

By Robert S. Dudley

Here He is, Whoever He Is

"If you would have asked me if I was going to be a pilot when I was an airman first class, I would have told you, 'No.' I would never have thought that possible."—**Air Force MSgt. "Alex"** (last name withheld), one of USAF's first two RPA enlisted pilots, **American Forces News Service**, Nov. 4.

Down For the Count

"This war [in Iraq] became so politicized, so PC. ... Under George [President George W. Bush], all we could do was straight right hooks and a couple of uppercuts. When Obama took over, we could only do straight lefts, and [first] we had to say, 'We're going to punch you.'"—**William Hansen**, National Guardsman who served two tours in Iraq, **New York Times**, Nov. 2.

Wages of Low Readiness

"If we were called upon to do a no-fly zone, ... we know how to do this. We know how to put this together, how to plan it, how to execute it. It would be enormously complex, but what I'm trying to convey is, if asked to do so, we would step up to the plate, we would do it with our joint warfighting partners, and we would do it as part of the coalition. ... Now, if we get called upon to do it, make no mistake, we will go and we will do the job, but at ... lower readiness. Our worry there is that it will take longer to get the job done, we may lose more lives, more people may be hurt or killed, we may lose more assets, more aircraft, and the like. That's the impact of not having sufficiently high levels of readiness."—**Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James**, on a possible "no-fly" zone over Syria, remarks at Center for a New American Security, Oct. 24.

Saladin AB, Perhaps?

"Turkey's Incirlik Air Base has supported America's most vital strategic needs for more than a half-century. ... Now, as its host country becomes less stable and less friendly to the United States, the best way to ensure continued access to this large and well-located base is to prepare to do without it. ... It's time to find an alternative to Incirlik. The best solution would

be to build a new airfield in Iraq—specifically, in territory controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government."—**Retired USAF Gen. Charles F. Wald**, op-ed in **DefenseOne.com**, Oct. 24.

Built to Last

"It is a testament to the [Northrop] engineering team that here we are in 2016 and the B-2 is still able to do its job just as well today as it did in the 80s. While we look forward to modernization, nobody should come away with the thought that the B-2 isn't ready to deal with the threats that are out there today. It is really an awesome bombing platform and it is just a marvel of technology."—**USAF Maj. Kent Mickelson**, director of operations for 394th Combat Training Squadron, interview with **Scout Warrior**, Oct. 29.

Not Bad

"They dropped 30 bombs—20 laser guided bombs and 10 JDAMs (Joint Direct Attack Munitions). All of them were effective."—**USAF Maj. Gen. Jeffrey L. Harrigian**, former director of F-35 Integration Office, on a test of F-35 attack capabilities, quoted in **The National Interest**, Oct. 18.

What China Does

"Chinese intelligence has repeatedly infiltrated US national security entities and extracted information with serious consequences for US national security, including information on the plans and operations of US military forces and the designs of US weapons and weapons systems. This information could erode US military superiority by aiding China's military modernization and giving China insight into the operation of US platforms and the operational approaches of US forces to potential contingencies in the region."—**Draft 2016 report of the Pentagon's US-China Economic and Security Review Commission**, quoted in **Washington Free Beacon**, Oct. 27.

No Killer Robots; No Skynet

"What we want to do [with development of 'autonomous' weapons] is just make sure that we would be able to win as quickly as we have been able to do in the past. There's so much

fear out there about 'killer robots' and 'Skynet.' That's not the way we envision it at all. ... There will always be a man in the loop."—**Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert O. Work**, **New York Times**, Oct. 2.

Killer Robots; Skynet

"What's very dangerous is the idea ... of autonomous vehicles that are simply given guidance to, 'Here's a geographic area; kill anything that moves in that area.' In my view, it is a violation of the laws of war. Whenever you take the human out of the loop, you have the possibility of that kind of outcome."—**Retired US Adm. James G. Stavridis**, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, interview with **McClatchy News**, Oct. 28.

Time Marches On

"I saw many former [Air National Guard] F-16 units go kicking and screaming into the [MQ-1] Predator mission and now, ... you can't go to one of these places [without former F-16 operators] telling you, 'We regret resisting this.'"—**USAF Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel**, Chief of National Guard Bureau, quoted in **Military.com**, Nov. 15.

Kendall's Disturbed Sleep

"We need capability and, to get capability in the hands of the warfighters, we have to go to the next step. We will do the demo, we'll be very happy with the results, we won't have the money to go on. That's what I'm concerned about. ... All the things we're doing are creating options. ... It's going to be difficult to get enough money to (produce) even a minor subset of those things. That takes money that we don't have, and that's what keeps me awake at night."—**Frank Kendall**, Pentagon's top acquisition official, quoted in **Breaking Defense**, Oct. 31.

The Lost Cause

"I think the notion of getting the North Koreans to denuclearize is probably a lost cause. They are not going to do that. That [possession of nukes] is their ticket to survival."—**Retired USAF Gen. James R. Clapper Jr.**, outgoing Director of National Intelligence, speech at **Council on Foreign Relations**, Oct. 25.