

By Robert S. Dudney

Killer Angels

"I say it's better to get along with Russia than not. And if Russia helps us in the fight against ISIS—which is a major fight—and Islamic terrorism all over the world, ... that's a good thing. Will I get along with him [Vladimir Putin]? I have no idea. ... There are a lot of killers [like Putin]. We've got a lot of killers. What, you think our country's so innocent?"—**President Donald Trump, interview with Bill O'Reilly, Feb. 5.**

Against the Day

"We have two of the three legs of the nuclear triad and, on our worst day as a nation, our job as the United States Air Force is to make sure you are where you need to be and make sure you remain connected to nuclear command and control."—**Gen. David L. Goldfein, USAF Chief of Staff, recounting what he told new President Donald Trump at Pentagon event, Jan. 27.**

Memo to Lil' Kim

"North Korea continues to launch missiles, develop its nuclear weapons program, and engage in threatening rhetoric and behavior. We stand with our peace-loving Republic of Korea ally to maintain stability on the peninsula and in the region. America's commitments to defending our allies and to upholding our extended deterrence guarantees remain ironclad: Any attack on the United States, or on our allies, will be defeated, and any use of nuclear weapons would be met with [a] response that would be effective and overwhelming."—**Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis, explicit warning to Pyongyang during official visit to South Korea, Feb. 3.**

First Build, Then Balance

"A balanced budget is fine, but sometimes you have to fuel the well in order to really get the economy going. And we have to take care of our military. Our military is more important to me than a balanced budget. ... I want a balanced budget eventually, but I want to have a strong military. To me, that's much more important than anything."—**President Donald Trump, remarks to Sean Hannity, broadcast Jan. 26.**

Call and Raise

"I don't think China is prepared for confrontation [with President Trump], or that they have a good way to deal with this yet. ... Unlike Obama, [Chinese President] Xi [Jinping] seemed to like tension in US-China relations, and he seemed to thrive on it to some degree. Now we've got a guy in the US who likes tension a lot more than Xi. He is president partly because he created tension. ... The Chinese cannot up the ante and raise the tension, because Trump will raise even more tension somewhere else."—**Robert Sutter, China expert at George Washington University, South China Morning Post, Jan. 30.**

They've Hardly Bothered Us Since

"Desert Storm ... was a very successful operation. And the reason it was so successful is that the first President Bush gave us a very clear mission. ... [A] classic military theory says, 'Make sure you know what you're getting into.' ... When you've decided on that political objective, then you put decisive force in to achieve it. And that's what we did in Desert Storm. Some people argue that we ended the war too soon, and there are others who say we should have gone to Baghdad. We didn't end it too soon. We ended it when the President wanted to end it, because we were killing people that didn't need to be killed, because the mission had really been accomplished."—**Retired Army Gen. Colin L. Powell, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman in Gulf War, militarytimes.com, Jan. 31.**

For the Record

"President Donald J. Trump is determined to protect the rights of all Americans, including the LGBTQ community. President Trump continues to be respectful and supportive of LGBTQ rights, just as he was throughout the election. ... The executive order signed in 2014, which protects employees from anti-LGBTQ workplace discrimination while working for federal contractors, will remain intact at the direction of President Donald J. Trump."—**White House statement, Jan. 31. It refers to former President Barack Obama's Executive Order 13672, protect-**

ing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning persons working for federal contractors.

Mugged by Nuclear Reality

"That new world [of post-Cold War nuclear restraint] was short-lived. ... We are now playing catch-up as nuclear deterrence once again is identified as priority No. 1 by senior US civilian and military leaders. ... What happened? The supposed new world order and its corresponding nuclear policy line—so embraced by the West—were mugged by reality, particularly including Russia's and China's blatant drives to overturn existing orders and their expanding nuclear capabilities. These drives appear ultimately to have persuaded key folks in the Obama Administration that the new world order is not emerging; that nonproliferation is not the highest priority goal; and that robust US nuclear capabilities and threats remain critical for the deterrence of enemies and the assurance of allies."—**Keith B. Payne, defense analyst at National Institute for Public Policy, remarks at a conference on nuclear weapons, Jan. 26.**

Sanctions Stay

"We do want to better our relations with Russia. However, the dire situation in eastern Ukraine is one that demands clear and strong condemnation of Russian actions. ... Eastern Ukraine ... is not the only part of the country suffering because of Russia's aggressive actions. ... Crimea is a part of Ukraine. Our Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns control over the peninsula to Ukraine."—**UN Ambassador Nikki Haley, remarks to the UN Security Council, Feb. 2.**

Running Hot

"If I don't get more money, I'll stop flying in July or August. ... We're eight percent shy of what we need ... for our flight hours. We're flying to our plan right now. So I would say we're running hot on our budget for our flight hour goals."—**Lt. Gen. Jon M. Davis, Marine Corps deputy commandant for aviation, remarks to Defense Writers Group, Feb. 1.**