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Russia Conducts Test Launch of 'Advanced' ICBM

By AFP

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An Iskander short-range ballistic missile test launch takes place at the Kapustin Yar range in southern Russia's Astrakhan Region on Feb. 19, 2022. **Russian Defense Ministry/TASS VIDEO SCREEN GRAB**

Russia has conducted what it said was the successful test launch of an "advanced" intercontinental ballistic missile, weeks after it suspended participation in its last remaining nuclear arms control pact with the United States.

The Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement that a "combat crew successfully launched an intercontinental ballistic missile [ICBM] of a mobile ground-based missile system" from its Kapustin Yar test site on Tuesday.

"The missile's training warhead hit a mock target at the Sary-Shagan training ground [Republic of Kazakhstan] with given precision," it added.

Since sending troops into Ukraine last year, President Vladimir Putin has issued thinly veiled

warnings that he could use nuclear weapons there if Russia were threatened.

In late February, Putin said Moscow was suspending participation in the New START treaty, under which Russia and the United States had agreed to limit nuclear stockpiles and submit to mutual inspections.

And less than three weeks ago, Putin said he would deploy tactical nuclear weapons in neighbor and ally Belarus, bringing the arms to the doorstep of the European Union.

Both moves drew condemnation from NATO.

While the Russian Defense Ministry did not specify the type of missile used in Tuesday's launch, it said the exercise's purpose "was to test advanced combat equipment of intercontinental ballistic missiles."

"This launch made it possible to confirm the correctness of the circuit design and technical solutions used in the development of new strategic missile systems," it added.

In February, Putin said a new kind of ICBM would be deployed sometime this year, following U.S. reports that the weapon had failed a recent test.

The Sarmat — dubbed "Satan 2" by Western analysts — is capable of carrying multiple nuclear warheads and is among Russia's next-generation missiles that Putin has described as "invincible."

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