

North Korea

N.Korea Deploys MiG-29 Fighter Jets on Frontline

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North Korea has deployed several MiG-29 fighter jets near the border with South Korea and increased air combat drills.

"There are signs that the MiG-29s, which are normally stationed near Pyongyang, have been forward-deployed recently," a military spokesman here said Monday. There have been frequent air combat drills in the frontline areas as well.

Another military spokesman said the North normally keeps its fighter jets grounded due to a fuel shortage, but now they are flying sorties almost every day.



North Korean leader Kim Jong-un salutes as he watches an air combat drill in an unidentified location in North Korea, in this grab from [North] Korean Central Television on Sunday.

The maneuvers seem to be aimed at discouraging reconnaissance activities by South Korea and the U.S. after the North tested a range of short-range missiles in recent days, according to Shin Jong-woo at the Korea Defense and Security Forum.

The U.S. has been conducting reconnaissance with special aircraft like the rapidly deployable RC-135S Cobra Ball since late last year, when the North threatened it with a "Christmas gift."

On Sunday, state media published pictures of MiG-29s shooting down imaginary enemy aircraft with air-to-air missiles, as leader Kim Jong-un watched an Air Force ceremony.