

North Korea hails 'successful ICBM' test

51 minutes ago



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Image caption

Japanese television networks heavily covered the missile launch on Tuesday

North Korea says it has successfully tested a long-range "intercontinental" missile.

It is the first time North Korea has claimed to have successfully tested an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), which could potentially have the range to reach the US mainland.

Earlier the US said a missile landed in the Sea of Japan but that it did not pose a threat to North America.

North Korea has increased the frequency of its missile tests, raising tensions.

An announcement on North Korea state television said it had launched a Hwasong-14 missile, overseen by their leader Kim Jong-un.

It said the projectile reached an altitude of 2,802km (1,731 miles) and flew 933km before hitting a target in the sea.

Have North Korea's missile tests paid off?

North Korea's missile programme

How advanced is North Korea's nuclear programme?

Earlier the US Pacific Command said it was an intermediate range missile.

While Pyongyang has appeared to have made progress, experts believe North

Korea does not have the capability to accurately target a place with an intercontinental ballistic missile, or miniaturise a nuclear warhead that can fit on to such a missile.

The big question - by Stephen Evans, BBC News, Seoul

The big question is: what range does this missile have - could it hit the United States? One expert already thinks that it might be able to reach Alaska but not the lower states.

David Wright, a physicist with the Union of Concerned Scientists, said: "If the reports are correct, that same missile could reach a maximum range of roughly 6,700 km (4,160 miles) on a standard trajectory.

"That range would not be enough to reach the lower 48 states or the large islands of Hawaii, but would allow it to reach all of Alaska".

It's not just a missile that North Korea would need but also the ability to protect a warhead as it re-enters the atmosphere, and it's not clear if North Korea can do that. On the prospect of North Korea being able to strike the US, President Trump tweeted in January: "It won't happen". The truth is that it might, most experts think within five years, probably less. What would President Trump do then?

What has the reaction been?

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in has called on the UN Security Council to take steps against North Korea over its latest missile test.

He has ordered security and diplomatic officials to seek "Security Council measures in close co-operation with the country's allies, including the United States," his chief press secretary Yoon Young-chan told reporters.

Earlier Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said: "North Korea's repeated provocations like this are absolutely unacceptable."

PM Shinzo Abe said Japan would "unite strongly" with the US and South Korea to put pressure on Pyongyang.



US President Donald Trump also responded swiftly on Tuesday to the missile launch.

On his Twitter account he made apparent reference to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, saying: "Does this guy have anything better to do with his life?"

"Hard to believe that South Korea and Japan will put up with this much longer.

Perhaps China will put a heavy move on North Korea and end this nonsense once and for all!"

He has repeatedly called on China, Pyongyang's closest economic ally, to pressure North Korea to end its nuclear and missile programmes.

China has not fully responded to the latest test.

North Korea in new missile test, South says

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Image caption

There have been a number of missile tests by North Korea (file photo)

North Korea has conducted another missile test, South Korea's military has said.

The White House said the medium-range missile had a shorter range than those used in North Korea's last three tests.

It comes a week after North Korea tested what it said was a new type of rocket capable of carrying a large nuclear warhead.

Last Monday, the UN Security Council again demanded that Pyongyang conduct no further such tests.

It stressed the importance of North Korea "immediately showing sincere commitment to denuclearization through concrete action".

The latest missile flew about 500km (310 miles) towards the Sea of Japan, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. Last week's missile travelled about 700km.

Japanese news agencies said the missile probably fell into the sea outside Japanese waters.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a press conference a protest had been lodged with North Korea.

North Korea's missile programme

Are N Korea's neighbours worried?

Have North Korea's missile tests paid off?

North Korea is known to be developing both nuclear weapons - it has conducted five nuclear tests - and the missiles capable of delivering those weapons to their target. Both are in defiance of UN sanctions.

South Korea said the latest test was conducted in Pukchang, in the west of the country. A missile exploded **soon after take-off** from Pukchang last month.

Earlier on Sunday, the North's state-run media had said it would continue to launch more "weapons capable of striking" the US.

In early May, the US said a missile defence system it had installed in South Korea was now operational.

The Thaad system can intercept North Korean missiles, although full operational capability is still some months away. North Korea and its ally China have condemned the installation of the system.

However, there is no sign that Thaad was used against the missile tested on Sunday.

Newly-installed South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who is seeking deeper engagement with the North, has convened an urgent meeting of his national security council in response.

Kim defies the pressure: Steve Evans, BBC News, Seoul

This would be the 10th detected missile launch by North Korea this year: outside experts agree that it's making progress in its stated aim of having the ability to strike the mainland US with nuclear weapons.

Though it's not there yet, the latest tests have been of missiles capable of reaching American bases in the Western Pacific, albeit with some failures.

There is intense pressure on Kim Jong-un from the US, which is seeking the help of China. Repeated and more frequent testing of missiles, despite prohibition by the United Nations, indicates the North Korean leader feels able to defy that pressure.

North Korea carries out new ballistic missile test



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Image caption

North Korea paraded its military hardware in Pyongyang last month

North Korea has carried out another ballistic missile test days after a new president took office in the South.

The missile was launched near north-western Kusong, flying hundreds of miles then landing in the Sea of Japan.

It puts immediate pressure on South Korea's President Moon Jae-in, who campaigned on a platform of better engagement with the North.

A series of North Korean missile tests this year has sparked international alarm and raised tensions with the US.

Two missile launches last month both failed, with the rockets exploding just minutes into flight.

After hosting an emergency meeting of his security council, Mr Moon condemned the latest launch as a "provocation".

"The president said while South Korea remains open to the possibility of dialogue with North Korea, it is only possible when the North shows a change in attitude," his spokesman said.

New type of missile?

The nature of the launch is still being determined, but analysts have said the test shows a longer range than previously tested devices.

The Japanese defence minister said it fell about 400km (250 miles) from the east coast of North Korea and could be a new type of missile, Reuters reported.

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Kim Jong-un: North Korea's supreme commander

The US Pacific Command said in a statement the type was being assessed but that its flight was not consistent with that of an intercontinental ballistic missile [ICBM], which would have the range to reach the US mainland.

The White House said President Donald Trump "cannot imagine Russia is pleased" because the missile landed not far from Russian territory.

It added that the new launch should serve as a call for stronger sanctions against North Korea.

North Korea is believed to be developing two types of ICBM, but neither has so far been flight tested.

China, North Korea's only major ally, called for restraint in the wake of the latest test.

Cuban echoes, by the BBC's Korea correspondent Stephen Evans



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The North Korean situation has been likened to the Cuban missile crisis in slow motion.

In October 1962, aerial pictures showed that the Soviet Union was building a missile base on Cuba, just off the coast of Florida.

President Kennedy said he would not accept that. It was what would now be called a "red line". In the face of a credible threat of war, the Soviet leader Khrushchev backed down.

It is not clear where Mr Trump's red line is or whether he could enforce it short of a truly devastating war, possibly with China drawn in.

He has said that North Korean missiles capable of hitting the US mainland "won't happen". Recently, he has mentioned talking to Kim Jong-un but also warned that North Korea risks a "major, major conflict".

There is also a new president in Seoul keen on dialogue. As the missile tests continue, it is not clear when or if Washington would decide on military action - or whether Seoul would try to block it.

The North has conducted five nuclear tests despite UN sanctions and is also developing long-range missiles.

It is reported to be continuing efforts to miniaturise nuclear warheads and fit them on missiles capable of reaching the US.

Washington has accused other UN Security Council members of not fully enforcing existing sanctions against the North, and has urged China in particular to use its trade links as influence.

But despite poor relations, North Korea recently said **it would hold talks with the US** "if the conditions were right".

The comments, by a senior North Korean diplomat, came after US President Donald Trump said he would be "honoured" to meet the North's leader, Kim Jong-un.