North Korea (DPRK) is Upgrading its "Super-Large Multiple Rocket Launcher (MRL)"

On November 28, 2019, North Korea conducted a “thirteenth, anniversary, missile launch”: a major multiple rocket launchers (MRL) weapons test, when two large-caliber short-range projectiles were launched from its South Hamgyong province into the Sea of Japan. Yonhap News Agency later clarified that the two projectiles traveled a maximum distance of 380 km at an altitude of approximately 97 km, quoting a press release given by the South Korean army’s Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Judging by the projectile's tactical and technical characteristics, it was the same MRL, a 600 mm rocket launcher with a wheeled platform and four guides, which had been tested on August 24, September 10 and October 31.

It is worth noting that the DPRK missile industry has gone from carrying out a minimum test as a trial to a series of test for new weapons, and it has not so much been checking the actual tactical and technical characteristics of shells, but the level of readiness to fire them out by ripple fire or in volleys. The interval between shots used to be 2-3 minutes, now it is 30 seconds.

According to the South Korean media, this is an indication that North Korea has reached the final verification stage to check the system before it is deployed to troops. The DPRK is already armed with 122, 240 and 300 mm rocket artillery systems as it is, and an improvement in their characteristics poses a significant threat to the South.

The South Korean press has said the weapons test is part of "a tactic of small provocative actions by North Korea aimed at South Korea, in order to influence the US dialog on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." One thing that was noticeable was that "information about where the projectiles were launched from, the direction and
The reaction to the launch was predictable. Some countries simply paid no attention to the launch, as strictly speaking, the MRL is not formally categorized as a short-range missile. Japan called it an intercontinental ballistic missile launch and a threat to the entire international community, which was met with a barrage of criticism from the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed strong regret and urged North Korea to immediately stop such moves, but they were not only referring to the MRL launch, but also to the firing drills it carried out using coastal guns on the border islet of Changrin, which was reported on November 25.

The Seoul government sent a message to Pyongyang to protest the moves strongly and urged it to stop such acts, but the North has given no response.

Washington has taken a cautious stance: the US Department of State would only say it was aware the launches had taken place, but did not provide any further details. The US is monitoring the situation and working closely with its allies in the region.

CNN, Reuters and other media outlets worldwide, most of which have an anti-Trump slant, highlighted that North Korea had carried out the launch on November 28, the same day Thanksgiving is celebrated in the United States, and the Hwasong-15 ICBM test had been carried out on the same date two years ago. The Washington Post called the launch a "Thanksgiving message to Trump", and Professor Vipin Narang from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) noted that North Korea has seriously modernized its missile and nuclear capabilities. According to Narang, the US missed the opportunity to slow North Korea's work to develop its nuclear potential in February this year at the North Korea–United States Hanoi Summit.

Will there be more launches? It is highly likely that North Korea will limit itself to multiple rocket launchers and short-range missiles until the end of the year (Kim has promised!), but next year we might see something bigger. Rumors are already going around based on satellite data about activity at the Sohae Satellite Launching Station (which would give the impression that Kim does not intend to launch an ICMB, but just another satellite; he insists on the right to peaceful space development), which the Asahi Shimbun has written about, citing American and South Korean sources. There are also rumors that the North Korean military has started to build concrete platforms, up to several dozen meters length and width, which can be installed on a mobile set to launch various types of missiles, including ICBMs. There may be more to this than just the creation of deception targets to make it more difficult to determine where the next missile launch is going to take place.

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