

Russia reveals hypersonic missile able to reach US in MINUTES in plan to load it to bomber

RUSSIAN bombers could soon be equipped with a hypersonic missile capable of travelling at 10 times the speed of sound, putting targets in Europe, the Middle East, the Asia Pacific and the North Atlantic within range - with President Vladimir Putin bragging about the military powerful at his fingertips.



Tu-22M3 bombers fly past Red Square in Moscow in 2016

State-run news agency TASS quotes a source within the defence ministry as saying the Russian air force is planning to test the country's Kh-47M2 Kinzhal aero-ballistic missile onboard the Tupolev Tu-22M3 Backfire bomber, in a significant development which will have NATO chiefs worried.

The Tu-22M3 can travel at nearly twice the speed of sound meaning it can travel between Russia and Washington within minutes.

At the moment, the missile is launched from the Mikoyan MiG-31K variant of the Foxhound interceptor, but military chiefs have concluded Kinzhal might be more suitable for a bomber.

Speaking to the TASS news agency, retired Lieutenant General Mikhail Oparin, former commander of the Russian Aerospace Forces Long Range Aviation branch said: “The MiG-31 has higher supersonic speed than the Tu-22M3 but now that a possibility has emerged to test the missiles aboard a long-range plane, this has to be done.

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Getty: Vladimir Putin has said the Kinzhal missiles are fully operational

“This will raise the combat potential of the Aerospace Force and add might to it.”

However, Mr Oparin said it remained to be seen whether the bomber was suitable for carrying the missile.

The Tu-22M3 class of bombers officially entered service in 1989.

It is able to reach speeds of roughly Mach 1.88 - slightly less than double the speed of sound - but it lacks the acceleration, speed or altitude of the MiG-31K, which can hit Mach 2.35 and fly at heights of 67,500ft.

Mr Oparin explained: “I believe it is speed that matters.

“The tests are needed to see whether it [the bomber] will be capable of accelerating the missile and to get the results.

“For long-range aircraft pilots, the missile is sooner of the tactical scope but at the same time it has clear advantages by its capabilities of breaching enemy anti-ballistic missile defences.”

The Russians have boasted that the Kinzhal, which they claim has a range of more than 1,200 nautical miles, is effectively invulnerable to existing

ballistic missile defences because of its in-flight manoeuvrability, as well as capable of hitting a wide range of targets.

Deputy defence minister Yuri Borisov told TASS: “This is a class of precision weapons fitted with multifunctional combat capabilities making it possible to strike both stationary and mobile targets.

“Specifically, aircraft carriers and cruiser-class warships, destroyers and frigates are potential targets for this weapon.”

Moscow says MiG-31K crews have flown more than 250 training flights so far with the new weapon.

Speaking on television last month, President Vladimir Putin said: “The Kinzhal [Dagger] high-precision hypersonic aero-ballistic missile that flies at Mach 10 is already in service with our army in the Southern Federal District, as I have already said.

“If anyone doubts this, they can look and see, we made a point of demonstrating the launch of this missile.”

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