

# Fact Sheet: West Sea Crisis in Korea, Military Escalation

## Contested Waters: Background to a Crisis

By [Global Research](#)

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Region: [Asia](#)

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### [National Campaign to End the Korean War \(NCEKW\)](#)

1. On November 22, 2010, military troops from the Republic of Korea (ROK, or South Korea) and the United States began joint war-simulation exercises, dubbed “Hoguk” [“Defend the State”], a massive endeavor involving 70,000 soldiers, 600 tanks, 500 warplanes, 90 helicopters, and 50 warships. It was slated to take place over a period of nine days.



2. South Korean artillery units located in the West Sea Islands, just seven miles from the North Korean coast, engaged in firing exercises on November 23, 2010, for four hours. According to the South Korean Ministry of National Defense, the units on those islands, including Yeonpyeong Island, fired 3,657 times, or over 900 shells per hour, into contested waters claimed by both Pyongyang and Seoul near the Northern Limit Line (NLL). Drawn unilaterally by the US Navy in 1953, the NLL is not internationally recognized and has never been accepted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea).

3. The South Korean military has stated that its live-fire drills began that day at 10:15 am, describing them as routine test-firing aimed not toward North Korea, but rather in a west-southwest direction. North Korea regarded these firing drills as part of the larger Hoguk military exercises and issued repeated warnings to South Korea, demanding a halt to the war games and warning that it would retaliate if South Korean troops fired live artillery shells into its territorial waters. [more >](#)

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