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## S. Korea successfully launches 3rd spy satellite into orbit

South Korea successfully placed into orbit its third homegrown spy satellite launched from a U.S. space center Saturday, the defense ministry said, as the country seeks to bolster its independent surveillance capabilities on North Korea.

A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying the satellite normally lifted off at 8:34 p.m. (Korean time) from the Vandenberg Space Force Base in California as planned and sent the reconnaissance satellite into orbit at 9:24 p.m., according to the ministry.

The launched satellite succeeded in communicating with an overseas ground station at 11:30 p.m., it added, in a step indicating the satellite's

normal operation.

It is the third military satellite launched under South Korea's plan to acquire five spy satellites by 2025 to better monitor North Korea with an independent military satellite network. South Korea has previously relied largely on satellite imagery provided by the United States.

"We will strive to bolster our military's independent surveillance capabilities by succeeding with additional launches going forward," the ministry said, noting the success of the latest launch has enabled more accurate and swift identification of North Korean provocations.

(Yonhap)