

# America's Preemptive Nuclear Strike Program: US Tests ICBM

After criticizing North Korea's missile tests, the U.S. conducted a test of its own

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Six days after the U.N. Security Council adopted a resolution condemning North Korea for test firing several ballistic missiles, the U.S. successfully test fired an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM).

The U.S. test fire, in the early morning of July 20, aimed to increase the reliability and capability of the Minuteman III. The missile was fired from the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, flew for about 30 minutes, and dropped into the Pacific Ocean near the Marshall Islands. The flight distance was about 4,200 miles.

The U.S. currently has 500 Minuteman III missiles, each carrying a nuclear warhead with a yield 10 or 20 times more powerful than the U.S. atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. Since January 2000, the U.S. has tested ICBMs at least 48 times — 23 of them were Minuteman IIIs.

## **U.S. Securing the Power for a Preemptive Strike**

Why is the U.S. concentrating on ICBMs? One reason is its preemptive strike strategy, well-known as the “Bush Doctrine”; the other reason, its non-nuclear ICBM lineup strategy. At the center is the Space and Global Strike command.

The U.S. Strategic Command established the Joint Functional Component Command for Space and Global Strike in January 2005. According to “Conplan 8022,” it especially focuses on performing preemptive strikes including nuclear weapons in case of the U.S. President’s order.

As exposed by a U.S. military expert, William Arkin, in The Washington Post May 2005, Conplan 8022 includes allowing for preemptive strikes on enemy states, such as North Korea and Iran, that are developing weapons of mass destruction.

The relationship between the Minuteman III test fire and the U.S. global attack strategy can be verified in the press releases distributed by the U.S. Air Force. Press releases distributed by the 30th Space Wing on June 14 explained that the data collected from the Minuteman III test is being used by planners at the U.S. Strategic Command.

Some groups have been critical of the Minuteman III tests. In a recent statement, the Lawyers’ Committee on Nuclear Policy, located in New York, said, “The ongoing conduct of

these tests represents yet another example of U.S. exceptionalism.” It also said, “The recent U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the North Korean tests also exemplifies the one-sided approach to international security.”

A renowned U.S. anti-nuke activist, Jacqueline Cabasso, said, “These tests are yet more evidence of blatant nuclear hypocrisy by the United States.” She emphasizes that grouping North Korea in the so-called “axis of evil” and creating a preemptive strike doctrine begs the question, “Who is threatening whom.”

If the U.S. military threat continues to expand, it will strengthen North Korea’s argument that its own nuclear missile development program is justified. Passing another resolution on the North Korean nuclear missile issue will not then be possible.

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