

Korean Space race continues with the latest Space X Falcon 9 launch.

10 April 2024 Adam Jeffs, Editor, SAE Media Group

Space X has sent the second South Korean spy satellite into orbit on a Falcon 9 rocket as they race with North Korea to advance space-based military capabilities



Credit: South Korea Defense Ministry

The military space community witnessed the [latest development in the Korean space race](#) over the weekend, with the successful launch of a South Korean military reconnaissance satellite. This is the second successful reconnaissance satellite launch by South Korea, with the [first](#) having entered orbit back in December of 2023.

The satellite launched on a Space X Falcon 9 rocket at 19:17 PST on Sunday, April 7th from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. This is the latest move in an ongoing race between North and South Korea to enhance space-based intelligence and reconnaissance capabilities. The race began in November of 2023, with both nations on the Korean peninsula [announcing plans](#) to have their first military satellites in orbit by the end of November or in early December.

Both nations succeeded with plans to get space-based reconnaissance operations off the ground, with North Korea putting the [Malligyong-1 satellite into orbit](#) in late November of 2023 and South Korea succeeding with their first launch from the Vandenberg Space Force Base in California on December 1st.

North Korea experienced some difficulty with initial launches however, with the [first satellite](#) ending up on the bottom of the ocean after the rocket's second stage malfunctioned during launch, according to Pyongyang. The South Korean military [confirmed the failed launch](#), announcing that it had salvaged what was presumed to be part of the wreckage 124 miles west of the island of Eocheongdo.

South Korea will continue efforts to bolster space-based intelligence gathering capabilities, with plans to launch a [total of five spy satellites](#) with the help of Space X by 2025. While North Korean plans are not made public, it is likely that they will seek to match or exceed the efforts of the South Koreans across the same time frame.

For more on the latest developments in international, space-based military communications, sign up for the [Global MilSatCom 2024 event](#).