



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, April 24, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most networks led with reports that the resignation of Vice Finance Minister Fukuda was formally approved by the Cabinet this morning. TBS gave top play to a report that at least ten people were killed after a van plowed into pedestrians on a busy street in Toronto on Monday.

INTERNATIONAL

Senate Foreign Relations Committee approves Pompeo as secretary of state

NHK reported online that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved the nomination of CIA Director Pompeo as the next secretary of state on Monday, saying that if the full Senate approves his nomination at a session expected to be held as early as this week, Pompeo will officially take up the post and is likely to begin working on preparations for the planned U.S.-DPRK summit.

U.S., Japan agree to cooperate on infrastructure development in Asia-Pacific

NHK reported online that the State Department and Japan's MOFA hosted the second "Public-Private Sector Roundtable Discussion on U.S.-Japan Cooperation on Third Country Infrastructure" in Washington on Monday, noting that some 100 U.S. and Japanese government officials and business executives exchanged opinions on how to expand bilateral cooperation to assist Indo-Pacific and other nations in securing quality infrastructure. Assistant Secretary of State Singh reportedly stated at the outset that the two nations are hoping to study how to expand cooperation between the governments and commercial enterprises in order to "compete with nations and companies that do not uphold international rules and norms." The broadcaster speculated that the U.S. official made the remarks with China in mind, emphasizing that the two governments are anxious to support U.S. and Japanese companies' infrastructure exports to counter Beijing's "One Belt, One Road" trade promotion initiative.

Japan commits \$10 million in aid for Palestinian refugees

NHK reported online on a MOFA announcement today that the GOJ will contribute \$10 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees following the Trump administration's decision in January to freeze its dues, which amount to 30% of the organization's annual budget, on the grounds that a review of its institutional management is needed. As a result, the organization's operations to provide education and healthcare in the Palestinian territories have reportedly been hindered. Japan reportedly made the financial pledge in the belief that the organization's activities are important to ensure stability in the Middle East.

- [Gov't officials differ in opinion of DPRK announcement of nuclear, missile test suspension](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Academic at DPRK-linked university on conditions for reaching agreement at U.S.-DPRK summit](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: DPRK's freeze of nuclear, missile tests amounts to declaration as nuclear power](#) (Sankei)
- [G-7 vows to keep "maximum pressure" on N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, China vow sports cooperation in 1st cultural talks in 9 yrs](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Cartoon: Kim Jong Un's Golden Week](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

ECONOMY

Motegi says new consultations on trade to be launched in mid-June or later

Asahi reported online on press remarks this morning by Economic Revitalization Minister Motegi, who disclosed that the GOJ told the USG that his first meeting with USTR Lighthizer under the agreed-upon "consultations for a free, fair, and reciprocal (FFR) trade deal" will probably be held in mid-June or later. On what the Japanese side is referring to as the "FFR" consultations, the cabinet minister was quoted as saying: "They are not supposed to be negotiations or preparatory talks for a free trade agreement. Japan's position of seeking the early effectuation of the TPP 11 remains unchanged.... I think President Trump places priority on getting a good deal over the format."

- [Japan labors to add 'fair' and 'reciprocal' angle to free trade](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Editorial: Precautions needed against aluminum market turmoil](#) (Nikkei)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 23, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Diet impasse continues as ruling, opposition parties clash over Aso's resignation, scandals](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Gov't provides Y7.9bn in subsidies for political parties](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Cartoon: Domino effect](#) (Akahata)

OPINION POLLS

- [Cabinet support rate continues to fall, reaching 38% as nonsupport rate exceeds 50%, Sankei-FNN poll](#) (Sankei)

- [All opinion polls by major media outlets show cabinet support rate declining](#) (Sankei)
- [Overall, pollees favor Ishiba as next LDP president, while Abe is favorite among LDP supporters, Sankei-FNN poll](#) (Sankei)
- [Opinion poll & results from Sankei Shimbun](#) (Sankei)

EDUCATION

Schools teach ethics, but risk undervaluing diversity

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported that ethics education in 22 areas including patriotism, family love, self-control, and abiding by rules officially became part of the curriculum for elementary schools starting this April. The program said some teachers feel that teaching specific values is difficult due to the increasing diversity of the Japanese population. An expert warned that the spirit of honoring diversity in Japan may be undermined if teachers try to "teach" or "force" certain values on children.

SOCIETY

- [Tokyo immigration prevented Turk with appendicitis from seeing doctor](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Man pressed with libel charges for hate speech against Koreans](#) (Kyodo News)

SECURITY

- [Health ministry team to compile report on response to chemical terrorism for Olympics](#) (Sankei)
- [Emergency medical manuals eyed ahead of 2020 Games](#) (The Japan News)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

Onaga's health condition could affect political situation, Futenma relocation

Okinawa Times reported on the announcement made on Monday by the Okinawa prefectural government that Governor Onaga underwent surgery over the weekend to check whether a tumor in his pancreas is benign or malignant, predicting that since he will remain hospitalized for several weeks, his health condition could have a significant impact on local politics and the ongoing FRF construction off Camp Schwab. Pointing out that the Defense Ministry is aiming to begin pouring sand and soil into the waters near the base surrounded by the banks currently under construction and that the governor has been mulling withdrawing the landfill permit possibly before July in order to block the reclamation work, the daily speculated that the Okinawa leader may not be able to follow through with the planned administrative step depending on the condition of his health at that point. Local LDP officials are reportedly wondering if Onaga may choose to step down before his current term expires in December due to poor health, with one of them conjecturing that the governor may be feeling so dispirited following the surgery and the defeat of his candidate in Sunday's Okinawa mayoral election that he will decide not to run for reelection in the November race.

- [Kokuba to serve as chairman of LDP's Okinawa chapter](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)

