

《China calls for calm on THAAD, vows to protect its interests》

Controversy has followed the anti-missile defense system from the start. The US says it's to protect against DPRK threats. Many South Koreans aren't convinced. Protests against the deployment are growing stronger. As tensions continue to rise in Northeast Asia, Beijing is urging both Washington and Seoul to scrap the plan.

"THAAD is damaging the strategic balance and security in the region and China strongly opposes the deployment of THAAD. The Chinese military will continue to conduct specific exercises and training for real combat, and continue with operational tasks on new weapons and equipment, resolutely safeguarding national security, and regional peace and stability," Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson Yang Yujun said.

THAAD is designed to intercept short and medium-range ballistic missiles during their final phase of flight. But its coverage, especially the monitoring scope of its X-Band radar, goes far beyond its host country.

Beijing has repeatedly expressed opposition to its deployment. And amid growing security uncertainties, China launches a new aircraft carrier. The Chinese and Russian militaries have issued a joint statement against US global anti-ballistic missile systems.

"The relationship between the Chinese and Russian militaries shows the high level strategic trust, and coordination between the two sides. Over the past 4 months, the two sides have held two meetings on missile defense. That's symbolizes the determination of two countries to deal with challenges to regional security and stability," Yang said.

Pyongyang regards the installation of THAAD next door as a provocation. While the US and the DPRK continue to exchange heated rhetoric over the scale of Pyongyang's nuclear program, China again called for restraint.

As Pyongyang vows to conduct another nuclear test anytime soon, it is difficult to dissuade Seoul from taking measures to boost defense. But the deployment of THAAD is adding other problems for South Korea and the region. All this means China's efforts in pushing forward a nuclear-free peninsula and its role in cooling down the heat are facing their biggest challenge to date.