

Russian military deploys new intercontinental ballistic missile

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Russia's military has commissioned its first unit of new intercontinental ballistic missiles mounted on mobile launchers, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported Sunday.

The new version of Topol-M missiles entered duty with a missile unit stationed near the town of Teikovo, the agency quoted Strategic Missile Forces spokesman Col. Alexander Vovk as saying.

Teikovo is a small town in the Ivanovo region, located some 250 kilometers (about 150 miles) northeast of Moscow.

Vovk said the unit, which previously had used a mobile version of an older Topol missile, quickly adopted the new weapon, the ITAR-Tass said. He did not say how many new missiles were deployed with the unit.

Military officials could not be immediately reached to comment on the report.

The Topol-M missiles, capable of hitting targets more than 10,000 kilometers (6,000 miles) away, have so far been deployed only in silos. Its new version, which will be mounted on a heavy off-road vehicle, makes it harder for an enemy to track it down.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov had said earlier this year that Russia's Strategic Missile Forces would get 69 Topol-M missiles by 2015; Russia so far has deployed about 40 silo-based Topol-Ms.

Windfall oil revenues over recent years have allowed Putin's government to increase weapons purchases and fund the development of new weapons.

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