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## General says Russia, China air power will be better than US in future

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US F-35

**US Air Force Gen. Mark Welsh has warned about the rising air power of Russia and China, saying the two countries' gap with the US military has closed.**

“China and Russia are two good examples of countries who will be fielding capability in the next three to five years; if they stay on track, that is better than what we currently have in many areas,” Welsh told Fox News on Monday.

“Fighter aircraft in the next three to five years that have more capability than what we currently have sitting on the ramp. The F-35 will stay a generation ahead of them. F-22 will, too. Everything else we have will not stay ahead. The gap has closed,” he added.

The general made the comments during a three-day visit to Langley Air Force Base in Virginia.

Welsh also said dozens of countries around the world would use Russian and Chinese top-end fighters in the future.

American officials have expressed their concerns about the military power of China and Russia during the past years.

This is while figures compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute showed that the United States spends more on its military than the next seven top-spending countries combined.

The US spends nearly three times as much as China and its military budget is more than seven times as much as Russia.

Washington’s relations have been icy with China and Russia over Beijing’s construction projects in the South China Sea and the Ukraine crisis respectively.

The US accuses China of undergoing a massive “land reclamation” program in the Spratly archipelago of the South China Sea, and says China’s territorial claims of the man-made islands could further militarize the region.

A Chinese state-owned newspaper warned Monday a war between the two superpowers is “inevitable” unless Washington stops demanding Beijing halt its construction projects.

“If the United States’ bottom line is that China has to halt its activities, then a US-China war is inevitable in the South China Sea,” The Global Times, an influential newspaper owned by the ruling Communist Party’s official newspaper the People’s Daily, said in an editorial.

“The intensity of the conflict will be higher than what people usually think of as ‘friction’,” it warned.