

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Vitaly Mutko (Sergey Fadeichev / TASS)

Space Weapons

The head of U.S. Strategic Command, Major General John Hyten, [said](#) Saturday that Russia and China are developing weapons that can target U.S. military assets in space including satellites.

"They're building those capabilities to challenge the United States of America, to challenge our allies, and to change the balance of power in the world," General Hyten said, adding this could not be allowed to happen.

Mystery Man

Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of the Kremlin-run news channel RT has described the network's 10th anniversary banquet where Michael Flynn was seated next to President Vladimir Putin.

Flynn on Friday pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his conversations with former Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak as part of ongoing investigations into Russian election interference.

"He didn't talk to him about anything — we had a program, a lot of loud videos, you couldn't talk. Moreover, Putin didn't know who it was at all," Simonyan [wrote](#) on her Telegram channel on Saturday.

Simonyan told Putin before the president shook Flynn's hand that he was the former head of U.S. military intelligence. Putin replied, "Military intelligence? Seriously?" and "that was the whole story," she wrote.

WADA Confirmation

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has announced that information about doping in Russian sports provided by former lab chief Grigory Rodchenkov in diaries published by The New York Times is authentic, the German TV channel ARD [reported](#).

From 2012–2015, "Russia took measures to protect Russian athletes who used doping," ARD cited Hunter Junger, the head of WADA's department of investigations, as saying.

Sour Grapes

In an interview with pro-Kremlin network NTV, former Russian sports minister Vitaly Mutko, who had previously claimed he [didn't](#) have time to read the diaries of Grigory Rodchenkov, [said](#) Sunday they had been "written in the United States" and that entries had been "edited to fit certain facts."

"[Rodchenkov] is a tool that is very cleverly aimed against Russia," Mutko said about the diary.

Innocent Players

Grigory Rodchenkov, former doping lab chief, [said](#) he was in favor of allowing Russian players — who can establish that they are clean — to play under a neutral flag at the forthcoming Olympic Winter Games in South Korea.

"Innocent athletes should not be prevented from participating," he said.

Bomb Threat

A man who [made](#) a bomb threat at Moscow's Domodedovo Airport has been detained. The suspect, who has yet to be identified, announced he had a bomb in his bag when he refused inspection after approaching a metal detector.

Corporate Exemptions

The Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs has [called](#) on the government to exempt major companies, such as the diamond company Alrosa, Norilsk Nickel, Russian Railways, and Lukoil from the "Yarovaya" anti-terrorism laws.

The companies, which use closed internal telecommunications services, want the networks to be exempt from laws requiring that user data be stored for inspection.

No Demonstrations

At a seminar for governors and the heads of election commissions this weekend, Sergei Kiriyenko, first deputy head of the presidential administration [called](#) for holding the March 2018 elections "absolutely legitimately so there would be no cause for protests or lawsuits afterward."

Kiriyenko said the elections should be held without infringements so there would be "no protests over '[carousels](#)' or other violations."

Sanctions Removal

U.S. Ambassador to Moscow [John Huntsman said](#) in a Dec. 1 interview with the Russian TV channel Sankt-Peterburg, that Russia could see [sanctions](#) removed "if we can solve the issue of Ukraine."

"We should remain at the negotiations table, first of all concentrating on the issues that created the problem of sanctions," he said.

Jumper Death

Basejumper Alexander Pogrebov died Friday in Kabardino-Balkaria in southern Russia when his parachute failed to open, the Investigative Committee determined.

Pogrebov was [exonerated](#) in July last year of painting a yellow and blue star on top of a Stalin era high-rise in Moscow in 2014, after a Ukrainian activist confessed.

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