

Fighter Fever

"I can't wait [to get the F-35 fighter in NATO Europe]. There are so many European allies already committed to the program, I believe that the very foundational premise of NATO will be moved along in a big way. ... I see nothing but exponential capability floating out of that system."—*Gen. Frank Gorenc, commander, US Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa, remarks to Defense Writers Group, April 5.*

Gradualism, Redux

"As a young military officer, I bore witness to the failed policy of gradual escalation that ultimately led to our nation's defeat in the Vietnam War. Now, ... I fear this Administration's grudging incrementalism in the war against the Islamic State ... risks another slow, grinding failure for our nation. ... [American officers] have been reduced from considering what it will take to win to what they will be allowed to do by this Administration. And it will be the men and women serving in our military and our national security that will pay the price."—*Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), letter to Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter, April 5.*

The Butcher's Bill

"ROE [rules of engagement] policies can carry with them a moral hazard of sorts when they operate to prevent a strike that is actually permissible under international humanitarian law. Obviously, a proposed attack against ISIS fighters that doesn't take place because of restrictive ROE would cause no direct civilian casualties ... but those ISIS militants who might have been killed if the strike went forward can now live on to commit all kinds of cruelties. ... Put another way, restrictive ROE can operate to shift risk from militaries ... to what might be a much larger number of civilians trapped under ISIS's thumb."—*Retired USAF Maj. Gen. Charles J. Dunlap, Duke University law professor, April 1.*

Ridonkulus

"Stories are being spread that Russia will send its tanks into the Baltic states, into Sofia, or into Budapest. No one intends to do that. There are

no such plans, nothing. Russia does not want war. The very idea of it is ridiculous."—*Russia's Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov, remarks to German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle, quoted in AP dispatch, March 30.*

Discordant Note

"We have got hundreds of people [in the Air Force] playing the tuba and clarinet. ... If we really had a manning crisis, from my perspective, we would tell people to put down the tuba and pick up a wrench or a gun."—*Rep. Martha McSally (R-Ariz.), House Armed Services Committee, March 22. She claimed USAF was using alleged manning woes as its "newest excuse" for retiring the A-10.*

Zombie Fighters

"You take an F-16 and make it totally unmanned—the F-16 is a fourth generation fighter—and pair it with an F-35, a fifth generation battle network node, and have those two operating together. ... The spread of autonomous technologies and platforms across the battlefield is an inevitability. This is something that is inexorable. It is going to happen."—*Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert O. Work, remarks at a joint Center for a New American Security and Washington Post forum, March 30.*

Pride and Cravenness

"I'm very proud of this moment. ... The perception was that my credibility was at stake, that America's credibility was at stake. ... I believe ultimately it was the right decision to make."—*President Obama, on his decision to back down, in 2013, from his own "red line" warning against Syria's use of chemical weapons, The Atlantic, April issue.*

The Gangster Way

"He [a potential terrorist in Russia] should understand his relatives will be treated as accomplices. When a person leaves to become a terrorist, he can kill hundreds of innocents. Those are the morals we are talking about. ... The relatives must fight this first. If the relative, before the fact, reported it, he is not guilty. If he did not, he is guilty."—*Kirill V. Kabanov, member of Russian human rights council, New York Times, March 29.*

Kim Philby, Creep

"Every evening, I left the office with a big briefcase full of reports which I had written myself, full of files taken out of the actual documents, out of the actual archives. I was to hand them to my Soviet contact in the evening. The next morning I would get the file back, the contents having been photographed, and take them back early in the morning and put the files back in their place. That I did regularly—year in, year out. ... Because I had been born into the British governing class, because I knew a lot of people of an influential standing, I knew that they would never get too tough with me."—*Kim Philby, notorious British turncoat spy and defector, in 1981 video of a lecture to East German secret police, released April 4.*

Dirty, Hairly

"It [a radioactive 'dirty bomb'] is not like a nuclear [fission] bomb that's going to kill a lot of people, but what it is going to do is contaminate ... a fairly large area with radiation. It's really an economic weapon, because it makes an area uninhabitable until you can clean it up, and the cleanup is probably going to be in the billions of dollars."—*Former Energy Department official Kenneth Luongo, on the threat posed by a so-called "dirty" bomb, Bloomberg, March 31.*

Big, Bad, Awful, No Goodniks

"Intelligence in the last couple of years has taken a beating, undeservedly. Europe is suffering under the hangover of World War II. ... The political debate was 'How do we restrict all these big, bad intelligence agencies from doing something really bad and awful?' Now, they never found anything big, bad, and awful. Everything was legal, and appropriate. We might not have liked what they were doing—that's a different topic—but there was nothing illegal. ... How many in Belgium today would like to have the ability to get an intel share-sheet that said, 'Hey, you've got a problem brewing in Belgium'? But we lost that, and for what appreciable reason? None, I would argue."—*Mike Rogers, former Republican chairman of House Intelligence Committee, speech at Heritage Foundation, March 30.*