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## China Conducts Second Test of Game-Changing Missile

8/20/2014



A 2011 artist's rendition shows the unmanned Falcon Hypersonic Technology Vehicle 2 (HPV-2) under development by the Defense Advanced Research...

**National Security:** Beijing is moving fast on a maneuverable, hypersonic glide vehicle designed to evade America's defenses, including the Aegis ballistic missile system guarding our carrier battle groups.

On Aug. 7, China conducted a second test of its hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV), known as the WU-14, yet another example of its relentless pursuit of high-tech weaponry as the United States abandons what the administration dismisses as Cold War weaponry.

The first test, conducted in January, saw China's HGV reach speeds in the vicinity of Mach 10, about 10 times the speed of sound. In the latest test, according to Internet reports, the WU-14 was the upper stage of a missile launched from the Jiuquan satellite launch facility in China's western Gobi desert.

Strategic experts say that the importance of this weapons program cannot be understated. The Washington Free Beacon quotes Rick Fisher, senior fellow at the International Assessment and Strategy Center, as saying:

"Accelerated HGV testing could potentially allow China to develop a second-generation antiship ballistic missile (ASBM) warhead that is more maneuverable and more difficult to counter."

As we noted after the January test, development of the WU-14 comes on the heels of China's deployment of a "carrier-killer," the DF-21D, a road-mobile ASBM. This land-based missile is designed to track and target our carrier battle groups in the western Pacific with the help of satellites and unmanned aerial vehicles similar to our drones, as well as over-the-horizon radar.

While the DF-21D is a traditional ballistic missile, the WU-14 operates in near-space and functions more like a plane, albeit on steroids. "The beauty of the HGV," Fisher told the Free Beacon, "is that it can perform hypersonic precision strikes while maintaining a relatively low altitude and flat trajectory, making it far less vulnerable to missile defenses."

China seems to be in a hurry. "The decision to conduct a second WU-14 test only a few months after its first test shows China's commitment to fast-tracking this program," said Lora Saalman, specialist on Beijing's HGV development at the Carnegie Foundation.

"China's test of a hypersonic glide vehicle proves that America's reticence about China's high-tech military developments diminishes American security by detracting from a needed political debate about real American defense requirements," Fisher has warned. "We are in effect disarming ourselves."

Certainly administration budget cuts and the effects of sequestration have done little to enhance America's military capabilities. In contrast, the New York Times reports, China in March announced a 12.2% rise in this year's military budget over 2013, which itself was 10.3% over the year before that.