

By Robert S. Dudley

## Too Late

"I take the position that, when you're Commander in Chief, you oughta keep all options on the table ... to be able to have the flexibility to do what is necessary in order to defeat the enemy. ... He [President Obama] has made the decision to put troops on the ground in Iraq, to try to help the security forces. He's made the decision to arm and train rebel forces in Syria. And he's made the decision to conduct air attacks [against ISIS forces]. So in many ways he's made the right decisions now. I think those decisions should've been made two years ago."—*Former Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, interview with CNN, Oct. 7.*

## Staying Power

"There is no reason that airpower ... cannot be successful against the terrorists of the Islamic State in both Iraq and Syria. But the American public must understand one thing: As in Afghanistan, there won't be a simple black-and-white, win-or-lose outcome. Nor is it a binary question of either having boots on the ground on one hand or using only airpower on the other. Both the mission and the objective are far more complex than that. ... The American population has become war weary, we're told. True or not, that weariness is usually the result of continued ground operations demanding thousands of troops—like Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Yet the American public has demonstrated a high tolerance for sustained, long-term airpower missions."—*Retired USAF Gen. Charles F. Wald, who ran the early air war in Afghanistan, op-ed in Politico.com, Oct. 1.*

## Welsh on The Problem

"I see the Air Force changing over the next 10 to 15 years. The world's changing around us. ... The thing we're most worried about is the rate of change. Technological change, demographic change, ideological change, and you see it in the world every day in the headlines. To be successful as a military force, we have to be able to operate ahead of that rate of change, which means we can't be slow and lethargic and hesitant to adjust ourselves. ... It's back to being willing to look in the mirror and be honest with ourselves, and not

hang on to the things that are nice to have or we want to have, but maintain those things and improve those things that are absolutely must haves to do the job for the nation. That's going to be the biggest problem."—*Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, USAF Chief of Staff, remarks at the Air Force Academy, Sept. 29.*

## Cyber Drunks

"I liken them a bit to a drunk burglar. They're kickin' in the front door, knocking over the vase, while they're walking out with your television set. They're just prolific. Their strategy seems to be: We'll just be everywhere all the time. And there's no way they can stop us."—*FBI Director James B. Comey, describing Chinese cyber criminals and spies, interview on CBS's "60 Minutes" program, Oct. 5.*

## The Lost Cause

"It is clear that Russia did not accept the outcome of the Cold War. That is what all this is about. This will last a long, long time."—*Recently retired NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, on what engenders Russian aggression, interview with New York Times, Oct. 5.*

## Netanyahu at the Bat

"Iran's nuclear weapons capability must be fully dismantled. To defeat ISIS and leave Iran as a threshold nuclear power is to win the battle and lose the war. ... To say Iran doesn't practice terrorism is like saying Derek Jeter didn't play shortstop for the New York Yankees."—*Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, address to UN General Assembly, Sept. 29.*

## Other Nondecisive Services

"[Critics say] strategic bombing did not achieve the promises of Giulio Douhet and Billy Mitchell, therefore get rid of the Air Force. Such a critique is logically absurd because it sets a standard for the Air Force that is ... not [required] of the Army or Navy. If the same standard of success were required of the other services, they too should be on the chopping block. After more than a decade of Army-led operations in Afghanistan ... and Iraq, ... we have not achieved the desired end-state, therefore get rid of the Army. Somali pirates

continue to attack merchant ships in the Indian Ocean, therefore get rid of the Navy. After all, John C. McManus and other land power advocates argue that wars are won on the ground, yet the Army cannot beat the Taliban. Alfred Thayer Mahan wrote about the war winning importance of seapower, yet the Navy's multibillion dollar ships cannot stop the scourge of gun-toting illiterate Somalis in fishing boats."—*Adam Lowther, research professor, Air Force Research Institute, writing in The National Interest, Sept. 30.*

## We've Seen This Before

"Whether [by] putting boots on the ground or relying on missiles from above, ... US efforts to promote stability [in the Greater Middle East] have tended to produce just the opposite. Part of the problem is that American policymakers have repeatedly given in to the temptation to unleash a bit of near-term chaos, betting that longer-term order will emerge on the other end. Back in Vietnam, this was known as burning down the village to save it."—*Retired US Army Col. Andrew J. Bacevich, fellow at Columbia University, op-ed in Washington Post, Oct. 3.*

## I Got Bad Intelligence ...

"Jim Clapper [the US director of national intelligence] has acknowledged that, I think, they underestimated what had been taking place in Syria."—*President Obama, suggesting he was given faulty intelligence about the rise of ISIS, CBS's "60 Minutes," Sept. 28.*

## McCain's Advice

"I wish the President would stop saying we're not going to have combat troops on the ground [in Syria and Iraq]. In support roles, in special forces roles, intelligence, and particularly (in) target acquisition, we can have people there. ... If you said, 'We're going to send the 82nd Airborne and you're going to see Iraq and Afghanistan all over again,' then, no. But if you said, 'We're going to send in support troops that can give vital information so that we can successfully carry out an air campaign, not put Americans into combat' then ... I think you could convince them."—*Sen. John McCain, interview with USA Today, Sept. 29.*