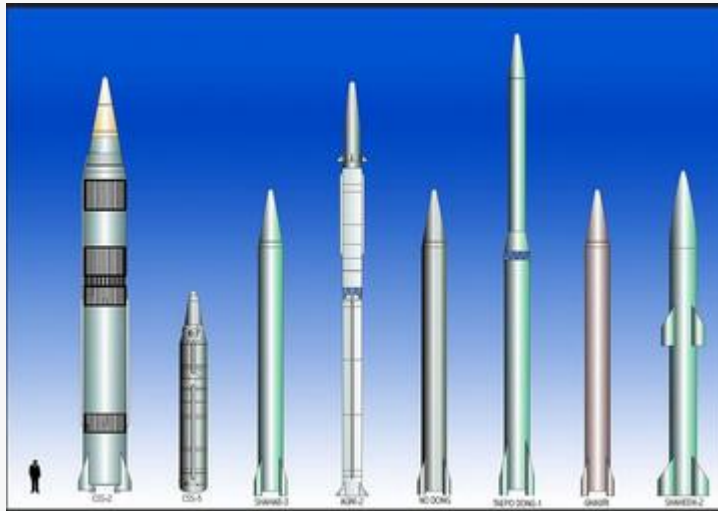


NY Times Says North Korea's Rocket Engines Came from Ukraine

written by GEG | August 15, 2017



The New York Times reports that Ukraine, an ally of the US, is the source of technology and the rocket engines used in North Korea's rapid development of a ballistic missile system. They were produced in a Ukraine factory that once produced Russia's most powerful rockets during the Cold War. [Some analysts believe that, with ISIS fading, the US deep state needs a new enemy to justify perpetual war. A false-flag attack blamed on North Korea would do the trick nicely.] —GEG

When the US State Department supported Ukraine domestic forces and nationalist elements to stage a successful and deadly coup against then pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovich in 2014, the outcome was supposed to be a nation that is a undisputed US ally and persistent threat, distraction and non-NATO opponent to bordering Russia. Instead, it now appears that it has been Ukraine which was, *as the NYT writes*, the secret behind the success of North Korea's allegedly nuclear-capable ballistic missile program.

Specifically, in a blockbuster report this morning, the *NYT alleges* that North Korea has been making black-market purchases of powerful rocket engines from a Ukrainian factory citing "expert analysis being published Monday and classified assessments by American intelligence agencies."

The studies may solve the mystery of how North Korea began succeeding so suddenly after a string of fiery missile failures, some of which may have been caused by American sabotage of its supply chains and cyberattacks on its launches. After those failures, the North changed designs and suppliers in the past two years, according to a new study by Michael Elleman, a missile expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

According to the report, analysts who studied photographs of Kim Jong-un, inspecting the new rocket motors concluded that they derive from designs that once powered the Soviet Union's missile fleet. "The engines were so powerful that a single missile could hurl 10 thermonuclear warheads between continents."

Since the alleged engines have been linked to only a few former Soviet sites, government investigators and experts have focused their inquiries on a missile factory in Dnipro, Ukraine, on the edge of the territory where Russia is fighting a low-level war to break off part of Ukraine. During the Cold War, the factory made the deadliest missiles in the Soviet arsenal, including the giant SS-18. It remained one of Russia's primary producers of missiles even after Ukraine gained independence.

Ukraine President Poroshenko visiting the Yuzhmash plant in Dnipro in 2014

However, after the 2014 coup which ousted Ukraine's pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovich, the state-owned factory, known as Yuzhmash, has fallen on hard times. The Russians canceled upgrades of their nuclear fleet.

"The factory is underused, awash in unpaid bills and low morale. Experts believe it is the most likely source of the engines that in July powered the two ICBM tests, which were the first to suggest that North Korea has the range, if not necessarily the accuracy or warhead technology, to threaten American cities."

In other words, it is America's latest Eastern European "ally" that is behind what is rapidly emerging as a potential nuclear threat that can blanket as much as half of the continental US.

"It's likely that these engines came from Ukraine – probably illicitly," Elleman told the NYT in an interview. "The big question is how many they have and whether the Ukrainians are helping them now. I'm very worried."

Bolstering his conclusion, he added, was a finding by United Nations investigators that North Korea tried six years ago to steal missile secrets from the Ukrainian complex. Two North Koreans were caught, and a U.N. report said the information they tried to steal was focused on advanced "missile systems, liquid-propellant engines, spacecraft and missile fuel supply systems." Investigators now believe that, amid the chaos of post-revolutionary Ukraine, Pyongyang tried again.

Considering Ukraine is a close US ally – just ask John McCain – maybe a phone call to current Ukraine president, oligarch billionaire Poroshenko, should suffice?

To be sure, the factory itself would never admit this stunning allegation: last month, Yuzhmash denied reports that the factory complex was struggling for survival and selling its technologies abroad, in particular to China. Its website says the company does not, has not and will not participate in "the transfer of potentially dangerous technologies outside Ukraine."

Making matters worse of the US "allies" in Ukraine, American investigators do not believe that denial, though they say there is no evidence that the government of President Petro O. Poroshenko, who recently visited the White House, had any knowledge or control over what was happening inside the complex.

The obvious implication here is that – if accurate – Ukraine had been working with North Korea for years, well into the administration of Barack Obama, the same president under

whom the Ukraine coup was greenlight, which would also suggest that the current North Korean crisis is explicitly a consequence of Obama's foreign policies.

Which is why we read the following amusing disclaime in the NYT: "How the Russian-designed engines, called the RD-250, got to North Korea is still a mystery."

Furthermore, Elleman told the NYT that the fact that the powerful engines did get to North Korea, despite a raft of United Nations sanctions, suggests a broad intelligence failure involving the many nations that monitor Pyongyang. Failure or perhaps just US intel closing its eyes to what Ukraine may be doing through the back door.

The NYT writes that "it is unclear who is responsible for selling the rockets and the design knowledge, and intelligence officials have differing theories about the details. But Mr. Elleman makes a strong circumstantial case that would implicate the deteriorating factory complex and its underemployed engineers. "I feel for those guys," said Mr. Elleman, who visited the factory repeatedly a decade ago while working on federal projects to curb weapon threats. "They don't want to do bad things."

One can only imagine what Elleman would "feel for those guys" if the factory turned out to be Russian, or Chinese.

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