

Daily Memo: Frictions Return Between Japan and South Korea

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Tokyo and Seoul are at it again. The endless **dispute between Seoul and Tokyo over wartime atrocities** is flaring up again. On Friday, a South Korean court ordered Japan to pay out new reparations to a dozen former so-called comfort women, or victims of Japanese wartime sexual slavery. This comes amid an ongoing legal process aimed at seizing and liquidating assets of certain Japanese companies to fund the compensation – the sort of move that triggered the **Japan-South Korea trade dispute** in 2019. Tokyo is protesting.

Israeli deployments. Israel **deployed Iron Dome and Patriot air defense batteries** to the southern city of Eliat. Together, the systems can defend against rockets, missiles, drones and aircraft. This is coupled with reports that Israel sent a submarine to the Red Sea. Both moves are seen as responses to threats from Iran. For its part, Tehran **debuted a strategic missile base** located on the Persian Gulf.

India's periphery. The Indian government **launched a \$3.8 billion project** meant to increase employment and investment in Jammu and Kashmir. The plan, which includes investment and tax incentives and promotes industrial development, runs through 2037. Next door, in Ladakh, the Indian government **approved the construction** of eight hydroelectric projects along the Indus River in the Kargil and Leh districts. They will collectively generate up to 144 megawatts. Delhi's moves reflect its need to strengthen control over peripheral territories that are contested by neighboring countries.

Water politics in Crimea. After a December drought, the water supply in all Crimean reservoirs has decreased to 31.3 million cubic meters. **Some districts have had to limit their water consumption**. This definitely worries the Kremlin, which must solve the water supply problem soon, as Ukraine refuses to restore the supply without definite concessions from Russia. **Funding for Crimea's development programs has been increased** from 310 billion rubles (\$4.2 billion) to 712 billion rubles and has been extended by two years (until 2024).

Mending ties between France and Turkey? During a visit to Portugal, which recently took over the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, **Turkey's foreign minister said Ankara is ready to normalize relations with France**

despite their differences on issues such as Syria, Libya, the Eastern Mediterranean and the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenian-French relations. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron on a host of bilateral issues, including economic cooperation, as well as the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

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