerusalem vote shows lack of civility in Trump's US](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Launch of Trump administration picked as top international story of 2017](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gov't allocates 30 billion yen for implementing Indo-Pacific strategy in FY18 budget](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan to set up permanent mission to NATO to counter North Korea](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: Tighten net encircling N. Korea by further restricting oil supplies](#) (The Japan News)

- [Editorial: New UN sanctions resolution a strong warning to N. Korea](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Commentary: Stop pleading for Xi to visit Japan](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga describes ties with China as 'smooth': Mainichi interview](#) (The Mainichi)

#### **OPINION POLLS**

- [83% interested in North Korea missile issue, drop in sense of affinity with U.S., Cabinet Office poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Difference in views of own country's ties with China, Yomiuri-Gallup poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [83% of Japanese pollees see North Korea as threat, Yomiuri-Gallup poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [67% of Japanese pollees say Japan-U.S. Security Treaty contributes to security in region, Yomiuri-Gallup poll](#) (Yomiuri)

#### **ECONOMY**

- [Japan pushes for March signing of TPP 11](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japanese minister to visit Vietnam next week for TPP talks](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Abe, Phuc agree to sign new TPP early](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Indonesia's Widodo says railway talks with Japan near conclusion](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [New body launched to adjust rice supply-demand conditions](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Minister denies Japan is hotbed of illegal ivory exports](#) (Kyodo News)

#### **POLITICS**

- [5 years on, Abe continues to dominate party, bureaucrats](#) (The Japan News)
- [Expo, casinos and shinkansen at top of Kansai's 2018 agenda](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 25, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 24, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 23, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 22, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Cartoon: PM Abe](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

#### **SCIENCE**

- [Japanese rocket positions 2 satellites in different orbits](#) (Kyodo News)

#### **EDUCATION**

- [Yokosuka native Haruna Kamezaki attains the American dream](#) (The Japan Times)

#### **SOCIETY**

##### **Professional golfer Hideki Matsuyama**

Sunday's "NHK Special" took up Hideki Matsuyama, a 25-year-old Japanese professional golfer who reached 2nd in the Official World Golf Ranking this season by winning two PGA tournaments. The program reported on his determined efforts to train himself both physically and mentally to improve his performance as a professional golfer. Matsuyama was invited by Prime Minister Abe to play golf with him and President Trump during the President's visit to Japan in November.

- [Estimated number of babies born in Japan in 2017 falls to record low](#) (Kyodo News)

## SECURITY

### **Onodera dismisses speculation about Japan's procurement of F-35B**

NHK's website took up press remarks this morning by Defense Minister Onodera, who commented on recent media reports alleging that the GOJ is considering introducing the F-35B and converting the MSDF destroyer Izumo into an "aircraft carrier." He was quoted as saying: "No concrete studies [on the alleged ideas] are currently underway." Asked whether Japan is allowed to possess an aircraft carrier, the minister said: "Japan is prohibited from possessing so-called assault weapons that would be used primarily for annihilating the homeland of an enemy country. Japan's strictly defense-oriented policy will remain unchanged." At the same time, the top MOD official stressed that there should be constant review of the status of existing defense hardware while taking into account "various threats" posed by potential foes.

- [Japan, Australia aim for Jan. deal on VFA](#) (The Japan News)
- [Gov't exploring appropriate defense capabilities after carrier report](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Ground-based Aegis must be steadily deployed under record defense budget](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Rapidly growing defense spending requires much closer scrutiny](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Ginowan school hit by hate calls after U.S. chopper incident](#) (Jiji Press)
- [2020 Tokyo Olympics to use facial recognition for athletes, reporters](#) (Kyodo News)

## OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

### **Okinawa may hold plebiscite on Futenma relocation in tandem with gubernatorial race**

Ryukyu Shimpo and Okinawa Times wrote over the weekend that the political parties in the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly that support Governor Onaga are mulling the idea of holding a prefecture-wide referendum on the FRF construction initiative off Camp Schwab in November next year on the same day as the gubernatorial election in which he is expected to seek reelection. The pro-Onaga parties are aiming to derail the base transfer project by demonstrating local residents' rebuke of the plan once again. They are also hopeful that the governor will be able to cite rejection of the plan which they assume local voters would express in the plebiscite if and when he withdraws the permit for land reclamation to thwart the FRF construction.

- [MOD office in Okinawa admits deficiency in monitoring U.S. flights over schools around Futenma](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
  - [District, land owner decide to return U.S. military's letter of appreciation](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
  - [Defense Minister inspects Okinawa school over U.S. chopper window accident](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
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