

With New Missile Test, North Korea Promises 'Package of Gifts' for U.S.

Over the holiday weekend, North Korea launched another missile test, this time launching what some observers believe to be its third different weapon system in as many weeks.

According to state-run media, the medium-range missile—believed to be a KN-17—struck within 23 feet of its target after traveling more than 300 miles. The government statement read:

Respected Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un guided a test-fire of ballistic rocket equipped with precision guidance system.

At a launching site, he looked round a caterpillar self-propelled launching pad vehicle and a ballistic rocket based on precision guidance system.

He learned in detail about the tactical and technical specifications of the rocket and expressed satisfaction over the fact that its preparatory process before launching was further automated than the preceding Hwasong serial rockets to complete the system for markedly reducing the launching time so as to rapidly contain the enemies' armed provocations.

After being reported about its test-fire program at the command post, he ordered the launch of that ballistic rocket.

The test was conducted in the way of medium range firing for minute remote observation to the last-stage guidance of warhead. It is aimed to verify the technical indices of new-type precision guided ballistic rockets capable of making

ultra-precision strike on the enemies' objects at any area and examining the reliability of the caterpillar self-propelled launching pad vehicle, newly designed to operate under various battle conditions.

The ballistic rocket flew toward the eastern sky where the day was breaking and correctly hit a designated target point with deviation of seven meters after flying at medium range.

The test fire verified the flight stability of the ballistic rocket loaded with fin-controlled warhead in the active flying section and reconfirmed the accuracy of velocity correction and attitude stabilization system by a small heat jet engine in the middle flying section.

It also verified the accuracy of ultra-precision guidance in the re-entry section by more precise late-stage guidance system and fully confirmed the running features in different geographical conditions of newly-developed caterpillar self-propelled launching pad vehicle and features of its automated launching preparation process.

Seeing the successful test-fire of ballistic rocket, he said that the rocket, which appeared for the first time at the square of military parade marking the Day of the Sun, seems to be sharp shooter's arms of precision hitting a target and such an accurate hit would [receive notice from the] eyes of the enemies. "Our Party highly appreciates this success," he said, adding: "The national defense science research field making steady victorious advance under the deep care and direct guidance of our Party is now ready to apply world-level ultra-modern military science and technologies in the Korean way as it wishes."

"Whenever news of our recent valuable victory is broadcast, the Yankees will be very much worried, and the gangsters of the south Korean puppet army will get dispirited more and more," he said.

He stressed the need to continue developing more powerful strategic weapons on the basis of the present success.

The national defense research field should clearly show the might of our self-reliant defense industry in a multi-phased and successive way under the timetable and road map worked out by the Party, he said, expressing belief that it would make greater leaping progress in the present stamina so as to send bigger “packages of gifts” to the Yankees.

The statement suggests the North Koreans may have developed what is known as “terminal maneuverability,” which allows for warheads to be piloted in the final moments of flight toward their intended targets. This would be one means of evading the Patriot Advanced batteries stationed in Japan and even the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system now deployed in South Korea.

The missile also had a payload that was about 17 percent larger than standard for its size. This suggests the North Koreans could be attempting to make their mid-range missiles nuclear capable.

In a departure from post-previous missile launches, the White House offered no official response. {eoa}