

House Foreign Affairs Committee: Investigation of the U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan
Summary Prepared by Democratic Committee Staff of Key Transcript Excerpts

Transcribed Interview of Austin “Scott” Miller

Conducted on Monday, April 15th, 2024.

General Miller is a distinguished General who served as U.S. troop commander in Afghanistan under two different administrations. He noted the challenge in continuity of his commensurate U.S. civilian counterparts and military leadership while serving in Afghanistan.

Page 12, line 24

A: 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.

General Miller stated that his mission in Afghanistan was to “safeguard the United States of America against any foreign terrorist organizations” and to “support the diplomatic efforts to find a political track to end the war in Afghanistan.”

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Q: And what did you understand as your mission in Afghanistan?

A: Well, first and foremost, it's safeguard -- for us, it was safeguard the United States of America against any foreign terrorist organizations. There were multiple terrorist organizations that operated in the region, but think AQ and ISIS-K as the two principals. And then of course you have a -- you know, you have your -- and then support the diplomatic efforts to find a political track to end the war in Afghanistan.

General Miller was not responsible for planning a potential noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO) in Afghanistan.

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Q: [. . .] When did you first discuss the possibility of a noncombatant evacuation order, or a NEO, with the State Department?

A: That largely was not my writ, okay? That's why, you know, CENTCOM -- you know, as Frank McKenzie goes, "You worry about getting the force out. I'll worry about planning this."

General Miller was involved in the “military component” of the Doha Deal negotiations. He viewed himself as the individual who would take military action against the Taliban if they did not adhere to their commitments in the Doha Deal. He also worried about the exclusion of the Afghan government and security forces from the development and implementation of the agreement.

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Q: Just to level set a bit, what role did you play in negotiating and concluding this deal?

A: Like I said, we had a military component that was part of this going forward, and more on it was something that I shared up through the military chain of command. It was a pretty good -- a very good working relationship between -- we talked a little bit about Secretary Pompeo in the previous. We were all looking at this, one, because you can see it has some challenges in the -- even in the written text you can start sensing some different challenges. We were all looking at this as we went forward. But we were participants. We were not leaders in this; we were participants.

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Q: Did you see your input, as a general matter, incorporated into the decision-making around the Doha deal?

A: The key pieces of it were when you started talking about some of the military actions that will take place or not take place, that's where -- and as I mentioned early on, my greatest concern was very clearly the Taliban wanted this to be a U.S.-Taliban agreement, not a U.S.-Taliban-Government of Afghanistan agreement, and why are you even concerned about these Afghan Security Forces? And that was -- so that was important to me, that we built in some safeguards for the Afghan Security Forces, so if the Taliban didn't live up to their side of the agreement militarily we could do things. I'm going to be very open here. As we were going through this, what started to become very clear to me was if this thing fails it's going to be because of me, because I'm going to do some military action on the ground and it's going to break the agreement apart, that I'd be the person to break this agreement. That was pretty clear to me as we went forward here, because, quite frankly, the Taliban did not adhere to their 80 percent, 90 percent reduction in violence. They said they did, that was their information campaign, but they actually ramped it up and we struck them. And every time we struck them they would list another U.S. military violation and wave it in their faces, almost similar to kind of some of the negotiations you've seen where every transgression gets recorded. And I think we probably had about a thousand transgressions against us, maybe more. I can't recall the exact count. And so we just really went back and started kind of doing it back to them. So, yeah, I was

concerned there that we could not leave the Afghan Security Forces alone and unafraid as a result of this agreement.

General Miller explained that he knew the chances for a political settlement with the Taliban “were going to be dim,” and that he “routinely” relayed these concerns to senior officials in the Trump Administration.

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Q: And did we understand your testimony correctly earlier to be that the concerns you had about the substance of the Doha deal -- namely, the release of prisoners that it required the Afghan Government --

A: Right.

Q: -- to do, which returned some fighters to the battlefield, and the lack of 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 political settlement, correct?

A: Yes, that's fair.

Q: So you knew that chances for a political settlement were going to be dim when the deal was signed.

A: That without either incentives or something else, that it was going to be very difficult.

Q: And you relayed, as you testified previously --

A: Routinely.

Q: -- to senior officials. Did that include Secretary Pompeo, who you mentioned you had --

A: You know, I think -- I'm almost positive he saw the same challenges as well with the Taliban.

Page 92, line 16

Q: And so, ultimately, the Taliban constantly said, I think as you testified earlier, that they want to just take over.

A: Yeah. I mean, that's my assessment, that this was -- you know, a settlement was -- a settlement that we viewed was probably not the same picture that the Taliban viewed.

Q: And did you share that assessment with anyone?

A: Routinely.

Q: To Zal?

A: Routinely.

Q: To Secretary Pompeo, who you spoke with on the phone?

A: I believe that was probably his assessment as he watched this. But that's why you had a conditions-based agreement.

General Miller stated that the United States military's presence in Afghanistan was "slowing the degradation" of the Afghan forces that had been occurring over many years as the war ground to a "stalemate." He testified that the Afghan forces relied extensively on contractors and other forms of U.S. government support. The Doha Deal, however, committed the United States to rescinding such support.

Page 14, line 25

A: [. . .] 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.

Page 17, line 20

A: [. . .] Now, [the Afghan Security Forces] 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 ordinance. 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.

Page 43, line 9

Q: Was it ever your assessment prior to President Biden's Go-to-Zero order that the Afghan Security Forces didn't fight for their country?

A: I'm trying to think of -- you know, the Afghan Security Forces were a troubled force and it was -- they were ripped apart by country politics. But the largely -- certainly the special operations organizations, they were focused on supporting and defending Afghanistan.

Q: Thank you, sir. And the Afghan Security Forces were taking heavy casualties, correct?

A: They were.

Q: What was your assessment at the time of the Afghan Security Forces' sustainability without U.S. forces?

A: It went back to my original assessment that I made early on, and I felt that was still valid as we progressed through the almost 3 years of service. There are just some key enablers that without them, like I said with the air force, if your air force can't fly, you don't have an air force. If you can't do -- I mean, it'd be similar to U.S. capability. If you actually don't maintain it, it's not going to fly, and you don't have an air force. So there are some things that I thought were actual critical pathways -- minimal critical pathways -- to keep them functioning.

Q: Thank you. And you had testified previously in your opening statement that the contractor support provided, with the presence of U.S. forces and NATO forces, were essential?

A: Yes, they were.

Q: And without it, that the Afghan Security Forces would not be able to sustain themselves, correct?

A: That's correct.

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Q: Had it been at a stalemate for some time?

A: It went back and forth where you had initiative on either side, but no side was clearly gaining an upper hand, that it was you're going to go see a surrender. We weren't at that kind of point.

Page 142, line 25

Q: [. . .] Was it your understanding that in the 5 years prior to 2021 that the Taliban had been gaining ground and territory every one of those years -- actually, going back longer than 5 years?

A: Yes, sir. The intel assessments were pretty consistent that there was an erosion of government control. I want to say the government still had majority control, but there was, you know, a constant encroachment. And I don't dispute those individual intel community assessments.

Page 147, line 9

Q: And were you shedding mission sets because the resources were fewer and it became more and more clear to you what the Afghan forces could and couldn't do?

A: Yeah, I didn't want to keep -- my viewpoint was, in an area -- I don't want to -- I don't want to put an unqualified force -- give them an untenable mission and really put, you know, a lot of good money against something that's not going to change no matter how

much I throw against it. One, it increases the risk to the force. And so, when I could pull off the things like that that, you know, enabled a political pipeline, still, where we could work, you know, a political settlement, support to the Afghan Government, and then support the core nucleus --

Page 156, line 3

Q: So you're not even really holding. You're just slowing the degradation.

A: That's correct.

Throughout his tenure, General Miller did not believe the Taliban wanted to negotiate with or stop fighting the Afghan government. He thought there was not enough pressure placed on the Taliban to reduce violence against the Afghan security forces as the Doha Deal went into effect.

Page 58, line 19

Q: That leads me to my next question. What was your assessment of the Taliban's intentions at the time?

A: I think they were looking for a takeover. You know, they were trying to figure out how to -- Afghanistan, the government could be reformed but under their vision of it, not under President Ghani's vision of it. 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" or the "Kabul government," it was repeated over and over. I mean, they're disciplined from that standpoint. But it was a -- you know, even when we got to intra-Afghan talks, they rejected government representation. And people could come as individuals. They couldn't come as President Ghani's personal representative. And you can imagine, President Ghani is trying to exert control over this as well. So it was a bit challenging.

Q: And your assessment of their intentions, did that stay true throughout 2021 --

A: Yeah. In '21 I assessed they were going for a takeover, just by their actions on the ground. And primarily I'm looking at the violence in the districts as they were working to influence. My assessment was they were going to try to take over.

Page 97, line 20

Q: So your testimony, so that we understand it correctly, is that the deal that was ultimately concluded did not include enough pressure or obligations on the Taliban to reduce violence against the Afghan Security Forces?

A: Yeah. I don't know if you could capture that in a written deal. I think you capture that 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 they'd come back and attack me for being the perpetrator of the violence.

Q: The Taliban violence against other Afghans?

A: Yeah, against anybody. They'd raise the temperature and I would condemn it. But, yes, I had a problem with the violence, and I thought a reduction in violence would've given us an opportunity or a possibility to see if there was an accommodation that actually looked like a diplomatic settlement.

Q And did you raise those concerns prior to February 29th, 2020?

A I raised them all the time. I raised them before, all the way to the end.

General Miller stated that, regarding the February 2020 Doha Deal, he was concerned with “[not creating] a deal that left the Afghans without support and allowed the Taliban to continue to attack without any support from us.” But he noted that U.S. troop drawdowns were then repeatedly ordered during 2020 despite the Taliban failing to adhere to the Doha Deal’s terms.

Page 22, line 16

A: [. . .] What we were most concerned about as a military component of this agreement is we didn't want to leave the Afghans, we didn't want to create a deal that left the Afghans without support and allowed the Taliban to continue to attack without any support from us. And we were very, very concerned about that. Obviously there was the agreements that manifested themselves towards U.S. and NATO forces, but we wanted to also make sure the Afghans still were able to have support.

Page 25, line 11

A: [. . .] The immediate signs after that the agreement was in trouble, there is a prisoner exchange issue and there is also -- the Taliban did not reduce their violence. That was kind of part of the agreement, that the violence would come down, there would be 80, 90 percent reduction in violence. [. . .]

A: So we will basically stay in this status. We went to 8,600 right after the agreement, that number I gave you. That became, okay, we can go to 8,600. It was actually advertised to the Taliban as well. So we start downsizing the force. We'd get to that number in the summer of 2020. And then we immediately received orders to go to 4,500. So we had another step down as we went forward.[. . .]

A: But we are clearly on a downward trajectory. The other thing that shows the agreement's in trouble: We get no intra-Afghan talks. The Taliban refused to talk till they get every one of their prisoners released per the Doha Agreement. And it wasn't a number, it was by name.

Page 161, line 2

Q: And I believe you testified previously that, within a matter of months of the Doha deal being signed, the conditions were not manifesting on the ground, yet troop drawdowns continued. Is that correct?

A: That's correct.

General Miller explained that the Afghan government was displeased with the Doha Deal and “uncomfortable” to accept conditions imposed on it related to the release of Taliban prisoners.

Page 24, line 16

A: [. . .] 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.

Page 26, line 4

A: [. . .] The other thing that shows the agreement's in trouble: We get no intra-Afghan talks. The Taliban refused to talk till they get every one of their prisoners released per the Doha Agreement. And it wasn't a number, it was by name. So they refused to talk. And the Afghan Government was not keen on releasing these prisoners, nor were we in some cases. But we ultimately would talk to President Ghani and he convened a loya jirga. They gave authorization to release these prisoners. And there began what was called intra-Afghan talks.

Page 93, line 23

Q: Had the Afghan Government agreed to [the] condition [to release up to 5,000 Taliban prisoners] prior to the deal being signed?

A: I don't believe so.

Q: And was it correct that the United States had to place a lot of pressure on a reluctant Ghani government to accept that condition?

A: Ultimately it was his decision, but it was -- you know, one, I don't think there was undue pressure put on him. But if there was going to be any hope of them having a delegation sit down with the Taliban, those prisoners -- very clear to me those prisoners were going to have to be released.

Page 26, line 9

A: [. . .] But we ultimately would talk to President Ghani and he convened a loya jirga. They gave authorization to release these prisoners. And there began what was called intra-Afghan talks.

Page 96, line 7

Q: Why did you have a problem with the detainee list?

A: Again, as I viewed it, and it's a live-and-learn type thing, I believe that the view on it was releasing 5,000 prisoners and we'll find another number that will work, and it was a bad assumption.

Q: Some have said that it essentially was the tipping point and undermined the Afghan Government by the United States forcing it to release these prisoners that were under its control.

A: Yeah, I wouldn't call it a tipping point. I'd say the Afghan Government died of a thousand cuts as opposed to a tipping point type thing. I just think that it wasn't a positive, okay. That was a tough one for the Afghans to absorb.

General Miller stated that a unilateral order by President Trump in December 2018 to withdraw 7,000 U.S. troops had “left [the Afghan government] in an uncomfortable position,” and that he had to speak with President Ghani and warned Ghani and security leadership “not to take rash actions resulting from the reporting [of the withdrawal.]” General Miller noted that “any shift” in U.S. troop levels was disconcerting for the Afghans.

Page 72, line 15

Q: Were you concerned that had this proceeded, had this directive [to withdraw 7,000 troops] proceeded, it would have been destabilizing on the Afghans?

A: I think any shift in the troops was always -- without proper preparation -- certainly left them in an uncomfortable position.

Page 74, line 18

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. 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 around the Beltway. I think it's already passed by the time this story comes out. But, yes, I'm trying to prepare Ghani and the security leadership not to take rash actions resulting from reporting.

General Miller stated that his recommendation in 2020 was to keep 8,600 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, but the Trump Administration ordered him to reduce troop levels to 4,500 in mid-2020 and subsequently to 2,500 in January 2021, despite the Taliban failing to meet their commitments under the Doha Deal.

Page 149, line 8

Q: So that's 8,600 at the time of the Doha Agreement, and then eventually drawing down to nothing, with no contractors. And then President Trump comes in, and that number goes to 4,500. Am I right?

A: That's correct.

Q: And what was that based on?

A: That was -- to me, it was an order. I mean, it was a -- you 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 know, the military's got all the plans, 100 plans. And we had a plan to get to 4,500 and knew what we wanted as our --

Q: So were you ordered to 4,500; it wasn't based on your recommendation?

A: No.

Q: Because your recommendation was 8,600.

A: It was. 8,600; you know, evaluate the conditions; then move to 4,500. And it really removed -- as I explained to the staff, the conditions that were in play, as you looked at the totality of the Doha Agreement, was there had been no attacks on U.S. forces.

Q: [. . .] And between the point at which we had 8,600 and the point at which we drew down to 4,500, is it fair to say that that was the only condition that was being met by the Taliban?

A: That's fair.

Q: That the other conditions were not being met?

A: And the Taliban would've argued they were, of course, meeting 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.

Q: 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?

A: Right.

Q: Okay. Then, when we go to 2,500 in January of 2021, where did that number come from?

A: 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.

Q: That wasn't your -- it wasn't a number you came up with?

A: No, it was not a recommendation.

Q: Do you know where it came from?

A: You know, I'm assuming it came above the Secretary of Defense.

General Miller stated that, even after years of degradation of the Afghan forces and a shedding of U.S. force mission sets from capacity-building to a narrow counterterrorism focus, he didn't have an answer to the question of "When does this end?" General Miller testified that "[i]t was forever until -- so, until the objectives change."

Page 152, line 15

Q: Okay. So, given all of that, you're sitting here in 2021 with 2,500 troops. The Taliban are on the move, are taking more and more territory, having a momentum. Capacity by the ANSDF is degrading. You have one-sixth of the force that you had when you assessed that you could do a predominantly counterterrorism mission. What is your assessment as to how long you can sustain that?

A: I didn't -- I was asked that question. You know, "When does this end?" is really how I was asked that question. When do you -- you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And, you know, the answer was, "I don't know." I was also asked the question, are you going to need more troops if I tell you you can have --

Q: Forever?

A: Well, that's not what you were stuck with. It was forever until -- so, until the objectives change. If you're being asked to do this, my military recommendation is, you can do this better from this location --

Q: Do what better?

A: Safeguard the United States of America --

Q: Okay.

A: -- and our interests. You can safeguard --

Q: But with 2,500 troops --

A: That's correct.

Q: But given increased Taliban momentum, then on the march, taking more and more territory, a degradation and a retrograde of the Taliban forces --

A: Right.

Q: -- fewer forces than you ever had under your command, did you think you could do that forever?

A: I don't know that I'd say forever, but there was a period of time that you could hold the Afghan Security Forces together. One of the things on the march, there weren't a lot of battlefield victories towards the end. There was a lot of psychological victories. And it was similar to what happened in 2001, and that's the people deciding, this fight's over, the U.S. is leaving. So you arrest that just by sheer presence. So you slow that down. I don't know that you stop it, but you certainly slow it down. But the 2,500 would allow to you --

Q: For some time --

A: Right.

Q: -- but not in perpetuity.

A: Unless you made some adjustments, or unless the Afghan Security Forces made adjustments.

General Miller was concerned that President Ghani's actions could have a destabilizing effect and that President Ghani's sudden departure from Kabul in August 2021 had a "catastrophic" impact.

Page 13, line 20

A: 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. A: 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.

Page 209, line 7

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.

Q: "Catastrophic" in the sense that it created a catastrophe on the ground?

A: Psychological. Yeah.

Q: And material as well?

A: Ultimately --

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.

General Miller noted that "it would've been challenging" if the State Department called for a NEO at an earlier time, and it would have potentially triggered a collapse of the Afghan government sooner than it ultimately fell.

Page 210, line 10

Q: So you testified in the prior round that you believed the State Department was too late in calling for the NEO. How do you think calling a NEO earlier would've impacted the stability of the Afghan Government?

A: Yeah, it would've been challenging.

Page 211, line 24

Q: And just going back to, I think, the question I'm trying to get at -- and I think you mentioned, it was a quandary. If you call for a NEO earlier --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- do you by chance lead Ghani to flee earlier and then precipitate this -- you said it was catastrophic, right?

A: Potentially.

General Miller did not make any recommendations to the Biden Administration to refrain from proceeding with the order to withdraw all U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

Page 128, line 9

Q: After it was announced, did you make any recommendations to the administration not to proceed with the go-to-zero order?

A: No. At that point, I did not. I mean, a couple times, I was queried when I start -- because when I report, it starts looking like alarming reporting. You know, I'm trying to just tell people what's happening on the ground here. And every once in a while, someone would call and go, is there a way to reverse this?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And I'd be kind of looking at the phone, going, if you reverse the policy, you can reverse this, but, you know, if you're asking me if I have something in the toolkit to, you know, save a district that's being surrendered, I said, no, I don't have any -- I don't have that. And then, obviously, at that point, I'm quite concerned about what I'd consider my moral obligation -- that's U.S. servicemembers, that's diplomats, that's our partners. I'm very concerned 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 policy reversal to, kind of, save this.

General Miller believed that the Biden Administration's interagency review of Afghanistan policy upon taking office in early 2021 was "comprehensive and deliberative."

Page 180, line 7

Q: But based on the testimony from these two other witnesses, do you have any reason to believe that there wasn't a robust interagency process going on --

A: Well, no, no, no, I knew there was DCs and NSC -- I mean, I was aware of the schedule. I just wasn't present.

Q: And you have no reason to dispute Mr. Evans's testimony earlier that the process was comprehensive and deliberative?

A: I wasn't there.

Q: Okay.

A: I assume it was comprehensive and deliberative.

General Miller stated that Ambassador John Bass had a “good, strong relationship” with the Afghan government, and that he had access to Ambassador Bass “all the time.”

Page 47, line 19

Q: We'll now speak to Under Secretary John Bass who at the time period we're speaking to, when he was the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan. This is for a portion of your tour as commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan.

[. . .]

A: John's a pro. I mean, this committee's seen him. He's an absolute pro and a brilliant diplomat too.

Page 48, line 23

Q: And just so I'm correct in understanding this, Under Secretary Bass had then a good relationship with the military. You coordinated.

A: He did.

Q: You spoke often.

A: Yeah.

Q: And how was Under Secretary Bass' relationship with the Afghan Government?

A: He had a hard job. He usually brought the Afghan Government bad news in terms of policy. But my sense was there was respect for Ambassador Bass' -- or Under Secretary Bass', one, his persona, not just as the symbolic leader of our diplomatic effort there, but I think as a person as well. He had a good, strong relationship.

Page 82, line 24

Q: [. . .] With regard to Ambassador Bass, you also -- did you also feel that you had access to him to share views that were --

A: Ambassador Bass?

Q: -- relevant if you needed to?

A: Oh, yeah, all the time.

General Miller believes that any comprehensive review of Afghanistan must look at “the 20-year war effort.”

Page 217, line 5

Q: [. . .] Do you think it's useful to boil down how we do oversight over Afghanistan to the 15th through 31st of August rather than taking a real holistic look at the 20-year war

effort? In some ways, you don't get an August 15th without a February 20th, and you don't get a February 20th without X, Y, and Z thing.

A: You don't get one without a 9/11.

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