

Aggressive Move by Washington: US Deploys Nuclear Powered Aircraft Carrier to South Korea

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WASHINGTON — The U.S. is sending the massive aircraft carrier the USS George Washington to South Korea this week, the military announced Monday.

The deployment is considered a show of force in the wake of the sinking of a South Korean warship last March that killed 46 sailors. South Korea and an international team of investigators have blamed North Korea for the attack.

The carrier was expected to be in South Korea's port of Busan by Wednesday and could participate in an upcoming military exercise.

The nuclear powered carrier, one of the world's largest warships, will be accompanied by three destroyers — the McCampbell, the John S. McCain and the Lassen.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton were expected to announce more details this week about the upcoming joint military exercise. Gates and Clinton were visiting Seoul to meet with their South Korean counterparts.

The military exercise and deployment of the George Washington has been under discussion since shortly after the March attack on the South Korean navy vessel, the Cheonan.

The Cheonan's sinking was considered South Korea's worst military disaster since the Korean War, which ended in a cease-fire in 1953. No formal peace treaty was ever signed, and more than 28,000 U.S. troops remain stationed in the south with a vow to protect its critical ally.

The deployment of the aircraft carrier could be seen by North Korea as a particularly aggressive move by the United States because of the ship's sheer size. According to a Navy website, the George Washington is 244 feet high from keel to mast and can accommodate some 6,250 crew members.

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