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North Korea threatens US over nuclear-capable bombers

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North Korea has threatened to take military action against the United States and its allies if Washington continues to fly nuclear-capable bombers over the Korean Peninsula.

Pyongyang denounced the joint US-South Korea military exercises and said the drills were an unpardonable provocation and rehearsals for invasion, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on Wednesday.

“The US is introducing a strategic nuclear strike means to the Korean Peninsula at a time when its situation is inching close to the brink of war,” the North Korean Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

North Korea vows a “strong military counteraction” should the strategic bombers make such a sortie to the peninsula again, a foreign ministry spokesperson stated.

The development comes at a time of growing tension between North Korea and South Korea along with its allies.

The Pentagon said at least one B-52 bomber had flown over South Korea during the military exercises.

On March 18, US Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said Washington would provide South Korea with all available military resources “by the US nuclear umbrella.”

Seoul and Washington launched the weeklong annual joint military exercises on March 11, near the Korean Peninsula despite warnings from Pyongyang. The drills involved 10,000 South Korean soldiers and about 3,000 US troops.

North Korea, however, condemned the maneuvers as a launch pad for a “nuclear war.” Pyongyang cut off its communication hotline with Seoul as the drills kicked off, while announcing that it had scrapped the 1953 armistice and peace pacts signed with Seoul in protest against the maneuvers.

On March 7, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed a resolution, drafted by the United States and China, against North Korea over its third nuclear test. The Council imposed sanctions on Pyongyang’s financial dealings and added new names to the UN sanctions blacklist.