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Russia Drops Out of Top 5 Defense Spending Countries – Think Tank

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Russia has fallen out of the top five defense spending countries for the first time since 2006 after its spending decreased by 3.5 percent from 2017 to 2018, according to a new report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

Russia has expanded its military presence abroad in recent years, with its 2014 annexation of Crimea and involvement in the Syrian conflict serving as examples. However, the economic impacts of Western sanctions and low oil prices have negatively affected the state budget.

Russia now ranks sixth in the world for defense spending, with $61.4 billion in expenditures in 2018 compared to $66.3 billion the year before. The Swedish think tank said that the decrease was part of a longer trend in defense expenditure decrease in the country.

The five biggest spenders in 2018 were the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, India and France, which together accounted for 60 percent of global military spending.

In Central Europe, military spending grew by 12 percent compared with 2017 and by 35 percent compared with 2009, increases that SIPRI linked to growing perceptions of a threat from Russia.

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Overall, the Swedish think tank found that total world military expenditures rose to $1.8 trillion in 2018, the highest figure since SIPRI started measuring military spending in 1988.

Russia remains the world's second-largest arms exporter after the United States despite five years of declining sales abroad, an earlier report by SIPRI found.

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