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North Korea cruise missile launches send a message to 'arch-enemy' South Korea

Запуски крилатих ракет Північної Кореї посилюють сигнал «залятому ворогові» Південній Кореї

В 2024 році Кім Чен Ин оголосив Південну Корею «головним ворогом» своєї країни, відмовився від агентств, які займаються возз'єднанням та інформаційно-просвітницькою діяльністю, та погрожував війною через «навіть 0,001 мм» територіального зазіхання.

Пхеньян також нараджує випробування зброї, включаючи випробування «підводної системи ядерної зброї» та запуск твердопаливної гіперзвукової балістичної ракети. Лідер Північної Кореї заявив, що Пхеньян без вагань «покладе край» Південній Кореї у разі нападу, назвавши Сеул «найнебезпечнішою і першою ворожою державою Півночі та незмінним залятим ворогом». Президент Південної Кореї Юн Сок Йоль пообіцяв дати рішучу відповідь у разі нападу Пхеньяна, закликавши своїх військових «спочатку діяти, а потім повідомляти», якщо їх спровокують. З моменту приходу до влади у 2022 році войовничий Юн Сок Йоль зміцнив оборонну співпрацю зі США та Японією, включаючи розширення спільних навчань, щоб протистояти зростаючим загрозам з боку Пхеньяну.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/world/news/north-korea-cruise-missile-launches-a-message-to-arch-enemy-south-korea-20240214>

North Korea fired missiles over its east coast.

The country also tested a new multiple rocket launcher.

North Korea has been ramping up weapons tests.

North Korea fired several cruise missiles off its east coast on Wednesday, Seoul's military said, the latest in a string of weapons tests this year.

"Our military detected several unknown cruise missiles over the waters northeast of Wonsan around 09:00 today (12:00 GMT) and South Korea-US intelligence authorities are conducting a detailed analysis," the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

It added that it was "strengthening surveillance and vigilance, and closely watching for any additional signs and activities from North Korea".

Earlier this week, North Korea announced it had tested of a new control system for a multiple rocket launcher it said would have an "increased" battlefield role.

So far this year, Kim has declared South Korea his country's "principal enemy", jettisoned agencies dedicated to reunification and outreach, and threatened war over "even 0.001mm" of territorial infringement.

Pyongyang has also been ramping up weapons tests, including an "underwater nuclear weapon system" test and the firing of a solid-fuelled hypersonic ballistic missile.

It has also launched a flurry of cruise missiles, prompting speculation from experts that it is testing the weapons before shipping them to Moscow for use in Ukraine.

Pyongyang and Moscow have bolstered ties in recent months, with leader Kim Jong Un making a rare trip to Russia to meet President Vladimir Putin in September.

Seoul and Washington have accused the North of supplying Russia with weapons in exchange for Moscow's technical support for Kim's nascent satellite programme, which would violate a raft of UN sanctions on both regimes.

Unlike their ballistic counterparts, the testing of cruise missiles is not banned under current UN sanctions on Pyongyang.

Cruise missiles tend to be jet-propelled and fly at a lower altitude than more sophisticated ballistic missiles, making them harder to detect and intercept.

Leader Kim repeated on Friday that Pyongyang would not hesitate to "put an end" to South Korea if attacked, calling Seoul the North's "most dangerous and first enemy state and invariable arch-enemy".

In January, North Korea fired an artillery barrage near two South Korean border islands, prompting a live-fire drill by the South and evacuation orders for residents.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol has vowed a strong response if Pyongyang attacks, calling on his military to "act first, report later" if provoked.

The hawkish Yoon has bolstered defence cooperation with the US and Japan since coming to office in 2022, including expanding joint drills, to counter Pyongyang's growing threats.

Pyongyang has drawn closer to Moscow in other areas than defence, with a group of Russian tourists - the first known foreign tour group since before pandemic-linked border closures in 2020 - arriving in the North Friday for a four-day visit.

It has become harder for Russians to travel to Europe and the US since sanctions were imposed following the invasion of Ukraine.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who has also visited Pyongyang, said last year that the North could be recommended as a tourist destination, Tass reported.