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South Korea May Send Military Personnel to Ukraine Amid Suspected North Korean Deployments – Yonhap

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North Korean soldiers. **Uwe Brodrecht (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

South Korea may soon deploy military intelligence personnel in Ukraine to monitor North Korean troops claimed to be fighting for Russia, the Yonhap news agency reported Tuesday, citing an anonymous government source.

Seoul's spy agency said Friday that Pyongyang sent a "large-scale" troop deployment to fight in Moscow's war against Ukraine, claiming that 1,500 North Korean special forces were already undergoing training in Russia's Far East before they were expected to be sent to the front lines.

A North Korean representative at the United Nations later dismissed the South's claims as a "groundless rumor." Russia has not confirmed the troop deployment but defended its military cooperation with Pyongyang as "not directed against the interests of South Korea's security" after Seoul summoned the Russian ambassador there.

“There is a possibility that personnel will be sent to Ukraine to monitor the tactics and combat capabilities of North Korean special forces dispatched in support of Russia,” Yonhap quoted a government source in Seoul as saying.

The personnel would reportedly be recruited from the South Korean military’s intelligence units to analyze North Korean battlefield tactics and help interrogate any North Korean troops captured in Ukraine.

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Authorities in Seoul are also considering whether to include defensive and, eventually, lethal weapons supplies to its current logistics and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, according to Yonhap’s source.

South Korea “strongly condemned” Pyongyang on Tuesday, urging its troops to be immediately withdrawn and warning of “phased countermeasures” in coordination with the international community.

The South Korean Defense Ministry said earlier that Moscow may be providing financial assistance or advanced technologies to North Korea in exchange for troop support.

Washington and its allies have already voiced concern about North Korea supplying weapons to Russia, which invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

U.S. Ambassador to the UN Robert Wood said South Korea’s reports of North Korean plans to send soldiers to Ukraine would mark a “dangerous and highly concerning” step in Russian-North Korean military ties.

Yonhap also reported Tuesday that a pro-war Telegram account posted a photo showing the Russian and North Korean flags waving side by side on a Ukrainian battlefield.

AFP contributed reporting.

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