



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, February 22, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All commercial networks led with reports on the PyeongChang Olympics. NHK gave top play to a report that Minister of Health, Labour, and Welfare Kato said at the Diet this morning that the government will submit a labor reform bill to the current Diet session.

ECONOMY

Trump administration unveils economic report, expresses concern about Japan's non-tariff barriers to car imports

NHK reported this morning that the Trump administration released this year's Economic Report of the President on Wednesday, in which it expressed strong concern that non-tariff barriers are preventing American automakers from accessing the Japanese market. According to the network, the report says: "A variety of non-tariff barriers impede access to Japan's automotive market, and overall sales of U.S.-made vehicles and automotive parts in Japan remain low."

While noting that the Trump administration also released the National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers last March in which it called on Japan to open up its auto market and pointed out that Japan's unique safety standards are impeding market access, the network said Japan has been making the counterargument that it has already eliminated tariffs on auto imports and that its safety standards are based on international standards and thus do not constitute trade barriers. The

network added that the President is sharpening his stance on rectifying the U.S. trade imbalance mainly with China ahead of the midterm election in November, saying that other nations are closely watching developments in U.S. trade policy.

- [TPP remains largely unchanged in attempt to lure back U.S., Japanese official says](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japan caught in a casino conundrum as addiction enters the debate](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [669 cryptocurrency money-laundering cases suspected in April-Dec.](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Special zones eyed for offshore power generation](#) (The Japan News)
- [Honda tops small business-jet shipments in 2017](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan likely to exceed quota on bluefin tuna for 2nd year](#) (The Japan News)
- [Behind BOJ personnel reshuffle](#) (Nikkei)
- [Foreign visitors hit record for Jan., but growth rate slows](#) (Kyodo News)

INTERNATIONAL

- [Chinese company possibly involved in ship-to-ship transfer with DPRK tanker on Feb. 16](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Members, ex-members of local assemblies to form delegation to visit North Korea](#) (Asahi)
- [Editorial: US proposal to restrict steel imports could spark trade war](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: U.S. steel import restrictions do nothing but harm](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: U.S. chooses "isolation" with its import curbs](#) (Sankei)
- [Expert on the possibility of limited U.S. attack on North Korea](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan highlights island claim after Olympic feud](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, Finland affirm cooperation on North Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Use diplomacy to maintain the international order](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

SCIENCE

- [Nippon Foundation and partners to map topography of ocean floor worldwide](#) (Asahi)
- [Gov't, Fukushima plan to build new education hub along coast hit by nuclear accident](#) (Nikkei)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 21, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Lower House likely to pass FY18 budget on Feb. 27](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Path to agreement on dissolving merged constituencies fraught with difficulties](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Gov't mulling delay to labor reform after survey scandal](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Abe sees need to consider steps to ease impact of sales tax hike](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: LDP proposal contains insufficient review of upper house's authority](#) (The Japan News)

SECURITY

MSDF begins survey of Lake Ogawara after dumping of fuel tanks

All networks reported at noon that MSDF personnel have begun a survey of Lake Ogawara where two fuel tanks were jettisoned by a U.S. fighter on Tuesday. According to the network, the MSDF discovered no oil slicks or parts of the tanks this morning, but reported that they smelled oil in four locations. The network said the MSDF will continue the survey this afternoon and retrieve the tanks if they find them.

- [Town mayor asks U.S. military to ground F-16s after tanks drop](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gov't mulls paying damages to Aomori fishermen](#) (Nikkei)
- [U.S. military denies defect with F-16 that jettisoned fuel tanks](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: U.S. forces in Japan must be strongly pressed to ensure safety](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [CCS Suga, Soka Gakkai vice president are the "winners" in the Nago mayoral election](#) (FACTA)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

- [USFJ refuses to accept letter of protest from Okinawa](#) (Okinawa Times)
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