

By Robert S. Dudley

Slip-Sliding Away

"I'm very concerned about eroding technological superiority and where we're headed. We're cutting our budget substantially while some of the people we worry about are going in the opposite direction. We've had 20 years since the end of the Cold War [and sort] of a presumption in the United States that we are technologically superior militarily. I don't think that that's a safe assumption. In fact, we've gotten complacent about that, and we've been distracted for the last 10 years fighting counterinsurgencies."—**Frank Kendall, undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology, and logistics, Defense News, Jan. 3.**

Chronicles of Wasted Time

"Soldier builds bin Laden compound replica out of ginger-bread."—**Actual headline, Army Times, Dec. 31.**

Did Someone Say "Vietnam"?

"The Taliban threw a lot at them [the Afghan national security forces]. Some would even say they threw their best at them. And the security forces are still there. The Taliban can't beat them on the battlefield."—**Col. B. J. Fitzpatrick, chief of staff, USMC forces in Helmand Province, on the recent combat performance of Afghan forces, Wall Street Journal, Jan. 2.**

Manned and Unmanned

"EW [electronic warfare] is one of those areas where we are going to see opportunities for unmanned systems, likely in tandem with manned systems. ... For scenarios that pit us against near-peer kinds of adversaries, range and endurance tend to be a premium—especially in the Pacific theater of operations. The distances are very long, and basing is more limited than [in] other places around the world. Systems that provide flexibility in range, flexibility in endurance, generally score pretty high to fulfill capability needs that the combatant commanders have."—**Dyke D. Weatherington, DOD's director of unmanned warfare and ISR, interview with Military.com, Jan. 2.**

We Bet It's "Worst Case"

"You can't predict when those kind of events [e.g., satellite breakups] are

going to happen. It may be that we don't have any major collisions over the next five years, and therefore, it's not a big deal. It may be that we have a bunch of them, and it's going to be a really big deal. ... The worst-case scenario is that it gets a lot more risky and a lot more expensive to operate in some of the most important regions in space."—**Brian Weeden, technical adviser for the Secure World Foundation, referring to the shutdown of part of the US space surveillance network, aljazeera.com, Jan. 2.**

PC Runs Amok

"There is too much focus on social issues in the armed forces, driven by external proponents with special interests, focused agendas, and in many cases, lack of knowledge about the armed forces. ... My greatest concern is the impact on the morale and steadfastness to service among some of the finest and most selfless leaders this nation produces, together with the equally fine young men and women they lead who are barraged with being branded as or tolerating sexual predators or [being] anti-equal opportunity. I cannot help but believe that there is long-term impact on the effectiveness of our armed forces from this in terms of morale, recruiting, retention, and public confidence and support."—**Retired Gen. Carl E. Mundy Jr., former Commandant of the US Marine Corps, Washington Times, Jan. 1.**

Promises Broken

"I'm not an angry man, but I was very, very angry. This is a pact between the greater population of the United States and the fraction of people who served and sacrificed. If you didn't want to pay us what you promised us, then you probably shouldn't have promised it."—**Retired US Army Lt. Col. Stephen Preston, attacking plan to cut retired pay increases for working-age military retirees, Washington Post, Dec. 30.**

Walter Duranty Award ...

"Months of investigation by the *New York Times*, centered on extensive interviews with Libyans in Benghazi who had direct knowledge of the attack there and its context, turned up no evidence that Al Qaeda or other

international terrorist groups had any role in the assault. ... It was fueled in large part by anger at an American-made video denigrating Islam."—**Reporter David D. Kirkpatrick, New York Times, Dec. 28**

... And Another View

"They [Kirkpatrick, et al] didn't talk to people on the ground who were doing the fighting and shooting and the intelligence gathering. ... [T]hat story's just not accurate."—**Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Mich.), House Intelligence Committee, on above-mentioned New York Times report, The Hill, Dec. 29.**

Great Expectations

"Common sense would dictate that, if airmen run across something in their duties that doesn't make sense, then they should suggest better ways to do them. If it's a policy, or a guideline, or an [Air Force Instruction], or a reporting requirement, and you can't figure out why it makes sense to be doing it, then maybe we shouldn't be doing it. ... When your young airmen or NCOs or young officers come to you and say, 'I don't understand why we are doing things this way,' pay attention."—**Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, USAF Chief of Staff, remarks to airmen at Ellsworth AFB, S.D., Nov. 27.**

Being Broke Can Be a Good Thing

"It actually is the first and best sign that the Air Force in particular ... is taking steps toward real reform in [commercial satellite communications] acquisition. ... People are thinking more creatively, and that has a lot to do with the fact that they don't have the money that they did in the past."—**Andrew Ruszkowski of Xtar, a commercial satellite operator, on USAF willingness to put military payloads on "host" commercial spacecraft, Washington Post, Dec. 1.**

Eyes Wide Shut

"Somehow, Obama's nuclear team thinks it can let Iran make nuclear fuel but get others like Saudi Arabia and South Korea to forswear doing so. If so, we're all in for a rude awakening."—**Henry D. Sokolski, executive director of Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, Wall Street Journal, Nov. 29.**