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5	COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
6	U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
7	WASHINGTON, D.C.
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12	INTERVIEW OF: GENERAL AUSTIN SCOTT MILLER
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16	Monday, April 15, 2024
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18	Washington, D.C.
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21	The interview in the above matter was held in room 2255, Rayburn House Office
22	Building, commencing at 10:05 a.m.
23	Present: Representatives Waltz and Crow.

1	Appearances:
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5	For the COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS:
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11	SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
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1	For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE:
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6	OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL,
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9	For GENERAL AUSTIN SCOTT MILLER:
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1	This is a transcribed interview of retired U.S. Army four-star			
2	general and former Delta Force commander and final commander of NATO's Resolute			
3	Support Mission and U.S. Forces Afghanistan, General Austin Scott Miller. Chairman			
4	McCaul has requested this interview as part of the committee's investigation of the			
5	Afghanistan withdrawal.			
6	Would the witness please state his name for the record?			
7	General Miller. Austin Scott Miller.			
8	<u>.</u> Thank you.			
9	On behalf of the committee, I want to thank you for appearing here today to			
10	answer our questions. The chairman appreciates your voluntary appearance and			
11	participation in this important investigation.			
12	My name is on Chairman McCaul's			
13	staff on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and I'm leading the investigation into the			
14	Afghanistan withdrawal on behalf of the committee.			
15	I will now ask committee staff present from the majority and minority to introduce			
16	themselves as well.			
17	. I'm for the majority.			
18	for the majority.			
19	for the minority.			
20	<u>.</u> on			
21	the minority staff.			
22	. I'm on the minority side.			
23	. I would like to now go over the ground rules and guidelines that			
24	we will follow during today's interview.			
25	Our questioning will proceed in rounds. The majority will ask questions first for			

1	I hour, then the minority will have an opportunity to ask questions for an equal period of				
2	time if they choose. We will alternate back and forth until there are no more questions				
3	and the interview is over.				
4	Typically, we take a short break at the end of each hour, but if you would like to				
5	take a break apart from that, such as lunch, please just let us know and we will be happy				
6	to accommodate.				
7	As you can see, there is an official court reporter taking down everything we say to				
8	make a written record. So we ask that you give verbal responses to all questions.				
9	Does that make sense?				
10	General Miller. Yes.				
11	. So the court reporter can take down a clear record, we will do				
12	our best to limit the number of people directing questions at you during any given hour to				
13	just those people on the staff whose turn it is.				
14	General Miller, we ask that you please try and speak clearly so the court reporter				
15	can understand, everyone can hear you. It is important that we don't talk over one				
16	another or interrupt each other, and that goes for everybody present at today's				
17	interview.				
18	We ask that staff keep side conversations and interruptions to a minimum. It is				
19	Chairman McCaul's expectation that decorum be maintained throughout the duration of				
20	this interview.				
21	Witnesses who appear before the committee have the opportunity to freely				
22	consult with counsel if they choose.				
23	General Miller, you are not appearing here today with private counsel, correct?				
24	General Miller. That's correct.				
25	. It's my understanding that agency counsel from the Department				

1	of Defense is here on behalf of the agency today.			
2	General Miller, you understand that agency counsel represents the Department o			
3	Defense and not you personally, correct?			
4	General Miller. That's correct.			
5	Could the agency counsel and notetaker please identify			
6	yourselves and state your names for the record?			
7	. Department of Defense.			
8	. Department of Defense.			
9	_ Thank you.			
10	We want you to answer our questions in the most complete and truthful manner			
11	as possible, so please take your time. If you have any questions or if you do not			
12	understand one of our questions, please let us know. Our questions will cover a wide			
13	range of topics, so if your need clarification at any point, just say so.			
14	If you do not know the answer to a question or do not remember, it is best not to			
15	guess. Please give us your best recollection. If there are things you don't know or			
16	can't remember, just say so and please inform us who, to the best of your knowledge,			
17	might be able to provide a more complete answer to the question.			
18	General Miller. Okay.			
19	. General Miller, this interview is unclassified, so if a question			
20	calls for information that you know to be classified, please state that for the record, as			
21	well as the basis for the classification and the original classification authority. Hopefully			
22	agency counsel can be of assistance with that.			
23	If you are uncertain of the classification, please consult with agency counsel.			
24	We'd be happy to go off the record to afford you the opportunity to do so.			
25	In the interest of transparency and open access to the Federal Government, we			

1	ask thawt your asserted basis for classification adhere to the uniform system prescribed		
2	by Executive Order 13526. Once you've identified the requisite classification, please		
3	respond with as much unclassified information as possible. Does that make sense?		
4	General Miller. That makes sense.		
5	<u>.</u> Thank you.		
6	Similarly, if a question calls for information you know to be covered by executive		
7	privilege, please take that for the record. Pursuant to Congress' Article I powers in the		
8	U.S. Constitution, that privilege must be clearly asserted. Assertions of purported		
9	executive branch and/or interagency confidentiality interests, sensitivities, and/or		
10	considerations will not be recognized.		
11	General Miller. Okay.		
12	. You should also understand that although this interview is not		
13	under oath, you are required by law to answer questions from Congress truthfully. Do		
14	you understand that?		
15	General Miller. I understand that.		
16	<u>.</u> Thank you.		
17	This also applies to questions posed by congressional staff in an interview. Do		
18	you understand that?		
19	General Miller. I understand that.		
20	<u>.</u> Thank you.		
21	Witnesses that knowingly provide false testimony could be subject to criminal		
22	prosecution for perjury or for making false statements under 18 U.S.C. Section 1001.		
23	Is there any reason you are unable to provide truthful answers to today's		
24	questions?		
25	General Miller. There is no reason.		

1	. Thank you.
2	Finally, I'd like to make note that the content of what we discuss here today is
3	confidential, per Chairman McCaul's terms. We ask that you not speak about what we
4	discuss in this interview to any outside individuals to preserve the integrity of our
5	investigation until the transcript is publicly released.
6	General Miller. Okay.
7	. For the same reason, the marked exhibits that we'll use today
8	will remain with the court reporter so that they can go in the official transcript and any
9	copies of those exhibits will be returned to us when we wrap up.
10	That is the end of the majority's preamble. Is there anything that my colleagues
11	on the minority would like to add?
12	<u>.</u> Yes.
13	We note that, notwithstanding any agreement made between the majority, the
14	witness, and/or agency's counsel for this transcribed interview, there is no provision
15	governing or mandating confidentiality of investigations and/or transcribed interviews in
16	the House or committee's rules for the 118th Congress.
17	In addition, I'd like to identify for the record that
18	for the minority, will be attending, and also invite our three guests to please
19	identify themselves for the record.
20	<u>.</u> Sure. Mike
21	will be here in a moment.
22	<u>.</u>
23	<u>.</u> I'm
24	_ Thank you.
25	General Miller Can Lask a question?

1	So I think what I heard at the beginning is I have no expectation of confidentiality			
2	of this, what's discussed here today. Is that			
3	. It's not an expectation. We are noting for the record that there's			
4	no rules related to the House of Representatives or the House Foreign Affairs Committee			
5	related to confidentiality of transcribed interviews.			
6	General <u>Miller.</u> Okay.			
7	. And that's a great question. And per Chairman McCaul's			
8	terms, given that he's sort of set the procedures for this interview, it is his expectation			
9	that confidentiality be maintained irrespective of those rules until the transcript is			
10	publicly released.			
11	General <u>Miller.</u> Gotcha. Okay.			
12	. General Miller, before we begin the clock, it's my understanding			
13	that you have an opening statement that you'd like to read into the record, correct?			
14	General Miller. Well, yes.			
15	. Great. We will now give you an opportunity to do so before			
16	we with start our first hour of questioning.			
17	General <u>Miller.</u> Okay.			
18	And so everybody that's here, I've testified before and I'm very familiar with the			
19	5 minutes of an opening statement, and I did not I'm not going to provide a written			
20	statement.			
21	What I thought might be most useful to all of you is if I start putting some things in			
22	context. And context didn't happen on 14 April, it's context over a wider period of time.			
23	And my thinking is it will help drive questions around this if I talk to you about some of			
24	the things that occurred over time as we go forward.			
25	I think you all know also I probably, like many of you, I don't know if anybody was			

My final assignment in Afghanistan was almost 3 years. I served there previously, though. I was there in 2001 in the aftermath of 9/11 as a lieutenant colonel, really probably on the ground in Afghanistan -- and my dates might be a little bit off -- November 2001 till spring, probably the April-May timeframe of 2002.

At that time, a lot of my attention, I turn away from Afghanistan because now I'm starting to focus on Iraq, it starts becoming what I'm looking at. So I would not -- I'd pay attention to Afghanistan only as a secondary issue, but I was really focused on Iraq from 2003 to really 2007-2008.

In 2008, I went to the Joint Staff and Afghanistan -- I worked in the J3, and I was part of the team that started preparing for the -- what would become known as the Afghan surge under General Stan McChrystal, so I now start getting refocused on Afghanistan in a pretty big way.

I'd actually deployed to Afghanistan -- after the surge I deployed to Afghanistan in March of 2010 for about 16 months as the Combined Forces Special Operations

Commander for Afghanistan, so I have, again, becoming much more reacquainted with the challenges and the opportunities that Afghanistan presented to us. That was a 16-month tour.

I returned back to Washington, D.C., and actually worked at, if you recall the organization known as JIEDDO, which was a counter improvised explosive device

1	organization. I worked as the deputy director for about 11 months with that	because
2	the majority of our casualties were taking place in Afghanistan. I worked that	t particular
3	problem for about 11 months.	
4	I returned to Afghanistan 2013 as the Special Operations Joint Task For	ce

Commander, and that would be a 12-month tour. And I would return to the United States in 2014, where for once I wasn't kind of paying close attention to our current -- our then current conflicts.

In 2016 I went to the Joint Special Operations Command, and certainly

Afghanistan was in our countries of interest. And I visited Afghanistan from 2016 to

2018 as the JSOC Commander and with a primary focus on the Haqqanis and certainly

ISIS-K, which had emerged in the 2014 timeframe. But, again, I had a wider portfolio so

it wasn't completely focused on Afghanistan.

In the spring of 2018 I was -- I didn't know at the time I was being interviewed. I was interviewed for the job by Secretary Mattis. And subsequently I was chosen to be the successor to General Mick Nicholson, who was the commander of Resolute Support and U.S. Forces Afghanistan.

I went through the confirmation process I think in the May or June time. I think it might have been June timeframe and confirmed in July. And then I would deploy to Afghanistan in the August timeframe, late August timeframe, in the late August timeframe. And that would -- I would assume command of Resolute Support in September. And then I would return -- I would give up command in September 2018, and I'd give up command in July of 2021.

Kind of of note because it plays a role as I get into the commander tenure, certainly very involved in the King and Weeks hostage situation in Afghanistan. And they would still be in captivity when I assumed my duties as the Resolute Support

commander.

Caitlan Coleman a	so was of great interest.	She had been held for	multiple years,
along with her husband.	And we were there for th	nat where she ultimately	was released.

- This is just for everybody so you know this. I mean, I want you to know this. I purposely did not do any professional preparation for this. I didn't go to a murder board. I didn't contact anybody to help me prepare for this. And I want you to know that. And I haven't rehearsed nor coordinated any of my response.
- To the best of my knowledge, I really haven't looked at classified information since November 2021. I can remember the day, I was at Fort Liberty, then Fort Bragg. But I haven't dug into it, and that's purposely so. So I want everyone to know that.
- So what you're going to hear today is me reviewing my unclassified notes and just kind of going through this as we go forward. I do believe I can keep this unclassified.

 And if I think we are trending towards a classified question, we'll figure out how to pull that off to the side and get that question resolved.
- I really have not had any official communication with DOD. This is my first official communication, which happened at the end of last week with OGC. So I want you to know that, okay. I have not -- I have purposely stayed away. I have not been in the Pentagon since -- it's been several years, okay.
- So that doesn't denote any hostility or anything else. It is a personal choice as I retired from the military.
- There is a couple of key events, though, in the command tour. And I recognize this takes a little bit of time, but I think it's worthwhile just to kind of understand when you try to put this in context.
- First off, and this is -- don't be -- I'm not looking for sympathy. But I served almost 3 years, two different administrations, five either confirmed or acting Secretaries

of Defense during my command tenure, which is a lot, two CENTCOM commanders,
which I know you have at least talked to one of them because I watched the public
testimonies, two Chairmen, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, two Secretaries of State,
two Supreme Allied Commanders Europe, two DCIAs, five and in my level I had one
ambassador, which I know you have talked to at least one of them, John Bass.

I had two charge d'affaires in charge of the Kabul country team. I had three to four chiefs of station. I had a major rotation in Afghanistan every 6 to 9 months, meaning people were coming in and coming out, you can start seeing the continuity piece here.

On my personal staff, my key players, I had five chiefs of operation and four chiefs of intelligence.

So you can now start understanding what it might look like below, your kind of key people that are coming in, coming out. There's a lot of rotation in Afghanistan even in 3 years and even with a relatively small footprint if you compare it to previous years.

Just prior to my assumption of command, so it's late August, and Mick Nicholson is still in -- General Mick Nicholson is still in charge in Afghanistan -- there was a security event. And I want to say it was an ISIS-K attack. I can't actually recall it, but it was a big, high-profile attack in Kabul, and it created one of these -- which happened periodically -- a security crisis.

But as I'm trying to get the lay of the land of the security ministry, Ghani,

President Ghani, announces he is getting ready to relieve his National Security Adviser,

Atmar -- which I actually had a personal relationship with and was hoping that would

provide some form of continuity -- his Minister of Defense, and his Minister of Interior,

and actually his NDS chief. He wanted to just get rid of them all. And I was thinking

this is an auspicious way to start off as you're trying to -- now trying to figure out who

your reliable partners are as you go forward.

Subsequently he'd rescind the order on his Minister of Defense and his Minister of Interior to keep them in place. He'd move Atmar out and he would replace him with what would -- actually would represent some continuity in the Afghan context. Dr. Mohib, I think some of you know, was the previous -- he was the Afghan Ambassador to the United States, so he wasn't unknown to this -- certainly in Washington, D.C.

So that's really just to give you an idea of volatility in just the political sense, all right. That wasn't that uncommon to be kind of dealing with these things that look like crises.

And this is an analogy. If you kind of picture us rotating Cabinet officials very routinely, it doesn't happen. I mean, sometimes it happens, but it's a pretty unique event certainly from a U.S. standpoint.

The state of security when I arrived. In July there had been what was known as the first EID cease-fire. So it was a cease-fire and it was actually kind of interesting to me because, one, I was in the States when it happened, but there was a lot of euphoria surrounding it and a lot of people who claimed responsibility.

You know, President Ghani felt he was responsible for it. I could tell Resolute Support felt they were responsible for it. And the Taliban of course thought they were responsible for it.

But it was a --- at the time it was a very unique event. Now, subsequently you'd have EID cease-fires during my tenure as well and they became maybe less unique because it really is meant a respite for everybody during these different cease-fires. But it was the first I had heard of in Afghanistan at that point, about 17 years of our involvement in Afghanistan.

But the security was bad. We had ISIS-K very active. You had a lot of

high-profile attacks. And I don't have the numbers and I haven't looked at them, but I
was concerned enough about ISIS-K as the JSOC commander that I put together a cell that
would just go after countering them in Kabul because they not only had an active
presence in Kabul and they were attacking Shia targets, the Hazaras, Shia targets but
it was routine and it was high body counts in every case.

And every time you have one of these security events it just kind of topples, you know, it topples everybody's confidence. And, again, you start getting into a place where things are going to rotate.

But they were very active, multiple attacks. But really what was most concerning was the security forces, the Afghan Security Forces were getting chewed up.

And I don't recall the exact numbers. And some of you, if you followed the Afghan problem, we may remember that we'd catch a lot of heat from SIGAR and other media because we wouldn't report Afghan casualties because they asked us not to report them.

So they became a -- that number per month became a classified number, but it was classified more for morale of the Afghan people than it was for any kind of -- anything else. As you know, if we had U.S. casualties or multinational casualties we reported those immediately.

But I want to say they were somewhere in the 80 to 90 range in some cases, sometimes per day. And most of these casualties happened not in big attacks or high profile attacks, they were happening in security checkpoints around the country, which was not a problem new to my tenure there. It was something that had happened. The Afghans would build these checkpoints and then they would not properly provision them.

So I didn't think it was good. I was actually a little concerned that the security situation felt a little bit oppressive as we're heading into a parliamentarian election and

there was just a lot of concern around it. But that's what I arrived with.

I already talked about ISIS a bit. I think the takeaway for the group, though, is security and political are always linked. You could argue which one presented the higher risk and we can talk about that as we get down towards the end game. But they were always linked.

And what really would concern me -- and I can share more about that if you have questions about it -- if we had a reliable leadership in the security institutions, a bad security event could just kind of topple all of them where President Ghani would just make a sweeping gesture and they'd all be gone and now you're back with trying to figure out new people.

I did provide an initial assessment. And overall it was classified really because we're transferring it on a -- we were transferring it on a SIPR system. But I will highlight parts of this that weren't classified so you can understand what the state of play was from my perspective in September, early October 2018.

And I provided this to General Dunford, General Votel, and Secretary Mattis.

That's my -- obviously General Votel as CENTCOM commander is my chain of command, my direct chain of command, but he encouraged me to communicate with the Secretary of Defense so that he was aware of it. And you'd never leave the Chairman out. So the Chairman is included in on this thing.

I did a similar one for NATO, so NATO was getting an assessment as well. I had to pull some pieces out of here just because of the classifications. But I wanted them to generally have the same understanding of what we were seeing on the ground here.

This is from memory, okay, but it basically said that if we uncoupled from Afghan Corps, C-o-r-p-s, that's to kind of think the regular Afghan Security Forces, that they would be at risk. And that's about how far I went describing it. The definition of risk,

we can go into what that means, but I saw the NATO and the U.S. partnerships with the Afghan Corps.

It was really essential to holding the integrity of those corps. And you can argue whether there was integrity anyway when you looked at their numbers, who was on duty, who was off duty, who was AWOL, who had been dropped from the rolls. But I was -- I made sure -- I wanted to make sure everyone understood that.

I was a little bit more optimistic about the special operations forces, and I think you had heard that. But at the same time, I said, yes, but there is more cohesiveness and integrity, but at the same time you have a -- first of all, they were better with us and they weren't so solid that I was sure they could stand if they were completely uncoupled from U.S. or NATO support as we moved forward.

So I wanted to make sure that was pretty clear to people, because they were just very dependent on our advisers and always more effective with us. It gave them a direct link to our air assets and just kind of cleaned things up.

At the time the Afghan Air Force, which is really the force I was most -- least familiar with, and I did purposely talk about the police. The police were always a problematic force in Afghanistan, despite best intentions.

The Afghan Air Force was getting a lot of kudos when I came in, I was watching the reporting. So I wanted to dig in there and see what really was there.

Now, they had a capable and competent tactical air force, meaning they could fly missions, they could take off, they could land safely. In some cases they could deliver ordnance. In some cases they could do surveillance. But they were wholly dependent on our contracted logistics support, meaning without that the air force stops flying soon. Okay.

So I wanted to make sure people understood that and it wasn't just becoming this

good news story that didn't really have a lot of substance behind it.

And then, even as I looked at that, even in my report and, you know, not usually the territory of our military commander, but that four-star position in Afghanistan was very much inextricably linked with Afghan politics. I said the political risk was pretty high too, it's volatile, even as you just watch elections and stuff.

So that was a lot. I got that. But let me keep moving here through this.

So this assessment is made early. And as I mentioned, people change positions over time. I made sure that assessment was shared with them.

Certainly substantive feedback in the initial submission from General Votel and I want to say General Dunford. I don't recall if I got anything back from Secretary Mattis or not. Periodically he would provide feedback, and I don't -- I can't recall if he did or not for that.

About this time the U.S. envoy for peace and reconciliation -- and I believe Zal has been in and talked to -- Zal Khalilizad went in and talked to the committee previously -- he arrives in Kabul. I knew he was coming because I'd talked to Secretary Pompeo before I departed and he informed me that he had appointed an envoy.

And if you recall from the Afghan strategy, which I don't remember the exact month, but from 2017, it talked about working a political track as well, so you didn't just have a military track as you went forward. So Zal was the first guy that came in here.

This is in September. I went -- I traveled to Islamabad with him, and it was really kind of in search of that authoritative Taliban body that you could actually communicate with and try to start working for a political settlement.

Just so you do know, as part of my initial review I actually included in my review, or maybe a separate addendum, that I thought we could reduce troops to 8,600 at that time.

1	And I said that and at that time I had about a 15,000 authorization U.S. troops.
2	And of course a lot of people argued with me about that. But really what my thinking
3	on that was is I looked at the objectives we were assigned as our U.S. objectives and our
4	NATO objectives. Now, we also have a NATO, you know, this isn't just U.S. forces, that's
5	the only people in country. You have contractors, you have civilians, you have NATO
6	forces.
7	But I looked at it, I thought we could, one, protect adequately protect the force
8	at 8,600, and at the same time I felt we could work our different objectives.
9	Now, I was actually told, you know, okay, good, thank you for that input at this
10	point, but let's not broadcast that, and for obvious reasons, trying, one, sending mixed
11	messages as we went forward.
12	I say that because a lot of times actually in a previous appearance, it was not
13	this committee, it was with the Senate Armed Services Committee, they go, "What are
14	you saying anything differently than any other previous military commander?" That was
15	the mantra. And I said, "Well, I bet you I'm the first one that said they need less, not
16	more."
17	And so I only say that, 8,600, it was, I thought we had a sufficient footprint to do
18	the necessary partnering, protect the force, and where necessary provide military U.S.
19	military authorities to actions on the ground there.
20	And, quite frankly, I thought it reduced the risk. When you have more people
21	out there than you need sometimes your risk goes up there, where people are
22	just they're in Afghanistan, they're doing something, they're not really sure what
23	they're doing.
24	And now, no one wanted to be part of that downsizing. So you do know that's

why one of the other things, people didn't want to be told they had to go home. But I

viewed it more as capabilities and force protection.

In October 2018 we had a pretty big event. We were down in Kandahar and the provincial chief of police, Raziq, Abdul Raziq, was assassinated.

I was present on the ground, I actually had other people on the ground with me.

One of my team members killed the shooter, it was pretty close proximity, soon after he killed Raziq. But in that exchange of gunfire you had Raziq was killed, obviously the shooter, the Taliban infiltrator, like I said, in Kandahar. And you had the NDS chief was killed, the corps commander was wounded, and I want to say the provincial governor was wounded.

So you all of a sudden -- and we're right on the eve of parliamentarian elections and so you have a very big security void now that's taking place in Kandahar.

So you have this for context. Raziq is a very powerful influence. And I knew him personally and I'd spent time with him over the years and you can say friends in a different life, but certainly people that worked together on trying to solve the security problems of Afghanistan.

He comes with a mixed rep -- he came with a mixed reputation -- but he was effectively very anti-Taliban and anti-al-Qaeda and ISIS. But, again, you know there is a mixed reputation there.

But there was a security void at this point. Then the question is: How do you fill that? And there is a security and there is a political void. The provincial governor was a guy name Wesa. He's gone now at this point. And so now you have to start filling this void, and it was a bit of a challenge.

And I think most of you, if you were, again, if you were following it, the spinoff of the Raziq shooting, we were actually blamed for it. We were blamed in a misinformation campaign. There's lessons learned there.

But we suffered two green-on-blue events, one killing a U.S. servicemember in
Kabul a few weeks later, a major named Brent Taylor. He was killed in this
green-on-blue. And then we lost a coalition soldier, a Czech soldier out west, all
attributed to this misinformation campaign that assigned blame to the U.S. for the killing
of Raziq.

About then we're implementing what we called the operational design, and that's just restructuring our operations against ISIS and the Taliban with an idea of being let's, one, we have to work on ISIS because of their security threats to the overall stability of the country, but also trying to shore up the Afghan Security Forces and see if we can't get them through this tough fighting season.

This is really a concentrating of Afghan operations with our unique capabilities, which are our air assets, our observation. And we know it was effective because the Taliban told us and the Taliban wanted it to stop.

We had a change in the security ministries, not a surprise, actually it was a positive change. Ghani and Mohib listened to the idea that if they were going to be successful in the security space they actually had to have leaders of action and people that would actually go see their troops and drive their troops.

And we would get a -- the Minister of Defense, Asadullah Khalid, we'd actually get Amrullah Saleh for a period of time as the Minister of Interior. He spent about a month there, was quickly elevated into Ghani's political circle to become his Vice Presidential candidate going forward. He was replaced by Massoud Andarabi, who actually lives in northern Virginia nowadays.

Khalid and Andarabi were good. And what they were really most powerful at is they trusted the younger leaders of Afghanistan. It was really -- it was -- not completely, but it was a changing of the guard in terms of out with the old and in with new.

1	And you started seeing for the first time a lot of Western-educated young leaders
2	started to move into key positions within the security ministries, which is a challenge for
3	them because you still have this overarching culture.
4	All right. And I'm watching my time here, guys.
5	Spring of 2019 discussions begin in earnest in Doha, Qatar, and we're participating
6	in that. As a military advisory team, I've got people in those discussions.
7	But that's you know, this has been kind of this hunt for this authoritative Talibar
8	delegation which bounced between Islamabad, I want to say Abu Dhabi, and then
9	ultimately sits in Doha, Qatar.
10	I talked about the ops design. I was not while they were respectful in a kind of
11	cultural way of Afghanistan, I was not one of the Taliban's favorite people. I want you to
12	know that. One, because we were killing their leaders. And ultimately you'd hear this
13	term "fight and talk," because I don't like that because it sounds like it's overly simplistic.
14	But the military operations were as married up as we possibly could be with pressure on
15	the Taliban while we were trying to work towards an agreement.
16	What we were most concerned about as a military component of this agreement
17	is we didn't want to leave the Afghans, we didn't want to create a deal that left the
18	Afghans without support and allowed the Taliban to continue to attack without any
19	support from us.
20	And we were very, very concerned about that. Obviously there was the
21	agreements that manifested themselves towards U.S. and NATO forces, but we wanted to
22	also make sure the Afghans still were able to have support.
23	This thing is moving towards an agreement, and it's the summer of 2019 now, it's

moving towards a signing, probably late August. And in late August we lose a staff

sergeant, Barreto, from the 82nd Airborne Division, along with one of his Romanian -- his

24

1	teammate is a Romanian soldier. And they're killed in a suicide blast, Haqqani
2	responsible, in Kabul.
3	And at that point President Trump shuts down the negotiations and says no more,
4	no further talking to the Taliban, not with this going on.
5	The only thing I'll tell you, because I think it matters a little bit in this it will in the
6	future. Maybe it doesn't matter now, but in terms of the lessons learned. The Taliban
7	were on their back foot when that negotiation was canceled.
8	The Taliban political committee was held responsible to get a withdrawal
9	agreement from the U.S. But that put the Taliban on their back foot, and I say that from
10	personal observation.
11	You could tell it was just a different conversation and they really wanted to get
12	these on track. And certainly without political authorization we weren't our policy
13	guidance was pretty clear, policy guidance to the State Department, but I as an observer.
14	But I want you to know the Taliban were on their back foot then and they just
15	weren't sure what was going to happen at that point. But again, it was the death of
16	Sergeant Barreto and his Romanian.
17	Then soon thereafter the Taliban initiated a provincial assault against Kunduz and
18	it was beaten back. And, again, if you know the history of Afghanistan, beating back
19	a it was beaten back on day one. And it was beaten back because of the coordination
20	between us and the Afghan Security Forces. Certainly they get the lion's share of the
21	credit. But it was beaten back.
22	And I talked to them, I go, "What are you doing? I mean, what are we trying to
23	do? Are we actually trying to find something that reduces violence? Are we trying to
24	bump violence up or what?" But they were knocked back on that.
25	Then in November 2019 we dislodged a really large ISIS-K stronghold in the

1	Nangarhar/Kunar area. That was big, and it was, as I said at JSOC, I had experience of
2	watching how these things happened in Syria and Iraq. They hold, they hold, they hold,
3	and then it's a mass surrender. And we had a mass surrender and that's really kind of
4	the rural fight of ISIS-K, that's their name, where they all came from. That's certainly up
5	for some additional discussion.

We're going back and forth with the Taliban. At some point we get authorization to continue conversation with the Taliban.

And then, in January 2020, you'll recall Qasem Soleimani was killed in a strike in Baghdad. And what that kind of meant for us is -- I think I'm okay on classification here -- what it meant for us is I was actually more determined to get the Taliban to lower violence in any agreement because what I didn't want is I didn't want anybody meddling in the noise of violence and taking action against U.S. and NATO forces.

And so I just didn't want to allow space for another nation, Iran being one of them, to have the ability to influence actions against our servicemembers or our diplomatic facilities or anything else.

The agreement was signed in -- would be signed 29 February 2020. There was a corresponding ceremony in Kabul. Kabul wasn't very happy about it. So you know that they felt like this was not -- that was very clear, they weren't happy, and at the same time were in this awful Presidential standoff. If 2014 was bad, 2020 was a little bit worse -- a lot worse.

So all these events are kind of coming in, you're getting the political, you're getting the security, you're getting a signed agreement. They're all coming together.

And then you also get COVID. And if you remember what starts happening with COVID, COVID will naturally start separating us from our Afghan partners as you're trying to, one, instill a level of confidence that's there.

1	I'll tell you, I attended an inauguration ceremony for President Ghani. We
2	decided at the last minute to go to that inauguration ceremony. Down the street in
3	Sapedar Palace there was another inauguration ceremony for President Dr. Abdullah.
4	And at our inauguration ceremony we were attacked by ISIS-K, which is an
5	underreported event, a rocket salvo that actually it did it went underreported.
6	Because I was present, our envoy Zal Khalilizad was present, our charge d'affaires, a lot of
7	diplomatic personnel were there.
8	And fortunately it wasn't catastrophic. And I say fortunately because you
9	actually had about a thousand people and you bracketed the crowd, just missed the
10	crowd. That was ISIS-K.
11	The immediate signs after that the agreement was in trouble, there is a prisoner
12	exchange issue and there is also the Taliban did not reduce their violence. That was
13	kind of part of the agreement, that the violence would come down, there would be 80,
14	90 percent reduction in violence.
15	And what they did is they changed their violence, they went full in on the Afghan
16	checkpoints and trying to dump a body count up. And then, like I said, we had COVID at
17	the same time. So all this is playing in here.
18	So we will basically stay in this status. We went to 8,600 right after the
19	agreement, that number I gave you. That became, okay, we can go to 8,600. It was
20	actually advertised to the Taliban as well.
21	So we start downsizing the force. We'd get to that number in the summer of
22	2020. And then we immediately received orders to go to 4,500. So we had another
23	step down as we went forward.
24	So, as you know, as I'm looking at this as we're going forward, one of the things
25	we'd tell the Afghans every time there is a drawdown announcement I'd tell them,

1	because I had a decent relationship with them, I said, "Don't get worried until I tell you to
2	get worried." I said, "We can still do the things we need do with these different
3	footprints." But we are clearly on a downward trajectory.
4	The other thing that shows the agreement's in trouble: We get no intra-Afghan
5	talks. The Taliban refused to talk till they get every one of their prisoners released per
6	the Doha Agreement. And it wasn't a number, it was by name.
7	So they refused to talk. And the Afghan Government was not keen on releasing
8	these prisoners, nor were we in some cases.
9	But we ultimately would talk to President Ghani and he convened a loya jirga.
10	They gave authorization to release these prisoners. And there began what was called
11	intra-Afghan talks.
12	If trying to understand intra-Afghan talks, the Taliban would refer to the
13	Government of Afghanistan as the Kabul, Kabul regime, or the Kabul government.
14	Meaning that's really all you have authority over, you're not an authoritative body for
15	Afghanistan. So that was something they held all the way through.
16	And then, as those talks started, the Taliban conducted an offensive in Helmand
17	Province. We were in a pretty decent position, we hit them pretty hard. Second,
18	maybe third time I saw the Taliban on their heels and really confused, because once they
19	conducted that provincial assault that was enough of a red line that we were able to bring
20	a lot of resources to bear. But it was a I want to say it was October 2020.
21	As we go through '20 we get I hear rumors, okay, I didn't get any orders, that
22	we're going to zero. And then ultimately the order comes down, I want to say the
23	November-December timeframe, to go to 2,500 for troops, and that's by January. And
24	so we get to 2,500, maybe a little bit more as I looked at it, 2,500 troops by January 2021.

Why don't I stop there? What I would just tell you, if you're interested, I have

1	actually sat down and thought through some lessons that I think this committee would be
2	interested in as we go through the day that involve oversight and some other things, and
3	certainly at this point just the recommendations of a retired general officer who's still a
4	very concerned American citizen, okay.
5	So why don't I go over to you for questions and answers. Sorry for taking so
6	much time.
7	. Think you, sir. We appreciate that. That's incredibly
8	important context. And I think we're just going to go off the record quickly to fix the
9	clock and then we'll start with questioning with Representative Waltz.
10	General Miller. Okay.
11	Off the record.
12	[Discussion off the record.]
13	. Thank you, sir, for that. That was incredibly helpful and we
14	very much appreciate you taking the time to contemplate all of these important events.
15	_ The clock.
16	. We're not starting the clock yet. I'm just going to introduce
17	Representative Waltz. We have Representative Waltz with us as well. And we're going
18	to start the first hour of questioning.
19	Mr. Waltz. Thank you for coming.
20	I think, as we've discussed not only the lessons learned, but I think the veterans
21	that are out there that are hurting, our Afghan allies that are still hurting, it's important
22	for the senior leadership involved at the time you, General Milley, and others in
23	uniform it's important to get your thoughts on record.
24	So, again, thank you. I know it's not easy.
25	I just want to actually pick up right where you left off, in that critical transition

1 period. 2 Were you --- you had heard rumors of going to zero, but at the end of the day as 3 you led up to the inauguration you were at 2,500, with Bagram, plus contractors, plus 4 about 7,000 NATO, and still a substantial CIA-led, roughly, intelligence community 5 presence. Fair? Is that accurate? 6 General Miller. Right. 7 Mr. Waltz. And that was essentially the posture as President Trump transitioned 8 to President Biden. 9 General Miller. That's correct. Mr. Waltz. And that was in your -- and I remember you coming into Armed 10 11 Services -- closed door hearing saying we could support and sustain the Afghan National 12 Security Forces with that footprint, because we have the contractor for their aviation, we 13 had intelligence, right? We weren't out really pulling triggers except a really small 14 special operations component. The rest was really bolstering support for the Afghans out doing the fighting. 15 16 General Miller. Right. 17 Mr. Waltz. Could we have sustained that past the May 1 deadline? And then I 18 know I'm jumping forward, but -- well, let me stop there. 19 What was your engagement then with Secretary Blinken as he came on board, 20 Secretary Austin? The President ordered an interagency review at the end of January 21 of '21 of the Doha Agreement and the posture going forward. 22 General Miller. Right. 23 Mr. Waltz. Can you describe, I mean, in broader -- unfortunately, I have to leave 24 in about 20 minutes --

25

General Miller. I understand.

1	Mr. Waltz in broader terms, your engagement at the Cabinet level? And
2	then also when and how often did you talk to President Biden?
3	General Miller. Okay. Let me it's actually kind of interesting.
4	I had come back to the States in November, November 2020. I had COVID too.
5	So you can tell I'm in a really good state there.
6	So I had COVID. And that's when I heard that there could be an order that could
7	be coming down that takes us to zero. Interestingly enough, I was asked if I wanted to
8	come out. "We can find somebody to backfill you. Come out."
9	And I said, "No." I said, "I think we're going to likely have a pretty robust policy
10	review." And I looked around, I didn't see a lot of people that had a kind of long
11	experience in this. So I said, "Let me just stay there." And I'm sometimes wondering,
12	"Why didn't I get out right there in December 2020?"
13	So I said, "No." I said, "I think I can run this through." And that was a
14	conversation with then-Acting Secretary Chris Miller. And I said, "No, I got this." And
15	so went back and did that.
16	And, again, I thought there would be need for some of this service that we went
17	through.
18	Mr. <u>Waltz.</u> Sure.
19	General Miller. I'm a little bit different, I know, than a lot of my contemporaries.
20	I'm more of a smaller footprint, meaning, I can do things with small teams, that mass
21	doesn't solve every problem. There's times for mass and there's times for some
22	different capability.
23	And it's a matter of record, I mean, for everybody here, it's a matter of record my
24	recommendation was that we retain a footprint, but it was all based on the objectives.
25	mean, as a military commander it wasn't me just kind of feeling my way through

1 Afghanistan. It was the objectives that were laid out in the Afghan strategy. 2 principally it talked about counterterrorism and the threat of terrorism. 3 And so as I looked at that, the best way to achieve those objectives from my 4 military point of view was this: That you leave something here that keeps the Afghan 5 Security Forces in the fight, keeps the Afghan Air Force in the fight, and you move 6 forward. So that was my recommendation and it stayed consistent. 7 Mr. Waltz. To both administrations? To both Pentagon leaderships? 8 General Miller. Right. It never changed. And it was a -- and, again, I was --9 Mr. Waltz. Did you re-recommended -- I mean, did you basically regenerate that 10 recommendation --11 General Miller. That's correct. 12 Mr. Waltz. -- in writing --13 General Miller. I did. 14 Mr. Waltz. -- with the Biden administration? General Miller. Well, I did, and that goes up through my military chain of 15 16 command. So Frank McKenzie to our Secretary. General Milley's obviously aware of 17 my recommendation. And you saw that reflected at least in their --18 Mr. Waltz. In their --19 General Miller. -- publicly what they have said that they've recommended. 20 Different engagements. I didn't have -- as the administration came in -- and this 21 is where I don't think I'll be violating any executive privilege -- I participated in what was 22 probably just an opening for NSC. And I was invited in and actually took it from 23 Ramstein, because I recall where I was. And this was just really to get familiar with the 24 policy discussion that's going to start.

And then I participated in one Deputies Committee meeting when I was back in

1	Kabul. And then I didn't participate in any more. Okay. So, I mean, that's I wasn't
2	invited to any more. So I didn't.
3	So I didn't have conversations with Secretary Blinken, no personal conversations.
4	I had conversations with Secretary Austin. And then my on the first NSC a brief
5	conversation as people are just trying to identify the problem.
6	Mr. Waltz. With Mr. Sullivan any follow-on past that NSC?
7	General Miller. A little bit, but not
8	I'm going to jump in here.
9	General Miller. Okay.
10	. And this response might call for executive branch confidentiality.
11	General Miller. Okay.
12	. I'm not sure how the witness is going to respond.
13	General <u>Miller.</u> Okay.
14	So we can speak at a high level or we can take it back.
15	. I just want the record to be clear. Unless you want to actually
16	assert it, you'll have the opportunity to consult off the record, but we require an actual
17	assertion. Obviously you don't know his answer. So please feel free to consult
18	separately.
19	General <u>Miller.</u> Do you want to
20	. I'm not in a position to assert it because I don't know how the
21	witness is going to respond. But this is a response that might implicate executive branch
22	confidentiality.
23	I think we can consult and see how there is a way that you could respond with
24	your opinions or your assessments, but the content and composition of any NSC White

House meetings could very well implicate executive branch confidentiality.

1	General <u>Miller.</u> Okay. So on my side and, again, not my counsel but I'd like
2	to back off. Again, I'm really trying to paint a picture
3	Mr. Waltz. Can you freeze a response with a potential assertion?
4	. No. Not with a potential. I mean, we can go off the record.
5	So I think it might be best for us to just go off the record.
6	Mr. Waltz. That's okay. Well, it's all right. I'll let you guys do that just with
7	the follow-up.
8	In general as you're recommending, because there is this broader narrative that
9	either, if we left the 2,500 plus Bagram, that we would have to essentially, past May, that
10	we would have to surge forces in. Was there any discussion
11	General Miller. Can you ask you that again? I want to make sure I understand
12	Mr. Waltz. So there is a broader narrative that really it was not an option to
13	leave a small footprint plus Bagram past the May withdrawal. The Taliban would have
14	reinstituted violence and therefore we would have had to surge. So it was really a get
15	out or surge forces, there was this kind of binary choice, right?
16	And that's what I'm asking. In your general advice and your opinion, were there
17	any other options? For example, the Colombia model where you had a small footprint
18	not engaged in combat. We had special operators and a small footprint, as you know, in
19	Colombia for 4 years, really providing a backbone to the Colombian military.
20	Was there kind of any middle ground between "get everybody out" and "you have
21	to surge forces in" explored?
22	General Miller. You know, and this is my military assessment, I did not see a
23	need for I could not rule out a need for a surge down the road to protect forces. But
24	at the same time, I didn't necessarily think it was the most likely.

And what that was, just for everybody, I know that will drive some questions, that

1	was just based on a military assessment.
2	I have been in Afghanistan before when the Taliban had declared war on U.S.
3	forces and they'd attack us, and it would look like rocket attacks, it would look like suicide
4	attacks, similar to the one that took Sergeant Barreto's life in August of 2019. And those
5	happened and we dealt with them, okay. It wasn't foolproof.
6	But I was I felt that we could adequately protect with our contracted security
7	and other pieces and parts. And actually, as we drew the force down there, I didn't I
8	wouldn't allow something to be so high risk for it to survive. I wouldn't leave an outpost
9	out there that I thought was so high risk that we could not provide direct support to it if
10	attacked.
11	Mr. <u>Waltz.</u> Right.
12	General Miller. So I didn't see I didn't necessarily see the sequel was a surge of
13	U.S. forces if we stayed. I thought that could be a branch, though. So just different
14	way to look at it.
15	Mr. Waltz. Okay. Just in terms and I understand your timeline, you weren't
16	there for the actual evacuation, all of those pieces, but kind of in the lead-up in the
17	thinking.
18	Were you aware that General McKenzie has testified, and some of the other
19	transcribed interviews, that the State Department believed they could operate the
20	embassy and kind of continue to operate post-full military withdrawal.
21	Were you aware of that, that that was essentially that their thinking, and do you
22	agree with it?
23	General Miller. I saw the security situation security and political risk a little bit

differently. And I wasn't shy about sharing that opinion.

Mr. Waltz. Who did you share it with? Because you didn't talk directly with

24

1	Secretary Blinken.
2	General Miller. No, I
3	Mr. Waltz. It was mainly with Ambassador
4	General Miller. I shared it with the charge.
5	Mr. <u>Waltz.</u> Okay.
6	General Miller. I told him my opinion on that. I shared it with my chain of
7	command obviously. And it wasn't just a feeling or anything else, it was you're watching
8	the circumstances.
9	And, again, it's the understanding that the military in Afghanistan, because we
10	were there so long, was different than really any other relationship, you know, any other
11	mil-state relationship we have anywhere else in the world because we were so heavily
12	involved in that.
13	And I thought when we were talking about policy not getting into policy. I did
14	not think it would be tenable and I would have liked to have seen everything come out
15	with us.
16	Mr. Waltz. They have also testified and I don't want to eat too much of our
17	time they have also testified that they believed when we shut down Bagram you should
18	have brought everything out.
19	In fact, General McKenzie testified that in his discussions with the Trump
20	administration that when President Trump was talking about go down to zero, he meant
21	civilians, our allies, our intelligence personnel, all of them.
22	General Miller. Yeah.
23	Mr. Waltz. But that definition of go to zero changed with the transition of just
24	military, leave the civilians, and they could continue to process the SIVs.
25	General <u>Miller.</u> Right.

1	Mr. Waltz. Right? And kind of live under a Taliban rule potentially since
2	everyone was predicting the Afghan army would fall.
3	So you were "everybody out," you were in that camp.
4	General Miller. Yeah. So for every so everybody knows and understands the
5	military planning, we actually executed the military plan, and actually we got some
6	criticism of how we left Bagram. But I'm prepared to talk about that. I actually think
7	we left it smartly.
8	But initially as the guidance came down, you know, we were building a plan to
9	take you know, a lot of things were going to come out, not just U.S. Embassy, but other
10	diplomatic facility.
11	Bagram was the last out. I mean, that was in our plan. It was the last out to
12	include me. I mean, where I pick up one day from Kabul, fly up to Bagram, and as the
13	rangers roll up the air field I get on the airplane and leave. That was military planning as
14	we went forward.
15	And then it does change. It changes as the guidance changes. And then you
16	get the I listened to General Milley and McKenzie's, but this is just what happened,
17	because I helped design this. As you then have an embassy requirement in Kabul, now
18	you have to give it provide it with an embassy security force.
19	And some of the capabilities at DOD or the U.S. military are such that you're not
20	going to find that in the contract world. So now you've become now you have a
21	military piece.
22	I think that you all know I handed over to General Frank McKenzie in July as a
23	transfer of command, but I had Rear Admiral Pete Vasely came in as a
24	Mr. Waltz. So you were given that cap of 600 troops, right?
25	General Miller I don't recall an eyact can, and I think it was requirement hased

1 But it wasn't zero. 2 Mr. Waltz. Right. And you could not run Bagram with 600, I mean, just to 3 operate. 4 General Miller. No, you couldn't. 5 Mr. Waltz. You had to shut it down. 6 General Miller. You had to make a choice on where you were going to operate 7 from. 8 Mr. Waltz. And this is the last question. What signal -- because I think there are a lot of Afghans that I would talk to and 9 10 others around the press, they had heard this go to zero before, right? 11 But what signal have you sent -- I mean, there's a lot of people, and I just want to 12 know your thoughts, that when Bagram went down and you, the four-star, left with it, 13 that that was a very clear signal that this was real and this was not conditions based, that

it was military -- the American military was leaving, period.

1 [11:03 a.m.] 2 General Miller. You know, the Afghans didn't believe we were going to go to 3 zero. 4 Mr. Waltz. Okay. 5 General Miller. They just didn't. It was one of those things, going, "There's no way." And any time we had any kind of conversation, to include leading up to the policy 6 7 decision that was announced, they were going, "You're not really leaving, are you?" 8 They just believed that this was -- you know, from some of them, it had been a 9 good majority of their life that we had been in their life, and they didn't believe we were 10 going to leave. 11 So, yeah, as I left, that was --12 Mr. Waltz. Was that your recommendation to leave at that time? 13 General Miller. It was time to leave. 14 Mr. Waltz. Well, not you --General Miller. Yeah. 15 16 Mr. Waltz. -- but the four-star position? 17 General Miller. Well, that's why it was transferred to General McKenzie. 18 Mr. Waltz. Okay. 19 General Miller. So it wasn't transferred to a two-star. 20 Mr. Waltz. Okay. 21 General Miller. It was transferred to a four-star so that you -- and we sat down 22 and talked to the Afghan Government. 23 But as you go through all these things, you have to understand confidence of the 24 Afghan Government kind of goes like this. 25 Mr. Waltz. Yeah.

1	General Miller. And so as we went through you heard what I talked about
2	here as we kind of went through some oscillations over the course of my 3 years. And
3	there were more. But what I could do, is, like I said, I'd made the statement to them, I
4	said, "Don't worry until I tell you to worry."
5	And I didn't tell them to worry when I left. You know, I really kind of gave them
6	advice on what I thought how they should posture to protect their political and security
7	forces.
8	Mr. Waltz. I promise, last one.
9	_ That's fine.
10	Mr. Waltz. Were you aware of the dissent cable that several a couple of dozer
11	Kabul-based diplomats sent through State channels basically predicting the fall?
12	General Miller. I think I heard about I think I was home
13	Mr. Waltz. General McKenzie testified he was not aware of that.
14	General Miller. I heard about it because it came out in media, and I tried to get a
15	copy. I never got a copy of it. I mean, I actually tried I wanted to see what was said,
16	but I never saw the cable.
17	Mr. <u>Waltz.</u> Thank you.
18	General Miller. Someday when it's in the Archives, I'll take a look at the cable,
19	but I still can't
20	Mr. Waltz. It was pretty prescient.
21	General Miller get a look at it.
22	Mr. Waltz. It was very prescient.
23	Thank you, General. I'm sorry I can't stay longer, but I'll make sure we're
24	General Miller. No, I understand.
25	Mr. <u>Waltz.</u> All right.

1	General Miller. See you, sir.		
2	Mr. <u>Waltz.</u> All right.		
3	_ Thank you, sir.		
4	With thanks to Representative Waltz for his helpful questioning.		
5	EXAMINATION		
6	BY ::		
7	Q Before proceeding, we just want to sort of set some terms for the record in		
8	the interest of clarity, at least with respect to the majority's reference to these terms.		
9	When referencing the term "withdrawal," the majority is referencing the		
10	U.S. military retrograde, i.e., the Go-to-Zero order which was officially announced by		
11	President Biden on April 14th, 2021. This includes related planning, military exercises,		
12	and decisionmaking processes by the Department of Defense and related agencies.		
13	Does that make sense?		
14	A Yes.		
15	Q Thank you.		
16	Second, when referencing the term "evacuation" or "emergency evacuation," the		
17	majority is referencing the evacuation of U.S. citizens and nationals, civilian personnel,		
18	and designated persons in August 2021, resulting in the noncombatant evacuation		
19	operation initiated by the State Department on August 16th, 2021.		
20	This includes related planning, military exercises, and decisionmaking processes b		
21	the Department of Defense and related agencies.		
22	Does that make sense?		
23	A Okay.		
24	Q Thank you.		
25	General, anologies if some of this is redundant		

Just for clarity of the record, how many years have you -- did you serve in the 1 2 U.S. military? 3 38 years and 7 months. So almost four decades? 4 Q 5 Α And I know the days too, okay? It's on your DD214. That's the only reason I know. Okay. 6 7 And how many years in combat? Q 8 Α You know, someone said it's probably -- in combat zones, I probably served 9 about 10 years in combat zones. 10 O Thank you. 11 Α Cumulatively. 12 Q And I would ask for you to give us a brief overview of your illustrious military career, but I think we covered that in your opening statement. 13 14 General, what decorations and honors have you received for your honorable service to the United States? If you'll indulge some of it. 15 16 The things that are important to me are the Combat Infantryman Badge and two awards. Got a couple Purple Hearts. I got a Silver Star from operations in 1993. 17 18 And then certainly distinguished service medals and that which tend to go with the job as 19 you progress through the military. 20 Q Thank you for that. 21 And I know you provided us the timeline. Am I correct, just for clarity of the 22 record, that you assumed the role of commander of NATO's Resolute Support Mission and U.S. Forces Afghanistan in October 2018? Is that correct. 23 24 September 2018. Α

25

Q

September.

1	Α	Yeah.			
2	Q	Thank y	ou.		
3	Α	And I w	ant to say it was the 2nd, but it could've it was pro	bably the 2	2nd or
4	maybe the	1st.			
5	Q	Okay.	Thank you for that.		
6	An	d what ord	ders did you receive upon assumption?		
7	Α	You kno	ow, the orders were, one, is you as I was looking at	t you lool	< at
8	the NATO	and you lo	ook at the U.S. strategy, and my guidance from Gene	ral Votel ar	ıd
9	General Sc	aparrotti a	at the time who was SACEUR, were consistent with t	hose docur	nents,
10	those guid	ing docum	nents.		
11	Q	Thank y	ou.		
12	An	d what did	I you understand as your mission in Afghanistan?		
13	Α	Well, fir	rst and foremost, it's safeguard for us, it was safeg	uard the	
14	United Sta	tes of Ame	erica against any foreign terrorist organizations. Th	nere were	
15	multiple te	errorist org	ganizations that operated in the region, but think AQ	and ISIS-K	as the
16	two princi	pals.			
17	An	d then of c	course you have a you know, you have your and	then suppo	ort the
18	diplomatio	efforts to	find a political track to end the war in Afghanistan.		
19	Q	Thank y	ou.		
20	An	d upon ass	suming the role, did you provide any initial assessme	nts to milit	ary
21	leaders?				
22	Α	Yeah.	The assessment that I referenced. Just it's pretty s	standard.	When
23	you want t	o do this,	it forces you to actually get out and take a deep look	at the ent	irety
24	of the forn	nations.	Sometimes you're meeting them for the first time.		

So, again, like I said, I think I gave myself about 60 days to do that assessment, and

1	I think it came in a little under 60 days.		
2	Q And just for clarity, to whom did you provide those assessments to?		
3	A To my military chain of command and then the NATO chain my military		
4	chain of command being General Votel, CENTCOM, with General Dunford in the loop, and		
5	then Secretary Mattis. And on the NATO side, it would've been General Scaparrotti and		
6	SECGEN Stoltenberg.		
7	Q Thank you.		
8	You spoke about this, I can't imagine this is an easy event to relive, but within		
9	weeks so around, is it September of 2018, but within weeks of becoming commander,		
10	you were in a room at the governor's southern Kandahar compound when a Taliban		
11	gunman shot the provincial police chief, correct?		
12	A Yeah. Actually, it was not in a room. It actually moved to the HLZ. And		
13	so we were waiting helicopters when the insider attack took place.		
14	Q And you testified that multiple individuals, members of the Afghan Security		
15	Forces were killed, including Mr. Raziq?		
16	A That's correct.		
17	Q It's our understanding that then-U.S. Defense Secretary Mattis stated that he		
18	had met Mr. Raziq previously and called his death, quote, "the loss of a patriot."		
19	Are you aware of the statement?		
20	A I actually am not aware of that statement.		
21	Q And it's our understanding that you similarly offered praise, stating, "Today I		
22	lost a great friend, LTG Raziq. We had served together for many years. Afghanistan		
23	lost a patriot. My condolences to the people of Afghanistan."		
24	A Yeah, I did make that statement. That was an official statement as		
25	commander, Resolute Support.		

1	Q	Thank you.
2	And	was it your assessment that Afghan Security Forces weren't fighting for their
3	country?	
4	Α	Say that one more time.
5	Q	Was it your assessment at that time that Afghan Security Forces were not
6	fighting for	their country?
7	Α	No, I wouldn't say that. Some of them were more effective than others
8	obviously.	
9	Q	Was it ever your assessment prior to President Biden's Go-to-Zero order that
10	the Afghan	Security Forces didn't fight for their country?
11	А	I'm trying to think of you know, the Afghan Security Forces were a
12	troubled fo	orce and it was they were ripped apart by country politics. But the
13	largely ce	ertainly the special operations organizations, they were focused on supporting
14	and defend	ling Afghanistan.
15	Q	Thank you, sir.
16	And	the Afghan Security Forces were taking heavy casualties, correct?
17	Α	They were.
18	Q	What was your assessment at the time of the Afghan Security Forces'
19	sustainabil	ity without U.S. forces?
20	А	It went back to my original assessment that I made early on, and I felt that
21	was still va	lid as we progressed through the almost 3 years of service.
22	The	ere are just some key enablers that without them, like I said with the air force, it
23	your air fo	ce can't fly, you don't have an air force. If you can't do I mean, it'd be
24	similar to U	J.S. capability. If you actually don't maintain it, it's not going to fly, and you

don't have an air force.

1	So there are some things that I thought were actual critical pathways minimal		
2	critical pathways to keep them functioning.		
3	Q Thank you.		
4	And you had testified previously in your opening statement that the contractor		
5	support provided, with the presence of U.S. forces and NATO forces, were essential?		
6	A Yes, they were.		
7	Q And without it, that the Afghan Security Forces would not be able to sustain		
8	themselves, correct?		
9	A That's correct.		
10	Q What was the troop size upon your assumption of the role? Again, I		
11	believe you said		
12	A I think 15,000. And, again, it's an authorization, and it's really how many		
13	U.S. servicemembers. Again, NATO's got a presence around that and contractors. But		
14	we were capped at 15,000 U.S. servicemembers if I'm remembering correctly.		
15	Q Thank you, sir.		
16	And you were the last commander in Afghanistan, correct, the last U.S.		
17	commander?		
18	A You had in Afghanistan obviously Admiral Vasely was on the ground after		
19	myself, and Chris Donahue would come in as part of the evacuation effort.		
20	Q Correct.		
21	And when you concluded your tour as commander of U.S. forces, that was under		
22	the Biden administration, correct?		
23	A That's correct.		
24	Q And what was the troop size upon your departure?		
25	A The troop size was the Embassy security force. So you had whether that		

1	number was 600, 620, it was a small contingent that was there to support and enable the		
2	security of the U.S. Embassy and other coalition embassies.		
3	Q And if you'll indulge us, I believe Representative Waltz asked this question.		
4	But prior to your departure, what was your assessment of how many troops would be		
5	necessary to sustain the Afghan forces?		
6	A Consistent with my recommendation, the 2,500, and it's may have been a		
7	little higher than that. And it was consistent because what it did, it allowed you to		
8	control certain areas without putting the forces at too much risk so you keep this comes		
9	down to keeping airfields. And if I recall and I could there could be one other		
10	location but at a minimum, I think we wanted to have a presence in Kabul and a		
11	presence in Bagram with that troop size. And there may have been one other base, but		
12	I don't recall it right now.		
13	Q And you had provided this number to the prior administration, so the Trump		
14	administration, as well as the Biden administration, correct?		
15	A To the through the military chain of command.		
16	Q And in December 2020, how many troops were on the ground in		
17	Afghanistan?		
18	A I want say we were getting down towards the directed number of 2,500. I		
19	don't have an exact figure. So we're moving to the 2,500 number based on the guidance		
20	that came out probably end of November, beginning of December.		
21	Q And upon your departure, it was around the 600 figure?		
22	A That's correct. And not under my command at that point, now under a		
23	separate command.		
24	Q Okay. Upon your departure, you made a promise I'd like to read in the		
25	record, or statement.		

1	"The people of Afghanistan will be in my heart and on my mind for the rest of my		
2	life."		
3	Would you mind sharing with us what you meant by this?		
4	A Yeah. I mean, just I mean, I think everybody here can kind of tell, that		
5	this isn't something I enjoy sitting down here and rehashing over and over. And I		
6	really so I didn't have a big change-of-command speech, but I knew I did not think I		
7	did not foresee a good future for Afghanistan as I was departing.		
8	I knew a lot of these people. They were friends, certainly acquaintances. And		
9	true to form, they're not just on my heart and my mind, they're still in my life in terms of,		
10	one, the Afghans that have come here. And then certainly Afghans abroad are still I'm		
11	still in touch with.		
12	Q Thank you for sharing that.		
13	A Yeah.		
14	Q I'm going to list the names of a number of individuals and ask some		
15	questions about them. These are, we believe, State Department leaders, as well as		
16	military leaders who were involved in Afghanistan policy, including withdrawal efforts and		
17	evacuation.		
18	Start with former Secretary of State Pompeo. He was serving as the Secretary of		
19	State for a portion of your tour as commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan, correct?		
20	A That's correct.		
21	Q Do you recall what those dates were?		
22	A He was there in the summer of '18 when I arrived, and then he left at the		
23	end of the administration. So he left at the conclusion of the Trump administration.		
24	Q Thank you.		
25	And can you please speak to Secretary Pompeo's relationship with the		

1	U.S. military?
2	A I actually knew Secretary Pompeo when he was serving as the Director of
3	CIA, not even though he was at West Point the same time I was, there was no
4	relationship at West Point. So I met him really in his professional life as the Director of
5	CIA. He was very active. We talked a lot.
6	Q Would it be fair to characterize his engagement as extensive?
7	A Yes.
8	Q Did you find that engagement between the State Department and the
9	military to be helpful or even necessary for the U.S. mission in Afghanistan?
10	A Yeah. Secretary Pompeo, we talked a lot, as well as Gina Haspel, as
11	Director of the CIA, and the Chairman and others, to try to and the Secretary of
12	Defense trying to understand the problems that were available. It was helpful.
13	Q And can you please speak to Secretary Pompeo's role in planning for a
14	potential withdrawal from Afghanistan?
15	A You know, he was apprised every time he knew what the what potential
16	numbers were or downsizing. He was apprised of that and he was I think he was
17	tracking what was happening.
18	Q Thank you.
19	We'll now speak to Under Secretary John Bass who at the time period we're
20	speaking to, when he was the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan. This is for a portion of
21	your tour as commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan.
22	A That's correct.
23	Q Do you recall what those dates were?

Yeah. He was there September 2018 when I arrived. I actually knew him

before because I came in as the JSOC commander, so I'd meet with the chief of mission.

24

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1	And then he would depart in early January '20, either right before the Soleimani		
2	operation or right after the Soleimani operation.		
3	John's a pro. I mean, this committee's seen him. He's an absolute pro and a		
4	brilliant diplomat too.		
5	Q And we've interviewed him as well.		
6	And he was the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan under the Trump administration,		
7	correct?		
8	A That's correct.		
9	Q And can you speak to Under Secretary Bass' relationship with the military?		
10	A You know, I thought we had a solid relationship.		
11	And here's something, again, as we looked at it, because I actually talk about this		
12	so excuse me. I talk to different groups from time to time.		
13	When you talk about State and you talk about or country teams and military		
14	relationships, the military, I mean, President Ghani was more would be more likely to		
15	call the military commander than he would the ambassador.		
16	And what really our role and what I saw my personal role was, was don't let		
17	daylight develop between the two of us and that always put the Ambassador in the right		
18	seat in the meetings, and make sure we very much keep the chief of mission, U.S.		
19	relationship in the proper protocol as we relate to other countries.		
20	And it was the same with Ross Wilson. I mean, you do the same for him. It		
21	was, make sure he was in the right seat.		
22	So the chief of mission is the President's representative out front. I'm not.		
23	Q And just so I'm correct in understanding this, Under Secretary Bass had ther		
24	a good relationship with the military. You coordinated.		
25	A He did.		

1	Q	You spoke often.
2	А	Yeah.
3	Q	And how was Under Secretary Bass' relationship with the Afghan
4	Governmer	nt?
5	Α	He had a hard job. He usually brought the Afghan Government bad news in
6	terms of po	licy. But my sense was there was respect for Ambassador Bass' or Under
7	Secretary B	ass', one, his persona, not just as the symbolic leader of our diplomatic effort
8	there, but I	think as a person as well. He had a good, strong relationship.
9	Q	And was that the same regarding his relationship with the Afghan
10	Security Fo	rces?
11	Α	They liked him. We kept everybody together. That was a pretty good
12	team effort	and wanted to make sure that the Afghan Security Forces, much like the
13	Afghan lead	lership, didn't see daylight between our diplomatic team and our military
14	team.	
15	Q	That's helpful. Thank you.
16	And	what was Under Secretary Bass' role in planning for the military withdrawal?
17	Α	Well, he was planning in terms of he would've been aware of the
18	drawdown	to 8,600. But he was gone before we actually executed any of it. We'd
19	share milita	ry plans with his team all the time because we move our posture, it
20	potentially	adjusts the State Department's posture as well.
21	Q	And do you believe Under Secretary Bass took your assessments regarding
22	Afghanistar	n seriously?
23	А	I do.
24	Q	Thank you.
25	Now	we'll transition to Secretary of State Blinken. He was serving as Secretary of

1	State for a portion of your tour as commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan, correct?
2	A That's correct.
3	Q Do you recall what those dates were?
4	A I'm not sure what date he was confirmed as Secretary of State. I think it
5	was early in the administration. And he obviously is still the Secretary of State, so
6	through the end of my command tour.
7	Q Thank you.
8	And can you speak to Secretary Blinken's relationship with the military, including
9	yourself?
10	A I can't speak to it in terms of his relationship with the Chairman and the
11	Secretary of Defense. There's obviously a relationship, but I'm not privy to it.
12	And I did not I've had a previous relationship with Secretary Blinken. During
13	this, the course of this, I did not. He and I did not speak.
14	Q Thank you.
15	And of course when we're speaking to the timeline, it's during your time as
16	commander of U.S. forces?
17	A That's correct, right.
18	Q And did he engage extensively with the military, including yourself, regarding
19	the Afghanistan withdrawal?
20	A Yeah, not in my wheelhouse. It's at the that would be at a different level.
21	So not at my level. Assuming at the, you know, again, at the Secretary level.
22	Q But you did engage with Secretary Pompeo when he was the Secretary,
23	correct?
24	A That's correct.
25	Q Do you find that limited engagement between State Department leadership

ı	and yoursell to be an impediment to planning?		
2	Α	I don't know that I'd go as far as saying impediment, because a Cabinet	
3	official is goi	ng to have their choice how they're going to work their engagements. And	
4	don't know	what the sensitivities were from the defense side with somebody reaching	
5	into the mili	tary hierarchy.	
6	In the	e previous administration, it was really nobody had a problem with these	
7	phone calls.	So I don't know what was going on behind the scenes.	
8	Q	That's helpful. Thank you.	
9	Α	But at the end of the day, more communication, particularly on something	
10	that's fast-m	noving and complex, is always better. Information generally makes the	
11	right inform	ation creates knowledge, and it certainly makes for a better understanding.	
12	Q	Certainly.	
13	And	what was Secretary Blinken's relationship with the Afghan Government?	
14	А	I mean, obviously he had one. I don't know. I want to say that it probably	
15	was at the P	resident Ghani level. I don't recall a very effective Foreign Minister in so	
16	I'm going to	see that there's a you know, opine that there was a relationship at the	
17	President Gl	nani level and probably from previous administrations as well.	
18	Q	Can you speak to Secretary Blinken's role in the Doha Agreement and	
19	specifically t	his interagency process that ensued in January?	
20	А	I can't.	
21	Q	Did he ever seek your assessment on the Taliban's compliance with the	
22	agreement?		
23	А	Not directly.	
24	Q	Can you speak to Secretary Blinken's role in the Afghanistan withdrawal writ	

large?

1	Α	No.
2	Q	Do you recall how involved he was on Afghanistan issues?
3	А	Again, I didn't sit the different interagency meetings so I'm in assumption
4	involved, b	ut I can't put any context behind it.
5	Q	Fair enough. Thank you.
6	Nov	w move to Ambassador Ross Wilson. He was serving as the chief of mission to
7	Embassy Kabul for a portion of your tour as commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan.	
8	А	That's correct.
9	Q	Do you recall what those dates were?
10	А	He was present at the inauguration, and I want to say he was present on 29
11	February.	So I don't recall the exact date that he came in to assume the role as
12	charge d'at	faires.
13	Q	Thank you.
14	And can you please speak to Ambassador Wilson's relationship with the	
15	U.S. military?	
16	А	It was fine. I mean, we tried we felt that it was incumbent upon us to
17	bring him o	over and bring him up to speed. Something new probably from his previous
18	tours wher	e the four-star is not the person that has so much authority in a country. And
19	so we wan	ted to make sure he felt comfortable in that relationship, that we weren't
20	usurping his authority.	
21	Q	And is it your understanding that Ambassador Wilson had limited experience
22	with the U	S. military prior to this post?

come up to step with everything we were doing. And I would take him -- I would try to

bring him out to different things and let him see different parts of the campaign, whether

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24

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Α

1	it's down Helmand province or Bagram, just to make him comfortable.		
2	And we had representatives over in the embassy as well.		
3	Q That's helpful. Thank you.		
4	What was Ambassador Wilson's relationship with the Afghan Government?		
5	A He had a good relationship with President Ghani, And it was you know,		
6	again, as I watched him, he again, as the chief of mission or charge d'affaires, you're not		
7	bringing good news a lot of times to the Presidential meetings. And he would bring it,		
8	and he would sit down and deliver it very deliberately, and oftentimes we did those		
9	together.		
10	Q And how about Ambassador Wilson's relationship with the Afghan Security		
11	Forces?		
12	A Really I worked to introduce him to the Afghan Security Force as much as		
13	possible.		
14	Q Did they have a good relationship?		
15	A You know, not a negative relationship in any sense. It's really just trying to		
16	build a familiarity with them.		
17	What I would try and point out to him is these are people you ought to listen to		
18	and even in my absence, for instance, I didn't have a problem if he wanted to meet with		
19	the Minister of Defense. If you want to sit down and have him for dinner, do that,		
20	because I thought you could learn a lot about just life in Afghanistan and what the		
21	prospects are.		
22	Q Did the Afghan Security Forces trust Ambassador Wilson?		
23	A They did not distrust him. I mean, it was more and probably in some		
24	cases really just not aware. But no distrust.		
25	Q Did Ambassador Wilson ever seek your assessment on the Taliban's		

1 compliance with the Doha Agreement? 2 I think we both agreed that there was lack of compliance with the Doha Α 3 Nobody was a fan of the Taliban, and certainly he and I spoke about that, Agreement. 4 the problems that we were seeing. He was also present during the ISIS-K attack at the inauguration. 5 Do you believe Ambassador Wilson took your security assessments 6 Q 7 regarding Afghanistan seriously? 8 Α I do. I think he listened to them. 9 Q And what was his position on maintaining Embassy Kabul open following the 10 Go-to-Zero order? 11 Α I don't know. Obviously he got direction from higher to maintain an 12 embassy presence there, so he's intent on executing that. Likely a position a little bit 13 different than mine, that this is -- we're not prepared for a security or a political failure of 14 the government. 15 So maybe a little bit different position to mine, that, yeah, we can get by here 16 even if the worst comes through. So probably different from mine. I would say I 17 probably saw it a little bit more on fire than maybe he did. 18 That's helpful. Thank you. Q 19 I'll now transition to Mr. Brian McKeon. He was serving as the State Department 20 Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources for a portion of your tour as 21 commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan, correct? 22 Α That's correct. 23 Q Do you recall what those dates were? 24 I don't. I had no interaction with him. Α 25 Q No engagement?

1	Α	No. I know of him because I know he worked in DOD previously, but
2	Q	Can you please speak to DMR McKeon's relationship with the military writ
3	large?	
4	А	No. I mean, I assume positive, but I don't know it.
5	Q	So at no point were you able to share your assessments regarding
6	Afghanistar	with him directly, correct?
7	А	May I ask a question?
8	Q	Yes, certainly.
9	[Dis	cussion off the record.]
10	Gen	eral Miller. He was I believe he was present and aware of the military
11	planning to	withdraw from Afghanistan.
12		BY :
13	Q	Including military exercises?
14	А	Yes.
15	Q	Thank you.
16	А	And then we'll try to stop going further there.
17	Q	Certainly.
18	Can	you speak to the White House and the National Security Council's role in the
19	2021 Afgha	nistan withdrawal? Were they involved at any point?
20	А	I can't. I'm actually not I don't know. I mean, obviously I know as wha
21	comes dow	n to me, but I don't have any direct knowledge of that.
22	Q	And, again, if we have issues of executive privilege, we just need to state
23	that for the	record, and we are happy to go off
24	А	I feel like I'm probably stepping into it in some cases.
25	But	to your last question, I don't know. Again, I just wasn't involved in the

1 deliberations enough to really understand it. So I'm getting things out second-, 2 third-hand of what's to our front, primarily through my chain of command. 3 That's helpful. Thank you. Q 4 And you had noted when asked maintaining Embassy Kabul's presence in 5 Afghanistan following the Go-to-Zero order, you had stated that Ambassador Wilson received orders from higher up. Was it your understanding --6 7 Well, let me correct that. I'm assuming that was -- you know, I don't know Α 8 if that was his recommendation or what it was. But I'm assuming it was driven down 9 that, yes, we will maintain a presence in Kabul. And I don't know if, again, recommendation up or top-down direction. That's a question for somebody else. 10 11 Q That's helpful. Thank you. 12 Was it your understanding that Secretary Blinken was setting the policy regarding Afghanistan during that period, or was it coming from somewhere else? 13 14 Α I don't know. 15 Q And I imagine I know the answer to this question, but were you also 16 engaging with foreign military counterparts in this period? 17 Α Yes. 18 And with whom specifically? Q 19 Α We talked to -- now, which timeframe, the entire 3 years or this --20 Q 2021. 21 Α Obviously Pakistan, Bajwa and his ISI chief, I have forgotten his name. You 22 had certainly all the NATO countries. You know, I had made trips to the North Atlantic 23 Council and visited the NAC, talked to the diplomats there, talked to the military 24 committee, and certainly all my commanders on the ground there, and the Afghans as

25

well.

1	Q	And did this also apply to the period prior to 2021	
2	Α	Yes.	
3	Q	so 2020 and 2021?	
4	Α	Yeah, I had a pretty wide if somebody contributed forces to the effort, I	
5	made a mad	e a point of talking to their leadership and telling and offering to update	
6	them on wh	at the situation looked like from our standpoint.	
7	Q	Thank you.	
8	Gene	eral Miller, I know you touched upon this briefly in your opening statement,	
9	but could yo	u please describe how negotiations with the Taliban and accordingly the	
10	Doha Agreer	ment began?	
11	Α	Yeah. Well, they began as Ambassador Khalilzad comes in. His first	
12	objective is j	ust trying to find an authoritative group of Taliban. There are a lot of	
13	groups of Ta	liban that thought they you know, said they speak for people. And I	
14	believe befo	re that, there were people reaching out to different Taliban. I mean,	
15	literally some in Brussels. I mean, it was just pretty convoluted.		
16	So hi	s quest was finding a group that he thought spoke for the Taliban leadership,	
17	so if you get to an agreement, that this is something that actually has some authority		
18	behind it.		
19	But that's how it began. And so that really takes us from the fall, through		
20	Islamabad to Abu Dhabi, ultimately to Doha. And it's a circuit, trying to put this group		
21	together.		
22	Q	Thank you.	
23	And	what was your perspective on engaging with the Taliban as a negotiating	
24	partner?		
25	А	You know, it's one, it was a little surreal, and I think everybody from the	

1	military that came into this initially, it was just surreal, because you're getting an		
2	opportunity to talk to your adversaries, which just doesn't normally happen.		
3	But that only goes so far, and then you get down to the point of, okay, this is my		
4	adversary. But you're, one, trying to glean.		
5	There's always that challenge and I'd tell all the military reps that I'd put in		
6	there, "I'd go, initially, you're going to be like, oh, my God." And I said, "What you need		
7	to get down is to a level of let's have a real serious conversation here because there has		
8	to be some hard-nose pieces there."		
9	And I didn't I haven't seen or heard, I didn't listen to the testimony of		
10	Ambassador Khalilzad. It's frustrating. I mean, the Taliban are a frustrating negotiating		
11	partner. You know, personally, I learned a lot. I think there was probably some		
12	assumptions made. You know, people walk into it that because you don't fully		
13	understand what you're dealing with, that you learn as you go.		
14	But it was a frustrating group, and they were they're true to form, what you're		
15	seeing post the withdrawal.		
16	Q That leads me		
17	A A lot of promises but not a didn't keep a lot of the promises as it related to		
18	what Afghanistan would look like in a post-President Ghani government.		
19	Q That leads me to my next question. What was your assessment of the		
20	Taliban's intentions at the time?		
21	A I think they were looking for a takeover. You know, they were trying to		
22	figure out how to Afghanistan, the government could be reformed but under		
23	their vision of it, not under President Ghani's vision of it.		
24	They, generally speaking, wouldn't mention President Ghani. And as I said, they		

never acknowledged the Government of Afghanistan.
It was always the "Kabul regime"

1	or the "Kabul government," it was repeated over and over. I mean, they're disciplined	
2	from that standpoint.	
3	But it was a you know, even when we got to intra-Afghan talks, they rejected	
4	government representation. And people could come as individuals. They couldn't	
5	come as President Ghani's personal representative.	
6	And you can imagine, President Ghani is trying to exert control over this as well.	
7	So it was a bit challenging.	
8	Q And your assessment of their intentions, did that stay true throughout	
9	2021	
10	A Yeah. In '21 I assessed they were going for a takeover, just by their action:	
11	on the ground. And primarily I'm looking at the violence in the districts as they were	
12	working to influence. My assessment was they were going to try to take over.	
13	Q And I believe you touched upon this in your opening statement as well as	
14	questioning with Representative Waltz, but was there an instance, or were there	
15	instances, when then-President Trump wanted to issue a Go-to-Zero order in Afghanista	
16	in 2020?	
17	A In 2020, again, not direct to me, but we heard a again, November '20, and	
18	then I want to say an instance in '18 as well.	
19	Q And did President Trump subsequently walk these efforts back, so no	
20	Go-to-Zero order was issued?	
21	A Well, the orders were, yeah, walked back or rescinded, so I did not move th	
22	force to zero.	
23	Q And what did you and others in the U.S. military warn the Trump	
24	administration would happen if the U.S. rapidly went to zero in Afghanistan?	
25	A Let me speak for myself and not with others in the U.S. military.	

1	My view was that going to zero things would go very bad very fast. And of		
2	course, define that, not prepared for a political or a security collapse while we're still		
3	present, just wouldn't be prepared. And going back not "you" know "I" know.		
4	Going back to the strategic documents, my view was that the best way to fulfill		
5	the objectives as outlined in the documents was with forces on the ground to safeguard		
6	the U.S United States of America, as well as U.S. interests in other parts of the world,		
7	as it related to a counterterrorism threat. That's my view. That was my view.		
8	Q Do you believe that President Trump eventually heeded the warnings from		
9	the U.S. military regarding Go-to-Zero?		
10	A Yeah, I can't answer that.		
11	Q You had previously testified that troops were not drawn to zero in December		
12	2020, correct?		
13	A They were not. Ultimately we'd reduce, but we wouldn't go to zero.		
14	Q Thank you.		
15	And in December 2020, was the Afghan military still standing at that time?		
16	A They were still standing.		
17	Q How about the Afghan Government?		
18	A Still standing.		
19	Q And you previously testified that you believe 2,500 to be the number		
20	necessary to continue supporting the Afghan military, correct?		
21	A Yeah. Now I've gone back and reviewed my testimony, so as I look at it, it's		
22	probably between 25- and 3,000.		
23	As I explained to people, what you have to do when you look at this is you have		
24	to if you go with this, you have to make sure you have the right capabilities for what th		
25	threats are that you're facing. So it may be a little bit of this and maybe some		

adjustments to it.

- 2 But that was my assessment. And as I said, from a sequel standpoint, I thought
- 3 that would hold, but you always have to be prepared for a branch that you may have to
- 4 surge forces in if there was some emergency that you couldn't handle with that force
- 5 level and with the combined force of NATO there as well.
- 6 Q And with that, the number that you provided, this would also mean that
- 7 Germany -- U.S. ally forces such as Germany and the U.K. would've stayed with us,
- 8 correct?
- 9 A They would've.
- 10 Q Can you speak to the all-in, all-out approach by our allies -- I'm not sure if I'm
- using the proper terminology -- but that they came with us, they stay with us, and they
- 12 leave with us?
- 13 A Yeah, in together, out together. You know, stay together. The idea being
- is that you're going to be welded wing as you move the forces up and down there.
- But in practical military terms, without a U.S. presence you don't have the ability
- to maintain -- the other nations might want to be there, but they don't have the ability to
- maintain a force. They were also very dependent on certain capabilities we brought to
- 18 bear.
- 19 Q So we knew that if the U.S. went to zero, our allies would also go to zero?
- 20 A Some of them said they weren't going to do that. But my assessment was,
- 21 just purely from a military standpoint, if we left, the NATO allies would go out with us.
- Now, with the exception of Turkiye, and I want to say Turkiye stay and play and
- they had a different perception out there. They controlled HKIA, and that was kind of
- their writ. They provided some support in Kabul. But everybody else I knew was
- coming out with us.

1	Q	Thank you.
2	General Miller, based on the timeline you provided us, you served as the	
3	commande	r of U.S. Forces during the Trump administration as well as for a portion of the
4	Biden admi	nistration, correct?
5	Α	That's correct.
6	Q	And upon taking office in January of 2021, did the new administration
7	communica	te to you a change in policy toward Afghanistan and the Taliban?
8	Α	No.
9	Q	Did they communicate a change in approach toward Afghanistan and the
10	Taliban?	
11	Α	No, not in the military standpoint. And whether what political guidance
12	came down	through the negotiating channel, a little bit different, but not to me.
13	Q	And did they communicate a change in approach regarding the Doha
14	Agreement	?
15	Α	No.
16	Q	What did Secretary Austin communicate to you upon taking upon
17	assuming h	is position?
18	Α	I don't recall. And I want to say that it was really probably getting my
19	assessment and estimate of the situation is which I always would owe somebody as	
20	they came into position, providing them an estimate of the situation. And there may	
21	have been some guidance.	
22	Wha	at I believe is that he was onboarding the information. I don't remember any
23	direct guidance at that point.	
24	And	I actually don't remember when he assumed the office, because I think there

was a gap there from -- I think he was an early confirmation, but I don't remember when

ı	he actually became the Secretary of Defense.		
2	He came out and visited during COVID and I don't remember the exact		
3	month and we sat down and talked.		
4	Q That's a helpful clarification. Thank you.		
5	What did Secretary Blinken communicate to you upon assuming his position?		
6	A We didn't talk. We didn't have communication.		
7	Q Did any member of State Department leadership from the new		
8	administration communicate anything to you?		
9	A Not to my recollection. I mean, I was still connected with the career		
10	employees, so Ambassador Phee and obviously Ambassador Khalilzad. So that		
11	connection didn't break. But as new came in, I don't remember any substantive		
12	comments or communications.		
13	Q Thank you. That's helpful.		
14	And can you please speak to how the potential military withdrawal from		
15	Afghanistan was approached by the Biden administration upon taking office?		
16	General Miller. I was going to ask if we could take a break.		
17	<u>.</u> Oh.		
18	General Miller. Are you guys ready for a break?		
19	<u>.</u> Of course.		
20	General Miller. I actually am ready for a break.		
21	You want to finish the questions? I just don't know where		
22	. Let's go off the record for a moment.		
23	[Discussion off the record.]		
24	. We can go back on the record.		
25	Can you please speak to how the potential military withdrawal from Afghanistan		

1	was approached by the Biden administration upon taking office?		
2	General Miller. Again, how I would just describe it as initial assessment and ther		
3	interagency interagency, which I also said I didn't participate in, but an interagency		
4	process that concluded with a decision.		
5	. And do you recall who from the administration was involved in		
6	addressing the potential military withdrawal during this transition period?		
7	General Miller. Secretary of Defense and Chairman is what I would assume.		
8	. Okay. We can cut our time short and take a break now if that		
9	works.		
10	General Miller. Okay.		
11	. Off the record.		
12	[Recess.]		
13	. We'll go ahead back on the record.		
14	EXAMINATION		
15	BY :		
16	Q We'll be asking questions on behalf of the minority.		
17	A Okay.		
18	Q Thank you very much for your service and voluntarily appearing here today.		
19	Before we dig into questions, we'd like to frame a couple terminology definitions		
20	for you from our perspective as related to the withdrawal and the evacuation.		
21	So as to the withdrawal, we understand this to describe the retrograde of U.S.		
22	troops, equipment, and personnel from Afghanistan.		
23	As such, the U.S. military the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel was initiated		
24	in the February 2020 Doha deal, involved partial troop drawdowns prior to 2021, and wa		
25	completed by August 31st, 2021, to include the withdrawal of both U.S. military and		

1	diplomatic personnel.	
2	Do you take any issue with this definition?	
3	A No.	
4	Q And it is our understanding that U.S. troops and equipment are primarily the	
5	domain of DOD and military leadership. Is that correct?	
6	A That's correct.	
7	Q Great. And then as to the evacuation, we understand this to describe the	
8	removal of American citizens and their eligible family members, lawful permanent	
9	residents and their eligible family members, SIVs and their eligible family members, and	
10	certain other Afghan allies.	
11	As such, this encompassed the civilian-led Operation Allies Refuge that began in	
12	July 2021 and the subsequent military NEO that occurred from August 16th to 31st, 2021	
13	Is that correct?	
14	A What do you say started in July '21?	
15	Q It began in July 2021 with the civilian-led Operation Allies Refuge.	
16	A Okay. So I don't I'm not aware of those dates.	
17	Q Okay. Fair enough.	
18	Do you agree that the NEO occurred from August 16th to 31st 2021?	
19	A Yes.	
20	Q Thank you.	
21	We have a couple of quick questions for you about your role in Afghanistan when	
22	you became commander.	
23	When you came into that role, what did you understand your job responsibilities	
24	to be generally?	
25	A Again, going back to what I answered previously, my guiding documents	

1	were the U.SAfghan-Pakistan strategy, parts of which were classified, but parts that are		
2	open press, and then or unclassified and then my guidance. I had a separate		
3	document which largely mirrored the U.S. strategy, but kind of took into the took into		
4	account the NATO caveats.		
5	And as I mentioned, principally it was safeguard the United States of America.		
6	That may not be the exact terminology in the document. I'm sure we could google it		
7	and find out what the exact terminology is. But protect it against terrorist threats.		
8	You know, the Afghan the survivability of the Afghan Security Forces may have		
9	been one of the objectives, but you could also argue that it was a way as opposed to a		
10	way and parts of the means as opposed to a standing objective. So I used those		
11	documents. And then, again, support the political efforts.		
12	Q And did you agree with these priorities set forth for you?		
13	A I didn't have a problem with the strategic documents. I actually thought		
14	they were pretty straightforward.		
15	Q Okay. So they were clear and articulate		
16	A That's correct.		
17	Q in terms of your goals? Okay.		
18	. All right. Thank you.		
19	BY ::		
20	Q So I know you covered some of this in your opening remarks, and I apologize		
21	in advance if I retread		
22	A That's okay.		
23	Q any answers that you think you've already started to cover. I just want to		
24	make sure that we get a clear record and a comprehensive understanding of your		
25	testimony.		

1	So thank you again for being here voluntarily and for the testimony that you		
2	already provided to frame up today's interview.		
3	I want to dig into the Doha deal as it was being negotiated		
4	А	Okay.	
5	Q	in that period prior to February 2020 when it was signed.	
6	Let's	back up a little further. We have a New York Times article that we want to	
7	give you fro	m December sorry, let me back up.	
8	Let's	start with this. This will be minority exhibit 1.	
9		[Miller Minority Exhibit No. 1.	
10		was marked for identification.]	
11		BY :	
12	Q	So this is I'll give you a minute to	
13	Α	This is going to be more than a minute.	
14	Q	I can tell you specifically what I'm going to call your attention to.	
15	Α	Okay. Go ahead.	
16	Q	You can see from the beginning, from the first page of this exhibit, it's a	
17	letter from	the U.S. Department of State, dated February 10th, 2023, to the chairman of	
18	this commit	tee. And it basically lays out that the pages that follow are unclassified	
19	opening ren	narks delivered at the State Department's June 15th, 2022, classified briefing	
20	on Afghanis	tan to the committee.	
21	Α	Okay. And just so you do know, I'm actually I have seen things previously	
22	just briefly.	I haven't studied them.	
23	Q	Great. I was going to ask you, so	
24	А	But I haven't I didn't study them in detail.	
25	Q	Okay. So then let me call your attention to page 5 of this statement.	

1	A And that would be with John Bass?		
2	Q That would be the portion of Ambassador John Bass' remarks.		
3	A Okay.		
4	Q And he says, beginning in the second full paragraph it's the third paragraph		
5	on the page it says, quote, "December 2018 marked a sudden shift into the phase which		
6	carried through the end of my tenure as ambassador and beyond. I call this space 'fight,		
7	talk and prepare to leave.' It was marked by President Trump's insistence that we		
8	prepare to rapidly reduce our military footprint; slash the cost of U.S. Government		
9	activities inside Afghanistan; and potentially suspend operations at our embassy, despite		
10	meaningful progress toward a settlement. Force reductions, potentially to zero, did not		
11	depend on progress toward a political settlement. If I had to select one word to		
12	characterize this period, it would be: 'uncertainty.'"		
13	Does his description seem reasonable to you for the situation you experienced		
14	upon taking up your post in Kabul at the time?		
15	A I think I can do this without violating executive privilege.		
16	So I don't want to overstate access to any Commander in Chief. Getting smaller		
17	was a priority was definitely a priority, though, okay, and that didn't drive my 8,600		
18	comments. But I stayed purely in the military and did not go to domestic. I took my		
19	guidance from the military side.		
20	And I obviously have a great deal of respect for John Bass. So I agree with		
21	"uncertainty," but I don't know that it was what was it? He said, "fight, talk, and		
22	prepare to leave." That would not be my quotation. Okay.		
23	Q What would your characterization have been?		
24	A Certainly fight and talk, and the uncertainty of which direction we were		

going to go was fair.

1	Q	Okay. So you did experience this, some sort of uncertainty
2	А	Of course. I think every commander experiences it at some point in their
3	tenure.	
4	Q	And to what did you attribute it at that time?
5	Α	It's trying to understand what is happening domestically. And it takes some
6	discipline.	You listen to it, but you take your guidance from the military channels.
7	Q	Okay. Around the same time, in December 2018, this article appeared in
8	The New Yo	rk Times that I'll make minority exhibit No. 2.
9		[Miller Minority Exhibit No. 2.
10		was marked for identification.]
11	Gen	eral Miller. Yeah, I think I may I alluded to this previously
12		<u>.</u> Okay.
13	Gen	eral Miller that there was and I think I answered in the question. But
14	what it was	, was in order to reduce force but never but we ultimately
15	rescinded -	reduce the force to zero but
16		BY :
17	Q	Okay. Let's go over the exhibit.
18	Α	Okay. I remember Mujib and Neff, T.J. Neff too, by the way.
19	Q	So this is from December 20th, 2018. It's an article by Thomas
20	Gibbons-Ne	ff and Mujib Mashal. The headline reads, "U.S. to Withdraw About 7,000
21	Troops Fron	n Afghanistan, Officials Say." This is from The New York Times.
22	Doe	s that comport with what you're seeing?
23	А	Yes, it is.
24	Q	And the first paragraph reads, "The Trump administration has ordered the
25	military to s	tart withdrawing roughly 7,000 troops from Afghanistan in the coming

- 1 months, two defense officials said Thursday, an abrupt shift in the 17-year-old war there,
- 2 and the decision stunned Afghan officials, who said they had not been briefed on the
- 3 plans."
- 4 So let's go back to December 2018. I believe you testified previously that there
- 5 were about 15,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan when you first arrived.
- 6 A Right.
- 7 Q Do you recall this drawdown of 7,000 troops shortly after you arrived or this
- 8 order to draw down?
- 9 A No, it was -- no. I remember I was woken up and said, you need to be
- prepared to leave in the middle of the night. But that was a plan that, as we looked at
- it, my response back was, it's not going to happen, it's not feasible. And it wasn't a -- I
- wasn't disobeying an order. I just said I can't do it. It's too hard to do.
- 13 Q Okay. Were you aware of the intent to withdraw about 7,000 troops
- before that order was made to you? Did you have any --
- 15 A No.
- 16 Q Okay. So you became aware how?
- 17 A Military chain of command. I had a phone call with Joe Votel.
- 18 Q Is it usual that the commanding general would be informed ahead of time
- 19 before an announcement of a major troop withdrawal?
- 20 A Well, I don't believe there was ever an announcement of a major troop
- 21 withdrawal. And I think that I was -- and I'm looking at the date here, 20 December. I
- 22 think this is Mujib and Thomas Gibbons-Neff have heard something that has happened
- afterwards. So in terms of, would I be informed ahead, I believe the military chain was
- 24 probably ahead of this.
- 25 Q You testified just a few minutes ago that you were awakened in the middle

1	of the night.		
2		Α	That's correct. Joe Votel is my boss from CENTCOM who called me up to
3	pass on that.		
4		Q	Is it usual that you would get a call in the middle of the night telling you
5		Α	Much too usual to get woken up in the middle of the night, and it's never
6	anything good, okay, so		
7		Q	Do you recall General Mattis' reaction to this order to withdraw 7,000
8	troops	?	
9		Α	You had he actually it's right around the time Secretary Mattis resigns.
10	And if I recall, it was, you know, it was in his statement and I don't recall his		
11	statement I believe he referenced the desire to withdraw troops from Iraq and Syria.		
12	And he talked about his desire to maintain the right partnerships with allies, that type of		
13	thing.	So I	do, I definitely recall it.
14		Q	So was it your sense that General Mattis was dismayed by this order to
15	reduce	?	
16		Α	You'd have to talk to Secretary Mattis on that one.
17		Q	Okay.
18		Α	I don't want to try to figure out his emotions in that time.
19		Q	But you understood it as occurring prior to his decision to resign?
20		Α	I believe so.
21		Q	Were you aware if the Afghans were aware of this order to draw down 7,000
22	troops	befo	re it was announced?
23		Α	I actually spent time with the Afghans in the because I had some concerns

that regardless of whether the order -- how the order came or whether it was determined

we were going to go forward, that I immediately went over and spoke with the Afghans to

24

1	make sure if they hear something, again, don't panic, you don't panic until I because		
2	they get pa	nicked, they do some they take some unhelpful actions. And what I want	
3	to do is I wa	anted to calm them down. So I spent time with the Afghans.	
4	Q	But to clarify, you went to the Afghans to talk to them and calm them down	
5	after the de	ecision had already been taken as far as you were aware?	
6	Α	Well, it ultimately became a nondecision, but	
7	Q	Correct. But at that time when you spoke to the Afghans, you understood	
8	it to be a di	rective?	
9	Α	Yes. But I didn't know that it was going to be a I didn't understand that it	
10	was going t	to I didn't know that it would be a directive that could be carried out.	
11	But	more so what I'm doing at this at that point was I was making sure the	
12	Afghans dic	dn't start hearing something in the information space before its time. I	
13	wanted to	make sure that they came to me for facts and they could take speculation from	
14	the informa	ation space.	
15	Q	Were you concerned that had this proceeded, had this directive proceeded,	
16	it would ha	ve been destabilizing on the Afghans?	
17	Α	I think any shift in the troops was always without proper	
18	preparation	n certainly left them in an uncomfortable position.	
19	Q	And did you understand this directive to be the result of any policy process	
20	or delibera	tions within the interagency?	
21	Α	I'm going to assume there were some deliberations that I didn't participate	
22	in, but I act	ually took it as a military order. Again, my take from the military.	
23	Q	From the Commander in Chief?	
24	Α	No, from General Votel to me. So I'm not involved so you got Votel and	

above, and so my call was from Joe Votel.

1	Q	Okay. But based on your understanding
2	Α	I couldn't speak of any process that took place that, you know
3	Q	You simply received the directive?
4	А	Yeah.
5	Q	And acted accordingly?
6	А	Yeah. Began planning.
7	Q	So just to be clear, the article refers to the Trump administration ordering
8	the military	So your testimony is that you heard of this through General Votel, your
9	military cha	in of command?
10	А	Yes.
11	Q	But do you have any reason to dispute that he derived that order
12	Α	No.
13	Q	from the Commander in Chief? No reason
14	Α	No.
15	Q	to believe that?
16		<u>.</u> Okay.
17		BY :
18	Q	You mentioned that you had to calm down panic from the Afghans. What
19	impact ho	w did this impact your relationship with the Afghans?
20	А	Personally, I think I have had a really good relationship with the Afghans,
21	and it was a	trusted relationship, and it was trusted from the terms of I'd tell them the
22	good and th	e bad.
23	Q	And so when they would read The New York Times, like many other people,
24	how did tha	t impact their trust in you?
25	А	Well, John Bass and I were deliberate in engagement with the President and

1	his close advisers.	As I mentioned, I had a very positive	relationship with his security
2	leadership and actu	ually deeper than just his leadership.	And what they knew is I was

- Q And was there panic when people read that article within your own -- the troops that you were commanding that were in Afghanistan?
- A No, there's no panic. I mean, but there's obviously a heavy -- a heavy-duty
 planning lift if you're trying to actually do a quick footprint or force adjustment. But I
 wouldn't call it panic. I'd call it late nights of planning.
- 9 Q Okay. Because typically in order to reduce at that point almost by half 10 would have required a lot of planning?
- 11 A Of course, yeah.

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12 Q Weeks of planning?

going to tell it to them straight.

- A It could -- it could -- it depends. I mean, you can do anything -- you can do anything fast, but things will tend to fall off the, you know, the fall off -- you have to leave some things behind. You have to triage what you're going to do as you move forward there. But certainly being more deliberate and having some time and be able to anticipate is a better place.
- Q And at that moment, when the story was out, you had not done planning for that?
 - A You know, I don't know the date -- I'd have to go back and review my dates. I think by the time they got a hold of this, it was already passed, that it wasn't -- and then as I'm looking at this, it's 20 December. You have to look at what time the Army-Navy game is that year, because I had stayed up late and watched the Army-Navy game. And then I got woken up and I was already off cycle.
- 25 So I want to say by the time the 20th came around, I think they were catching

- snippets of something and not from -- and I don't think from Afghanistan, but maybe
- 2 around the Beltway.
- 3 I think it's already passed by the time this story comes out. But, yes, I'm trying to
- 4 prepare Ghani and the security leadership not to take rash actions resulting from
- 5 reporting.

```
1
       [12:11 p.m.]
 2
                           And if you'll indulge me, one more article we want to introduce into
 3
       the record. This will be minority exhibit 3. And we'll refer to this at various points
       throughout our questioning today.
 4
 5
                                        [Miller Minority Exhibit No. 3.
                                        was marked for identification.]
 6
 7
               General Miller. Okay.
                                        Yeah.
 8
                       So just to read this into the record for clarity, this exhibit says
 9
        Washington Post at the top. The headline is, "He spent years at war in Afghanistan.
        Now he commands the U.S. withdrawal." This is an article by Dan Lamothe, published
10
11
       June 7th, 2021. Does that --
12
               General Miller. Right.
                  Is this an article that you're familiar with?
13
14
               General Miller. It is.
15
                           Okay.
16
                           . Were you interviewed for it?
17
               General Miller. I was, briefly. Dan had come out periodically over time.
18
                      BY
19
               Q
                    Okay. Do you need a minute to read --
20
               Α
                    I do.
21
                    -- and refresh yourself of its contents?
               O
22
               [Pause.]
23
               Α
                    Okay. Go ahead.
24
                    So I want to turn to --
               Q
25
               Α
                    It's a long article.
```

1	Q	Yeah. Fair enough. I want to turn to page 4 of the article. I apologize,
2	the pages a	ren't numbered, so you'll just have to
3	А	One, two, three, four, okay.
4	Q	This is the page that begins at the very top with, quote, "He went in."
5	А	"He went in."
6	Q	Yes. Okay. And if you could go down about six paragraphs
7	А	Okay.
8	Q	to a paragraph that begins as follows: "Mattis told Miller that it was best
9	for the gene	eral to stay in Kabul and focus on the mission, as opposed to making
10	occasional,	customary visits to Washington to give congressional testimony and briefings
11	with journa	lists, several officials said."
12	Nex	t paragraph, quote, "'Mattis sensed nothing good could be gained from the
13	military con	nmander speaking based on where we were in the war. And I think that that
14	part Genera	Il Miller probably agreed with,' said Kim Field, a retired Army general who
15	Miller brou	ght on as a civilian adviser. 'What do you want me to say? That we're
16	winning mil	itarily? That's not where we are anymore."
17	How	would you respond to this characterization of the state of play among
18	military lead	dership at this time?
19	А	Yeah. So, first of all and Kim, somebody I know, Kim is speaking a little bit
20	above her l	evel because that was not my guidance from Secretary Mattis. I think it was
21	really kind o	of a, if you will, a little bit of a rumor mill of maybe another commander
22	showing up	in Washington, D.C., at different I didn't show up in Washington, D.C., at
12	different ou	ants and facus there

So I think that's Kim not really characterizing my guidance from Secretary Mattis.

So, again, I'd give that -- and we're friends, but I attribute that to a third party that's -- I

24

1	don't know that that adequately represents Secretary Mattis. And matter of fact, he				
2	never said anything like this to me.				
3	Q Did you believe at the time that the U.S. was winning militarily on the				
4	ground in Afghanistan?				
5	A Well, winning is actually a tricky question for a military leader, because when				
6	you talk about the strategic nature of war, what you're really trying to do is, are you				
7	moving towards your objectives or are you not. If you talk about just what's going on on				
8	the ground there, at best you're stalemated.				
9	Q And do you recall at that time was the Taliban starting to take additional				
10	swaths of territory?				
11	A No, they weren't. It was actually one of the few times that we and,				
12	again, there's different assessments that are classified that you can get access to.				
13	I don't get into the game of arguing with our intel community on this district or				
14	that district. But I'm pretty I'm confident that we stabilized the security situation, but				
15	you didn't hear me making winning speeches.				
16	Q And I believe the word you just used now was that the war was at a				
17	stalemate.				
18	A Yeah, it was, an acknowledged stalemate.				
19	Q Had it been at a stalemate for some time?				
20	A It went back and forth where you had initiative on either side, but no side				
21	was clearly gaining an upper hand, that it was you're going to go see a surrender. We				
22	weren't at that kind of point.				
23	. Okay. Any more questions on this?				
24	I'm going to now introduce minority exhibit 4.				
25	[Miller Minority Exhibit No. 4.				

1		was marked for identification.]
2	General Miller.	See, I haven't looked at these in quite a few years now.

3 We're bringing you way back.

1		BY ::
2	Q	A walk down memory lane.
3	Α	Yeah. I love it.
4	Q	So this is a copy of the Doha Agreement.
5	Α	Okay.
6	Q	You'll see at the top of the page it says, "Agreement for Bringing Peace to
7	Afghanistan	Between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the
8	United State	es as a State and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America."
9	Quite a leng	thy title.
10	Α	If you only knew what went in behind this.
11	[Lau	ghter.]
12		_ That's why we're here.
13		_ I can imagine. And this is dated February 29th, 2020.
14	Does	s this look familiar to you?
15	Gene	eral <u>Miller.</u> It does.
16		Okay. So I want to ask you questions about your experience, the
17	role that you	u played in negotiating and concluding this deal.
18		. And just before we get there, are you very familiar with the text in
19	the deal itse	elf?
20	Gene	eral Miller. No, I'd have to go back and review it. If there's something you
21	want to ask	a specific question on, please point me to that one.
22		<u>.</u> Okay.
23		. We're happy to direct you to specific pieces of the text, and if at any
24	moment you	u'd like just a little bit more time to refresh your recollection, please let us
25	know.	

1	General <u>Miller.</u> Absolutely. Okay.			
2				
3	concluding this deal?			
4	General Miller. Like I said, we had a military component that was part of this			
5	going forward, and more on it was something that I shared up through the military chain			
6	of command.			
7	It was a pretty good a very good working relationship between we talked a			
8	little bit about Secretary Pompeo in the previous. We were all looking at this, one,			
9	because you can see it has some challenges in the even in the written text you can star			
10	sensing some different challenges.			
11	We were all looking at this as we went forward. But we were participants. We			
12	were not leaders in this; we were participants.			
13	BY :			
14	Q When you said you had a really good relationship, who was that with?			
15	With the State Department? With Afghans?			
16	A No. The Afghans I kept abreast of this thing, and Ambassador Khalilzad did			
17	as well, but he had responsibility to really explain it to President Ghani. But I'd make			
18	sure the military leaders were also getting a chance to see this as well and I'd bring in			
19	Ambassador Khalilzad.			
20	But we had like I said, we had embeds in the team that were monitoring the			
21	different discussions. And it wasn't all smooth sailing as we went forward. There was			
22	obviously some disagreements.			
23	Q So I think we'll probably get into some of those in a minute, but, again, just			
24	to get context here, what was your assessment of Ambassador Khalilzad as a negotiator			
25	Did you have confidence in his abilities?			

1	Α	I did.	I mean, yo	u guys know	him.	At the	time, as he	comes in, he's	what
2	we all consid	der if y	ou're look	ing for the A	fghan h	iand, s	omebody wh	o knows the c	ulture,
3	the assumpt	tion wou	ld be it wo	uld be obvio	usly An	nbassa	dor Khalilzad	, previously se	rving
4	as an ambas	ssador th	ere, obvio	usly growing	g up in A	Afghani	istan, and the	en subsequent	ly
5	coming to th	ne Unite	d States he	ere. So no r	major is	sues th	nere.		
6	Q	And yo	u felt that	he listened to	o you w	hen yo	ou would spe	ak about	
7	Α	Someti	mes.						
8	Q	the c	ontent of t	hese negotia	ations	-			
9	Α	Someti	mes he did						
10	Q	and t	he approa	ch?					
11	Α	Someti	mes he did						
12	Q	But you	ı had acces	s to him					
13	Α	I had ad	cess to hir	n, yeah.					
14	Q	in ter	ms of airin	g your views	5?				
15	And,	similarly	,, I think yo	ou've testifie	d to thi	s alrea	dy, but what	was your	
16	assessment	of Amba	ssador Bas	ss and his ab	ility to l	nelp co	ntribute to tl	he negotiation	s of
17	this deal?								
18	Α	He was	n't as invo	ved as you	ı know,	one, h	ie was very fo	ocused in Kabu	ıl, and
19	he was reall	y the int	erlocutor t	o the he w	/as keep	oing Pr	esident Ghan	ni informed as	well
20	in the Afgha	ın Gover	nment, bu	t not so deep	oly invo	lved.	I want to say	y he had	
21	representat	ives fron	n the emba	issy that wer	e on th	e team	n as well.		
22	Q	Okay.	And did y	ou also belie	ve that	officia	ls in Washing	gton I'm sorr	y, let
23	me back up.								
24	With	regard	to Ambass	ador Bass, yo	ou also	did y	ou also feel t	hat you had a	ccess

to him to share views that were --

1	Α	Ambassador Bass?				
2	Q	Q relevant if you needed to?				
3	A Oh, yeah, all the time.					
4	Q	Okay. And did you believe that Washington that you also had access to				
5	communica	te views and input that Washington could rely on as the deal was being				
6	negotiated?					
7	Α	Yes.				
8	Q	Did you see your input, as a general matter, incorporated into the				
9	decision-ma	aking around the Doha deal?				
10	Α	The key pieces of it were when you started talking about some of				
11	the military	actions that will take place or not take place, that's where and as I				
12	mentioned early on, my greatest concern was very clearly the Taliban wanted this to be a					
13	U.STaliban agreement, not a U.STaliban-Government of Afghanistan agreement, and					
14	why are you even concerned about these Afghan Security Forces?					
15	And that was so that was important to me, that we built in some safeguards for					
16	the Afghan Security Forces, so if the Taliban didn't live up to their side of the agreement					
17	militarily we	e could do things.				
18	I'm g	going to be very open here. As we were going through this, what started to				
19	become ver	ry clear to me was if this thing fails it's going to be because of me, because I'm				
20	going to do	some military action on the ground and it's going to break the agreement				
21	apart, that I	'd be the person to break this agreement.				
22	That	was pretty clear to me as we went forward here, because, quite frankly, the				
23	Taliban did	not adhere to their 80 percent, 90 percent reduction in violence. They said				
24	they did, th	at was their information campaign, but they actually ramped it up and we				
25	struck them	. And every time we struck them they would list another U.S. military				

1	violation and wave it in their faces, almost similar to kind of some of the negotiations			
2	you've seen where every transgression gets recorded.			
3	And I think we probably had about a thousand transgressions against us, maybe			
4	more. I can't recall the exact count. And so we just really went back and started kind			
5	of doing it back to them.			
6	So, yeah, I was concerned there that we could not leave the Afghan Security			
7	Forces alone and unafraid as a result of this agreement.			
8	Q Just on that last point, you testified previously that you were particularly			
9	focused			
10	A Yeah.			
11	Q on the elements of this deal as it was coming together that would affect			
12	the Afghan National Security Forces.			
13	A That's correct.			
14	Q You also described the Afghan Government and security forces as wanting			
15	this to be a three-way deal			
16	A That's correct.			
17	Q not a two-way deal.			
18	A Yeah.			
19	Q But, in fact, this was a two-way deal between the United States and the			
20	Taliban?			
21	A Well, it's U.STaliban agreement.			
22	. Okay. Did you want to ask about the agreement?			
23	BY :			
24	Q Yeah. Sorry. And you had said in your previous testimony that, when yo			
25	were being honest, that the Taliban was 80 or 90 percent not abiding by the agreement			

1	A No. I said what they well, they would use this term of, "We're going to
2	get you 80 percent reduction in violence. Once you guys get out of the fight, that's most
3	of the violence anyway."
4	So, I mean, pretty typical back-and-forth in a negotiation.
5	And I had some pretty strong conversations with them. I go, "If you don't reduce
6	this violence then this thing is going to fail, just not going to work." And they said,
7	"Don't worry. It's going to work."
8	But they had they literally changed their tactics. So instead of going after
9	provincial capitals or big, high-profile attacks, you kill ten over here, ten over here, ten
10	over here, and all of a sudden you get your numbers up here.
11	Q But they were not abiding by the spirit of the
12	A That's correct.
13	Q reduction in violence commitment that
14	A That's correct. I did not feel they were abiding by the spirit of the
15	agreement.
16	Q Okay. Thank you.
17	BY :
18	Q Okay. Let's get a little bit into the terms itself themselves of the Doha
19	deal.
20	A Okay.
21	Q You see at the bottom of exhibit 4, page 1, under the heading "Part One," it
22	reads, "The United States is committed to withdraw from Afghanistan all military forces of
23	the United States, its allies, and Coalition partners, including all non-diplomatic civilian
24	personnel, private security contractors, trainers, advisors, and supporting services
25	personnel within fourteen months following announcement of this agreement, and will

ı	take the following measures in this regard.			
2	Before we go into the measures themselves that both the U.S. and the Taliban			
3	were obligated to under the terms of this deal, let's just clarify for the record.			
4	You had stated previously in the assessment you gave in around September or			
5	October 2018, I believe, to Generals Votel, Dunford, and Mattis, that if the U.S. were to			
6	uncouple from partnering with Afghan Corps, C-o-r-p-s, we would be placing the Afghan			
7	units at risk.			
8	A That's correct, under those under the conditions of a fight against the			
9	Taliban.			
10	Q And you had also testified earlier today in your opening statement that the			
11	Afghan Air Force, in particular, whose capacities were lauded, was nevertheless, quote,			
12	"wholly dependent" on U.S. contractors to perform.			
13	A That's correct, for contracting logistics support.			
14	Q Okay. So based on what we've just read in part one of the Doha deal text,			
15	does that represent essentially a United States commitment to remove all contractors			
16	who could have supported the Afghan Air Force and other Afghan security entities, the			
17	deal itself?			
18	A So you were pulling out this clause. But make no mistake, Zal Khalilzad			
19	thought he was negotiating a peace deal. So this is now you're starting to			
20	create you're starting to make agreements based on a peace deal, not a continuation of			
21	a war deal.			
22	Q Yeah. But we'll get into that. But the commitment that ultimately the			
23	first commitment that the U.S. made was to withdraw everything, including contractors,			
24	correct?			

Minus a diplomatic presence.

25

Α

1	Q	Okay.	And the withdrawal of all U.S. military forces, allies, coalition
2	partners, no	ondiplom	natic civilian personnel, private security contractors, trainers, advisers,
3	and suppor	ting serv	ices personnel, that would have required a stoppage of contractor
4	support to t	the Afgha	an military, correct?
5	Α	Yes.	
6	Q	And it v	would have required
7	Α	But tha	t's not this is not my language, I mean, so I don't want this language
8	being attrib	uted to r	me, because it's a I feel like I'm now defending somebody else's
9	language in	a docum	nent that I have some problems with.
10	Q	Okay.	Well, we'll get a little bit more into the problems. I just wanted
11	Α	These o	questions might be better for I didn't write this document.
12	Q	Fair en	ough.
13	Α	Okay.	
14	Q	But you	u did testify previously that you had access to the people who were
15	concluding	the term	s of this document, right, and that you were able to share your views.
16	А	And th	at we talked that we all talked about it, correct.
17	Q	And yo	ur views had been that elements of the Afghan military
18	Α	That's	correct.
19	Q	relied	d critically on contractor support, correct?
20	Α	Absolu	tely.
21	Q	And th	at if U.S. forces were to draw dawn and no longer able to couple
22	Α	Right.	
23	Q	with	Afghan military entities, that would put those units
24	Α	Right.	
25	Q	at ris	k, correct?

1	Α	Yes. But let's go ahead and go back to the context. The context is an	
2	Afghan Air Force at war requires these enablers.		
3	Q	Yes.	
4	Α	An Afghan Air Force not at war, so you may we may that's a different risk	
5	assessment	there.	
6	Q	Okay. I don't want to belabor each term too much out of respect for your	
7	time. You	said in the beginning when we first introduced this exhibit that you had some	
8	concerns.		
9	Α	Right.	
10	Q	So let's let me give you a chance to highlight some of the concerns that	
11	you had, I'm	assuming, beyond the ultimate sort of top-level commitment that we've just	
12	discussed.		
13	А	Okay. As you go through this document and you found the Taliban looking	
14	to find reaso	ons. But let me put this in perspective. And you guys have talked to	
15	Ambassador	Khalilzad.	
16	My v	iew is he viewed this document as a start point for negotiations once it was	
17	signed, whic	h is important, where I can adjust off of this document and I don't have to	
18	live off of th	is document and it's a conditions-based document, meaning if conditions	
19	aren't lived (up to that you don't have to adhere to it. Again, probably better for him	
20	to that's m	ny view of his position.	
21	From	a Taliban side, they saw this, they viewed this as a religious document, that	
22	when it was	written it was a religious document. And by a religious document, even	
23	when challe	nged by other religious authorities, they go, "No, this is a religious	
24	document."	And so you had two different interpretations of a document you just put	

together.

1	The areas that caused us problems from the outset were the lack of clarity on
2	violence and prisoners. Those two were problematic. Violence was obviously
3	something in my domain, that I wanted to make sure that we had the ability to support
4	Afghan Security Forces, and on the prisoners more of a political domain.
5	But the Taliban were very clear that they would not entertain anything that ought
6	to be discussed between Afghans, and in my view prisoners fell in that category because
7	the United States did not hold any prisoners. And so when you start talking about
8	different aspects of it, that's a that was a concern.
9	Q Okay. I think my colleague
10	A And it played out very quickly after the document, the agreement, was
11	signed.
12	Q Okay. I think my colleague will ask you some questions just to follow up on
13	those concerns.
14	A Okay.
15	Q But I just wanted to quickly clarify, because you described this just now as
16	the starting point for negotiations. This is how you viewed it, correct? Maybe the
17	Taliban didn't see it that way.
18	A Not how I viewed it, how our lead negotiator viewed it, okay.
19	Q Okay. But you testified previously that negotiations had, in fact, begun in
20	spring 2019, correct?
21	A Actually yeah. I mean, so they finally kind of gained ground in spring of
22	2019.
23	Q Okay. So is it your assessment that the negotiations that had begun prior
24	to the concluding of this deal in Doha in February 2020 did, in fact, inform what was

possible or not possible to get in the agreement?

1	Α	Say that one more time so I make sure I understand the question.
2	Q	Was it your understanding that the negotiations around a forthcoming Doha
3	deal	
4	Α	Right.
5	Q	that began in spring of 2019
6	А	Yeah.
7	Q	informed what we ultimately see on the page that was signed in
8	February 20	020?
9	Α	Yes. But, again, if you're negotiating, you're negotiating; if you're closing
10	documents,	you're no longer negotiating. And so without critiquing the team that's
11	doing it, jus	t because the Taliban says something, you know, I'm not of the view that just
12	because the	e Taliban say it that's what that's the law that's not I don't subscribe to
13	that law.	And so
14	Q	But is it your belief that if the United States says it, it's something that we
15	should ende	eavor to fulfill?
16	А	Well, the United States hadn't signed anything prior to 29 February 2020.
17	There had b	peen no signatures exchanged.
18	Q	But this text itself was culminated
19	А	Some of the text was, yeah.
20	Q	So the text that I've given you in exhibit 4?
21	А	I won't dispute that. I'm not that familiar with it.
22		. But just to confirm, this is, in fact, the text that was signed and
23	agreed to b	y the United States, the one that my colleague
24	Gen	eral Miller. I'm assuming that you've given me the document that was
25	signed by th	ne United States.

1	I wasn't present at Doha when it was signed. If this is I'm going off of what
2	you've handed me that this is the signed agreement, so
3	BY :
4	Q Okay. Just a couple other pieces of the deal text that we want to unpack.
5	The agreement, as we read it and understand it, required Taliban leaders to begin
6	separate negotiations with the Afghan Government?
7	A That's correct.
8	Q I believe you testified to this, on an eventual peace in Afghanistan. But are
9	you aware of whether it said that they had to make progress in those talks in order for
10	the United States to fulfill our commitments of the deal?
11	A I don't know. I mean, I think we I think logical people now, I'm not
12	putting the Taliban in the logical aspect of this thing, and in reality the Taliban were very
13	effective at delaying, deliberating, obfuscating. But logical people would say that if
14	you're going to have talks, that you start moving things forward.
15	Q Okay.
16	Do you want to talk about the prisoners?
17	Yeah. I just wanted to ask an additional question on this.
18	In the Washington Post article, this was exhibit
19	<u>.</u> Two.
20	<u>.</u> Two.
21	<u>.</u> Three.
22	_ Sorry, three.
23	BY :
24	Q I'm trying to figure out where exactly it is on this document. So on the last
25	page, I'm just going to read from it, it says, "What emerges is a portrait of a

1	battle-hard	ened officer who was steady through chaos and open to trying new	
2	approaches as time ran out on the U.S. military in Afghanistan.		
3	"Restricted by the realities of a 20-year-old conflict, Miller boosted air strikes to		
4	numbers no	ot seen in a decade, and threw his support behind a possible political	
5	settlement	with the Taliban even as he privately questioned the group's willingness to	
6	follow thro	ugh, several officials said."	
7	Wo	uld you agree with that characterization?	
8	А	I would agree with that.	
9	Q	And so, in particular, I think what we want to what I want to at least get to	
10	is, a key ası	pect of this agreement required the Taliban to want to negotiate a political	
11	settlement with the Afghan Government. Would you agree?		
12	А	I'd agree.	
13	Q	And I think earlier you testified that the Taliban showed no willingness or	
14	real willing	ness to actually engage in a negotiation. Is that correct?	
15	А	That's correct.	
16	Q	And so, ultimately, the Taliban constantly said, I think as you testified earlier,	
17	that they want to just take over.		
18	А	Yeah. I mean, that's my assessment, that this was you know, a	
19	settlement was a settlement that we viewed was probably not the same picture that		
20	the Taliban	viewed.	
21	Q	And did you share that assessment with anyone?	
22	А	Routinely.	
23	Q	To Zal?	
24	А	Routinely.	
25	Q	To Secretary Pompeo, who you spoke with on the phone?	

1	Α	I believe that was probably his assessment as he watched this. But that's
2	why you had	d a conditions-based agreement.
3	Q	His assessment was also that the Taliban didn't really want
4	А	Let me back up and strike that, because I don't want to speak for Secretary
5	Pompeo on	this one. I think that'd be a question for Secretary Pompeo. I don't
6	think I dor	n't believe he trusted the Taliban though.
7	Q	Thank you. It's a significant trust piece, because the entire agreement
8	essentially h	ninged on the Taliban wanting in a good-faith way to negotiate a peace.
9	А	I don't disagree with that.
10	Q	Okay. Thanks.
11	А	An assumption.
12	Q	Yeah. Thank you.
13		. And your testimony is that that never happened after the deal was
14	signed on Fe	ebruary
15	Gene	eral Miller. I saw the agreement in trouble as soon as it was signed.
16		<u>.</u> Okay.
17	Do y	ou want to ask about the prisoners?
18		BY :
19	Q	Yeah. Thanks.
20	I thir	nk you discussed a little bit about the requirement in the agreement for the
21	Afghan Gov	ernment to release up to 5,000 prisoners.
22	А	Right.
23	Q	Had the Afghan Government agreed to that condition prior to the deal being
24	signed?	
25	А	I don't believe so.

1	Q	And was it correct that the United States had to place a lot of pressure on a	
2	reluctant Gh	nani government to accept that condition?	
3	А	Ultimately it was his decision, but it was you know, one, I don't think there	
4	was undue p	pressure put on him. But if there was going to be any hope of them having a	
5	delegation s	it down with the Taliban, those prisoners very clear to me those prisoners	
6	were going	to have to be released.	
7	Q	But what impact do you think this commission had on the legitimacy of the	
8	Afghan Gove	ernment?	
9	А	How they legitimized is they ran a loya jirga to get the people to agree to it.	
10	Q	And how did it affect battlefield positions after the Taliban prisoners	
11	returned to the fight?		
12	А	I don't know. I mean, I don't you know, anecdotally I always hear about	
13	prisoners re	turning to the fight. I can't empirically say that that happened or not	
14	happened.		
15	Q	And how did the conditions on releasing Taliban prisoners impact your	
16	relationship	with NATO allies like the French?	
17	А	The French weren't present on the battlefield, and they didn't have they	
18	had a diplon	natic presence. They didn't have a military presence.	
19	Ther	e were some allies that had problems with certain prisoners because there	
20	were by n	ames of people that had killed nationals, including the U.S. But if there was	
21	something between me and the French, I'm not aware of it.		
22		[Miller Minority Exhibit No. 5.	
23		was marked for identification.]	
24		BY :	
25	Q	I just want to introduce exhibit 5 into the record. Small type.	

1	Α	Yeah, too small, so they say. I didn't
2	Q	I'll read the exhibit. It says, "Afghanistan Communique Issued by the
3	Ministry of	(sic) Europe and Foreign Affairs." Oh, wait
4	А	So it's criticism of the Taliban and their actions since taking over, right?
5	Q	Actually, sorry, this is the wrong one. Can I
6	Α	This is them talking about the Taliban and their behavior since
7	Q	Sorry. That's the wrong one.
8	Α	Okay.
9		_ So this will be the new exhibit. Which number are we on?
10		<u>.</u> Five.
11		Five.
12	ВҮ	:
13	Q	Let's pull the other five back.
14	Α	Should I give this one back?
15	Q	Sure. Thank you.
16	Α	Yeah, this wasn't uncommon to the French. Honestly, the Australians had
17	some objec	tions. I think there were a couple countries that had lost servicemembers.
18	Q	Had you seen previous instances of NATO partners publicly expressing
19	criticism of	such a big agreement and the condition in that agreement?
20	А	I think there was criticism all along, but this was, as we get down to prisoner
21	release, is t	here was some there were some named prisoners that people did not want
22	to see by	name, by country that they did not want to see released.
23	Q	Oh, yeah. Sorry, let me just read the exhibit title. It's from Al Jazeera, and

it's titled, "France asks Afghans not to free Taliban who killed its citizens. France objects

to release of three men jailed for the murders of French nationals in Afghanistan." And

24

1	it's dated 10	6th August 2020.
2	Α	I recall. I recall this. Like I said, there were other countries that had
3	problems w	rith the detainee list as well.
4	Q	Okay.
5	Α	I had a problem with the detainee list, okay. I mean, that was again,
6	it's	
7	Q	Why did you have a problem with the detainee list?
8	Α	Again, as I viewed it, and it's a live-and-learn type thing, I believe that the
9	view on it w	vas releasing 5,000 prisoners and we'll find another number that will work, and
10	it was a bac	l assumption.
11	Q	Some have said that it essentially was the tipping point and undermined the
12	Afghan Gov	ernment by the United States forcing it to release these prisoners that were
13	under its co	ontrol.
14	Α	Yeah, I wouldn't call it a tipping point. I'd say the Afghan Government died
15	of a thousa	nd cuts as opposed to a tipping point type thing.
16	l jus	t think that it wasn't a positive, okay. That was a tough one for the Afghans
17	to absorb.	I think you asked me the question, did it super fuel the battlefield? I mean,
18	I've heard t	hat, but I don't I didn't see that the battlefield was super fueled or super
19	charged by	some of these guys.
20	Q	It was already charged?
21	Α	Yeah, it was already violent. It was already a violent place. And trying to
22	see someth	ing more violent was I was not able to discern that, okay. But, again, not a
23	positive put	ting all these guys on the street.
24	Q	Okay. Thanks.
25		BY Example:

1	Q	And I want to move us on in the remaining time we have left to talk about	
2	some of the things you've already testified to		
3	Α	Okay.	
4	Q	that occurred after the Doha deal was signed in February 2020.	
5	But	just to make sure we're crystal clear, your testimony today is characterizing	
6	essentially t	two areas of concern that you had with the content of the Doha deal	
7	Α	Right.	
8	Q	that was signed, first related to reductions by the Taliban in violence and	
9	how it woul	d measure that?	
10	Α	Let me this is actually probably important for the committee and it was	
11	something I	was consistent on.	
12	I thi	nk we were always at a long shot finding an accommodation, because	
13	ultimately v	ve wanted to find an accommodation that brought Afghanistan together,	
14	didn't tear i	t further apart.	
15	l wa	s became pretty consistent that you give President Ghani some room if you	
16	drive home	the idea of reducing violence and because, one, it's the more violence	
17	there is tha	t's out there again, a Helmand offensive is hard to give him room. But I felt	
18	that if you'd	reduce violence, you might've had an opportunity to find some	
19	accommoda	ation short of what we ended up seeing.	
20	Q	So your testimony, so that we understand it correctly, is that the deal that	
21	was ultimat	ely concluded did not include enough pressure or obligations on the Taliban	
22	to reduce vi	iolence against the Afghan Security Forces?	
23	Α	Yeah. I don't know if you could capture that in a written deal. I think you	
24	capture tha	t in actions afterwards. And that's and I was I routinely I mean, I had a	

voice that could at least reach certain circles, and I'd condemn the Taliban violence, and

2 The Taliban violence against other Afghans? Q 3 Α Yeah, against anybody. They'd raise the temperature and I would condemn 4 it. 5 But, yes, I had a problem with the violence, and I thought a reduction in violence 6 would've given us an opportunity or a possibility to see if there was an accommodation 7 that actually looked like a diplomatic settlement. 8 Q And did you raise those concerns prior to February 29th, 2020? 9 Α I raised them all the time. I raised them before, all the way to the end. 10 O And your other area of concern that you identified today was with respect to 11 the prisoners? 12 Yeah, so not mine to negotiate or not mine to be -- this is the diplomatic lead 13 now where you're -- and even the violence was a supporting effort. 14 But it -- you know, that one was one that I'm sure we didn't enjoy it as -- I certainly 15 didn't enjoy it -- as we moved through the process that you gave the Taliban -- the Taliban 16 had an out there a bit until they got all their prisoners released. 17 And did you raise concerns prior to February 29th, 2020, about that Q 18 component? 19 Α I don't recall. I know at my first meeting, soon after the Doha Agreement 20 was signed, when everyone clapped their hands and go, "Okay, let's get the Afghans 21 together and talk," and the Taliban said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, not until our prisoners are 22 released," I knew we had a problem on our hands. 23 Q Okay. And that was my last clarification, was that your testimony was that 24 you immediately knew after the deal had been signed in February 2020 that it was --

Yeah. I saw that -- I saw that as a -- yeah.

they'd come back and attack me for being the perpetrator of the violence.

1

1 Q You immediately knew that it was going to be problematic --2 We were going to have a problem there, yeah. Α 3 Q Okay. 4 Do you recall -- one last question. Do you have more on this one? 5 Do you recall when the Afghan Government became aware of the condition? Was it before the deal was signed? 6 7 General Miller. I don't know. I think the -- not I think. On this one I think we 8 have to go back to the -- to Ambassador Khalilzad and ask him when he presented it to 9 the government. I'm sure the government probably had a problem with it if they saw it, 10 but I don't know when they saw it or didn't see it. 11 BY 12 Q Okay. So --13 Α Not exact dates. 14 Q So let's move to after February 29th, 2020, and after the deal was signed. You testified previously that the U.S. drew down to 8,600 troops in the summer of 15 16 2020 --17 Α Yeah. 18 -- pursuant to the terms of the deal, correct? Q 19 Α 135 days post the deal we were going to go to 8,600. 20 Q So it's our understanding that that was explicitly required of the U.S. by the 21 terms of the deal? 22 Α That's correct. 23 Q And then you said earlier, quote, you immediately received orders to then go 24 to 4,500.

Yeah, we got to 8,600, and then we were ordered to come back down.

25

Α

1	Q	Can you describe what changed between as far as the situation on the	
2	ground or the degree to which the deal was being implemented between		
3	А	No.	
4	Q	the order to go down to 86 and the order to	
5	А	No, I mean, there was that was not a condition. That was not an order	
6	type piece.	There were no the only condition that was can you get down there safely	
7	can you do	this, and the answer was, yes. So from a purely military standpoint could	
8	safeguard tl	ne force, still address the objectives.	
9	Q	At 8,600?	
10	Α	But there was nothing in the deal that was indicating let me back up.	
11	There actually was something in the deal that was indicating, and that was the		
12	lack of violence against U.S. and NATO forces, okay. So that actually is holding as we're		
13	moving through this.		
14	Q	As we're moving to 8,600?	
15	Α	8,600 and then down. So as we go to from 29 and you guys know this	
16	From the 29th of February, we did not have U.S. servicemembers or NATO forces killed		
17	during that time.		
18	And	so, again, you have what's happening on our side as it relates to this deal and	
19	it's moving, progressing. So, yeah, those conditions are being observed. But you do		
20	have anything happening on the Afghan side, the Taliban, Afghan Government, key		
21	players started to work the different discussions.		
22	Q	Okay. So your testimony is ultimately that you completed the explicit	
23	requirement to go down to 8,500 (sic).		
24	А	Yeah.	
25	Q	The only	

1	Α	Which, by the way, the Taliban weren't counting. We'd just tell them that
2	we were do	oing this, okay. They weren't they'd see airplanes fly away.
3	Q	And the only appreciable change on the ground at that time that you drew
4	down to 8,6	500 had been that the Taliban had ceased attacks against U.S. forces.
5	А	That's correct, yeah.
6	Q	And your testimony is that that cessation of attacks against U.S. forces
7	generally h	eld going forward.
8	А	It would hold you know, there were some violations of it, but it would hold
9	for through	out the duration.
10	Q	But you testified earlier that immediately after going to 8,600 you were then
11	ordered to	go down to 4,500.
12	Α	That's correct. So I don't know the exact dates, but it was, okay, we've
13	reached 8,6	600, okay, continue to move down the ladder.
14	Q	So I believe you already testified to this, but just to be clear, what changed in
15	the time th	at you went down to 8,600 and immediately thereafter receiving the order to
16	go to 4,500	?
17	Α	The biggest change was the lack of violence against U.S. and NATO forces.
18	That was st	ark.
19	Q	Which had existed previously when the reduction to 8,600 occurred,
20	correct?	
21	Α	Right. So, but, again, during that period and actually it's a little bit prior
22	to, because	we actually had about a 7-day cease-fire they called it something else,
23	reduction in	n violence period but you had from 29th of February through June, and I
24	don't reme	mber the exact dates where we hit 135, you did not have attacks against U.S.
25	forces. Ar	nd by attacks, it's artillery, it's IEDs by the Taliban.

•	Q	To what do you attribute the order to go to 4,300 after the officed states had
2	just met its	obligation, explicit obligation, under the Doha deal to go to 8,600?
3	Α	Yeah, I don't know. I'd recommend you talking to somebody else who
4	drove that o	order. But, again, the only condition that was really met at that point was
5	the lack of v	riolence against us.
6	Q	Who did you understand the order to go to 4,500 to come from?
7	Α	Well, I got it from Secretary Esper.
8	Q	And
9	Α	I didn't get it from Secretary Esper. I got it from the CENTCOM commander
10	via the Secr	etary of Defense.
11	Q	And you understood that order to have been given to Secretary Esper?
12	Α	Assuming.
13	Q	Okay. Let's go ahead and go back to, I think it was exhibit 1 that I gave you.
14	This was the	2
15	Α	Can I put a clarifying piece?
16	Q	Please.
17	Α	Because I actually do think this is important, because this sounds like I'm
18	sitting dowr	here and it's like get an order, go, go execute.
19	I'm d	contributing, too. "Can you do this?" "Yes, I can do this, and I can do this
20	safely."	
21	And	so I want to make sure that's I don't want to make it sound like here I am
22	just blindly	accepting an order. But the movement to 4,500, while a little bit of a
23	surprise, wa	is also planned in our you know, we had actually built plans, assuming you
24	have a succ	essful outcome of a political settlement.

So 4,500 was a number I could accept as well. You know, as I looked at it, I could

1	ob	it	witho	ut	risk.
	\sim		** : : : : : :	чı	

- Q Did you have much of a choice to accept it or not accept it, or was it communicated to you as a directive?
- 4 A I don't recall pushing back on it, because I didn't see it as problematic.
- 5 Q Okay. Let's go back to exhibit 1. This was the --
- A And I would've pushed back if -- if it was problematic, I would've pushed back.
- Q This is the unclassified opening statements from -- that were furnished to
 the committee in February 2023. And if you could go to pages 10 and 11 of this
 document.
 - At the bottom of page 10, in the very last paragraph, I'm going to start reading midway through. But if you haven't already seen earlier in the document, this is the opening statement that was provided by Assistant Secretary Molly Phee --
- 14 A Okay.

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- 15 Q -- who was the deputy negotiator at the time.
 - She says, quote, "In mid-July, we met the 135 day deadline to drawdown to 8,600 troops. The Trump administration then decided unilaterally to withdraw to 4,500 troops by September. The release of Taliban prisoners, as well as Afghan government soldiers detained by the Taliban, finally took place in early September, allowing the start of intra-Afghan negotiations between the parties to begin on September 12."
 - Next page. "Once the agreement was signed, we set up an interagency group to monitor and assess compliance, which I chaired. We found the Taliban's compliance with the agreement to be mixed. I have no knowledge that any Principal in the previous administration factored these assessments into decisions to withdraw troops below 8,600.

1	"It is my judgment that the unilateral decision to reduce to 4,500 troops by			
2	September, without explicitly tying this move to a requirement for the Taliban to act,			
3	significantly weakened the prospect for successful intra-Afghan negotiations as the			
4	Taliban appeared to conclude that President Trump was intent on withdrawal regardless			
5	of their conduct."			
6	So really quickly before I ask for your reactions to that, you testified earlier you did			
7	engage with Ambassador Phee			
8	A That's correct.			
9	Q during this time. Can you give us your reaction to her characterization of			
10	the troop drawdowns below 8,600?			
11	A Molly and I worked very well together. We didn't always agree on the			
12	analysis I saw that that drove the Helmand offensive.			
13	I don't know that that necessarily drove the Helmand offensive, and it was a			
14	serious miscalculation by the Taliban. I almost think the Helmand offensive was a			
15	mistake on their part, they just kind of stumbled into it.			
16	But it's fair to say it's a at this point, we're not sure we have a conditions-based			
17	agreement. But so I think that's a fair statement.			
18	Q At which point?			
19	A Well, like I said, I had concerns about the Taliban violence from			
20	February 29th on, and it was a you know, but I'm also looking at my negotiating team as			
21	part of that, you're part of the conditions here too, so are you helping us with some of			
22	this Taliban violence here.			
23	Q Okay. So your testimony is that despite the United States signing explicit			
24	conditions on February 29th, 2020			
25	A Right.			

1	Q in the Doha Agreement, by September, within 6 months of signing that
2	deal, it was not conditions-based and steps to withdraw troops were being taken
3	independently of conditions on the ground?
4	A That's fair.
5	. Okay. We're out of time. Thanks.
6	. Thank you. That concludes our round. We can go off the
7	record.

[Recess.]

1	[1:45 p.m.]			
2	. We are going back on the record. The time is now 1:45.			
3	BY :			
4	Q General Miller, we had a quick question pertaining to the minority's			
5	exhibit 2, which was a New York Times article, "The U.S. to Withdraw About 7,000 Troops			
6	From Afghanistan."			
7	So you previously testified that you had been informed the day of the Army-Navy			
8	game. Is that correct?			
9	A Some like a day or two after.			
10	Q And that was so the initial order for the military to start withdrawing			
11	troops, roughly 7,000 troops from Afghanistan, but that had been walked back, correct?			
12	A Yeah. And it may have been more than 7,000 troops. I think it was more.			
13	Q Complete.			
14	A Yeah.			
15	Q Exactly. So we looked at, just for clarity of the record, so I believe the date			
16	of the Army-Navy game was December 8th, 2018.			
17	A Yeah.			
18	Q And the article is dated December 20th, 2018, so that's a 12-day time span.			
19	A Right.			
20	Q And between that time span, had there been developments, to the best of			
21	your recollection?			
22	A My recollection is, by the time this it creates a little bit of a spin as you're			
23	now kind of trying to go through some rapid planning.			
24	My recollection is there was no that was the only open press reporting on any of			
25	that, and I think it was after the fact.			

- 1 Q Okay. That's helpful. Thank you for that.
- 2 A So you know when the Army-Navy game was. I just remember it. I stayed
- 3 up late.
- 4 Q I try to watch it.
- So it's important to Chairman McCaul that his investigation cover not just one administration, whether it be the past administration or the current administration, but
- 7 both administrations, given the lives that are at stake --
- 8 A Right.
- 9 -- the servicemembers who dedicated their careers to the issue, and
- 10 those -- the lives that were lost ultimately. So we're going to be hopping back in time a
- bit from one administration to the next, if you'll indulge us.
- 12 A Okay.
- 13 Q But I just want to go back to sort of the conditions-based approach of the
- 14 Doha Agreement. And you had noted, you viewed the agreement as being a
- 15 conditions-based agreement, correct?
- 16 A Right.
- 17 Q And was it your assessment that conditions were not being met by the
- 18 Taliban in 2020 as well as 2021?
- 19 A Correct.
- 20 Q And at the end of the Trump administration the Commander in Chief had not
- 21 officially ordered a U.S. troop withdrawal down to zero, correct?
- 22 A That's correct.
- 23 Q And at the end, toward the end of your tenure, it was April 14th, 2021, the
- 24 Commander in Chief, a new administration, did order a troop withdrawal down to zero,
- 25 correct?

1	A Inat's correct.
2	Q Okay. Thank you.
3	So it's our understanding that at the end of January 2021 the White House, under
4	President Biden, announced that it would be reviewing the February 2020 U.STaliban
5	agreement, i.e., the Doha Agreement, through the interagency, including to assess
6	whether the Taliban was living up to its commitments. Is that correct?
7	A I recall that.
8	Q Okay. Were you informed of this interagency review by anyone in the DOD
9	or the administration at any point?
10	A Likely informed by my military chain of command, but I also think it was
11	probably open press also.
12	Q Okay. And did anyone from the DOD or the administration more broadly
13	request briefings or inputs from you during that interagency period?
14	A No. I mean, again, what I would routinely do is I'd push information, and
15	the information I pushed was, one, wanted one, a new administration coming in, I
16	wanted to update the intel you know, the commander's appreciation of the situation.
17	So that would be what would be going up to going up to through Frank
18	McKenzie, General Frank McKenzie, to ideally enter into the conversation, what parts of
19	my input most of the time a lot of it did, made it up there. I could see it as it kind of
20	matriculated through the system, but I didn't see what would happen to it afterwards
21	oftentimes.
22	Q That's helpful. Thank you.
23	Do you wish that you had been invited to present at more of the
24	Afghanistan-related interagency meetings in 2021?
25	A I do. I mean, I thought I had something to offer. And it was a again, it's

1	not even so much	- by the way, for everybody	, both sides h	ere, I don't make value
2	judgments on Comi	mander in Chief decisions.	I just don't.	That's important for me to
3	put on the record.	But at the same time, who	at I do want to	make sure is that relevant
4	information is in the	e conversation.		

Q Of course. And do you wish you had been offered more opportunities to deliver your assessments directly to leaders in these interagency meetings?

A I had the opportunity to provide my inputs to my chain of command, again, the military chain of command, which goes to the SecDef. You know, I wasn't clamoring to be in different meetings, but at the same time I just wanted to make sure that there's a good understanding of the assessment from the ground. And it's less about policy decisions but making sure everybody has a clear, deep understanding of what was happening in Afghanistan.

Q And do you believe you did have that opportunity under the prior administration to have more direct face-to-face engagements with administration leaders?

A Well, I did. I mean, that's just -- you know, it is. And it was just a function of routine access, not necessarily one-v-one access with anybody, but working with Secretary Pompeo, Director CIA Gina Haspel, obviously Secretary of Defense and the Chairman and the CENTCOM commander. That was a group that convened over -- around different issues.

Q Thank you.

A Every administration does it differently, so I acknowledge that up front too, okay.

24 Q Of course.

I believe you touched upon this issue previously, but just for clarity of the record,

ı	did you believe that the Taliban was interested in coexisting in peace with the Alghan		
2	Government, or was it your assessment in 2021 that the Taliban was focused on a military		
3	takeover of Afghanistan?		
4	A By 2021, I was I assessed a military takeover, military and/or political		
5	takeover. I mean, political being the ultimate objective, and by 2021 I was there.		
6	Q And prior to 2021, was that assessment not yet complete? Was it still in		
7	progress?		
8	A Well, you had to play this out a little bit. And that's, again, part of		
9	the you know, I first of all, I had orders to support the political process. But I		
10	supported the political process because I know that any conflict has to have a political		
11	and a diplomatic and a military component to it. And so I supported that almost moving		
12	forward, going, is this going to work or is this not going to work?		
13	You know, is the diplomatic we already knew what we could do on the military		
14	side and we could've kept doing that forever as long as the American people and the		
15	Commander in Chief support it, but the idea of seeing if a political track could be opened		
16	up was something they definitely supported.		
17	Q That's helpful. Thank you.		
18	And I think in terms of that political track, you had, in 2021, you mentioned earlier		
19	this concept of intra-Afghan negotiations. Is that correct?		
20	A Yeah. Which actually started in September 2020 or very early October,		
21	post the release of the 5,000 named prisoners.		
22	Q Okay. Thank you.		
23	And are you aware of any deals the U.S. engaged in that would've put the Taliban		
24	officially in charge of Afghanistan?		

No.

1	Q	Were you ever briefed on the, quote, "peace government plan" advanced by
2	the Biden	administration in early 2021 that would result in a purported power-sharing
3	agreemei	nt between the Taliban and Afghan Government?
4	А	No specifics of any such plan. But at the same time the idea would
5	be the	dea that was being advanced was power sharing. But I don't have any details
6	on the sp	ecific plan.
7	Q	Okay. Do you believe the Taliban would've accepted a power-sharing
8	agreemei	nt with the Afghan Government?
9	А	No.
10	Q	And the Taliban viewed the Afghan Government as illegitimate, correct?
11	А	As illegitimate, correct.
12	Q	What course of action did the Afghan military urge the United States to take
13	during th	e interagency review of the Doha Agreement?
14	А	Can you ask that question what course of action did the
15	Q	Correct, during the interagency review.
16	А	What did the Afghan military?
17	Q	Yes.
18	А	They didn't really push us on I mean, they of course they wanted us to
19	stay. Bu	at they didn't push us on a specific lobbying effort of our government or
20	anything	any of that nature.
21	Q	Is it accurate that during this interagency review period that the Afghan
22	Governm	ent at least presumed that the administration would reassess the Doha
23	Agreeme	nt and particularly an ultimate decision to go down to zero?
24	А	Yeah. President Ghani and his team surrounding him, I think, never really

completely understood the dynamics of the U.S. Government -- in any administration.

1	So make that clear.		
2	I don't they're overly optimistic about any administration's ultimate intentions		
3	and objectives. But at the same time it didn't stop them from trying, so they would try		
4	to make assessments.		
5	And I do recall believing that they said, "Okay, now that we're going to have a new		
6	President, now is the time to make our case." I recall that.		
7	Q Thank you.		
8	And what course of action did NATO allies and other allied countries urge the		
9	United States to take during this interagency review?		
10	A I can't speak for every country. I can speak to my interactions in Brussels.		
11	They were committed for the long haul in terms of let's get on a conditions-based		
12	path. They were committed.		
13	So the NATO allies to some extent were, I thought, a more sure you know, I		
14	think they domestically they were assessing that they had the support to stay with a		
15	military component for the foreseeable future.		
16	Many of you know Nick Carter, who was the chief of defence for the U.K. He was		
17	very adamant that we had to stay. But I found most of the framework nations were		
18	we've got to stay, we've got to enforce the you know, force the Taliban to agree, to live		
19	up to the conditions.		
20	Q That's helpful. Thank you.		
21	Did you believe the Taliban would be deterred from challenging the Afghan		
22	Government once the military went down to zero?		
23	A No.		
24	Q What was your assessment of whether the Taliban was meeting the		
25	conditions of the Doha Agreement during that interagency review?		

1	A They weren't. As I said, from the kind of from the onset, I didn't see
2	them meeting it. Again, right after we started intra-Afghan talks and the Helmand
3	offensive could've been an accident, meaning somebody pushed forward and it created a
4	panic on the Afghan Security Force side and then they just kind of kept moving.
5	But, again, it was a period of time where I talked about they had kind of held up,
6	"We haven't assaulted a provincial capital," and they basically assaulted Lashkargah,
7	which is the provincial capital of Helmand, and we drove them back.
8	And you saw a disconnect, one of the rare disconnects with their political and
9	their military commanders in the field there. And in the field they paid the price, and, of
10	course, now they were accusing us of violating the agreement. That's how they played.
11	Q Yeah. That's helpful. Thank you.
12	General, are you familiar with the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan
13	Reconstruction, or SIGAR?
14	A SIGAR, very familiar.
15	[Miller Majority Exhibit No. 6.
16	was marked for identification.]
17	BY :
18	Q I'd like to introduce I think we are on exhibit 5? exhibit 6 into the record.
19	This is an excerpt of a report by SIGAR dated January 30th, 2021.
20	I'd like to direct your attention to the top of page 48 in this excerpt.
21	A Which page? 48?
22	Q Forty-eight, yeah. And I'll read the relevant portion into the record.
23	It states here, "However, several Taliban actions continue to belie other
24	commitments in the agreement, including continued affiliation with terrorist groups, high
25	levels of overall violence, and attacks on major population centers and on U.S. and

1	Coalition personnel."	
2	Did the Taliban carry out some attacks against U.S. and coalition bases in 2021,	
3	including indirect fire attacks, both before and after President Biden's April 14th	
4	Go-to-Zero announcement?	
5	A At least a couple indirect fire attacks, with	no there was no effect on U.S.
6	forces.	
7	Q Okay. And what was the U.S. response to	these Taliban attacks?
8	A You know, in that case, we went out and st	ruck the what we thought was
9	the point of origin. But at the same time had created	a particularly after we once
10	we started the withdrawal, we created a package that v	vas meant to heavily inflict
11	damage on the Taliban should they strike any U.S. forces while we were withdrawing the	
12	force.	
13	So in that case, it was, if I recall, the indirect fire	attack happened soon after the
14	announcement, and it was down at Kandahar airfield, and we went after the point of	
15	origin.	
16	Q And soon after the announcement, being t	he Go-to-Zero announcement,
17	correct?	
18	A That's correct.	
19	Q What was your assessment of whether the	Taliban were living up to the
20	commitment to cut ties with terrorist groups?	
21	A I didn't see it. I mean, it's a you know,	they always spoke about
22	distancing themselves from al-Qaeda, but without getting into classified information, we	
23	could still see the ties.	

We had potential AQ targets, and we'd strike those targets, and we had unilateral

authorities to go after those targets with our -- with the intel community.

24

When we'd go after those targets we would not share it with the Taliban. We wouldn't try to deconflict it through a military channel or anything else because we were putting U.S. forces on the ground and, quite frankly, we didn't trust them.

And after the operation they would also go, "You should have told us." And that

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And after the operation they would also go, "You should have told us." And that just wasn't a place we were willing to go prior to our withdrawal, when we were putting a U.S. unilateral package on the ground.

1	[12:02 p.m.]		
2		BY :	
3	Q	So, by saying "I didn't see it," are you saying that you didn't see them cutting	
4	ties with th	e terrorist groups?	
5	А	Yeah, I couldn't see that in a you know, what's interesting is, they are	
6	anti-ISIS.	There's no doubt about that. One of the things I told them and they would	
7	claim a lot o	of ISIS victories and they attacked ISIS too, so, you know, I want to make sure	
8	that is unde	erstood.	
9	But	what I told them is, I said, you're underestimating ISIS. I said, this thing is	
10	something	that is so dangerous for you you know, here within, you know, it's dangerous	
11	for Afghans	, but it's also dangerous for the world.	
12	Q	Uh-huh.	
13	Α	But they didn't buy into that. They just said, you know, we'll take care it.	
14	Q	Thank you.	
15	And	I have a couple of questions about the ISIS threat, but, first, going forward	
16	with al-Qae	da in particular, I'd like to introduce exhibit 7 into the record.	
17		[Miller Majority Exhibit No. 7.	
18		was marked for identification.]	
19		BY :	
20	Q	This is an excerpt by a U.N. sanctions monitoring team dated May 27th,	
21	2020.		
22	Α	Okay.	
23	Q	I'd like to direct you to what is marked page 3 in the bottom right-hand	
24	corner, spe	cifically the fifth paragraph.	
25	А	Which paragraph?	

1	Q The fifth paragraph. And I'll read the relevant portion into the record.
2	A Okay.
3	Q Quote, "The senior leadership of Al-Qaida remains present in Afghanistan, as
4	well as hundreds of armed operatives, Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent, and groups of
5	foreign terrorist fighters aligned with the Taliban. A number of significant Al-Qaida
6	figures were killed in Afghanistan during the reporting period. Relations between the
7	Taliban, especially the Haqqani Network, and Al-Qaida remain close, based on friendship,
8	a history of shared struggle, ideological sympathy and intermarriage. The Taliban
9	regularly consulted with Al-Qaida during negotiations with the United States and offered
10	guarantees that it would honour their historical ties. Al-Qaida has reacted positively to
11	the agreement, with statements from its acolytes celebrating it as a victory for the
12	Taliban's cause and thus for global militancy."
13	Does this comport with your understanding of the relations between the Taliban
14	A It does. Yeah, it's consistent with the , and yeah.
15	So that's consistent.
16	Q And can you obviously, this report's from May 2020. Can you speak to
17	the relationship between the Taliban, its Haqqani Network, and al-Qaeda in 2021?
18	A No real change. I mean, up until I left and, again, I stopped reading
19	classified information in 2021, but I didn't see a major change.
20	Now, you know, I'm aware of Zawahiri's presence in Kabul, I guess the summer of
21	'22, so
22	Q And we've had some witnesses, at least one witness, that we've interviewed
23	say that al-Qaeda is no longer a threat to the United States. Would you agree with that
24	assessment?
25	A I don't know right now. I know they were severely degraded, but I don't

1	know that they were defeated.		
2	ı	Q	And how about in 2021? Do you believe they were a threat to the United
3	States?		
4	•	Α	I think as long as al-Qaeda is out there with an idea and some operatives,
5	there is	som	e threat to, if not the homeland, to U.S. interests.
6	1	Q	And did you share these assessments with members within the Biden
7	adminis	stratio	on?
8	,	Α	I shared it with my chain of command as part of my estimate. I and,
9	again, t	his m	nay differ from the intel community I shared that I saw ISIS-K as a larger
10	threat a	and co	ertainly much more active.
11		Q	Thank you.
12		And i	if you could please
13		Α	And, by the way, that may not have been agreed to. You know, the intel
14	commu	nity r	may disagree with me. But from an on-the-ground perspective, that was my
15	viewpoi	int.	
16		Q	Thank you.
17		And i	if you could please turn your attention to the page marked 19 in the bottom
18	right-ha	and co	orner, bullet point 73.
19		Α	It's marked okay, gotcha. And it's bullet point 73?
20		Q	Yes, bullet point 73, exactly. And I'll the relevant portions into the record.
21		"Whi	le operations in Nangarhar and Kunar have weakened the ability of ISIL-K to
22	conduct high-profile attacks, debate continues as to how many operations were genuinely		
)3	carried	out h	by ISII-K during the reporting period. Member States have commented that

most attacks claimed by ISIL-K demonstrated some degree of 'involvement, facilitation, or

the provision of technical assistance' by the Haqqani Network. Furthermore, they have

24

1	stated that ISIL-K 'lacked the capability to launch complex attacks in Kabul on its own'		
2	while taking responsibility for operations that had, in all likelihood, been carried out by		
3	the Haqqani Network. Notably, the tactical autonomy of the Haqqani Network in		
4	pursuing Taliban goals enables them to support operations, which undermined the		
5	control and credibility of the Government of Afghanistan. Likewise, operations resulting		
6	in civilian casualties allow Taliban deniability whereas ISIL-K is willing to claim		
7	responsibility to demonstrate capability and relevance."		
8	And if you look at footnote 35, it provides a source there at the bottom of the		
9	page, which states, "The Monitoring Team has previously viewed communication		
10	intercepts following ISIL-K claimed attacks that were identified as traceable to known		
11	members of the Haqqani Network."		
12	General, were you aware of these relationships between the Haqqani, Taliban,		
13	and ISIL-K?		
14	A Yeah, it's actually interesting, somebody is trying to write an article using a		
15	similar source of I could never verify a Haqqani-ISIS nexus.		
16	I mean, these are ISIS does actually pose a threat to the Taliban. And I'm not		
17	talking about just on a level of violence. It's a competing ideology. And, you know, I		
18	don't think I'd have to look too deep to find Taliban members, as probably well as Afghan		

crosswalk between members, but I could never find the -- you know, the nexus.

Make no mistake, Amrullah Saleh wanted to say, this wasn't ISIS, this was

Haqqani. And he would always bother me about that as I'd get them going in the wrong -- they'd start themselves going in the wrong direction.

Security Forces, that now have defected and fight under the ISIS flag. So you have

But -- so I could never confirm that, those ties. There's certainly crossover. You know, people have crossed into different organizations.

1	Q	What was your assessment of the relationship between the Haqqani,
2	Taliban, and	I ISIS?
3	Α	Well, the Taliban tried to kill ISIS, and ISIS would kill they'd fight Taliban.
4	So, you kno	w, that's at the most basic level.
5	And	then, again, it's a competing ideology. You know, the Salafists are pushing
6	one directio	n, and, you know, the Taliban are going with their version of Islam in a
7	different dir	ection. So it definitely was a competition to try to pull recruits into their
8	organization	ns.
9	Q	That's helpful. Thank you.
10	I kno	ow we've asked this question in multiple variations, but if you'll just indulge us.
11	There's a se	quence that follows.
12	Gen	eral, just to confirm, with 2,500 troops in Afghanistan, it was your assessment
13	that the U.S	. could support the sustainability of the Afghan Security Forces against these
14	threats, cor	rect?
15	Α	That's correct. That was my military assessment.
16	Q	And what were your thoughts on a younger generation of Afghan military
17	leaders, suc	h as General Alizai and General Sami Sadat?
18	Α	Active, better you know, better coordinated, a bit more agile.
19	I dor	't know if Alizai's come before this. He's in the area.
20	But i	t went beyond Sami Sadat and Alizai. You know, they're younger men, but it
21	was really a	cross the we were starting to see some of the investment that the you
22	know, the e	xchange programs pay off and you're bringing them in there.
23	lt wa	as the first time they were allowed to serve in these types of positions. And
24	Alizai, actua	lly, for a couple days, was the chief of the Army staff prior to the fall of Kabul.
25	Sami was th	e corps commander of two corps c-o-r-p-s, okay? Other people assume

1	I'm talking about "core." But Sami did that and then ascended to the ANASOC,		
2	commander of the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command.		
3	So these were quite young officers, but they responded well and, in large part,		
4	were reliable partners not without problems, I mean, but at the same time developing a		
5	level of reliability, you know, across the force that was seen as a positive.		
6	Q Well, thank you.		
7	And do you believe that this younger generation of Afghan military leaders		
8	could've succeeded against the Taliban if given the proper support by the United States?		
9	A I think they had an they had an opportunity to do that. Yes.		
10	Q And when you say you see the, sort of, results of your investment, this is the		
11	result of two decades of investment, correct?		
12	A That's correct.		
13	Q Uh-huh.		
14	A And it's actually results of a recognizing this on a transcript, you know, I		
15	don't want to overstate this but an enlightened President, you know, going against		
16	what everybody else is saying, is, go to the old war horses, they're the ones that, you		
17	know and he went back to it with bringing Bismillah Khan back, B.K., bringing him back		
18	as the Minister of Defense, even though it was just you know, he'd argue against things		
19	like that. But these were a new generation coming up.		
20	Now, would they have had the same challenges as the older generation as they		
21	moved to different levels? Absolutely. But a hand on their shoulder would've been		
22	helpful for them.		
23	Q Thank you.		
24	I think now I'd like to introduce exhibit 8 into the record next.		
25	[Miller Majority Exhibit No. 8.		

1		was marked for identification.]
2		BY :
3	Q	This is an article from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies' "Long
4	War Journa	l" dated April 8th, 2021. The font is very small, but we'll read it into the
5	record.	
6	Α	My eyes aren't that bad, but
7	Q	My eyes certainly are.
8	Α	that one's a little rough. Okay.
9	Q	And this is written by senior fellow and editor Bill Roggio.
10	So t	his is dated April 8th, 2021. This was about a week prior to President Biden's
11	April 14th,	2021, go-to-zero announcement. And you were serving as commander as
12	U.S. Forces	Afghanistan still then, correct?
13	Α	Right.
14	Q	You'll see, at the top of this page, it states, "Al Qaeda and its regional branch
15	Al Qaeda in	the Indian Subcontinent, continue to operate across Afghanistan despite
16	repeated Ta	aliban claims that the group has no presence in the country."
17	"Al (Qaeda's enduring presence in Afghanistan is visible both through press
18	reporting o	n Coalition operations against the terror group, and Thabat, Al Qaeda's own
19	media arm	that has noted the group's operations in 18 provinces. Afghan security
20	forces have	targeted Al Qaeda operatives in two additional provinces.
21	operating ir	n at least 21 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces."
22	And	if you'll direct your attention to the fifth paragraph on this page, it states, "An
23	analysis of 2	16 issues of Thabat (issues 3 through 18) shows that Al Qaeda and its
24	constellatio	n of allies in Afghanistan have been involved in dozens of attacks from Nov.
25	2020 to the	present in 18 of Afghanistan's provinces."

1	General, were you aware of this? And do you agree with this assessment?
2	A Not aware down to this specific level. But al-Qaeda was in
3	Afghanistan you know, people proclaiming they were al-Qaeda and part of the AQIS.
4	So they're there.
5	And, again, to the degree which they were conducting these operations, I can't
6	validate those.
7	Q Fair enough.
8	A I'm familiar with Bill's reporting.
9	Q Thank you.
10	And did you assess the Taliban's ties with al-Qaeda to be a violation of the Doha
11	Agreement?
12	A Of course. I mean, that was you know, principally at the forefront.
13	What the Taliban did and it's a you know, there, we're working because
14	they're so interwoven into the society, which one of these other exhibits talked about.
15	You know, they're intermarried, they're part of it.
16	Q Uh-huh.
17	A And, you know, the Taliban was very clear that you've got to lower your
18	profile here; this is not the time. So every time we could find them, you know, we
19	weren't going to coordinate with them to address the issue.
20	Q Thank you.
21	I'd like to introduce into the record exhibit 9 next.
22	[Miller Majority Exhibit No. 9.
23	was marked for identification.]
24	BY :
25	Q This is an excerpt of an article from the FDD's "Long War Journal" again, this

1	time dated March 8th, 2020.	
2	I'd like to direct your attention to the box at the bottom of what is marked page	
3	The article cites a Taliban fatwa from the Voice of Jihad dated January 28th, 2016.	
4	The fatwa states, quote, "The Islamic Emirate has not readily embraced this deat	
5	and destruction for the sake of some silly ministerial posts or a share of the power. On	
6	the contrary, they epitomize the nation's hopes and aspirations for a just and peaceful	
7	government that will strive to build our beloved nation on the basis of Islamic law, social	
8	justice, and national interests."	
9	"The people of Afghanistan readily sacrifice their sons to achieve this objective.	
10	And the Emirate as the true representative of our people will not end its peaceful an	
11	armed endeavors until we have achieved this hope of Afghanistan."	
12	Do you believe the Taliban was focused on the reestablishment of an Islamic	
13	Emirate in 2019 and 2020 prior to Doha?	
14	A Absolutely.	
15	Q And how about in 2020 after the Doha Agreement was signed?	
16	A Still.	
17	Q And do you believe the Taliban was focused on the reestablishment of an	
18	Islamic Emirate through 2021?	
19	A I do.	
20	Q Now, when were you informed that the Biden administration made the	
21	decision to remain in the Doha Agreement?	
22	A I don't know that I was specifically contacted that they were going to remain	
23	in the Doha Agreement. I just don't think I was told we were pulling out of the Doha	
24	Agreement, so that's how we knew we were in it, okay?	
25	Q Okay. So you were never explicitly told by anyone that	

1	A No, I don't recall if I was, I don't remember.	
2	Q Okay.	
3	A And there was a lot of communications going on, so this it could be part of	
4	a conversation, but not as a not as a standalone.	
5	Q And your recommendation at the time, prior to becoming aware of this, was	
6	enforce the conditions of the Doha Agreement, correct?	
7	A It always was.	
8	And, again, what I focused on was the violence, that you can talk about a lot of	
9	different governing bodies and meetings and the rest of this, but if you don't get to the	
10	heart of the matter there were a lot of issues, but at the heart of the matter was, if you	
11	bring the violence down, you now actually have the potential for a you know, maybe	
12	not a 50-50 government split, but you have the potential for some serious discussions on	
13	power-sharing.	
14	Q And did the violence go down after the April 14th announcement?	
15	A I don't recall the violence. It may have.	
16	Let me do you want to talk about what happened after the agreement?	
17	So this is Afghanistan. And I'd remind people of this. You know, this is part of it	
18	that people just people didn't understand. It's got a history of changing sides through	
19	negotiations without a lot of fighting.	
20	And, you know, I try to remind people that in 2001 we didn't kill a lot of Taliban.	
21	What had happened was, the people had decided that the Taliban were done. And so, if	
22	you recall Hamid Karzai moving down the South and even the Northern Alliance coming	
23	down, there was a lot of people who just said, "I'm not Taliban anymore," switched sides,	
24	Taliban left, and the government changed like that.	

You started seeing signs like that post the agreement, where it's less about

- fighting and it's more about negotiated -- you know, with the elders, negotiated
 settlements with the elders, where the elders would then go to the military and go, "You
 need to leave," and troops would leave.
 - And that's how you lost districts. You weren't losing districts in these large defensive fights. You had the people actually -- it almost -- it was 2001/early 2002 in reverse, where people had decided the sides have changed. And that's not uncommon in Afghanistan, in the history of Afghanistan.
- 8 Q Uh-huh.

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- A So, you know, in terms of day-to-day violence, what I also said is, we're losing -- as we started drawing down, we were losing sensors in the field. And we were pretty -- we tried to be pretty specific and not just rely on Afghan reporting for what was happening out in the field. But once you start losing your sensors, now you're less able to discuss, you know, the violent incidents every single day.
- 14 Q Is it fair to say that they saw the writing on the walls after the announcement?
 - A No, they did. I mean, again, it was starting a little bit before then, but certainly accelerated in April, May, and then into June.
- Q And the Afghan Security Forces were still experiencing fatalities during that period, correct?
- 20 A There were some. There was -- because, actually, a couple people I knew 21 were killed.
- And I was actually getting a little concerned about outside actors, you know, getting involved here and providing some unhelpful weapons to -- you know, that threatened our capabilities during that period of time too.
- Q Uh-huh.

- 1 A So it was a tense time, as we were trying to figure out how to get the force 2 out of there. So, yeah.
- So I can't say violence went up. Fatalities were still there. What you were really seeing was -- your larger metric was districts falling.
- Q And when did it become clear to you -- so the timeframe -- that the U.S. would be proceeding with an unconditional withdrawal?
- 7 A When --
- 8 Q The timeframe. So around what time --
- 9 A To go to -- okay, so withdrawal -- because we've had a couple definitions 10 here -- going to zero, that, yeah, we were leaving, that was in mid-April.
- 11 Q Of course.

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- And our definition in terms of, just for context, why we focus on the go-to-zero is that, based on the assessments that we've heard from military leaders, including yourself today, 2,500 was enough to sustain the Afghan forces. So, when we say go-to-zero, it's really that zero number that is important to us in better understanding now --
- 16 A Right.
- 17 Q -- given what we've seen. So when we --
- 18 A At zero, you lose your infrastructure.
- 19 Q Precisely.
 - A Everything goes over the horizon, to include contracted logistics support, fires. Everything goes over the horizon. And that's a challenge that I -- and, you know, we experienced it in 2001 when we first came in here, where everything was coming from over the horizon. And it's just a -- you're working against time and weather at that point.
- Q Exactly. So, when using the term "withdrawal," that's very much what

1	we're focusing on	
2	Α	Okay.
3	Q	on the go-to-zero, on the majority side.
4	So w	hen did you become aware of that?
5	А	Of the decision to I think it was maybe the day prior to the public
6	announcement.	
7	Q	Okay. So around April 13th?
8	А	Yeah, April 13th, I believe I had a phone call.
9	Q	After it was announced, did you make any recommendations to the
10	administration not to proceed with the go-to-zero order?	
11	Α	No. At that point, I did not.
12	I me	an, a couple times, I was queried when I start because when I report, it
13	starts lookir	ng like alarming reporting. You know, I'm trying to just tell people what's
14	happening on the ground here. And every once in a while, someone would call and go,	
15	is there a way to reverse this?	
16	Q	Uh-huh.
17	Α	And I'd be kind of looking at the phone, going, if you reverse the policy, you
18	can reverse this, but, you know, if you're asking me if I have something in the toolkit to,	
19	you know, save a district that's being surrendered, I said, no, I don't have any I don't	
20	have that.	
21	And	then, obviously, at that point, I'm quite concerned about what I'd consider my
22	moral obligation that's U.S. servicemembers, that's diplomats, that's our partners. I'm	
23	very concer	ned about their force protection during this period.

But so, no one in a position that was going to reverse a policy -- you know, when

they say, can you do something about this particular event, I'd say, it's going to take a

24

1 policy reversal to, kind of, save this. 2 Q Okay. Thank you. 3 And do you recall any consideration being given to the fact that the U.S. military withdrawal would be occurring in the middle of the well-known fighting season in 4 5 Afghanistan? 6 Α Yeah. We talked about that. And, really, my view on it was, you're going 7 to waterfall; when do you want to waterfall? 8 Q Uh-huh. 9 Α You know, do you want to waterfall and, kind of, just extend out a presence 10 where, you know, you've got your force at risk? Or do you want to take it up 'til the 11 end? But you were going to waterfall at some point. 12 And my recommendation was that, actually, if we've made a policy decision, you know, based on the strategic objectives, now the overarching concern is safeguarding our 13 14 forces, safeguarding our diplomats. And so you want to try to get them out of the 15 theater instead of having them linger in the theater. 16 So, once you received your marching orders from the Commander in Chief, 17 your job was to effectuate that policy decision? 18 Α No, that's correct. And I actually, as I looked at it, that, you know, not 19 advertising when we were leaving was a better course. 20 Q Uh-huh. 21 Now, when I say not advertising it -- and we didn't. I mean, we had a 22 window to withdraw the force, and I thought that that was -- you know, that the security 23 of the force was pretty important. 24 Uh-huh. Q

I've been in other conflicts where we didn't have a real good -- in 1993, we

1	did not have vital national interests at stake. And I was only a captain, but I watched 18	
2	people killed that day for lack of a vital national interest. And I was not did not want	
3	to see a repeat of that here as we were pulling the force out.	
4	Q Thank you.	
5	Understanding that this was a policy or political decision, not a military one, are	
6	you aware of any consideration by the administration of leaving the Doha Agreement?	
7	A I don't recall if that was a I'm going assume that was a conversation, but I	
8	don't recall if it was or not.	
9	Q And were options presented for the withdrawal timeline to change?	
10	A In what sense?	
11	Q So, in terms of the end date, I believe that President Biden initially	
12	announced that forces would be out by September 11th and then	
13	A Yeah, I heard September 11th, and I heard it backed up to the end of August.	
14	Not very you know, I'll be very straightforward: Not real clear to me I know 31	
15	August was the end date. It was not real clear to me, as I was leaving, what the end	
16	date was for the Embassy security force. I don't know that they would've left on 31	
17	August had it not been precipitated by an emergency.	
18	Q Uh-huh. That's helpful. Thank you.	
19	A I don't believe there was any planning being done for them exfil other than	
20	the emergency exfil.	
21	Q Uh-huh.	
22	And you noted that, once you received your orders, your job was to effectuate, of	
23	course considering force protection as one of your most important priorities. But what	
24	did you advise Biden administration officials would likely happen if the U.S. rapidly went	

to zero in Afghanistan?

1	A I actually, not just in one administration, but in two administrations going
2	to zero is always going to be hard, okay? So there really wasn't going to be a good
3	outcome, going to zero. And now the question is, how do you make it a less bad
4	outcome?
5	And, you know, my view was, like I said, is, being present when the security forces
6	or the political forces collapse, we weren't going to be prepared for that, if we were
7	present.
8	Q And what did you advise would likely happen with respect to the survival of
9	the Afghan Government?
10	A I thought it was in trouble.
11	Q So the fall was foreseeable?
12	A Yeah, it was.
13	And, you know, again, I don't want to get into classified here, but you guys have
14	access to the intel assessments. I thought they were overly optimistic. And I
15	didn't you know, intel assessments don't influence me. The commander's assessment
16	influences you know, so I'm taking a lot of a lot of factors in play. But I thought they
17	were overly optimistic.
18	And if I'm not mistaken, they collapsed. You know, as we got partway through
19	the withdrawal, people could see the districts falling. I want to say they you know,
20	from 12 to 18 months to, okay, 6 to 9 months, the intel community was starting to
21	collapse those assessments. But that's a question for the intel community, what was
22	driving them.
23	Q Fair enough.
24	And did you engage with our NATO allies and other allied nations about the
25	withdrawal plan before President Biden announced the decision to go to zero?

ı	A we always did contingency planning with our partners, and we just talked	
2	our way through it.	
3	Now, again, the military forces on the ground, just such as I am, you know, they're	
4	the subject of political guidance coming out of NATO. So I'd spent time with the NAC in	
5	NATO, but, you know, as far as partners on the ground, it was we were communicating.	
6	Q Uh-huh.	
7	And you just testified that you learned of President Biden's unconditional	
8	withdrawal on April 13th, 2021. Do you know when our allies became aware of that?	
9	Were they notified beforehand?	
10	A I believe they were notified prior to the public announcement on the U.S.	
11	side. I sat a session where I think Secretary Blinken addressed them, and I believe it was	
12	a joint address with and I sat it remotely. But I know they were told beforehand.	
13	Now, what they were told informally beforehand, I don't know.	
14	Q Uh-huh. And how about the Afghan Government?	
15	A Afghan Government, I'm not sure of their exact timings of their notification.	
16	I did not notify them. I was like I said, I was actually back CONUS there for a short	
17	period of time, and then, of course, sat down with them after to lay out what our	
18	withdrawal would look like with them.	
19	Q Thank you.	
20	A I believe they were notified by the administration. Our administration.	
21	Q Before the formal announcement?	
22	A I think so. Yeah, I don't think they were notified with the public	
23	announcement, so I'm going to guess there was some tick-tock associated with it to make	
24	sure key people knew about it beforehand.	
25	Q That's helpful. Thank you.	

1	Our capabilities in Afghan were a key strategic position in the region that would've		
2	allowed our forces to keep an eye on other nations, such as China for example, to dispel		
3	their influence.		
4	Are you aware if any such elements of Afghanistan's strategic importance were		
5	taken into consideration before President Biden's go-to-zero order?		
6	A I don't believe that was in the conversation. You know, certainly,		
7	conversation amongst us, as you can kind of look at your geography. But I don't if that		
8	happened in the interagency process, I'm not aware of it.		
9	Q Was that part of your assessment at any point?		
10	A I kept my assessment focused on our strategic my strategic guidance,		
11	which really focused on the region. It had a peripheral you know, a little bit of a on		
12	the periphery, but, you know, the majority of it was focused specifically on the objectives		
13	assigned to me.		
14	Q Uh-huh.		
15	A So I paid attention to Central Asia, I paid attention to Iran, paid attention to		
16	Pakistan, less to China, but, you know, it was contiguous. And then but, you know,		
17	when I made my recommendation, it went to the objectives in the		
18	Q Fair enough.		
19	A Afghan strategy.		
20	Q I'd like to transition to the impact of the go-to-zero order, so it's the time		
21	that followed after, and introduce exhibit 10 into the record next.		
22	[Miller Majority Exhibit No. 10.		
23	was marked for identification.]		
24	BY :		
25	Q This is an excerpt of a report dated August 2022 that was published by		

1 United States Institute of Peace.

I'd like to direct your attention to what is marked as page 25 under the "End Game" subheading. And I'll read the relevant portions into the record.

"President Biden announced on April 14, 2021, that all remaining U.S. troops would depart Afghanistan by September 11, thus adhering to the withdrawal component of the U.S.-Taliban deal, but pushing back the deadline by four months. The announcement had an immediate impact on the negotiations as well as affecting events in Afghanistan: It emboldened the Taliban; seriously damaged the morale of the Republic's security forces; and persuaded many Afghans to think about switching sides to the Taliban, who were now perceived as likely winners. Moreover, the actual withdrawal of contractor and U.S. military support had practical impacts on the Republic military capabilities in terms of Afghan aircraft (needed to evacuate wounded troops and to support beleaguered ground troops) and accurate close air support from the United States."

Do you agree with this assessment of the impact of President Biden's go-to-zero order?

- A Yeah. I agree with Steve Brooking's assessment there.
- 18 Q And can you -- do you care to elaborate?

A Yeah, I mean, it was -- again, the idea that we'd be there forever was -- you know, always kind of thought about, yeah, eventually you leave. But when it became a reality, that, you know, certainly affected the psychology and the morale of the people of Afghanistan.

And then, of course, the Taliban, who wanted zero U.S. presence -- which, by the way, they didn't agree to 600 either. They wanted zero U.S. military presence, and they wanted all the intel people out of there, and they wanted all the contractors out of there.

- 1 You know, they had gotten what they wanted.
- 2 And the Taliban, you know, they were better at this than the Afghan Government.
- The Taliban were in the villages and they talked to people. And, again, that's when you
- 4 started getting your surrenders -- or, it really wasn't necessarily a surrender, because
- 5 that's not really how that -- that's not the culture. What you were getting was, I'm
- 6 switching sides, I'm going to swear bay'ah to you. So, by doing that, now I'm protected;
- 7 I'm in the Taliban fold and I'm under the Taliban protection. And, like I said, not
- 8 uncommon in that culture as the tide starts turning. So you were seeing more of that.
- 9 Q Uh-huh. And how is this different from when troops were down from
- 10 4,000 to 2,500?
- 11 A Well, I said this, that, you know, the Afghans would never really believe we
- 12 were leaving.
- 13 Q Uh-huh.
- A And, you know, so I -- and I had a -- you know, I was there and I had the
- ability to say, okay, we're still going to be okay here; you know, we've got to do this, this,
- and this. And, you know, in reality, we talked -- did the same thing: Okay, we're
- 17 leaving. Now let's talk about some things that we recommend you do.
- 18 We started losing less -- you know, losing our ability to really influence, at least
- 19 from our vantage point, positive decisions by President Ghani as he was kind of -- you
- 20 know, kind of putting his mind around all of this. So we lose our ability as we start
- coming out.
- Q Uh-huh.
- A But, yeah, so it's the loss of confidence in the security forces and some
- radical security force adjustments as a result.
- 25 Q And one of the things that this piece mentions is that "the announcement

1	had an immediate impact on the negotiations."	
2	Are these the intra-Afghan negotiations?	
3	A Yeah well, I think those for certain. "Why even talk to this group of	
4	Afghans that are here talking about a power-sharing agreement? We have what we	
5	want here now. We don't need a power-sharing agreement." Yeah, that's fair.	
6	Q That's helpful. Thank you.	
7	And I understand that your assessments were not focused on the neighboring	
8	countries, more so on Afghanistan itself, but do you recall what the impact on the	
9	conduct of neighboring countries was, such as Pakistan?	
10	A You know, Pakistan played a double game for so long with this thing. And,	
11	you know, I would try to explain to them, I go, "This is not going to be good for you. If	
12	we actually leave, you know, this is going to be yours to clean up here."	
13	And you'd have these conversation at a level where you'd go, they've got to	
14	understand this. But it appeared that they just kind of their policy kind of policy	
15	that had been around for a while just could never get out of the way of, kind of, what was	
16	reality in today's environment.	
17	So they were probably a little shocked that we were going to zero too. And it's,	
18	you know, for the first time now, let's envision an Afghanistan without NATO troops or	
19	without a, you know, real presence that kind of keeps us at bay here.	
20	But, again, a little bit of a double game that, you know, from my viewpoint now,	
21	it's backfired on them.	
22	Q Uh-huh.	
23	And what impact did it have on our NATO allies?	
24	A They weren't happy. I mean, that's a you know, in terms of assessing the	
25	long-term damage, that's a hard alliance to fracture. You can bruise it quite easily. But	

1	they certaini	y were unhappy, and they voiced that unhappiness in different publications.
2	Q	Uh-huh. That's helpful. Thank you.
3	l'd lik	e to enter exhibit 11 into the record next.
4		[Miller Majority Exhibit No. 11.
5		was marked for identification.]
6		BY :
7	Q	This is an excerpt of an article published by The Dispatch on June 25th, 2021
8	А	I haven't even seen these.
9	Q	The article is titled "The Situation in Afghanistan is Much Worse Than You
10	Realize: Th	e U.S. military is downplaying the Taliban's gains, and the U.S. and U.N. are
11	pretending t	nere is a viable peace process."
12	And I	believe this was published shortly before you left, correct?
13	А	Right.
14	Q	And if you could please direct your attention to the bottom of what is
15	marked page	2, proceeding after the bolded text. And I'll read the relevant text into the
16	record, but if	you'll indulge me, it's a bit lengthy, and goes onto the next page.
17	А	Okay.
18	Q	Quote, "While testifying before the House Armed Services Committee this
19	week, Chairn	nan of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley tried to downplay the
20	Taliban's gair	ns. 'There's 81 district centers that are currently, we think, are underneath
21	Taliban conti	ol. That's out of 419 district centers,' Milley claimed. 'There's no
22	provincial ca	pital that is underneath Taliban control, and there's 34 of those.'
23	"Mille	ey went on to argue that '60 percent of the 81 [district centers] were seized
24	last year, and	the others since the last two months or so.' He then went on to say that
25	while the U.S	6. is 'concerned,' there are enough Afghan forces 'to defend their country.'

"There are several problems with Milley's figures. First, he claimed that 31 or 32 districts fell to the Taliban in the past 'two months of so,' but that's a very low estimate. That was an accurate figure in mid-June, but was no longer the right figure when Milley testified on June 23, as the Taliban continued its offensive.

"The U.N. reported on June 22 that more than 50 districts have come under Taliban control since the beginning of May -- and that was before the Taliban won even more ground in the past 72 hours. My colleague Bill Roggio, who follows this more closely than anyone, thinks that the Taliban has actually conquered 60 to 70 or more districts since May 1. Roggio's figures are buttressed by reporting from the Afghan media, which has documented far more districts falling than Milley let on. To give you some perspective on the importance of the Taliban's gains, Roggio likens an Afghan district to an American county in terms of land mass.

"Second, Roggio estimates that the Taliban now controls more than 140 districts -- 60 or so more than Milley claimed before Congress. It is often difficult to discern when the jihadists have full control of a district. Even so, the majority of Afghanistan's districts are, at a minimum, outside of Kabul's control. Roggio also estimates that more than 170 districts are contested. That is in addition to the 140 or so he thinks are controlled by the Taliban, meaning three-quarters of the country is now outside of Kabul's control. Milley did not inform Congress of this dire situation.

"Third, while it is true that no provincial capitals have yet fallen to the Taliban, it is only a matter of time. The Taliban's fighters have encircled multiple provincial capitals, deliberately waiting for U.S. and NATO forces to fully withdraw from the country before seizing at least some of them. To give just two examples from recent days, Taliban fighters have made incursions into Kunduz and are on the outskirts of Mazar-i-Sharif, two of Afghanistan's 34 provincial capitals. Many more provincial capitals are surrounded."

1	I understand this is very long text	
2	A Yeah.	
3	Q with lots of numbers, General, but what was your assessment of the	
4	district numbers in control of the Taliban at this time?	
5	A No, I don't disagree with the article. I saw the country, you know and I	
6	don't believe I was, you know whoever staffed his comments to Congress	
7	Q Uh-huh.	
8	A wasn't me. I saw the country as being on fire. And, really, it was in	
9	the it was probably 2 weeks after the agreement, so it was the first week of March,	
10	where I said, pay attention; districts are falling at a rate that they haven't fallen at before.	
11	You know, now, Bill and Tom Joscelyn really, you know, were pulling this apart	
12	district by district. And we were, too, in some of our reporting as we were going along	
13	there. But I didn't disagree. And I just said, the only thing they haven't done is take a	
14	provincial capital.	
15	And I can't recall the first provincial capital it was after I left fell, without a	
16	fight, in early August. And I want to say it was Kunduz. It might've been	
17	Mazar-i-Sharif, but I think it was Kunduz. But I can't recall.	
18	But it was clear to me that, you know, this was happening, and I was trying to get	
19	people to understand this tidal wave that was happening. That's the, "It's going bad;	
20	pay attention."	
21	Q That's helpful. Thank you.	
22	And we've interviewed multiple witnesses to date, from the State Department in	
23	particular, and I've also spoken with some military leaders. And at least in the context	
24	of our transcribed interviews with some State Department witnesses, there has, you	
25	know, just to summarize, been you know, we talked about territorial gains, but that	

1	didn't lead them to conclude that Afghanistan was falling into the hands of the Taliban.
2	A Yeah.
3	Q It doesn't sound, though, as though there was a lack of battlefield awareness
4	for those who were actually on the ground. Do you believe there was a disconnect
5	between those who were on the ground in Afghanistan and the decision-makers in
6	Washington, D.C.?
7	A Almost certain I mean, almost certainly, yeah
8	Q Uh-huh.
9	A just based on the different outcome. Again, you have an intel community
10	saying, you have this much time, and you have conflicting information, and just not sure
11	we got that tightened up in time.
12	But it was clear to me it was going bad early. And, you know, without
13	trying you know well, I'll hold off on that. That's commentary that's not necessary
14	for this body. But it was fairly obvious to people who watch this closely.
15	And, you know, I'm not, you know, close to either of these two writers. They
16	were usually antagonistic, you know, to all the military commanders out there. But they
17	had it they had it right.
18	BY :
19	Q Uh-huh.
20	And do you believe if you had the opportunity to engage in more face-to-face
21	engagements with some of the administration leaders outside of the chain of command
22	that you've already outlined you would have informed them of the issues on the ground?
23	A Well, if I had the opportunity if I was in those sessions, yes, I would've
24	informed you know, I would've informed. I wasn't shy about expressing my opinion,

probably to the point of, you know, time for me to be quiet down here. So -- but it was,

- again, trying to show the urgency of what was happening across the country.
- 2 You know, one other thing -- and I don't know it if belongs in this report or not,
- 3 but Kabul is -- for those who've spent time in Afghanistan, Kabul can kind of become this
- 4 strange Petri dish. You can live in Kabul for a year and go, "Afghanistan's not that bad."
- 5 You know, you have a high-profile attack, you have a rocket attack. But if you're out in
- 6 Logar and you're living out in the villages in Logar, it's bad, and the contacts are routine.
- 7 If you're in Kandahar, it's bad.
- 8 So I think you can become -- and then, remember, post 29 February, low violence
- 9 in Kabul across the board, with the exception of ISIS-K. So the Taliban are not hitting in
- 10 Kabul. So it's very easy to go, "Hey, I can go to the bazaar, I can do these different
- 11 things. I can -- you know, it's a nice day out here in Kabul," but I think that's a -- you
- 12 know, we tried to get outside the bubble a little bit.
- 13 Q Afghanistan is generally a decentralized state with a tribal --
- 14 A Absolutely.
- 15 Q -- correct?
- 16 A Right.
- 17 Q Do you agree that in June 2021 it was only matter of time that the Taliban
- 18 would not only start capturing provincial capitals but Afghanistan as a whole?
- 19 A That's fair. I thought it was coming soon.
- 20 Q Do you believe that the U.S. military inadvertently discounted some of these
- Taliban gains due to political constraints in Washington, D.C.?
- A I don't think we discounted them. I mean, again, part of it was, again,
- 23 you're going to have a waterfall, and it's -- but I don't believe we discounted them. I
- think we were very cognizant of them, as we withdrew the force and the equipment out
- of Afghanistan.

1	Q I believe one of the things that General Milley said is "a strategic failure, but
2	a tactical success." And I'm paraphrasing him here.
3	Do you believe that political priorities or policy priorities were dictating or, at the
4	very least, over-influencing strategy?
5	A I'd prefer not to comment on that.
6	Q Fair enough.
7	A Yeah.
8	. I think we have 1 more minute left, and rather than going over,
9	we'll just stop the time now.
10	General Miller. Okay.
11	Yeah. And we can take a 5-minute break.
12	[Recess.]
13	. We can go back on the record.
14	So, today, we're joined by Representative and Ranking Member Jason Crow and
15	, who is
16	So we'll go ahead and turn it over to Representative Crow. Thank you.
17	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Great. Thank you.
18	General Miller, it's a true pleasure to see you again. I know it's been a number of
19	years. But I've watched with admiration your military career and service to the country,
20	and, you know, the things you've been involved with and the way you serve is, in so many
21	ways, you know, a model to a lot of us. So I appreciate you coming in on your own to do
22	this yet again.
23	I wanted to just start back a little bit in terms of the years leading up to 2021 and
24	better understand the context as you saw it on the ground.
25	Was it your understanding that in the 5 years prior to 2021 that the Taliban had

1	been gaining ground and territory every one of those years actually, going back longer
2	than 5 years?
3	General Miller. Yes, sir. The intel assessments were pretty consistent that
4	there was an erosion of government control. I want to say the government still had
5	majority control, but there was, you know, a constant encroachment. And I don't
6	dispute those individual intel community assessments.
7	Mr. Crow. How far back, you know, just from memory, roughly, do you think
8	that that erosion started and continued?
9	General Miller. As I mentioned to the staff earlier today, I really got back into
10	Afghanistan in the '09-2010 timeframe. And, as I recall, leading through the Afghanistan
11	surge and I know the military would have a different larger military would have a
12	differing opinion, but the intel community assessments were showing, you know, not
13	necessarily a gain of control, but in some cases a stalemate, in some cases a slight Taliban
14	edge in gaining districts.
15	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> So, over a decade, there had been an erosion to varying degrees
16	General Miller. That's correct.
17	Mr. Crow in places. And how was that, in your view, impacting the morale
18	and the viability of the Afghan National Security Forces?
19	General Miller. Well, loss of control means you lose mobility and you lose access
20	to different parts of the country there.
21	Whether, you know, in terms of affecting the morale, I didn't see that. I'm not
22	sure they were aware, you know, of the subtle losses of terrain. And control of terrain
23	was always a little bit different. It could be actually physically very dangerous, or it
24	could just be a control you know, a kind of political control.
25	But I didn't see it, like, as necessarily weighing on the Afghans one way or the

1	other. As a matter fact, when Asadullah Khalid became Minister of Defense, he was
2	aware enough that he knew he had to go back into districts that had been take over by
3	the Taliban and take them back.
4	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> As the Afghans' control shrunk over that decade, ours did too. Is
5	that safe to say?
6	General Miller. That's correct.
7	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> And as our control over territory, visibility in the territory. Was it
8	harder and harder to get reliable intelligence?
9	General Miller. Always. You're always striving to make your sensors as
10	accurate as possible.
11	And so I think you'll remember the old village stability program.
12	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Uh-huh.
13	General Miller. I mean, that was my 2010-'11 tour, and we were in every
14	province, deep into the provinces. And you had a unique perch of reporting during the
15	time.
16	Mr. Crow. And as we get later into the teens, 2020 you know, in 2017, 2018,
17	2019, and into 2020, most of that had gone away.
18	General Miller. It was gone. We were back to the big bases. We were
19	bespoked at the different large generally speaking, an airfield, with the idea of making
20	sure you controlled you know, you had a sense of what was going on, you had the
21	ability to provide our CT access, our counterterrorism access, at different points. But,
22	no, I found this to be a large base organization with forays out into the hinterland.
23	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> So, given that, before the Doha Agreement was negotiated and
24	completed, what was your understanding as to our mission there?

General Miller. As I looked at the strategic objectives when I arrived, the

1	overarching objective was the counterterrorism mission. You know, obviously, we went
2	there in 2001 because of the attack on the homeland by al-Qaeda, and, you know, as hard
3	as it was to say, in 2020 we were still there on a counterterrorism mission.
4	Mr. Crow. And how much of that counterterrorism mission was unilateral, were
5	we conducting, versus by, with, and through the Afghan forces?
6	General Miller. We'd still do some unilateral operations. Certainly, all of our
7	Predator shots, they were all U.Sunilateral.
8	But, at the same time, whenever we could, if we could use the Afghan forces,
9	whether it be our special operations forces or our intel partners' special operations
10	forces you know, I'd always prefer to go with Afghans unless the target was such that,
11	you know, it made good sense to go U.Sunilateral.
12	Mr. Crow. So the overarching mission by 2020 was counterterrorism.
13	General Miller. It was.
14	Mr. Crow. The other mission, would you say, was capacity-building, trying to
15	develop a standalone Afghan force?
16	General Miller. And it was.
17	And as I explained to staff a little bit earlier, the you know, I'd have to go back
18	and relook at the strategic document, and it may you know, the building and sustaining
19	an Afghan security force may have been one of the objectives, but it also was a ways and
20	a means to get to your overarching objective. "Don't let this thing fall apart.
21	Otherwise, it complicates the other parts of the mission."
22	Mr. Crow. So, taking it that day from 2010 to 2020, would you say that the
23	proportion of the mission set from counterterrorism to capacity-building was changing?
24	Changed?
25	General Miller. Well, it definitely changed from 2010, with the Afghan surge,

1 which was all about building an Afghan Army. 2 Parts of that still remain, as you saw when you came out to visit: the things we 3 were doing with the Air Force; the things we were doing with the Afghan commandos; 4 also our NATO partners, with their specific partner forces. 5 So it stayed there, but -- you know, the idea of supporting the Afghan corps, the 6 regular Army, still existed, but not to the depth that it did when the -- during the 7 Afghan surge. 8 Mr. Crow. So, between 2010 and 2020, the proportion of our focus and the 9 allocation of our resources changed. And am I hearing you say that, by 2020, the 10 overarching, the predominant mission was counterterrorism, was no longer the 11 capacity-building? 12 General Miller. It involved some capacity-building, but --13 Mr. Crow. Some. 14 General Miller. -- not --Mr. Crow. Overarching. 15 16 General Miller. Right. 17 Mr. Crow. The thrust. What would you just say those proportions were? 18 Was it 70-30? 19 General Miller. I'd say it's probably 60-40 at that point, because we still had 20 legacy. 21 And, again, part of what I explained to the staff earlier was, one of the reasons -- I 22 had 15,000 authorization of U.S. forces when I arrived, and I was okay pulling it down. 23 And I was okay pulling it down because I looked at the strategic objectives and said, you 24 know, we're not going to build a police force; you know, that's not going to happen. 25 And so you start pulling it down. You take out efforts that are, you know,

1	working in areas that, you know, I can't see any possible good outcome, and put them
2	against efforts that
3	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> You were triaging.
4	General <u>Miller.</u> Exactly.
5	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> And you were shedding mission sets.
6	General Miller. Right. You know, I don't know if it was necessarily triaging,
7	because I still had excess force. It's really kind of sharpening, you know, what is it that
8	we're there to do.
9	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> And were you shedding mission sets because the resources were
10	fewer and it became more and more clear to you what the Afghan forces could and
11	couldn't do?
12	General Miller. Yeah, I didn't want to keep my viewpoint was, in an area I
13	don't want to I don't want to put an unqualified force give them an untenable mission
14	and really put, you know, a lot of good money against something that's not going to
15	change no matter how much I throw against it. One, it increases the risk to the force.
16	And so, when I could pull off the things like that that, you know, enabled a political
17	pipeline, still, where we could work, you know, a political settlement, support to the
18	Afghan Government, and then support the core nucleus
19	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Yeah.
20	General Miller that is c-o-r-e core nucleus of the Afghan forces, that's
21	where we put a lot of our effort.
22	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> And this was 2020?
23	General Miller. '19 and 20.
24	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> So counterterrorism, force protection

General Miller. Some advise-and-assist.

1	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> But a diminishing amount of capacity-building than advise-and-assist?	
2	General Miller. That's correct. More focused on sustainment of the force, as	
3	opposed to building the force.	
4	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> And how many troops did you have in-country at that point?	
5	General Miller. In 2018, again, 15,000. We actually went to 8,600 after the	
6	agreement, so that was in early '20, but we had shed some of that force. We had	
7	built some you know, we probably had we'd shed maybe 2,000, 2,500 troops	
8	beforehand, without direction.	
9	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> That's helpful.	
10	So, going to Doha now, the Doha Agreement, that required 8,600. What was	
11	your understanding as to that number? And what was your involvement in helping	
12	determine that number?	
13	General Miller. That was my number before we ever entered Doha. And it was	
14	a number that there was limited risk to the force and to the mission.	
15	Mr. Crow. And so, for the 8,600, predominantly a	
16	counterterrorism/force-protection mission?	
17	General Miller. But still doing some advise-and-assist and logistics and other	
18	aspects.	
19	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Okay.	
20	And the Doha Agreement also stipulated no contractors, right, ultimately,	
21	eventually?	
22	General Miller. Ultimately.	
23	When they said no contractors, they were talking about us hiding capability in the	
24	contracted force. So, you know, as we think of contractors, they're thinking of	
25	contractors as something completely different based on their understanding of how we	

1 operate in some of our --2 Mr. Crow. But, regardless of that understanding --3 General Miller. They wanted --Mr. Crow. -- they wanted them out. 4 5 General Miller. They did not want anybody that could support the counterterrorist teams. 6 7 Mr. Crow. Okay. 8 So that's 8,600 at the time of the Doha Agreement, and then eventually drawing 9 down to nothing, with no contractors. 10 And then President Trump comes in, and that number goes to 4,500. Am I right? 11 General Miller. That's correct. 12 Mr. Crow. And what was that based on? 13 General Miller. That was -- to me, it was an order. I mean, it was a -- you 14 know, it was a step along the ladder. Because we had actually planned out how we'd bring the force down as soon as we started talking about bringing the force down. You 15 16 know, the military's got all the plans, 100 plans. And we had a plan to get to 4,500 and 17 knew what we wanted as our --18 Mr. Crow. So were you ordered to 4,500; it wasn't based on your 19 recommendation? 20 General Miller. No. 21 Mr. Crow. Because your recommendation was 8,600. 22 General Miller. It was. 8,600; you know, evaluate the conditions; then move to 23 4,500. And it really removed -- as I explained to the staff, the conditions that were in 24 play, as you looked at the totality of the Doha Agreement, was there had been no attacks 25 on U.S. forces.

- 1 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Okay. So -- and that was one of several conditions.
- 2 General Miller. That's correct.
- 3 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> And between the point at which we had 8,600 and the point at which
- 4 we drew down to 4,500, is it fair to say that that was the only condition that was being
- 5 met by the Taliban?
- 6 General Miller. That's fair.
- 7 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> That the other conditions were not being met?
- 8 General Miller. And the Taliban would've argued they were, of course, meeting
- 9 all the conditions. But, in our viewpoint, the only condition that had been met was no
- attacks on U.S. and NATO forces or our diplomatic facilities.
- Mr. Crow. So the movement from 8,600 to 4,500 was not based, as you could
- see it, upon the Taliban meeting the conditions of the Doha Agreement?
- 13 General Miller. Right.
- 14 Mr. Crow. Okay.
- 15 Then, when we go to 2,500 in January of 2021, where did that number come
- 16 from?
- 17 General Miller. That was, you know, an order. There was discussion on going
- from 4,500 to zero, and we fell in between at about 2,500.
- 19 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> That wasn't your -- it wasn't a number you came up with?
- 20 General Miller. No, it was not a recommendation.
- 21 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Do you know where it came from?
- General Miller. You know, I'm assuming it came above the Secretary of Defense.
- 23 Mr. Crow. Okay.
- So, in 2020 -- I just want to level-set here. In 2020, you had 16,000 troops on the
- 25 ground. You were predominantly doing counterterrorism and force protection. You

1	were shedding advise-and-assist and capacity-building mission sets based both on limited
2	capacity, U.S. capacity, and on your assessment as to the ability of the Afghan forces and
3	the erosion of control on the battlefield, correct?
4	General Miller. Not so much erosion of control on the battlefield, but, really, it
5	was, again, sharpening getting people out there that didn't you know, reducing
6	numbers where you didn't need people to do something.
7	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Uh-huh.
8	General Miller. Where it didn't matter whether they were or not there, it wasn't
9	going to have a positive or negative effect on the battlefield.
10	Mr. Crow. But shedding non-counterterrorism and non-force-protection
11	General Miller. Non-essential. Non-essential, in some cases.
12	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Yeah. Okay.
13	Then we went to 8,600 after Doha; then 4,500. And then when President Biden
14	was sworn in, you had 2,500.
15	General Miller. That's correct.
16	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> So, at that point, you know, that's I'm not a math genius, but that's,
17	you know, a sixth, less than a sixth of what you had in 2020. And you were already
18	shedding mission sets.
19	So, in your view, at 2,500, other than very limited counterterrorism operations,
20	did you believe you could do, really, any effective advise-and-assist and capacity-building
21	with that number?
22	General Miller. I thought it was a minimum force that would keep the Afghan
23	military in the fight. Because within that 2,500 came a pretty robust air package, to
24	include our ISR in-country.

Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Uh-huh.

1	General Miller. You know, we had the F-16s up at and different fast-movers.	
2	You know, we pulled them out of Kandahar, so Kandahar was going to be a casualty of	
3	that number. But still at Bagram you had a location, and then we retained one of our	
4	other bases down in the south, which	
5	Mr. Crow. So that's providing logistical support, ISR support, but that's	
6	not what I heard you describe is, that's not capacity-building. We're not building and	
7	expanding the ANSDF at that point.	
8	General Miller. No. At that point, you're principally focused on institutional,	
9	with a Kabul presence, and that's in the ministries. And certainly you have some specia	
10	units in the Kabul area that you could stay focused on. And then it's focused on the	
11	counterterrorism fight.	
12	Mr. Crow. And a continued erosion of battlefield control and momentum by the	
13	Taliban.	
14	General <u>Miller.</u> Likely.	
15	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Okay.	
16	So, given all of that, you're sitting here in 2021 with 2,500 troops. The Taliban	
17	are on the move, are taking more and more territory, having a momentum. Capacity by	
18	the ANSDF is degrading. You have one-sixth of the force that you had when you	
19	assessed that you could do a predominantly counterterrorism mission.	
20	What is your assessment as to how long you can sustain that?	
21	General Miller. I didn't I was asked that question. You know, "When does	
22	this end?" is really how I was asked that question. When do you you know.	
23	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Uh-huh.	
24	General Miller. And, you know, the answer was, "I don't know."	
25	I was also asked the question, are you going to need more troops if I tell you you	

1	can have
2	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Forever?
3	General Miller. Well, that's not what you were stuck with. It was forever
4	until so, until the objectives change. If you're being asked to do this, my military
5	recommendation is, you can do this better from this location
6	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Do what better?
7	General Miller. Safeguard the United States of America
8	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Okay.
9	General Miller and our interests. You can safeguard
10	Mr. Crow. But with 2,500 troops
11	General Miller. That's correct.
12	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> But given increased Taliban momentum, then on the march, taking
13	more and more territory, a degradation and a retrograde of the Taliban forces
14	General <u>Miller.</u> Right.
15	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> fewer forces than you ever had under your command, did you think
16	you could do that forever?
17	General Miller. I don't know that I'd say forever, but there was a period of time
18	that you could hold the Afghan Security Forces together.
19	One of the things on the march, there weren't a lot of battlefield victories towards
20	the end. There was a lot of psychological victories. And it was similar to what
21	happened in 2001, and that's the people deciding, this fight's over, the U.S. is leaving.
22	So you arrest that just by sheer presence. So you slow that down. I don't know
23	that you stop it, but you certainly slow it down.
24	But the 2,500 would allow to you
25	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> For some time

- 1 General Miller. Right.
- 2 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> -- but not in perpetuity.
- General Miller. Unless you made some adjustments, or unless the Afghan
- 4 Security Forces made adjustments.

- 1 [3:07 p.m.]
- 2 Mr. Crow. And "adjustments" would be additional resources, additional troops?
- General Miller. You know, I was asked that question too, and as I explained to
- 4 the staff, I said, you know, the C-corps (ph) should be 2,500 you hold, but you have to
- 5 plan for a branch that -- you know, there could be an emergency. We saw an
- 6 emergency on 15 August, where all of a sudden now we bring in another 7,000 troops to
- 7 try to stabilize the situation.
- 8 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Uh-huh.
- 9 General Miller. So you always have a branch plan. But, you know, my take
- was -- and I wasn't going to stay there that much longer; I'd already been there 3
- 11 years -- was, you can manage this and --
- 12 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> So you're managing it. You're not winning it.
- 13 General Miller. You're --
- Mr. Crow. When I say "winning," I'll clarify: You're not helping the ANSDF
- 15 prevail over the Taliban on the battlefield.
- 16 General Miller. Right. Yeah. But you're having them hold. And what
- 17 you're -- in my view of winning, is, this thing isn't going to be won militarily. And I could
- almost argue that it really wasn't won militarily anyway. It was a political collapse that,
- 19 you know, gave us Afghanistan today.
- 20 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Yeah.
- 21 General Miller. Now, with formidable military force supporting that political
- collapse.
- 23 Mr. Crow. Uh-huh.
- General Miller. But the idea being, is, do you try to do anything with Doha.
- 25 Mr. Crow. But it isn't -- the situation you described to me is not a status quo,

1 right? 2 General Miller. No, it's not status quo. It's slowly degrading. 3 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> So you're not even really holding. You're just slowing the 4 degradation. 5 General Miller. That's correct. Mr. Crow. So, in January of 2021, with 2,500 troops, the mission was to conduct 6 7 counterterrorism operations, protect our force and our diplomatic presence, and to slow 8 down the loss --9 General Miller. Keep --10 Mr. Crow. -- and degradation of the battlefield. 11 General Miller. Or keep the government and the security forces intact. 12 Mr. Crow. Okay. General Miller. I'd almost -- I'd describe it there. Because without that there is 13 14 no Doha Agreement. It's --Mr. Crow. Right. 15 16 General Miller. It's just -- it's gone. 17 Mr. Crow. But the 2,500 could not just be there in perpetuity, because there was 18 no stalemate or status quo; the Taliban were on the march? 19 General Miller. I think "the march" is too strong of a word. 20 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> They were gaining territory consistently? 21 General Miller. Year over year --22 Mr. Crow. Right. 23 General Miller. -- and with, you know, some back-and-forth on different 24 districts.

Is there a place that, you know, the Kabul -- the Afghan -- I don't really want to call

1 it the "Kabul government," because that's what the Taliban called it -- where the Afghan 2 Government consolidates and holds key cities and has a nominal level of freedom of 3 movement in certain parts, which has always been Afghanistan? That's the best case. 4 Mr. Crow. And we weren't always often dealing with the best-case scenario with Afghanistan --5 General Miller. Well, Afghanistan was a place where it was hard to find good 6 7 news --8 Mr. Crow. Okay. 9 General Miller. -- throughout the years. 10 Mr. Crow. And, then, all of what we've just discussed is in the context of the 11 Taliban not conducting offensive operations against the United States, you know, that 12 they were meeting that criteria. 13 General Miller. You know, I've thought about that, and we don't know. I mean, 14 we weren't tested. 15 I've been in Afghanistan when the Taliban declared all-out war on the U.S. forces, 16 and it wasn't a constant running gun battle. It was, you know, they'd sometimes come 17 at you, you'd go at them. Sometimes we lost servicemembers -- NATO servicemembers, 18 U.S. servicemembers -- but, for the most part, the Taliban didn't do well against us. 19 mean, we just know that. 20 So, you know, all-out war --21 Mr. Crow. Yeah. 22 General Miller. -- that people were, you know, discussing, I said, well, on 23 28 -- actually, probably about 21 February, I said we were in all-out war with Taliban and,

you know, had been in country now for almost a year and a half, and --

Mr. Crow. Yeah.

24

1 General Miller. -- you know, we were doing -- we were still able to operate. 2 Mr. Crow. Right. Still able to operate because you're professional and our 3 military, our servicemen and -women, do amazing work if they're tasked to do it. 4 General Miller. They absolutely do. 5 Mr. Crow. But that's also not, from a policymaker's perspective, winning or changing the status quo. 6 7 General Miller. Right. 8 Mr. Crow. So we're at 2,500. The Taliban are not conducting offensive 9 operations against us. We're doing CT, which we can also do over the horizon. Not all 10 the same, right? Obviously, easier to do some of those operations with boots on the 11 ground than over other options. 12 General Miller. It's a -- one of the things I talked about is, again -- and I don't 13 make value judgments on the decisions that come in here, but when you just talk about 14 how to do this, the stair is better than the periodic, trying to get over the horizon. And that's --15 16 Mr. Crow. Right. 17 General Miller. -- just weighing those two --18 Mr. Crow. Undoubtedly, all things being equal. 19 General Miller. Right. 20 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> But the picture that we're fleshing out here is that all things were not 21 equal, and the conditions continued to change and deteriorate. Is that accurate? 22 General Miller. "Deteriorate" sounds too strong for me. It's a --23 Mr. Crow. Well, choose another --24 General Miller. It's a degradation.

25

Mr. Crow. Degradation.

- 1 General Miller. It's almost like a slow bleed, is what we're dealing with, that's
- 2 going on, until people start switching sides. And when the sides start switching,
- 3 obviously, that's a rapid collapse.
- 4 Mr. Crow. So we were slowly bleeding.
- 5 General Miller. That's fair.
- 6 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> In your time in service -- and you did multiple deployments, spent
- 7 years there; I think your last stint was 3 years --
- 8 General Miller. It was.
- 9 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> -- did you ever hear anyone in uniform come to you and say, "We
- 10 can't win this"?
- 11 General Miller. I don't think I heard people say, "We can't win this." I'm sure
- there was views that this was -- I mean, I had a view, that if you're going to solve this
- problem, there had to be a political -- there had to be a political aspect to this thing. For
- 14 quite --
- 15 Mr. Crow. There was no military solution for this.
- 16 General Miller. Right. And much like many of the intransigent problems we
- have anywhere nowadays, until you can get the political settlement piece of this thing, it's
- 18 just -- it's going to be this wound that just continues to bleed.
- 19 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Yeah. And a military officer is almost never going to say, "I can't do
- 20 it."
- 21 General Miller. Well, I would call it straight, you know? I call it straight.
- Mr. <u>Crow.</u> We're both infantrymen, although you're far more bad-ass than I ever
- 23 was --
- 24 General Miller. But I call it straight.
- 25 Mr. <u>Crow.</u> -- but you find ways -- you're gonna find ways to make it work --

1	General <u>Miller.</u> Right.
2	Mr. Crow with what you have available.
3	But we have civilian control of the military, right?
4	General Miller. Absolutely.
5	Mr. Crow. And the reason is because our elected officials have to make the
6	policy and have to decide whether or not this is winnable.
7	General Miller. Or is it in the interest of the United States of America? And so
8	fully understand that aspect and support that aspect.
9	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> Yeah. Right.
10	Thank you. Appreciate the time.
11	General Miller. Good seeing you, sir.
12	Mr. <u>Crow.</u> It's good to see you again too.
13	BY ::
14	Q So we'll endeavor to go as quickly as we can
15	A Okay.
16	Q through some topics that we just want to make sure we're clear on and
17	that we accurately understand your testimony today. And hopefully I'll be able to give
18	you some of your time back.
19	A Okay.
20	Q So I want to start with just a quick followup on the Doha deal. I think in the
21	prior round there was maybe a distinction between the commitment that that deal
22	entailed and President Biden's April 2021 directive to go to zero.
23	But we went over this in our last round, correct, that the commitment that the
24	U.S. made explicitly in the Doha deal was to go to zero if conditions were met
25	A That's correct.

1	Q correct?
2	And I believe you testified previously that, within a matter of months of the Doha
3	deal being signed, the conditions were not manifesting on the ground, yet troop
4	drawdowns continued. Is that correct?
5	A That's correct.
6	Q You also said that fulfilling the aim of going to zero, which the Doha deal
7	envisioned and then, again, President Biden decided to finish that withdrawal in
8	April 2021 you had previously testified that that was, quote, "always going to be hard."
9	And if I understood correctly, your prior testimony was that we needed the
10	Afghan Government and Security Forces to be present in-country and be partners with us
11	in-country to pick up the slack that we would essentially be leaving behind as we drew
12	down our troops.
13	Is that a fair characterization of your view?
14	A Yes. But going to zero without a deal, that's what was going to be hard.
15	You know, the idea was, you know
16	Q Without a political settlement
17	A Right. Yeah.
18	Q between the Afghans?
19	A So the idea was, if you can get you know, you get a political settlement,
20	then going to zero is different.
21	Q Uh-huh.
22	A It's different. Because we talked about contracted logistics support and the
23	rest. You know, things change if you actually get a political settlement.
24	And perhaps that was just a wish and a hope that wasn't ever going to happen.
25	You know, there are some people that have said, you know, the Taliban were never going

1 to do this. And I'm not in a position now to disagree with them. 2 But that was -- as the political discussion started, you know, the idea is, you 3 actually have to -- if you're going to end a war, you have to get to a political place, or you have a complete turnover, which is what we saw --4 5 Q Yeah. 6 -- was a complete turnover. 7 And did we understand your testimony correctly earlier to be that the Q 8 concerns you had about the substance of the Doha deal -- namely, the release of 9 prisoners that it required the Afghan Government --Α 10 Right. 11 -- to do, which returned some fighters to the battlefield, and the lack of 12 mechanisms or lack of substance in the deal that really got at the Taliban reducing violence against Afghan forces -- you saw those as impediments to ever reaching a 13 14 political settlement, correct? 15 Α Yes, that's fair. So you knew that chances for a political settlement were going to be dim 16 Q 17 when the deal was signed. 18 Α That without either incentives or something else, that it was going to be very 19 difficult. 20 Q And you relayed those concerns and those views, as you testified 21 previously --22 Α Routinely. 23 Q -- to senior officials. Did that include Secretary Pompeo, who you

You know, I think -- I'm almost positive he saw the same challenges as well

24

25

mentioned you had --

1	with the Tal	iban.
2	Q	But the deal was, nevertheless, concluded.
3	А	That's correct.
4	Q	And now that you
5	Α	And this is I'm saying post was when I started seeing they're going as you
6	go into the	deal, you're hoping for the best. That's not what you're basing your
7	preparation	s on, but so your preparations are based on the deal not being upheld in
8	certain area	s or at least not in all areas. But the so, yeah, if you're not seeing it
9	happen ar	nd, again, one of the reassurances was, don't worry, this is an opening, this is
10	conditions-k	pased, we can adjust. That wasn't the Taliban's view of the deal.
11	Q	Uh-huh.
12	And,	, ultimately, you testified that it wasn't that conditions changing on the
13	ground wer	e not informing successive troop drawdowns
14	Α	Well, except for the lack of violence against our forces and our facilities.
15	Q	Uh-huh.
16		_ Do you have any more? Go ahead.
17		. So I want to introduce another exhibit. This is the transcript of
18	Ambassado	r Ross Wilson's transcribed interview.
19	If yo	u can turn to page 10
20		. And this will be exhibit 12. Thank you.
21		[Miller Minority Exhibit No. 12.
22		was marked for identification.]
23	Gene	eral Miller. Am I allowed to keep these exhibits afterwards
24		<u>.</u> No.
25	Gene	eral <u>Miller.</u> or do I have to give them all back?

1	. You have to give them back.
2	General Miller. There's some interesting reading here.
3	. We made a packet
4	General Miller. Yeah.
5	so that you can look at it.
6	BY :
7	Q So, on page 10, the first full paragraph, Ambassador Wilson says:
8	"When I met with Secretary Pompeo, he told me that my top priority was to
9	support the implementation of that agreement." This is the Doha Agreement that the
10	Trump administration signed with the Taliban. "The Afghan Government, as you all
11	know, had been excluded from the agreement, was deeply opposed to it and opposed to
12	what it aimed to achieve."
13	You served with Ambassador Wilson. You, I think, testified that you and he both
14	engaged repeatedly with Afghan Government officials. Would you agree with his
15	assessment that the Afghan Government opposed the agreement?
16	A They were not happy about the agreement. They were on the outside of
17	that agreement, even as much as we tried to be transparent with them of what was
18	taking place. Clearly, the Taliban were excluding them, and then I think you might have
19	heard that Ambassador Khalilzad and President Ghani had something of an interesting
20	relationship that maybe precluded deeper coordination.
21	Q Would you agree that the Afghan Government opposed what it aimed to
22	achieve?
23	A No. What it aimed to achieve you know, it wasn't that they were
24	blocking it to stop a political settlement. The terms, I don't believe they felt that they
25	had the input into it to determine what that political settlement should look like. That's

1	what they were opposed to. They were vehemently opposed to that.
2	Q They were opposed to the political settlement approach?
3	A Well, not a political settlement approach; a political settlement approach on
4	somebody else's terms that did not include them.
5	And, again, going back to the intra-Afghan talks, you never really had you had
6	Afghan Government officials. You never really had an Afghan Government body that
7	talked with the Taliban.
8	Q And, to be clear, the terms of that peace process and that negotiation was
9	defined in this agreement that the Afghan Government opposed, as you just testified.
10	A Say that one more time.
11	Q The terms of the peace process, the peace agreement, the peace
12	negotiations
13	A Right.
14	Q that was defined in this agreement that the Afghan Government opposed.
15	A Yes. But in the again, better question for Ambassador Khalilzad. I don't
16	believe it was his intention to fracture the Afghan Government and have a fractured
17	delegation, you know, talking to the Taliban. He saw, you know, an Afghan society, you
18	know, talking to the Taliban, certainly under the umbrella of the Afghan Government.
19	But there was a this was a government that felt like they were left out of negotiations.
20	Q And, in your experience, when you have a key party who is a real
21	stakeholder in an outcome
22	A Right.
23	Q that opposes, essentially, or feels excluded, is it your sense that an
24	agreement like that could be successful?
25	A Well, both sides are very tough, I mean, just to be clear. I mean, the

1 Taliban was tough, but so was the Afghan Government. And, of course, neighbors 2 wanted to help them, you know, solve their problems, and that was even more fuel on 3 that fire. 4 But both -- yeah, they were not fans of this. And, to some degree -- I mean, 5 they're, you know, vociferously opposed to it now in retrospect. You know that. I mean, you can see that in daily interactions. But, yeah, the Afghan Government did not 6 7 support this process. They went along with this process, but they didn't necessarily 8 support it. 9 Q But the Taliban supported this process. It was advantageous for them. 10 Α The Taliban wanted to negotiate with the United States of America. 11 Q Yeah. 12 Let me just read one quick thing, and then I'll turn it back over to my colleague. This is from the Washington Post profile. 13 14 Α For me? My profile in there? Yes, your profile. 15 Q 16 Α Okay. That's comfortable. 17 That's why I'm reading it. Q 18 Page 5 of this, it's at the bottom, the second paragraph from the bottom. 19 Α Do I even have it anymore? 20 Q I think it's exhibit --21 . Exhibit 3. 22 General Miller. Okay, here it is. 23 <u>.</u> There you go. Perfect. 24 BY

That one you can keep. No, just joking.

25

Q

1	It says, "Miller and several people who served under his command declined to
2	describe the deal in detail. But one former staff member said it was a struggle to 'not be
3	embarrassed' after seeing the specifics and how tough it would be for Miller to stop [the]
4	violence."
5	"'When you see something written like that and you have an analytic brain, a
6	curious brain, my initial reaction is: "Is this it? Really?"' the official said."
7	Just before I turn it back over, I'd love to get your thoughts on that.
8	A Again, it's a you know, what are our rules of engagement?
9	If you'll recall one of the things I said early, as I looked at this because I knew I
10	was going to strike the Taliban. I knew I was going to. So the Taliban would say, "If
11	we're doing this, you can't strike us." And I'd go, "That's not how I read this." And
12	they go, "No, if you do this and you strike us, you're in violation of the agreement."
13	And that's really when I kind of decided, I go, "I'm going to be the person who's in
14	violation of the agreement, routinely, because we're going to strike the Taliban if they
15	continue this type of violence." So that's, I think, what they were probably referring to.
16	Q Okay. Thanks.
17	A We struck. Okay? Please don't think we you know, in some degrees,
18	my guys were more worried about violating the agreement than I was, and I'd go, "No,
19	you strike, in defense of the Afghan Security Forces. You don't take the Taliban's
20	definition of what an attack on a checkpoint is; you take our definition of an attack on a
21	checkpoint."
22	Q I think the concern, potentially, is that when the agreement was briefed to
23	staffers on the Hill, for example, about the conditions
24	A Right.
25	Q when looking at the agreement, it is clear that it is a prohibition to attack

- 1 U.S. forces. There is zero prohibition in that agreement on attacks on the Afghan
- 2 Government.
- And so, when many people talk about whether or not it's a one-sided agreement,

 which is in some ways how I read that quote, there is obviously concerns about how you
- 5 shape an agreement and not make it one-sided --
- 6 A Yeah.

13

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- Q -- and you have a party who feels excluded and delegitimized by a negotiating process.
- 9 A Without a doubt.
- Now, you know, one of the -- just so you do know, the Afghans would go, "You've taken away all our air support." I go, "On the contrary, I've given you all our air support." I said, "Now, can you get that air support to the point of need?"
 - You know, you actually have to have a communications architecture that gets that air support to a point of need. I mean, if you have a checkpoint out there that's completely unsupported, it has no communication, you're right, I probably won't find that checkpoint that's in need. But if you actually have a checkpoint out there where you actually have leadership on it? So --
 - Q On that point, did they ever say, well, we just need 10 more years, 5 more years, 15 more years of your support?
 - A No, that's not how the Afghans talked about it. You know, I think I implied, the Afghans did not believe the United States of America was going to leave. I mean, so you know that. Now, in terms of putting a timeframe on it that clearly, those weren't the types of conversations. It was like, "We know you're going to be here with us in this struggle." That's more along the lines of the conversation.
- 25 Q Thanks.

1	A Okay.
2	BY :
3	Q Okay. Just one more followup.
4	You had testified previously in the last round to our majority colleagues that the
5	Afghan Government, in early 2021, as the Biden administration began its policy review of
6	Afghanistan, they wanted to, quote, "make the case" to the new administration for
7	maybe revising or rescinding this deal that we've been discussing. And I believe you
8	testified that you encouraged them or wanted them to be able to make that case.
9	Is that a fair summary of your testimony?
10	A No. My input was because no one was asking me to make the case
11	Q Okay.
12	A to do anything with the deal in 2021. My input to the group was: If
13	you're going to do anything, you know, to put pressure on the Taliban, if you want to
14	make one push, you've got to stop violence. You know, it's not going to be a Moscow
15	Conference or a conference here or a conference there that's going to change anything in
16	this. I said, it's got to be about violence.
17	Q This was your recommendation to the U.S. Government?
18	A This was my recommendation to my counterparts on the negotiating team
19	Q Okay.
20	A as well as the negotia I mean, because I had a relationship with
21	Ambassador Phee, Ambassador Khalilzad, and the staff around them. And I said, if
22	you're going to go in here and have a shot, you know, stopping violence has to be at the
23	top of your list; otherwise, you're really not going to move this anywhere.
24	Q Okay.

Then -- let me make sure I understand -- when you said earlier that your

- perception was that the Afghan Government wanted to make its case to the new
 administration, what did you mean by that? Can you help us -
 A Oh, I just thought that they thought they had a new administration, they
- President Ghani always had some grand plans -- I mean, always. And he was a very smart individual. I mean, you know, he's the one that he's ready to hit you with a 45-PowerPoint presentation, a roadmap. And he believed that he had that access with the incoming administration.
- 9 Q Okay. Did he have that access with the prior administration? Had he ever 10 made this case previously?
- 11 A He had access, but -- and he made it to different people.

were going to be able to talk about the way forward.

- 12 Q And what was the result of him making the case previously?
- 13 A Probably similar to him making the case in the second -- you know, in the new administration as well.
- 15 Q Which is that it was not successfully made?
- 16 A It did not.
- 17 Q Okay.
- 18 I also just want to clarify for the record, you were shown exhibits 6 and 7.
- 19 A Which are?
- 20 Q This was a report from SIGAR, is exhibit 6, and then I think a U.N. report was
- 21 exhibit 7.

- A So you had Brooking's, Steve Brooking's, and you had SIGAR. Okay.
- 23 Q I think --
- 24 A I don't know where they are.
- 25 Q -- that's exhibit 7 right there.

```
1
               Α
                     This is 7?
 2
               Q
                    Yes.
 3
               Α
                     Okay.
                     So, for the SIGAR report, I believe the date of that was January --
 4
               Q
               Α
                     This is not -- this is SIGAR. Okay.
 5
                     -- January 2021.
 6
               Q
 7
               Α
                     Right.
 8
               Q
                     But the portions you were looking at with the majority were looking
 9
        backward.
                    Is it your understanding that SIGAR reports on things that have essentially
10
        already happened and reviews and assesses those things?
11
               Α
                     Well, certainly. I mean, there was some prep time beforehand.
12
               Q
                     Yes. So the content of that report is referring to evidence that was
13
        available or facts that were emerging in 2020, prior to January 2021. Is that a
14
        fair assumption?
15
                     I'm just looking at the headlines. It looks like it's 2020.
16
               Q
                     Yeah. And then the U.N. report, I believe the date on that is May 2020?
17
               Α
                     19 May 2020.
18
                     Okay. So, just by virtue of the dates, those findings, those assessments,
               Q
19
        would've been available to the administration at the time in 2020 --
20
               Α
                     I would assume so.
21
               O
                     -- to inform their decision-making?
22
               Α
                    I would assume so.
23
               Q
                     And is your assumption that that kind of input was not factored in or did not
24
        manifest --
25
               Α
                     You know, I don't know. I don't -- there is obviously -- I've got a lot of
```

1	publications around me. What was you know, how information was processed in
2	either administration, I don't know.
3	Q Okay. But it was
4	A Whether it was factored or not.
5	Q Yes. But it was knowable in 2020?
6	A Fair.
7	Q Yep. Okay.
8	And then, just really quickly, since I think you liked this exhibit or getting to read
9	testimony that hasn't yet been made public, there's one more exhibit I'd like to offer.
10	This is the testimony of Mark Evans
11	A Okay.
12	Q who was give me a minute. He testified before this committee. This
13	is the draft transcript. And he was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for
14	Afghanistan, I believe, from October 2020 through the evacuation
15	A Okay.
16	Q through the noncombatant evacuation.
17	<u>.</u> Exhibit 13.
18	[Miller Minority Exhibit No. 13.
19	was marked for identification.]
20	General Miller. This is exhibit 13?
21	I don't know Mark Evans. That's the first time I've I know Marcus Evans, but I
22	don't know Mark Evans.
23	_ Fair enough.
24	BY :
25	Q Okay. If you draw your attention to page 15 of that testimony

1	Α	Right.

- 2 Q -- starting on line 14 --
- 3 A Okay.

- 4 Q -- through page 16, line 16, I'll go ahead and read those into the record.
- 5 Sorry. Let me start with page 15, line 9.

"And so we were looking at the planning in those two respects. As noted, the NEO planning, which was ultimately the responsibility of the military and specifically under the AOR of CENTCOM, our role in that regard was one of providing information, answering the questions that they had so that they could get -- could gather the data necessary to plan for that type of operation.

"That received very broad and high-level attention very soon into this -- into the new administration. If I recall correctly, it was in March, I believe, when I accompanied, for example, the Deputy for Management and Resources, Brian McKeon, and the Acting Under Secretary for Management, Carol Perez, to an exercise that the Pentagon did on a Saturday morning to talk about issues associated with a NEO and to do some initial planning in that regard.

"That was a very high-level exercise, essentially Cabinet-level, but that represented the type of attention that these issues were getting -- was getting. The -- of those interagency meetings that I mentioned earlier, you know, it was a mix of topics there were covered, but a large number of those, significant number of those meetings every week touched on issues having to do with a possible evacuation scenario and what would be needed and who we would -- who we would be helping, et cetera.

"And so the types of questions that would be asked of the State Department were assessments or estimates of, for example, how many U.S. citizens were present, how many people who were eligible for SIVs remained in Afghanistan, or potential eligible.

1	There was a lot of discussion about who else might warrant U.S. assistance and trying to
2	define that group and what sort of assistance we would provide to them and so on.
3	"In terms of the other possible scenario, a non-urgent crisis type of evacuation, I,
4	as one of the things I did, as Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, was to pull in all of the
5	offices within the State Department that would have a role in that type of an evacuation
6	and do contingency planning with them. That working group that I formed met, I would
7	say, formally two or three times, but informally we communicated by email over time to
8	address various aspects of that planning and those requirements.
9	"Then, when August 15th came and the Taliban took over, our role, from my
10	perspective, shifted quite a bit, because then it was an execution phase in terms of just
11	moving forward with meeting the requirements at the time. And the State Department
12	formed a task force that was in charge of all of those efforts and working very closely with
13	those who we had on the ground in Kabul and our military colleagues."
14	Was any of the information that he shared in that testimony familiar to you?
15	A Some was.
16	Q Can you elaborate?
17	A I would actually like to talk just a little bit, to make sure I'm not going to
18	violate a DOD equity here.
19	. I would remind the witness that
20	General Miller. No, I think I want to talk
21	a response might implicate executive branch confidentiality. So
22	would you like to confer?
23	General Miller. Could I talk?
24	<u>.</u> Sure.
25	Can we please go off the record?

1	[Discussion off the record.]
2	. We can go back on the clock and on the record.
3	BY :
4	Q So I think I can move on and hopefully make this less complicated for you.
5	A No, it's already complicated, but if you want to but if you ask that
6	question, I will address it.
7	Q Let me actually go to a different portion of his testimony. I'll give you two
8	pages this is 98 and 99 of his testimony. This might get it more succinctly.
9	On line 14, it starts, "And that is because, I believe, as you previously testified, you
10	felt that the plans as related to the evacuation were deliberate. Is that right."
11	Answer: "Yes, they were deliberate, and I believe that they were
12	comprehensive. We were very dedicated to answering all calls for information that
13	came our way from CENTCOM, from the Department of Defense.
14	"I know that as part of those planning processes and as we were approaching the
15	summer, once the decision had been made to withdraw troops, CENTCOM made the
16	decision to preposition certain equipment at the region that they anticipated that they
17	would need if somewhere were to happen and it was required."
18	Question: "And I believe you also testified that you found interagency
19	communication, particularly with the onset of the Biden administration, to be robust. Is
20	that correct?"
21	Answer: "Yes, that's an appropriate assessment, in my view."
22	I'm going to stay away from asking you to clarify the content of any exchanges
23	between the State Department and CENTCOM. I just simply want to know if you have
24	any reason, A, to dispute his testimony specifically, his testimony that there were
25	extensive, comprehensive, and deliberate efforts within the Department of State going on

- during that year to plan for contingencies of possible evacuation.
- 2 Is that your recollection?
- A I don't know if that was or not. The tabletop exercise you referred to didn't
- 4 happen in March. It happened in May. Okay? And --
- 5 Q And we don't need to get into the substance of any specific exercise, if that's
- 6 easier.
- 7 A Well, no, I think it's actually somewhat relevant. And, again, May is when
- 8 this stuff is starting to -- in my view, starting to already become readily apparent. We
- 9 talked about some of that in the previous round.
- And my view was that the -- when we talked about going to zero, that everybody
- 11 needed to go to zero pretty rapidly, not just the military. That was expressed in there, in
- 12 that particular meeting.
- 13 Q Okay.
- Let's just -- let's pivot away from this to a little bit further in time. This is August
- 15 2021.
- 16 A Okay.
- 17 Q This is --
- 18 A Now, I'm gone in August 2021.
- 19 Q Okay.
- A Oh, this is testimony.
- 21 Q This is testimony of Carol Perez, who was the Acting Under Secretary for
- 22 Management.
- And I want to call your attention to page 96, line 14.
- 24 A I have 125 and 126.
- 25 Q Oh, I'm sorry. Let me give you this.

1	<u>.</u> Exhibit 14.
2	[Miller Minority Exhibit No. 14.
3	was marked for identification.]
4	BY :
5	Q So, on page 96, line 14, at the end of the line, it says, "Where did things
6	stand by mid-August 2021 in terms of, sort of, being able to replicate or perform those
7	functions?
8	Her answer is: "I think on some of the contracting things we were in a pretty
9	good place to go, right? If I recall, DOD was willing to let the contracts you know,
10	trying to work through the modalities of sort of getting through that. Again, this is
11	not we're not talking about uniformed military to doing this. We were in pretty good
12	shape to go. Because those are, I think it was more the hardware that we needed,
13	more than anything else."
14	She's then asked: "Do you believe that that process should've started sooner?"
15	Answer: "You know, I just I don't know. You know, I think that the embassy
16	was in a good place to begin with. Again, this is an embassy who for decades had been
17	in a war zone. This is not like, you know, we were living in housing with pools in the
18	backyard, you know? I mean, they were in hardened facilities that, over time, had been
19	made more safe"
20	"Uh-huh."
21	Answer: "to meet threats, which had gone up and down over the years. So it
22	wasn't as if we started from scratch. It was just more, now that a decision had been
23	made which was made in April and then, you know, now we had a deadline, which
24	was September, now's the time to really kick it into gear."
25	And let me just draw your attention to the end of her testimony on this topic.

- On line 20, she says: "And, again, to me, it was getting people into the compounds, get
- 2 rid of these offsite locations we have, let's get everybody consolidated. That was what
- 3 was needed to be done. And I think we could've done most of that, you know, by
- 4 September 11th."
- 5 So Carol Perez -- had you ever met Carol Perez in your --
- 6 A I think so.
- 7 Q Did you meet her in Kabul?
- 8 A I think she came out for a visit, but I don't know that I --
- 9 Q On or around May 2021?
- 10 A Perhaps.
- 11 Q Okay.
- 12 A I'm going to say yes since [inaudible].
- 13 Q And the reason that I raise this is to see if you have any concerns or reason
- 14 to dispute her testimony.
- As you can probably tell from the excerpts I read, she's describing the efforts that
- 16 were ongoing inside the State Department to prepare for the continuity of the
- 17 U.S. diplomatic mission after the full drawdown of troops.
- 18 A Yeah.
- 19 Q Do you have any reason to disagree with or dispute the characterization that
- she's made of the plans that were underway?
- 21 A Here's what was -- it was missing some information.
- There was this assumption of "we don't need the military" at first. Trust me, that
- 23 was out there. "We don't -- you know, you're withdrawing. Get out of here. All of
- 24 you, just go away."
- 25 And then, all of a sudden, this realization that, you know -- and the idea being that

1	we have Columbia helicopters, you know, different contracts let. Then you start
2	thinking about, well, how do we protect ourselves against indirect fire? Well, that's
3	U.S. military, that's C-RAM.
4	How do you keep Columbia helicopters even in the game, which is only there
5	because of the NATO presence? You know, they're all going to leave when we leave.
6	mean, that's not a it wasn't a, "Please stay." They're leaving when we leave, while
7	they still had the ability to get out of country. And, in some cases, you know,
8	they're because they're contracted through U.S. companies.
9	And so this idea of a decision, "We can do this all on our own," changes over time
10	to, "Well, maybe we need 50 military," "Maybe we need 100," "Maybe we need 150,"
11	"Maybe we need 600," you know, as it grew and grew.
12	So I believe there was some learning going on here. And we were trying to help
13	too, just going, if you say you need this capability, this isn't a capability you can buy.
14	This is a capability, you know and if you try to buy it, contract if you try to buy that
15	security, you know, contracts take 90, 120 days to put in place in some cases. So now
16	you start becoming dependent on a military presence to provide the additional security.
17	Q Uh-huh. Okay.
18	A So I don't dispute her testimony. And I actually think now I remember
19	meeting Carol it was Carol, right?
20	Q Uh-huh.
21	A I remember meeting her and trying to talk her through, you know, the
22	challenges. And this was still before we, I think, had settled on a U.S. Embassy presence
23	Q Okay.

The reason I raise these exhibits is because you've testified a few times today that

you didn't interact with Secretary Blinken over the course of --

24

1	A I didn't. We actually had a phone call scheduled probably in mid-April, and
2	for some reason it got canceled. But he and I did not talk.
3	Q And you've also testified, if I'm characterizing your testimony correctly, that
4	you would've liked maybe more access to the interagency process that was ongoing in
5	2021.
6	A I thought it was curious that I wasn't involved in it.
7	Q But based on the testimony from these two other witnesses, do you have
8	any reason to believe that there wasn't a robust interagency process going on
9	A Well, no, no, no, I knew there was DCs and NSC I mean, I was aware of the
10	schedule. I just wasn't present.
11	Q And you have no reason to dispute Mr. Evans's testimony earlier that the
12	process was comprehensive and deliberative?
13	A I wasn't there.
14	Q Okay.
15	A I assume it was comprehensive and deliberative.
16	. That concludes our round.
17	General Miller. Okay. All right.
18	The Reporter. Off the record?
19	<u>.</u> Yes, please. Thank you.
20	[Recess.]
21	Back on the record.
22	BY :
23	Q General, I imagine I know the answer to some of these questions, but I think
24	they're important to be asked.
25	Firstly, there's been some discussion around the term "winning." And you've

1 provided us a helpful explanation as to, A, why the term is not necessarily appropriate 2 and, B, what your interpretation of that term would be if utilized. 3 But have you been following the events following the U.S. withdrawal from 4 Afghanistan, the Taliban takeover, pertaining to the oppression of Afghan women and 5 religious and ethnic minorities? Α 6 Yes, I am. 7 Going back to the term "winning the war," in 2020 until -- really, until our Q 8 complete withdrawal or the go-to-zero order for Afghanistan, its execution, were women 9 in Afghanistan generally able to move freely, especially in the capital or district centers? 10 Α They could. 11 And at that time when the U.S. was present in Afghanistan, were women Q 12 generally stoned to death for certain violations? 13 Α No. 14 O And around that time, were religious and ethnic minorities in Afghanistan, such as the Hazaras, persecuted and oppressed? 15 16 Α No. 17 Okay. Thank you for answering the questions. Q 18 So, pivoting now, General, do you agree with the assessment that following 19 President Biden's go-to-zero order on April 14th, 2021, the Taliban were resoundingly 20 triumphant. 21 Α Yes. They -- their goal was our departure. 22 The zero, correct? Q 23 Α Right. 24 And did they have the same response when we went to 4,500? Were they Q

25

celebrating it as --

1	Α	You know, I don't recall different celebrations. I'm sure they, you know, in
2	their propag	gan in their information channels, which I consider propaganda channels,
3	I'm sure tha	t the signing of the Doha Agreement, that that was trumpeted as a major
4	victory. I'd	have to go back and look at it. And I didn't really pay that much attention
5	to their pro	paganda post our announcement as well.
6	Q	But their
7	Α	I monitored Afghan information, but it was pretty consistent, what I'd hear
8	from the Ta	liban, from the Voice of Jihad.
9	Q	But their goal was zero, correct?
10	Α	It was.
11	Q	I'd like to introduce exhibit 15 next.
12		[Miller Majority Exhibit No. 15.
13		was marked for identification.]
14		BY ::
15	Q	This is a study published by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point,
16	titled "Afgha	anistan's Security Forces Versus the Taliban: A Net Assessment."
17	I ima	gine you're familiar with West Point?
18	Α	And the CTC.
19	Q	So, if you could direct your attention to the page marked as 20 that's the
20	only page in	this packet and specifically the second sentence in the first bolded
21	paragraph.	And I'll read the relevant language into the record.
22	"Acc	ording to a net assessment conducted by the author across five factors size,
23	material res	ources, external support, force employment, and cohesion the Taliban
24	would have a slight military advantage if the United States withdraws the remainder of its	
25	troops from	Afghanistan, which would then likely grow in a compounding fashion."

'	General, were you aware or this study:
2	A I know Jon. I know all these guys. I didn't see this particular study.
3	Just so you know my position on this, it goes back to what I said before: This was
4	not about who was going to kill who on the battlefield. And it was so similar and I just
5	think people forgot to 2001.
6	If you could just picture this, you know, everybody's going, oh, my God, we've
7	been attacked from the you know, from Afghanistan. We're in there, and it toppled.
8	It toppled psychologically across there. There was some fighting, some killing, some
9	raids. You know, we chased bin Laden up into the White Mountains up in Jalalabad.
10	But the Taliban were Karzai came in, and people were, you know, surrendering
11	to him. He came in with some military support, but not a lot, and people were
12	surrendering to him. And it was a reverse.
13	And, again, going back, if you just watch that history, it's in Central Asia, but
14	Afghanistan specifically, you've watched that fall before.
15	Q Uh-huh.
16	A So this net assessment was things like this, at that point, were mildly
17	interesting to me, but it wasn't it's about, you know, where are the people?
18	And I talked with Congressman Crow, I talked a little bit about village stability
19	back in the day. That was all about the people. That was less about the Afghan local
20	police or guns or anything else. It was, can you get the people, and, really, can you get
21	the elders and the people that are responsible in these locations?
22	And that's what the Taliban targeted, very clearly. And they just went to them
23	and said, look, if this is over and people agreed with them. And that's why you saw
24	the districts fell at a rapid clip.
25	Q Uh-huh.

1	A So that was not the rapid clip was not a slow bleed. I hat, to me, was,	
2	here comes a wave.	
3	Q Uh-huh.	
4	A And I think Kandahar fell I actually talked to an Afghan; I was in Tampa.	
5	When Kandahar fell, I said, 2 days for Kabul, that's it. And it's because now people are	
6	just decided, you know, it's a new side. And that's what they do; they switch sides. It's	S
7	not that they switch sides every week, you know, like we've heard in the past, but	
8	So a net assessment is interesting, but this wasn't a ratio of forces against forces	
9	at that point.	
10	Q Uh-huh.	
11	Was the go-to-zero order the final, sort of, psychological blow for the Afghan	
12	people?	
13	A Yeah, they were going in that direction anyway. Because, as we were	
14	coming down, again and I go back to that term that was asked; I can't recall which side	
15	asked it was the uncertainty question. So there was uncertainty, but then, when the	
16	certainty came, the certainty wasn't a positive for the Afghan Government and the	
17	Afghan Security Forces, so	
18	Q And that certainty being the zero, correct?	
19	A Right. And that's what I said: Zero regardless of who was in charge,	
20	going to zero was never going to be easy. And it just wasn't going to be.	
21	Q Makes sense. Thank you.	
22	I want to transition a bit. And I know we've talked about this so apologies for	
23	any sort of redundancy, but I promise there's a rhyme or reason specifically as to the	
24	contractor issue a bit more.	

Okay.

•	Q Tou had noted impact that the contractors had on Alghan military, and, in
2	particular, you provided examples of its impact on the Afghan Air Force.
3	Did the U.S. ever come up with a plan to properly make up for the loss of these
4	key enablers?
5	A A plan was developed. And, actually, Curtis Buzzard was coming in behind
6	Lieutenant General John Deedrick, who had been the CSTC-A commander. I had two
7	CSTC-A commanders, three if you count Curtis. I had Jim four, because there was one
8	before Jim Rainey. But I had Jim Rainey in there. They manage all that for the Afghan
9	Security Forces. That's where the big budget is; it's over in CSTC-A.
10	And then John Deedrick, you know, as we were triaging and adjusting the force,
11	John Deedrick managed it. And as Curtis Buzzard came in and this is what goes to
12	Congressman Crow's and Curtis Buzzard's a fine officer.
13	And a lot of what I was concerned about, as I was getting ready to leave and I was
14	getting new people in, you know, they only want to accomplish the mission. I don't care
15	whether you're from State Department or CIA, you're coming in new to the theater; you
16	just want to get the mission done.
17	And, you know, what I tell the people, it's not "hooah" time. It's, you have to
18	actually identify the yes, you know, are we going to go ahead and work an
19	over-the-horizon possibility? Absolutely. Because part of going to zero, even as you
20	go to zero and you have the ability to do this over the horizon but that means in
21	another country, aircraft flying in and out. You know, we're not doing maintenance in
22	Afghanistan.
23	So we tried to do it. I mean but I told you know, as I kept explaining to
24	people as they were coming in new and I knew I was leaving, I said, listen, I'm not raining

on the parade here, because that's not what we do. What we do is, we take the -- you

1	know, we take the new mission, and you propose options.
2	But what I really wanted my team to do is make sure you identify the risk.
3	Because if you kind of brief this as a typical military briefing, "Yeah, we can do this." You
4	need to make sure that people understand the risk levels associated.
5	Q And what were the risk levels
6	A High.
7	Q associated with this?
8	A They were high. Everything was always high in Afghanistan. But, you
9	know, again, based on your proximity and your ability to kind of solve the problem by
10	showing up, you could mitigate it and maybe get it, you know, less than high. But you
11	never got to low-risk. You never had anything in Afghanistan that was low-risk.
12	But when you get to high-risk, now have you to start working the really working
13	the mitigation here. And it was going to be difficult. Same with the for both sides.
14	It's what I was talking about with Representative Crow, is that the you can still do CT
15	operations from over the horizon, but the risk level's a little bit different.
16	And that's you know, what we do is, we take the assigned mission and then we
17	work within that. But just because you don't get exactly what you want, you have to
18	acknowledge what the challenges are going to be. And then you have to communicate
19	those challenges up.
20	Q Certainly.
21	And in terms of the contract [inaudible] with the contractors, what was the plan?
22	A Fly for maintenance, phase maintenance, those types of things. You fly
23	from Kabul. I think it was I think we had a base in UAE. I'm pretty sure it was UAE.
24	So UAE agreed to an air base in which we'd moved the contracted logistics

support down to another base. So, now, as your aircraft comes into a maintenance

- 1 period, you fly it out, and then it comes -- you know, it's there for 2, 3 days, and then it 2 comes back. You know, so you had transit, plus maintenance, back in here.
- 3 Just a vignette for everybody. It was actually really refreshing to hear. So this 4 was part of my first assessment, because, like I said, I hadn't spent much time with the Air Force. And I found an Air Force officer, and he was telling me how great things were 6 going and, you know, this was a great capability. And I said, you know, just, when can you leave? He goes, well, what do you mean? I said, well, when can you and this 8 contracted team -- that costs money --
- 9 Q Uh-huh.

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- 10 -- I said, when can you leave? And he said, never. And I went -- that was 11 actually a very candid answer. And I went, okay.
 - So that, you know, serves as a point, if we lose this, we have to recognize that we're going to lose the Afghan Air Force.
 - You know, if we looked at foreign military sales, it's pushing away different, you know, different additions to the Afghan Security Forces because I didn't think we were going to be here to be able to support it. And so I -- you know, we've already talked about in the press all the equipment that was left behind. That wasn't our equipment; that was Afghan equipment that was, you know, part of the foreign military sales program. But the more you give to them that they can't maintain if we're not there, to try to keep that -- put a stop to that.
- 21 O Uh-huh.
- 22 So long answer there, but that's obviously a -- the "never" comment was Α 23 early on in my command tenure, and it was very illuminating too.
- 24 That's helpful. Thank you. Q
- 25 And in terms of -- you touched upon an important issue in terms of, sort of, the

1 weapons that were provided and the helicopters, et cetera, to the Afghan military. 2 Based on your assessments, though, it was not a matter of if Kabul would fall to 3 the Taliban, or Afghanistan would fall to the Taliban, but when it would fall, though, correct? So it was --4 I think it was more a "when," as opposed -- and that is consistent with -- you 5 6 know, depending on -- we could argue about the timelines, but that was consistent with 7 the intel community's assessment that it's going to fall. And SIGAR, obviously, was in 8 that camp as well. 9 Q Uh-huh. So, unless these materiels were actively destroyed -- which, some 10 of it was, in other contexts -- it would inevitably land in the hands of the Taliban. 11 Α Right. And we could not destroy it. I mean --12 Q Of course. 13 Α -- as we were leaving, you know, we're trying to actually set them up for 14 success, you know, with the idea that it's going to be used, not abandoned. 15 Q And we talked about the, sort of, rapid Taliban gains in May, June, and July. 16 Understanding that you left sort of mid-July there, what specific actions did the U.S. take 17 as the districts fell in rapid fashion? 18 We didn't have a lot of options at that point. And, again, there's Afghans in Α 19 this equation too. So picture Ashraf Ghani -- I mean, I actually -- I didn't bring them. I 20 found the set of notes that I wrote in my last meeting with Ashraf Ghani. It was almost 21 disbelief. 22 It was when I was getting ready to change command and Frank McKenzie came in, 23 you know, and we sat down and we talked with him. I'm trying to remember who else 24 was -- certainly, Ross Wilson was with us. 25 But I wrote those notes down there. They're almost surreal. You know,

his -- "I'm going to get some South African contractors. I think I can get some
 South African contractors to replace" -- and it didn't fit in the realm of reality.

But, you know, as he's talking -- but I wrote it down here. I'll read it to you

before I leave, just my -- really, my last note, before the decision, to Dr. Mohib, just kind

of urging him, going, "You've got to settle your security apparatus down. You've got to

anticipate what's coming at you, and you've got to settle it down."

But I said -- Bismillah Khan, who was Mohammadi, who had been a previous

Minister of Interior, a Minister of Defense, a Northern Alliance guy -- you know him,

-- he comes back in as the Minister of Defense, which surprised me, because I suggested him at one point to President Ghani, and he, you know, screamed at me and didn't really want me in the office after I suggested that name. And I was going, "I'm just trying to think of a name that, you know, your servicemembers will look up to and think they've got somebody in charge." And he was like, "No, no, no," but he didn't say it quite that nicely.

So then Mohammadi comes over and sees me, and I'm literally a week out, and he knows I'm leaving. And he says, "Just promise me that you're going to give me air support." And all the air support was already -- it was now over the horizon.

So I said, "Listen, you're going to get the air support that we can provide." But it's a different dynamic if something takes off at Bagram Airfield or down at Dwyer in Helmand Province, because now, to launch an aircraft, you have to get through weather. And if the weather is going to close in or behind, you can't launch preps. So you don't have coverage. The weather can be perfect in Afghanistan, but if you have weather in the -- you know, between or scheduled to come between, you can't launch.

And so I was trying to explain to him: Of course we're going to give you air support, but there's not that much air support. It's much more sporadic.

So you got me on a long -- I'm now burning your time here, and my time. But that's -- I mean, that's what we were seeing at the end, okay? So they were looking for help, and we were about out of the -- even with Admiral Vasely, he didn't have a lot of -- he didn't have a lot of capability.

And I explained to him before I left, I said, resist -- resist -- I said, I know it's going to be hard because you're a two-star, you're not a four-star, but resist the idea that you become Resolute Support mind (ph). I said, you can do the same things that we were doing, you know, even 30 days before, because you don't have the same capabilities.

Now, people are going to start thinking you should be able to do that -- and I'm talking about military. This is not a -- anybody in the civilian community. They're going to say, can you do this, can you do that, and sometimes it's hard to say, no, I can't. I could say that. I was a little concerned Pete might not be able to say that.

1	[4:09 p.m.]
2		BY :
3	Q	That's helpful. Thank you.
4	А	Yeah.
5	Q	And just so I make sure I'm understanding correctly, at that point in time,
6	U.S. forces	were no longer on the battlefield with the Afghan Security Forces, correct?
7	All of the re	esources had been focused on the retrograde itself?
8	А	Yeah, so there was because we had the concentration in Kabul, you still
9	had a connection with the ministries	
10	Q	Uh-huh.
11	А	you know, and how much of that they took advantage but there's no
12	advise-assist-and-accompany going on at this point, and there hadn't been for a while,	
13	because we	e'd been in the withdrawal of forces.
14	Q	Thank you.
15	Α	Yeah.
16	Q	General, multiple administration officials, Biden administration, have
17	testified to	the committee that the Taliban took over and that the Afghan military
18	collapsed ir	i just, quote, "11 days."
19	Doy	you agree that, in reality, the collapse of the Afghan Army and Government
20	had been cl	early happening for months at that point?
21	Α	Certainly, I think it was being degraded over time.
22	And	the Afghans, in the best of times, had an AWOL problem. And I don't know
23	what you	know, again, losing the touches there was probably an endemic AWOL
24	problem that was going on. This is me surmising now.	
25	Q	Uh-huh.

1	A But there were too many things that were happening at the same time.
2	Now, you know, I think you've had some of them come testify before you.
3	think they wish they had stayed and they'd fought, they'd rallied around Kabul and they
4	had fought. But they didn't, and they're here and but that's a regret they have,
5	particularly the young officers.
6	Q Certainly. And we did speak with some of them.
7	And, General, do you think, then, that the warning signs were there throughout
8	2021 and not just in August? Would you agree with that statement?
9	A Warning signs of collapse?
10	Q Correct.
11	A Yeah, this situation it was very clear the situation to me, it was very clear
12	the situation was deteriorating.
13	Q You touched upon this briefly just a few minutes ago, but it's our
14	understanding that a key consideration in the administration's withdrawal was the
15	confidence in our over-the-horizon capabilities to support our Afghan allies, target
16	terrorist organizations, and keep American citizens safe. This is another issue that
17	General McKenzie touched upon, as well, in his public testimony.
18	Was it your assessment that those over-the-horizon capabilities were not a
19	sufficient substitute for U.S. military presence in Afghanistan to accomplish those goals?
20	A Yeah, so that's a it's not the same as, okay? So, rather than say
21	"insufficient" or "sufficient."
22	And, again, it becomes a choice. If you're in close contact, you can kind of, you
23	know, collapse your timelines, your response times, everything. You know, that's where
24	I want to be as a military commander, where I have resources that I can move quickly.
25	As you move them over, it doesn't mean it's impossible but it does get harder.

- 1 And that's the -- you know, that's the understanding of it. But that goes back to, you
- 2 adjust your objectives. And we manage risk on the battlefield as the military. That's
- 3 what we do. We manage risk on the battlefield and at the operational level.
- 4 And then when you're talking about, you know, risk at the national level,
- 5 that's -- you know, that's our leadership. That's our civilian leadership. Which, I think
- 6 you guys all know I absolutely support the concept of civilian control. Okay?
- 7 Q And understanding that we're in an unclassified space, can you speak to how
- 8 many U.S. air strikes were conducted from January 2021 through the first half of
- 9 July 2021?
- 10 A I'd have to go look. There was a lot. We did a lot. We were not
- inactive. And that's why I kind of -- I don't -- I probably had read the Lamothe article,
- but I was looking at it, going, "I wonder who said that."
- We were active -- again, I had to actually push the guys a little bit, because they
- were actually worried about breaking the agreement. I mean, everyone felt a little bit of
- 15 pressure of, am I going to be the one who breaks this agreement?
- 16 And I'd go, listen, I said, just let me worry about that; you strike. You know, if I
- tell you you took a bad strike, we'll talk about it afterwards. I said, but if you're killing
- 18 Taliban that have moved, you know, farther than 100 meters away that they, you know,
- in their mind -- I'm not going to let them define this for us.
- Q Uh-huh.
- 21 A And so we took a lot of strikes.
- And that's what I'd tell the Afghans. "You're not giving us any support," and I'd
- 23 go, "Everything flying in the evening, you know, with the exception of something that's
- working against an al-Qaeda target or an ISIS-K target," I go, "it's yours." And I said, "But
- you've got to tell me where you need it."

1	Q mat's neiprui. Thank you.
2	And I know you're no longer in this position at this point, but can you speak to
3	how many U.S. air strikes were conducted after August 30th, 2021?
4	A I don't know. Less, if any.
5	Q That's helpful. Thank you.
6	A I think there was a strike in response to the Abbey Gate attack, which that
7	didn't turn out well. And I don't know about any U.S. military strikes, but I haven't
8	looked for them either.
9	Q Uh-huh. That's helpful. Thank you.
10	I'd like to introduce exhibit 16 into the record next.
11	[Miller Majority Exhibit No. 16.
12	was marked for identification.]
13	BY :
14	Q This is an excerpt from the book "The Internationalists: The Fight to
15	Restore Foreign Policy After Trump," authored by Alexander Ward and published in 2024.
16	I'd like to direct your attention to the second paragraph, which begins: "One
17	meeting on May 8 got heated. The Pentagon organized a rehearsal for how to conduct
18	an evacuation operation with senior officials, including Lloyd Austin, Jake Sullivan, Deputy
19	Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, General Milley, and General Miller. Once again,
20	Pentagon and State Department officials tussled over whether it was necessary to close
21	the U.S. embassy in Kabul as American troops left the country. The recommendation
22	from Defense Department officials was that it would be too risky to operate as usual."
23	"Brian McKeon, the deputy secretary of state for management and resources, said
24	it was the diplomatic ethos to live with danger. 'We at the State Department have a

much higher risk tolerance than you guys,' he said, according to three people in the room.

1	All the unif	ormed personnel either stiffened or shifted uncomfortably in their seats.
2	Milley near	ly jumped out of his chair, but restrained himself from shouting how he and
3	many servi	ng in the armed forces had lost friends in war. Austin showed no signs of
4	anger, but l	ne later told colleagues that he was offended by McKeon's remark."
5	Gen	eral, do you recall this meeting?
6	Α	I do.
7	Q	First, addressing the disagreement between the Pentagon and the State
8	Departmen	t regarding keeping U.S. Embassy Kabul open after the military went to zero,
9	can you ela	borate on the State Department's position on this issue?
10	Α	The intention was to keep the Embassy open.
11	Q	And that was even if the Taliban took over?
12	Α	I don't know that that question was asked, but it was it was, keep the
13	Embassy op	pen.
14	Q	And General Milley appeared before the committee for a public hearing held
15	by Chairma	n McCaul on March 19th, 2024. In that hearing, he stated that it was the
16	general cor	sensus in the military that the Embassy should be coming out at the same
17	time as the	military.
18	Doy	you agree with General Milley on this point?
19	Α	I do. That was my position.
20	Q	Was it your assessment that keeping U.S. Embassy Kabul open without a U.S.
21	military pre	esence would endanger lives?
22	Α	I thought it would increase the risk.
23	Q	And what was your assessment based on?
24	Α	Again, the collapse of the country; that the bigger we were, if we hit crisis

point, the harder it was going to be for us.

Q Uh-huh.

A And, you know, I've -- and I have not talked about this with many people. I mean, I've not talked about this publicly or with anybody else. You know, what I have said, though, is -- I've said, you know, the best way to stay out of an emergency is don't get into an emergency. And it's a -- we got ourselves in an emergency.

And I don't actually like commenting on the 15th to 31st because I wasn't there.

I promise you, I had to -- you've probably had multiple people come through here. The same angst that they felt, I felt it deeply throughout, because there wasn't much I could do. My phone was ringing off the hook because all the Afghans had my contact information. I could help some; I couldn't help all.

I watched veterans get dragged into this, and there was no talking them off of it.

I watched my son, who had only a very small amount of time in Afghanistan, but he's got a name that's very similar to mine, they understood who he was, so once they got his phone number, his phone was going off the hook. So I know what was happening there amongst the veteran population. That's something that not only was it happening to them but I'm part of that population and still am today, with requests for assistance.

The bigger you are when things go bad, it's hard to leave.

You know, and I wasn't going to provide any commentary, but we took criticism over Bagram Airfield. You've seen it. And it's come from both sides of the aisle, by the way. And I'm apolitical, and I'm actually fairly thick-skinned. But I'll tell you something: There's, like, other pieces that just weren't picked up on, and I wasn't there when this happened.

When we left -- when Kandahar was evacuated, very similar actions had happened at HKIA -- people rushing the airplanes, because no one wants to get left behind. And so you were trying to move people -- and I knew this because the guys were talking to me,

the Afghans were telling me. This thing feels like it's an emergency, and you're begged to get out of there. It's hard to get out of there. We all know that. This is not -- we just know that.

- And I wasn't going to add this, but I will. I actually talked to the Marine commander who was going to go in there early, and I said, "You're going to do a NEO at some point, because we're not doing the things we need to do to avoid a NEO. And we're going to do it probably under some really adverse conditions."
- I said, "It's going to be up to you." I said, "I would tailor your force. I would pick your most -- I would tailor your force and not just come in with an organic force but pick your most mature Marines you have and retask, organize. Because it's going to be really hard."
- So Bagram and how we got out of Bagram, I don't think much is known about that. We closed Bagram. We did -- Bagram was basically a small U.S. city by the time we got to '21. We brought in the Afghan commanders, and we showed them how the water treatment plant worked, we showed them how the electrical facilities worked. We didn't really believe they were going to, you know, stay with us on this, you know, and understand, but we wanted them to at least have a working knowledge of this.
- But Bagram was -- it was in the middle of the night. President Ghani, the Minister of Defense were all aware that we were going to leave and that we'd be leaving in this window. And it was closed up by a Ranger battalion. They were the last ones on the ground, living out of rucksacks, and they left.
- Now, you know, people said, "You left in the middle of the night. What kind of departure was that?" And I said, "It was a departure where no one was rushing our aircraft." And it was a clean departure, and it was conducted after the last NATO forces left. When we got word that the Germans had left Mazar-i-Sharif, then we rolled up

1 Bagram. So, as we look at this thing -- and, ____, I know I'm going over -- this is just risk. 2 3 It's risk analysis that goes beyond a military commander. It's all of us. I mean, it's 4 trying to understand risk. 5 You know, I've been asked in small forums, they go, do you think we learned our 6 lessons? And I said, I sure hope so. But I've got a lot of history that shows that maybe 7 not. You know, I go back to 1979, as a young cadet at West Point, when I watched the 8 Iranian Embassy get overrun, just not understanding where the risk is, and you end up 9 getting caught in positions. It's nobody trying to do something really bad; it's just not 10 getting ahead of the risk curve. 11 So I guess that's my comments on that. 12 Q Thank you, sir. I appreciate that. 13 Α Yeah. 14 O And I do have some questions about Bagram, but I'll follow up with those thereafter. 15 16 Α Okay. 17 There's one other component of this excerpt, and that's specifically former Q 18 DMR McKeon's statement that the State Department has a higher risk tolerance than the 19 military. 20 Was it your assessment that the State Department had higher risk tolerance than 21 the Department of Defense? 22 No. I think it was a lack of understanding of the risk. Α 23 Q Thank you. 24 You mentioned the NEO and the fact that you believed it would be likely given the

situation and the steps that weren't being taken.

1	When did you first discuss the possibility of a noncombatant evacuation order, of	
2	a NEO, with the State Department?	
3	A That largely was not my writ, okay? That's why, you know,	
4	CENTCOM you know, as Frank McKenzie goes, "You worry about getting the force out.	
5	I'll worry about planning this."	
6	So, again, the Marines that, you know, came in and did site surveys, the other	
7	forces that came in to do site surveys, while I was there, you know, as the senior officer	
8	on the ground, they weren't coming in to report to me. They were, one, doing site	
9	surveys but in direct support of CENTCOM at that point.	
10	So those conversations you know, I had the informal conversations about my	
11	assessment of what might happen out here, but I didn't get into very deliberate NEO	
12	conversations.	
13	Q Makes sense. Thank you.	
14	Understanding that you were not involved in sort of the process itself, but having	
15	been someone who, I would say you know, I think it's fair to say you're an expert on	
16	Afghanistan, its tribalism, the Taliban, et cetera.	
17	Based on General McKenzie's public testimony, as well as information that we've	
18	received in the course of our investigation, it's our understanding that the NEO was	
19	requested as the Taliban were at the gates and Kabul had effectively fallen into their	
20	hands.	
21	Do you believe that the NEO was requested too late by the State Department?	
22	A Yeah, it was too late. It was too late.	
23	Q Do you believe that our soldiers, including the brave 13 who lost their lives	
24	trying to save Americans and Afghans, had to assume more risk because the State	
25	Department was unprepared to evacuate?	

1	A Yeah, so I don't want to attribute that to the State Department, but I'd go
2	back to, if you get yourself in an emergency if the building's already on fire before you
3	start evacuating it, it's a much more challenging evacuation.
4	Q Uh-huh. Thank you.
5	Now, I promised we'd address Bagram, so I'm going to get there.
6	Were you forced to make life-and-death decisions on defense posture in the
7	evacuation mission, including the shutting down of Bagram, based on the number of
8	troops in Afghanistan?
9	A You know, I don't know that they were life-and-death. And that's, you
10	know, not how I work and solve military problems. It's all based on the risk.
11	And, again, without getting into too deep of a commentary, once we made the
12	decision to depart Afghanistan, my calculus changed. And I've told people that. I said,
13	my calculus changed.
14	I still had a very capable Special Operations Task Force that was very focused on
15	al-Qaeda. And, actually, in the post the decision, we had an al-Qaeda target. We
16	didn't have those a lot, but we'd have those periodically.
17	And my instincts always are you know, it's a bias for action; you're going to go
18	ahead and do this. Because this actually gets back to the main objectives. We have
19	the capability, and we can do it with reduced risk. And I stopped doing those missions.
20	And I one, and I went out and I talked to the guys, too, because I know they're thinking,
21	"Hey, we've got to go," and I said, "I'm not going to order this operation."
22	And I don't order those types of operations based on what I said, what I learned in
23	'93. I carried it, you know, for many years forward. I was a very junior officer who only
24	just wanted to get in the fight and, you know, wanted to have someone shoot at me.

And so I wanted to go on every operation. But we did an operation on 3-4 October that,

1	you know, as much as I kind of wish there were, I had a really difficult time, in the
2	aftermath, of finding a vital national interest. And if I'm going to lose somebody, I want
3	to at least be able to look at the family and say, there was a vital national interest at stake
4	here.

And so, when I looked at it, we had made an adjustment. And our adjustment was, we think we can accomplish the objectives from afar. And, again, I made very clear, you know, I may have internal opinions and I have military recommendations, but I don't make value judgments on Presidential decisions. That's our Commander in Chief.

Q Uh-huh.

A But, at that point, my focus was, how do I get these guys out of here without hurting somebody?

And I'm going to be very honest with all of you. You want to talk about -- I don't usually get scared. I don't. I was scared. And you know what I was afraid of? I was afraid I was going to lose somebody, that I was going to have something happen down in Helmand to my SF, you know, ODA down there, where I'm holding them there too long as I'm trying to get them out. And I was concerned.

And it was kind of a very tense time for me, and I was watching it as we went through that, because that's not -- you never want to lose anybody. You just never, never want to lose anybody. But that was a period of time where I was going, this is going to feel really, really bad.

And so we did build a very robust response package. And, kind of, you have the tell the guys, you go, "Look, if something happens to you, just know, whoever does that to you, you know, we're going after them immediately. You know, this is not going to be, they get to do stuff to us." Because we were worried about the Taliban post 1 May.

So not life-and-death, but just managing risk.

1	And it was a you know, in terms of a difficult time, dealing with Afghan people
2	that I'd spent years with. You know, the force and I want the force to go out there
3	positive. I didn't want them to go out there going, what was this about?
4	So it's risk, and not life you know, not thought about in life-and-death, but risk.
5	Q That makes sense. Thank you for that.
6	And that sort of brings me to a followup question based on that information. Did
7	the United States have to reduce or end strikes against al-Qaeda and ISIS-K after the
8	go-to-zero order in 2021?
9	A We kept some capability. But there came a point, and it's sometime in
10	June, that I mean, that's when we sent the fixed-wing aircraft, or probably our F-16s at
11	that point the A-10s had already been gone we sent them over the horizon, so that's
12	a reduction in strike.
13	So we kept an expeditionary Predator package in place, but that largely became
14	more about force protection. So, at that point, we were focused on protecting the
15	force, not fighting the CT fight.
16	Q That's helpful. Thank you.
17	And in terms of Bagram, in particular, do you recall what the breakdown was of
18	the terrorist population at the prison there?
19	A That was a mix. You know, it was a the prisons are you know, when
20	you kind of talk ISIS-K, you had you know, you almost certainly had some al-Qaeda
21	sympathizers in there. And you may have had people that went in there that weren't
22	sympathizers that were likely radicalized. But you had an ISIS-K floor; you had a Taliban
23	floor.
24	And, in the prisons, it's a hotbed and always has been for where terrorists you

know, between a mosque or a prison, you're going to get more radicalization in a prison.

1	So I	don't know the exact breakdown. I think we'd have to pull into that and kind
2	of see what	t our last assessment was.
3	But	it was a little harder for us. We at one point still had a mentoring team in
4	the prison a	and, you know, an intel look inside the prison, but that was as we started
5	pulling off,	those were some of the things we gave up.
6	Q	Thank you. And
7	Α	And you also had Pul-e-Charkhi down in Kabul, as well. So you have more
8	than one pr	rison. You have prisons down at Kandahar and other places.
9	Q	And given your warnings with respect to, sort of, the Taliban's likely military
10	takeover of	Afghanistan, what was the U.S.'s plans to secure these terrorists if the Taliban
11	advanced to	oward Bagram and toward Kabul?
12	Α	I don't know that we had a plan.
13	Q	Appreciate that.
14	And	we've since learned, as a result of the reopening or, sort of, supplemental
15	review of th	he Abbey Gate report, that one of those prisoners was the Abbey Gate ISIS-K
16	terrorist.	
17	А	Yeah, I read that in the report, but I didn't that was not something I'd been
18	following fo	or the last 2 years.
19	Q	I'd like to now talk to you about the time following the Taliban takeover of
20	Afghanistar	n, promising to keep it as short as possible.
21	Can	you speak to the impacts of the U.S. withdrawal, specifically the go-to-zero,
22	and the Tal	iban takeover on global terrorism?
23	Α	I don't know if I can speak to it in global terrorism. I do watch I do watch
24	different te	errorist groups. And I also pay attention to the great-power competition and

1	Center up at West Point, so they're always trying to keep me abreast of the different
2	global jihadi threats.
3	Q Uh-huh.
4	A Yeah, Afghanistan you know, there's other places like Afghanistan. So
5	this is not you know, you have places in Africa, you have places in Central Asia, you
6	have places in the FATA. I mean, you have multiple places where terrorism can thrive.
7	But this is just one of those places that's a it's an iconic piece of ground, and so, you
8	know, that's just something I was concerned about.
9	And I've heard the argument, well, if you're going to do Afghanistan, why don't
10	you do these other 40 places? And, in some cases, we are doing some of those places,
11	perhaps with a smaller footprint and maybe a little less overt presence there.
12	So, I mean, I'm concerned about it.
13	Q And do you believe that the United States's unconditional withdrawal, the
14	Taliban takeover, and, sort of, their framing of it as winning, sort of, the war on terror has
15	emboldened terrorists worldwide?
16	A I don't know that I can go that far. But, like I said, the Taliban always
17	estimated what they could do from a counterterror perspective, and, in some cases, I
18	believe they'll enable may potentially enable and house terrorists.
19	Q And, transitioning a bit, this is an issue that's very important to the
20	chairman, and it's specifically the moral injury and impact the unconditional withdrawal
21	had on U.S. servicemembers following the catastrophic withdrawal.
22	They have spoken to what losing a war in which thousands of their fellow
23	servicemembers died and the abandonment of hundreds of Americans and tens of
24	thousands of Afghan allies has done to their psyche.

Can you please speak to how the catastrophic withdrawal resulted in moral injury?

- 1 A Well, I mean, I think you laid it out. You know, war take as toll on anybody.
- Q Uh-huh.
- A And, you know, it's not just Afghanistan. I mean, we see it in our veteran
- 4 population. You know, whether our veterans serve short tours or longer tours, we just
- 5 see it. So we know it's real out there. And there is a variety of reasons.
- 6 And Afghanistan, I know, has affected people. I've tried to help them and, you
- 7 know, help them steer in the right direction and encourage them what not to do. But I
- 8 think it's not just Afghanistan, but, you know, the way we came out of there felt
- 9 traumatic. It just did. I mean, it felt traumatic for all of us, and probably not unlike
- what Saigon looked like for Vietnam veterans after spending so much time in Vietnam
- and seeing an evacuation off the roof. It's probably pretty similar.
- 12 Q Thank you for that, sir.
- 13 I promised we would end earlier than the 1-hour mark. I just want to give you an
- opportunity to sort of close with any additional statements. I know we've had sort of a
- 15 long day. So if --
- 16 A Yeah, I've had a long day.
- 17 Q -- there's anything else you'd like to add?
- 18 A Any -- you guys okay with questions?
- 19 Q I think the minority will have their time --
- 20 A Oh, separate. Okay.
- 21 Q -- to conclude it, yes.
- A And you're not going to let me talk at the end, huh? Is that -- okay. Why
- 23 don't I hold 'til the end?
- Q Okay.
- 25 A Because there are some things I think -- and you guys take them or leave

1	them. But, you know, you're an oversight committee. You're actually important to,
2	you know, the governing of the United States of America. And I just think I have a few
3	thoughts that might be you know, I can't do them. I can think them. But I'll share
4	those with the committee, okay?
5	Q Then, in that case, I'll just ask some closing questions in terms of
6	preparation.
7	I believe you touched upon this in your opening statement, but how did you first
8	learn of the committee's interest in conducting a transcribed interview with you?
9	A When you and I spoke.
10	Q Okay. And what kind of preparations did you undertake for this interview?
11	A Self-preparation.
12	Q Were any U.S. Government officials involved in your preparations?
13	A They were not. I did that purposely too. I just didn't want to do that.
14	General, we greatly appreciate your voluntarily appearing
15	before the committee today to answer our questions. On behalf of Chairman McCaul
16	and the rest of our team, thank you for your decades of service and sacrifice to the United
17	States.
18	Chairman McCaul's goal in this investigation is truth, transparency, and
19	accountability. We thank you for answering our questions honestly and
20	comprehensively in furtherance of those goals.
21	And, with that, I'll close the majority's round and open it up to the minority.
22	General <u>Miller.</u> Okay.
23	I'm good without a break, unless you need one. Do you guys need a break?
24	. We'll go off the record.
25	[Recess.]

1		Okay. So we'll go back on the record quickly just for a few last
2	followup qu	estions from the minority.
3		BY :
4	Q	First of all, you were asked in this last round the number of U.S. strikes that
5	have been o	conducted against targets in Afghanistan since August 31, 2021?
6	А	Right.
7	Q	You referenced a strike subsequent to the Abbey Gate
8	А	Which was before
9	Q	Yes.
10	Α	U.S. forces had evacuated.
11	Q	I just want to recall for the record, what transpired in August 2022 regarding
12	the U.S. stri	ke on Zawahiri?
13	Α	But not a military strike, to the best of my knowledge.
14	Q	Okay.
15	А	That's what I was that's why I was so not U.S. mil. I think the question
16	was U.S. mi	I.
17	Q	Okay. Thanks for the clarification.
18	I also	o wanted to ask: You had said previously that, when you met with Ghani in
19	July of 2021	as you were preparing to leave the country, you had previously used the
20	phrase with	him, "Don't worry unless I tell you to worry," and you noted earlier today that
21	you didn't t	ell him to worry.
22	Α	We had that conversation earlier in the withdrawal, you know, where I
23	literally wer	nt by and did a one-v-one with him and talked to him a little bit about my
24	departure,	explained that.
25	Q	When was that conversation?

1	A Probably the end of June, maybe early part of July. And it wasn't really a,
2	go tell them you know, tell them to start to worrying. He could figure out what was
3	happening. But I wanted to be real clear with him on what was going to transpire as I
4	departed the country.
5	Q Okay. So, at that time, I believe you testified earlier that you saw a
6	degradation in the situation, but you didn't raise any specific alarms with him?
7	A He saw them. You know, he was again, what was happening and a lot
8	of it was their reporting or even Taliban reporting and it was just the press reporting,
9	which were the loss of districts at a very that was not a slow bleed, okay? This was
10	just like, boom, boom
11	Q Uh-huh.
12	A just kind of coming down. And you could see what they were doing.
13	They were surrounding Kabul, and they were kind of taking control of, you know, key
14	places across the country.
15	Q So you believe that he saw them, but I think you also testified that you have
16	notes from a last meeting with him where you described almost a state of disbelief on his
17	part
18	A Surreal. Surreal, yeah.
19	Q of it, that he wasn't reading the situation correctly?
20	A Well, maybe he was and maybe he had a plan to leave that I didn't know
21	about, so that's you know, that would happen a month later.
22	Q So is it fair to say, regardless of what he saw as far as a degradation in the
23	situation, you didn't think that he was understanding or taking appropriate action
24	A Or that he
25	Q as a result?

1	A Yeah, he hadn't quit. Okay? He had not quit. But they were doing
2	things, their security forces, that were not helpful. And by that, I mean, when you kee
3	replacing leaders so Vasely comes in; you know, he's got to have some knowns to wo
4	with. If every time you go over there there's a new general or a new minister, you're
5	not even sure who you're working with. Those were the types of actions that were
6	happening in the security forces.

- Q What do you think President Ghani's departure on August 15th -- what signal do you think that sent, and what impact do you think that had on the situation on the ground in Kabul?
 - A Catastrophic. Yeah. I mean, I actually called up and asked; I go, "Did you tell him to leave?" And he goes, "No, I didn't tell him to leave." And so I didn't know what had transpired there, and I'd only find that out much like all of us would. You know, somebody came in, said you've got to go, and then they explained. I haven't spoken to Ghani since he left.
- 15 Q "Catastrophic" in the sense that it created a catastrophe on the ground?
- 16 A Psychological. Yeah.
- 17 Q And material as well?
- 18 A Ultimately --

11

12

13

- 19 Q Given that there were --
- A Initially psychological, but then, you know, that -- that's the panic. That's the emergency. So, you know, you're approaching that emergency, and if it needed an accelerant, he gave it one.
- Q Okay. So your testimony is that the emergency began on August 15th, or emerged on August 15th --
- 25 A Yeah, I don't know --

1	Q and you saw that as triggered by Ghani's departure?
2	A I don't know that you can attribute that to me. I'm only going by the
3	dates. I wasn't there. I'm in Tampa.
4	So, you know, if we kind of sat down and analyzed this, when Kunduz fell on 3 or 4
5	August, you know, the sparks are flying in the house at that point. You don't have a lot
6	of time. You're running out of time.
7	_ Do you have any questions?
8	<u>.</u> Yeah.
9	BY :
10	Q So you testified in the prior round that you believed the State Department
11	was too late in calling for the NEO. How do you think calling a NEO earlier would've
12	impacted the stability of the Afghan Government?
13	A Yeah, it would've been challenging.
14	A couple things emerged as I watched this. There was no plan to take 120,000
15	people out. I mean, you know, everybody ultimately left. I never saw a plan that said
16	we're going to take 120,000 people out of Kabul, in any plan, you know, whether you're
17	an SIV or an American citizen or what. So we know that other-than-SIV-or-at-risk people
18	got on planes and went somewhere.
19	And maybe I just had the scale wrong. As I started planning our departure, what
20	I started looking at were very high-risk Afghans that I knew if they I knew if the Taliban
21	could get their hands on them, they'd just kill them. You know, that I knew. Asadullah
22	Khalid, who was actually out of country for medical, but there was others. And I was
23	just kind of it's a quandary. Because do I put Alizai on an airplane early to get him out
24	of there before, you know or I leave him there to work the fight?
25	But we had identified high-risk Afghans. It wasn't in the thousands. It was

- 1 probably in the, you know, 100, 150, of maybe you move them out ahead of them.
- 2 But, you know, I understand the quandary. The quandary is, if you start pulling
- 3 people out, do you precipitate the crisis, you know? Or do you -- you know, it's chicken
- 4 and the egg, and it's a balance there.
- 5 So Afghans would've been one thing. Downsizing is a different -- looks
- 6 differently. Most of the other foreign embassies downsized. And by that -- you know,
- 7 none of them were nearly as big as our embassy, but most of them downsized, you know,
- 8 to the point where, because you threw the French at me -- and I didn't know I had a
- 9 problem with the French -- but I think the French were probably down to three or four
- 10 people. You know, the U.K. is down to a very skeleton crew. And so what that means
- is, when the problem arises, you just get in a car and you drive over and you get on an
- 12 airplane and you leave.
- That's -- that's -- you know, as I kind of look at this -- and I'm second-guessing,
- 14 now, behind. But the reality is that we had a pretty large footprint by the time we rang
- the bell.
- 16 Q But, ultimately, just in advance of August, even, the U.S. Embassy did
- 17 downsize.
- 18 A I know.
- 19 Q Okay.
- 20 A But not in advance of August.
- 21 Q There was a departure in advance of August at the U.S. Embassy.
- 22 A There was a -- okay. They were pretty heavy when I left.
- 23 Q Yes.
- 24 And just going back to, I think, the question I'm trying to get at -- and I think you
- 25 mentioned, it was a quandary. If you call for a NEO earlier --

1	Α	Yeah.
2	Q	do you by chance lead Ghani to flee earlier and then precipitate this you
3	said it was o	catastrophic, right?
4	А	Potentially.
5	Q	Potentially. It's a risk. And, ultimately, with the, as you said, catastrophic
6	departure o	of Ghani, do you then precipitate the collapse of the Afghan forces and have
7	the similar	chaos at the airport August 15th on July 15th? Do you agree that that's a
8	concern?	
9	Α	You're asking me hypotheticals here
10	Q	Well, I mean, the whole thing is hypothetical.
11	Α	and I don't think it's appropriate for me to here's the piece, if you want a
12	hypothetica	al, because now I watch it in the commercial world. It's that company that
13	hangs on to	o long, that won't make a decision. And so, because they don't make a
14	decision, th	ey make the situation a little bit worse.
15	And	now we're in the lessons learned. So I'm not judging who made the call,
16	when they	made the call, should you have left with me or not. But this is the lesson
17	learned.	And it's not the first time we've learned this lesson either, you know, as we
18	know.	
19	And	it's a very hard call to make, too, by the way. But when we made the call,
20	we were in	to a very high-risk event at that point. You know, that's what the facts on the
21	ground say.	
22	So I	think maybe I'd just go with that, as opposed to trying to come back and
23	hypothetica	ally "if we had pulled some Afghans out" or "if we'd downsized a little bit,"
24	because I th	nink that's not fair to the people that were on the ground having to make

those decisions.

1	Q Okay. Thanks.
2	A Okay?
3	. I think the majority had extended the opportunity to you to share
4	anything we haven't covered. Since it's now in the minority time, I want to give you tha
5	same opportunity before we thank you on behalf of Ranking Member Meeks and close
6	our questioning.
7	General Miller. Can I share with everybody? I mean, is this okay, now? You
8	know, I'm not lecturing the minority or
9	<u>.</u> Of course.
10	General Miller. You know, as I thought about this a lot and, again, I don't wan
11	to dig into the hypotheticals, because we have enough people that do that anyway, you
12	know, that will dig into our and second-guess our decisions and the rest.
13	But, you know, this is a conversation I had with Senator Reed when I came back.
14	COVID hit in March of '20. I never saw a congressional delegation again. And I
15	wasn't and, by the way, that wasn't your fault. I mean, usually it wasn't the Foreign
16	Affairs Committee that came out, but we'd see different Members out there. And I
17	think we lost something with that.
18	And, you know, probably DOD was probably the one saying, don't come out,
19	because of COVID. And we were all you know, we were in a unique position there.
20	We suffered as a result of that. And it was just, kind of, loss of awareness of what was
21	going on in Afghanistan, you know, at levels that we had had previously.
22	And you know you're not going to get the entire body of a committee or the entire
23	Congress or the entire Department of Defense to kind of have, you know, a granular feel
24	on there, but oversight does matter.
25	And I say that as a one, I never oh, maybe one. I usually had very good

1	congressional delegations. You know, every once in a while, you get one that's not.
2	You know, it's kind of attacking and accusatory, and you're kind of scratching your head.
3	But that played, I mean, and it hurt us. I think it hurt the United States of
4	America, and it hurt us, you know, me, as an individual.
5	But it was a confluence of events that was you know, we were at such a critical
6	time. We should've been having these conversations.
7	Because at the same time as you're getting you know, you talk about the
8	interagency process. You know, maybe not formally in it, but we do know that people
9	talk to the leadership and, you know, they kind of share what they're seeing out there.
10	So I bring that up as just a comment for all of you, if you can keep pushing people
11	out, because I think it's necessary.
12	And DOD will push back on you. I know that. Push back on DOD. You know,
13	I've watched it. "No, no, we don't want them out there." I go, "Why not? I mean, I'd
14	love to have Senator Reed come out here with a delegation."
15	. The box is closed.
16	General Miller. What's that?
17	. The box is closed.
18	General <u>Miller.</u> Yeah.
19	You know, the other thing is, I watched and I've watched it closely, and I've paid
20	attention to the debate, but, like I said, I haven't gone particularly deep. You know,
21	I so people obviously ask me about Afghanistan. They ask me about and DIA has got
22	me coming in, because a lot of these guys served with me, and they'll have me coming in
23	next month and talking to them. And they'll say, will you be a keynote for this, and then
24	do you mind talking about Afghanistan? And I've refrained from it, because I don't want

to make public comments, at least not yet.

But how I describe it to them -- and I've talked a little bit about it today -- it's, we lost the understanding of risk. And so now we can argue about who shot who now, but, at the end of the day, what we can't argue about is we got behind the risk curve.

And we don't have to argue fault or anything else, but it's -- we got there, and usually it's lack of communication, it's lack of voices in the room and somebody standing up and saying, no, no, no, you must do this.

But how I explain it to people, I say, when the United States, us, all of us -- I'm not talking about the military. You know, when we have a risk problem, we end up getting someone hurt. When we, as a country, we end up kind of, you know, finding kind of a knock on our prestige. And then, you know, we lose our ability to use finesse to work our way through a problem, and we brute-force our way.

And let's face it: 15 to 31 August, we had to brute-force our way, and we almost got out. And I said, we almost got out, except for the Abbey Gate bombing, where we lost our -- I mean, I was praying, I was praying we were going to make it out of there.

And I knew it wasn't pretty because I was talking to the guys on the ground. You know, I'd call them, and they'd go, just be glad you're not here. You know, it was that bad.

And you can imagine the bad.

But the risk piece, I think that the people that come before the committee, I think they ought to be asked about that. Are they weighing the risks? Are they seeing the risks accumulate? And we can just go through it like 10-K studies. And we make it bipartisan, because one would happen in, you know, different administrations, and you could go through it and you could look at it.

But I explained it to people, I said, I use my experience in Mogadishu as, we had a bad risk calculus, and we, as the United States, ended up not looking real good at the end of it, you know? Now, did everybody on the ground do the best they could? Were

1	people trying to make right decisions? Of course. But so I talk to them in those
2	terms, of, you know, taking something away from it.
3	So I offer that up because I think that's something that you have the opportunity
4	to kind of probe before the action, as opposed to after the after the action, it's not
5	much fun. It's just not fun. Preventing the action is always a lot better. So I say that.
6	There's other things. If you want to, you know, we could talk for I can't wait
7	until the lessons learned come out of Afghanistan. They're many, and they should be.
8	You know, we can start about discontinuity. We can talk about I mean, I hope
9	gave you a little bit of flavor of that. And I love my servicemembers, I love my NATO
10	people. You know, the people showing up for the first time in Afghanistan believe in
11	Afghanistan. I started in 2020, and I'm trying you know, I'm on to my second year, just
12	kind of going, "Oh, this is going to hurt, to try to explain this to you." But the
13	discontinuity that we displayed there. And that's not new either. And it wasn't just
14	the military; it was all of us, as we went through it.
15	So let me stop there and just tell you, as painful as this was for me, I mean, I'm
16	hoping it's useful. And I'm hoping it's useful in the context of, you know, the United
17	States of America, because I do believe in that.
18	And, you know, at some point, I'll start talking publicly, but it hadn't felt right yet.
19	I haven't felt like I've got enough in me to kind of stomach it, and only will do it with small
20	groups.
21	When I say "talk about it publicly," I'm not talking about speaking about it publicly
22	for political purposes. I'm talking about publicly to make sure people don't make the
23	same mistakes I did. Okay?
24	. I just want to ask appreciate the comments. I think it's
25	extremely useful.

ı	And I think the point you made about brute-force pushing through, you know,				
2	15th through 20th, 21st, 31st of August, I think it's one of the things that, as we look at				
3	the oversight that we're doing, is really relevant.				
4	Because, in some ways, I think and I think what I would close with you is this				
5	question, is: Do you think it's useful to boil down how we do oversight over Afghanistan				
6	to the 15th through 31st of August rather than taking a real holistic look at the 20-year				
7	war effort? In some ways, you don't get an August 15th without a February 20th, and				
8	you don't get a February 20th without X, Y, and Z thing.				
9	General Miller. You don't get one without a 9/11.				
10	You know, Steve Coll is going to write a book. Are you guys aware of that?				
11	can't wait, because he's I thought he's wrote some of the best books. Now, they're				
12	not encompassing.				
13	And, you know, there will be a historian that it's more than my 3 years.				
14	It's you know, Mick Nicholson has got a viewpoint on things that went on here. You				
15	know, but it's a lot of time to cover down on lessons learned, and it will be exhaustive.				
16	I'm not I'm holding off on the Afghan War Commission and the rest of those				
17	interviewing. At some point I will, but I don't have the energy quite yet to really dig in				
18	deeply with them.				
19	And it's bigger, you're right. And nothing happens in isolation. But some				
20	events happen that are so big that we end up 3-4 October, there were a lot of things led				
21	to that in 1993. But there's a movie about 3-4 October, you know, not the five or six				
22	things that preceded it. It's just				
23	. The lessons learned from 3 to 4 October, though, cannot just be				
24	from 3 to 4, right? If we're going to do a broader lessons-learned, it just can't be about				
25	the movie clip. It's got to be about all the things that led to it.				

1	General Miller. Yeah. So, yeah, I believe in a comprehensive piece. And				
2	that's the position you guys have, so thank you for that, okay?				
3	<u>.</u> Thank you.				
4	Well, with that, we have no further questions from the minority side				
5	so thank you very much for your testimony.				
6	General Miller. Are we done on the majority side too?				
7	. We are. Thank you. Appreciate it.				
8	. We are off the record.				

[Whereupon, at 4:55 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

Errata Sheet for the Transcribed Interview of

General Austin Scott Miller dated 4/15/2024

1) majority errata, (2) minority errata, (3) U.S. Department of Defense/agency counsel errata, (4) private counsel (as applicable) and witness errata

Page	Line	Change	Reason
6	Line 13	Change "your" to "you"	
7	Line 1	Change "thawt" to "that"	
8	Line 14	Change "agency's counsel" to "agency counsel"	
8	Line 15	Change "there is" to "there are"	
9	Line 16	Change "we with start" to "we start with"	
9	Line 22	Change "didn't happen on 14 April" to "is not limited to what happened on 14 April"	
10	Line 5	Change "evac" to "evacuation"	
10	Line 10	Change "till" to "until"	
11	Line 9	Change "in" to "one of"	
11	Line 17	Change "time" to "timeframe"	
11	Line 21	Change "give up" to "assume"	
12	Line 7	Change "response" to "responses"	
12	Line 21	Change "is" to "are"	
14	Line 14	Change "EID" to "Eid"	
14	Line 21	Change "EID" to "Eid"	
14	Line 22	Change "meant a" to "meant as a"	
16	Line 24	Strike "to kind of think"	
18	Line 14	Change "Khalilizad" to "Khalilzad"	
19	Line 1	Change "authorization U.S. troops" to "authorization of U.S. troops"	
19	Line 4	Strike "a"	
21	Line 21	Change "Massoud" to "Masoud"	
22	Line 13	Strike "because" before "I don't"	
22	Line 20	Change "was" to "were"	
22	Lines 24-25	Change "Staff Sergeant" to "Sgt. 1st Class"	
23	Line 13	Change "as" to "was"	
25	Line 6	Change "Khalilizad" to "Khalilzad"	
26	Line 5	Change "till" to "until"	
26	Line 17	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
27	Line 7	Change "Think you" to "Thank you"	
31	Line 24	Change "NSC White House" to "NSC or White House"	
33	Line 21	Change "essentially that their" to "essentially their"	
35	Line 9	Change "U.S. Embassy" to "the U.S. Embassy"	
35	Line 10	Change "facility" to "facilities"	

39	Line 12	Change "decisionmaking" to "decision making"	
39	Line 20	Change "decisionmaking" to "decision making"	
45	Line 13	Change "so the Trump" to "to the Trump"	
52	Line 3	Change "sit the" to "sit in the"	
		Change "you had to calm down panic from the	
		Afghans" to "you had to calm the Afghans down	
73	Line18	from panicking"	
81	Line 6	Strike "more on"	
81	Line 21	Change "was" to "were"	
84	Line 2	Change "their" to "our"	
84	Line 1	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
84	Line 6	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
85	Line 6	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
88	Line 21	Change "From a" to "From the"	
94	Line 8	Change "commission" to "condition"	
101	Line 2	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
102	Line 3	Change "talking" to "talk"	
112	Line 11	Change "in terms of let's" to "in terms of, let's"	
112	Line 17	Change "were" to "were,"	
113	Line 5	Strike "I talked about"	
113	Line 6	Change "Lashkargah" to "Lashkar Gah"	
113	Line 2	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
113	Line 7	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
115	Line 3	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
116	Line 3	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
116	Line 9	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
117	Line 10	Change "honour" to "honor"	
118	Line 20	Change "I'll the" to "I'll read the"	
120	Line 24	Change "chief of the Army staff" to "Army Chief of Staff"	
121	Line 17	Change "Bismillah Khan" to "Bismullah Khan"	
123	Line 19	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
125	Line 5	Change "was enforce" to "was to enforce"	
129	Line 18	Change "No, that's correct" to "That's correct"	
132	Line 11	Change "sat a" to "sat in a"	
133	Line 1	Change "Afghan" to "Afghanistan"	
134	Line 11	Change "Republic" to "Republic's"	
135	Line 18	Strike "less"	
136	Line 13	Change "conversation" to "conversations"	
145	Line 13	Change "." to "?"	
155	Line 4		
133	Line 4	Change "you hold" to "to hold"	

		Change "foreign military sales" to "Foreign Military	
187	Line 18	Sales"	
		Change "Bismillah Khan who was Mohammadi" to	
189	Line 7	"Bismullah Khan Mohammadi"	
193	Line 19	Change "them" to "the Taliban"	
200	Line 1	Change "yeah" to "no"	
202	Line 6	Change "followup" to "follow-up"	
205	Line 1	Change "war take as toll" to "war takes a toll"	
217	Line 11	Change "wrote" to "written"	