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## Evaluating the Military Parade Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of North Korea's Workers' Party

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### □ Outline

- The event celebrating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party was held at 0:00 on October 10th, and recorded without a live broadcast
  - The regime focused on maximizing the impact and significance of the event internally rather than on promoting it to an international audience
- Chairman Kim Jong-un's speech refrained from sending messages to an international audience and focused on domestic messaging
  - The speech emphasized North Korea's will to move to a "new stage," starting with the 8th Party Congress, while highlighting Kim Jong Un's image as a leader who loves and is dedicated to his people
- Highlighted were achievements in the sphere of military capabilities and they demonstrated the country's ability to defend itself by showing off major weapons
  - New weapons developed during the Kim Jong-un period were placed prominently in various ways in the military parade
  - It showed progress in the modernization/advancement of selective conventional weapons, considering the continued strengthening of the country's nuclear arsenal, the military situation on the Korean Peninsula, and increases in the military capabilities of its opponents
  - The showcasing of the new strategic weapons, the Bukgukseong-4 and a new ICBM clearly showed that the country is strengthening its nuclear arsenal by developing the capability to launch from the ground and underwater

### □ Major Points of Analysis

- The military ceremony was held at 0:00 on Oct. 10
  - It seems that North Korea decided on the timing of the event for various reasons. However, any analyses that suggest the country tried to make the event "low-key" to avoid stoking tensions in consideration of its relationship with the US or South Korea or that it tried to avoid detection from or test the capabilities of South Korean or American intelligence assets is not persuasive because the regime released a recording of the military parade.
  - In a video released by North Korea, Chairman Kim Jong-un is shown appearing after an image of a clock and a bell sounding at 0:00 on October 10. That the event started at midnight, the start of the day, suggests the regime was trying to maximize the significance of the event on the domestic front. Holding a midnight event is not new because the country holds New Year's events, and Kim Jong-un has often visited Geumsusan Palace at 0:00 on Kim Il Sung's birthday.
  - The regime held new kinds of night-time events including a fireworks show, LED show, and a nighttime combat fighter air show to demonstrate it can hold modern events and to maximize the impact of the celebrations. Video from the event also aimed to show that the country's electricity situation is not "too bad." Showing people not wearing masks during night-time parades was meant to show off that the country has been successful in staving off COVID-19.

**\* Since North Korea decided to hold a grand mass gymnastics and artistic performance called 'Great Guidance' for 20 days at the May Day Stadium, there is the possibility that the country may announce victory over COVID-19 and return to normal life following the Oct. 11 event.**

- A Leader Devoted to His People: Kim Jong-un Sheds Tears During Speech

- First of all, there was no direct messaging to the United States or South Korea in Chairman Kim Jong-un's speech. As a whole, external messaging was restrained and it was mainly made up of content aimed at the North Korean people.

- "Our people have placed trust, as high as the sky and as deep as the sea, in me, but I have failed to always live up to it satisfactorily. I am really sorry for that," Kim said during the speech. "Although I am entrusted with the important responsibility to lead this country . . . my efforts and sincerity have not been sufficient enough to rid our people of the difficulties in their lives." This was an example of Kim Jong-un's ruling style in that he focuses on leadership for the people (populism).

- He noted, however, that "I will ensure that all Party organizations, the government and power and military organs make more and more strict demands on themselves, direct strenuous efforts and work with sincerity for our people and for bringing a better tomorrow to them." This suggested that he would be strict toward his cadres, while generous towards his people. This also suggests that he will clamp down more on his officials in the party, government, and military while moving forward with the five-year plan to be announced during the 8th Party Congress.

- While he sent words of consolation to the entire world during the first part of the speech, Kim specifically mentioned that "I also send this warm wish of mine to our dear fellow countrymen in the south, and hope that this health crisis would come to an end as early as possible and the day would come when the north and south take each other's hand again." We will have to see, however, whether this leads to anything of major significance. Given Kim's quick move to issue an apology after the incident in the West Sea while watching over President Moon Jae-in's statement at the UN about declaring an end to the Korean War, it appears that Kim desires to keep the door open with South Korea.

- While the regime's promotion of its new SLBM and ICBM may suggest the country is putting pressure on the United States, Kim made no mention of US-DPRK relations nor did he directly criticize the United States. His message to the international community emphasized that the country's military capabilities are not for preemptive strikes but to defend the country's autonomy and deter war; however, Kim also made clear he would act if any forces tried to use military force against North Korea.

- North Korea is honestly hinting at the special position the country is in within the international community and its economic difficulties. As such, there is the possibility that North Korea will move forward with a more diversified foreign policy toward the international community after the 8th Party Congress next year, rather than focus on US-DPRK relations.

○ North Korea shows off a diverse range of new weapons and new strategic weaponry

- New anti-tank armored vehicles, new tanks similar to China's export-type VT series, and new 152mm self-propelled guns were shown in the first half of the parade



- There were 5 types of radiating cannons (multiple guns) shown, including 122 mm (improved), 240 mm radiating cannons and 3 super-sized radiating cannons with 4, 5, and 6 extension tubes (estimated 400 mm). The country's focus on the development of various large-diameter cannons seems aimed at maximizing conventional deterrence on the Korean Peninsula. Additional analysis is needed because the three types of super-sized cannons differ only in the number of launch vehicles and launch tubes but appear to be homogeneous cannons of the same caliber.

**\* During North Korea's test launches, two names were used - the large-diameter piloted missile and the super-sized missile - and there were differences in the number of vehicles and launchers. When**

North Korea released the images, some photos were blurred and there may actually be two different types of weapons (400mm and 600mm types). However, in the video of the military parade, they appear to have the same aperture (400mm class). The 300mm cannon was not included in the military parade.



- It is also worth noting that a number of new anti-ship missiles (similar to the Russian surface-to-ship, short-range missile BAL-E) and a number of anti-aircraft missiles were shown during the parade. After showing a new low-altitude anti-aircraft system that includes anti-aircraft radar, two anti-aircraft missiles similar to the Russian S-300/400 were shown. This is evidence that air raids after the Korean War, the development of US strategic assets on the Korean Peninsula, and the development of a “kill chain” -- including South Korea’s introduction of the F-35 -- led the country to feel threatened and that it is focusing on anti-aircraft defenses.



- The Bukgukseong-4, which was shown along with the Bukgukseong-2, has the words “Bukgukseong-4 ㄸ” on its exterior, and was introduced as an underwater strategic ballistic missile by the broadcast announcer. It is a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) that has not yet been test launched. In the photo, it looks similar to the Bukgukseong-3 (diameter 1.5-1.6m) launched on October 2, 2019 but based on a comparison with the soldier sitting in the front in the video, the diameter seems to have been increased slightly to 1.8~2m. Since the Bukgukseong series has solid fuel engines, the increase in diameter may mean that the country’s solid fuel solidification technology has improved, and that its range has also increased. The maximum range is estimated to be more than 3,000-4,000 km. Among the 4 types of Bukgukseongs shown in the military parade, there is a possibility that the ones in the front row and the rear row are the same diameter, but there is a difference in their length.






- In addition, if the diameter of solid fuel is increased, it is possible to further develop the already-publicized SLBM (Bukgukseong-4), as well as the Bukgukseong-2 (range 2,000-3,000 km, Guam), a ground-launched medium-range ballistic missile that uses a solid fuel engine. It is expected that a ground-launched solid fuel engine ballistic missile is also being developed to replace the Hwaseong-12 (range of 5,000 km or more, Alaska/Hawaii), a ballistic missile that uses liquid fuel engines. Ultimately, it is expected that North Korea will continue development to replace its ICBMs with solid fuel engines as well.

- In the second half of the parade, short-range ground-to-ground tactical guided weapons called the North Korean version of Iskander and ATACMS were shown. In regards to the North Korean version of Iskander, the regime revealed two launch vehicle types, a wheel type and a track type, and the North Korean version of ATACMS used a tracked vehicle.



- At the end of the military parade, Hwaseong 12 and 15 and the new ICBM were shown. In regards to the Hwaseong 12 and 15, the Hwaseong 12 and 15 were mounted on 9-axis vehicles (22m) on a 6-axle vehicle, just as they were when they were test launched in 2017. It is not clear whether the Hwaseong type 14 was simply excluded, or whether its range overlaps with Hwaseong type 15, which could then mean that it will no longer be produced and used by the country.

	Hwaseong-12	Hwaseong-15
		
Hwaseong-14		
Hwaseong-15		

- The new ICBM has an 11-axis launch vehicle (TEL), which means that its length is about 23~24m and its diameter (2.2~2.3m) has also been increased. Although this missile was not called the Hwaseong 16 during the parade, the main engine is likely to be a pre-existing liquid based Baekdusan engine, so it is expected to be classified as part of the Hwaseong series. However, rather than simply clustering one more engine so that the first stage has three engines, it appears that North Korea is developing an improved new engine that may be related to an engine test conducted at the Dongchang-ri engine test site in December. This means there may be a chance that the country will conduct a test launch in the future.



- Some believe that the increased length and diameter of the newly introduced ICBM (the Hwaseong-16?) means that its range has been extended. However, most likely simply increasing the length and diameter of the missile does not increase the range. Rather the increase in the weight of the missile itself may reduce its range. The expected range of the existing Hwaseong 15 is 13,000 km, so if it is already possible for North Korea to hit the entire US mainland, there is no reason to increase the range further. Increasing the warhead's weight also does not necessarily mean it has multiple warheads.

- Making the missiles larger does not mean that multiple warheads can be placed inside. Increasing the size of the missiles so that it can hold multiple warheads has limitations when considering maneuverability and stealth. Since North Korea's new ICBM is the world's largest existing ICBM, there may already be problems with mobility and stealth. Rather, it seems premature to suggest it has multiple warheads considering North Korea's current ability to move forward with miniaturization and reducing the weight of its nuclear warheads. It is only possible to add multiple warheads if the country improves its capabilities in miniaturization and reducing the weight of its nuclear warheads.

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