

By Robert S. Dudley

## New Normal

"Here we are, 70,000 people have been killed in Syria, a million-plus refugees destabilizing the region in Turkey, Jordan, other countries—500,000 in Jordan alone—and the United States is messing around trying to figure out how we're going to have enough pilots to enforce a no-fly zone or how we're going to be able to make sure our Air Force can maintain the proper training in order to execute this particular mission."—*Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), on sequestration's damage to USAF capabilities, Air Force Times, May 13.*

## Long-term Degradation

"The 2014 budget will not reverse the damage done by the Fiscal Year 2013 sequestration. Recovering the warfighting capability that we lost and improving readiness will certainly require some reduction in operations tempo and/or additional resources. Reduced flying hours will cause some units to cease flying operations, resulting in severe, rapid, and long-term combat readiness degradations. Today, for the first time I can remember, we have 12 squadrons—bombers and fighters—that will not fly for the rest of the fiscal year. It's about an 18 percent of our flying hour, a 200,000-hour, flying cut, by the end of the year."—*Lt. Gen. Charles R. Davis, USAF acquisition official, Senate Armed Services Airland subcommittee, April 24.*

## Good Luck With That

"We are going to have to think about how to remain a global power with fewer resources. I think we are going to have to find ways to accomplish almost the same things but with smaller force structures. It's a mess. It's just a real mess."—*Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, remarks to USAF troops in Japan, Wall Street Journal, May 3.*

## Fighting the Stupids on RPAs

"There is a growing impression that [remotely piloted aircraft, or RPAs] are a grotesque, futuristic, out-of-control weapon of war. Collateral damage, always a regrettable event in war, including casualties among the civilian populace that our terrorist enemies are wont to use as cover, is somehow blamed on the use of armed RPAs. But, as unfortunate as these casualties among the innocent are, would they be any fewer or less consequential if they were caused by

attacks from aircraft actually carrying the pilots onboard? To think so is absolutely ridiculous."—*Bruce S. Lemkin, former deputy undersecretary of the Air Force, op-ed in defense news.com, May 5.*

## And As If On Cue ...

"The idea that this President would leave office having dramatically expanded the use of drones—including [against] American citizens—without any public standards and no checks and balances, ... that there are no checks, and there is no international agreement—I would find that to be ... terrible and [it] ultimately will undermine a great deal of what this President will have done for good. I cannot believe this is what he wants to be his legacy."—*Anne-Marie Slaughter, former State Department director of policy planning 2009-2011, Washington Post, April 7.*

## Like "Law and Order"

"What we now have is evidence that chemical weapons have been used inside of Syria, but we don't know how they were used, when they were used, who used them. We don't have a chain of custody that establishes what exactly happened. And when I am making decisions about America's national security and the potential for taking additional action in response to chemical weapon use, I've got to make sure I've got the facts."—*President Obama, White House press conference, April 30.*

## "Weak and Legalistic"

"The muddle that is President Obama's policy on Syria has grown still muddier. On Tuesday the President backed away from a 'red line' he had drawn on the use of chemical weapons by the regime of Bashar al-Assad, setting the threshold for proof of a violation in such a way as to virtually exclude the possibility that one could ever be confirmed. ... His weak and legalistic words about the need to verify a 'chain of custody' on any chemical weapons use—and his declaration that even a hard confirmation would lead only to a 'rethink [of] the range of options'—simply invite further chemical attacks."—*House editorial, Washington Post, May 2.*

## We're Here To Help

"Our goal would be to remove all decision-making out of the chain of command about whether to prosecute a case and whether to bring a case to

the chain of command. And it would not just be for sexual assault. We're looking at all violent crimes. Everyone knows the current system is not working. Everyone knows that 19,000 sexual assaults and rapes a year is unacceptable. I think the military has been trying to grasp this for a while now, without success, and so they may need some outside assistance in looking at it freshly. ... It's not one of those situations where they can say, 'We got this,' because they clearly don't."—*Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), responding to a USAF officer's decision to overturn a court-martial conviction in a sexual-assault case, Associated Press, April 30.*

## More Dreck From Headquarters

"When on duty or in an official capacity, Air Force members are free to express their personal religious beliefs as long as it does not make others uncomfortable. Proselytizing, as defined above [i.e., 'to induce someone to convert to one's faith'], goes over that line."—*Official Air Force statement sent to news organizations, USA Today, May 2.*

## What Marines Want To Know

"When I was at [Marine Corps Base Camp] Pendleton, I told the marines: 'OK, I'm going to answer your questions up front, the ones you want to ask. Are we going to go sleeves up? The answer is no. Now, I know you want to show your guns. Believe it or not, there was a period in my life when I had some good-size guns. So I get it. But I have a solution to show off your guns: Wear Charlies [uniform with short-sleeve shirt]. ... And by the way, I'm not changing the tattoo policy. Three Commandants and nine years went into that. If you think I'm touching that, you're crazy.'"—*Gen. James F. Amos, Commandant, Marine Corps, interview with Marine Corps Times, May 13.*

## Wingless T-Birds

"Sequestration temporarily limits our ability to travel, but it doesn't stop us from reaching out within our community to tell the Air Force story. We've always had a robust community relations effort. Until this issue is resolved, we'll continue to engage the public as best we can."—*Lt. Col. Gregory M. Moseley, commander of the Thunderbirds aerial demonstration team, whose flying season was canceled, Washington Post, April 5.*