

By Robert S. Dudley

**Straight Talk**

“We [the Air Force] are too small, too old, less ready, and out of balance for what the nation needs of us.”—**Gen. David L. Goldfein, USAF Chief of Staff, Air Force Sergeants Association, Aug. 24.**

**Dept. of Red Tape**

“The Department of Defense is the world leader in funding high-risk, high-pay off technology, but too many high-tech businesses and startups are turning their backs on us. ... You have to remember that DOD has been accused of having a culture where it’s better to do nothing than it is to do 99 things right and one thing wrong.”—**Adam Jay Harrison, DOD’s director of National Security Technology Accelerator, Financial Times, Sept. 4.**

**Veiled Talk**

“We’ve had problems with cyber intrusions from Russia in the past, from other countries in the past, and, look, we’re moving into a new era here, where a number of countries have significant capacities. ... Frankly, we’ve got more capacity than anybody, both offensively and defensively.”—**President Obama, remarks at conclusion of G20 Summit in China, Sept. 5.**

**Chapman’s Honor**

“I support moving forward with the Medal of Honor for Sergeant Chapman, because he unquestionably died a hero fighting for his country. We may never know exactly what happened during the final hours of that fight, but, undoubtedly, Sergeant Chapman died a hero.”—**Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), referring to USAF TSgt. John Chapman, a combat controller, killed by al Qaeda fighters on March 4, 2002, in Afghanistan, The Hartford Courant, Aug. 28.**

**Zinni’s Zapper**

“I don’t want to be part of a strategy that in my heart of hearts I know is going to fail. It’s a bad strategy, it’s the wrong strategy, and maybe I would tell the President he would be better served to find somebody who believes in it—whoever that idiot may be.”—**Retired USMC Gen. Anthony Zinni, former**

**head of US Central Command, on why he couldn’t lead the war on ISIS, Time.com, Aug. 31.**

**Hollowing Out**

“On average, I would go to three flag exercises a year, plus I would do a rotation with the National Training Center with the Army, and that would be a normal battle rhythm. ... Today’s pilot—based on the size of the force, the age of the force, and the continued optempo demand in Central Command—is getting about half of that. ... We’re able to maintain a higher state of readiness forward, where the combat commanders need it, but the bill payer is home station.”—**Gen. David L. Goldfein, USAF Chief of Staff, news conference, Aug. 10.**

**No Regrets**

“This study concluded that DOD must accelerate its exploitation of autonomy—both to realize the potential military value and to remain ahead of adversaries who also will exploit its operational benefits. ... [It is] vital if the US is to sustain military advantage. ... The decision for DOD to deploy autonomous systems must be based both on trust that they will perform effectively in their intended use and that such use will not result in high-regret, unintended consequences. Without such trust, autonomous systems will not be adopted except in extreme cases.”—**Defense Science Board study of autonomous, “thinking” weapons, “Summer Study on Autonomy,” June 2016.**

**Bucket Brigade**

“If we form a hypothesis and build an experiment, you have to be willing to be wrong. Then we can discount that idea and move on to another one. And my experience with commercial industry tells me that innovation in commercial industry is exactly that process. ... Failure is acceptable, ... but it moves at the speed of a small brush fire and it fertilizes everything in its path as it burns out the underbrush. ... We (DOD planners) bring out the fire brigades and we try to put it out.”—**USAF Gen. Paul J. Selva, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,**

**remarks to Center for Strategic and International Studies, Aug. 25.**

**Clear Enough**

“As I look at our modernization, I look at [plans for] 179 [KC-46 tanker] aircraft, and I go: ‘Is that enough?’ I can tell you right now, because of the combatant war fighter needs that I have, ... I’m going to need more of those aircraft.”—**Gen. Carlton D. Everhart II, head of Air Mobility Command, Air Force Times, Sept. 1.**

**Good Question**

“Given that half of the remaining [Guantanamo] detainees are too dangerous to release and that it would be illegal to transfer them to the US, how does [the Obama Administration] expect ... to close Gitmo without violating the law?”—**Question from House Foreign Affairs Committee member, Aug. 25.**

**The Next Whatever**

“Somewhere around 2028—with key investments in some key technology areas—you’d be able to have some initial operational capability of a penetrating counterair [system]. ... I’ve gotten into a little hot water with my fighter pilot brethren over this, because I say things like, ‘Hey, it may not necessarily be a fighter.’ ... A typical fighter pilot for air superiority would say, ‘You need 9Gs, two tails, a gun, short range. That’s what fighters are.’ This is something that’s a little bit different and has some different attributes.”—**USAF Brig. Gen. Alexis Grynkewich, head of Air Superiority 2030 enterprise capability collaboration team, Defense News, Aug. 28.**

**Cheaters**

“Syria has engaged in a calculated campaign of intransigence and obfuscation, of deception, and of defiance. We ... remain very concerned that [some legally banned Syrian chemical warfare agents] and associated munitions, subject to declaration and destruction, have been illicitly retained by Syria.”—**Kenneth Ward, US representative to the multinational Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Foreign Policy, Aug. 31.**