

Air Mobility Command Update

General Arthur J. Lichte
Commander, Air Mobility Command

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Moderator: -- This morning we are honored to have with us as a speaker the Commander of the Air Mobility Command, General Art Lichte. General Lichte's bio is in your program and I want you to note that he has flown almost everything that's got a C in front of it as well as some things that have got KCs and VCs and all kinds of other Cs in it, and there's even a helicopter or two in there. He's got over 4,000 hours. He's commanded various wings and served at major command and at the Air Staff and at unified command levels. Before his present position he was Assistant Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

I must note if you look closely at his bio that General Lichte's from New York. I was going to tell a New York Yankees joke this morning, but I decided I'd not do that. I will note that the first time I met General Lichte was at Harvard in Boston and Harvard took us to a Boston Red Sox game. General Lichte may comment on that.

Please join me in welcoming the Commander of the Air Mobility Command, General Art Lichte.

[Applause].

General Lichte: Thank you, Mike.

I don't know why you're picking on me for being a Yankee fan. Except for this one Red Sox guy out here who's already holding up how many games behind the Yankees are. [Laughter]. You hold that sign, sir, until the end of the World Series and then we'll talk, when the Red Sox are home watching it on TV.

Okay, I guess we've got to get serious and talk a little bit about Air Mobility Command. I was telling General Cross -- and by the way, welcome to everybody here, distinguished guests, the folks that are joining us, of course -- When you have this at 8:00 o'clock in the morning you never know who's going to wander in and I'm sure there will probably be a few more wandering in as we proceed through here.

Mike mentioned, I am the new Commander of Air Mobility Command and I was telling General Cross, the last opportunity I had to speak it was to say, "Sir, I assume command." So this is my first presentation here at AFA and Bob, I want to thank you for having me, and Mike, thank you for introducing me and for having us. This has been a great symposium. As we hit day three, you guys are in full stride and I know there have been a lot of great

lot of great briefers on the stage talking about their programs and I'd like to tell you a little bit about Air Mobility Command because I'm very very proud to be in Air Mobility Command. For me it's going back home.

This morning I'd like to take a few moments and tell you a little bit about Air Mobility Command, what we're doing, how we're organizing, and where we're going in the future. Then I'll try and get through all the slides so we can really talk about what's on your mind and what you want to talk about.

Let's get the first slide and we'll jump right in here. I think as Air Mobility Command we've got to step back and think about how we are aligned with the Air Force and how we stand up to what our Chief of Staff has said.

General Moseley talks about this slide a lot. He says the mission of the United States Air Force is to fly and fight, and don't you forget it. It's just that simple.

He likes to point out to people that this is cutting to the chase. As an expeditionary Airman, he says all we do is fly and fight. For many of you, you probably remember that we went through a period in our Air Force where political correctness started to run amuck. Some people would say my job is really not to fly, I'm a maintainer, or I'm a civil engineer. The bottom line is we are all expeditionary, we are all Airmen, and our mission is to really fly and fight. So General Moseley had it right.

The Chief also points out that he put this picture on this slide for a reason. It's the raid on Floeste from World War II. It was really one of the first bombing missions, strategic bombing missions, that took off from North Africa, proceeded some 1350 miles up to Floeste, Romania, to hit the oil refineries there.

There were 177 airplanes that launched that day. Fifty-four of them did not return. Five Airmen were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor from that mission. The Chief says it took bravery and courage to jump in those airplanes and to fly that mission. You know what? It takes bravery and courage to do our mission today, whether it's in air, space or cyberspace. So let's not forget that that bravery, that courage, that was exhibited back in World War II is still being exhibited every day.

And as I thought about it a little bit more I realized Air Mobility Command is just as proud and doing the same thing in their missions. So I would say we have to change that picture that the Chief shows because we do fly into harm's way. We put tankers over hostile territory. We go in and we save people's

lives with our aeromedical evacuation. We deliver cargo. We do airdrops. We're always in harm's way. And by the way, we're doing it around the clock and it never stops. And by the way, it's not just our arbiters and our tankers. We even put Air Force One into harm's way as when you'll recall just over Labor Day weekend the President landed and stepped off the airplane in Iraq.

So really, there's not any mission in Air Mobility Command that is not considered a combat mission. We do our combat mission every day and we're very very proud of that.

Next.

Our Air Force has been at this business for a long time. We say 17 years at war. You know what? The mobility air forces have been doing this all the same throughout that time, and if you look at this list, and there's about 45 different operations up there, and the ones in black, 13 of them, are the ones that we've used kinetic capability. All the rest have been either humanitarian airlift or strictly mobility type missions.

So the global mobility aspect of our mission is evident with what you see here. With USAFE and PACAF, the Guard, Reserve and active duty, the mobility air forces have served every one of them.

But that's not all we do and it's not just this group of people that work it.

Next, please.

We have to be prepared to perform our mission every day and that's why over the last couple of years they added "Unrivaled Global Reach for America Always." It's in there for a reason, because it never lets up. It never stops.

The night that we dropped some thousand paratroopers in the north of Iraq within five hours, and then over the next few days we delivered supplies. We delivered 400 more people on the very next day. It kept growing until they had over 2,000 troops in the north. That froze the Iraqi divisions. Two Iraqi divisions couldn't move south. That's combat power and that's delivering mobility around the world. That's why I say that our Air Mobility Command is the one responsible for unrivaled global reach for America.

But if you look at that slide, too, and you start looking at some of the numbers, you realize that we don't do this alone. We do it as a total force with the Guard and Reserve. As a matter of fact, not that I'm going to try and do math in public, but it's about 60 percent of our forces are in the ARC, the Guard and

Reserve, the rest on active duty. And together we accomplish the mission and we work very very closely, obviously, with USAFE and PACAF as the lead for mobility air forces.

Next.

This is just a quick snapshot of all the things that are going on in the command and what we've been doing, really, in the last few years and actually in some cases just the last few months.

About every 90 seconds we have a planned departure rolling down a runway somewhere in this world. This past week it got all the way down to one every 85 seconds. Now that's very impressive when you figure out how that all is accomplished. And like I said, it's spread across the full gamut of operations -- with the earthquake relief in Pakistan; and of course we're doing OEF and OIF. But all the missions out there are pretty impressive.

One thing that I want to point to your attention, though, because sometimes it's lost on people. When we talk about the air refueling, just since 9/11 our tanker folks have passed 1.1 billion, that's B, gallons of fuel to other aircraft. That's kind of hard to imagine so I figured I'd give you a little explanation to this.

Next slide, please.

It comes from my home state. If you can imagine Niagara Falls, and imagine it in the summer time when the water is running at its strongest, and you can start to get the feel for 1.1 billion gallons of fuel as you see this water come rolling off. Niagara Falls, summer time, it's running. I stopped it there because I figured too many of these old guys up front would have to run to the bathroom. [Laughter]. But we would have to watch that film for 25 minutes to get an idea of how many 1.1 billion gallons of water, in this case.

Next slide.

Starting to get down to the details of Air Mobility Command. We've got an awful lot going on. We've got people running in different directions, we've got OpsTempos, we've got people that are running out and trying to accomplish the mission. I told you we're doing it with the Guard and Reserve, and quite frankly, in Air Mobility Command we said all right, how are we going to do this? We've got to get it organized and we've got to figure out how we're contributing to the Air Force mission. So we want to get all those arrows and everything moving in the right direction. We wanted to get this together and come about and follow the Chief's and Secretary's top three priorities -- fighting and winning the global war on terror, and preparing for the next war;

the next war; developing and caring for Airmen and their families; and recapitalizing and modernizing our air, space and cyberspace systems. And of course you know in the mobility business we have an awful lot of our systems that we need to recapitalize and modernize.

Let me show you how we are contributing to each of those priorities of the Chief and Secretary.

First of all, you know back in May of this year the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Gates, said it's absolutely essential that we get these mine-resistant ambush protected vehicles, MRAPs, to the troops in the field. So Air Mobility Command was called on. We have been delivering these MRAPs to the folks in the field as quickly as they come off the line.

There are three different categories of MRAPs and if you look at the lower left of your slide where it shows one of those MRAPs after being hit, it looks pretty bad but all the Marines that were in that MRAP were safe. That's why the Secretary of Defense said we need to get these over to the field right away.

Some of you may say yeah, but why don't you just put them on a ship and send them over there? Because you can't get them there quick enough, and because they're not coming off the line quick enough. These are being made down in Charleston, South Carolina, and as they roll out of the factory they literally drive over to Charleston Air Force Base, and as soon as they arrive on the base they get scheduled and put on an airplane. Usually it's within two days. They are then in the field so our Army and Marine soldiers can take care of business and use these and be safer.

So right away, we are saving lives. This is going on every day. We've launched enough sorties to get 410 of these vehicles in theater and right now we're doing about six a day right out of Charleston here in the United States.

Next.

Another way we're helping to save lives is with precision airdrop. You all remember how we used to do this business. We'd come in, usually low, and you'd get the green light and start dropping your parachutes. Down in harm's way because you were down at low level. So we said we had to improve that.

Next slide.

With the ICDS we use the drops on, it goes down, feeds the different winds back to the airplane, so we were able to do this a little bit more precise. As you see from the slide we've done

this 432 times in combat now. But we said that's still not good enough because we want to get the supplies directly to the troops.

The next slide is an example of JPADS. This now uses GPS and you've heard it referred to as probably the JDAM of Air Mobility Command, because we can get those bundles exactly where they need to go. So what we've done is we've really turned that cone upside down. Now you can release it from a far distance away and it will land right where you want it.

I've got a video clip here, next please, to show you how it looks. Let's start the video.

If you can imagine yourself as you watch this maybe sitting in a football stadium waiting for the guy to show up with the flag right on the 50 yard line. So overhead an aircraft goes by and starts dropping things to include the jumper who would deliver the flag.

You can't see the airplane. It's probably five miles up and maybe seven to ten miles away and yet those air foils come out and they start steering directly to that 50 yard line in the stadium. It's very precise. You've seen these jumpers do this and control their parachutes all the way down, the parasail. You'll see it just kind of flares and lands softly right on its target.

The only advice is make sure you're not standing where you told them to drop it because you're going to get it dropped right on your head. It's a very impressive system and we've been doing this now and we're continuing to work to improve the amount of payload we can deliver. Right now we're doing 2,000 pounds and we're trying to get that up to about 10,000 pounds for each drop that goes in. Next please.

In addition to the precision airdrop, we are taking people off the road. You've probably heard some of this before. We are very very proud of the fact that now we get the 130s that are in theater are carrying all the passengers, so we can take all those buses and cars off the road, first of all, getting all the passengers on the airplanes. But more importantly, we're also taking a lot of the cargo now as well, so either it's being precision air dropped to where it needs to be or it's being flown so we don't have the convoys on the road taking care of business, getting all this off the road and saving lives.

In addition to all that, we've established the two C-17 Expeditionary Airlift Squadrons. So we've put C-17s in theater that can respond and move cargo around and be doing that every day. We're going to talk a little bit more about that because it comes into play in a couple of other areas of our mission. It's

being very very effective. As well, we've initiated a CRAF-like cargo tender express, we call it, where we're putting small pieces of cargo on contracted aircraft. In this particular case we're using a lot of IL-76s that are in theater and we can have them move some of the cargo around, again, keeping people off the road and saving lives by keeping them out of convoys.

Next.

These are the numbers that it's affecting. So when you think about that and when you think that the IEDs are the biggest killer of our forces over there, if we can keep those people off the road in those kind of numbers we are definitely saving lives. So once again, I say that Air Mobility Command is really in the fight and we're contributing day in and day out.

Another way we do this, and I consider this really kind of a little bit of in the fight but also taking care of Airmen, because we have a moral obligation if one of our troops is down, first of all to go get them, and that's why there's a lot of talk about the CSARX and how important it is, because it's a moral obligation to go behind enemy lines and get a troop and get them to the hospital.

Aeromedical evacuation is that same promise that we made to our people.

You can see from the chart at how we've improved with our survival rate. Really the traditional survival rate was about 75 percent but now it's up at 90 percent. And if you can get to a place like Balad you have about a 97 percent chance of living. We can do that because of the great improvements we've made in aeromedical evacuation. It used to be in Desert Shield/Desert Storm, which wasn't that long ago, it would take ten days to get people from the theater direct back to home. Now we've got that down to three days. It's an absolute miracle the way some of this is pulled off and I want to share a little bit about that with you.

Let me tell you a story about Sergeant Dan Powers this 4th of July. First of all, I want all of you to think where were you on the 4th of July this past year? I was here in Washington, DC and we were getting ready for the fireworks. As a matter of fact I was fortunate enough to go over to General Moseley's house so we could watch the fireworks from his grand view at Fort Myers.

Sergeant Powers on the 3rd of July in an early morning raid found himself the victim of an attack. He was going through in a house and an enemy came out, grabbed him from behind, had a knife, and stuck it in his head.

Next slide.

These are the X-rays from Sergeant Powers. He gave us permission to use these slides because we wanted to talk about this. But can you imagine how everybody around him felt when they rushed him to Balad? That's when this miracle takes place and the story continues.

Fortunately, I mentioned that we had the two C-17 Expeditionary Airlift Squadrons, and we had a crew who was just getting ready to start their day and to start going around and make their standard cargo runs. As they showed up for duty they were told, hey, you've got to go direct to Andrews today. They said no way, what, are you kidding? A typical crew, walking in, getting ready to do their mission and they get told no, you're going to go non-stop direct to Andrews.

They found out after the next few moments that it wasn't a joke, it was for real, and they were going to have someone's life in their hands.

About the same time that the crew was being notified and they start preparing, because they were up at al-Udaid, now they're going into Balad. They wanted to make sure, and by having the Expeditionary Airlift Squadrons in theater we had our squadron leadership there who were making the calls and helping out in conjunction with the Tanker Airlift Control Center back at Scott. So they started putting a plan together. They made sure they had the extended range tank C-17 available for the crew and they cleared out any of the other cargo.

About the same time this was going on we had a critical care team that was notified they needed to get ready and be prepared for a mission. So they started getting ready and getting to this patient to start helping him. And oh by the way, they said there's another specialist that needed to be added onto that flight, and both these patients had to have the cabin pressure no higher than 4,000 or 5,000 feet. And by the way, it wouldn't be prudent, wouldn't be smart, to land anywhere. You have to go non-stop because any time those pressures would change that head injury may start bleeding and Sergeant Powers could lose his life.

So the crew had a challenge out in front of it, but just like every other crew you've ever known they said it was a routine day and they just went about their business.

The critical care team married up, got the patient, Sergeant Powers, to the airplane and off they went. They took off, they started heading towards Andrews. There were two refuelings scheduled, one over Turkey and one over Mildenhall. They found out they didn't need to do the one over turkey, they had enough fuel because of the extended range tanks and what they put on, but the

but the joined up with a tanker out of Mildenhall to take gas and then proceed on direct to Andrews Air Force Base.

Next slide.

They touched down in the early morning hours of the 4th of July at Andrews Air Force Base and transported Sergeant Powers to where he needed to be so he could get to the neurosurgeon up at Bethesda. It was less than 24 hours that he ended up from being injured and being in the hospital at Bethesda.

So as we were waking up and getting ready to celebrate the 4th of July here in Washington, DC, Sergeant Powers was in surgery in Bethesda and a miracle was taking place.

Now Sergeant Powers couldn't be here this morning. He wanted to. The reason he couldn't be here is not because he's not doing well. The reason he's not here is because his unit is returning today and he wanted to be with his unit to share the joy of seeing them all return. But he wanted to send a video clip.

Could you play the video, please?

[Video shown].

"I'm Sergeant Daniel Powers from the 118th Military Police Company Airborne. I wanted to thank you and all the flight crews and everyone who took care of me, for getting me home in one piece. Airborne."

What a guy.

[Applause].

Sergeant Powers couldn't be here today but we have the technology to get the C-17 crew here today along with the critical care team. So here you go, Lieutenant Colonel Jesse Strickland, Captain Corbett Buffton, Scott Fruchette, Justin Herbst, Colonel Dr. Dan Gillen, and Major Keith Farrell. These are the guys who pulled off the miracle.

[Applause].

The miracle was pretty impressive, but let me tell you a couple of other details that I kind of left out.

To show you what Air Mobility Command is all about. First of all, it was a McCord airplane. These guys are from Charleston. As a matter of fact the Charleston Wing Commander Red Millander is here too. But it was a Charleston crew on a McCord airplane. These guys are active duty except when you turn to the doctor.

to the doctor. The doctor is from Air Reserve Command and he works at Langley Air Force Base.

The nurse, he's from MacDill Air Force Base. He's also in the Reserves. The rest of his team was Air National Guard.

All this happens and it's being controlled from the cornfields of Scott Air Force Base by the Tanker Airlift Control Center.

Now when you put all that stuff together, you talk about total force, then you add the math because it was as USAFE tanker that popped up and gave them the gas. There is no better definition of total force and everybody working together to pull off this miracle. I don't think there's another nation in the world that could do that, and more importantly, there's not probably another nation in the world that would do that for one soldier.

Stop everything you're doing, launch an airplane, and save that guy's life. And stories like that happen day in and day out. General McNab told the story last year about Corporal Justin Ping, same scenario. It's amazing to me that we can pull all that off and we have to continue to work on that to make sure that we'll be able to save lives in the future. They were able to do it because the C-17 was reliable and took off on time. The 135 was reliable, took off, and they were able to get their gas. They had a tremendous total force crew. All capable and ready to serve. We need to continue to do that, which brings me to my next part of starting to talk about our modernization.

We've got a lot of issues that we're dealing with in Air Mobility Command. A lot of them are just simple age and wear of our aircraft.

You've heard many times about the C-130s and the center wing boxes. WE have a lot of problems with the C-130s. We've got to modernize them. We have AMP out there for them, but we've got to get on with it. We need to be able to get those 130s to where we can use them or we have to make the decision to move to another airplane.

C-17 is going to celebrate its 15th anniversary of the first delivery to Charleston Air Force Base next spring, right? So we forget. We think the C-17 is our newest airlifter, which it is, but that's starting to get old and it's starting to wear out. It's starting to have some cracks on thrust reversers. So we've got to take care of that.

C-5, you all know the story about the C-5s. We're going to AMP them, we're going to RRRP them, but we also have a lot of sustainment issues with the C-5 and we've got to take care of

them. Even our [OSVIPSAM] fleet, which everyone looks at and sees the nice blue and white airplanes, but they're getting old too. We need to modernize them. And oh by the way, we never have enough of them. So we have to get on with that.

The 135, we can talk more about the 135 too, and I'm sure you might have a question or two, but the 135 we've simply just got to do it. The E models are on average 49 years old. You know we've already celebrated the 50th birthday a couple of years ago for the oldest tanker that we've had. And the 135Rs are also pretty old. We've just got to get on with modernization.

Next.

We also are saddled with a lot of restrictions that have been place on us, and if we can't retire the old aircraft we've got to keep them around, and if we keep them around that costs money. That's just hurting Air Mobility Command because then we can't use those dollars to modernize. So we're prohibited right now from retiring some of the C-130Es and Hs, and then some of the ones that we have been allowed to retire, we have to keep them in a flyable status down at [AMOR] and that's costing money. That'd costing up to \$12 million a year to keep them in that status.

135s, we've been restricted on retiring them and we're having trouble as we look at the C-5s as to what we're going to do with them, can we retire some more, and how will the balance be between C-5s and C-17s? And it's really tough because it's all in this fiscally constrained environment.

You know that the KCX is the number one priority for acquisition for the Air Force. It's certainly AMC's number one priority as well.

Next slide.

It is the single point of failure, as the Chief would say, for any air bridge activity. Right now if everything goes smoothly with the contract, and I'm sure hoping it does, the first delivery will take place in 2011. We're assuming a rate of about 15 per year. With that rate the last KC-135 will retire in 2048. That's getting out there a ways.

But you all know that we are a little bit nervous about whether the KCX will have any more slips, whether there will be any problems as we go through the final phases of this contract.

Next.

If we run into any problems and if it slips let's just say three years, and we don't get the first delivery until 2014, and

let's say in Air Mobility Command we can't find enough money to buy them at a rate of 15 per year and we have to go down to eight, we start retiring the last KC-135 in 2082. That's why it's important.

And when the people say well why is it important that you get the KCX, your 135s are doing fine. Yeah, they are. They're doing great. But if you don't start eating this elephant, you're not going to get there. So you've got to do it.

This is the one that really scares me, because if people just keep saying oh, it's not that critical, you can wait. Remember, we thought we were going to have a new tanker on the ramp last December. That's not going to happen. So we have to move on with this program. That's why it's the Air Force's number one priority; it's also Air Mobility Command's number one priority. Because if this occurs -- next slide -- you're going to have something looking like this.

The 1956 tanker is the same as when we did the question mark refueling back in 1929. As a matter of fact if you use that scenario I just said you're looking at some 92 years and it would be like having that tanker refueling a Joint Strike Fighter in the year 2021.

Now none of us, well let's put it this way. I think the majority of us would say that's absolutely crazy, we don't want that to happen. So we need everyone's help to try and get on with this modernization of the KCX.

Where does that take us for the future then? It leaves us with looking for the KCX as our number one priority. We've got to get on with that. We also want to get on with the Joint Cargo Aircraft, the JCA. There is a real requirement as we've looked at this and a perfect match with our 130 fleet and with everything else we're doing. I know sometimes if you pick up a paper it will say the Air Force is not really committed to this. I can tell you that Air Mobility Command is really committed to this, and we're going to try and make this happen. We've got to get on with it.

It's important for homeland defense. It's important to the Governors. It's important to FEMA. There's a whole bunch of people that it's important for, including all our international partners. We've had two meetings already with our international partners and we have one more meeting coming up in November to find out how we can use this aircraft together. This is a way of bringing the world together, and just like with a lot of the other mobility business, we do a lot of strategic partnering and we work with our allies and our friends. This is another example where we can do that, but we've got to get on and we've got to make some decisions on JCA to keep it moving forward.

C-130. The C-130J is doing great. It's proving itself day in and day out. The other C-130s are old and so we have to make some tradeoffs and decisions on what we're going to do with the older C-130s and C-130Js.

C-5, we do have the AMP going. We've got about 30 airplanes that have been AMPed with the glass cockpit. Of course we have the three aircraft that are going through the RRRP right now. But that's a program that we won't get for a long time and we have to wait and see how all that comes out. Right up front you know because you've probably been reading some of the trade journals, that there are some problems with costing on the RRRP business. We really want this to succeed, we want this program to work, but it has to be at a reasonable cost and we have to get it all together. So there's a lot of activity going on now between the Air Force and with the folks at Lockheed to work this C-5 business.

There are thousands of other programs that we have going on with loaders and other modernization pieces, but the bottom line is we have to move on with some of this. While I can rest, I wouldn't say easy, but I'm very happy with the way things are going tonight. I'm more concerned about the future of Air Mobility Command and how we get new aircraft and how our people are holding up.

Right now a lot of what Air Mobility Command does is being done on the backs of the people. They're holding up great, they're fantastic, but we have to help them and we have to get new equipment, we have to modernize things for them so that they can be ready to accomplish this mission 10, 20 and 30 years down the road.

We have fantastic people in Air Mobility Command and on just my short time out at the headquarters, and I've done one base visit. I can tell you that we have fantastic people and they have really raised the bar higher and higher and higher. While I was at Dover this past week I was totally impressed by the people. And not only did I see the active duty guys, but I saw General Bradley's Reserve guys. They are working together and everyone is doing great.

I would tell you that the future of Air Mobility Command is bright, but we need to continue to work some modernization issues. The people are in place. Everyone will do their job and we can be very very proud of them. We have to help. My job as the commander is to get them the resources that they need so that Air Mobility Command will be a bright spot for many years to come.

So I'd like to turn it over to you to find out what's on your

your mind and find out what questions you have. I also have my Command Chief, Chief Master Sergeant Joe Barron. Joe, stand up for a second so people can see you. He's a fantastic Command Chief and he's here to help answer any questions too.

At the end of this forum we'll spend whatever time you want, you can grab either one of us and talk about any of these issues.

Thanks again for coming out this morning. I appreciate the fact that you all showed up and you're sitting there smiling and no one took a little nap. I especially appreciate the front row being so supportive here.

Any questions?

Question: I'm going to take the prerogative of the chair to ask the first question.

General Lichte, I was struck with your briefing, and just like I was struck at your change of command, in how much AMC is doing. You mentioned a lot of it, but people don't realize that you have airplanes that have been to North Korea, to Central Africa, you're resupplying the Antarctic. I talked to General Dave Patreaus in the spring and he had 17 congressional delegations there. They don't get there by themselves. Plus you're resupplying State Department missions all around the world.

My question is simple. What can we do to better get the AMC story out to the American public? They don't understand that when ever there's a hint of something that happens, you're repositioning airplanes and trying to get ready.

General Lichte: You're right. Any time there's an earthquake in the world, phones start ringing and people start pre-positioning airplanes. We make sure that the tanker air bridge is stood up and we're ready to go.

It's forums like this that help get the word out. AFA does a great job in getting the word out and I know some of the efforts that you've initiated by getting your daily report out in e-mail to quite a few people. And by the way, if you're not getting that I suggest you get in touch with General Dunne because it's a fantastic update. Then we have to pledge to get our word out ten times more than we're doing now. Yet everybody thinks that we're spreading the word and we're getting it out, but there are so many times where we don't get the word out and we don't get a chance to honor some great people like we did today with the C-17 and the CCAT crew that was responsible for saving Sergeant Powers' life.

I'm open for ideas and I guess I'd ask all of you to help me spread the word on Air Mobility Command.

Question: Could you give us a status report on the Civil Reserve Air Fleet and what are their concerns? And how sensitive is participation in the CRAF to any alternation in the number of strategic tails that we will have in the future?

General Lichte: As you know, the Civil Air Reserve Fleet are partners of ours. As a matter of fact just next week I'll be going to a meeting to find out the answers to all your questions that you just asked me, but I till tell you that eh big part is the guaranteed business I think the Civil Reserve Air Fleet is interested in right now. Right now, obviously, there's a lot of business that's being generated as a result of what's going on. We're doing the tender express that we talked about. There's other, a lot of business that's being generated as a result of putting troops over to the field and bringing them back.

But the big concern that I've heard expressed is what about the guaranteed business of the future and how are we going to do that?

Now the other question you asked about is how do we balance that with the number of strategic tails that we own? And there will be another study that we're doing to take a look at the mobility requirements as well as capability, and that will all be balanced out.

But at this point I haven't heard any other concerns expressed by the carriers, but like I said, we're meeting in Tulsa, Okalahoma next seek and I might find out more.

Question: General Lichte, have you ever embedded any reporters on some of your flights so they can write a story about it?

General Lichte: I'm sure we have, but it's funny you ask that because I just talked to our public affairs officer yesterday, Lieutenant Colonel Borg, who I'm sure is out here too, and told him we need to do more of that. WE need to get them out and put them on the road with our crews. All they would have to do is fly around for a day with a crew like you've seen in here today and they would walk around and they would be out telling the word and telling their story.

I hope to be able to do that more frequently than maybe we've done it in the past. I know we put a lot of folks on tankers to go up and see a refueling, but what I'd like to do is to put them out in the theater and let them see our folks in action. Thanks for the idea.

Question: General Lichte, given the tremendous amount of work that you've got to do in the United States Air Force can you talk a little bit about the coalition effort to try to help this thing, particularly Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

General Lichte: If you're talking about the partner efforts, obviously there's a lot going on across our, with all our partners. In Afghanistan primarily NATO is helping out and they're doing a lot with C-130 contributions. There are contributions across the bigger picture for the Air Force with partnering with our neighbors and of course with the Brits and the Australians, Canadians, and on and on and on. We keep learning more and more about things. The Australians now have C-17s, the Canadians are getting some C-17s. We'll continue to do more lift missions working with them. That's just a few examples, but we are working very closely with all of our allies and that's obviously why the Chief invited all the Air Chiefs here. We work very very closely with all the air attaches here in Washington to try and find out where we can work together and what contributions each country can make to, quite frankly, share the load with what Air Mobility Command is doing out in theater.

Question: Let me follow up on the number of tails question for you. We've had, and I'm sure General Cross and others can tell you all the different airlift studies that we've had out there on requirement, so MRS, Guru, and all these other set of acronyms. Almost every requirement study says we need more lift. Every single one of them that I can think of that's come out yet we seem to be replacing their current tails with a small number of tails. I know we have plans in the out years, but what's your view on the real need from the operational perspective?

General Lichte: Mike, as you know this is a debate that goes on and has gone on for years. Different studies come out and you hear 66 million ton miles. You do another study and someone else says 66 million ton miles, in that range, whatever a million ton miles really is. It's hard to put your finger on it.

But the bottom line is, we always go with just enough. I don't care whether it's mobility platforms or fighters or bombers, we always come back because of budgetary issues and go well, let's just go with just enough.

So if you're always operating at the just enough level, any time you have a problem, a glitch, a difficulty with part of the fleet, it's going to have a big profound impact.

We as a nation have to figure out what we want to spend for defense. If we're comfortable with the amount that we're spending, then we're going to assume some risk. If you want to buy down that risk you have to put more money in the system.

You heard our Secretary and Chief talk about needing about \$20 billion more per year. I think the American people have to have a debate and discussion as to how much of our GDP, what percentage of GDP do we put in defense? Right now it's about the 3.9 percent level. When we were in Vietnam it was around nine percent. Even in the Reagan era we were about six percent. So now we're fighting really a war, we're a nation at war, and we're down to 3.9 percent. So the question is, is that enough.

When you go out and you talk to the people in the hometowns and you talk to the people around the nation, most of them will say no, we need to be putting more in there. But then when you get to the debate stage, they go okay, where are you going to get the money from? And where are you going to take it from?

I think we could afford to put a couple more percentage points in defense and then we would have to figure out where we would put that money, then the debate would go on. Do you need more fighters, more bombers? Do you need more airlifters? Or do you need things for the other service? That brings you to a whole discussion on who is watching the rest of the world? If the Air Force is tasked with watching the rest of the world because of our space and cyberspace capabilities, we probably need more money to get on with it.

Moderator: It's easy to see why the Air Force chose General Lichte to command Air Mobility Command. We've had a wonderful presentation this morning. Sir, thank you very much and on behalf of all of us at AFA and everyone in the symposium, we wish you well in the future.

[Applause].

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