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China Successfully Tests Hypersonic Nuclear Missile Wu-14

By: Vikas Shukla
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In a move that has alarmed the United States, China has confirmed that it has successfully tested its hypersonic nuclear-capable missile Wu-14. It was the missile's fourth successful testing in less than 18 months. But the latest one was far more complicated than the previous three. That's probably the reason the United States described it as an "extreme maneuver."



China's Wu-14 can penetrate the U.S. missile defense systems

The hypersonic nuclear delivery vehicle can travel up to ten times the speed of sound or 7,680 miles per hour. That means, if launched from Shanghai, it can hit San Francisco in about 50 minutes. The even bigger cause of worry for the United States is that it is fully capable of penetrating the U.S. missile defense systems. The test was carried out in Western China last week.

China tested the missile just days before the Central Military Commission vice-chairman Fan Changlong left for the U.S. on a week-long visit. Military observers told the *South China Morning Post* that the missile test reinforced China's nuclear deterrent in response to the United States' interference in South China Sea disputes.

Military experts said the launch was timed to boost Fan Changlong's bargaining power on the negotiation table when he met with the U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter. Professor He Qisong of the Shanghai University of Political Science and Law said the Wu-14 test was probably a response to a U.S. spy jet's flight over the disputed South China Sea last month.

China downplays missile test

By testing a missile capable of penetrating the U.S. missile defense systems, China has sent a clear signal that it is fully capable of defending its territorial sovereignty. However, Chinese military officials termed it a routine "scientific research and experiment," reports The Washington Free Beacon. Tensions have risen between the world's two biggest economies as China continues to build artificial islands in the disputed South China Sea.

Other countries in the area such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, Taiwan and Malaysia also claim territorial rights in the region. The U.S. defense secretary Ashton Carter last month asked China to "implement a lasting halt on land reclamation, cease further militarization, and pursue a peaceful resolution of territorial disputes in accordance with international law."