

NEXT-GENERATION MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

ADVANCED WEAPONRY IN THE MILITARY

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AT A GLANCE

- New nonlethal weapons protect soldiers and civilians. The military is using new technology to develop weapons faster.
- Artificial intelligence is used to automate weapons and make combat decisions.
- The US Army is replacing the Bradley Fighting Vehicle with the XM-30. The new technology can make the XM-30 an uncrewed vehicle.
- The Precision Strike Missile will provide the United States with the ability to hit targets at a much greater distance than older missiles.
- The B-21 stealth aircraft is replacing the B-2. The B-21 is smaller than the B-2 and can carry less weight, but it costs much less than the older aircraft.



- Drones, and the ability to defend against drones, is vital new technology.
- The Aegis Combat System, used on US ships, is one of the most advanced weapons systems in the world.
- The United States is developing a fleet of uncrewed ships and submarines to support the US fleet.

STAYING AHEAD

In 2024, the United States spent \$997 billion on its military. China was the second-highest spender. It spent \$314 billion. Militaries must pay troops and buy weapons. It takes money to operate bases. Militaries research new technology, too. In 2024, the US military spent \$138 billion on this work.

The job of defending the United States is always changing. New weapons require

In the military, drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), are used for everything from gathering information to precise strikes on targets.



new defense methods. These new weapons include drones. Annabel Flores works for Raytheon. This company makes military technology. Flores says, “Drone threats are particularly dangerous in any environment—from soccer stadiums to battlefields—because they’re not easy to spot and take down.”¹

Military Spending

The United States spends more money on the military than other countries do. But the United States is a large country. Some smaller countries actually spend more per person. This includes the United Arab Emirates. It also includes Qatar, Oman, and Saudi Arabia. North Korea spends 23.5 percent of the country’s total budget on the military. That is more than twice the budget of the second-highest spending country.

The military is concerned about drones. But other new technologies pose threats, too. In 2025, Russia claimed to have a new nuclear cruise missile. Cruise missiles fly long distances to hit targets. Russia also said it had an uncrewed nuclear submarine. If true, these could be serious threats. North Korea has advanced weapons, too. It has missiles that can reach the United States. China has new ships and airplanes. It is also creating new cyber weapons. These could destroy communication systems or utilities. The US military must defend itself against these threats. This is a big job.

A NEW APPROACH

In the past, developing a new weapon could take years. But technology is changing fast.

GLOSSARY

autonomous vehicles

vehicles with sensors and AI software that are able to operate with little to no human help

controller

a device used to control action on a computer screen

deployment

moving troops or equipment to a place for military action

evacuations

quickly leaving a place, usually for safety reasons

nonlethal

will not cause death or serious injury

reconnaissance

observing an area to locate enemies or strategic features

simulation

using a computer to model or study something

stealth

technology that makes detection by radar difficult

virtual

when something appears to exist through the use of computer software

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