

## Declaring Our Intentions

"We are in this thing to win."—**Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, en route to Afghanistan, Washington Post, Dec. 8.**

## This Is Not Vietnam

"There are those who suggest that Afghanistan is another Vietnam. They argue that it cannot be stabilized, and [that] we're better off cutting our losses and rapidly withdrawing. I believe this argument depends on a false reading of history. Unlike Vietnam, we are joined by a broad coalition of 43 nations that recognizes the legitimacy of our action. Unlike Vietnam, we are not facing a broad-based popular insurgency. And most importantly, unlike Vietnam, the American people were viciously attacked from Afghanistan, and remain a target for those same extremists who are plotting along its border."—**President Obama, speech at West Point, Dec. 1.**

## Our Strengths, Not Theirs

"Play to our strengths. The insurgents have available for use only one tactic: short-range, ground combat. They have to get close and slug it out. The tactic can be quite effective (ask General Custer), and we should refuse to cooperate. Let's stay out of the clinches, jab, and move. They can't touch us if we put primary reliance on long-range, precision attack. By the way, some Army officers, themselves trained in close combat, have difficulty with this idea, suggesting we should look at putting a Navy or Air Force officer in charge."—**Retired Gen. Merrill A. McPeak, former Air Force Chief of Staff, The Oregonian, Nov. 7.**

## Depend on It

"Our mission is to keep the joint ground fighter out of trouble, and when he gets into trouble, it's to get him out of trouble as soon as possible. ... We have the ability to oversee the joint ground warfighter 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with no weekends and holidays and without a break. We are not going 500 miles an hour. We are going 120 knots, right on top of him, and we are orbiting around him and helping him."—**Col. Peter E. Gersten, wing commander at Creech**

**AFB, Nev., on air support provided by the MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper, American Forces Press Service, Nov. 13.**

## Stray From the Course

"The new doctrine that seems to enjoy enormous cachet among the smart foreign policy set is: Fight wars until they get hard, then quit."—**Robert Kagan, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington Post op-ed, Dec. 3.**

## Best of the Best

"Overall, the survey asked Americans to rate the federal government on a five-point scale. ... The military was included and was the highest. We asked which branch of the military is most important to the United States and it historically continues to be the Air Force."—**Frank Newport, editor in chief of the Gallup Poll, Air Force News Service.**

## Airpower Makes It Possible

"Our battlefield success in Afghanistan is, to a great degree, underwritten by aviation and space platforms. In a landlocked nation with few workable roads, helicopter lift and cargo aircraft make possible almost everything we do, from dumps of food, fuel, and ammunition, to maneuver support. It's hard to imagine a more difficult place to support combat operations. Yet even in Afghanistan's remote corners, combat air patrols and search and rescue teams watch over our troops day and night. So do intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms, both manned and unmanned. Without question, our offense against the Taliban and al Qaeda depend on airpower."—**Deputy Secretary of Defense William J. Lynn III, Aerospace and Defense Finance Conference, Dec. 2.**

## Imagine That

"The American military thought that they were fighting a war and when the war was over they were expecting to go home. ... They looked still much more in fighting mode than in peacekeeping mode."—**David Manning, former British ambassador to the United States, on the focus**

**of US forces after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Associated Press, Dec. 1.**

## The Enduring Contribution

"The primary enduring contribution of the Air Force is the ability to establish and maintain freedom of action in the air for US and coalition forces, permitting them to operate with minimum risk of hostile air attack. The increased speed, range, and flexibility that is achieved by our ability to operate in the air and in space also allows us to rapidly project power in response to threats and crises, wherever they may emerge in the world. While airpower cannot win wars on its own, and does not offer boundless strategic potential, some degree of control in the air has become absolutely essential for any reasonable hope of success in modern warfare."—**Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, Air Force Chief of Staff, Aerospace and Defense Finance Conference, Dec. 3.**

## Tough Standard

"Humans are imperfect beings but this mission demands perfection."—**Col. Ferdinand B. Stoss, newly assigned 91st Missile Wing commander at Minot AFB, N.D., following a series of nuclear-related problems, Associated Press, Nov. 29.**

## Targeting Osama

"I believe he [bin Laden] is an iconic figure at this point whose survival emboldens al Qaeda as a franchise organization across the world. I don't think we can defeat him until he is captured or killed."—**Army Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, top US and NATO commander in Afghanistan, testimony to Congress about importance of Osama bin Laden, McClatchy Newspapers, Dec. 9.**

## The Strategic Perspective

"We could have an operation that was a great success tactically, but we kill one or two civilians, or more than that, and then it's a strategic failure. As strategic failures pile up, the strategy would fail."—**Adm. Michael G. Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, speaking to marines at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Dec. 7.**