



Weekly Update: Counter the Threat
By Congressman Rob Wittman
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Since the beginning of the Cold War, our nation’s biggest national security threat has been a nuclear attack on our homeland.

Last week, Russian President Vladimir Putin gave his annual speech to his nation – much like our annual tradition of the President delivering the State of the Union. During Putin’s speech, he said that Russia is developing new nuclear weapons that he claims could overcome any U.S. missile defense.

Putin also claimed that Russia had successfully tested nuclear weapons that could go virtually undetected for extremely long distances. He said that the tests “will allow the development of a complete new type of weapon — a strategic complex of nuclear arms with rockets fitted with a nuclear-propulsion engine.”

This year, President Trump released the first [Nuclear Posture Review](#) (NPR) since 2008 and much has changed since then. The NPR is a document that describes what the administration sees as the role for nuclear weapons in the U.S. national security policy. In 2008, President Obama said that Russia was an emerging ally. Ten year later, they’re rightfully recognized as a near peer adversary and potential threat.

This declaration by Putin further proves that Russia is becoming more aggressive towards other nations around the world, including the United States. Russian aggression has continued to grow throughout the past decade, whether that is through the violation of multiple treaties, election meddling, planting fake news stories, or invading sovereign neighboring countries.

Our response to Russian rhetoric will be watched carefully by other potential adversaries. North Korea continues to grow more belligerent and dangerous in their quest to

successfully launch a nuclear missile capable of reaching the United States and in creating instability in the Asia-Pacific region. China is inserting itself more on the world stage aggressively vying for power, and Iran also seeks to obtain nuclear weapons and to destabilize other governments in their region.

These very real threats make clear that now more than ever, we must continue to develop strategic capabilities and maintain a strong defense investment plan to gain and maintain an advantage over our adversaries. These investments include developing high-tech weapons systems like [hypersonic weapons](#), extending the range of the Air Force with the [B-21](#) bomber, and rebuilding our Navy to [355 ships](#).

We took the first steps towards doing that last month when President Trump signed into law the Bipartisan Budget Act. This legislation empowers the military to address critical national defense needs.

Our military has been operating under harmful stop-gap spending bills (continuing resolutions) for over 1,000 days. However, this legislation finally provides a clear path forward for stable funding. This two-year budget agreement ensures that our Armed Forces will have the resources they need to carry out their missions. This legislation lifted the outdated budget caps, ended dangerous sequestration through 2019, and finally puts us back on a path to fixing our current military readiness crisis.

By renewing our commitment to stable funding of our military, we are taking important steps to deterring potential aggressors and supporting our Armed Forces to execute its core mission: to protect and defend our nation.

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