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3 Leadership reshuffle

Yoon accepts spy agency chief's resignation

Nationwide 24-hour reservation
1588-2001
KOREAN AIR



This photo released by the North's official Korean Central News Agency shows the launch of a rocket carrying a Mailliyong-1 spy satellite at Tongchang-ni, North Pyongan Province, Tuesday. **Yonhap**

How advanced are NK's ICBM capabilities?

Launch likely to have involved Russian assistance: spy agency

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North Korea's recent launch of a space launch vehicle (SLV) has set off alarm bells in the U.S. and worldwide, intensifying concerns about progress in the regime's intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capabilities. The U.S. National Security Council strongly denounced North Korea's manipulation of ballistic missile technology in the guise of an SLV.

North Korea launched its military reconnaissance satellite from the Sohae Satellite Launching Ground in North Pyongan Province last Tuesday. Experts posit that North Korea is using satellite launch tests to refine the precision of its ICBMs, employing SLV technology specifically for dedicated ICBM purposes. This has fueled perceptions within the international community that North Korea is advancing its ICBM program.

There are also concerns about Russia's involvement in North Korea's technological advancements, with speculation about Russian assistance in data transmission between ground stations and satellites.

The National Intelligence Service (NIS) confirmed the success of North Korea's reconnaissance satellite launch, and suggested Russian involvement.

"The success of this launch is likely to have involved assistance from Russia," an NIS official said during a National

Assembly intelligence committee meeting, Thursday.

"During the summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Russian President Vladimir Putin, Putin publicly expressed his willingness to support the launch itself. After the summit, North Korea provided Russia with blueprints and data related to the first and second launches, and there is evidence that Russia provided the analysis results."

The Chollima-1 SLV shares critical technologies with an ICBM, raising concerns that, if North Korea successfully equips it with a nuclear warhead and reentry technology, it could be repurposed as a dedicated ICBM for nuclear strikes.

Military assessments indicate that North Korea's reconnaissance satellite has entered a stable orbit, raising concerns about the country posing a new threat to the U.S. and South Korea by enhancing its space surveillance capabilities.

The recent launch of the Chollima-1, using liquid fuel propulsion similar to the Hwasong-15 and Hwasong-17, is considered a test of the Hwasong-15 and 17 at the optimum angle of ascent. This year witnessed four such launches, including Hwasong-15 and 17 tests and two Hwasong-18 solid-fuel ICBM tests, all at high angles.

Experts suggest North Korea will use the data from the recent launch to enhance the performance of its existing ICBMs.

Regarding advancements, a defense expert noted that the preparation time required for liquid-fuel rockets allows a window for detection and pre-emptive measures in the event of a potential nuclear launch.

"Liquid rockets have better thrust-to-

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North Korea's announcement of additional launches suggests the possibility of launching multiple satellites.
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North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, alongside his daughter Ju-ae, waves as he joins a photo session with a group of engineers and scientists who contributed to the country's successful launch of a military spy satellite, at the National Aerospace Technology Administration in Pyongyang, Thursday, in this photo released by the North's official Korean Central News Agency the next day. **Yonhap**

weight ratios than solid rockets, allowing them to propel heavier warheads over longer distances. Russia possesses such capabilities, making it difficult for the U.S. to accurately track the trajectory of Russian ICBMs," said Lee Il-woo, a director at the Korea Defense Network. "However, in the case of North Korea, the launch site is quite obvious, making it challenging for North Korea to launch undetected and most likely suppressed in advance."

If North Korea successfully deploys multiple reconnaissance satellites, the space sur-

veillance threat becomes more severe to the U.S. and South Korea.

Military sources said, even with the low-resolution satellite launched this time, efforts to secure previously unavailable space surveillance capabilities should not be underestimated.

The estimated resolution of North Korea's reconnaissance satellite is three to five meters, allowing limited monitoring of major U.S. military bases, movements in Guam and the deployment of U.S. strategic assets in South Korea.

"North Korea's announcement of additional launches suggests the possibility of launching multiple satellites. Despite hav-

ing lower resolution, these satellites play a role in roughly locating the deployment of U.S. strategic assets, such as aircraft carriers, around the Korean Peninsula," Lee said.

However, with potential Russian support, if North Korea develops high-resolution reconnaissance satellites and deploys more than 10, it could monitor key military activities of the U.S. and South Korea almost in real time. The military authorities express concern that if North Korea integrates nuclear missiles and multiple high-performance reconnaissance satellites targeting the U.S., it could severely impact U.S. deterrence.