

By Robert S. Dudney

Right Stuff, Revisited

“Roger. The clock is operating. We’re underway. ... Zero G, and I feel fine.”—**Laconic statement radioed to Earth by USMC Col. John H. Glenn Jr. at start of historic 1962 orbital spaceflight. Glenn, the last of America’s original seven Project Mercury astronauts, passed away Dec. 8 at age 95.**

Russia’s Landgrab

“Quite simply, Russia has launched a military landgrab in Ukraine that is unprecedented in modern European history. These actions in Crimea and other areas of eastern Ukraine dangerously upend well-established diplomatic, legal, and security norms. ... We believe it is in our vital national security interest to uphold these norms and values and prevent America’s commitment to its allies and ideals from being called into question. ... We believe that Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea should never be accepted.”—**Letter from bipartisan 27-member group of senators to President-elect Donald J. Trump, Dec. 8.**

Meanwhile, in Lithuania ...

“Spring will come, the cuckoo will sing, and we will pave our roads with the corpses of Russian soldiers.”—**Rimvydas Matuzonis, Lithuanian who teaches guerrilla warfare courses for civilians, The Associated Press, Dec. 1.**

Affordability Quiz

“Do we go down the path of trying to recapitalize both nuclear and conventional [assets] at the same time? ... How do we as a nation ensure that we are appropriately modernizing both our conventional forces that have atrophied and our nuclear forces that have atrophied. And we’ve got to get at both. ... We tend to get the question, ‘Can we afford this?’ I would offer you a different question: ‘Can we afford not to do this?’”—**Gen. David L. Goldfein, USAF Chief of Staff, National Defense, Dec. 6.**

“Dear Next SECAF ... ”

“The first thing I would say is, ‘You think you know everything, but beware the unknown unknowns.’ You’ll have an agenda of things you’ll begin working on and boom! Real life will intervene.”—

Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James, interview with BreakingDefense.com, Dec. 1.

Something of an Obstacle

“I don’t give a damn what the president of the United States wants to do, or anybody else wants to do. We will not waterboard. We will not torture.”—**Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), quoted in The New York Times, Nov. 28.**

Raptor Tales I

“We’ve been focused on the high-end threat all along. ... In the F-22, I convert on guys, and they never even see you there. You roll up right behind them and go, ‘Why waste a missile when you have a gun?’”—**Col. Peter M. Fesler, F-22 pilot and commander of USAF 1st Fighter Wing, quoted in The National Interest, Nov. 29.**

Raptor Tales II

“It [the Raptor] makes up for a lot of shortcomings in the pilot side. You can have a really bad day and [the] airplane will still do phenomenally well. ... In this airplane it is much easier to survive.”—**F-22 pilot call sign Crash, The National Interest, Nov. 29.**

Occam’s Razor

“Some people say you can’t throw money at everything. You can! You absolutely can. If you said, the pilot bonus is now \$500,000, single lump-sum payment, I guarantee you will solve your pilot shortage.”—**Tom Hunt, former USAF fighter pilot who left the force in 2013, VOAnews.com, Nov. 28.**

The Pompeo Line

“The line is very clear. Are you with us or against us? If you’re with us: God bless you, Godspeed, let’s go get ‘em. And if you’re against us: Godspeed, I have a missile that is looking for you.”—**Rep. Michael R. Pompeo (R-Kan.), tapped to be CIA director in Trump administration, quoted in DefenseOne.com, Nov. 30.**

Latest Sorcery

“We managed to fabricate very teeny tiny structures. Those magic structures are capable [of] changing the intensity of the light, change the shape of the light, and at the same time, change the color

of the light. Our eyes are capable only of seeing light in the visible spectrum. If we can fabricate an area of nanostructures on flat surfaces like glass, ... we will be able to convert invisible light in the nighttime or dark areas into visible light.”—**Mohsen Rahmani, Australian National University, on super night vision systems, DefenseOne.com, Dec. 7.**

A Certain Latin Flair

“One more three- or four-star general given a senior appointment, and we can start referring to a Trump junta rather than a Trump administration.”—**Retired Army Lt. Col. Andrew Bacevich, commenting on prominence of flag officers in Trump administration, Time.com, Nov. 29.**

Vanishing Act

“He [ISIS chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi] is in deep hiding because we have eliminated nearly all of his deputies. We had their network mapped. If you look at all of his deputies and who he was relying on, they’re all gone.”—**Brett McGurk, US envoy to the global coalition fighting ISIS, The Washington Post, Nov. 28.**

Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines

“The biggest challenge right now is the fact that only three in 10 can actually meet the requirements to actually join the military. We talk about it in terms of the cognitive, the physical, and the moral requirements to join the military, and it’s tough. ... What the research tells us is that 50 percent of the youth today actually know very little about the military. They don’t know the different types of services—the fact that there is an Army, a Navy, an Air Force, and a Marine Corps.”—**Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Snow, commander US Army Recruiting Command, The Arizona Republic, Dec. 1.**

He’s Back

“Rosalynn and I share our sympathies with the Castro family and the Cuban people on the death of Fidel Castro. We remember fondly our visits with him in Cuba and his love of his country.”—**Former President Jimmy Carter, statement on death of Cuban thug president for life Fidel Castro, Nov. 26.**