



Afternoon Alert - Friday, March 9, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

All networks led with reports on an announcement by Chung Eui-yong, the head of South Korea's National Security Office, in Washington that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has expressed his eagerness to meet President Trump as soon as possible, and that the President said he would meet Kim by May. The networks also reported that Prime Minister Abe told reporters this morning that he will visit Washington as early as April to meet with President Trump to discuss North Korea.

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump agrees to meet with Kim Jong Un

All networks gave extensive coverage to the announcement by a senior South Korean official on Thursday in Washington that President Trump has reportedly agreed to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un by May. An NHK reporter opined that President Trump likely views this as a major achievement of the maximum pressure campaign against the North, conjecturing that the President decided that the issue of North Korea's nuclear program cannot be resolved unless he speaks directly to the North Korean leader. The reporter speculated that the Trump administration plans to continue to apply maximum pressure on the North, saying that Washington will apparently adopt a policy combining hard and soft approaches. Claiming that there is skepticism within the USG as to whether North Korea will actually move toward denuclearization and concerns that international pressure may weaken amid the current mood for dialogue, the reporter expressed the view that the President will be tested over whether he is able to obtain results from the planned summit. NTV and TBS also asserted that the President's negotiating skills will be put to the test, with NTV claiming that the White House decided to leave the fate of the North Korean issue to direct negotiations between the two leaders.

Prime Minister Abe to visit Washington as early as April

NHK reported that Prime Minister Abe held a teleconference with President Trump this morning, saying that the premier told reporters afterward that they agreed to hold a summit in Washington as early as April to discuss North Korea. Abe was quoted as telling reporters: "North Korea has proposed beginning talks premised on denuclearization. I appreciate North Korea's change in stance.... The U.S. and Japan's stance of continuing to apply maximum pressure on North Korea until it takes concrete actions toward complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization remains solid. I hope to continue to work more closely with President Trump to resolve the nuclear, missile, and abduction issues." The network quoted Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga as telling reporters this morning: "President Trump reportedly told Prime Minister Abe that the U.S. will definitely continue to apply sanctions and military pressure on the North. The prime minister told the President that the U.S. and Japan are together one hundred percent and that he will make arrangements to visit the U.S. as soon as early April after the budget has been passed to meet with President Trump. The President agreed."

Meanwhile, the network said the families of the Japanese abductees responded positively to the news, quoting Shigeo Iizuka, the leader of the Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea, as saying: "This will also be a great opportunity to resolve the abduction issue." Iizuka also referred to the meeting between the President and the abduction victims' families last November and expressed hope that the President will raise the issue at the envisaged U.S.-DPRK summit given that the President reportedly expressed understanding about the abduction issue.

- [Japan wary that inter-Korean rapprochement may affect Japan-U.S. cooperation](#) (Mainichi)
- [USDA official says "it would be good to rejoin TPP"](#) (Sankei)
- [Special Advisor to the LDP President Kawai calls for caution, saying "Pyongyang is manipulating public opinion"](#) (Sankei)
- [Hiroshima, Nagasaki mayors ask Obama to visit Nagasaki](#) (Asahi)
- [Japan may hold Iraq reconstruction aid conference in Tokyo in April](#) (Mainichi)
- [Head of Tibetan gov't-in-exile on Dalai Lama's succession, China's policy](#) (Asahi)
- [Editorial: Maintain maximum pressure, not misled by Pyongyang's smiling facade](#) (The Japan News)
- [Cartoon: Kim Jong Un](#) (Mainichi)

ECONOMY

New TPP accord signed by 11 members

Friday evening's Nikkei reported from Santiago on Thursday's signing ceremony of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) agreement by the 11 member states, with the trade ministers of the member nations stressing in a released statement that they are determined to complete their domestic procedures for the swift effectuation of the accord. In hosting the event, the Chilean president reportedly stated that the signing will convey a "message of trade

liberalization amid rising protectionism." The participants from Australia, Mexico, and Chile reportedly expressed hope to effectuate the regional free trade scheme this year. Minister for Fiscal and Financial Policy Motegi told the press that the 11 members are moving forward with their domestic procedures "faster than expected." As for President Trump's earlier statements indicating that the U.S. may return to the trade liberalization framework if amendments are made to the agreement, the Japanese official said it would be extremely difficult to change certain parts of the agreed-upon deal.

Other papers ran similar stories, with Yomiuri saying that the CPTPP members are hoping to rein in what it described as rising protectionism under the Trump administration. The paper quoted Motegi as saying: "We would like to make utmost efforts for early effectuation so as to establish a high-standard framework for trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region."

Seko to urge U.S. to remove Japan from new tariffs

NHK and TBS reported at noon that Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Seko spoke to reporters this morning on President Trump's signing of orders imposing new steep tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. NHK quoted Seko as saying: "It is extremely regrettable that the measures have been decided on imports from Japan and other nations. Broad trade restrictions for national security reasons could have a major impact on the multilateral trade system. We will fully assess the content and the impact on Japanese firms and continue to urge the U.S. to exempt Japan from the new tariffs." NHK added that Minister Seko is expected to meet with USTR Lighthizer in Belgium on Saturday to confirm the details of the new measures.

- [Turkey's economy minister seeks Japan trade pact this year](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [FSA suspends 2 crypto marts](#) (The Japan News)
- [Gov't to open door to foreign farmers in three special strategic zones](#) (Nikkei)
- [Panasonic researchers permitted to conduct R&D in U.S.](#) (Nikkei)
- [Toyota, Mazda launch joint U.S. output venture to run \\$1.6 bil. plant](#) (Kyodo News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 8, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of interpellations at Upper House Budget Committee, March 8](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [LDP Constitution panel focusing on wording of provision on SDF](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: LDP constitutional change ideas risk sacrificing human rights to state power](#) (The Mainichi)
- [LDP factions actively maneuvering for presidential election in September](#) (Yomiuri)
- [The 2018 LDP leadership contest / Koizumi — Eloquence honed from rakugo tips](#) (The Japan News)

OPINION POLLS

- [66% say education will keep memory of Great East Japan Earthquake from fading, Yomiuri poll](#) (Yomiuri)

- [Opinion poll & results of Yomiuri nationwide public opinion poll on the Great East Japan Earthquake](#) (Yomiuri)

EDUCATION

- [Japan's university startups top 2,000 for first time](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

SOCIETY

Tohoku children look back on past seven years since 3/11 disaster

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" focused on children from Iwate and Miyagi prefectures who were asked to write essays on their experiences of the Great East Japan Earthquake five years ago and today, seven years after the disaster. The program showed how they have changed, adding that while some feel they should live their lives to the fullest for the sake of their friends and family members who lost their lives in the disaster, others have tried to seek meaning in their tragic experiences.

- [No. of teen marijuana cases up 5-fold in 4 yrs: police](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Record 2,413 child pornography cases detected in Japan in 2017](#) (Kyodo News)

SECURITY

- [Gov't to offer cybersecurity training to private sector](#) (Nikkei)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

- [Contrary to 1997 Japan-U.S. accord, U.S. Marine Corps in Okinawa says it "won't report accidents to local authorities"](#) (Okinawa Times)
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