

The Essential Airplane

"The F-35 is at root the core of our combat tactical aircraft in the future. ... My view is we cannot afford, as a nation, not to have this airplane."—**Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, touring Lockheed Martin plant in Fort Worth, Tex., Aug. 31.**

Cut the Essential Airplane

"Rather than buying both new long-range bombers and thousands of short-range F-35 fighters, DOD might consider whether the new bombers—given their much larger payload capacity—could represent a cost-effective substitute for some number of these new fighters."—**Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments report, August.**

Legacy of the Nation Builders

"Had we gone into Afghanistan in 2001, knocked over the Taliban, driven out al Qaeda, and departed, we would not be facing what we do today. But we were seduced by the prospect of converting a backward tribal nation of 25 million, which has resisted every empire to set foot on its inhospitable soil, into a shining new democracy that would be a model for the Islamic world. Now, whatever Obama decides, we shall pay a hellish price for the hubris of the nation builders."—**Patrick J. Buchanan, conservative political commentator, Miami Herald, Aug. 16.**

Lobbyist-Industrial Complex

"You've heard the stories: the indefensible no-bid contracts that cost taxpayers billions and make contractors rich; the special interests and their exotic projects that are years behind schedule and billions over budget; the entrenched lobbyists pushing weapons that even our military says it doesn't want. The impulse in Washington to protect jobs back home building things we don't need has a cost that we can't afford. This waste would be unacceptable at any time, but at a time when we're fighting two wars and facing a serious deficit, it's inexcusable."—**President Obama, Veterans of Foreign Wars convention, Aug. 17.**

Buzzing the Bad Guys

"The first thing we do [in Afghanistan] is fly overhead, and the bad guys know airpower is in place and oftentimes that's enough. That ends the fight, they

vamoose. The A-10 has a very distinct sound. The cannon on an A-10 is horrifically capable and our adversaries know it. When they hear the sound of an A-10, they scatter."—**Lt. Gen. Gilmory M. Hostage III, commander, US Air Forces Central Command, Associated Press, Aug. 14.**

Communicating in the Muslim World

"I would argue that most strategic communication problems are not communication problems at all. They are policy and execution problems. Each time we fail to live up to our values or don't follow up on a promise, we look more and more like the arrogant Americans the enemy claims we are."—**Adm. Michael G. Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Forces Quarterly, Aug. 28.**

Get Out of Afghanistan

"Afghanistan would need hundreds of thousands of coalition troops, perhaps for a decade or more. That is inconceivable. So, instead, forces should be substantially reduced to serve a comprehensively revised policy: America should do only what can be done from offshore, using intelligence, drones, cruise missiles, air strikes, and small, potent Special Forces units, concentrating on the porous 1,500-mile border with Pakistan, a nation that actually matters."—**Columnist George F. Will, Washington Post, Sept. 1.**

Boots, Not Bombs

"Success in Afghanistan serves America's own national security interests. As for securing Afghanistan, no smart-missile attacks can substitute for boots on the ground."—**M. Ashraf Haidari, political counselor, Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington, D.C., letter to Washington Post, Sept. 7.**

Not Again

"The US walked away from Afghanistan once before, following the Soviet collapse. The result was 9/11. We must not make that mistake again."—**Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Sen. Joe I. Lieberman (I-Conn.), and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), op-ed, Wall Street Journal, Sept. 14.**

Limits of UAVs

"Because unmanned aircraft have small payloads and limited maneuver-

ability, there are many missions they cannot perform even against poorly equipped enemies. In other words, they are a niche capability for accomplishing certain types of missions against certain types of adversaries, not a revolution in warfighting. So while unmanned aircraft may be the Pentagon's technological flavor of the day, don't expect them to do the heavy lifting when a real enemy comes along."—**Loren B. Thompson, Lexington Institute, Aug. 18.**

It Takes a Carrier

"Current and future operations require aircraft to be there, on station, and responsive to asymmetric threats, while being ready to attack moving ground targets. ... What makes aircraft carriers unique has not changed over time; they are independent, potent, and when they show up off the coast, impossible to ignore. Shore-based aircraft and long-range missiles all play a part, but the fact that the geographic coordinates of their hangars and bases never change makes them instant targets. When the requirement for host-nation permission is added to the mix, diplomatic challenges often hamper operational effectiveness."—**Rear Adm. Terry B. Kraft, "It Takes a Carrier," Naval Institute Proceedings, September.**

Calley Apologizes

"There is not a day that goes by that I do not feel remorse for what happened that day in My Lai. I feel remorse for the Vietnamese who were killed, for their families, for the American soldiers involved, and their families. I am very sorry."—**Former Army 1st Lt. William L. Calley Jr., who led the massacre of hundreds of villagers at My Lai, South Vietnam, in 1968, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Aug. 22.**

Predictors and Prediction

"As we go forward today killing the F-22, the Presidential helicopter, the combat search and rescue helicopter, the kinetic energy interceptor, we do so with the hope that today's military and civilian leaders are more prescient than their predecessors in predicting our future needs."—**Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Sept. 9.**