

An Airman Looks at Russia

"I look east and I see a pretty powerful Russia. I see a Russia that has changed borders. I see a Russia that continues to operate outside of the international world order, all of the rules. ... When you look at the totality of Russia and what they have done, I have very little faith in what they say. I'm more interested in how they act and up to this point it hasn't been good. ... They are No. 1 for me and growing. I take them seriously."—*Gen. Frank Gorenc, head of US Air Forces in Europe- Air Forces Africa, interview with Defense News, March 1.*

Complete Rewrite

"Russia does not want to challenge the agreed rules of the international order. It wants to rewrite them."—*USAF Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, House Armed Services Committee, Feb. 25.*

Weaponizing the Migrants

"Together, Russia and [the Syrian] regime are deliberately weaponizing migration in an attempt to overwhelm European structures and break European resolve. ... I can't find any other reason ... other than to cause refugees to be on the move and make them someone else's problem. ... This is bringing great pressure on the nations of Europe."—*Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, Senate Armed Services Committee, March 1.*

American Way of War, Continued

"The United States can't fight—much less win—today's wars without airpower. That's just the way modern warfare has moved and the demand signal for that airpower continues to rise. ... The platforms and systems that made us great over the last 50 years will not make us great over the next 50. ... The world is changing, and the threat is changing, and our Air Force must change with it if we're to remain relevant. ... Today, American airpower is a given and I believe it's our job, collectively, to ensure that this nation's ability to deliver that airpower, when and where it matters most, does not diminish over time."—*USAF Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee, Feb. 10.*

Aircraft Carriers: Fading, Fading ...

"Operating the carrier in the face of increasingly lethal and precise munitions will ... require the United States to expose a multibillion dollar asset to high levels of risk in the event of a conflict. ... An adversary with A2/AD capabilities would likely launch a saturation attack against the carrier from a variety of platforms and directions. Such an attack would be difficult—if not impossible—to defend against. ... [The US] must re-examine the relevance of the carrier and its air wing."—*From the report, "Red Alert: The Growing Threat to US Aircraft Carriers," Center for a New American Security, Feb. 22.*

How Loh Sees It

"You are going to have to fight for [the B-21] every day, every week, every month, every year, because there are people out there that are going to try to kill it. They are all over this town [Washington]. The sooner the Air Force can release [facts about] the team, the industry team, ... the more support you are going to get. If you don't do that, it isn't going to survive."—*Retired USAF Gen. John M. Loh, former head of Air Combat Command, quoted in Defense News, Feb. 25.*

Ancient Hardware

"As we have explained in the past, less than half of our combat air forces are ready today for a high-end fight. Our aircraft inventory is the oldest it's ever been, and our adversaries are closing the technological gap on us quickly so we simply must modernize."—*Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James, Senate Appropriations Committee, Feb. 10.*

Motherless Orbs

"An increasingly [large number] of nations can attack US satellites through nonkinetic, limitable, and even reversible techniques. ... This means that an opponent is likely to have ways of going after US satellites that don't necessarily seem massively escalatory. Given that satellites 'have no mothers,' how angry are the American people going to be if one gets disabled by jamming or cyberattack, even if the satellite is a crucial asset?"—*Elbridge Colby, senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, op-ed in Defense News, Feb. 23.*

Reading Material

"Once you've set it [Hillary Clinton's private email system] up this way, ... it's gone bad. You're going to end up with information on this private server that just shouldn't be there. ... How much energy would I expend if I were still director of the National Security Agency and someone told me I could get access to the unclassified email server of [Russian Foreign Minister] Sergei Lavrov? I'd move heaven and Earth to do that. ... I would lose all respect for a whole bunch of foreign intelligence agencies if they weren't sitting back, paging through the emails."—*Retired USAF Gen. Michael V. Hayden, former director of the NSA and CIA, quoted in MilitaryTimes.com, Feb. 22.*

Still on the March

"Unfortunately, we have lost ground over time [in the fight against Islamic terror]. The scope of the ideological movement, the geographic dispersion of Islamic extremism, the number of terror attacks, the number of people swearing allegiance, and the ground they hold have all increased. Groups like the Islamic State have now taken on state-like forms and features that are unlike anything we've seen in the past. So on balance we are in a worse position strategically with regard to the growth of international terrorism, Islamic terrorism in particular, than we were after September 2001."—*Retired Army Gen. John P. Abizaid, former head of US Central Command, in an interview published in the Combating Terrorism Center's Sentinel, Feb. 19.*

Flat Earthers

"In my opinion, China is clearly militarizing the South China Sea. You'd have to believe in a flat earth to believe otherwise."—*US Navy Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., head of US Pacific Command, Senate Armed Services Committee, Feb. 23.*

What I Learned in Kindergarten

"China must not pursue militarization in the South China Sea. Specific actions will have specific consequences. These activities have the potential to increase the risk of miscalculation or conflict among claimant states."—*Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter, speech to the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, March 1.*