# North Korea Launches Ballistic Missile Amid US-South Korea-Japan Military Drills and Reports of Trash Balloons



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SEOUL, South Korea — On Wednesday, North Korea fired a ballistic missile toward its eastern waters, according to South Korea’s military. This action coincided with the deployment of a U.S. aircraft carrier for trilateral military exercises involving the United States, South Korea, and Japan.

Earlier, South Korea had reported that North Korea had been sending large balloons, presumably carrying trash, across the border for the second day in a row. In response, South Korea threatened to retaliate with anti-Pyongyang broadcasts.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff confirmed the missile launch but did not provide additional details. Japan’s Defense Ministry also noted the launch, identifying the missile as a suspected ballistic type.

The USS Theodore Roosevelt arrived in South Korea on Saturday, and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol boarded the carrier on Tuesday, a first since 1994. Yoon emphasized the strong alliance between South Korea and the U.S., praising the joint military capabilities.

The planned departure of the U.S. carrier coincides with the start of the "Freedom Edge" drill, aimed at refining combined military responses in various operational domains.

North Korea’s vice defense minister, Kim Kang Il, described the aircraft carrier’s deployment as “reckless” and “dangerous.” North Korea has historically viewed large-scale U.S.-South Korean drills as invasion practices, often responding with missile launches.

South Korea stated the carrier's presence aims to bolster defenses against North Korea’s nuclear threat and its growing military ties with Russia.