

By Robert S. Dudley

Readiness: Fading, Fading ...

"The expected level of readiness is different for those units [that] are not scheduled to support a combat role. Particular units cannot be expected to have the same level of readiness when, due to sequestration impacts, we are forced to limit their resources and flying hours. ... Many units are unable to accomplish the flying portion of their scheduled readiness inspection and therefore receive a compliance-based inspection. The decrease in [Air Combat Command] units' abilities to accomplish a readiness inspection has had a significant impact on the readiness schedule."—**Col. Rickey S. Rodgers, chief of ACC's inspections division, Air Force Times, July 7.**

Commonsense Solution

"Most of us inside the business right now are kind of tired of talking about this. Let's just figure out where we're going and get moving."—**Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, USAF Chief of Staff, on the confusion caused by trying to build a budget around the sequester cuts, Aviation Week, June 24.**

Jurassic Parks

"If any country's security is threatened by nuclear inferiority, it is Russia. ... The latest data exchange mandated by the [New START] treaty, and verified by on-site inspections, showed that, as of March, the Russians had 1,480 operational warheads on 492 long-range missiles and bombers. Meanwhile, the United States maintained 1,654 operational warheads on 792 long-range missiles and bombers. No wonder Russian President Vladimir Putin is so belligerent—and beginning to allocate resources to nuclear modernization. ... If the Russians want to waste their resources on nuclear dinosaurs, let them."—**Barry M. Blechman, former US defense and arms control official, op-ed in the Washington Post, July 5.**

That's a Ratio of 26 to 1

"The way that the Air Force chooses to field its RPA [remotely piloted aircraft] force limits wing-command opportunities for RPA airmen, thus creating a career-path bottleneck. Despite fast-

paced growth over the last decade that led the RPA community to balloon into the second-largest group of aviators in the Air Force, RPA pilots have the fewest opportunities for wing command. ... The Air Force centralized RPA management, establishing one massive RPA wing at Creech AFB, Nev. The 432nd Wing commander has responsibility for two operations groups and eight squadrons. ... In contrast, fighter wings normally consist of two or three squadrons. ... The Air Force's approach to RPA basing—standing up isolated RPA units dominated by other communities and disproportionately sending RPA units to the Guard—amounts to the organizational equivalent of political gerrymandering. This process results in malapportionment of institutional power that overwhelmingly favors fighter pilots. RPA personnel enjoy one wing command. ... Fighter pilots, though, control 26."—**Lt. Col. Lawrence Spinetta, F-15 pilot and former RPA commander who now heads J-7 Force Development Directorate on the Joint Staff, Air & Space Power Journal, July-August issue.**

You Don't Want To Know

"HUMERUS REUNION: DOC RETURNS VIETNAMESE VET'S ARM—An American doctor arrived in Vietnam carrying an unlikely piece of luggage: the bones of an arm he amputated in 1966."—**AP story from Hanoi about the strange visit of Dr. Sam Axelrad of Texas, July 1.**

Well, If You Must Know

"I can't believe that an American doctor took my infected arm, got rid of the flesh, dried it, took it home, and kept it for more than 40 years. I don't think it's the kind of keepsake that most people would want to own. But I look forward to seeing him again and getting my arm bones back."—**North Vietnamese soldier Nguyen Quang Hung, whose shot-up left arm was amputated, and then returned, by former military doctor Axelrad, same AP dispatch.**

They Are Not Victims

"After every conflict, there's a period of time when the nation kind of decides what it will think of the veterans of that

conflict. It happened after World War II, 'the Greatest Generation.' I think you would agree after Vietnam there was—the military was held in far less esteem. After Desert Storm, ... we were embraced as conquering heroes of a sort. And I think now is the time for us to begin thinking and discussing what is it that we—what images that we want to have of this generation's men and women who serve. ... I don't want to have this generation's young men and women, the warriors, seen as victims, somehow. This conflict has been a source of strength as well for many, many veterans. ... So I want it to be a positive image. But there are moments when it feels as though it's slipping to a negative image."—**Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, CNN's "State of the Union" program, July 7.**

Why Pakistan Failed

"The failure [to find Osama bin Laden] was primarily an intelligence-security failure that was rooted in political irresponsibility. In the premier intelligence institutions, religiosity replaced accountability at the expense of professional competence. ... There was no real and sustained priority given to the search for OBL, although from time to time US raised the issue in an accusatory manner. [There was] culpable negligence and incompetence at almost all levels of government."—**Excerpt from leaked, 337-page report of a blue-ribbon Pakistani commission on the 2011 killing of Osama bin Laden, Washington Post, July 8.**

An Ellsberg Bloviation

"Snowden believes that he has done nothing wrong. I agree wholeheartedly. More than 40 years after my unauthorized disclosure of the Pentagon Papers, such leaks remain the lifeblood of a free press and our republic. One lesson of the Pentagon Papers and Snowden's leaks is simple: Secrecy corrupts, just as power corrupts."—**Daniel Ellsberg, who in 1971 leaked the so-called Pentagon Papers to the media, on National Security Agency leaker Edward Snowden, Washington Post, July 8.**