



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, February 20, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that a U.S. military F-16 fighter jet belonging to Misawa AB in Aomori jettisoned two fuel tanks into Lake Ogawara located north of the base due to an engine fire. The network said several fishermen were gathering freshwater clams in the lake at the time of the incident. NTV led with a report on the PyeongChang Olympics. TBS reported that Prime Minister Abe is being grilled at the Diet over his retraction of flawed data he had presented earlier regarding the amount of overtime put in by Japanese workers.

INTERNATIONAL

Secretary Tillerson says U.S. to maintain pressure on North Korea

TBS reported on its website on Monday evening on Secretary of State Tillerson's interview with CBS that was aired on Sunday, during which he stressed that the U.S. will continue the pressure campaign against North Korea. "We are not using a carrot to convince them to talk," the Secretary was quoted as saying. "We are using large sticks, and that is what they need to understand. This pressure campaign is having its bite on North Korea, its revenue streams. It's having a bite on its military programs."

On the possibility of holding a dialogue with the DPRK, the network said the Secretary stressed the need to determine whether North Korea is ready, saying: "If they're not, we'll just keep the pressure campaign underway." According to the network, while the Secretary said the dialogue would be a one-on-one discussion between the U.S. and North Korea at first, the Secretary pointed out that the U.S. has been "very clear with China" that "they are going to have an important role to play once we get to the negotiating table." The Secretary also reportedly said: "My job is to never have a reason for the first bomb to drop. And we don't know precisely how much time is left on the clock." NTV and Fuji TV carried similar stories this morning. Fuji TV said that while inter-Korea relations have begun

to thaw since the PyeongChang Olympics started, the Secretary demonstrated the U.S. stance of not entering direct dialogue with North Korea readily because the reclusive state's stance remains unclear.

Experts discuss North Korea's "smile diplomacy"

NHK's Nichiyō Toron Sunday debate show aired a discussion among six scholars on North Korea's "smile diplomacy" toward South Korea. Canon Institute for Global Studies Research Director Kunihiko Miyake expressed the view that although the economic sanctions on Pyongyang appear to be taking effect, the Kim regime probably has no intention to abandon its nuclear program. Nanzan University Professor Shunji Hiraiwa said that the DPRK is probably stepping up its conciliatory approach to South Korea because the United States has not responded positively to Pyongyang's request for dialogue. University of Shizuoka Assistant Professor Hideki Okuzono speculated that President Moon is trying to promote dialogue with the Kim regime by taking advantage of the Olympics. Tokyo University Professor Fumiaki Kubo conjectured that the primary purpose of North Korea's "smile diplomacy" is to drive a wedge into the trilateral coordination between the United States, Japan, and South Korea. Takushoku University Professor Takashi Kawakami said that if South Korea accepts a request from North Korea to cancel its planned joint military drills with the United States, a serious rift will form in the alliance between Washington and Seoul. Keio University Professor Yoshihide Soeya stated that Japan should keep a close eye on the DPRK's next steps, including moves concerning the abductions.

- [FM Kono actively travels overseas with China in mind](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan, Russia to step up talks for joint business on disputed isles](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Keep pressure on N. Korea despite conciliatory mood: Japan's Kono](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, Latvia agree on need for pressure on N. Korea](#) (Jiji Press)
- [JBIC to support Japanese companies' business expansion in Russian Far East](#) (Nikkei, Evening edition)
- [Kansai executives offer advice on improving nation's diplomacy](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Cartoon: Rapprochement on ice](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

AMBASSADOR

- [U.S. Ambassador says Osprey training in Hokkaido will continue, expresses understanding of Japan-Russia dialogue](#) (Hokkaido Shimbun)
- [Interview with U.S. Ambassador Hagerty: Osprey training "will take local residents' wishes into consideration," "negotiations key" to creating direct U.S.–Hokkaido flight](#) (Hokkaido Shimbun)

ECONOMY

- [Gov't: Casinos must pay for screenings](#) (The Japan News)
- [Over 10 billion yen of stolen cryptocurrency possibly traded online](#) (Mainichi)
- [Japan to open gates wider to foreign professionals](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Cryptocurrency boom: A fading fad or real innovation?](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Abe closes door to talk of an early end to monetary easing](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

- [Japan's cheap money addiction set to deepen under Kuroda's second term](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Policy mastermind and outspoken dove set to help steer BOJ](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan's small bluefin tuna catch will surely exceed international standards](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan pro-whaling documentary wins award at London film festival](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Uber looks to expand Japan service through tie-up with taxi firm](#) (Kyodo News)

SECURITY

U.S. military F-16 jettisons fuel tanks into Aomori lake

NHK reported that a U.S. military F-16 fighter jet belonging to Misawa AB in Aomori jettisoned two fuel tanks into Lake Ogawara located north of the base right after takeoff at about 8:40 a.m today. The network said the tanks were probably dumped into the lake because the aircraft's engine caught fire, adding that the Defense Ministry is currently verifying the details. According to the network, no injuries have been reported. Defense Minister Onodera was quoted as telling reporters this morning: "We received a report from the U.S. military that an F-16 that took off from Misawa AB at about 8:39 a.m. experienced problems due to an engine fire right after takeoff, dropped two external tanks into Lake Ogawara located north of Misawa AB, and returned to the base at about 8:42 a.m." Onodera also reportedly said that he hopes to obtain an explanation from the U.S. side as to why such an incident occurred and to call for preventive measures. The network said Lake Ogawara is the second largest lake in the Tohoku region, and this is the prime season for catching freshwater clams and Japanese smelt. All networks carried similar stories.

- [University professor points out danger of Futenma relocation due to active fault off Henoko](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Ministry reneges on full report of SDF protection of U.S. ships](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Murdered Okinawa woman's family to seek compensation from U.S. gov't](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Commentary: The narrow latitude of Japan's security policy](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japan and U.S. scramble to perfect missile attack responses](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 16, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 17, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 18, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 19, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Parties spar over overtime system as gov't accused of bending data](#) (Kyodo News)
- [LDP constitutional revision headquarters accepts members' proposals on SDF provision](#) (Yomiuri)
- [LDP's Ishiba presents proposal on constitutional provision on SDF](#) (Asahi)
- [LDP mulls lowering minimum ages for holding public office](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Amari talks about Abe, 'post-Abe' candidates, promotion of innovation](#) (Sankei)

OPINION

POLLS

- [Cabinet support rises to 48% as public approves of Abe's participation in Olympics ceremony, Jiji Press poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

SCIENCE

- [Gov't to support AI semiconductor development](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: U.S. civilian rocket demonstrates frontier spirit](#) (Sankei)

SOCIETY

- [Editorial: Japan needs a rework of its shameful foreign trainee program](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
 - [Japan lags in fact-checking initiatives, media watchers say](#) (The Japan Times)
 - [The face of immigration is rapidly changing in Japan](#) (The Japan Times)
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