

Russia Says It Test-Fired New Missile

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The Defense Ministry said the new ICBM will strengthen the missile forces' combat capability. Above, a missile test launch conducted last year.

Russia on Wednesday successfully test-fired a new intercontinental ballistic missile with an enhanced capability to penetrate missile defenses and commissioned a new early warning radar, the Defense Ministry said.

The first launch of the new missile was performed at the Plesetsk launchpad in northern Russia, the ministry said in a statement. It didn't give the name of the missile but said it was fired from a mobile launcher.

Russia has viewed the planned U.S.-led NATO missile defense system around Europe as a potential threat to its nuclear forces, rejecting the U.S. assurances that the shield is intended to counter an Iranian missile threat.

NATO has said it wants to cooperate with Russia on the missile shield, but has rejected Moscow's proposal to run it jointly. Without a NATO-Russia cooperation deal, the Kremlin has sought guarantees from the United States that any future missile defense is not aimed at Russia and threatened to take military countermeasures if no deal is reached.

The ministry said the missile's practice warhead successfully reached a designated target at a range on the far eastern Kamchatka Peninsula.

"The new ICBM will strengthen the combat capability of the strategic missile forces thanks to its ability to penetrate prospective missile defense systems," the ministry said.

The military also said it commissioned a new early warning radar on Wednesday. The Voronezh M-type facility in Irkutsk has an improved range compared to older radars.

The military's Aerospace Defense Forces chief, Lt.-General Oleg Ostapenko, praised its efficiency on a visit to the facility Wednesday, saying it would significantly enhance the military's capability to monitor missile launches.

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