

By Robert S. Dudley

Boots in the Closet

"With the end of US military commitments in Iraq and the drawdown that is already under way in Afghanistan, the Army and Marine Corps will no longer need to be sized to support the kind of large-scale, long-term stability operations that have dominated military priorities and force generation over the past decade."—**Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, News conference, Jan. 5.**

Cue the Violins

"Here we go again. The Obama Administration will reduce its long-service, professional land force to pay for something called 'AirSea Battle,' a strategy that seeks to buy more ships and planes in order to confront China with technology rather than people. This strategy shows a degree of ahistoricism that exceeds that of any post-World War II Administration. ... We will enter the next war again tragically short of the precious resource that we have neglected for six Administrations: our soldiers and marines."—**Retired US Army Maj. Gen. Robert H. Scales, former US Army War College commandant, Washington Post, Jan. 5.**

Demanding Customer

"The F-35 will be a major piece of our force structure, but getting there will be on a somewhat lower ramp than we had envisioned. ... We're certainly committed, [but] that's not to suggest we're not going to be a demanding customer. In the budgetary environment that we're in, we absolutely must be a demanding customer."—**Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, USAF Chief of Staff, Jane's Defence Weekly Magazine interview, Dec. 21.**

The Bomber Imperative

"The ability to operate from long distances will be fundamental to our future strategy in the Pacific. You have to have a long-range bomber. In terms of Air Force priorities, I cannot think of a larger one."—**Andrew Hoehn, RAND Corp. Wall Street Journal, Jan. 4.**

Iran's Latest Suicide Note

"We warn this ship [USS *John C. Stennis*], which is considered a threat to us, not to come back [into the Ara-

bian Gulf], and we do not repeat our words twice."—**Gen. Ataollah Salehi, Iranian armed forces commander, Washington Post, Jan. 4.**

The Iran IQ Test

"The 'American warship' that Tehran is now threatening, the USS *John C. Stennis*, is a Nimitz-class carrier whose air wing alone is more capable than the entire Iranian Air Force. If the mullahs are serious about carrying out their threats, they're dumber than we thought."—**Wall Street Journal editorial, Jan. 4.**

Maybe He'll Just Stay There

"Former President Jimmy Carter reportedly sent a personal condolence letter to the son of Kim Jong Il, the late North Korean leader who presided over one of the most repressive dictatorships in the world. The state-run Korean Central News Agency claimed that the former US President sent 'a message of condolences' to Kim Jong Un. ... The news agency said Carter wished the next leader of North Korea 'every success as he assumes his new responsibility of leadership, looking forward to another visit to [North Korea] in the future.'"—**FoxNews.com dispatch, Dec. 22, uncontested by Carter.**

The Hair Stands on End

"A 27-year-old running a repressive regime with nuclear weapons: It's kind of hard to say you don't have some concerns."—**Unnamed US official, on the ascension of 27-year-old Kim Jong Un to command of North Korea, Wall Street Journal, Dec. 20.**

The Score—Thus Far

"[President George W.] Bush's unambiguous objective in dealing with Kim [Jong Il] was zero nuclear weapons. Kim's objective was to build a nuclear arsenal without provoking an attack that threatened his regime. When Bush left office in 2009, the score in this big game was: George W. Bush, 0; Kim Jong Il, 8."—**Former Pentagon official and current Harvard professor Graham T. Allison, Boston Globe, Dec. 20.**

Biden's Surrealpolitik

"Look, the Taliban per se is not our

enemy. ... There is not a single statement that the President has ever made in any of our policy assertions that the Taliban is our enemy because it threatens US interests."—**Vice President Joseph Biden Jr. in White House interview, Newsweek, Dec. 19.**

That's a Rigorous Standard

"I feel like I either should have gotten them [four of his squad mates] out of there alive or died trying, and if I didn't die trying, that means I didn't try hard enough."—**Former USMC Sgt. Dakota Meyer, Medal of Honor recipient, interview with San Antonio Express-News, Dec. 16.**

Anwar Will Be a Little Late

"I specifically invite the youth to either fight in the West or join their brothers in the fronts of jihad: Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. I invite them to join us in our new front, Yemen, the base from which the great jihad of the Arabian Peninsula will begin, the base from which the greatest army of Islam will march forth."—**Posthumous video message from Anwar al Awlaki, US-born al Qaeda militant killed by a drone strike in September. Posted on various websites, Dec. 20.**

Huh?

"Our motto is, 'America's Navy: A Global Force for Good.' And what better way to demonstrate that [motto] than to reach into these countries, where we don't have a lot of presence, with military bands? It's soft power projection, if you will."—**US Navy Lt. Cmdr. Dwaine Whitham, head of the service's music program, CQ Weekly, Dec. 22.**

Putin's Nightmare

"Mr. Putin can no longer take his supremacy for granted. It is not yet a revolutionary situation. ... But Russians, having sleepwalked away from communism, are awakening to the idea that if they want democracy and social justice, they need to engage in active struggle. Quiescent 20 years ago during Soviet communism's final days, they may at last be about to stand up for their rights."—**Robert Service, Russia expert at Oxford University and Stanford's Hoover Institution, New York Times, Dec. 24.**