

Spy planes will be downed, N. Korea warns

by UPI

PYONGYANG, North Korea -- North Korea warned Wednesday it will shoot down any U.S. spy aircraft in its airspace, ripping aerial surveillance over the area of a planned rocket launch.

North Korea's state-run radio said the U.S. and South Korea conducted at least 190 aerial spy missions over its territory, including flyovers of Musudan-ri, the coastal launch site, South Korean news agency Yonhap reported.

"Should the U.S. imperialist racketeers dare to perpetrate aerial espionage, interfering with our preparations for a satellite launch for peaceful purposes, our revolutionary forces will shoot them down without spare," Korean Central Broadcasting Station said.

North Korea said it will launch a communications satellite into space between April 4 -8 as part of its space development program. Western countries, however, suspect the launch is a test-firing of North Korea's long-range missile technology.

The United States, Japan and South Korea have deployed warships with U.S.-made anti-missile systems to monitor the launch, The Washington Post said.

Pyongyang said if any country tries to use the missile launch to seek tougher U.N. sanctions against the North, it would terminate its agreement to abandon nuclear weapons and break off denuclearization talks.

Japan, South Korea and the United States said they would seek further punitive action if the missile is launched. The three countries pointed to a 2006 U.N. resolution banning North Korea from activities related to its ballistic missile program.

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