

North Korea Missile Test

Why in news?

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North Korea tested another intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that appears to have the range to hit major US cities.

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What is the significance?

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- If North Korea's claims about the test are true, Pyongyang may be even further advanced in its missile program than was previously thought.

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- If the missile were fired on a a flatter, standard trajectory, it would have major US cities like Los Angeles, Denver and Chicago well within its range.

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- It even has the ability to reach as far as New York City and Boston.

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- South Korea's joint chiefs of staff said they estimate that the ICBM is more advanced than one launched earlier this July.

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- But the test cannot determine how heavy a payload the missile was carrying in its warhead. The heavier the payload, the shorter the range.

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- Also, despite the ongoing tests, experts believe the North does not yet have the capability to miniaturise a nuclear warhead, fit it on to a long-range missile, and ensure it is protected until delivery to the target.

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- However, this latest missile test shows the **US' actions are not changing North Korea's behavior** and it's time for Donald Trump to articulate a comprehensive strategy.

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North Korean missile range estimates



Tested/operational

- ① Hwasong: 1,000km ② Nodong: 1,300km ③ Musudan: 3,500km
④ Hwasong-14: 6,700 km

Untested

- ⑤ KN-08: 11,500km

Source: James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies / NTI

BBC

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What was the reaction from major powers?

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- Kim Jong Un is quoted as saying that **the whole US mainland** is now within North Korea's reach.

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- US President Trump condemned North Korea's launch and said it only threatens the world, further isolate North Korea, weaken its economy, and deprive its people.

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- Hours later, the US and South Korean military conducted a live fire exercise as a show of force in response to the missile test.

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- China issued a statement condemning the missile launch and asked Pyongyang to "stop taking actions that would escalate tensions" on the Korean Peninsula.

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- Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said China and Russia need

to do more to stop North Korea's missile program.

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Source: The Indian Express

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