



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

IN THE NEWS

The Last Fighter Pilot

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As networked warfare has risen, incidents of aerial combat have decreased. Since 1990, only 54 fighter jets have been shot down globally, says John Stillion, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, and a former Air Force officer, who put together a database on all confirmed aerial victories between 1965 to 2013...Stillion argues that technology is driving change as well. The increase in sensor-driven flying and beyond-visual-range shooting, he says, has rendered a jet's traditional strengths—things like high speeds, acceleration, and maneuverability—less important than they once were. What matters most now, he argues in a recent paper, "Trends in Air-to-Air Combat: Implications for Future Air Superiority," are sensors, powerful and long-range weapons, aircraft flight range, and network connectivity.

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