

Nuclear Defense, or Nuclear Offense? US Military to Test Launch an ICBM, Notifies the Kremlin

By [Al Arabiya](#)

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The US military will test-launch [an intercontinental ballistic missile](#) on Wednesday, the Pentagon announced, in the second such practice operation of the country’s nuclear defense in less than a month.

“There will be an operational test launch of an Air Force Global Strike command unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile early tomorrow morning, September 7, from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California,” Pentagon Spokesman Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said Tuesday.

The announcement ahead of the launch was unusual; the Pentagon has not confirmed recent tests until after they take place.

Ryder stressed the test would be “routine,” adding that it had been long-scheduled and that the US had notified Russia and other countries of the plans.

The aim of the test “is to demonstrate the readiness of US nuclear forces and provide confidence in the security and effectiveness of the nation’s nuclear deterrent,” Ryder told reporters.

The US Air Force successfully launched a Minutemen III ICBM August 16, after having postponed the test twice to avoid stoking tensions over Ukraine and Taiwan.

The missile carried a test re-entry vehicle, which in a strategic conflict could be armed with a nuclear warhead.

The re-entry vehicle traveled about 4,200 miles (6,760 kilometers) to the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands in the western Pacific.

Ryder said the two tests were scheduled long in advance and are occurring close together

because of the first one's postponement.

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Featured image: Cape Canaveral - February 20, 1958. The launch of a U.S. Air Force Atlas missile, test number 449, takes place from the Air Force Missile Test Center.

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