

# China tests waverider hypersonic aircraft

China says it has successfully tested its first experimental hypersonic waverider vehicle. The Starry Sky-2 could potentially be used as a weapon capable of evading current air defence networks

**XINGKONG-2  
(Starry Sky-2)**  
Hypersonic  
flight vehicle

**Test speed:** Mach 5.5 to Mach 6  
(6,790km/h to 7,344km/h)

**Payload**  
Possible nuclear  
or conventional  
warhead

**Fuselage:** Wedge-shaped design  
improves supersonic lift-to-drag ratio by  
using shock waves generated by its own  
flight as lifting force

## FLIGHT PROFILE

**1 Launch:** Waverider  
carried by medium-range  
ballistic missile to upper  
edge of atmosphere

**2 Separation:** Vehicle's  
own propulsion system  
takes over

**3 Pull-up:** Manoeuvre  
performed to control  
speed, altitude and  
direction of flight

**4 Flight to  
target zone**

Comparison of  
standard missile trajectory

Earth's atmosphere

**Waverider's high speed, low trajectory  
and mid-flight manoeuvrability could make it  
immune to interception by missile defence systems**