



China's View of Hypersonic Weapons: Changing the Dynamics of Warfare

OE Watch Commentary: China (like Russia) has been pursuing hypersonic weapons. The country reportedly conducted seven test-flights of the DF-ZF, a hypersonic missile delivery vehicle, which is expected to be operational by 2020. Such missiles have clear advantages and, as the accompanying excerpted article from *Jiefangjun Bao* explains, “will open up a new arena and a new form of military struggle.” The article discusses how hypersonic missiles change the concept of time and space as the speed of these weapons will allow little time for an opponent to react. The article goes on to explain that it will be possible to launch hypersonic missiles from many platforms on land, at sea, in the air, and in space. They combine the superiorities of ballistic missiles and aircraft technology, giving them speed and flexible maneuverability. As a result, the article states that their employment “will completely overturn the equilibrium of current opposing offensive and defensive systems,” and the side that possesses them will have the strategic advantage.

End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)

“The side with hypersonic weapons will create a new, asymmetric, absolute superiority in the attack, rendering current, traditional air defense and anti-missile defense systems ineffective.”

Source: Niu Yujun, “高超声速武器如何影响战争 (How Hypersonic Weapons Affect Warfare),” *Jiefangjun Bao*, 14 February 2019. http://www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2019-02/14/c_1210059534.htm

The development and use of hypersonic weapons will open up a new arena and a new form of military struggle. Their unique combat superiority will overturn the forms of future warfare and the shape of combat operations.

Profound change in the concept of time and space in future warfare. Hypersonic weapons fly so fast ... That speed greatly shortens an opponent's reaction time and the combat operations process. It upsets the opponent's operational tempo... They can execute fast and accurate attacks against global targets from many platforms on land, at sea, in the air, and in space... The boundary between air and space is completely erased. The distance between areas is shortened. The battlefield space concept of forward and deep deployment is blurred. “The distant horizon is right in front of your face” is truly achieved. Battlefield distance is no longer barriers and buffers which the enemy and friendly sides can use for support, and trading space for time will be difficult to achieve.

Overturning of the current strategic balance in opposing systems. ... hypersonic weapons will combine the superiorities of ballistic missile and aircraft technology. That is, they will have the combat characteristics of fast speed and long range of ballistic missiles in flight, along with the technical features of aircraft, namely their flexibility of maneuver and unpredictable course. That will completely overturn the equilibrium of current opposing offensive and defensive systems. The side with hypersonic weapons will create a new, asymmetric, absolute superiority in the attack, rendering current, traditional air defense and anti-missile defense systems ineffective...

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