
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Friday, June 15, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

TV Asahi led with a report that U.S. media outlets said the Pentagon is expected to officially announce the suspension of U.S.-ROK military drills soon. NTV and TBS gave top play to the opening of the FIFA World Cup in Russia. Fuji TV led with a report on its interview with the wife of a real estate mogul in Wakayama who was found dead in his home. NHK gave top play to an incident in which a Tokyo-bound bullet train hit a person after leaving Hakata Station on Thursday.

AMBASSADOR

- [U.S. expects "significant" Japan role in N. Korea economic aid](#) (Kyodo News)

INTERNATIONAL

Secretary Mattis tells Onodera that U.S.-ROK drills in August to be suspended

NHK reported this afternoon that it learned from Defense Ministry officials that Secretary of Defense Mattis told Defense Minister Onodera during their phone conversation on Thursday that the U.S. side is making arrangements with South Korea to suspend the annual Ulchi Freedom Guardian computerized exercises between the U.S. and South Korea planned for August. According to the network, Onodera reportedly said in response: "This is a matter to be arranged between the United States and South Korea." The defense ministers also reportedly confirmed that the joint military exercises between the U.S. and Japan will continue. Noting that the Defense Ministry views the U.S.-ROK joint military drills as an important pillar in ensuring regional peace and stability, the network said the ministry will analyze the impact of the suspension.

Nominee for U.S. ambassador to ROK supports suspending military drills

NHK, NTV, TBS, and TV Asahi reported at noon that Harry Harris, the Trump administration's nominee for ambassador to South Korea, said during his nomination hearing at the Senate Foreign

Relations Committee on Thursday that he supports President Trump's possible suspension of U.S.-ROK joint military drills. He was quoted as saying: "We should give major exercises a pause to see if Kim Jong Un in fact is serious about his part of the negotiations." TV Asahi said although Harris has been known as a hardliner against North Korea and has stressed the need to conduct U.S.-ROK joint military exercises, he reportedly said: "The situation has changed dramatically after the U.S.-DPRK summit."

Meanwhile, Defense Minister Onodera told reporters this morning: "Trilateral security and defense cooperation between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea, including joint military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea and the U.S., Japan, and South Korea, are an important pillar in ensuring regional peace and stability. Our view on this remains unchanged."

New York Times refers to possibility of Japan going nuclear

TV Asahi reported at noon that the New York Times wrote on Thursday that suspending U.S.-ROK joint military drills will create new anxieties among U.S. allies and referred to the possibility of Japan going nuclear. According to the network, the U.S. paper wrote: "The biggest fear [for Japan] is that future negotiations with North Korea will not lead to substantial disarmament and that Mr. Trump will slowly withdraw from the region." It added: "The biggest beneficiary of an American withdrawal would be China.... If North Korea keeps some part of its arsenal, while China continues its military buildup, both South Korea and Japan may feel a need to go nuclear themselves."

- [Gist of joint news conference by Japan, U.S., ROK foreign ministers, June 14](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Gist of Japan-U.S. foreign ministerial, June 14](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Gist of FM Kono's meeting with ROK president, June 14](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Abe seeks September summit with Kim Jong Un](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Possible Japan-DPRK arouses hope, concern in the LDP, may affect Abe's election bid](#) (Yomiuri)
- [FOCUS: Abe-Kim summit possible but uncertainty remains over denuclearization](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: Fight hard to resolve abductions issue](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: Japan should play active role to create new order after U.S.-N. Korea pact](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: Singapore summit](#) (Mainichi)

ECONOMY

- [Macau gaming mogul mulls investing over \\$10 bil. in Japanese resort](#) (Kyodo News)
- [FOCUS: Japan's new law may dampen sentiment for "minpaku" private lodgings](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Some 2,700 applications filed for "minpaku" lodging biz under new law](#) (Jiji Press)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on June 14, 2018](#) (Nikkei)

- [Editorial: Time to calmly discuss restarting nuclear reactors in Niigata Pref.](#) (The Japan News)
- [Labor groups to field candidates for 2019 Upper House election separately under CDPJ, DPFP](#) (Yomiuri)

OPINION POLLS

- [Abe cabinet's approval rate falls for fourth consecutive month to 35%, while over 50% say "Aso should resign," Jiji Press poll](#) (Jiji)
- [Opinion poll & results from NHK survey on the U.S. military's Iwakuni base](#) (NHK)

SCIENCE

- [NASA chief scientist interested in int'l cooperation for moon, Mars projects](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Japan passes bill for limiting microplastics emission](#) (Jiji)

SECURITY

- [Editorial: Japan, ROK should urge U.S. to rethink](#) (Sankei)
- ["Seiron" column: Nightmare of USFK's withdrawal emerges from U.S.-DPRK summit](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan, Israel strengthen cooperation in cyberattack countermeasures](#) (Sankei)
- [Suga, Komeito rushing to prepare for Okinawa gubernatorial race](#) (THEMIS)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

U.S. military refuses to accept Okinawa's protest over aircraft accident

Okinawa Times led with a report claiming that the U.S. military has dismissed a request filed by the Okinawa prefectural government to send someone to the prefectural government office or set up a meeting at Kadena AB so that the government can directly lodge a protest over the recent crash of a Kadena-based F-15 off Naha. According to the article, the 18th Wing authorities have said that the request should be forwarded to the Okinawa Defense Bureau first. This is reportedly the first time for the U.S. military to refuse to accommodate a local request to lodge a direct protest over a mishap involving military assets. The daily insisted in a separate article that the U.S. military does not appear to be interested in hearing about the anxiety and anger of residents of the base-hosting community, emphasizing that by ignoring local opinion, the U.S. military is missing a precious opportunity to come up with "practical ideas" for improving base operations.

