The Sword of the Rising Sun: Japan Integrates the Tomahawk on JS Chōkai

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Japan has taken a historic step in strengthening its long-range attack capabilities. In the last 24 hours, the Ministry of Defense in Tokyo officially announced that the destroyer **JS Chōkai (DDG-176)** has successfully completed the integration and crew training for the deployment of **RGM-109 Tomahawk** missiles.

This is a milestone that **transforms a platform traditionally dedicated to air defense into a powerful force projection tool**. The integration was achieved in record time thanks to close collaboration with the US Navy, allowing the Kongō-class ship to manage the entire fire cycle: from mission planning through updated Aegis systems to the physical launch of the vector. For Tokyo, this is not just a technological upgrade, but an unequivocal political signal sent to regional neighbors: the ability to strike adversary missile launch bases hundreds of kilometers away is now an operational reality.

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Tokyo's Doctrinal Shift: from "Reactive" to "Proactive"

The combat enablement of JS Chōkai marks the definitive shift from an exclusively reactive defense doctrine to one of **"proactive deterrence"**. In the last two days, political debate in Japan has focused on the speed with which the country is acquiring "counterattack capabilities." This transformation is driven by the need to face the growing militarization in the Indo-Pacific and repeated missile tests in the region.

The Tomahawk, with its range of over 1,600 km, allows the Japanese Navy to maintain a stand-off distance while threatening enemy strategic targets. This change requires not only new missiles but also **a revolution in satellite intelligence and reconnaissance, as striking long-distance targets** necessitates an extremely precise "kill chain" integrated with allied systems, particularly those of the United States, creating an unprecedented common defense architecture in the Pacific.

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Towards an Attack Fleet: the "Type 25" and Beyond

The success of JS Chōkai is just the tip of the iceberg. Japan has already formally designated the new **"Type 25"** systems, which include enhanced versions of long-range ship-to-ship missiles developed internally. **The goal is to create a balanced mix between technologies acquired from the United States and domestic innovations to ensure technological sovereignty in the defense sector.** The next steps include upgrading all destroyers equipped with the Aegis system and potentially installing vertical launch systems (VLS) on smaller units as well.

This effort is part of a record increase in the defense budget, aiming to double spending by 2027. The speed with which Japanese crews have assimilated the operational procedures of the Tomahawk demonstrates a level of combat readiness that greatly concerns analysts in Beijing and Pyongyang, reshaping the balance of power in the waters of the Sea of Japan.