

Dr. Burgess Weekly Address July 19, 2018  
American Relations with Russia

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Hello, this is your Congressman Michael Burgess.

This week, President Trump met with Russian President Vladimir Putin, fulfilling his constitutional role to lead American diplomacy as “Diplomat in Chief.”

Since Monday, critics of the President have said that the Administration is taking a soft approach to Russian aggression. However, the Trump Administration consistently has confronted Russian activities that threaten our institutions, our interests, or our allies. Just last month, the Administration imposed sanctions against 5 Russian entities and 3 Russian individuals for enabling Russia’s military and intelligence units to increase Russia’s offensive cyber capabilities.

President Obama ignored Putin’s interference in Crimea, but the Trump Administration sanctioned 100 targets in response to Russia’s ongoing occupation of Crimea and aggression in Eastern Ukraine.

In March 2012, President Obama promised outgoing Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that he would have “more flexibility” to deal with contentious issues like missile defense after the U.S. presidential election. While President Obama accommodated Putin’s demands to end our missile-defense plan with Poland and the Czech Republic, the Trump Administration imposed export controls against 2 Russian companies that were helping Russia develop missiles that violate the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

As you can see, President Trump has taken a strong stance to confront Russian aggression – oftentimes correcting course where former Administrations have failed.

Now, the only way to move forward is “peace through strength.” Thankfully, over the last two years President Trump and Republicans in Congress have prioritized rebuilding our military. Today the American people can be more confident in our Armed Forces’ ability to protect Americans and our democratic process.

There is no doubt that Vladimir Putin is not our friend. It is critical to ensure that our nation, our elections, and our democratic process are safe. However, it also is essential that the two biggest nuclear powers in the world have a working relationship. I support President Trump’s efforts to enter into discussions with Putin as we seek to build progress even as we defend our American way of life.

This story is far from over. Earlier in the week, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats said the threat of cyberattacks against America is a critical point. In his words, “the warning lights are blinking red.” If indeed we are at this critical moment, it is imperative

that Congress fully understands the threats facing our nation. I have requested additional information from the Director of National Intelligence and the American intelligence community. And, I will keep you updated as we learn more.

As always, I appreciate your comments and your questions on this issue or any other issue. May God bless you and your family, God bless the people who protect us on the front lines, and as the song says, God bless you Texas.