

Russia Points Finger at U.S. Over Korean Border Altercation

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Russia's Foreign Ministry has blamed tension between North and South Korea, who fired hundreds of artillery rounds into each other's waters on Monday, on South Korea's involvement with the U.S. military.

Following a North Korean drill in which shells crossed the disputed maritime border between the two countries, South Korea responded by firing shells into North Korean waters, officials in Seoul said, Reuters reported.

Residents of a South Korean island near the sea boundary fled to shelters, though neither side fired shells at military installations or land, the Guardian reported.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that "it is impossible not to see that the periodic aggravation of the situation in the region coincides with the annual large-scale military exercises of the U.S. and South Korea," adding that Moscow has "repeatedly drawn attention to the inadmissibility of excess military activity in northeast Asia."

The exchange of shells follows recent missile tests by North Korea in response to the U.S.-South Korea military exercises, as well as an announcement that the North would conduct a “new form” of nuclear test.

The Foreign Ministry’s statement also said that Russia is “worried” by Pyongyang's plans to continue nuclear testing and called for both sides to “show maximum restraint and avoid any statements or actions leading to a further degradation of the situation on the Korean peninsula and the surrounding area.”

The Yellow Sea has been the site of repeated conflict between North and South Korea, including North Korea's 2010 shelling of an island near the sea border that killed four South Koreans.

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