**Despite his rhetoric, Trump has continued reassurances to Japan – Ryall 17**

(<http://www.scmp.com/week-asia/geopolitics/article/2071849/why-japan-relieved-about-trump> Julian Ryall “Why Japan is relieved about Trump” February 17th, 2017)

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe returned to Tokyo after his meetings with President Donald Trump in Washington and Palm Beach last weekend declaring the visit had been a resounding success.

And, given the positions that Trump had taken against Japan in the run-up to his election in November, the Japanese leader’s relief is understandable.

Trump never once mentioned his earlier demand that Japan pay more – or, indeed, the entire cost – for US troops stationed there and the suggestion that Japan develop and deploy nuclear weapons that so horrified many never came up.

Instead, the two leaders busied themselves by reiterating the importance of the bilateral security relationship and Washington’s commitment to defending Japan and maintaining its nuclear umbrella. Pointedly, that included the disputed Diaoyu islands, which Japan controls and knows as the Senkakus.

The shared security message received a significant boost when North Korea launched a new type of medium-range ballistic missile on Sunday morning. Not many believe the timing of the launch was a coincidence.

The other key issue between Trump and Abe was economics, with the Japanese leader again relieved that there was no new talk of imposing tariffs on Japanese companies’ imports or accusations that Tokyo manipulates its currency to help exports and the national economy.

The Japanese public shared Abe’s delight at being able to dodge issues that had the potential to derail the relationship, with more than 70 per cent replying to a poll conducted by Kyodo News expressing satisfaction at the outcome of the first meeting between the two leaders. Only 19.5 per cent were unhappy with the results.

And 60 per cent said it was “appropriate” that Abe had played a round of golf with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.