

Trump's hypersonic missile boast sent key message about US capability - expert

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US President Donald Trump's "off-the-cuff" reference to a "super duper missile" was aimed at sending a general message about the nation's formidable military capabilities, a defence analyst has said.

Mr Trump raised eyebrows with his comment, made during a presentation at the White House on Friday to unveil the new Space Force flag. He said: "We're building right now, incredible military equipment, at a level that nobody's ever seen before, we have no choice we have to do it, with the adversaries we have out there.

"We have, I call it the 'super duper missile', and I heard the other night 17 times faster than what they have right now.

"Then you take the fastest missile we have right now.

"You heard Russia has five times, and China is working on five or six times, we have one 17 times, and it's just gotten the go-ahead."



US President Donald Trump mentioned the "super duper missile" last week (Image: GETTY)



Vladimir Putin announced the development of the Avangard system in 2018 (Image: GETTY)

Jonathan Rath Hoffman, the Pentagon's chief spokesperson, subsequently tweeted: "The Department of Defense is working on developing a range of hypersonic missiles to counter our adversaries."

Eugene Gholz, an adjunct scholar for the US-based Cato Institute's Defense and Foreign Policy Department, told Express.co.uk it was important to remember Mr Trump was speaking "off-the-cuff", as opposed to making an official policy announcement.

He added: "The bottom line is that the United States is working on advanced, high-speed missiles, and President Trump wants to make sure that everyone around the world knows that the United States is not planning to cede any military-technological lead and that the United States has tremendous innovative capabilities."

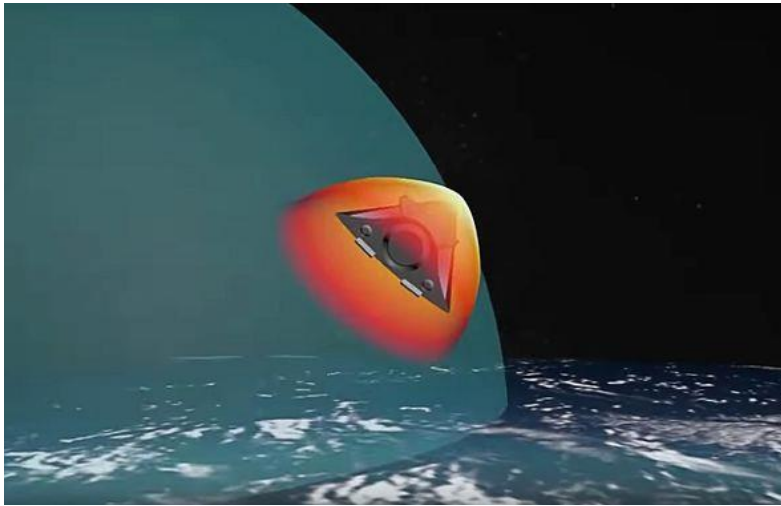


US President Donald Trump signs the 2020 Armed Forces Day Proclamation (Image: GETTY)

"I don't think the details of a particular missile project are the key point - for Trump, for the American people, or as a message to potential American adversaries."

Mr Gholz said missile technology was judged according to various criteria, from speed, accuracy and reliability and others, stressing what mattered was the ability to achieve a particular goal.

He added: "The United States military is certainly spending a lot of effort and money these days on speed.



An artist's impression of Russia's Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle (Image: GETTY)

"Having faster missiles than competitors is a point of pride; having missiles that can execute particular missions is what the United States needs for its national security.

"I think the United States and President Trump value both pride and security.

"Perhaps this comment had more to say directly about pride, and it leaves listeners to infer what the high-speed missile projects might contribute to American security."

