



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

North Korea's first spy satellite - a new aggressive operation against neighbours



Starting Wednesday and in the next 10 days, a window will be open for North Korea to launch its first spy satellite, according to announcements from Pyongyang, which should be taken with a pinch of salt.

We should also be sceptical regarding the picture from 2 weeks ago when the state news agency reported that Kim Jong Un checked the military spy satellite and approved the "action plan" for its launch at the national aerospace agency.

The leader of North Korea, dressed in a white protective suit, accompanied by his daughter and surrounded by scientists, did indeed pose next to the object covered in gold-coloured foil, which is supposed to be the main component of the satellite.

However, there is no data on the performance of the satellite, particularly its ability to monitor military activities of its "enemies" (the US and allies in the region) in "real-time". There are doubts about whether it is a satellite or something else entirely.

Worthless satellites

Pyongyang demonstrated the ability to launch satellites into space in 2012 and 2016, although they were Earth observation satellites. However, their performance has been poor.

They have never managed to send images from space, and according to experts, the new "spy" satellite will not perform much better either because, according to the images published so far, it seems too small and poorly designed to carry equipment for high-resolution imagery.

Whatever Pyongyang tries to launch in the next ten days, it does not look as if it will significantly change the balance of power in the region in North Korea's favour.

But it is disturbing that the offensive military operations are continuing, endangering countries in the region, primarily South Korea and Japan, which have been increasing their defence measures because of this. Unlike

previous launches, Pyongyang, strangely enough, informed the Japanese authorities that it would perform a launch attempt in early June.

The Japanese coast guard took steps to protect against the possible failure of the launch of the rocket in the area of the Yellow Sea, and informed the authorities of other countries about the risk.

Testing illegal rockets

However, a much greater concern stems from the possibility that Pyongyang, under the "guise" of a satellite, actually wants to conduct another test of its intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

"North Korea will go ahead with the satellite launch, I think most analysts believe that it's actually an ICBM - demonstrating increased capabilities of being able to attack US bases in the Pacific but also on the mainland", said Stephen Nagy, a professor at International Christian University.

It is a technology that was banned from North Korea by the UN Security Council, which Seoul immediately warned Pyongyang about, stressing that it is a provocation and a threat to peace, which means an illegal launch should be cancelled immediately.

The same issue was discussed by the nuclear envoys of the US, South Korea, and Japan. They have pledged to call jointly for a decisive international response to counter the launch of a North Korean spy satellite.

Kim has several important reasons to turn a deaf ear to the demands of his surroundings. All are related to his internal image as an unwavering protector of the people against enemies who want to destroy them.

Kim ignores invitations for talks

Kim promised his people that he would

develop high-tech weapons, which he would use to match the Western "enemies". The spy satellite is on that list. The list also includes nuclear submarines, hypersonic missiles, multi-warhead missiles, and ICBMs.

The accelerated launch of the spy satellite should also be viewed as a response to the recent large-scale military manoeuvres by the US and South Korean armies near the border with North Korea, which marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the alliance.

Also, seemingly less important, but in the context of domestic propaganda, Kim wants to outdo his southern neighbour, whose first such satellite could be launched later this year.

Seoul recently sent the first commercial-grade satellite into orbit. It was a significant technological step towards the next phase and the launch of the first South Korean spy satellite.

This is why Kim will not pay much attention to warnings that he is again seriously violating international security obligations and endangering the immediate neighbourhood, in addition to the fact that he usually threatens attacks on distant "enemies", primarily the US.

Pyongyang refused the very open invitation of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida prepared to meet with Kim Jong Un at "any time without preconditions", and that he was making efforts to organise a summit as soon as possible.

Kim will subordinate talks to his aggressive military actions, such as the announced launch of a spy satellite (or an ICBM test).

The allies' response to this dangerous policy could only strengthen military cooperation in the region to protect against the rogue state and its leader.

"North Korea and its inability to move forward on some kind of compromise to move towards verifiable, irreversible denuclearisation really puts the Biden administration in a position

where if the North Koreans don't move in terms of compromise, that they [US] can continue and will continue to enhance their deterrence capabilities within the region", said Stephen Nagy.