
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Thursday, June 14, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TBS led with reports on the finding that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said he is open to holding talks with Prime Minister Abe over the abduction issue during his meeting with President Trump. TV Asahi gave top play to a report that North Korea's Rodong Shinmun reported that Kim Jong Un returned to North Korea yesterday. NTV and Fuji TV gave top play to reports that Japan Wrestling Federation director Kazutoshi Sakae held a press conference this morning and apologized for harassing Japanese wrestling champion Kaori Icho.

INTERNATIONAL

Kim open to talks on abduction issue

NHK reported at noon that according to a GOJ source, President Trump told Prime Minister Abe over the phone that Kim Jong Un said he is open to holding dialogue with Japan over the abduction issue during the U.S.-DPRK summit held on Tuesday. The network added that the President also told PM Abe that he intends to move forward with negotiations on the abduction issue at the same time as the issue of denuclearization and asked for his cooperation. PM Abe is said to have told reporters after his phone conversation with the President: "I cannot comment on the details, but President Trump clearly conveyed my view to Chairman Kim." Noting that PM Abe has been stressing that a Japan-DPRK summit has to lead to the resolution of nuclear, missile, and abduction issues, the network said the GOJ will seek dialogue with North Korea through behind-the-scenes meetings while assessing the real intention of the North Korean leader.

Meanwhile, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told reporters this morning: "President Trump told Prime Minister Abe about his talks with Chairman Kim on the abduction issue at the U.S.-DPRK summit,

but I will refrain from commenting on the details." He added: "We are certain that the abduction issue is something that needs to be resolved between Japan and North Korea with the strong support of President Trump. We are addressing the issue in various ways." With regard to a Japan-DPRK summit, Suga said: "Nothing has been decided at this point. In any case, if we do hold a summit, it is extremely important that it leads to the resolution of the nuclear and missile issues, and most importantly, the abduction issue. We hope to hold a summit that leads to the resolution of such issues."

Asahi carried a similar report online, quoting a Seoul-based intelligence source as saying that Kim Jong Un told President Trump during the summit that he is willing to begin dialogue with Japan. The article cited several sources connected to North Korea saying that the Kim regime envisages holding a summit between Kim and Abe within a month at the earliest

Foreign ministers of U.S., Japan, ROK agree on close cooperation

NHK reported at noon that the foreign ministers of the U.S., Japan, and South Korea held a meeting for about 30 minutes in Seoul this morning following the U.S.-DPRK summit on Tuesday. According to the network, the three ministers confirmed that they will not provide security guarantees to North Korea until it completely denuclearizes, and agreed to work closely to ensure that North Korea takes concrete actions. According to the network, Foreign Minister Kono said during a joint press conference: "The three nations confirmed that they will continue to make efforts to accomplish their goal. North Korea has promised complete denuclearization, and the United States has promised security guarantees. We will carefully assess whether North Korea will denuclearize. We confirmed that no security guarantees have been provided yet."

PM Abe meets with families of Japanese abductees

NHK reported this afternoon that Prime Minister Abe met with the families of the Japanese abductees at the Kantei this afternoon following the U.S.-DPRK summit held earlier this week. According to the network, the premier told them: "Any Japan-DPRK summit must make progress on the abduction issue." The network said the premier stressed that he will make utmost efforts to resolve the abduction issue.

Former nuclear envoys talk about U.S.-DPRK summit

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on the U.S.-DPRK summit, saying that the two leaders failed to reach an agreement on concrete steps toward denuclearization. Former top nuclear envoys Ambassador Sasae and Ambassador Hill appeared live on the show. Sasae first said: "Looking at the joint statement alone, one might criticize it by saying it could have included more. But rather than focusing only on the statement, I think it was important that the two leaders met in person and learned about each other's intentions and commitments. I hear they are planning to hold additional meetings in the future, so I think the summit was a great opportunity to begin that kind of relationship. Most importantly, it says in the statement that North Korea will work on denuclearization

and the U.S. will provide security guarantees, which are extremely important to both sides. In that sense, if your expectations were not too high, I think it was a good starting point." Ambassador Hill said: "First of all, I would agree with Ambassador Sasae that it is a good thing that the leaders have had an opportunity to talk face-to-face. But I must say I have a lot of concerns about the joint statement. I think with North Korea, it's always important to be as specific and detailed as possible and very few details were in that joint statement. I don't think that statement in and of itself is a sufficient basis to move forward. So I think we will have to look to Secretary Pompeo who has already begun his visit to the region to discuss with people in the region on what U.S. policy going forward really is." Sasae also stressed the importance of filling the gap between the U.S. and North Korea over the process of denuclearization through a series of both working-level and high-level meetings. Hill stressed that countries in the region should be involved, pointing out that the biggest challenge is how to make North Korea understand the need to quickly move forward with denuclearization. Sasae and Hill both stressed that maintaining pressure until North Korea takes concrete steps is vital.

The program also aired its interview with Defense Minister Onodera. "We will closely monitor developments since there were no remarks on how North Korea will eliminate its nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction, and mid- and long-range ballistic missiles," he said. "Given that nothing has actually changed at this point, we will not let our guard down. The defense authorities will maintain pressure." Noting that President Trump expressed his intent to reduce or possibly withdraw U.S. forces in Korea and also to temporarily suspend the U.S.-ROK military drills, Japan has been concerned that if the USFK is withdrawn from the region, it will upset the power balance in East Asia. Onodera was quoted as saying: "The presence of U.S. forces in Korea and the U.S. forces in Japan is necessary for the stability of the region. The presence of the United States is necessary in order to stabilize the security environment, and maintaining the military balance is important. Prime Minister Abe has said it would not be an overstatement to say that the security situation is the worst it has ever been since the end of the war. I don't think that situation has changed at this point and we will be well prepared."

- [Japan, U.S. foreign chiefs meet after Trump raises abduction issue](#) (Kyodo News)
- [U.S., allies hope for progress on N. Korea denuclearization](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, S. Korea foreign chiefs to discuss post-summit coordination](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Gov't sources: Coordination underway for Japan-DPRK summit in August or September](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Abe shifting to dialogue policy toward North Korea](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Gov't mulls economic aid for North Korea in three stages](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Press DPRK in tandem with U.S.](#) (Sankei)
- [Ex-Lower House Speaker Kono: Normalization of ties with DPRK should come before abductees' return](#) (Sankei)
- [Cartoon: U.S.-DPRK talks going forward](#) (Asahi)
- [Editorial: N. Korea must carry out its intention to denuclearize](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

ECONOMY

- [Japan to join WTO panel for U.S.-EU talks on steel import restrictions](#) (Nikkei)
- [U.S. gov't official calls for "bilateral talks on farm tariffs"](#) (Nikkei)
- [U.S. gov't ag official warns TPP 11 effectuation poses risk to U.S.](#) (Sankei)
- [Indonesia making preparations to join TPP](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [General contractor Kajima to invest 70b yen in three years on logistics hubs in the U.S.](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan approves 70-year plan to scrap nuclear reprocessing plant](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Tepeco considering decommissioning Fukushima Daini nuclear plant: chief](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Cartoon: Work-style reform](#) (Akahata)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on June 13, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Regular Diet session to be extended to July 8](#) (Sankei)
- [High-ranking official in LDP's Takeshita faction says he "supports Abe for third term"](#) (Mainichi)
- [LDP set to overhaul in-house policy research functions to cut back reliance on Kantei](#) (Nikkei)
- [Cartoon: Keeping the peace](#) (Akahata)

SECURITY

- [GOJ to continue to make enormous outlays for U.S. weapons](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Defense minister to give briefing on Aegis Ashore to Akita, Yamaguchi residents](#) (Yomiuri)

SOCIETY

- [Japan's Diet OKs law lowering age of adulthood to 18](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Tokyo wards going beyond "children's café"](#) (Mainichi)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

F-15 flights resumed in Okinawa amid local uproar

Thursday morning's Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo gave prominent front- and inside-page coverage to the resumption of flights by F-15s at Kadena AB on Wednesday, explaining that the flights were only suspended for two days after an F-15 crashed in waters off Naha on Monday. The dailies said the lifting of the flight suspension is contrary to the prefectural government's request for discontinuing F-15 flights until the cause of the accident is identified. While reporting on the U.S. military's explanation that it is confident the aircraft is safe, the papers underscored that such a "unilateral declaration" of safety will not ease local anxiety and anger over U.S. military operations. They added that the distrust of the U.S. military among residents near the Kadena base has been compounded lately by the substantial noise generated by the F-22 stealth fighters that are currently deployed temporarily at the installation.

- [U.S. Osprey grounded in Kagoshima for more than a week](#) (Okinawa Times)
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