

**Sent:** Monday, April 15, 2013 2:56 PM

**Subject:** North Korean missile story ['Daily Beast'] -- an unrecognized 'scoop'??

1. The story today in the Daily Beast [link below] seems to contain an unrecognized 'scoop' and may even be a camouflage for a major US intelligence coup.
2. The story states that US Navy ships recovered the 'front' of the satellite rocket last December. BUT the photograph with the story shows part of the FIRST stage of the rocket, recovered by a South Korean ship.
3. Until now, all news reports has only referred to recovery of the FIRST stage [the bottom] of the rocket, by South Korean ships.
4. If the nose cone was recovered by US ships, that would be an intelligence coup that had not -- to my knowledge -- been widely known up until today. That's what 'front' seems to refer to.
5. The recovery is reasonable, since the nose cone would have been jettisoned during ascent, and fallen back to the sea not far from where the first stage hit -- off the southwest coast of South Korea.
6. Here is the widely-published map of the impact zones for the first stage and second stage rockets [the rocket flew precisely this path]:  
<http://sociorocketnewsen.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/north-korean-missile.jpg?w=530&h=383>
7. This more detailed map includes the secondary debris impact point south of the first stage point -- it's where the jettisoned nose cone [presumably in two halves] hit:  
<http://www.japantoday.com/images/size/x/2012/12/rocket.jpg>  
"Satellite casing" is the nose cone.
8. So US ships could easily have been in the area, tracked the pieces on radar, and grabbed them as they briefly floated -- or retrieved them from the sea bottom [depth -- unknown to me].
9. But if so, no word of this activity -- and its success -- has come to my attention until this morning.
10. The news report discusses knowledge of 'miniaturization' that had been learned from this recovery. That new knowledge allowed analysts to determine it was quite possibly within the capability of North Korea to build a small-enough nuclear warhead.
11. PROBLEM: Typically a nose cone -- as well as the first stage whose recovery was announced quickly, last December -- does NOT contain electronic components. Or maybe not nearly enough to judge the technology level of the builders.
12. SPECULATION: Such a judgment would be much more reasonable if the analysts were not working from the nose cone, or the first stage, BUT WERE WORKING FROM COMPONENTS OF THE APRIL 2012 FAILURE. That rocket, in its entirety -- all three stages and satellite -- fell into the sea off the South Korean coast following a flight failure.
13. The location of that splash is somewhat to the east -- a bit in-shore -- of the spot designated on these early maps [exactly where remains secret]:  
AFP map: <http://www.japantoday.com/images/size/x/2012/12/rocket.jpg>  
BBC map:  
[http://news.bbcimg.co.uk/media/images/59636000/gif/59636552\\_nkorea\\_missile\\_route\\_464\\_2.gif](http://news.bbcimg.co.uk/media/images/59636000/gif/59636552_nkorea_missile_route_464_2.gif)  
Australian news map: [http://images.smh.com.au/2012/04/13/3218600/1404\\_jh\\_wo\\_korea\\_map-200x0.jpg](http://images.smh.com.au/2012/04/13/3218600/1404_jh_wo_korea_map-200x0.jpg)
14. My South Korean sources assure me they have NO information about ANY recovery of debris from the April failure.
15. But THAT debris would have been FAR more valuable than the 'normal' debris available from a successful launch. It would have examples of far MORE high-technology components useful in assessing technological levels of NKorea.
16. So I've got to suspect that a significant underwater search was made for it. And if it were found, the fact of the finding would remain highly classified.
17. In this speculative reconstruction, the publicly-known recovery of debris in December -- including the reasonable recovery of nose cone pieces -- would be

a credible 'cover story' for assessments based on analysis of UNDISCLOSED retrievals from the April failure.

18. Many years ago I worked 'technical intelligence' on 'retrievals' of Soviet military hardware components, at the AF Weapons Lab at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. These were compartmentalized under code names such as 'Have Kerf', 'Have Apple', 'Have Glass', referring to hardware that we had acquired. They ranged in size from heat shield fragments to a truck to an entire industrial laser [snuck out of East Germany]. So I appreciate the importance we put on hands-on analysis. AND the importance we laid on the other side NOT knowing we had even seen the stuff.

19. A different issue: What would NOT have been on any of the North Korean rocket debris would be the crucial question of a HEAT SHIELD for the warhead. This seems to remain as the key untested component of a long-range military missile.

20. In an article last month in SPACE REVIEW, I discussed the possibility that such a test could have been piggy-backed in disguise on the April and December satellite launches. Here is the URL:

Using "rocket science" to understand North Korea's space and missile efforts

by James Oberg, Monday, March 18, 2013

<http://www.thespacereview.com/article/2262/1>

21. My conclusion was that while it was possible that such a test might have happened -- and despite promises, the North Koreans never showed us evidence it was NOT happening in April -- I had no reason to suspect that it HAD occurred.

22. Also note: to date, NO official admission in Pyongyang that the December satellite was a dud, that it failed immediately after launch and has made no detectable transmissions. nor have they released a single ground image that they promised the satellite would be sending. They might always decide to blame this on the US, as a provocation needing retaliation.

23. I'm also following up on my close-up analysis of photographs we took in April of the two control centers -- the rocket launch center, and the general satellite center. Compared to images released in December after the successful launch, there have been major, puzzling changes in equipment and room decor -- the significance of which I can't yet figure out.

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### **Exclusive: How North Korea Tipped Its Hand**

by [Eli Lake](#) Apr 15, 2013 4:45 AM EDT

**The U.S. recovered the front section of the rocket used in North Korea's satellite launch in December, which gave away the status of the regime's nuclear-arms program**

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/04/15/exclusive-u-s-recovered-north-korean-rocket-head.html>