

S.Korea's Yoon says cooperation with US, Japan key to overcoming N.Korea threats



South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol speaks during a ceremony of the 104th anniversary of the March 1st Independence Movement Day against Japanese colonial rule, in Seoul on March 1, 2023. Jung Yeon-Je/Pool via REUTERS reuters_tickers

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SEOUL (Reuters) - South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol said on Wednesday that trilateral cooperation with the United States and Japan has become more important than ever to overcoming North Korea's growing nuclear threats and other crises.

Yoon spoke at an event commemorating the country's historic March First independence movement against Japan's 1910-1945 occupation of Korea.

"Japan has transformed from a militaristic aggressor of the past into a partner that shares the same universal values with us," said Yoon.

"Today Korea and Japan cooperate on issues of security and economy. We also work together to cope with global challenges... We must stand in solidarity with countries that share universal values."

Yoon's comments come after South Korea's presidential office said on Tuesday that officials from South Korea, the United States and Japan have held their first economic security dialogue, amid efforts to strengthen supply chain resilience and develop technology.

Though Japan and South Korea are at times uneasy neighbours, the three countries are keen to expand cooperation in various fields in the face of increased global tensions, a more assertive China and an unpredictable North Korea.

Last November, Yoon and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida agreed to continue discussions for a prompt resolution of pending issues, according to Yoon's office, as they seek to improve relations dogged by historical disputes.

(Reporting by Joyce Lee; Editing by Tom Hogue and Michael Perry)