

South Korean Missiles: Part Of U.S. Containment Of Russia And China

By [Stop NATO](#)

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[The U.S.] wants the ROK to take on more of its defense responsibilities. Washington hopes Seoul would gradually increase its weaponry...help strengthen the US' anti-missile system in Asia to fulfill America's strategic goal of containing China and Russia.

[B]allistic missiles with a range of 800 km, which will cover the entire DPRK, Northeast China, Russia's Far East, and parts of Honshu, Japan's largest island...will make neighboring countries feel more insecure, which are bound to take corresponding measures to improve their security and defense capabilities. This would upset the military and strategic balance in Northeast Asia, and exacerbate geopolitical instability, shifting the balance of power in the US' favor and thus undermining peace and stability in the region.

In contrast to the intensifying islands disputes between Japan, on the one hand, and China, the Republic of Korea and Russia, on the other, the situation on the Korean Peninsula has been unusually calm and stable for a few months. But this relative calm and stability on the Peninsula could be broken by US and the ROK unilateral actions.

On Sunday, ROK National Security Adviser Chun Yung-Woo said the country has negotiated a revised pact with the United States that allows Seoul to extend the range of its ballistic missiles from 300 to 800 kilometers. The US and the ROK also agreed to maintain the maximum payload for a ROK-developed ballistic missile at the current level of 500 kilograms. But a reduction in the missile's range is inversely proportional to an increase in its payload.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea responded on Tuesday, saying that its rockets can hit the US mainland. The DPRK National Defense Commission said the country was prepared to counter any US military threat, according to the KCNA news agency.

Although the ROK's Hyunmu-3 cruise missile with a range of 1,500 km can strike missile bases or other strategic facilities in the DPRK, compared with ballistic missiles cruise missiles are slow, less destructive and can be intercepted more easily. Perhaps that's why the ROK is desperate to extend its ballistic missiles' range. The agreement, which more than doubles the existing range of the ROK's missiles, shows a major shift in Seoul's efforts to strengthen its weaponry and gradually free itself of US dependence.

Given its prolonged economic downturn and cuts in defense spending, the US also wants the ROK to take on more of its defense responsibilities. Washington hopes Seoul would gradually increase its weaponry against perceived threats from Pyongyang and help strengthen the US' anti-missile system in Asia to fulfill America's strategic goal of containing China and

Russia.

The agreement that allows the ROK to develop longer-range ballistic missiles is a dangerous move, which will have a series of negative effects on the security situation in Northeast Asia, especially on the Korean Peninsula.

First, ballistic missiles with a range of 800 km, which will cover the entire DPRK, Northeast China, Russia's Far East, and parts of Honshu, Japan's largest island, can improve the ROK's security and alleviate the military pressure on the US. But it will make neighboring countries feel more insecure, which are bound to take corresponding measures to improve their security and defense capabilities. This would upset the military and strategic balance in Northeast Asia, and exacerbate geopolitical instability, shifting the balance of power in the US' favor and thus undermining peace and stability in the region.

Second, the DPRK is indeed making great efforts to develop the economy and improve its people's living standards, but the possession of longer-range missiles by the ROK could prompt it to step up the development of its own long-range ballistic missiles or conduct more nuclear tests to strengthen its security.

In view of the dispute over the Dokdo Islands (Takeshima Islands in Japanese) between the ROK and Japan, the development of longer-range ballistic missiles by Seoul will prompt Tokyo to ask Washington to ease restrictions and allow it to improve its own ballistic missile technology to strengthen its offensive and defensive capabilities. This would pose a serious threat to the security of neighboring countries. Given the belligerence of Japan's right-wing forces, this would cause great concern and anxiety among countries - including the US - that once suffered the horrors of Japanese aggression.

Finally, the US' agreement to extend the ROK's ballistic missile range would trigger a new round of an arms race in Northeast Asia. Countries in the region will spend more funds to develop sophisticated long-range ballistic missiles, and thus create greater economic and psychological pressure on each other. The using of a DPRK military threat to blindly support some of its neighboring countries is a cunning way for the US to get involved in the Korean Peninsula issue, strengthen its military presence and play a leading role in the Asia-Pacific region. Though the US hopes the DPRK would give up its nuclear program completely, it is also worried that if the Peninsula issue is resolved once and for all, it will have no excuse to deploy its troops in the ROK and Japan. Therefore, the US wants to keep the Peninsula issue under control without resolving it completely.

For now, the US military's focus in the Asia-Pacific is on the ROK, and the situation on the Peninsula is developing in favor of Seoul, Washington and Tokyo. This will seriously weaken Pyongyang's position in negotiations and halt the denuclearization process on the Korean Peninsula.

China has been working relentlessly to help denuclearize the Korean Peninsula and succeeded, to a large extent, in reasoning with the DPRK, for which it has been praised by the international community. But if the US and the ROK continue to play their military deterrence game, the DPRK might be forced to take military action to counter it.

To maintain peace and stability on the Peninsula, the US and the ROK should focus on the overall situation, annul the agreement to extend the range of ballistic missiles, enhance communication with the DPRK, avoid provoking the DPRK on sensitive issues and offer it

humanitarian assistance. Only in this way can long-term peace and stability reign remain on the Korean Peninsula.

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