

By Robert S. Dudley

Thinking the Unthinkable

"The service Chiefs ... have had to ... take cuts that eventually are going to impact us. Flying hours, for example. In the near term, what the Air Force is going to try to do is take their [cut in] flying hours in the bomber force ... in such a way as to make sure that our crews that are nuclear-certified will remain so for as long as possible. ... As time passes, we will see greater impacts to the nuclear deterrent, global strike, missile warning and missile defense, situational awareness in both space and cyberspace, and to our support for warfighters around the globe. ... Ultimately, reduced readiness and curtailed modernization [will] damage the perceived credibility of our capabilities, increasing the risk to achieving our primary deterrence and assurance objectives."—*Gen. C. Robert Kehler, head of US Strategic Command, remarks before the House Armed Services Committee, March 5.*

In Other Words, Screwed

"We find ourselves stuck in the unenviable trade-space between modernization and readiness, with infrastructure improvement delays and deferrals amplifying the impacts to each, and we need your help to get out."—*Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, USAF Chief of Staff, appealing to Congress for relief from budget cuts, testimony before a House appropriations subcommittee, March 5.*

And You Know What "It" Means

"It is Iran's pursuit of a nuclear capability which is the greatest challenge facing Israel, the region, and the world today. ... Frankly, while exhausting all diplomatic means is understandable, I do not believe it will lead to a moment of truth when the ayatollahs will give up their nuclear aspirations. Therefore, all options must remain on the table. ... We expect all those who say it to mean it. Ladies and gentlemen, we mean it. And let me repeat it. We mean it."—*Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, remarks at the annual conference in Washington, D.C., of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, March 3.*

All Fall Down

"The benefits to an attacker using cyber exploits are potentially spectacular. ... US guns, missiles, and bombs may

not fire, or may be directed against our own troops. Resupply—including food, water, ammunition, and fuel—may not arrive when or where needed. Military commanders may rapidly lose trust in the information and ability to control US systems and forces."—*From an unclassified version of a new Defense Science Board study, noted in the Washington Post, March 6.*

Carter Burlesque

"We met Hugo Chavez when he was campaigning for president in 1998. ... We came to know a man who expressed a vision to bring profound changes to his country to benefit especially those people who had felt neglected and marginalized. Although we have not agreed with all of the methods followed by his government, we have never doubted Hugo Chavez's commitment to improving the lives of millions of his fellow countrymen."—*Former President Jimmy Carter, statement on the death of Venezuelan dictator Hugo Chavez, March 5.*

Dead Men Tell No Tales

"Drone strikes are easy. With a single key stroke, a suspected enemy is eliminated once and for all, with no fuss, no judicial second-guessing, and no legions of lawyers poised to challenge detention. ... Potential intelligence assets are bombed out of existence. ... What could we have learnt from even a handful of the high-value operatives killed in drone strikes? We do not dispute that use of drones against al Qaeda is a legitimate part of the President's powers as Commander-in-Chief, and we have doubts about some proposals that purport to circumscribe that authority. But it is clear this Administration is using them as a substitute for capture, detention, and intelligence-gathering."—*Jay Lefkowitz and John O'Quinn, former officials in the George W. Bush Administration, op-ed in the Financial Times, March 4.*

Where Is the Love?

"What I see Lockheed Martin and Pratt & Whitney doing today is behaving as if they are getting ready to sell me the very last F-35 and the very last engine and are trying to squeeze every nickel out of that last F-35 and that last engine. I want them both to start behaving like they want to be around for 40 years. I

want them to take on some of the risk of this program. I want them to invest in cost reductions. I want them to do the things that will build a better relationship. I'm not getting all that love yet."—*USAF Lt. Gen. Christopher C. Bogdan, chief of the F-35 fighter program, remarks to reporters at an air show in Avalon, Australia, Feb. 27.*

A Suicide Note

"The United States should be acutely aware that the US mainland is now well within the range of our strategic rockets and nuclear weapons."—*Official North Korean statement, posted on North Korea's propaganda website, Feb. 27.*

Next: Thumb Sucking

"Any paramount leader needs the support of the PLA [the People's Liberation Army] and makes gestures in that direction. I think that's what Xi's doing. It's kind of like how a kid holds on to a security blanket. The [Chinese Communist] Party is more secure than it thinks, but it needs that security blanket of the PLA."—*RAND China expert Andrew Scobell, on overtures of Chinese President Xi Jinping to the military, New York Times, March 4.*

Well, Did He?

"A study to learn whether or not a fish called the golden shiner can teach us about 'collective action': \$5 million. A project to design beef jerky that rolls up: \$1.5 million. A seminar in which a topic was, 'Did Jesus die for Klingons, too?' (This is a question that, I can assure you, will not be answered by any sane person): \$100,000. These examples of absurd government spending become even more absurd when you realize these items were all part of the budget for the Department of Defense."—*Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), op-ed in the Washington Times, March 1.*

Tired and Untired

"The conflict formerly known as the Global War on Terror is spreading and intensifying. Many in Washington would like to talk about other things, but, while the West might be tired of the war on terror, the war on terror isn't tired of the West. ... This war isn't over, and the danger isn't past."—*Walter R. Mead, editor-at-large of the American Interest, op-ed in the Wall Street Journal, March 5.*

Verbatim
