

The Scholar-Secretaries

"For the first time, both the United States Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense have doctorates in Russian studies. A fat lot of good that's done us."—**Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, speech at Oxford Analytica (United Kingdom), Sept. 19.**

Allegations and the F-35

"In all F-35 program office and US Air Force air-to-air combat effectiveness analyses to date, the F-35 enjoys a significant combat loss exchange ratio advantage over the current and future air-to-air threats to include Sukhois."—**Maj. Gen. Charles R. Davis, F-35 program executive officer, on allegations published in Australia (which is considering purchase of F-35s) and elsewhere that the multirole stealth fighter had been beaten by Russian Sukhoi fighters in a computer wargame, Sept. 19.**

Total Force Commitment

"I commit that we will share the load and communicate openly on every decision that we face."—**Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, National Guard Association of the United States conference, Sept. 22.**

Mediocre Military Leaders

"When it comes to reaping political advantage from our supposed military superiority, Americans have been getting a lousy return on their investment. One consistently overlooked explanation for this phenomenon is that the quality of American generalship since the end of the Cold War has seldom risen above the mediocre. Although the overall quality of US forces may be at an all-time high, the same cannot be said of the most recent generation of four-star generals and admirals."—**Andrew J. Bacevich, retired Army colonel and professor of history and international relations at Boston University, The Limits of Power, Metropolitan Books, Aug. 5.**

Modesty and Technology

"Be modest about what military force can accomplish, and what technology can accomplish. The advances in precision, sensor, information, and satellite technology have led to extraordinary

gains in what the US military can do. The Taliban dispatched within three months, Saddam's regime toppled in three weeks. Where a button is pushed in Nevada and seconds later a pickup truck explodes in Mosul. Where a bomb destroys the targeted house on the right, leaving intact the one on the left. But also never neglect the psychological, cultural, political, and human dimensions of warfare, which [are] inevitably tragic, inefficient, and uncertain. Be skeptical of systems analysis, computer models, game theories, or doctrines that suggest otherwise. Look askance at idealized, triumphalist, or ethnocentric notions of future conflict ... where adversaries can be cowed, shocked, or awed into submission, instead of being tracked down, hilltop by hilltop, house by house, block by bloody block."—**Gates, National Defense University, Sept. 29.**

Not Asked

"I have no clue. I know zero, zip, nada, nothing. ... That's on the record. Zero, zip, nada, nothing. ... I was not consulted."—**Paula A. DeSutter, State Department chief of verification, on US taking North Korea off State Department's list of terror-sponsoring states, Wall Street Journal, Oct. 13.**

Carrier Air Mix

"So what I envision in the future is an air wing that will have a mix of F/A-18 Super Hornets and Joint Strike Fighters, and then when Super Hornets phase out over time, ... replace [them] with a sixth generation fighter. Then you'll have JSF and a new fighter."—**Adm. Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Times, Oct. 6.**

Absolute Standard

"Every day, you have to be perfect. There is no room for error when it comes to nuclear weapons."—**Air Force Gen. Kevin P. Chilton, commander of US Strategic Command, to missile crews at Malmstrom AFB, Mont., Omaha World Herald, Sept. 29.**

F-22: More Is Less

"The Air Force's biggest mistake was insisting on 381. They should've

chosen a more budgetarily sustainable number."—**Richard Aboulafia, Teal Group research firm, on prospects for further funding of the F-22 fighter, National Defense, September.**

Nation Builders

"I don't think the Army should transform itself into a light-infantry-based constabulary force."—**Army Col. Gian P. Gentile on new Army doctrine that foresees that nation building will become a more important mission than conventional warfare, Washington Post, Oct. 5.**

Defining the Century

"It's not going to be the war on terror that defines the ideological challenge of our century. It's something more elusive. I think it involves three grand changes. One is what I call the global political awakening. For the first time, all of humanity is politically active. ... Second, there's a shift in the global center of power from the Atlantic world to the Far East. ... And the third is the surfacing of common global problems that we have to address, lest we all suffer grievously. I mean climate and environment, but also poverty and injustice."—**Former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, Los Angeles Times, Sept. 28.**

Plan A

"Russia plans to raise defense expenditure by 50 percent in three years."—**Russian News & Information Agency NOVOSTI, Sept. 30.**

Plan B

"Russia plans to trim its armed forces by more than 10 percent by 2012 with radical cuts among the officer ranks, the defense minister said Wednesday."—**Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Oct. 9.**

No Victory

"We're not going to win this war. It's about reducing it to a manageable level of insurgency that's not a strategic threat and can be managed by the Afghan army."—**Brig. Mark Carleton-Smith, senior British commander in Afghanistan, declaring that a "decisive military victory" over the Taliban is impossible, Associated Press, Oct. 4.**