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This photo, taken on Tuesday, released by Pyongyang's state-run Korean Central News Agency the following day, shows the launch of a rocket carrying a spy satellite, Malligyong-1, at Tongchang-ri, North Pyongan Province, North Korea.



This photo, taken Wednesday, shows the U-2S Dragon Lady, a surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft, landing in Osan Air Base in Pyeongtaek, Gyeonggi Province.

Seoul suspends inter-Korean military accord

S. Korea to resume surveillance flights near border after more than five years

By Jung Min-ho
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Seoul on Wednesday partially suspended an inter-Korean military agreement designed to ease tensions and decided to resume surveillance operations along the border with North Korea in response to Pyongyang's launch of a spy satellite. The South Korean government said it was a "necessary measure" for self-defense.

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At an extraordinary Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo said North Korea's latest provocation — and violation of the agreement — shows it has no intention to comply with it.

"A partial suspension of the agreement is a necessary measure for national security and the minimum



action for self-defense," he said after endorsing the proposal. It was subsequently approved in less than an hour by President Yoon Suk Yeol, who is on a state visit to Britain.

North Korea said it placed its first reconnaissance satellite in orbit on Tuesday and vowed to launch more in the near future, despite South Korea's warning that such obvious violations of U.N. Security Council

resolutions could lead to the official suspension of the military accord.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff confirmed later that day that the North Korean satellite entered orbit successfully. But the military advisory group said it would require further analysis to determine whether it can function as a reconnaissance satellite.

"North Korea's launch of a so-called military reconnaissance satellite, whether it succeeds or not, chiefly aims to develop surveillance capabilities and the performance of its intercontinental ballistic missile in a (broader) effort to materialize its nuclear and missile threats," Yoon said at a National Security Council meeting, according to the presidential office.

In a statement, the council said the military accord, inked by the previous Moon Jae-in administration on Sept. 9, 2018, amid a thaw in relations, has virtually been nullified by repeated violations by North Korea — nearly 3,600 times, according to military officials.

The government decision immediately suspended the effectiveness of Article 1, Clause 3 of the agreement, under which the militaries of South Korea and the North should abide by

no-fly zones established close to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

South Korea's military said it will resume aerial surveillance and exercises involving aircraft, including drones, in border areas without specifying a date.

"A helicopter carrying a commander had to land before reaching the no-fly zones, where the commander should move around by car, say, to inspect frontline bases," a high-ranking official at the Ministry of National Defense told reporters. "With the no-fly zones suspended, our military assets in the air can now conduct exercises to their full capacity near the border areas."

On the same day, the nuclear envoys of South Korea, the United States and Japan — Kim Gunn, Jung Pak and Hirofumi Namazu, respectively — spoke by phone and strongly condemned the latest provocation by North Korea.

"They also expressed deep concern that the North carried out a deceptive launch, as it came more than an hour before the time it had previously announced, seriously jeopardizing the safety of planes and vessels this time again," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Seoul said in a statement.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also condemned Pyongyang for carrying out a military satellite launch using ballistic missile technology.

"Any launch by the DPRK (North Korea) using ballistic missile technology goes against relevant Security Council resolutions," the statement said. "The Secretary-General reiterates his call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its international obligations under all relevant Security Council resolutions."

According to military officials, South Korea is now in talks with the U.S. and Japan to conduct joint maritime drills possibly involving key strategic assets in the coming days. On Wednesday, the USS Santa Fe (SSN-763), a Los Angeles-class nuclear-powered submarine, arrived in Jeju Naval Base, joining the USS Carl Vinson, a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier that docked in Busan the previous day.

"We're in consultations to conduct combined South Korea-U.S., and South Korea-U.S.-Japan maritime exercises in the southern waters of the Korean Peninsula this weekend," an official said.

NK spy satellite launch feared to pose fresh threat to S. Korea

Surveillance satellite may help Pyongyang conduct precision missile strikes

By Lee Hyo-jin
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North Korea's launch of a military spy satellite — if proven to be successful in terms of its surveillance functions — will pose heightened security threats to South Korea, analysts said Wednesday.

While it may take a few days, if not weeks, to fully determine whether the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's ambition to obtain a military reconnaissance satellite has been achieved, experts said the launch itself shows a significant improvement in Pyongyang's satellite technology.

North Korea fired a rocket carrying what it claimed to be a military reconnaissance satellite "Malligyong-1" from Tongchang-ri, North Pyongan Province, at 10:43 p.m., Tuesday, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

The satellite was accurately placed into the designated orbit about 12 minutes after liftoff, as reported by the North's state media Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Wednesday morning. The KCNA

Analysis

referred to the launch as the nation's "legitimate right to bolster its self-defense capabilities."

Tuesday's launch marked the North's third attempt following two previous botched endeavors earlier this year.

The South Korean military did not immediately verify whether the launch was a success.

"North Korea made a hasty announcement about the success, which is difficult to accept at face value. We will make a judgment after further analyzing various information, including data shared by the United States," a senior defense official told reporters, Wednesday.

Later in the day, the authorities said the satellite seemed to have entered into orbit.

"The so-called 'military reconnaissance satellite' launched by North Korea has been evaluated to have entered orbit, based on comprehensive analysis of flight trajectory information and other data," the JCS said in a text message sent to reporters.

But it added that confirmation of whether the satellite is properly functioning requires additional analysis through the coordinated efforts of relevant agencies.

Shin Jong-woo, a senior researcher



In this photo carried by North Korean state media Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), Wednesday, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un celebrates with workers over what the state claims was a successful launch of a military reconnaissance satellite on Tuesday night.

at the Korea Defense and Security Forum, a think tank, also said it is too early to make a judgment.

"Just entering orbit doesn't mean that the launch was successful. The satellite would need to deploy its solar panels and then undergo attitude control. We will be able to hear from the North in the coming days if the satellite can actually be utilized," he said.

"Otherwise, it will just be space junk." Nevertheless, Shin pointed out that Tuesday's launch indicates visible technological advancement, which may pose serious threats to Seoul's national security, as the North is expected to send up multiple spy satellites in the future.

Touting the successful launch, the KCNA reported that the national

space agency plans to launch more spy satellites in the near future to continue strengthening its surveillance capabilities over South Korea and other regions related to its military operation.

Yang Moo-jin, the president of the University of North Korea Studies, said the North's space-based surveillance system, if properly established, will serve as the eye for North Korea

in launching more accurate missile strikes.

"Operational spy satellite is not only capable of obtaining real-time information about South Korea's military assets, but it would also bolster the regime's ability to conduct accurate missile strikes on targets," he said.

The spy satellite's surveillance activities could stretch beyond the Korean Peninsula to key U.S. military bases in Guam and Japan.

However, it remains to be seen whether its camera is advanced enough to deliver high-resolution images. Little is known about the satellite's technical capabilities, such as camera operating technology, data processing and the transmission ability of its communication devices.

When the South Korean military retrieved parts of a North Korean spy satellite that plunged into the West Sea in May, authorities asserted that the device had no military utility as a reconnaissance satellite.

But this time may be different, according to experts, who believe that Russia provided technological support for the latest launch. When North Korean leader Kim Jong-un held a summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Russia's space center in September, the latter pledged to help Pyongyang modernize its satellite technology.