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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.

#### [READ MORE: US launches Minuteman III ICBM to show ‘nuclear capabilities’ amid N. Korea tensions](#)

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

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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.

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