



Global Deterrence: USA Tests Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile - VIDEO

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May 21, 2025 - Vandenberg Space Force Base (California)

The **US Air Force** successfully conducted the second operational test of 2025 of the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) **Minuteman III**, launched from Vandenberg base at 00:01 Pacific time.

The missile, unarmed but equipped with a high-fidelity Mk21 reentry vehicle, traveled over **4,200 miles** at a speed exceeding **24,000 km/h**, precisely hitting a designated target area near the **Kwajalein Atoll** in the Marshall Islands.

*"This test underscores the readiness of the ICBM component of our nuclear triad," stated **General Thomas Bussiere**, commander of the **Air Force Global Strike Command**.*

A Device Tested in Rotation

The launched Minuteman III is part of the arsenal of **Malmstrom AFB (Montana)**. The practice involves extracting a missile from one of the Air Force silos (located in Montana, Colorado, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wyoming), transporting it overland, and reassembling it at the launch site for the test, nicknamed “**Glory Trip**.”

The test also involved crews from the **90th Missile Wing** of F.E. Warren AFB (Wyoming), with technical personnel and operators from all three Air Force ICBM units: the **90th**, the **91st**, and the **341st Missile Wing**.

Remote Detection and Control

During the test, the flight and terminal phase of the vehicle were tracked by advanced sensors and the **Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site** in the Marshall Islands. These observations are crucial for validating the system's reliability and performance.

A key role was played by the **625th Strategic Operations Squadron** of Offutt AFB (Nebraska), responsible for writing and verifying targeting instructions for the missiles and supporting the **ALCS (Airborne Launch Control System)**. This airborne backup – embarked on US Navy E-6B Mercury aircraft – can ensure missile launches even if ground communications are compromised.

The Future: Sentinel ICBM, but Minuteman Remains

Despite the Minuteman III being operational for over **55 years**, the USAF now plans to keep it in service until **2050**, well beyond the initially planned retirement date (2030). Meanwhile, the development of its successor, the **Sentinel ICBM**, is being accelerated.

The US Congress has allocated an increase of **1.5 billion dollars** in the recent 2025 budget for the Sentinel program and about **500 million** for updates to the Minuteman, which include silo

adjustments, electronic improvements, and modifications to warhead systems.

*“Minuteman III remains the cornerstone of our strategic deterrence, and the Airmen who ensure its efficiency demonstrate its inherent lethality,” explained **Colonel Dustin Harmon**, commander of the **377th Test and Evaluation Group**.*

“Looking to the future,” he added, “the same military personnel are paving the way for the Sentinel, ensuring a smooth transition to a new generation capability.”

News link: <https://www.airandspaceforces.com/air-force-conducts-test-launch-of-minuteman-iii-icbm/>