

By Robert S. Dudley

Air Guard Worries

"I'm very concerned that, just because of the age of our fleet, some people might discard our Air Guard as out-of-date and incapable of being recapitalized. I'm not willing to accept that. But I know intuitively that that's going to be a tremendous challenge for our Air Guard."—**USAF Gen. Craig R. McKinley, Chief of National Guard Bureau, in National Defense, September.**

Presidential Impulse

"In due course, President Obama will declare a victory of sorts for his Libyan strategy—just before he starts cutting the US military. Last year's cuts and the recent Budget Control Act have already reduced defense spending more than half-a-trillion dollars. The Pentagon is preparing for even deeper cuts at the direction of a White House seeking money in the budget for added domestic spending. The President's impulse to slash the military goes against the principal lesson from our engagement over Libya—that our military cannot do more with less."—**Rep. Howard P. McKeon (R-Calif.), chairman of House Armed Services Committee, RealClearPolitics.com, Sept. 3.**

Some Choice

"Without adequate funding, we are destined to go down one of three paths: We get smaller, we get weaker, or we get smaller and weaker."—**Retired Lt. Gen. David A. Deptula, former Air Force intelligence chief, Air Force Times, Aug. 15.**

Specter of the 1970s

"The approach that we have taken is to preserve the readiness of our Air Force as a prime imperative—that whatever size we end up, that we are going to be a ready, well-trained, highly motivated, and supremely capable force. ... It is preferable to have a smaller superb force than a larger hollow one. Those of us who have been around a while remember what it was like to schedule three airplanes to make one, or walk down the line and see airplanes with no engines, or fewer engines than they were supposed to have. We do not want to go back to those days."—**Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, USAF Chief of Staff, Defense News, Aug. 29.**

Bad News for the Taliban

"I will tell you 2010 was a very bad year for our enemy, and 2011 is going to be even worse for them."—**USMC Gen. James N. Mattis, head of US Central Command, remarks at Quantico, Va., Aug. 30.**

Get on the F-35 Train

"I am concerned that the DOD's failure to sufficiently defend and advocate for the F-35 program has enabled and even invited unwarranted criticisms from many corners, including calls for partial or complete cancellation of the program. It is my hope that, as deputy secretary of defense, you would be a champion of the F-35 program, using your voice to remind Congress that this weapon system is one our nation cannot do without. I strongly encourage you to step up your defense of this key program."—**Sen. John Cornyn (R-Tex.), letter to deputy secretary of defense nominee Ashton B. Carter, Aug. 24.**

How Was Club Med, Mike?

"I was burned out from months of tough battles, but I underestimated the resistance of reactionary forces. I should have postponed my vacation."—**Last Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, who was out of town when foes in August 1991 staged a coup d'etat attempt, Washington Post, Aug. 21.**

The Hollywood Boost

"The White House is ... counting on the Kathryn Bigelow and Mark Boal big-screen version of the killing of bin Laden to counter Obama's growing reputation as ineffectual. The Sony film by the Oscar-winning pair who made 'The Hurt Locker' will no doubt reflect the President's cool, gutsy decision against shaky odds. Just as Obamaland was hoping, the movie is scheduled to open on Oct. 12, 2012—perfectly timed to give a home-stretch boost to a campaign that has grown tougher."—**Columnist Maureen Dowd, New York Times, Aug. 6.**

Keeping the Faith

"There are a lot of [budget-cutting] ideas on the table, ranging from retirement changes to health care and allowance for housing. The challenge for the Chiefs is trying to get a sense of which things can you change without breaking the faith of those who decided to serve and which things [you can] change

without negatively impacting retention in the next decades."—**Erin C. Conaton, undersecretary of the Air Force, Gov-Exec.com dispatch, Aug. 16.**

Next Up: The Hollow Force?

"I don't think you have to choose between our national security and fiscal responsibility. ... The President and Bob Gates before me basically decided pretty much the parameters that we would have to be looking at, and we're within that ballpark with what the Congress just did. If they go beyond that, if they do the sequester, this kind of massive cut across the board which would literally double the number of cuts that we're confronting, that would have devastating effects on our national defense. ... Very simply, it would result in hollowing out the force."—**Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, remarks at National Defense University, Washington, D.C., Aug. 16.**

I Broke No Law

"Well, you know, in someone's eyes, maybe I broke the chain of command. But from the standpoint of the law, no. And so I'm very comfortable with where I was. My job is not to come up with a strategy and say, 'This is the answer.' My job is to give the President and the Administration a broad enough range of choices."—**Retired USMC Gen. James E. Cartwright, former JCS vice chairman, on claims he circumvented superiors by working Afghan war options with Vice President Joseph Biden, "The Cable," Sept. 2.**

Tell Me Another One

"I don't think the supercommittee will be [looking at] defense. Defense cuts are the fallback."—**Former White House budget director Alice Rivlin, remarks at Brookings Institution forum in Washington, D.C., Aug. 12.**

Stand and Deliver

"If we want an all-volunteer force, the bottom line is that we're going to have to take care of these people who were willing to do what the bulk of people weren't willing to do. Going to war is dangerous—you can get killed doing it. And the question is, are the American people willing to recognize the sacrifices of these young people?"—**Retired Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, former Army Chief of Staff, Associated Press dispatch, Aug. 19.**