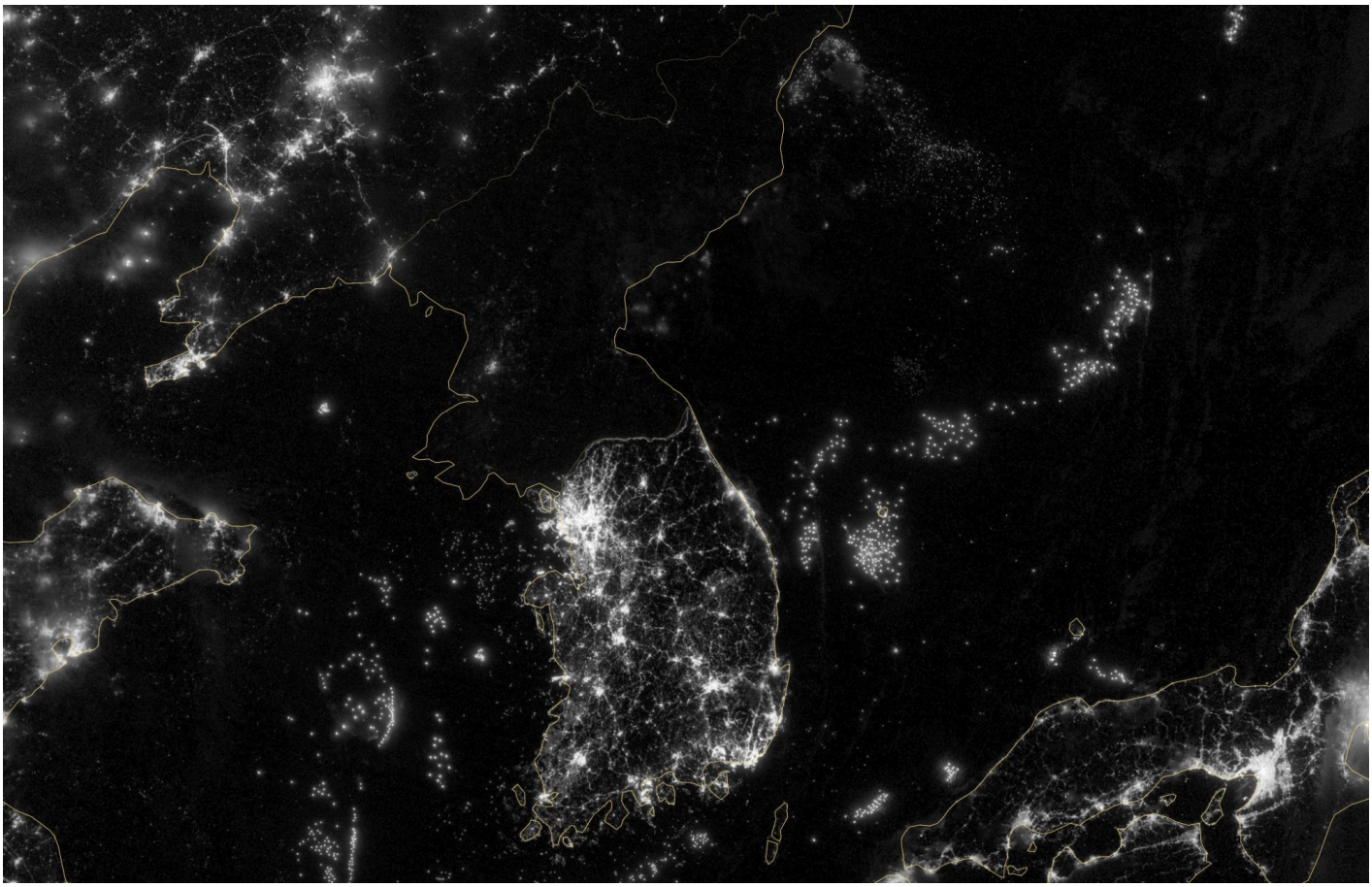
NORTH KOREA SAYS READYING SATELLITE, SUGGESTING LONG-RANGE MISSILE LAUNCH

News / Airlines



North Korea's space agency is close to developing a new **satellite** and readying it for **launch,** state media said on Monday, suggesting it will fire a **long-range** rocket around a national anniversary next month.

North Korea will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of its ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) on Oct. 10 and has been expected to launch an upgraded long-range ballistic missile, viewed as a major violation of international sanctions.

"The world will clearly see a series of satellites of Songun Korea soaring into the sky at the times and locations determined by the WPK Central Committee," the North's KCNA news agency said, with Songun referring to its "military first" policy.

"The NADA is pushing forward at a final phase the development of a new earth observation satellite," KCNA quoted the director of the National Aerospace Development Administration (NADA) as saying.

"Successful progress made in reconstructing and expanding satellite launching grounds for higher-

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level satellite lift-off has laid a firm foundation for dynamically pushing ahead with the nation's development of space science," the director said.

North Korea is banned under U.N. Security Council resolutions from conducting tests that use ballistic missile technology, but it has defied international warnings and sanctions to pursue missile and nuclear programs.

The North claims its rocket launches are part of a legitimate space program aimed at putting satellites into orbit.

Satellite images showed North Korea has completed upgrades to its main satellite launch site near the west coast, according to 38 North, the US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University in July, fuelling speculation of a planned long-range rocket launch to celebrate the 70th anniversary.

But South Korea's defense minister said last week there were no indications of actual preparations for a missile launch.

The secretive country has an arsenal of missiles of various ranges and is believed to be developing an intercontinental ballistic missile aimed at delivering nuclear weapons, although it is considered years away from such deployment.

In 2012, North Korea launched what is generally considered a long-range rocket, putting what it said was a satellite into orbit. Pyongyang called it a space launch vehicle, but the international community said it was a missile that violated U.N. Security Council resolutions.

The North is also working to miniaturize a nuclear warhead to mount on a delivery vehicle

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