



South Korea to scrap security deal with Japan

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South Korea says it will scrap an intelligence-sharing pact with Japan, drawing a swift protest from Tokyo and deepening a decades-old dispute over history that has hit trade and undercut security cooperation over North Korea.

Japan's Prime Minister was on the offensive Friday (August 23), after Seoul announced it was cutting intelligence ties with Tokyo.

That means it won't share information on North Korea.

JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER SHINZO ABE SAYING:

"Unfortunately, South Korea has continued with responses that damage the trust between our two countries."

It's the latest development in a growing dispute between the two countries that's affected everything from trade to diplomacy, and now - national security.

A pact between them was due for automatic renewal on Saturday (August 24); it's what's allowed them to share intel on the North's weapons program.

But South Korea on Thursday (August 22) said it's dropping that deal.

Japan's Defense Minister has called for Seoul to reconsider, saying that South Korea didn't appreciate the growing threat from North of its border.

JAPANESE DEFENSE MINISTER, TAKESHI IWAYA, SAYING:

"Considering regional security, cooperation between Japan, South Korea and the U.S. is still crucial."

Reuters' Joyce Lee explains why Tokyo is so concerned.

REUTERS CORRESPONDENT JOYCE LEE SAYING:

"Although Japan has excellent reconnaissance assets, South Korea is closer to North Korea and can detect launches faster as well as having great human intelligence.

Now South Korea has said that it would continue sharing information with Japan under a less binding pre-existing deal called TISA."

Under TISA, Japan and South Korea will likely go back to sharing intelligence through the U.S. Military and experts say there's a risk information could be lost in the process.

The dispute between the two stems from a long and bitter shared history dating back to the Japanese colonization of the Korean Peninsula in 1910.

Japan recently refused to compensate South Koreans its firms forced into work during the Second World War.

Instead it slapped Seoul with trade restrictions and it's spiraled downward from there.

The U.S. has expressed its concern over the feud between two of its biggest Asian allies.

On Thursday Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urging them to cooperate - he's been the point person before in talks with Pyongyang.

America's main concern is weaker security at a time when North Korea continues a series of short-range missile tests.

On Friday, Pyongyang said through state media that it was ready to talk with Washington - but reiterated that the one person they won't deal with is Mike Pompeo.