

Panel: Afghan Air War

**Lieutenant General Gary North
Lieutenant General Donald Wurster
Dr. Rebecca Grant**

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General Dunn: Ladies and gentlemen, our final panel of the day is on the Afghan Air War, and we are blessed to have as a moderator a distinguished author, writer and researcher, a Senior Fellow at the Lexington Institute in Arlington, Virginia, and the first Director of the Air Force Association's General Billy Mitchell Institute of Air Power Studies. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Rebecca Grant.

[Applause].

Dr. Grant: Thank you, General Dunn. I'm glad you all have made it through a very productive afternoon, but I want you to know this will be the best panel of the day. That will be primarily because of the panelists whom it is my pleasure first of all to introduce.

First we have the Commander of AFSOC, General Donald Wurster; and to his left is Lieutenant General Gary North. He is the Commander of 9th Air Forces and of Air Forces Central for Central Command. And of course we all know him as the CFACC in charge of those operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

So what we'll do with this panel is I have a couple of opening remarks to make. Then I will turn the microphones over to our two panelists so that they can make some remarks. After that it will be time to take your questions from the floor.

First of all, I want you to look at the slide. The slide that we have here really symbolizes for me some of the huge changes that have gone on in the last nearly eight years in Afghanistan. Afghanistan began as an air power war coming up on eight years ago. We remember that the first we heard of our nation striking back after 9/11 came with announcements from the Chairman and the Secretary of Defense announcing that airstrikes had begun. What was really in place at that time was a tremendous collection of U.S. Air Force and joint and coalition air power. It had taken all the pieces coming into place. There had to be Navy carriers to do their part; the search and rescue

assets had to be properly positioned; quick agreements made with partners in the region; C-17s ready to drop humanitarian rations in certain parts of the country; B-2s and other bombers carrying out strikes from the very beginning. And we remember how that war evolved so quickly from a set of fixed targets into a hunt for mobile and flexible targets.

That war in Afghanistan has changed a great deal in the last almost eight years. It's a really different war today from what we saw in the past. The intensity has wrapped up amazingly.

Next chart, please.

This shows to me one of the high points. This data was provided to me by General North's staff. It's a compilation of statistics from 2004 to 2008. It shows just one metric of the air operations in that theater, and that is the number of close air support sorties scheduled for both Iraq and Afghanistan, and the sorties flown.

What I want you to see on that chart is how that bar has changed in 2008. So that for the first time General North's folks had to plan and fly more close air support for Afghanistan than for Iraq.

That points you to some of the new metrics for the war in Afghanistan and it really gives a sense that we are today in 2009 at a turning point in that war. We see the incredible intensity, and yet I also have a feeling that we are not yet to the final act. We're still somewhere in the middle of the story and waiting to see how the rest will unfold.

One of the most important new metrics in this is the interaction between the air component writ large and the forces on the ground. One Army staff sergeant recently said, and I quote, "Air power plays a vital role in dismounted or mounted maneuvers through hostile areas. When CAS is on station, it greatly reduces the threat. If we do get hit," says the staff sergeant, "only a handful of enemy troops will be brave enough to fire back."

So one of the key metrics of this is the incredibly refined support now provided to the land forces.

I thought it was interesting that General Lichte mentioned the Question Mark experiments of 80 years ago. Because today a lot of the innovation that is so close to the core of what the Air Force does is taking place in Afghanistan. Whether that's the amazing developments in

precision airdrop that I showed you on the first slide, the increasing sophistication of coordination with ground forces, the immense importance of ISR. There seem to be changes month to month, week to week, engagement to engagement.

In that sense, Afghanistan is a very far away war in the view of many Americans, but it is remaking the combat power of the U.S. Air Force.

Next slide, please.

This slide also shows in another form some of the intensity of the operation going on over there today. You can see in the bar graphs these are munitions expended. Now this tells only a small part of the story of what strike sorties do, but the message is graphic and undeniable. The upswing in operations that began most markedly in 2006 came at a point as NATO's forces along with the other coalition members were extending into new areas. Down into the south, more activity out to the east, of course plenty of activity in other areas as well. And as the enemy began to show up, in the words of Gary North, the engagement and the role for air power and the reliance upon it began to increase.

So this is a sobering message to us of how important our operations are in Afghanistan today and how important the role of joint and coalition air power is there.

Now for every bomb dropped there are many many other effects going on. The ISR effects are tremendous. A JTAC back in the TOC wants to be able to see what's going on and clear some of those fires. A JTAC may call not for a bomb, but for a show of force or a show of presence, perhaps through strafing. There are wonderful tales, and I hope you've heard some of them. They come from Air Force pilots, Navy pilots, Marine pilots, everyone who's there, all the air crews. They'll talk about going lower and lower on their strafing missions.

What we see is airmen giving everything they have to make this extremely complicated conflict turn out the way that it needs to. As I said, we're at a point where we see the increasing intensity. We don't know quite yet what is to come.

President Barack Obama has made very clear that rethinking our policy in Afghanistan is at the top of his list. Secretary Gates talked recently about finding attainable goals. We could talk all afternoon and into the

evening about the complexity in that area where terrorism is rooted very deeply and what the potential solutions are.

We know that they involve diplomatic solutions, the continued engagement of NATO, and many other things. But there is no doubt that any way forward in Afghanistan depends very heavily on the full capabilities of American air power.

As President Obama wrote a few years ago in *Foreign Affairs*, "Success in Afghanistan is still possible, but only if we act quickly, judiciously, and decisively."

With that I'd like to turn the panel over to General Wurster for his remarks, and then to General North.

LtGen Wurster: Dr. Grant, thank you. I appreciate the chance to be here, particularly to sit next to Nordo, one of my heroes who has been carrying the load for the Air Force in the theater for a very long time. Thank you very much for doing that, Nordo.

[Applause].

This panel really is about air power in Afghanistan, and I hope that during some of the questions and answers we'll talk a little bit more about phase zero activity in other parts of the world, really, which is where your air commando force is reaching out to now. You heard the Chief talk about Zach Rheiner's story. Those are happening every day. And the portion of our force that is close to that has given me tremendous appreciation for in fact what boots on the ground means when you put a small contingent of Americans deep in enemy territory and just sort of camp out there. They are sustained by air life lines, whether it be through mobility forces or fires through the United States Air Force.

I will tell you that the reputation of the Air Force is on solid footing with the customers with whom we support. Our crew's ability to put ordnance down extremely well, extremely close to dangerous situations, to kill the enemy and not kill the friendlies is remarkable and appreciated by all of our joint partners in the United States Special Operations Command.

As you know, we are a small enough force that the relationships that we form matter a great deal, and we emphasize them a lot.

For instance, before a ground force commander will go to theater, routinely they will go out and hook up with the

people flying our Predators and they will walk through the details of how they want to conduct activities on a target, the labeling of objectives on the structures, what the ground force wants them to look at. That information is fed back into our PED. We push a third of our PED forward working directly in support of the customer, so those people understand the battle rhythm, how they think, what they want to do, and then they come home and they're the reach back force.

So you've got really somebody at the plate, somebody on deck and somebody in the hole, all of whom go through a methodology where they become relatively intimate with the people that they are supporting and operating with and it works extremely well.

A large portion of our contribution in Afghanistan are of course our gunships which are flying most nights for most of the night. We've got a wing box issue facing us soon. We've got an amp issue on platforms. And recognize that a third of our gunship fleet dates to Vietnam.

There are other portions of our mission that I will unfortunately not be able to discuss in this forum, but recognize that there's a commitment from the Air Force through AFSOC, the air component of USSOCOM, that is on the battlefield, engaged daily, doing the types of things that you would be proud of.

I thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

But let me talk for one second before I hand the mike off. If you look at, let's imagine it's before September 11, 2001. This is when I'm coming back to on phase zero, I want you to have something to think about.

Imagine if five years before that we knew that enemy terrorists working from some ungoverned sanctuary intended to strike the United States in the manner in which they did. The question then is, for the next five years what would the Air Force do about it?

Now I'm relatively confident that we would, despite the excellent response from a cold start on that day, we got the fighters airborne and quickly came to the defense of the country. And my guess is that had we known that that attack was coming we could have intercepted all of those planes.

But if you wanted to do better than that, and if you wanted to bring the overwhelming effect of air power to the defense of our nation, how would you back down that

timeline to prevent the attacks? There's a portion of that, of course, in the industry that falls to law enforcement or the Transportation, Security Administration now and things like that. But if you back out beyond when those people got on the airplane, and you back it all the way down to when Khali Sheikh Mohammed had a good idea, what would the Air Force do in those five intervening years?

Let me pose a scenario. This is an open source article that came out that points out that a month ago 40 al-Qaida operators in North Africa died of plague. They were tinkering around with a plague weapon and it obviously went bad and they're all dead.

So given that we know that, and that we know we have a national intelligence estimate that there is a reasonable probability before 2013 that there will be a weapon of mass destruction issue in the United States, what does the United States Air Force bring to that? How do we take action to interpose air power between the population of the nation and the threat that we know is out there? And it's not somebody else's job. What piece of what we do, what piece of what we build falls in vigilance, reach and power so that we prevent that from happening with air power as the dominant force to bring to bear?

I'd like to talk about that later in the Q&A if you want to. Thank you.

LtGen North: First of all Rebecca, thanks very much for moderating the panel, Chief, and for all of the members here. The Chief stood up a group of distinguished leaders, our four stars, and said thank you, and I don't see too many of our enlisted force here now, but from the air component and the AFCENT commander's perspective, the brunt of our airmen doing our business around the world today are our young enlisted force. So if we could, if our enlisted force members are here, please stand, because we owe you a debt of gratitude for your leadership and the work that you do.

[Applause].

Just as we have, the Chief discussed now Staff Sergeant Rheiner for his absolute act of heroism which I'm very familiar with, last week we lost another JTAC STS member, Staff Sergeant Tim Davis, on his multiple combat tours, several Bronze Stars, and collected his second Purple Heart when he was killed in an IED incident in southern Afghanistan and leaves behind at Hurlburt Field a young wife and a two year old. So not only are our airmen

all in, but they contribute with obviously the greatest sacrifice as do all of our members.

We should always remember that because this is a long war. We have been involved in seven years, and it is much more than just the bombs and the work that has been done, so I'd like to talk just a bit about that and talk about where our airmen are.

Obviously we are looking at Iraq and the conditions that are allowing a reduction of our U.S. forces as a function of an increase in the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi Security Forces, and the Iraqi Air Force.

In Afghanistan what we are seeing now is the tenet of any combat environment, and that is to be able to provide security for a nation. Internal security by those people who live there. That's exactly the tenet that starts the conditions for success and enables all of those other things, the economy, health, education, welfare and jobs for people. So the very basic tenet of security is very important.

In our Air Force side by side with the Army, the Marines, the Navy, the international partners, certainly are building side by side with the Afghan government the Afghan National Army, the Afghan Police, the Afghan National Army Air Corps, and the governance piece which will enable the security to establish a livelihood such that the Afghan people can feel free to go about the trade and the lives that we all enjoy.

In my travels I get the opportunity to talk to senior leaders, both military and civilian, in Afghanistan. In the far reaches of the PRTs, of which there are 24, 6 of which are led by U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonels, and airmen in 12, fully our airmen support 25 percent of all the members of a PRT. What the Afghan people tell us is this. They have a choice. They can either get a job and work and earn money, or they can pick up a rifle and work with the Taliban such that they can provide food for their families. They are no different than us. They want to be able to have their children have a life better than they have had. They'd like their children to one, be healthy; have food on the table; and the opportunity for education.

So the security piece is very important in the domain and that enables the rest of the pieces of the pie that will enable Afghanistan to continue.

Rebecca's got some great slides. I'd like to talk about the parts and pieces in AFCENT, in my role as the

CENTCOM CFAC that have enabled the collective air component to synchronize and integrate along with both ISAF and U.S. Forces Afghanistan to keep air power overhead in a multitude of missions.

If you start from the very tenets of our Air Force, air, space and cyberspace, we start with those whirling satellites overhead, one of which times the entire world these days and that's our GPS satellites, flown by young airmen who enable us to be able to not only move but to be able to shoot and communicate within split seconds.

So it starts in space and then it goes down into the air breathers where we've got our ISR constellation of Rivet Joint, JSTARS, U-2, Global Hawk; and then down into our tier one UAVs, UAS', the Reaper and the Predator.

Our Air Force is really a distributed operation. We used to use this term reachback. I don't like that term because we're not reaching back anywhere because our Air Force is all over the globe. In a distributed operation we are global down to local, and those airmen that fly our Predators from all over the United States in the 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing and in our Guard and Reserve partners, enable the incredible ISR capacity that reach into the persistent stare and when called on the deadly stare that enables us to have incredible success against an enemy who chooses to fight.

So that tied piece in the ISR domain all the way down to our soon to be introduced MC-12s and the collective integration and growth of our intelligence network has enabled us as an air component to be able to put the weapons on call to defeat the enemy. We have been very very successful in what is the most persistent and the most precise warfare that the world has ever known.

Every weapon that we use in Afghanistan save one of the multitude of bombs that we employ on the A-10 is a precision weapon, either a JDAM or a laser guided weapon. And as Rebecca's slide showed, the gun is a very very accurate weapon, both from a gunship or from a fighter.

The other piece that I would add is the innovation that our Chief talked about is alive and well with the airmen that come to the fight. The airmen at the headquarters of all of our major commands who help us when we ask for urgent needs request to be able to satisfy tactical and operational requirements, and over the last three years both industry and our Air Force has answered our call every time.

We do not fly a single platform, either a fighter, bomber, manned or unmanned platform now, that does not have the capability to persistently stare with a targeting pod or an IR and EO Ball capability to be able to look at points of interest or people of interest. Each one of those has got the capacity to downlink what the operator is seeing, such that it can be distributed all the way down to the tactical unit of action, either the JTAC or a special operator, who can see exactly what the operator is seeing in the air. And as well that can be distributed all over the world for anyone who has got the right capability to hook into that particular network.

This enables us to be able to look at points of interest and literally track and trace people for as long as it takes to be able to do the job that is required. That is capture, kill or analyze and be able to determine the best way to ensure security and stability either in a localized environment or across a larger domain.

The weapons, the numbers, are not a real measure of merit as much as a result of the incredible increase in our capacity to garner intelligence which enables that security to be successful.

We are obviously in Afghanistan in a growth period. Our President has directed the increased deployment of forces, some 17,000 U.S. forces. So for the next two or three years this increase will define our U.S. Air Force requirements. We will focus our theater and our support operations to the strategic sizing of our ability to integrate our Air Force mission into the collective mission of both ISAF and U.S. Forces Afghanistan.

In doing that there are several methods. Our Air Expeditionary Wings, of which we have two, one for combat operations and one for training the Afghan Air Corps that is dual-rolled with the MNSTCI or SSTICA domain. We also have some 1300 Joint Expeditionary Tasked airmen that are in Afghanistan to be able to support medical contracting, logistics, security forces, OSI, intel, com, personnel and legal requirements of the joint force. These JET airmen not only are all in, but they are all over Afghanistan working the issues that are required by the U.S. Forces Afghanistan Commander.

They work in their core competencies to the large part, and they are highly commended by their TACOM Commanders for their expertise. In fact they would love to have more of these airmen. And as the mission set grows in Afghanistan, surely we will continue to provide more and more of our airmen into these Joint Expeditionary Taskings.

One of the key products of the growth of this is our young airmen are more joint than any airmen in the history of our Air Force have been, and that is critical to the future of our warfare and the future of our joint domain.

Of those 17,000 forces that will go into Afghanistan over the next two years, clearly we must build the infrastructure to make that work. So our engineers, our programmers, our planners are very busy in defining exact requirements and as fast as we can pour concrete at our major bases and bring up other installations in the field, we will be able to provide forces in.

There was a question about Manas earlier. I'm sure someone will ask that question again so I'll hold it and discuss it at that time. But I will talk a bit about the layout of our airmen because some of you may not be aware.

We do have about 28,000 airmen in the CENTCOM AOR today. Some 5,000 of them are in Afghanistan.

As I said, we've got two Air Expeditionary Wings, one of which is at Bagram, and that is the 455th Wing, and it has a group that is at Kandahar. The other is the 438th Air Expeditionary Wing that works in building the Afghan National Army Air Corps, and that is at Kabul.

In the domain as an operations overview, Rebecca had some great numbers. I'd like to just give you an idea of the scope and scale of which the air component has increased over the last two years.

From '06 to '08 we have increased our sortie requirements and execution by 170 percent. In 2008 we flew 40,400 sorties in Afghanistan or directly supporting Afghanistan.

Our weapons deliveries, again, is a function of our ability to target the enemy accurately and precisely. Increased, almost double from '06 to '08 with incredible results. This is directly related to our TAC system and our JTACs which work side by side with the Army, with the Marines, and with the coalition forces that enable us to put the proper capability on target. Sometimes a show of force, sometimes a show of presence, sometimes a weapon.

TIC responses are Troops in Contact, which is where the ground forces call for air to come overhead to provide, again, either noise, presence, or a weapon when required, have increased some 300 percent from '06 to '08, and very often just the sheer presence of an airplane overhead will

disburse the enemy because they know that when an airplane is called overhead by a JTAC with a radio, that that airplane has got incredible capacity and capability, so just the sheer presence is enough to sometimes disband the enemy which is a huge win.

We have increased the capacity with our ISR domain, as you all know, at an exponential rate. In fact from '06 to '08 a 415 percent increase in ISR sorties in Afghanistan.

As General Lichte said, airlift, it really is all about logistics. We have had a steady growth in both passengers and tonnage. We cannot do what we do in Afghanistan without both our STRAT and our TAC airlift. We also airdrop quite a bit because Afghanistan is a country where there's not a lot of roads and we have folks way out in the frontier land, up in the mountains which reach up to 14,000 to 16,000 feet. So we have had, since '06, a 450 percent increase in airdrops.

In 2008 we airdropped 15.6 million pounds, and we expect to double that in 2009. This is a nine-fold increase since 2006 that we expect to have at the end of 2009. And again, industry partners, and great work on the part of both the Army and the Air Force have enabled us several years ago to bring JPADS into our inventory at a great rate.

General Lichte talked about air refueling. We can't do our mission in Afghanistan without air refueling. We fly about, in the AOR, about 56 air refueling sorties a day. That's split between Iraq and Afghanistan. We pass on average about 3.9 million pounds of gas a day to about between 250 and 330 receivers, and about half of those are in Afghanistan. So the tanker is absolutely critical to our business.

If you used an analogy, I'll just take this a moment, General Lichte talked about the graceful degrade of the tanker by 2040 as currently programmed. In 2040 if we took that last tanker to fly, the analogy would be today I would be flying the B-17 on a CAS sortie over Afghanistan. So I echo his desire and our desire obviously to bring a new tanker on.

Second behind that, from my perspective is the CSARX, the new CSAR helicopter that we obviously need. Our HH-60s are wearing out quickly. They are deployed in Afghanistan quite a bit, in Iraq as well. So we look to that new capacity in the future as well.

General Chilton talked about com. At the operational level of war my biggest goal is our ability to communicate. We can shoot and move, but if we cannot communicate across the domain, then we are back to where we were pre-Desert Storm. So protecting the net is clearly everyone's job to enable us to be able to have that secure domain to be able to do our job throughout anyone's AOR. And it's certainly key and critical to our business in Afghanistan.

With that, we're ready for your questions, I think.

Dr. Grant: I'd love to ask them a couple of questions if that's okay with you.

General Dunn: Please.

Dr. Grant: First, General Wurster you mentioned phase zero operations. We know that's become part of joint doctrine, something that all our forces engage in. I wonder if you could take a few minutes and tell us a little more about how you see AFSOC's future in that phase zero shaping operations, please.

LtGen Wurster: I'm happy to.

If you look at, the real question is how do we prevent the next Afghanistan. That's kind of where we're operating in this right now.

We have recognized that a little bit of American influence, whether it be smart soldiers on the ground, appropriate intelligence analysts in a station chief's spaces, good coms and connectivity to a \$200 billion intelligence system makes one person matter a whole lot if it's in the right place at the right time.

So if you want to have, for instance. I'll give you an example.

Before Afghanistan we had been sending six special operations squadron members into the Stans and they had been working with them. It's a small element of AFSOC, people that are specially trained and screened and selected to operate independently in small numbers, speak the language, and be fitted into a culture and trained in many cases in foreign weapon systems. But they run the range from maintenance to security forces to [Siri] instructors to combat control to pilots and mechanics. They go and work in very small numbers on relatively unsophisticated aircraft in most cases in different places around the world.

When the attacks of 9/11 happened a relationship had been built with the airmen in the area and they said we're going to need a place to bed down tankers. They said no problem, we'll get Manas. That's how that started.

When you look at places that we have national strategic interests. Nigeria. That's a place that we've got to pay attention to. The al-Qaida in the Magreb. That's a place we've got to pay attention to, particularly in light of this bio threat.

We are recognizing that small airplanes provide a great deal of utility in that. We have the world's greatest mobility system, bar none. But if you don't meet the threshold of payload or short tons, you fall out the bottom of that.

So one of the things that I had mentioned in the past is when General Brady or General Chandler, when the commander of the theater turns to them and says I need to get these eight people or this special equipment or this humanitarian package into so and so, my intuition is that his airmen should be able to say got it, they're gone. Without going back through a TRANSCOM [twick off] system and finding out who's going to pay for it. That's just a personal opinion. It's not my union. But it would seem to me that there are places that effectiveness matter a great deal more than efficiency.

We build the world's most efficient air power machine. We build the world's most efficient transportation architecture. But there are some times when it doesn't need to be efficient, it just needs to happen and it needs to happen now.

We have recognized that the mobility, Nordo was talking about the PRTs. Four of the airmen that were commanding the six PRTs that were headed up by airmen are in fact air commandos. One of them came back, works for me now at the headquarters, and he said sir, going from here to here took five and a half hours, there is only one road, and we were attacked on the way back, and we lost a guy. But getting there by air is an answer that compounds the problems that the enemy faces.

So if we're taking an ODA into Mauritania or Mali, or into South America or working with the Southern Philippines down the Holo Island chain, that ability to have an aircraft that is at the disposal of the joint force commander to do things that is important right now, matters a great deal. It can do cas evac, it can in some cases carry sensitive packages, it can move people, it can do

stuff. As we have evolved this capability, we have intentionally pushed authorities very far down the chain such that if you need to carry a member of the State Department you don't have to go back to the Department of Defense to get an interdepartmental MIPR to decide who's going to pay for six gallons of av gas. Likewise, the authority to carry a host nation partner or the Chief of Staff of the Philippines Air Force. He can get on the plane. Those authorities are in place.

So the country team, the ambassador, the joint force commander, and the people in place can connect back into our huge architectures, and you end up in the circumstance where they lean in and they say we can't tell you why you ought to look in that house right there, but that's the house you ought to look in. Then the host nation acts within their own sovereignty, protects their own dignity and executes missions to the degree to which they are capable.

But if we're going to try and overlay a very diverse and distributed network, we need to be a very diverse and distributed network with authorities delegated down the chain, with a clear understanding of limitations and commanders intent.

So that's really what I'm talking about in phase zero.

For instance, the question that I would like us to think about as we walk away from here is what elements of air power are we going to use to defeat the bio threat in Central Africa? And how should we best do that? How should we force structure for it? How should we organize, train and equip for it? and who should do it? Because right now nobody is there. We have special forces teams that go there, but this is a threat to our nation. Normally when we face a more conventional threat we know precisely what to do. But this is a new threat and this is what, to me, the irregular warfare construct is all about. Irregular warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan is counterinsurgency. We know how to do that. But this other piece is different than that, and it's a new skill set. All we need is some balance. It doesn't take a lot. But it takes more than zero to do this.

Make sense?

Dr. Grant: Absolutely.

General North, a quick question for you. You said 15 million pounds airdropped last year and you're expecting to double in 2009. Are you able to deliver that as tactical

resupply to a fire base if they call up and say I need resupply, could you deliver that as a rapid response as well?

LtGen North: In the logistic world, and again truly being an ICAF graduate I did learn all about logistics, it really is important to be able to do routine sustained resupply as a function of the desired classes of munitions, classes of equipment, food, fuel, medicine out into the FOBs and the COBs. And we do that on a routine basis because you do the math, you've got X number of people on the ground, you need Y amount of food and water and fuel, et cetera, et cetera. So we do have a routine supply network for resupply. But we do keep both airdrop and aeromedical evaluation capacity on alert, both in Iraq and Afghanistan, such that if there is a call, and there have been plenty, and we have been able to dispatch both airdrop and aeromedical requirements very rapidly. We've got pallets built up, we've got crews on alert. So when the call comes in we are able to dispatch very quickly. We've done that both for force on force, we've done that for humanitarian. We've had times where we've had forces out in the high mountains and the call is it's cold out here, we've worn out our clothes. We dispatched a patrol out without the proper clothing so we need jackets. So we've airdropped jackets.

So that capacity is inherent in our business. We continue to look to lean forward into the process. As we looked into this winter and we're looking into the build, we'd been airdropping a tremendous amount of, if you will, forward supplies to build up the supply base on a routine basis. Lumber, food, fuel, water, to get ahead of the requirements.

We're also clearly building new tactical strips, particularly in the east and the south, that will enable our C-130s and our C-17s and coalition C-160s to be able to go into, and again, a lot of this is very tactical, not on the fly but expeditionary requirements in active, Guard and Reserve personnel are well trained in this and do fabulous work.

Dr. Grant: Thank you very much.

General Dunn, do we have time for a couple of questions from the floor?

General Dunn: I do. I've got a tough one. This is a tough crowd. It's late in the afternoon, but I've got about a dozen cards with the same essential question and I'm going to direct this to you, Dr. Grant, and you,

General Wurster and General North can comment, but they're all the same theme. Let me just read a couple of lines from each one.

Do you think that victory in Afghanistan will come from more sorties, munition dropped? What will lead to success in Afghanistan? Afghanistan has historically been a hard nut to crack reference the British failures of two centuries ago. How do we make sure that history doesn't repeat itself? How do you define success in Afghanistan? What's a realistic end state in Afghanistan? Et cetera, et cetera.

Dr. Grant: I'll comment on that very quickly.

Clearly defining victory in Afghanistan is a national policy discussion that's going to involve a lot of people, maybe a few who are in this room and a lot who aren't. But there's a wonderful painting in I think the Tate in London that's called "The Last Soldier." It shows the last British soldier leaving Afghanistan in 1848 when they pulled out.

If you were to do a painting like that today, it's hard to say, but it wouldn't surprise me entirely if that might be an airman. Maybe in a flight suit. Maybe a security forces airman.

I think whatever the solution is we will count on air power to drive us through to that to the end.

Now I want to have my other panelists answer that question. What's it going to take?

LtGen North: That's a great national strategy and an Afghan discussion where the Afghans have to be able to define their own success. We need to look at it from, and I'll take General Wurster's discussion, an environment where the enemy does not have a sanctuary in which to breed, and an environment where that enemy does not have the capacity to be able to run an exclusive area to where they can plan for future attacks.

So as we all know, the area between the ungoverned areas between the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan require work both from the Afghan people, the Pakistani leadership. And in working with that we should look at localized successes, and the PRTs is a perfect example of how to achieve localized success side by side with the Afghan people to where they are enabled through economic and governance progress to be able to plant something other than poppy and see success and make it work. To be able to

have schools built, to have medical and dental and veterinary capacity brought into their local villages and domains so that they can locally have success in the area. And they've got a choice. When the Taliban come into the town, into the villages, the village elders can push them out and say we don't want you, get out of here. You're not giving us anything. And that local success is a domino that from the ground level up, as the national government continues to work its governance piece, the two hopefully will meet at some point, and at some time the government has got to make some sort of peace with the Taliban, those moderates that now have an opportunity to change their ways while they continue to fight those Taliban folks who just will not see the way and have to be eradicated.

So success is local.

General Dunn: Let me bring this session to a close. We were just out of time.

I do want to plug Dr. Grant's new study that's being released today. If you wouldn't mind, Rebecca, holding that up. It's called Air Power in Afghanistan. It's an exceptional study. It talks about how the Air Force has changed and led the effort in Afghanistan and is part of the joint effort.

General Wurster and General North, I want to thank you very much. You guys are my heroes, being out there every day, taking the fight to the enemy. America is blessed by having great leaders like yourselves.

Thank you very much on behalf of all of us.

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