



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, December 27, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most commercial broadcasters gave top play to a Supreme Court decision upholding a lower court ruling acquitting a former female Aum Shinrikyo member of charges of abetting an attempted murder in connection with the explosion of a letter bomb at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government office in 1996. TBS and NHK led with the snow storm in Hokkaido.

INTERNATIONAL

ROK panel criticizes former Park administration over comfort women pact

NHK reported that a South Korean Foreign Ministry taskforce on Wednesday released the results of its review of the process leading up to the conclusion of the 2015 comfort women agreement with Japan, noting that it criticized the former Park administration for failing to fully incorporate opinions of the victims. The panel asserted that the accord was reached while primarily taking into account the position of the Park administration, stressing that even if a "final and irreversible settlement" was announced by the two governments, the issue will be continually rekindled in the absence of understanding by the victims. As the committee scrutinized the process with a primary focus on the ROK government's internal deliberations, the panel did not directly take issue with Japan's steps leading to the deal.

Japan proposes convening four-way talks on Middle East peace in Tokyo

Nikkei's website focused on Israeli media stories regarding Foreign Minister Kono's recent separate meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Palestinian President Abass, during which the top Japanese diplomat put forward at both sessions the idea of hosting in Tokyo four-party talks involving the Israeli, Palestinian, and U. S. leaders with the goal of defusing the escalated tensions following President Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the Israeli capital. The Israeli leader

reportedly told Kono that he would be in Tokyo if Special Adviser Kushner would also be there. While noting that it is uncertain whether Abass would accept the idea, the article wrote that this proposal was initially submitted in September by Prime Minister Abe to Netanyahu, who said such talks would be premised upon the Trump administration's cooperation.

In a follow-up, the Japanese paper wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told the press today that no such talks are planned in Japan. He added that he "was not aware" that Kono made the offer to the two Middle East leaders.

U.S. imposes sanctions on two high-ranking DPRK officials

NHK, NTV, and Fuji TV highlighted the Treasury Department's announcement on Tuesday that two senior DPRK Workers' Party officials will be subject to economic sanctions for their heavy involvement in missile development, noting that the two technocrats have allegedly fulfilled a central role in honing the reclusive regime's ballistic missile technology. Their financial assets in the U.S. will be frozen.

Government spokesperson projects trilateral summit with China, ROK in spring

NHK took up press remarks this morning by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, who predicted that arrangements will be made with the Chinese and the South Korean governments to convene a tripartite summit in Japan next spring after the conclusion in late March of the National People's Congress.

- [Japan deals with Jerusalem issue based on strong Abe-Trump relationship](#) (Mainichi)
- [FM Kono faces difficulty in mediating for Jerusalem issue](#) (Sankei)
- [S. Korea lacked communication with "comfort women" on deal: minister](#) (Kyodo News)
- [FOCUS: Japan, China to mend ties on tenuous foundation in 2018](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: U.S. must face UN General Assembly resolution squarely](#) (Nikkei)
- [Former UNSC official on Japanese behind DPRK shipping company dealing in arms smuggling, more](#) (Yomiuri)

ECONOMY

- [Editorial: A greater healthy sense of alarm needed for addressing population decline](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan's jobless rate improves to 24-yr low, spending jumps in Nov.](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan to lift ban on beef imports from Uruguay](#) (Kyodo News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 26, 2017](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gov't decides to appoint Akiba as next Vice Foreign Minister](#) (Nikkei)
- [Political groups see their revenues fall for fourth year](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Cartoon: Shan Shan's debut](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)

OPINION POLLS

- [Japanese trust “SDF” and “hospitals,” Yomiuri-Gallup poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [79% of Japanese say fake news on Internet “impacts voting,” Yomiuri-Gallup poll](#) (Yomiuri)

SECURITY

- [FOCUS: Japan’s defense buildup to come under scrutiny in 2018](#) (Kyodo News)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

- [Consul general says “no need to revise” Japan-U.S. SOFA](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)
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