

US Sends Nuclear-Capable Bomber, Stealth Jets to South Korea

By [Kyle Anzalone](#) and [Will Porter](#)

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Some of America's most advanced military aircraft conducted drills in South Korea on Tuesday as a show of force against North Korea. Pyongyang recently announced that it had made advancements toward deploying a surveillance satellite.

US [B-52s and F-22s](#) took part in a new round of war games in the skies over the Korean Peninsula, joined by South Korean F-35s and F-16s. The B-52 is capable of carrying nuclear weapons, and has long served as one of Washington's primary strategic bombers.

The joint military exercises came soon after the DPRK carried out a test of a newly developed spy satellite, which is among a range of military tech Pyongyang has vowed to produce to better counter the United States.

Throughout 2022, Washington, Seoul and Pyongyang have engaged in a series of escalatory actions. North Korea has conducted a record number of missile tests – including multiple intercontinental ballistic missile launches – and fired projectiles over Japanese territory. US officials, among them [Vice President Kamala Harris](#), have repeatedly threatened to use nuclear weapons against the DPRK and increased deployments of [strategic assets](#) to the Korean Peninsula. Seoul and Washington regularly carry out large-scale, [live-fire war games](#), including the largest aerial military drills ever held between the two countries.

Additionally, the US and South Korea have entered into a trilateral defense agreement with Japan, largely looking toward Pyongyang and Beijing. The North has denounced the security pact, suggesting the United States intends to create a NATO-like alliance in the Pacific.

The heightened military tensions in 2022 are a break from the previous four years. Starting in the second half of the Donald Trump administration, Washington and Seoul scaled back their military activity and opened up a dialog with Pyongyang, ultimately netting a drastic reduction in war games and weapons tests on all sides. However, the Joe Biden White House

has broken with the policy of engagement, almost entirely favoring military action over diplomacy.

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Kyle Anzalone is the opinion editor of Antiwar.com and news editor of the Libertarian Institute.

Will Porter is the assistant news editor of the Libertarian Institute and a staff writer and editor at RT.

Kyle Anzalone and Will Porter host Conflicts of Interest along with Connor Freeman.

Featured image: US B-52H, F-22, and C-17 aircraft fly together during a joint air exercise with South Korea, December 20, 2022. (Credit: Republic of Korea Defense Ministry)

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