

Too Fat

"Are we becoming a nation too fat to defend ourselves?"—**Retired Army generals John M. Shalikashvili and Hugh H. Shelton, former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noting that 27 percent of military-age Americans are too overweight to serve, Washington Post, April 30.**

Nuclear Innocence

"China has consistently stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons [and] is firmly committed to a nuclear strategy of self-defense, and its nuclear weapons pose no threat to other countries. ... China has never deployed any nuclear weapons on foreign territory. China has not participated and will not participate in any form of nuclear arms race."—**"Senior Chinese diplomat" quoted by Chinese government's Xinhua News Agency, May 4.**

Is the Navy Affordable?

"Do we really need 11 carrier strike groups for another 30 years when no other country has more than one? ... At the end of the day, we have to ask whether the nation can really afford a Navy that relies on \$3 [billion] to \$6 billion destroyers, \$7 billion submarines, and \$11 billion carriers."—**Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, address to Navy League, May 3.**

Setup for Decline

"The Defense Secretary is setting the stage for a decline in America's global military power that matches its waning economic clout."—**Loren B. Thompson, Lexington Institute, May 5.**

And Then There's Tricare

"Health care costs are eating the Defense Department alive. ... The premiums for Tricare, the military health insurance program, have not risen since the program was founded more than a decade ago. Many working age military retirees—who are earning full-time salaries on top of their full military pensions—are opting for Tricare, even though they could get health coverage through their employer, with the taxpayer picking up most of the tab."—**Gates, speech in Abilene, Kans., May 8.**

1.4 Percent Is Enough

"The deal is that we're going to have to again look at ourselves and the proportion of dollars that we invest in personnel and personnel programs and family programs—where we might be able to sort of reduce the growth in our personnel costs. Any strategic leader has to look at that. As have American companies—and they have found ways to adjust. The President asked for a 1.4 percent pay raise for military members. Typically, the Congress adds to that, and we certainly are grateful for their generosity. However, it comes from someplace. It requires a trade. And that is why each of us [service chiefs] has said in our own way that for now, 1.4 percent is enough."—**Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, USAF Chief of Staff, Defense News, May 10.**

Stark Choice in Iran

"Past approaches haven't worked. President Bush tried his we-don't-speak-to-evil hard line, which failed to persuade Iran to stop its nuclear program. President Obama tried his open-hand approach, but Iran refused to engage in negotiations. Given the political turmoil within Iran, it is possible that Iranians cannot get their act together to engage with the United States. But the nuclear program has broad support, even among the political opposition. There are really only two options if sanctions fail: attack Iran or prepare to live with an Iranian bomb."—**Military analyst H. D. S. Greenway, Boston Globe, April 21.**

Best Value Force

"We provide a third of total Air Force capabilities for less than seven percent of the total Air Force budget. In all three areas—personnel, operations, and facilities—the Air Guard provides the 'Best Value for America.'"—**Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, director of the Air National Guard, House Armed Services personnel panel, April 15.**

Changing Times

"Once we freed Europe. Now we pay to leave an Afghan valley without getting shot at."—**Columnist Henry Allen, Washington Post, April 20.**

Bloated CIA Bureaucracy

"The CIA has become a bloated bureaucracy where senior bureaucrats are more interested in protecting their jobs than in gathering intelligence. A sign of how bad things are is that more than 90 percent of all CIA employees work within the United States. This is curious for an organization whose purpose is to collect foreign intelligence."—**Columnist Jack Kelly, deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force in the Reagan Administration, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, April 18.**

Eight Years Later

"Eight years after they were overthrown by US airpower, a drumbeat is starting to sound across Afghanistan in favor of talking to the Taliban, the country's once-hated former rulers. An idea that used to seem absurd, if not defeatist, is coming to be seen as the only credible way to end an ever-widening war."—**Columnist Jonathan Steele, Guardian (Britain), May 4.**

NATO Industrial Specialization

"Do we really need so many different types of infantry combat vehicles, or radios, or helicopters? If European nations buy 600 NH-90 helicopters, does each of them really have to certify its allotment on a national basis when it is estimated that, if this certification were harmonized, it could save up to 5 billion euros?"—**NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Defense News, April 28.**

Handy Lancer

"The B-1's very flexible. What makes us very useful in the current fight is that we have a large payload, we can carry a varied amount of weapons. If you need to go kinetic, you have a lot of choices on what you can do. ... We're fast for what you might think a bomber can do. The loiter time is exceptional so we don't require as much tanker time to stay and hang around over the fight. Afghanistan is a good-size country and we can dash back and forth across it as we need to, if somebody needs help in a hurry."—**Col. Charlie Catoe, 7th Operations Group commander, AFNS, April 26.**