
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Thursday, August 2, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and all commercial networks led with reports on the severe heat in eastern and western Japan. All broadcasters reported on a ceremony held at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii on Wednesday to mark the arrival of 55 sets of remains of U.S. soldiers killed in the Korean War. The broadcasters quoted Vice President Pence as saying at the ceremony that the return of the remains is a sign of tangible progress in U.S. efforts to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula.

INTERNATIONAL

U.S. Strategic Command chief comments on DPRK missile development

NHK reported online that General Hyten, the commander of U.S. Strategic Command, held a teleconference on Wednesday, during which he reportedly said that the fact that North Korea hasn't launched any ballistic missiles since last November probably indicates that Pyongyang is slowing down its missile development. However, the general added that his command is fully prepared to respond to all kinds of threats posed by the DPRK. The commander also commented on Russia's concern over Japan's planned deployment of the Aegis Ashore system by reportedly saying that Japan is adopting a wise strategy to step up its defense system against the threat posed by North Korea and that the deployment has nothing to do with Russia.

- [Japan, Malta agree to maintain rules-based maritime order](#) (Kyodo News)
- [New footage likely shows Japanese journalist held in Syria: gov't](#) (Kyodo News)

ECONOMY

Chairman of Council of Economic Advisers expects U.S. economy to continue to grow

TV Tokyo's popular nightly business news program "World Business Satellite" led with a six-minute report on its exclusive interview with Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Kevin Hassett that was held in Tokyo on Wednesday. The program introduced Chairman Hassett as someone who plays a key role in advising President Trump on macroeconomics. When asked about the possibility of the U.S. economy continuing to grow, Hassett said the current forecast is for the economy to grow an average of 3% a year over the next five years, adding that this is a big increase from the economy President Trump inherited from the previous administration. He also said that tax reform has been the biggest contributor to economic growth, expressing the view that President Trump's major tax cuts have resulted in job growth and U.S. companies' returning to America. Hassett expressed the view that the President is mulling additional tax cuts, saying: "President Trump is a man of action.... Frankly he just doesn't talk about tax cuts 2.0 - also 3.0, 4.0. 5.0." Concerning the new U.S.-Japan trade talks set to be launched next week in Washington, Hassett said he is optimistic about the outcome. Nikkei Senior Writer Takita, who interviewed Hassett, commented that the CEA chairman apparently attaches importance to tax cuts for their effect of revitalizing business and boosting household spending.

- [Upcoming U.S.-Japan talks a 'big step' toward bilateral deal](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [UK appeals to Japan to press EU for Brexit deal](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Corporate Japan's capital spending plans reach 38-year high](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan's efforts to decrease plutonium stockpiles do little to appease US, int'l community](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Plutonium reduction does not fit in with nuclear fuel cycle](#) (The Mainichi)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Aug. 1, 2018](#) (Nikkei)

- [Abe keeping a tight lid on who he meets, even if just for drinks](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [LDP to propose reorganization of gov't ministries and agencies](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Constitutional amendment, fiscal reconstruction to be key issues in LDP presidential election](#) (Mainichi)
- [Taro Aso zeros in on post-Abe initiative](#) (Yomiuri)
- [LDP faction retreats are changing in character](#) (Nikkei)
- [Liberal Democratic Party campaign: Abe and rivals home in on local concerns](#) (The Japan Times)

SCIENCE

- [Australia condemns Japan's proposal to resume commercial whaling](#) (Kyodo News)

SOCIETY

- [Tokyo Medical Univ. discriminated against female applicants: sources](#) (Kyodo News)

SECURITY

GOJ official discusses Aegis Ashore deployment with local mayor

NHK reported online that Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense Ono held talks with Mayor Fujimichi of Hagi, Yamaguchi Prefecture, at the ministry on Thursday. Hagi is one of the candidate sites for deploying the Aegis Ashore system. In response to the mayor's request for the GOJ to address local residents' concerns over possible health and environmental damage caused by the system's radar, Ono said that the GOJ will not move forward with the deployment without the local residents' understanding, adding that the central government will provide detailed explanations about the plan.

- [Aegis Ashore clouds Japan-Russia ties](#) (Asahi)
 - [Editorial: Rising costs fuel doubts about Aegis Ashore plan's efficacy](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
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