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Japan to develop missiles as tensions with China rise over East China Sea dispute

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Japan has said that it will develop a new land-to-sea missile in an attempt to increase its defence as tensions with China continue to rise. The two countries have been engaged in a dispute over the uninhabited Senkaku and Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea since World War II. According to Japan's Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper, Tokyo plans to deploy a new weapon that will have a range of 300km (186.4 miles). The range is expected to cover disputed chain of islands and is expected to be deployed on islands such as Miyako by 2023. Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper stated: "In light of China's repeated acts of provocation around the Senkaku islands, Japan aims to increase deterrence with improved long-range strike capability."

According to AFP, the missile will be developed by Japan and will use solid fuel, which refers to technology that reportedly allows weapons to be stored in the long-term, as well as maintain the

capacity to be launched at short notice. Yomiuri Shimbun did not name their source for the information and officials at Japan's Defence Ministry were unavailable for comment.

The report of the new long-range missile comes after protests by Japanese foreign ministers over Chinese government vessels entering into waters around the Senkaku Islands. On 14 August, Japanese government sources said that a Chinese military fighter jet had approached the disputed Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea since late May, with one of them flying within 50km of Japan's territorial airspace around the island chain.

On 9 August, Japan authorities recorded Chinese vessels in the waters on a total of 10 occasions. Foreign ministers protested against China's actions in the region.

A spokesperson for Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said at the time: "China's unilateral activities further raise tensions on the ground [and] cannot be accepted whatsoever... The vessels should leave Japan's territorial waters and contiguous zone immediately."