



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, March 8, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

All networks gave top play to reports that the opposition parties are reacting sharply to the submission to the Diet this morning by the Ministry of Finance of copies of original documents on a controversial land sale to Moritomo Gakuen, claiming that they are not copies of the original, unaltered documents, but are copies of the documents that were submitted earlier.

## ECONOMY

### White House suggests some nations may be exempted from tariffs

TBS and Fuji TV reported at noon that the White House disclosed on Wednesday that it will consider exempting some nations, such as Canada and Mexico, from steep tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from a security point of view. The networks quoted White House Press Secretary Sanders as telling reporters on Wednesday: "There are potential carve-outs for Mexico and Canada based on national security, and possibly other countries, as well." TBS claimed that in light of opposition among Republicans to the blanket tariffs, the White House is apparently considering exempting Canada and Mexico, with which the U.S. is renegotiating NAFTA. The network speculated that Japan, as a U.S. ally, might also be exempted from the tariffs. Fuji TV added that Sanders reiterated that the President will sign a document to impose the tariffs by the end of this week, saying that according to the U.S. media, the President may sign the document on Thursday.

### Japanese firms less eager to expand business in U.S., Mexico

NHK reported this morning on the results of an annual survey by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) on Japanese companies' overseas operations. The survey was conducted from last November to January and targeted about 3,200 firms. The network said 29% of respondents, down 4.5 points from last year, chose the United States as a nation or region where they plan to expand their business. The number of companies that chose Mexico also dropped 1.6

points to 6.9%. The network said more than half of the companies cited the Trump administration's policies as a challenge to doing businesses in the U.S. and Mexico, adding that JETRO reportedly attributed this to growing uncertainty caused by President Trump's policies, such as the review of NAFTA. Meanwhile, China took first place as a nation or region where Japanese firms want to expand their business at 49.4%, down 2.9 points, and Vietnam came in second at 37.5%, up 3.4 points.

- [Editorial: There is no winner in a trade war](#) (Sankei)
- [Japanese regulator to punish cryptocurrency exchanges](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [LDP to ask gov't to ease casino regulation](#) (Asahi)

## **INTERNATIONAL**

- [Deputy CCS: Japan, U.S. mull IAEA inspection of DPRK nuclear sites to check denuclearization](#) (Nikkei)
- [Expert: DPRK expected to look for sanction loopholes through rapprochement with ROK](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Denuclearization the goal as 2 Koreas agree to hold summit](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: Kim Jong Un](#) (Asahi)

## **SECURITY**

### **U.S., Japan differ over information sharing on U.S. military incidents**

NHK's weekday evening news show "New Watch 9" aired a six-minute report asserting that the GOJ is dissatisfied with the information being provided by the U.S. military concerning incidents involving its aircraft. As an example, the network cited the Marine Corps' document on the investigation into the cause of the incident in December 2016 in which an Osprey crash landed in waters off Nago, Okinawa. The document was reportedly submitted to the Ministry of Defense nine months after the incident. The network alleged that the ministry felt the document was insufficient because interviews with the aircraft crew were not included and the conclusion of the investigation was blacked out. NHK claimed that the U.S. military told it that although personal and classified information may be withheld, it shares information with the Japanese government to the extent possible.

The broadcaster also took up communication between the GOJ and the U.S. military over its safety inspections of attack helicopters following the two unscheduled landings made by Futenma-based AH-1 helicopters in January. Defense Minister Onodera reportedly told the press on Jan. 30 that he wanted to send SDF mechanics to Okinawa to confirm that maintenance was performed before flight operations were resumed. However, according to the network, the planned deployment of SDF personnel was cancelled at the request of the U.S. military. NHK speculated that the U.S. probably took Onodera's statement as a desire to "verify" the maintenance performed by the U.S. military and was concerned about possible "interference" in its internal investigation. An NHK announcer expressed the view that although the U.S. military says it is making substantial efforts to establish strong ties with local communities, the recent incidents involving the U.S. military are apparently

causing concern and distrust to increase among local residents.

## **POLITICS**

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 7, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [LDP constitutional proposals on state of emergency not to include people's obligations](#) (Yomiuri)
- [LDP may not be able to draft state of emergency, SDF provisions in time for party convention](#) (Yomiuri)
- [LDP's Nikai makes unusual request with Kantei to present Moritomo-related document](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Ishihara faction's talks on merger with Tanigaki group at standstill](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Cartoon: Moritomo scandal](#) (Asahi)
- [Race to the top: The 2018 LDP leadership contest / Kono — From maverick to mainstream](#) (The Japan News)

## **SOCIETY**

### **Figure skater Mao Asada talks about her life and dreams**

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported on Japanese figure skater Mao Asada, who retired from competition last April. During an interview, Asada said although she once felt like throwing away her skates, she decided to work as a choreographer and perform nationwide in order to express her gratitude to her fans. She also talked about her passion for teaching children and her dream to eventually lead a completely self-sufficient life.

- [60% of municipal mayors say 3.11 reconstruction will be completed "within three years," Yomiuri Shimbun poll](#) (Yomiuri)
  - [Japan fails to shine in annual report on women's participation in politics](#) (The Japan Times)
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