



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, April 25, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

NHK and Fuji TV led with reports on the heavy rain in the Tokyo region today. NTV and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that Shohei Ohtani of the Los Angeles Angels started against the Astros on Tuesday. TBS led with a report that Education Minister Hayashi apologized for using his official vehicle to go to a yoga lesson.

## INTERNATIONAL

### President Trump to tap Admiral Harris as envoy to South Korea

NHK reported this morning that a White House official told the network that President Trump is planning to nominate PACOM Commander Admiral Harris as the next U.S. ambassador to South Korea. While noting that Adm. Harris was nominated as the U.S. envoy to Australia in February, the network said CIA Director Pompeo, who has been nominated as the next secretary of state, is planning to prioritize filling the post in South Korea, which has been vacant for more than a year, and has proposed tapping Harris. The network said the decision is aimed at demonstrating the administration's determination to seek North Korea's denuclearization ahead of the U.S.-DPRK summit.

### New Russian ambassador says U.S.-Japan alliance stands in way of Japan-Russia relations

NHK reported this morning that Russia's new Ambassador to Japan Galuzin stressed during his first interview with NHK that the U.S.-Japan alliance is standing in the way of Japan-Russia relations. The network quoted Ambassador Galuzin, who took up his post last month, as saying: "We cannot turn a blind eye to the reality that the United States is adopting unfriendly policies toward Russia." Concerning the attempted assassination of a former Russian spy and Japan's agreement with the UK's conclusion that Russia was involved, Galuzin reportedly said: "I cannot understand why Japan is supporting the claim of an anti-Russian nation such as the UK. This will do serious damage to Japan-Russia relations." According to the network, the Russian ambassador disclosed that a Japan-Russia summit will be held in late May and expressed hope for progress in the dialogue.

### **U.S.-ROK summit to be held in mid-May**

NHK reported this afternoon that a Blue House official disclosed on Wednesday that the South Korean government is making arrangements with the USG for South Korean President Moon to visit the U.S. for a summit with President Trump in mid-May. The network said President Moon is expected to brief President Trump on the results of the inter-Korean summit on April 27 and the two leaders will exchange views on the upcoming U.S.-DPRK summit.

### **MOFA protests ROK plan to serve dessert decorated with map showing Takeshima as Korean territory**

NHK reported at noon that MOFA lodged a protest against the South Korean government over its plan to serve a dessert decorated with a map of Korea showing the disputed Liancourt Rocks (known as Takeshima in Japan and Dokdo in South Korea) as part of Korean territory at a banquet for the inter-Korean summit on April 27. According to MOFA, a dessert decorated with the map is included in the menu for the banquet announced by the Blue House. The network said MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau chief Kanasugi met with the Deputy Chief of Mission of the South Korean Embassy and said: "This is totally unacceptable and extremely regrettable in view of our position on the territorial rights of Takeshima." Kanasugi also reportedly called on South Korea not to serve the dessert at the banquet. In addition, the Japanese Embassy in Seoul lodged a protest with the South Korean foreign ministry.

- [Gist of Abe-Moon teleconference, April 24](#) (Yomiuri)
- ["Inside story" of Abe-Trump talks in Florida](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan, Russia plan to organize Northern Territories tours for Japanese in summer](#) (Yomiuri)

### **ECONOMY**

- [Thailand aims to join TPP trade deal](#) (The Japan News)
- [FM Kono meets with WTO chief](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: G-20 response to market protectionism too sluggish](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Foreign rice growers urge Japan to open up its market](#) (Nikkei)

## POLITICS

- [Abe apologizes to Komeito for Finance Ministry scandals](#) (Nikkei)
- [DP, Party of Hope picks name for their new party](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Public fed up with Abe administration but viable alternatives lacking, Mainichi poll](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Abe's diplomatic efforts fail to boost support for Cabinet, Yomiuri poll](#) (The Japan News)
- [Prime minister's schedule on April 24, 2018](#) (Nikkei)

## OPINION POLLS

- [Infographic: Lowering legal age of adulthood, Yomiuri poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [47% of LDP supporters say they will back Abe in LDP presidential election, Yomiuri poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Men are also moving away from Abe, Yomiuri poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [40% of LDP supporters say it would be good if Abe were replaced as LDP president in next party election, Mainichi poll](#) (Mainichi)

## SECURITY

- [Defense ministry plans to create SDF "joint command"](#) (Sankei)
- [Pentagon corrects statements about missile used in Syria strikes, says stealthy new weapon eyed by Japan was not fired](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Ex-defense chief under DPJ gov't suggests reversal in roles played by Japan, U.S. in alliance](#) (Asahi)

## SCIENCE

- [Japan's greenhouse gas emissions fall for 3rd year](#) (The Japan News)

## SOCIETY

### **Postal workers pressured to force customers to buy insurance policies**

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported that postal workers are being pressured to force customers, especially elderly ones, to buy insurance policies. Postal workers are reportedly required to meet high sales targets and those with low sales performance are often subject to harassment by their supervisors. The program pointed out that Japan Post is apparently facing organizational problems.

- [U.N. disarmament chief Izumi Nakamitsu of Japan makes Fortune's list of World's 50 Greatest Leaders](#) (The Japan Times)