

Putin probes Trump's defense posture as Russian planes breach U.S. air defense zone

U.S. military intercepted Russian aircraft during 8th such incident this year.



PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. - North American Aerospace Defense Command F-22 Raptors, supported by KC-135 Stratotankers and an E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System, successfully completed two intercepts of Russian bomber aircraft formations entering the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Russian planes breached the Alaskan air defense zone on Tuesday night and came within 32 miles of Alaskan shores, the Pentagon said, and the U.S. military scrambled F-22 Raptors to intercept two separate Russian formations before they reached sovereign American airspace.

In a statement Wednesday morning, North American Aerospace Defense Command said the Russian incursion marked the eighth such incident this year. It

continues a pattern of close aerial encounters between the two countries and underscores Moscow's willingness to test how far the U.S. will allow it to go.

"For the eighth time this year, Russian military aircraft have penetrated our Canadian or Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zones and each and every time NORAD forces were ready to meet this challenge," said Gen. Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy, NORAD Commander. "Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, NORAD constantly monitors the northern approaches to our nations and our operations make it clear that we will conduct homeland defense efforts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year."

Military officials said the first Russian formation consisted of two Tu-95 bombers, accompanied by two Su-35 fighter jets and supported by an A-50 airborne early warning and control aircraft. A second formation included two Tu-95 bombers accompanied by an A-50.

At their closest, the Russian planes were just 32 nautical miles from the coast of Alaska, but U.S. officials said that at no point did the aircraft cross into American airspace.

Source:

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