
US successfully launches second Minuteman III ballistic missile in 7 days (PHOTOS, VIDEO)

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An unarmed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) has been launched from a US Air Force base in California just seven days after the first launch.

The three-stage ICBM blasted off from Vandenberg Air Force Base at 07:02GMT Wednesday. It travelled around 4,200 miles to a test range near the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

[GT-222GM Minuteman III Launch](#)

The test of the Minuteman III missile follows a similar launch on April 26 from North Vandenberg Air Force Base. The move comes amid rapidly growing tensions on the Korean Peninsula, although the mission was planned *“over the past 10 months,”* according to the 30th Space Wing, which conducted the test.

The Minuteman III tests are aimed *“to validate and verify the effectiveness, readiness and accuracy of the weapon system”* according to Air Force Global Strike Command.

“These ICBM test launches verify the accuracy and reliability of the weapon system, providing valuable data to ensure a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent,” the 30th Space Wing stated.

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The US military denied that the previous operational test had anything to do with tensions with

North Korea. A spokeswoman for the Air Force Global Strike Command stated that the missions are carried out [regularly](#) and are planned in advance, according to the Washington Examiner.

One of the tests of the same ICBM was previously described as a signal for the US enemies.

“The Simulated Electronic Launch of a Minuteman III ICBM is a signal to the American people, our allies, and our adversaries that our ICBM capability is safe, secure, lethal and ready,” the 625th Strategic Operations Squadron commander, Lt. Col. Deane Konowicz, said in a statement following a successful simulated electronic firing on April 11.

The Minuteman III nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile is one of the pillars of the US air-land-sea triad, which also includes the Ohio-class submarine and the B-52 strategic bomber.

The ICBM was initially deployed in 1970 and its useful lifespan ends in 13 years. Over the next 30 years Washington is planning to spend \$1 trillion on a massive modernization program for the weapons.
