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## Why is NK not allowed to launch spy satellites?

*Pyongyang accuses Washington of double standards*

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North Korea is wrong to accuse the United States of having double standards when it comes to spy satellite launches, analysts said, Tuesday, as Pyongyang's action — a clear violation of international laws — contrasts with South Korea's adherence to established protocols in its satellite launch.

The South Korean military successfully launched its first indigenous spy satellite from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, Friday (local time), around a week after North Korea placed its own military reconnaissance satellite into orbit for the first time on Nov. 21.

Unlike Seoul's satellite launch, North Korea's move drew condemnation from the U.S., which labeled it a "brazen violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions."

In response, the reclusive regime argued that its satellite launch was the "legitimate and just right of a sovereign state," claiming that it is not different from South Korea's latest launch of its own spy satellite.

"It is a space-level tragicomedy that the U.S., going frantic with illegal denunciation and sanctions moves over the exercise of the DPRK's sovereignty, has shown behavior based on double standards by launching a spy satellite of the 'Republic of Korea' (ROK) in a shameless manner," a spokesperson for North Korea's National Aerospace Technology Administration (NATA) said in an article released by Pyongyang's offi-

### News Analysis

cial Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), Monday.

The Republic of Korea (ROK) is South Korea's official name, while DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea's official name.

The article added, "Ten years ago, the U.S. claimed that South Korea's satellite launch is different from that of North Korea as the former has no military intention. And now we wonder how absurdly the U.S. would justify the launch of the ROK's spy satellite which has a clear military purpose."

Experts, however, viewed that North Korea's satellite launch constitutes a clear violation of multiple international laws.

"Broadly speaking, any country has the right to pursue space exploration. But in the case of North Korea, the recent launch of its space vehicle using ballistic missile technologies is clearly prohibited under international law," said Cho Han-bum, a senior researcher at the Korea Institute for National Unification.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 1718, which was passed shortly after Pyongyang's October 2006 nuclear test, bans North Korea from launching ballistic missiles or carrying out further nuclear tests, he added.

Park Won-gon, a professor of North Korean studies at Ewha Womans University, echoed that sentiment, highlighting the use of ballistic missile technologies in the satellite launch, as well as the speculated assistance from Russia, which violates U.N. Security Council resolutions.

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Under U.N. Security Council Resolution 2270 adopted in 2016, U.N. member states are banned from providing technical assistance to North Korea, along with training and services related to the production, use and maintenance of arms.

"In addition to the legitimacy issue, the North's satellite deployment was a part of the regime's plan to enhance its military power to reach the ultimate goal of communism of the whole Korean Peninsula, another reason why its action cannot avoid international criticism," Park said.

The professor also said that Pyongyang will continue propaganda efforts in order to portray the recent developments related to spy satellites as a competition in space between two sovereign states.

U.S. officials refuted North Korea's claim that Washington has double standards. "South Korea is not the subject of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions over its (North Korea's) dangerous and destabilizing activities in this area," Matthew Miller, the state department's spokesperson said during a press briefing, Monday (local time), in response to a query about the difference between the two Korea's military satellite launches.