



S. Korea 'won't be defeated again' by Japan: Moon

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Japan announced its intention to remove South Korea from a list of trading partners that enjoy easy-trade access to the country, with South Korea decrying the news, and President Moon Jae-in saying that his country will 'not be defeated again' by Japan, a reference to Japan's occupation of Korea before World War II.

An escalating row between South Korea and Japan Friday (August 2), as Japan moved to strike South Korea from a list of favored trade partners that enjoy fast-track exports with minimal controls.

It would potentially slow down exports of a wide range of goods that could be used to produce weapons.

Japan said the decision was made on the grounds of national security and not intended to harm bilateral relations.

(SOUNDBITE) (Japanese) JAPANESE CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY, YOSHIHIDE SUGA, SAYING:

"This revision was necessary to manage Japan's export system properly... Based on our stance on various topics, we will remain consistent and firmly await South Korea's appropriate response."

The decision comes a month after Japan tightened exports to South Korea of materials used in the production of memory chips and display panels, and would be the first time that Japan removed a country from the list.

South Korea's foreign minister called the decision 'arbitrary':

(SOUNDBITE) (English) SOUTH KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER, KANG KYUNG-WHA, SAYING:

We are gravely concerned by this decision to say the least.

With South Koreans protesting after the news.

Also drawing the ire of President Moon Jae-in, who fired back in a rare live television broadcast, referencing the Japanese occupation of Korea before World War II.

SOUTH KOREA'S PRESIDENT, MOON JAE-IN, SAYING:

"We won't be defeated by Japan again... If Japan attempts to harm our economy, the Korean Government also has countermeasures with which to respond."

Relations between the two countries began to deteriorate last year following a dispute over wartime forced labor.

The rift between the two U.S. allies comes at a time when Washington wants both working together on North Korea.

According to a senior White House official, Washington has urged Seoul and Tokyo to consider reaching a 'standstill agreement' for the time being.