

By Robert S. Dudley

Snot Smart

“Adversaries think they can keep us out [of defended military areas]. I’m here to tell you they are absolutely wrong. We will, quite frankly, pound the snot out of them from range and in the close fight.”—**Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert O. Work, address to the Association of United States Army, Oct. 4.**

Fun, but a Time-Waster

“As a pilot, dogfighting is fun, but it doesn’t get the job done. If I’m dogfighting, I’m not bombing my target ... I’m not getting my job done, and what I’m probably doing is wasting gas and wasting time. I have stealth, so I’ve fought against F-16s and I’ve never gotten into a dogfight yet. You can’t fight what you can’t see, and if F-16s can’t see me, then I’m never going to get into a dogfight with them.”—**USAF Maj. Will Andreotta, F-35A fighter pilot, interview with *Business Insider*, Oct. 2.**

Ah, Blitzkrieg

“As currently postured, NATO cannot successfully defend the territory of its most exposed members. Across multiple games, using a wide range of expert participants in and out of uniform playing both sides, the longest it has taken Russian forces to reach the outskirts of the Estonian and/or Latvian capitals of Tallinn and Riga, respectively, is 60 hours.”—**From “Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO’s Eastern Flank,” study by Rand Corp., quoted in *The National Interest*, Oct. 4.**

No Absolution

“One of the places where we spend a great deal of time is determining whether or not the tools we are developing absolve humans of the decision to inflict violence on the enemy. That is a fairly bright line that we’re not willing to cross. ... In the world of autonomy, as we look at what our competitors might do in that same space, the notion of a completely robotic system—[one] that can make a decision about whether or not to inflict harm on an adversary—is here. It’s not terribly refined, it’s not terribly good, but it’s here. As we develop systems that incorporate things like artificial intel-

ligence and autonomy, we have to be very careful that we don’t design them in a way where we create a situation where those system absolve humans of that decision.”—**USAF Gen. Paul J. Selva, vice chairman of JCS, remarks to Center for Strategic and International Studies, Aug. 25.**

Old Gray Mares

“If we don’t replace these [existing US strategic nuclear] systems, quite simply they will age even more and become unsafe, unreliable, and ineffective. The fact is, most of our nuclear weapon delivery systems have already been extended decades beyond their original expected service lives. So it’s not a choice between replacing these platforms or keeping them, ... it’s really a choice between replacing them or losing them.”—**Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter, remarks at Minot AFB, N.D., Sept. 26.**

Sure, After a Stiff Drink

“While the probability of an accidental [nuclear] launch is low, human and machine errors do occur. I experienced a false alarm nearly 40 years ago, when I was undersecretary of defense for research and engineering. I was awakened in the middle of the night and told that some Defense Department computers were showing 200 ICBMs on the way from the Soviet Union. For one horrifying moment I thought it was the end of civilization. Then the general on the phone explained that it was a false alarm. He was calling to see if I could help him determine what had gone wrong with the computer.”—**William J. Perry, former Secretary of Defense (1994-97) op-ed in *The New York Times*, Sept. 30.**

First, Kill All Lawyers

“The problem is the Russians don’t care about international law and we do. And we don’t have a basis [to use military force in Syria], our lawyers tell us.”—**Secretary of State John Kerry, remarks to Syrian civilians at a UN meeting, Sept. 22.**

The Horror

“Finally, a real power move in American diplomacy. Secretary of State John

‘Not Delusional’ Kerry has made the one threat the Russians feared most—the suspension of US-Russia bilateral talks about Syria. No more lakeside tête-a-têtes at five-star hotels in Geneva. No more joint press conferences in Moscow. ... Butchering the Syrian people to save the Assad regime is an important Russian goal, but not if it comes at the unthinkable price of dialogue with Secretary Kerry.”—**Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), statement after Kerry warned Russia that the US might drop Syrian peace talks, Sept. 28.**

Hot Sticks

“This is not about social engineering. This is about maintaining a competitive advantage. The challenges we face as a nation are not getting less complex. They’re getting more complex. Having a diverse group of leaders ... that are representative of the nation [and] can come together ... to provide creative solutions to some of these complex challenges is as much a warfighting imperative as it is about improving our Air Force.”—**Gen. David L. Goldfein, USAF Chief of Staff, on new initiatives to increase diversity in the pilot force, *Air Force Times*, Sept. 29.**

China Syndrome

“Everywhere we went, we did talk about the situation in the South China Sea. China still appears to be building and has not appeared to stop or abate. This continues to be worrisome. ... We want a good and balanced relationship with China, but we do want China to respect the rule of law. More [freedom-of-navigation flying] operations are certainly a possibility.”—**Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James, after a two-week trip in Asia, *The National Interest*, Sept. 29.**

No No-First-Use

“That’s our doctrine now, and we don’t have any intention of changing that doctrine.”—**Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter, rebutting calls to abandon the deterrence doctrine that leaves open a possibility of “first use” of nuclear weapons, remarks at Kirtland AFB, N.M., Sept. 27.**