

By Robert S. Dudney

Hostage on Stealth

"We [had] one F-117 shot down in 78 days of flying over that country [Serbia, in 1999], thousands of sorties. They shot down one airplane. And they shot down one airplane because we flew across the same spot on the ground for weeks at a time. It took them multiple weeks to figure out how to shoot the thing. Then they had to get four or five systems to do it. It took them weeks to take it out. I can accept that kind of attrition rate. I obviously don't want to lose anyone, but good Lord, one airplane over the course of 78 days, that's pretty impressive."—*Gen. G. Michael Hostage III, head of Air Combat Command, on the continuing value of stealth despite claims that high-powered EW support is needed, breakingdefense.com, June 6.*

The VA Meets Godot

"When you actually get in the room with a doctor, it's OK, but it's what it takes to get to that point that I think is the problem. You're sick today. Three weeks from now, you're either cured or you're dead."—*Stewart Hickey, national executive director of AMVETS, on the long wait times for service at VA hospitals, Washington Post, May 30.*

Deja Vu All Over Again

"I remember the very first time I struck in a B-1 bomber. It was my first combat sortie. This was in Afghanistan. We checked in, and they said, 'Hey, we have troops in contact and you've got to fly over here.' So we flew, like, 500 knots, and by the time we got there, they were ready for the bombs and they had given us clearance. And we dropped bombs right away. And it was like, 'Whoa! Super exciting! Oh my gosh, my first combat sortie! And then, my very first strike in a [drone]—I had nearly identical feelings inside.'"—*"Patrick," last name and rank withheld, USAF RPA pilot based at Holloman AFB, N.M., The Atlantic, June 4.*

Blue—Really Blue—Angels

"This commanding officer witnessed, accepted, and encouraged behavior that, while juvenile and sophomoric in the beginning, ultimately and in the aggregate, became destructive, toxic, and hostile. He failed himself, failed those

that he led, failed the Blue Angels, and failed the Navy."—*Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., US Pacific Fleet, referring to Capt. Gregory McWherter, Blue Angels commander. Harris had led a probe that found McWherter failed to stop sexual harassment and condoned pornography, homophobia, and lecherous behavior in the unit. Washington Post, June 3.*

Hagel Speaks ...

"In recent months, China has undertaken destabilizing, unilateral actions asserting its claims in the South China Sea. ... The United States has been clear and consistent. We take no position on competing territorial claims. But we firmly oppose any nation's use of intimidation, coercion, or the threat of force to assert these claims."—*Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, address to a regional defense conference in Singapore, May 31.*

... And China Responds

"As US power declines, Washington needs to rely on its allies in order to reach its goal of containing China's development. But whether it will get involved, or use military intervention once there is a territorial dispute involving China and its neighbors, that is another issue. We can see from the situation in Ukraine this kind of ED [extended deployment] has become the male type of ED problem—erectile dysfunction."—*Chinese Maj. Gen. Zhu Chenghu, interview with Chinese-language Phoenix TV in Singapore, reported in Wall Street Journal, June 2.*

The Empire Strikes Back

"The former Soviet Union invested in [the right] technology. Our country has not invested in that technology for now going on 30 years."—*Mike Gass, chief executive of United Launch Alliance, on why Russia has the RD-180 booster engine and the US has nothing comparable, Washington Post, May 30.*

The Insult

"[Ukraine President Petro] Poroshenko said last week that he hoped for an extensive 'lend-lease' program from the United States that would supply the ragtag Ukrainian army with the weapons and training it needs to defeat the Russian-backed forces. He

got a promise from Mr. Obama of \$5 million in nonlethal equipment, including radios and goggles. It would have been less insulting to have offered nothing."—*House editorial, Washington Post, June 4.*

In the Wings

"I believe, today, we could build a Mach 5 cruise missile [with] off-the-shelf materials. We could go 500 nautical miles in 10 minutes."—*Charles Brink, Air Force Research Laboratory, dispatch on the website breakingdefense.com, June 3.*

CNO Surprises All

"We need 11 [carriers] when you add [general combatant commander requirements] with the contingencies that we are tasked to respond to, in the time that we have to respond, and the capabilities that we have out there. It would be wonderful if we had a 'doomsday device' and magical things that could come off [fewer] carriers and fly further and be invisible, but we don't have that now. We have what we have. So when I look out into the future, we need at least 11 carriers."—*Adm. Jonathan W. Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations, remarks to the Defense Writers Group in Washington, D.C., May 21.*

Poland Speaks Up

"For the first time since the Second World War, one European country has taken a province by force from another European country. America, we hope, has ways of reassuring us that we haven't even thought about. There are major bases in Britain, in Spain, in Portugal, in Greece, in Italy. Why not here?"—*Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski, calling for a US military presence in Poland, New York Times, June 3.*

Well, Yes—Backed by Guns

"You don't lead with your military in foreign policy. The military is an instrument of power. It's an important instrument of power. But our foreign policy is based on our interests around the world. It's based on who we are, international law. It's based on our standards, our values."—*Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, remarks to reporters aboard his aircraft, May 28.*