

Russia Halts Close Intercepts of American Jets in Europe, U.S. Says

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Russia has not buzzed U.S. aircraft and ships in Europe and the Mediterranean in the past three months, the Military.com news website quoted a top U.S. commander in Europe as saying Tuesday.

Russian and NATO aircraft have conducted thousands of intercepts over international waters in the past four years, Gen. Tod Wolters [said](#) in June. Dangerous [incidents](#) have decreased in frequency during that period, Wolters, who became the head of U.S. European Command and NATO's supreme allied commander this spring, had said at the time.

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“We have had zero unprofessional incidents at sea and zero unprofessional incidents in the sky” with Russian jets in 90 days, Wolters [told](#) reporters, according to Military.com.

Russian and NATO warplanes have had fewer close calls because of “deconfliction dialogue” with Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Gen. Valery Gerasimov, Wolters was quoted as saying. Gerasimov had his first [face-to-face](#) with the newly appointed Wolters in July.

“He was concerned about it; I was concerned about it,” Wolters reportedly said Tuesday.

"The safety deconfliction has improved," Wolters was quoted as saying. "That's because we're deterring better, that's because we're deconflicting better."

NATO members and Russia have reported numerous airspace violations by military aircraft in eastern Europe since 2014, when Moscow’s annexation of Crimea from Ukraine froze relations between the sides.

The United States has [reported](#) several Russian incursions this year, including in airspace near Alaska and Syria.

President Vladimir Putin [criticized](#) his own Defense Ministry in 2016 for a “high-risk” incident involving a Russian military plane flying close to a U.S. Navy ship in the Black Sea.

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