



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, March 7, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All networks gave top play to reports on the surprise announcement that North Korea and South Korea will hold their first summit in 11 years at the end of next month, saying that senior South Korean government officials will visit Washington tomorrow to brief officials on their meeting with North Korean leader Kim.

INTERNATIONAL

Senior GOJ officials remain cautious toward inter-Korean summit

All networks reported that the GOJ remains cautious toward the planned summit between South Korea and North Korea, saying that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters this morning that holding dialogue for the sake of dialogue is meaningless. TV Asahi quoted Suga as saying: "It is extremely important that North Korea commits to abandoning its nuclear and missile programs in a verifiable and irreversible manner and takes concrete actions toward denuclearization." The network also quoted an unnamed senior GOJ official as saying: "A temporary freeze of nuclear tests and missile launches is not a measure toward denuclearization. We must not let them buy time." TV Asahi said that based on its strong ties with the U.S., the GOJ plans to warn South Korea against rapidly gearing up for dialogue with North Korea and to work closely with the U.S. and South Korea. According to the network, one of the senior ROK government officials who visited North Korea will visit Japan today to meet with senior GOJ officials.

Meanwhile, NTV reported that while the GOJ remains skeptical of North Korea's stance, there is also a marked wariness in the government that it could cause disarray between Japan, the U.S., and South Korea over the policy of applying maximum pressure on the North. Onodera was quoted as telling reporters: "North Korea's intentions remain unclear, so we need to carefully analyze the

situation." An NTV reporter said that although some within the GOJ responded positively to the news by saying that the sanctions proved to be effective, others are dubious as to whether North Korea will actually move toward denuclearization. The reporter said there are also concerns that Japan's claims will be ignored amid the current mood for dialogue. He added that Japan's diplomacy is facing a crucial test on how to balance pressure and dialogue in order to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear and missile programs.

President Trump's top economic advisor to step down

NHK reported this morning that the White House announced on Tuesday that National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn will step down in the next few weeks. The White House also reportedly released a statement by President Trump praising Cohn by saying he helped to realize historic tax reform and is a rare talent. Noting that Cohn is reportedly opposed to President Trump's plan to impose new tariffs, the national network speculated that the resignation of Cohn, who has played a major role in tax reform, may cast complicate the Trump administration's future economic policy management. TBS also reportedly briefly on Cohn's resignation.

All national dailies filed similar stories online, with Nikkei claiming that the former Goldman Sachs COO is one of the few "globalists" in the Trump administration and that his departure will result in the White House economic team being primarily composed of so-called trade hawks, including Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and Commerce Secretary Ross. Nikkei conjectured that as a result, the Trump administration will probably take a hard line on the trade front in the run-up to the midterm elections in November. Asahi projected that what it referred to as the U.S. administration's "protectionism" may pick up further momentum.

- [Japan will not change policy to keep pressuring N. Korea: spokesman](#) (Kyodo News)
- [FOCUS: Inter-Korea summit breakthrough leaves Japan on back foot](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: How serious is Pyongyang about denuclearization?](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Assure path toward denuclearization; South-North summit](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Can we trust the North's "satisfactory agreement"?](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan to seek explanation from ROK on planned inter-Korean summit](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Expert: DPRK's statements on denuclearization, etc. prompt ROK's decision to hold summit](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Expert: North Korea's apparent compromise meant to obtain economic cooperation](#) (Nikkei)
- [China's economic coercion worries retiring US Navy commander](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Commentary: Did \\$550 million from Japan fill Kim's coffers?](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Japan teams up with UN office to tighten measures against extremists in Indian Ocean](#) (Mainichi)

ECONOMY

President Trump says no option to exempt nations other than Canada, Mexico from tariffs

National TBS reported at noon that President Trump told reporters on Tuesday that there is no option to exempt nations other than Canada and Mexico from the planned imposition of tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. The President was quoted as saying: "If we will be able to make a deal with Canada and Mexico in NAFTA, then there will be no reason to do the tariffs with Canada and Mexico. But other countries, we won't have that choice unless they can do something for us." The network interpreted his remarks to mean that Japan will be subject to the tariffs. President Trump also reportedly said he will eliminate the U.S. trade deficit and that a trade war would not be a bad thing because although it would hurt other nations, it would not hurt the United States.

In meeting with Ambassador Hagerty GOJ urges review of proposed restrictions on steel imports

Yomiuri and Asahi, Japan's two largest papers, reported on Ambassador Hagerty's meeting with Vice Foreign Minister Akiba at MOFA on Tuesday, during which Akiba reportedly asked the U.S. to take a second look at President Trump's announced plan to impose stiff tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. Akiba reportedly stated: "Metal products from Japan, which is a U.S. ally, do not have adverse effects on U.S. national security." The Ambassador reportedly replied by saying that the Japanese request will be conveyed to Washington.

- [11 TPP members to face difficulties even after signing](#) (Asahi)
- [Kobe Steel may face stiff fines in U.S. for data fabrication](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Osaka pushing life sciences and wellness in 2025 Expo bid](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Fact-finding team arrives to examine Japan's bid to host Expo](#) (Asahi)
- [Gov't and ruling parties to include 10-year review requirement in IR legislation](#) (Mainichi)
- [Gov't proposal says IRs must be equipped with top-flight conference hall](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 6, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Diet in gridlock due to opposition boycott over land sale memo](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Even LDP officials critical of Finance Ministry's handling of Moritomo-related documents](#) (Yomiuri)
- [CDPJ approves membership of 67 regional politicians](#) (Mainichi)
- [LDP to brief prefectural chapters on constitutional revision proposals](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Cartoon: Work style reform](#) (Akahata)
- [Race to the top: The 2018 LDP leadership contest / Female point of view crucial to stance of factionless Noda](#) (The Japan News)

OPINION POLLS

- [64% say nuclear power "should be eliminated in the future," 11% say it "should be eliminated immediately," Nihon Yoron Chosakai poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

- [Opinion poll & results for Nihon Yoron Chosakai poll on the Great East Japan Earthquake and the TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

SOCIETY

Taylor Anderson's parents keep her dream alive

NHK's 15-minute weekday morning news analysis program "Kurashi Kaisetsu" took up Taylor Anderson, a JET teacher who died at the age of 24 in Ishinomaki, Miyagi, when the region was hit by a devastating earthquake on March 11, 2011. Taylor is believed to have helped guide her students out of the classroom and waited to hand them over to their parents before heading home and perishing in the tsunami triggered by the quake. Taylor's parents have continued to pursue her dream of serving as a bridge between the United States and Japan by retaining close ties to Japan and trying to help the quake-hit region by establishing the Taylor Anderson Memorial Fund. The fund has been active in installing reading corners in more than a dozen schools in Ishinomaki and organizing student exchange programs between Ishinomaki and her hometown of Richmond, Virginia. However, Ichiro Fujisaki, former Japanese Ambassador to the United States and chairperson of the Taylor Anderson Memorial Fund, expressed concern to NHK after visiting Randolph-Macon College in January that the memory of Taylor is apparently fading even at her alma mater. Noting that the JET program has made significant contributions to U.S.-Japan relations over the past 30 years, an NHK commentator said that there is concern in Japan that the number of Japanese who will be active in connecting the two nations in the future may decline because the number of Japanese students studying at American universities and colleges has been decreasing in recent years.

Fukushima "heroes" refuse to take part in medical survey

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported that 70% of the more than 20,000 people who have worked at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant since the nuclear accident in 2011 have refused to take part in a medical survey being conducted by the GOJ. The government is hoping to conduct free examinations on all of the workers in order to collect data on their radiation levels and health condition for future reference. While some workers have reportedly refused to take part because they cannot take time off from work, others have refused because they distrust the government. The program said many of the workers it interviewed said that even though they risked their lives, they were treated like people who could be sacrificed because neither the government nor TEPCO provided them with sufficient support after they left the nuclear plant.

- [Americans, Japanese who lost family on 3/11 help each other](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan Foundation awardee takes lead in sharing manga culture with U.S.](#) (Asahi)

AMBASSADOR

Ambassador Hagerty visits Foodex Japan

The Japan Times carried a photo of Ambassador and Mrs. Hagerty at Foodex Japan. The caption read: "U.S. Ambassador to Japan William Hagerty (left) and his wife, Chrissy Hagerty, pose at the

U.S. Pavilion of the Foodex Japan 2018 food trade show Tuesday at Makuhari Messe in Chiba Prefecture. The pavilion features 53 U.S. companies and organizations such as the U.S. Meat Export Federation and includes booths for visitors to sample American products."

SECURITY

Onodera displeased with tardy notification of missing F-15 part

TBS and TV Asahi reported at noon that Defense Minister Onodera expressed displeasure over the fact that the U.S. military did not immediately notify the GOJ that a part from a Kadena-based F-15 fighter jet was discovered missing on Feb. 27. Onodera was quoted as telling reporters this morning: "We ask that information on such incidents be provided immediately. We will ask the U.S. to place priority on confirming flight safety." TV Asahi said that although the U.S. is supposed to immediately notify the GOJ of such incidents in accordance with a bilateral agreement, the Defense Ministry only found out about the incident from MOFA six days after it happened.

- [MSDF completes work to recover tanks jettisoned by U.S. fighter jet](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Door falls off ASDF copter flying over Kagoshima island](#) (The Japan Times)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

- [Okinawa Prefectural Assembly lodges protest with Embassy, GOJ over fallen part incident](#) (Okinawa Times, Ryukyu Shimpo)
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