Stenographic Transcript Before the

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

NOMINATION

Tuesday, June 19, 2018

Washington, D.C.

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1	HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF:
2	LIEUTENANT GENERAL AUSTIN S. MILLER, USA
3	TO BE GENERAL AND COMMANDER,
4	RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION,
5	NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION/
6	COMMANDER, UNITED STATES FORCES-AFGHANISTAN
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8	Tuesday, June 19, 2018
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10	U.S. Senate
11	Committee on Armed Services
12	Washington, D.C.
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14	The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:31 a.m. in
15	Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James M.
16	Inhofe, presiding.
17	Committee Members Present: Senators Inhofe
18	[presiding], Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis
19	Sullivan, Graham, Sasse, Scott, Reed, McCaskill, Gillibrand
20	Blumenthal, Donnelly, Hirono, Kaine, King, Heinrich, Warren
21	and Peters.
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Τ	OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S.
2	SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA
3	Senator Inhofe: The meeting will come to order.
4	And Senator Reed and I talked this over and we thought,
5	before our opening statements, we would like to hear the
6	introduction of our witness by Senator Burr. Senator Burr?
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- 1 STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD BURR, U.S. SENATOR FROM
- 2 NORTH CAROLINA
- 3 Senator Burr: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Vice Chairman,
- 4 thank you. And to all of my colleagues, I realize that this
- 5 is not normal for the committee to have a uniformed
- 6 individual introduced, but I felt compelled to offer him.
- 7 General Miller was nice enough to honor me with accepting
- 8 that.
- 9 This nominee really needs no introduction because I
- 10 think for most of you, you have either met him or you have
- 11 read about his career. But there are a few things that I
- 12 feel are important to highlight to members.
- For Senator Reed and myself, we are delighted to see
- 14 another West Point graduate that really does deserve the
- 15 attention that this nominee has gotten.
- 16 I am not going to cover everything because most of you
- 17 know it, but not only is he a proud West Point graduate, he
- 18 served in the 82nd Airborne. He has had multiple combat
- 19 tours, multiple awards and commendations. My committee, the
- 20 Intelligence Committee, has worked closely with General
- 21 Miller since 2016 when he became Commander of JSOC, and I
- 22 can tell every member here he has been responsive, thorough,
- 23 and honest.
- 24 But what I really wanted to come before you to tell you
- 25 is that this is a man that has earned the respect of his

- 1 superiors and his subordinates. Without question, when you
- 2 go to Fort Bragg today and you talk to those soldiers,
- 3 regardless of whether they are inside a wire inside Fort
- 4 Bragg, they all know Lieutenant General Miller. He has
- 5 earned the respect of his troops. He has done it from the
- 6 time he left West Point. He has performed in a commanding
- 7 role in some of the most difficult situations in the world,
- 8 and he has been deployed into a combat zone multiple times.
- 9 Our soldiers are taught to follow leaders, and there is
- 10 a reason that the troops under him follow him. Scott Miller
- 11 is a tremendous leader. He is the right man at the right
- 12 time to carry out a difficult mission in Afghanistan. His
- 13 intellect, his honesty, and his intelligence and his
- 14 experience make him the appropriate choice. So I hope that
- 15 this committee will act expeditiously on his nomination.
- 16 But I will end in this. He is a great father and he is
- 17 a great man. This is the full package of everything we look
- 18 for when we look at somebody that we want to put that star
- 19 on their shoulder and ask them to represent our kids and our
- 20 grandchildren's future.
- 21 I thank you for the opportunity to be here. I hope and
- 22 I pray that we can do this as expeditiously as possible. I
- 23 thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Burr. That is an
- 25 excellent introduction. And you are welcome to stay and

- 1 come up here at the table if you would like for this or you
- 2 can be relieved.
- 3 Senator Burr: Mr. Chairman, I think I will go back to
- 4 the padded room with no windows.
- 5 [Laughter.]
- 6 Senator Inhofe: That is good.
- 7 Senator Burr: Thank you.
- 8 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Burr.
- 9 The committee meets today to review the nomination of
- 10 the next commander for both the U.S. Forces-Afghanistan and
- 11 NATO Resolute Support Mission.
- We welcome Lieutenant General Austin Scott Miller,
- 13 Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command.
- 14 In order to exercise its legislative oversight
- 15 responsibilities, it is important that the committee and
- 16 other appropriate committees of Congress are able to receive
- 17 testimony and briefings. Please answer the following
- 18 questions. These are the required questions. You just
- 19 answer yes or no audibly, if you would please.
- 20 Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations
- 21 governing conflicts of interest?
- 22 General Miller: I have, Senator.
- 23 Senator Inhofe: Do you agree, when asked, to give your
- 24 personal views even if those views differ from the
- 25 administration in power?

- 1 General Miller: I do, Senator.
- Senator Inhofe: Have you assumed any duties or
- 3 undertaken any actions which would appear to presume the
- 4 outcome of the confirmation process?
- 5 General Miller: I have not, Senator.
- 6 Senator Inhofe: Will you ensure your staff complies
- 7 with deadlines established for requested communications,
- 8 including questions for the record in hearings?
- 9 General Miller: I will, Senator.
- 10 Senator Inhofe: Will you cooperate in providing
- 11 witnesses and briefers in response to congressional
- 12 requests?
- 13 General Miller: I will, Senator.
- 14 Senator Inhofe: Will those witnesses be protected from
- 15 reprisal for their testimony or briefings?
- General Miller: Yes, sir, they will.
- 17 Senator Inhofe: Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear
- 18 and testify upon request before this committee?
- 19 General Miller: I do, Senator.
- 20 Senator Inhofe: And do agree to provide documents,
- 21 including copies of electronic forms of communications, in a
- 22 timely manner when requested by a duly constituted committee
- 23 or to consult with the committee regarding the basis of any
- 24 good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?
- 25 General Miller: I do, Senator.

- 1 Senator Inhofe: General Miller, we are grateful for
- 2 your decades of service to our country and your leadership.
- 3 And I have to say I agree with the comments of Senator Burr.
- 4 I think he described you very well.
- 5 You have been nominated to lead the forces fighting our
- 6 nation's longest war. We look forward to hearing your
- 7 views.
- 8 This is really a significant post. Since 2001, U.S.
- 9 forces have battled terrorist groups to secure our nation
- 10 from attack and ensure Afghanistan is never again a
- 11 terrorist safe haven. In that time, we have decimated Al
- 12 Qaeda and driven the Taliban from power, providing the
- 13 opportunity for a freely elected Afghan government to take
- 14 root and grow.
- 15 And yet, major challenges remain. As the Taliban
- 16 insurgency spreads violence and chaos around the country and
- 17 new groups like ISIS-K are terrorizing the Afghan people,
- 18 the administration's South Asia strategy reemphasized
- 19 America's commitment to Afghanistan and reversed the
- 20 previous administration's policy of announcing a timeline
- 21 for withdrawal.
- 22 I was just in Afghanistan visiting our troops and
- 23 General Nicholson last month. After speaking with him, it
- 24 is clear that we have made progress under the new approach.
- 25 Still, we need to remain clear-eyed about Pakistan's

Τ	continued support for the Taliban insurgency. General
2	Miller, you are uniquely qualified to lead the renewal
3	effort in Afghanistan with your service in Special Ops and
4	your most recent assignment as the commander of the Joint
5	Special Operations Command. This committee looks forward to
6	hearing how you would address the challenges that you face
7	today.
8	Senator Reed?
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- 1 STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE
- 2 ISLAND
- 3 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe.
- 4 Let me join you in welcoming General Miller, as well as his
- 5 daughter Sarah and son Austin, who has just joined the 82nd.
- 6 Thank you both for your commitment and service in support of
- 7 your father.
- 8 General, thank you for your continued service to the
- 9 nation and thank also, as I said, your family for their
- 10 tremendous support. And as Senator Burr indicated, we do
- 11 have things in common. We were both runts at West Point who
- 12 became grunts, and so I appreciate your service very much.
- Much of your career has involved the mission in
- 14 Afghanistan. In addition to several deployments, you have
- 15 served as commander of the Combined Forces Special
- 16 Operations Component Command in Afghanistan and as the
- 17 director of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Center on
- 18 the Joint Staff.
- 19 General Miller, if confirmed, you will take command at
- 20 a critical time. It has been nearly 10 months since the
- 21 President's South Asia strategy was announced. In support
- 22 of the strategy, the administration has increased the number
- of U.S. troops on the ground primarily to advise and enable
- 24 the Afghan Security Forces, made adjustments to the rules of
- 25 engagement, and sought to keep pressure on the Taliban

- 1 throughout the winter months.
- 2 Despite these changes, the lead inspector general for
- 3 overseas contingency operations recently reported that
- 4 available metrics showed few signs of progress, and the
- 5 intelligence community assess that the overall situation in
- 6 Afghanistan will probably deteriorate modestly this year due
- 7 to persistent political instability, sustained attacks by
- 8 the Taliban-led insurgency, unsteady Afghan National
- 9 Security Forces performance, and chronic financial
- 10 shortfalls. General Miller, I am interested in your
- 11 thoughts on the security situation in Afghanistan,
- 12 particularly how we ensure we are making measurable progress
- in our efforts to train, advise, and assist the Afghan
- 14 Security Forces.
- 15 In addition to the advisory mission in Afghanistan, our
- 16 forces are engaged in a counterterrorism operation against
- 17 foreign terrorist organizations, namely al Qaeda and the
- 18 ISIS-Khorasan group. Despite concerted efforts to disrupt
- 19 and destroy these networks, these groups remain resilient
- 20 and have retained the ability to conduct high profile
- 21 attacks against innocent civilians throughout the country.
- 22 I look forward to your assessment of the threats emanating
- 23 from Afghanistan and Pakistan and your expectations for the
- 24 counterterrorism mission under your command.
- 25 Though the security projections for 2018 are

- 1 pessimistic, there are a few notable bright spots that also
- 2 bear highlighting. The Afghan Security Forces continue to
- 3 employ their most effective fighting units, specifically the
- 4 special operations and air forces, and are committed to the
- 5 effort to recruit and train additional forces in both
- 6 categories. Over the recent Eid holiday, the Afghan
- 7 Government and the Taliban completed a successful 3-day
- 8 ceasefire, the first national level ceasefire the Taliban
- 9 has agreed to since 2001. Additionally, grassroots level
- 10 peace efforts, including peace marches and sit-ins, have
- 11 spread to over half the provinces in Afghanistan over the
- 12 past few months.
- We have heard from the administration that the South
- 14 Asia strategy is integrated and whole-of-government.
- 15 However, many questions remain regarding the way in which
- 16 progress on the battlefield will be translated into progress
- 17 towards a political solution. Absent the diplomatic effort
- 18 that is empowered with appropriate resources and staffing to
- 19 engage with Afghan counterparts and critical regional
- 20 players, any security gains will be fleeting.
- 21 General Miller, these are just a few of the challenges
- 22 you will confront, if confirmed. Again, I thank you for
- 23 your willingness to serve in this critical position. And as
- 24 reflected by many people I know in the military, you are one
- of the most extraordinary general officers that we have in

1	the uniform of the United States. Thank you.
2	Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.
3	General Miller, we will be anxious to hear your opening
4	statement. You can take whatever time you would like.
5	However, your entire statement will be made a part of the
6	record. You might start off by introducing your family, and
7	you are recognized.
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- 1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL AUSTIN S. MILLER, USA
- 2 TO BE GENERAL AND COMMANDER, RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION, NORTH
- 3 ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION/COMMANDER, UNITED STATES
- 4 FORCES-AFGHANISTAN
- 5 General Miller: Senator, thank you for that. I will
- 6 recognize the family, of course.
- 7 I would like to thank Senator Burr for that humbling
- 8 introduction.
- 9 Senator Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished
- 10 members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before
- 11 you today. I appreciate the opportunity to answer your
- 12 questions regarding my nomination as Commander of Resolute
- 13 Support and U.S. Forces Afghanistan.
- And I know we all feel the absence of Senator McCain
- 15 today, a true American hero.
- 16 But I would also like to thank the President and
- 17 Secretary Mattis and Chairman Dunford for their trust in me
- 18 -- they have placed in me with this nomination. If
- 19 confirmed, it would be my honor to follow my friend, General
- 20 Mick Nicholson, who is doing an outstanding job in this
- 21 critical position.
- 22 Both my children and my sister's family are here with
- 23 me today. My son, Lieutenant Austin Miller, currently
- 24 serving with the 82nd Airborne Division.
- 25 Senator Inhofe: And how long has he been in this

- 1 position?
- General Miller: Senator, he has been in the position
- 3 about 4 months now.
- 4 Senator Inhofe: Okay.
- 5 General Miller: He is not tenured quite yet. A little
- 6 bit more to go.
- 7 And my daughter Sarah, who just recently graduated from
- 8 Fordham this past May and who is intending to pursue a
- 9 career in law.
- I am proud of both of them and honored to have them
- 11 with me here today.
- Before I go on, I would like to thank the soldiers, the
- 13 sailors, the airmen, and the marines and civil servants whom
- 14 I have had the honor to serve. Their selfless service to
- 15 our country and to each other is a testament of the strength
- 16 of our Department and our nation.
- Most importantly, I wanted to remember and honor those
- 18 who have fallen. They and their families have made the
- 19 ultimate sacrifice.
- I also wanted to recognize our Afghan coalition
- 21 partners. 39 countries recognize the common threat posed by
- 22 ISIS and al Qaeda. We fight together today against a common
- 23 enemy to keep our country safe, and if confirmed, it will be
- 24 my privilege to fight alongside them again.
- I have learned a lot in the last 17 years. I have

- 1 learned there are groups that want nothing more than to harm
- 2 Americans. I have learned these groups thrive in ungoverned
- 3 spaces. And I have also learned when we maintain pressure
- 4 on them abroad, they struggle to organize and build the
- 5 necessary means to attack us.
- I understand our core goal in Afghanistan is to ensure
- 7 terrorists can never again use Afghanistan as a safe haven
- 8 to threaten the United States or other members of the
- 9 international community. I believe military pressure is
- 10 necessary to create the conditions for political
- 11 reconciliation. As we enable the Afghans to build military
- 12 capacity, they are better able to deny safe haven to
- 13 terrorists.
- 14 I know and appreciate the tremendous cost committed to
- 15 this mission. If confirmed, I will be a vigorous steward of
- 16 the people, the resources I am entrusted with. Corruption
- 17 and incompetence are corrosive to our mission, and fighting
- 18 them will always be a constant focus of mine.
- The military component of this is only one aspect of
- the administration's conditions-based strategy in
- 21 Afghanistan and South Asia. It is necessary to provide
- 22 space for political progress. If confirmed, I look forward
- 23 to working alongside my friend, Ambassador John Bass, and
- 24 other intergovernmental partners whose experience in those
- 25 trusted relations is going to be vital to our shared

1	mission.
2	I have had the honor of serving more than 20 years in
3	my career in special operations. I know the values of
4	working with reliable partners. I learned problems are best
5	addressed by seeking insights and advice from a wide pool of
6	talent, not just those in uniform, but those throughout our
7	government, as well as our international partners. And I
8	have learned to maximize the resources I have been entrusted
9	with to achieve effects. I have seen firsthand the
10	terrorist threats coming from Afghanistan, and I know what
11	is at stake. If confirmed, it would be my distinct honor to
12	serve in this position.
13	Thank you for the opportunity. Sir, I look forward to
14	your questions.
15	[The prepared statement of General Miller follows:]
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- Senator Inhofe: Thank you, General Miller.
- Our two core military missions in Afghanistan are
- 3 counterterrorism and to train, advise, and assist the Afghan
- 4 Security Forces.
- In late August, the Trump administration released the
- 6 South Asia strategy reemphasizing America's commitment to
- 7 Afghanistan and bolstering American security. The strategy
- 8 is conditions-based and reversed the previous
- 9 administration's policy of artificial timelines for
- 10 withdrawal, and it made changes to the rules of engagement,
- 11 including those of the use of air power to strike enemy
- 12 targets throughout the country.
- This new rules of engagement has allowed for targeting
- 14 of illicit narcotics and severely hampered the flow of
- 15 funding and is impacting the Taliban. Currently, there are
- 16 approximately 16,000 U.S. personnel serving in the country.
- 17 Both General Nicholson and Ambassador Bass, who
- 18 recently appeared before this committee, have said that the
- 19 new strategy is impacting the Taliban on multiple fronts.
- 20 In the past, the Taliban simply had to sit back and wait us
- 21 out. With this new strategy, I would like to have in your
- 22 view, has that changed the thinking of the Taliban, and if
- 23 so, how?
- General Miller: Senator, I go back to, as you
- 25 mentioned, the vital national interest. It is the

- 1 counterterrorism piece. Certainly the Taliban create the
- 2 conditions for the ungoverned spaces.
- 3 As far as the changing of the thinking of the Taliban,
- 4 I am following the progress from a distance. If confirmed,
- 5 that would be something that I would go over and make an
- 6 assessment. I do note, as highlighted earlier, the recent
- 7 ceasefire over Eid, one by the government and one by the
- 8 Taliban. So if nothing else, we have seen some change from
- 9 that regard. But clearly the conditions-based strategy has
- 10 taken time off the table at the present.
- 11 Senator Inhofe: Okay. What about resources? You have
- 12 had a chance to look and see the resources available to
- 13 carry out your mission. What is your response in terms of
- 14 are they adequate, as far as you see right now?
- 15 General Miller: Senator, where I sit today in Joint
- 16 Special Operations Command, it gives me a unique look at
- 17 certainly the resources that are applied against the
- 18 counterterrorist fight. So I do see those.
- 19 As for other resources, my instincts say they are about
- 20 right, but at the same time, if confirmed, I would like to
- 21 go over and just look at that and come back to you with a
- 22 better assessment of that.
- 23 Senator Inhofe: Take some time to get used to where we
- 24 are.
- 25 Just for a minute, let us talk about the SFAB

- 1 activities that are going on. We have some six. I guess
- 2 one of those is to the reserves. So we are looking at five
- 3 SFABs which concentrate on the NCOs and the officers, and
- 4 that is going to be predicated on the assumption that the
- 5 Afghans have adequate resources to carry out missions as
- 6 instructed and participate in by these officers and NCOs.
- 7 How do you think that is going to work? Do you see the
- 8 cooperation of the Afghans at this time to be adequate to
- 9 carry out those missions?
- 10 General Miller: Senator, I have seen the SFABs only
- 11 from a distance. I had an opportunity to meet with their
- 12 commander. I do know it is very high quality soldiers,
- officers, and noncommissioned officers as part of the SFAB.
- 14 What I would go back to is my personal experience with
- 15 advising and assisting, which as you mentioned, is a
- 16 critical component of our train, advise, and assist. I have
- 17 seen it work. I have seen it work with the Afghan Special
- 18 Security Forces, primarily with the commandos, but also with
- 19 the police. That combination is a powerful combination, and
- 20 it has a chance to increase their capabilities, their reach
- 21 -- the Afghans' reach in intelligence and operations. So I
- 22 am confident that this is going in the right direction.
- 23 Senator Inhofe: Well, that is good. And I am
- 24 confident that you are going to be confirmed too. So I
- 25 would just like to have you, once you are on the job and

- 1 looking to see how -- it is a concept. It is good I think,
- 2 but it has not had time to be proven to the extent in the
- 3 environment you are going to be working in. So we will need
- 4 to have report-backs on that.
- 5 General Miller: Yes, Senator.
- 6 Senator Inhofe: Thank you so much.
- 7 Senator Reed?
- 8 Senator Reed: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
- 9 General Miller, again I shared the chairman's
- 10 confidence in your skill and your ability and your
- 11 leadership.
- The military efforts are designed to be the forcing
- 13 process for diplomatic and political issues. I mean,
- 14 ultimately that is what is going to resolve the situation.
- 15 There is an election that is pending in Afghanistan,
- 16 political reconciliation. The ceasefire at Eid was a good
- 17 sign but I think a very transitory sign.
- You will be part of a team, but one of the things I
- 19 just want to ask you about is that we had previously a
- 20 special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. That
- 21 has been eliminated. So who is the lead beyond the
- 22 Ambassador in Afghanistan? Who is the lead diplomat that is
- 23 going to work with you and the Ambassador to get this
- 24 political situation in hand?
- 25 General Miller: Sir, today I am tracking that

- 1 Ambassador Alice Wells is the lead working very specifically
- 2 in the reconciliation arena for the State Department.
- 3 Senator Reed: She is the acting Assistant Secretary of
- 4 South and Central Asia, and she has a range of tasks. But
- 5 she could be there or not there in the next few months or
- 6 weeks. Again, together with military leadership that is
- 7 consistent and very capable, we need diplomatic leadership
- 8 too. And that message I hope you will carry back.
- 9 The other area of concern immediately outside of
- 10 Afghanistan is Pakistan. Can you give us a sense now from
- 11 your great experience in the region as to where we are with
- 12 regard to Pakistan and how effective they will be in
- 13 assisting our efforts?
- 14 General Miller: Senator, as I look at Afghanistan --
- 15 and I have looked at it for quite a number of years -- it is
- 16 obviously a very tough neighborhood with some tough
- 17 neighbors. As I look at Pakistan, Pakistan must be part of
- 18 the solution, and we should have high expectations that they
- 19 are part of the solution, not just diplomatically but from a
- 20 security standpoint as well.
- 21 Senator Reed: Do you think they are part of the
- 22 solution yet? They seem to be contradictory in what they
- 23 do.
- 24 General Miller: Senator, again, I see similar
- 25 behavior, contradictory. But as we go forward, as we work

- 1 through the South Asia strategy, not just from a military
- 2 standpoint, but from a diplomatic standpoint, again I go
- 3 back to I believe we ought to have very, very high
- 4 expectations of them.
- 5 Senator Reed: With respect to the military forces of
- 6 Afghanistan, their special operations troops have done
- 7 remarkably well and they are very well trained. You are
- 8 trying to increase the number of special operations troops,
- 9 as well as the air force. Do you see those as the two key
- 10 elements of power that the Afghan Government can wield to,
- if not win, at least to push back the Taliban?
- 12 General Miller: Senator, I do. And if confirmed, I
- 13 would like to go forward, take some time to make an
- 14 assessment. I have personal experience with the ground
- 15 forces, limited experience with the air forces, but that
- 16 would be an area I would like to assess and report back.
- 17 Senator Reed: With respect to our operations in
- 18 Afghanistan, there was a great deal more transparency with
- 19 respect to the effect of our operations. So recently we
- 20 were releasing data about airstrikes, the targets, and any
- 21 collateral damage. We still do that in CENTCOM overall with
- 22 respect to operations in Iraq and Syria, but within that
- 23 Afghan command, we stopped that with the notion that we were
- 24 giving too much information to our opponents.
- 25 What is your view on the detail of information that

- 1 should be released?
- 2 General Miller: Senator, if confirmed, first off, I am
- 3 committed to being very transparent with this committee as
- 4 required. As for details that are on hold, I would need to
- 5 go forward and understand why we are holding back that
- 6 information.
- 7 Senator Reed: Thank you.
- Again, good luck, sir. And thank you for your service
- 9 and thank you for Austin's service and thank you for Sarah's
- 10 service too.
- 11 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Reed.
- 12 Senator Wicker?
- 13 Senator Wicker: General, thank you for your service.
- 14 We are eager to get reports about how things are going
- 15 over there, and so there is a little disadvantage in doing
- 16 so because you have not actually been over there in this new
- 17 capacity.
- But let me ask you your assessment of this Eid's
- 19 ceasefire that you mentioned. It was supposed to last 3
- 20 days, and the Afghan Government then agreed to a unilateral
- 21 10-day extension. This was widely criticized in some
- 22 sectors of Afghanistan. Some members of parliament had some
- 23 critical things to say about that. And there are reports of
- 24 Reuters that this led to Taliban fighters walking freely
- 25 into government-controlled areas.

- 1 So can you enlighten us a little more, based on what
- 2 you have heard, about how this worked and whether the 10-day
- 3 unilateral extension might have been a disadvantage for the
- 4 government?
- 5 General Miller: Senator, as I look at this, first and
- 6 foremost, anything that lowers the violence for any period
- 7 of time is a positive. There is goodness that comes out of
- 8 there. It means people are talking. And this campaign will
- 9 not be resolved by military means alone. Even as we disrupt
- 10 the threats to our nation, there has to be a political
- 11 realignment that takes place there.
- I am working off of open source reporting as well. I
- 13 understand we just started the 10-day period. And what I
- 14 will be looking forward trying to understand is what are the
- 15 violence levels. Do the violence levels spike or do they
- 16 stay at a lower historical period over the next 10 days
- 17 while the government is in a self-declared ceasefire.
- 18 Senator Wicker: Well, when you came by my office the
- 19 other day -- and I appreciate that visit -- I told you I
- 20 might ask you about MRAPs. And I do not know if you had a
- 21 chance to look into this. But I think we can both agree
- 22 that MRAPs provide more protection to ground forces than the
- 23 lighter skinned Humvees. We agree on that, do we not?
- General Miller: Sir, we agree.
- 25 Senator Wicker: And also, it has come to my attention

- 1 that Afghans have requested approximately 730 MRAPs, and we,
- 2 the United States, actually has hundreds of excess MRAPs in
- 3 mothballs that are ready for refurbishment.
- 4 Have you had a chance in the days since you dropped by
- 5 the office and today's hearing to look further into that,
- 6 and can you comment for us?
- 7 General Miller: Sir, my comments would be I did took
- 8 into it, and what I found out is the Afghans do have a
- 9 number of MRAPs. What I do not know and would have to wait,
- 10 if confirmed, to go forward and look at it to see how they
- 11 are utilizing them and how they are maintaining them and
- 12 what is the long-term sustainability of those. But that
- 13 would be something I --
- 14 Senator Wicker: So you found out that they do have a
- 15 number of them. Were you able to confirm that instead of
- 16 the 730 that they requested, that they are having to use the
- 17 lighter skinned Humvees instead?
- 18 General Miller: Senator, I do not have that
- 19 information. Again, I am aware that they have been issued a
- 20 number of armored vehicles to include MRAPs. And that would
- 21 be one, if okay with you, to come back to you and get you
- 22 the exact facts on that.
- 23 Senator Wicker: Okay.
- Let me just ask you then in closing to react to a
- 25 statement that Senator Reed made about the lack of progress

- 1 over the last several months in terms of our effort. Is
- 2 that your assessment also that our progress has been
- 3 somewhat flat? It has not gone backwards, but we are not
- 4 really getting where we need to be.
- 5 General Miller: Senator, I have seen the SIGAR
- 6 reporting as well as the Resolute Support and the State
- 7 Department reporting. There is a difference of opinion
- 8 there.
- 9 As we look at progress, first and foremost, I go back
- 10 to the core objective, and that is al Qaeda, ISIS,
- 11 preventing sanctuary, preventing external operations. So
- 12 there is progress there.
- 13 As it relates to advising and assisting the Afghans to
- 14 harden, fill in some of that space against the Taliban, I
- 15 would need to go forward and make an assessment of where we
- 16 stand there.
- 17 Senator Wicker: Thank you. Appreciate it.
- 18 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Wicker.
- 19 Senator Peters?
- 20 Senator Peters: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- 21 And, General Miller, again thank you for your long
- 22 career of service to our country.
- General Miller, when President Trump announced his
- 24 strategy for Afghanistan last August, he made clear that the
- 25 U.S. military would be taking a goal-oriented approach and

- 1 moving away from timetables, as I know you are well aware.
- 2 The President said that conditions on the ground, not
- 3 arbitrary timetables, will guide our strategy.
- But I am concerned that for too long we have not
- 5 clarified what our metrics are for success in Afghanistan,
- 6 and as a result, we have allowed our strategy to drift over
- 7 the years. When we do have metrics, I think it is
- 8 questionable whether or not we are achieving those. The
- 9 previous question, you were not sure we were drifting
- 10 backwards or there were some other opinions that we are
- 11 moving forward. So it is somewhat of a debate.
- So it is one thing not to let our enemies know our
- 13 plans. I get that. I think we all get that. But I do not
- 14 think it is an excuse to not make some tough decisions about
- 15 our national security. And as you can imagine, my
- 16 constituents ask me what our return on investment has been
- 17 in Afghanistan. A common question that I get, in fact, at
- 18 town halls that I hold, is why are we investing in
- 19 infrastructure in Afghanistan when we have significant needs
- 20 right here in the United States?
- 21 It is important to remember that over \$125 billion has
- 22 been spent on relief and reconstruction alone in
- 23 Afghanistan. That is more than what the United States spent
- on the Marshall Plan to rebuild Western Europe after World
- 25 War II when accounting for inflation.

- 1 So I know our general objective has been to set up an
- 2 Afghan Government capable of running their own country and
- 3 providing security necessary to not allow terrorist
- 4 operations, but after spending more than we did to set up
- 5 Europe after the devastating effects of World War II and 17
- 6 years have elapsed, tell me what you think we need to be
- 7 doing differently that we have not done for the past 17
- 8 years.
- 9 General Miller: Senator, I acknowledge 17 years is a
- 10 very long time. And as I look at the strategy today, I am
- 11 very focused on our vital national interests, as identified
- 12 in that strategy, which is the threat to U.S. citizens,
- international partners that emanate from Afghanistan, again
- 14 very specifically ISIS and al Qaeda.
- Overall objective. Certainly the ways involve a train
- 16 for the military component of this strategy, a train,
- 17 advise, and assist of Afghan forces -- that is army and
- 18 police -- that are able to then secure these areas so that
- 19 it lightens our touch.
- 20 And lastly, work towards a political solution here,
- 21 whether it is reconciliation or political realignment that
- 22 does take place.
- 23 My experience -- and I have watched this war with high
- 24 troop levels. I was present during the surge of 130,000. I
- 25 know we have reduced costs over time by bringing the force

- 1 levels down, as well as the resources for the mission.
- 2 Senator Peters: General, you talked about cost and
- 3 spending. I serve as the ranking member on the Federal
- 4 Spending Oversight Subcommittee, and last month, we had a
- 5 hearing on spending in Afghanistan. We heard testimony from
- 6 the special inspector general that spending of over \$8
- 7 billion on counternarcotics programming and basically after
- 8 \$8 billion of hard-earned taxpayer money, those programs, it
- 9 has been decided, just did not work because they were not
- 10 coordinated. They were poorly executed. We have also heard
- 11 that the incentives for narcotics production and conflict
- 12 dynamics just overwhelm anything that the United States can
- do with these assistance programs, meaning it is
- 14 questionable that these programs were wise investments in
- 15 the first place. But certainly at some point after spending
- 16 \$8 billion, someone should have spoken up. I know that is
- 17 not your fault. You were not there. This is not about
- 18 anything that you did in your role.
- But I would like to hear from you and have some
- 20 assurances that you will do things differently, particularly
- 21 when it comes to maintaining accountability for hard-earned
- 22 money that is being spent in Afghanistan to make sure that
- 23 it is actually spent wisely and it is having an impact based
- 24 on objective metrics. How would you plan on doing that?
- 25 General Miller: Senator, first of all, in my present

- 1 duty and present and previous command positions, I view
- 2 myself as personally responsible, a good steward for the
- 3 taxpayer, for the resources that are allocated. And I thank
- 4 this committee very specifically for the support given over
- 5 the years.
- 6 If confirmed and I move forward, I would take that same
- 7 mantra forward with me. That goes there. Fraud, waste, and
- 8 abuse cannot be tolerated. Corruption cannot be tolerated.
- 9 Accountability has to be established. Working with SIGAR,
- 10 working with other auditing agencies to ensure that we
- 11 understand where money is flowing, where it is flowing where
- 12 it is useful and where it is flowing where it is unuseful.
- 13 Senator Peters: Thank you.
- 14 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Peters.
- 15 Senator Ernst?
- 16 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
- General Miller, thank you. It was a pleasure meeting
- 18 with you last week. I appreciate your insight very much.
- 19 And I would like to thank your family as well for being here
- 20 today. Lieutenant Miller, Sarah, thank you for joining us
- 21 and thank you for supporting your father.
- 22 General, last year there was a very realistic chance
- 23 that all U.S. forces were going to be withdrawn from
- 24 Afghanistan. Can you briefly paint a picture of how
- 25 Afghanistan would look today if that had occurred?

- 1 General Miller: Senator, my personal opinion -- I am
- 2 going to think echoed by others in the intel community -- is
- 3 a precipitous and disorderly withdrawal -- we would have
- 4 negative effects on protecting our vital national interests,
- 5 which is to protect from attacks emanating from Afghanistan.
- 6 Senator Ernst: So you do agree, sir, that at some
- 7 point we do need to find our way out of Afghanistan, but it
- 8 needs to be done in a methodical order. Is that correct?
- 9 General Miller: That is correct, Senator.
- 10 Senator Ernst: Thank you very much.
- 11 You shared some very wise words with me last week, and
- 12 you had stated the Afghan military and government must want
- 13 to win more than us. Can you best explain how we work with
- 14 the Afghans to make that happen?
- 15 General Miller: Senator, again, I have worked in
- 16 Afghanistan with the Afghan partners, not the wider army but
- 17 very specifically the special security forces, and I know
- 18 they can fight. I know they fight and they can win.
- 19 As we go forward on what must be a sustainable effort,
- 20 my look on this is, if confirmed, you put money where you
- 21 know you will have results. And that speaks to not only on
- 22 the military side but any other activities that are taking
- 23 place.
- 24 Senator Ernst: And we also spoke a little bit about
- 25 counter-drug operations and going after narcoterrorists in

- 1 Afghanistan. That is very important. As you know, it is
- 2 vital that we do cut the terrorist funding streams and just
- 3 as important as that, we stop the production of those
- 4 narcotics in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, we are often using
- 5 millions of dollars in bombs and putting troops in very
- 6 dangerous situations to have very low impact on the actual
- 7 drug revenue.
- 8 So how do you intend to quantify our counter-drug
- 9 campaign, and what will you do and how will you view that as
- 10 success?
- 11 General Miller: Senator, the military is certainly a
- 12 supporting arm to any counternarcotics, counter-drug
- 13 strategy. From a military perspective as we look at the
- insurgency, very much focused on revenues, which as you
- 15 indicated, the opium trade does provide revenues for Taliban
- 16 and actually likely fuels corruption, as well as other bad
- 17 actors. The military focus today is focusing on the
- 18 finances. How do you reduce the finance streams, which does
- 19 include narcotics but also includes other illicit traffic,
- 20 whether it be mining or taxation that takes place? And with
- 21 any insurgency, you have to go after the finances.
- 22 Senator Ernst: Thank you. Of course, we have to do
- 23 that.
- I have a little bit of time left. But we do talk a lot
- about our troop numbers in Afghanistan, and we do not talk

- 1 enough about all of the air assets and the needs that come
- 2 with them. Of course, we have to have the support force
- 3 too. As you know, close air support, medevac platforms, and
- 4 lift capabilities are equally as important.
- 5 Do you have any plans now to increase air assets in
- 6 Afghanistan?
- General Miller: Senator, if confirmed, that would be a
- 8 place I would want to take a look. Agree with the size of
- 9 the country and the places we need to be. Air assets are
- 10 absolutely critical.
- 11 Senator Ernst: Thank you. I do want to give a shout
- 12 out to our Iowa National Guard air assets that are serving
- in Afghanistan right now.
- 14 The medevac company -- when I visited them last
- 15 November, they had just been in country a few weeks and they
- 16 had done numerous, numerous evacuations and one mass
- 17 casualty evac. So I appreciate that very much.
- I do not have much time remaining. I will get
- 19 questions to you. I do have a few other questions.
- 20 But I want to echo Senator Burr's sentiments that I do
- 21 think you are well qualified. I look forward to having you
- 22 confirmed quickly through the Armed Services Committee and
- 23 on the floor of the Senate. My best wishes to you, General
- 24 Miller. Thank you very much.
- Thank you, Mr. Chair.

- 1 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Ernst.
- 2 Senator Warren?
- 3 Senator Warren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- 4 General Miller, thank you for being here and thank you
- 5 for your willingness to take on this very, very difficult
- 6 assignment. You have been nominated to be the 17th
- 7 commander of NATO's Afghanistan mission. Since 2007, you
- 8 would be the ninth U.S. commander in the same mission. So
- 9 you come from what is now a very long line of military
- 10 leaders who acknowledge the real challenges but ultimately
- 11 remain faithful to the idea that our strategy is working.
- 12 Unfortunately, you are not the first commander to come
- in here to express cautious optimism. In fact, I just
- 14 started looking through some of the old documents.
- 15 General Campbell said, I really do think that as people
- 16 look back and as they say 2010 was the year in Afghanistan,
- 17 I think that was a turning point.
- 18 Secretary Panetta. 2011 was a real turning point. It
- 19 was the first time in 5 years that we saw a drop in the
- 20 number of enemy attacks.
- 21 General Dempsey in 2014. The election seems to be a
- 22 turning point and a confidence of the Afghanistan Security
- 23 Forces.
- General Nicholson in 2017. U.S. and Afghan forces have
- 25 turned the corner.

- General Miller, we have supposedly turned the corner so
- 2 many times that it seems now we are going in circles. So
- 3 let me just ask you, do you envision turning another corner
- 4 during your tenure as commander? After 17 years of war,
- 5 what are you going to do differently to bring this conflict
- 6 to an end?
- 7 General Miller: Senator, first off, I acknowledge the
- 8 17 years. That is generational. And I have experience from
- 9 2001 until very recently. This young guy sitting behind me
- 10 -- I never anticipated that his cohort would be in a
- 11 position to deploy as I sat there in 2001 and looked at
- 12 that. So I acknowledge that.
- 13 I cannot guarantee you a timeline or an end date -- I
- 14 know that going into this position -- or offer necessarily a
- 15 turning point unless there is one, unless there is something
- 16 to come back and report back that something has changed.
- 17 And that is where I anticipate being.
- I go back to the vital national interest of the United
- 19 States of America, and I do know today from personal --
- 20 because of our forces there, I know that that is having an
- 21 effect on elements that would attack the United States of
- 22 America. It is disrupting.
- The other piece is can we harden the Afghan Security
- 24 Forces to close the distance and change the calculus on the
- 25 ground now.

- 1 Senator Warren: Well, I appreciate that, General, but
- 2 let me just push back just a little bit on this.
- 3 Afghanistan is in crisis. The government is not gaining new
- 4 territory. It lacks the support of its own people. It
- 5 controls or influences only about two-thirds of the
- 6 population. The Taliban has actually increased the
- 7 population under its control since 2016. The Security
- 8 Forces are sustaining unsustainable losses. According to
- 9 UNICEF, nearly 50 percent of Afghan children are out of
- 10 school. Food insecurity has spiked. Corruption is rampant.
- 11 Let me see if I can frame the question differently.
- 12 Even if U.S. forces could somehow stabilize the security
- 13 situation, can we realistically expect a political
- 14 settlement without addressing these underlying challenges?
- 15 General Miller: Senator, I admit from the military
- 16 component as we support the political, the political speaks
- 17 quite a lot to the reconciliation, the aspects of bringing
- 18 the Afghans back together, and some of those underlying
- 19 challenges will also have to be addressed.
- 20 Senator Warren: None of this is the fault of the brave
- 21 men and women of the U.S. military. But I am afraid that we
- 22 are asking our military to perform an impossible task. We
- 23 have been in Afghanistan for 17 years. Our military cannot
- 24 and should not be in Afghanistan forever. We need to make
- 25 it clear to the Afghans that they need to secure enough of

- 1 their own country so that U.S. troops can come home as soon
- 2 as possible. I appreciate your being here, but I am deeply
- 3 concerned that we are just heading further and further down
- 4 a path that does not have success at the end.
- 5 Thank you.
- 6 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Warren.
- 7 Senator Perdue?
- 8 Senator Perdue: Thank you, General, for your service
- 9 and your family's service.
- 10 I share the concern of the Senator. But let me ask you
- 11 a question. So we have been there a long time. You have
- 12 been there. A lot of people have died there. It seems to
- 13 me that the real question here is, are we going to get the
- 14 Security Forces of Afghanistan hardened, as you call it,
- 15 enough to stand on their own to where we can downsize our
- 16 involvement there with some security that they will be able
- 17 to withstand the Taliban onslaught? Would you agree with
- 18 that?
- 19 General Miller: I do, Senator.
- 20 Senator Perdue: And so we have given them air power
- 21 over the last year. We train their A-29 pilots in this
- 22 country. We have given them a lot of support. And yet,
- 23 when we cross the border into Pakistan, we see nothing has
- 24 really changed much in the last year. I was in Pakistan
- 25 last year with Senator McCain, and we met with General

- 1 Bajwa. We met with the head of their intelligence service.
- 2 And then we went over and met with President Ghani the next
- 3 day in Afghanistan and talked about cross-border joint
- 4 operations. To your knowledge right now from open source
- 5 and from your special operations background, have any of
- 6 those joint operations actually been conducted yet?
- 7 General Miller: Senator, from my knowledge, there has
- 8 been joint cooperation but not joint operations back and
- 9 forth across each other's borders.
- 10 Senator Perdue: So the solution here, it seems to me
- 11 having had some personal experience in that region over the
- 12 last 30 years, that the Pashtun problem, of which Haggani
- 13 and the Taliban are among the many tribes, is part of the
- 14 problem and part of the potential solution. But right now,
- 15 with the Haggani Network being protected inside Pakistan, do
- 16 you see any relief for this cross-border safe haven that the
- 17 Taliban now continue to enjoy?
- 18 General Miller: Senator, that would be something I
- 19 would have to go look at, if confirmed. I go back to what I
- 20 think our larger expectations of Pakistan ought to be is
- 21 that we ought to have high expectations of them to address
- 22 the issues you are speaking about there.
- 23 Senator Perdue: So last year, when I visited General
- 24 Nicholson over there, the objective, as he laid it out, and
- 25 the plan for victory, as he called it -- and I have high

- 1 regard for General Nicholson. I think he has done a great
- 2 job there -- was to get the Taliban to the table. Are we
- 3 any closer to that today in your opinion than we were a year
- 4 ago? And what would you do as the new commander over there
- 5 to help achieve that mission if that continues to be our
- 6 objective?
- General Miller: Senator, I am not aware, and that is
- 8 again just because I am not on the inside of getting them to
- 9 the table with the discussions that are taking place.
- The military strategy directly in support of the
- 11 political objectives is in play. I see that shoring itself
- 12 up from a distance. And if confirmed, I look forward to
- 13 continuing that.
- 14 Senator Perdue: Sir, one last question briefly.
- 15 Last week, just last Friday as a matter of fact, we had
- 16 a report that the head of the Pakistani Taliban was actually
- 17 killed in a U.S. airstrike. I think you may have seen that
- 18 report, Mullah Fazlullah. But it heightens the opportunity
- 19 that these guys have to go across borders. But these high
- 20 value targets like that -- are they effective in terms of
- 21 reducing the strength and the power of the Taliban in their
- 22 ability to keep the government off balance and to continue
- 23 this turmoil that we talk about in Afghanistan?
- General Miller: Senator, as you look at a CT strategy
- 25 as part of a larger campaign, certainly leadership strikes

- 1 are a pillar there. They are not decisive by themselves.
- 2 It takes a much deeper disruption of a network and, as
- 3 importantly, the political aspect to come in and solidify
- 4 that, take a disrupt, and make it into a consolidation of
- 5 gains.
- 6 Senator Perdue: Sir, it seems to me that one of the
- 7 things that we do most harmful here in the United States
- 8 Senate is to pass a continuing resolution that ties your
- 9 hands from a finance point of view. What can we do, besides
- 10 eliminating the use of continuing resolutions, to help you
- 11 be successful in your mission as the new commander over
- 12 there?
- General Miller: Senator, first of all, I would like to
- 14 thank this committee very specifically, but Congress in
- 15 general for the support over the years. And I think I would
- 16 take that question, look at things on the ground, if
- 17 confirmed, and come back with specific areas of support.
- 18 Senator Perdue: I will look forward to that answer
- 19 when I visit you over there. Thank you, sir.
- 20 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Perdue.
- 21 Senator Blumenthal?
- 22 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- I join my colleagues in thanking you and your family
- 24 for your service and expressing my appreciation for your
- 25 very candid visit with me recently.

- 1 When I asked you the question about what the end game
- 2 is in Afghanistan, you very articulately made the point that
- 3 we need to protect our nation and our national security from
- 4 the use of that part of the world and specifically
- 5 Afghanistan as a safe haven for terrorists to attack us.
- 6 And perhaps for this committee and in a sense for the
- 7 American people you could express that view because I think
- 8 it would help in a sense further the understanding among
- 9 members of this body and the American people about what our
- 10 goals are there.
- 11 General Miller: Senator, thank you for that.
- 12 Very clearly stated, this is about protecting U.S.
- 13 citizens when you get right to the heart of the issue. U.S.
- 14 citizens, other international partners are threatened by
- 15 terrorism that emanates from Afghanistan. I look at these
- 16 groups with my current capacity. So today I am thinking
- 17 about Afghanistan, but I look at them across the globe in
- 18 these two groups. Very specifically, it is transnational
- 19 capabilities that allow it to project power. That is the
- 20 interest that we are protecting.
- 21 It is not enough just to disrupt. It does require the
- 22 political levers that come in. It does require work by the
- 23 Afghans as well. The Afghans are part of the solution. The
- 24 peace process -- it is Afghan-led, Afghan-owned. And those
- 25 are the components that need to come together here to

- 1 achieve our core objective.
- 2 Senator Blumenthal: How significant in that peace
- 3 process do you think the recent ceasefire was?
- 4 General Miller: Senator, again, I am a fan of anytime
- 5 you can lower violence, that gives you a chance to talk.
- 6 Specifically in Afghanistan my experience is, as long as you
- 7 are talking, they are probably not shooting at you, and that
- 8 is a good place to be there.
- 9 But I do not want to overstate it. I think it starts a
- 10 conversation. I think what will really matter here now is
- 11 the follow-through certainly by the Afghans, the Taliban,
- 12 but also the international community and the coalition.
- 13 Senator Blumenthal: Speaking of that coalition,
- 14 General, it is a coalition that involves our European
- 15 allies. Correct?
- 16 General Miller: There are some of our European allies.
- 17 Yes, Senator.
- 18 Senator Blumenthal: And they have shed blood and made
- 19 sacrifices side by side with us.
- 20 General Miller: That is correct, Senator.
- 21 Senator Blumenthal: Would you say that our national
- 22 interest is well served by maintaining the close ties and
- 23 friendships and alliances that we have with our European
- 24 partners?
- 25 General Miller: Senator, I agree with that. And if

- 1 confirmed, that is one of my key responsibilities is
- 2 maintaining the cohesion of the coalition.
- 3 Senator Blumenthal: And it is hard to compartmentalize
- 4 those alliances and friendships to the battlefield. They
- 5 really extend to a variety of other areas and spaces where
- 6 we share common interests and where we should be cooperating
- 7 and expressing the ties that have bound us for literally
- 8 decades and centuries and in other wars where we have shed
- 9 blood and made sacrifices together. I feel very strongly
- 10 that we need to be mindful about those alliances, and your
- 11 service and the coalition that you will lead I think is
- 12 better served by keeping our allies and our friends close
- 13 rather than alienating them. I do not know whether you
- 14 agree.
- 15 General Miller: Senator, I agree, and if confirmed,
- 16 you can have the utmost confidence that will be key for me
- 17 to maintain the cohesion of that coalition.
- 18 Senator Blumenthal: I assume also that you believe
- 19 that Pakistan, as some of my colleagues have mentioned, has
- 20 to be part of this overall solution as well.
- 21 General Miller: Senator, I do. And to just to go a
- 22 little further, I think the neighbors in the region, which
- 23 speaks to the regionalization of the strategy, have a
- 24 responsibility and an interest in a stable Afghanistan.
- 25 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you very much.

- 1 Thanks, Mr. Chairman.
- Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.
- 3 Senator Graham?
- 4 Senator Graham: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- 5 General, how many years have you spent in Afghanistan
- 6 since 9/11?
- General Miller: Senator, I am counting 3 and a half to
- 8 4 years.
- 9 Senator Graham: So you understand the area pretty
- 10 well?
- 11 General Miller: Senator, the more I stay there,
- 12 sometimes the more difficult it becomes to understand. I
- 13 think I recognize what I do not understand at this stage of
- 14 my career.
- 15 Senator Graham: Have you been wounded twice?
- General Miller: I have, Senator.
- 17 Senator Graham: Where were you wounded at?
- 18 General Miller: Senator, first in Mogadishu in 1993
- 19 and then a follow-on 10 years later in Iraq.
- 20 Senator Graham: General Nicholson has done a superb
- 21 job. I just want to thank him and his family for their
- 22 contribution. I think you are a worthy successor.
- We have a conditions-based withdrawal policy. Is that
- 24 correct?
- 25 General Miller: That is correct, Senator.

- 1 Senator Graham: Did you support sending more forces to
- 2 Afghanistan? Do you support the current number?
- General Miller: I do, Senator, but I would actually,
- 4 if confirmed, like to, one, look at it on the ground.
- 5 Senator Graham: Would you tell us if you thought you
- 6 needed more?
- 7 General Miller: I would, Senator.
- 8 Senator Graham: What would happen if we withdrew in 6
- 9 months?
- 10 General Miller: Senator, I think a disorderly and
- 11 precipitous withdrawal would have negative effects on U.S.
- 12 national security.
- 13 Senator Graham: Describe those effects briefly.
- 14 General Miller: Senator, I would be concerned about
- 15 ISIS and al Qaeda's ability to emerge and project external
- operations, one, because I know they want to and I know they
- 17 are constantly looking for that opportunity.
- 18 Senator Graham: Do you think it would be any different
- 19 than Iraq when we left too soon?
- 20 General Miller: Senator, from my viewpoint, I think it
- 21 would be similar.
- 22 Senator Graham: In terms of the rise of ISIS and other
- 23 radical Islamic groups, do we have a plan to deal with them?
- General Miller: Senator, I do think we have a plan.
- 25 Senator Graham: Do you have the authorities to engage

- 1 the enemy?
- 2 General Miller: Senator, especially in my current job,
- 3 I have the authorities to engage the enemy.
- 4 Senator Graham: When did that change?
- 5 General Miller: Senator, in the 2016 time frame
- 6 discussion -- and a lot of this was lowering of authorities
- 7 as opposed to creating new authorities -- it was bringing
- 8 them down to a lower level.
- 9 Senator Graham: What is your biggest challenge in
- 10 Afghanistan, as you see it?
- 11 General Miller: Senator, as I look at Afghanistan, the
- 12 biggest challenge is neighbors, again bringing that
- 13 neighborhood to a place where they are helpful. Certainly
- 14 the security situation is something -- bringing violence
- 15 down is a continuing challenge and continuing to advise and
- 16 assist. But I go back to the most important thing we are
- doing is disrupting the terrorist threat that emanates from
- 18 Afghanistan.
- 19 Senator Graham: In the last year, has Pakistan gotten
- 20 better or worse or about the same when it comes to helping
- 21 our efforts in Afghanistan?
- 22 General Miller: Senator, I do not know the answer
- 23 fully to that question. My assessment is that they need to
- 24 be. We should have high expectations of them. But I am not
- able to judge the better or worse at this stage.

- 1 Senator Graham: So we have been there a long time. Do
- 2 you agree with me that history will judge not when we left
- 3 but what we left behind?
- 4 General Miller: I do, Senator.
- 5 Senator Graham: Do you believe it is possible to leave
- 6 a secure and stable Afghanistan behind one day?
- 7 General Miller: I do, Senator.
- 8 Senator Graham: What does winning look like?
- 9 General Miller: Senator, I would describe winning,
- 10 first and foremost, protecting, safeguarding U.S. vital
- 11 national interests so long as they remain those interests.
- 12 I have described it previously as a hardened Afghanistan
- 13 Security Force, but I guess more detail would be a security
- 14 force that I know does exist out there with capability to
- 15 take care of these threats and to project not only their
- 16 security but their governance and then ultimately it is a
- 17 political reconciliation or realignment.
- 18 Senator Graham: What does losing look like from an
- 19 American point of view?
- 20 General Miller: Senator, I would see an attack, a
- 21 catastrophic attack, against the United States or our
- 22 allies. That would be a negative.
- 23 Senator Graham: How likely is that if we leave too
- 24 soon?
- 25 General Miller: Senator, my opinion is if we leave too

- 1 soon, there is a threat in Afghanistan.
- 2 Senator Graham: A real threat?
- 3 General Miller: Yes, Senator, a real threat.
- 4 Senator Graham: Thank you very much for your service
- 5 and good luck.
- 6 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Graham.
- 7 Senator King?
- 8 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- 9 I would like to follow up on Senator Graham's usual
- 10 good questions.
- 11 The question I am struggling with is that the
- 12 fundamental premise of our presence in Afghanistan now for
- 13 17 years is the safe haven argument, that Afghanistan is a
- 14 safe haven. It was a safe haven for al Qaeda at the time of
- 15 September 11th. The question is what makes Afghanistan so
- 16 peculiarly safe as opposed to Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Africa,
- 17 Syria. I am genuinely trying to understand why all the
- 18 blood and treasure goes into one country if the enemy can
- 19 simply set up a tent city in the middle of the Sahel or
- 20 somewhere in Pakistan or somewhere in Iran. Do you see
- 21 where I am going? Why is it Afghanistan is the center? You
- 22 are talking about a mobile enemy. Most of the people that
- 23 plotted September 11th were not from Afghanistan. They just
- 24 used the land. Help me out here.
- 25 General Miller: Senator, with Afghanistan, obviously

- 1 an ungoverned space, not the only ungoverned space and not
- 2 the only place very specifically that ISIS and al Qaeda
- 3 operate from -- there are other locations as well. In
- 4 Afghanistan, as we discuss it today, one of the unique
- 5 pieces is Afghanistan has a functioning government. So I
- 6 would go to that direction. Al Qaeda, ISIS, dangerous in
- 7 Afghanistan, transnational in nature, communicating outside
- 8 of the conflict zone and not dissimilar to other places
- 9 around the world which my particular command were able to
- 10 attempt to address those threats as well.
- 11 Senator King: Well, I understand your answer, but I
- 12 really do not. Again, you say Afghanistan has a functioning
- 13 government which seems to be losing ground, but there are
- 14 ungoverned areas. Are there areas where there is a
- 15 sympathetic government to terrorists, Yemen -- I mean, I
- 16 just listed them. I just wonder if we are not concentrating
- 17 all of our fire power on the place that bred September 11th
- 18 and a lot of blood and treasure, as I said. I do not know
- 19 how we are going to change the dynamic there. We had
- 20 110,000 troops there. Now we have 15,000. What is going to
- 21 be different? I was following up I thought Senator Warren's
- 22 questions going back in history where your predecessors have
- 23 all said we are at a turning point. Nothing seems to
- 24 change. And what is going to change in the next 2 years or
- 25 3 years?

- 1 And by the way, I am not questioning your leadership
- 2 whatsoever. I certainly plan to vote to confirm you. I
- 3 think you are the right guy in the right job at the right
- 4 time. Your record is impeccable. I am talking more about
- 5 national policy. You happen to be the guy sitting in the
- 6 witness seat.
- 7 But what do you see as changing that will change the
- 8 dynamic? Because it seems to be going in a negative
- 9 direction in terms of land controlled, decline in the size
- 10 of the Afghan Security Forces, political instability within
- 11 the government in Afghanistan. How do we make a change in
- 12 that dynamic?
- General Miller: Senator, as I look through and think
- 14 back based on your question and reflect what has changed,
- 15 again I was there in 2001 when we probably had about 1,000
- 16 U.S. boots on the ground maybe, maybe even a little less
- 17 than that, with other coalition partners. I was there in
- 18 2009 and 2010 when the U.S. military, as well as other NATO
- 19 forces surged, and there were over 130,000 U.S. forces in
- 20 the period where we took the brunt of U.S. casualties as
- 21 well as NATO casualties.
- 22 As I came back in 2013-2014, what had changed then was
- 23 an Afghan-led effort, Afghan forces to the fore, Afghan
- 24 forces leading the security charge and wanting to do that.
- 25 As a matter of fact, their senior leadership wanted to

- 1 ensure they were in the front.
- We will have to go forward and take a look at this, if
- 3 confirmed. But that is another adjustment. You see an even
- 4 smaller number of U.S. and other coalition forces that are
- 5 working to train, advise, and assist both institutionally
- 6 and tactically. But this is, first and foremost, Afghan-led
- 7 except where our national security interests are at risk.
- 8 Senator King: And I understand that.
- 9 One final question. Is the Taliban our enemy?
- 10 Because, again, this whole thing is in the context of
- 11 counterterrorism. Is the Taliban a terrorist organization?
- 12 Are they more likely to tolerate and support and encourage
- 13 the resurgence of ISIS or al Qaeda as opposed to the
- 14 government? I am genuinely interested in the ideology of
- 15 the Taliban. I cannot figure out who they are.
- 16 General Miller: Senator, from my perspective, the
- 17 Taliban had previously hosted and tolerated al Qaeda. They
- 18 have now said that that would not be part of their future
- 19 policy, but that is statements by them. I do not have a
- 20 judgment whether that is true or not.
- 21 They are the enemy of the Afghan people because they
- 22 are fighting against the Afghans. What they are is they
- 23 create the disorder in these spaces that now become
- 24 ungoverned over time.
- 25 Senator King: Well, I really appreciate your

- 1 thoughtfulness and your willingness to take on this very
- 2 difficult assignment. We will certainly try to provide you
- 3 with what you tell us you need. Thank you.
- 4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- 5 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator King.
- 6 Senator Cotton?
- 7 Senator Cotton: Thank you.
- 8 General Miller, thank you very much for your
- 9 willingness to go to Afghanistan once again and for your
- 10 many years of service. We have many fine flag officers that
- 11 come in front of this committee, but few have displayed not
- 12 just the command excellence but the personal valor and
- 13 bravery you have on the battlefield. We all appreciate
- 14 that.
- 15 Let me continue down Senator King's line of questioning
- 16 about why Afghanistan, why are we in Afghanistan 17 years
- 17 later. Why do not all the other places that are deeply
- 18 troubled and pose threats to us as well, like Syria, for
- 19 instance -- although we do have troops in Syria. But just
- 20 at the levels and the length of time. It is true that
- 21 Afghanistan is where we were attacked from on 9/11. Is that
- 22 right?
- 23 General Miller: That is correct, Senator.
- 24 Senator Cotton: Is it still true that Afghanistan in
- 25 its border area with Pakistan has the highest concentration

- 1 of foreign terrorist organizations anywhere in the world?
- 2 General Miller: That is correct, Senator.
- 3 Senator Cotton: It is also the case that we have a
- 4 troop presence that is established and that does many
- 5 important tasks in Afghanistan and that we would lose those
- 6 capabilities in the country if we were to, as you say,
- 7 precipitously withdraw?
- 8 General Miller: Yes, Senator. That is correct.
- 9 Senator Cotton: But 17 years is a long time. This
- 10 will make, you said, your fourth deployment?
- 11 General Miller: I counted in years about 4 years,
- 12 Senator.
- 13 Senator Cotton: Did you imagine in 2001 that you would
- 14 be deploying for a fourth year to Afghanistan in 2018?
- 15 General Miller: Senator, I did not.
- 16 Senator Cotton: Is that something you really would
- 17 have wanted to do in 2001?
- 18 General Miller: Senator, I actually recall
- 19 conversations of people who were out over Christmas in 2001
- 20 talking about they were doing this so their kids did not
- 21 have to.
- 22 Senator Cotton: Well, since you raise that, let us
- 23 talk about Lieutenant Miller there for a second. If
- 24 Lieutenant Miller does his job well and stays as a platoon
- 25 leader at the 82nd Airborne into next year, 2019, he is

- 1 going to have a private report to his platoon in all
- 2 likelihood who was born after the 9/11 attacks. That is a
- 3 pretty shocking fact. Is it not?
- 4 General Miller: Yes, Senator.
- 5 Senator Cotton: So we have taken on a lot of burden in
- 6 Afghanistan. We have taken it on for a long time. Many
- 7 Americans rightfully question why we have spent so much
- 8 money there, why we have had so many of our sons and
- 9 daughters killed there. Is the simple answer to those
- 10 questions that Afghanistan is where they attacked us from
- 11 and if we were to, as you say, precipitously withdraw, they
- 12 would simply try to start attacking us again?
- General Miller: Senator, I go back to that national
- 14 interest, the vital national interest, which is the security
- 15 of our country, the security of our citizens, as well as
- 16 other international partners. That is why we are in
- 17 Afghanistan.
- 18 Senator Cotton: And I wish that you and all those
- 19 other lieutenants and captains who said in 2001 that they
- 20 were there so their kids did not have to be there had that
- 21 prediction come true, but it is simply not the case. The
- 22 enemy is still there and the enemy still gets the vote.
- 23 Right?
- 24 General Miller: That is correct, Senator.
- 25 Senator Cotton: A couple weeks ago, unfortunately an

- 1 American soldier was killed, Staff Sergeant Alex Conrad. He
- 2 was killed in a very poor, troubled, war-torn country. It
- 3 was not Afghanistan, though. It was Somalia. And Captain
- 4 Miller served in Somalia 25 years ago. Is that not right?
- 5 General Miller: That is correct, Senator.
- 6 Senator Cotton: Did you have the same sentiment when
- 7 you served in Somalia, that you were there, in part, so your
- 8 children would not have to be there 25 years later?
- 9 General Miller: Senator, I think in 1993 I was not
- 10 thinking in that direction. But to your point, yes.
- 11 Senator Cotton: But it is the truth that although not
- 12 a continuous presence, for 25 years we have had a pretty
- 13 regular presence in Somalia for many of those 25 years.
- 14 Correct?
- General Miller: That is correct, Senator.
- 16 Senator Cotton: And what do Somalia and Afghanistan
- 17 have in common that has required us to have troops
- 18 continually present since 2001 in Afghanistan and regularly
- 19 present in Somalia since 1993?
- 20 General Miller: Senator, it is violent extremist
- 21 organizations in this present day. We are speaking about al
- 22 Shabaab and ISIS in Somalia.
- 23 Senator Cotton: And we all wish that they were not
- 24 there and we all wish they did not want to try to kill us in
- 25 the United States. But they are there and that is why we

- 1 have troops there still. And I commend you and I commend
- 2 your son and every other soldier, sailor, airman, and marine
- 3 that we have that are continuing to carry on this fight for
- 4 17 years in Afghanistan to keep this country safe. It is
- 5 something that probably none of them want to do. They all
- 6 wish like you had wished in 2001 that they were not having
- 7 to do it. But as you say, if we precipitously withdraw,
- 8 then the only thing that is going to happen in Afghanistan
- 9 is they are going to start plotting to attack us again here
- 10 in our home.
- 11 Thank you and Godspeed in Afghanistan.
- 12 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Cotton.
- 13 Senator Scott?
- 14 Senator Scott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- 15 General, thank you for being here this morning, and
- 16 thank you for coming by my office last week and spending
- 17 some quality time. I think the time was well spent and I
- 18 certainly appreciate the time that we focused on your
- 19 current assignment and how well you have done this. And
- 20 thank you for your service to our country.
- 21 I think Senator Cotton, as well as Senator Warren, and
- 22 others have alluded to the question that I am going to ask
- 23 you that you seem to have the same very succinct answer to.
- 24 I want to give you a little more time to kind of unscramble
- 25 that egg a little bit for us.

- 1 17 years later, we still have more than 12,000 troops
- 2 still in Afghanistan. There is no question that there seems
- 3 to be a part of our national security priorities keeping our
- 4 men and women who served this nation so bravely and so well
- 5 still in Afghanistan.
- 6 So my question to you is, does ISIS or the Taliban or
- 7 al Qaeda pose a threat to Americans here at home? And
- 8 absent our presence in Afghanistan, would you say that the
- 9 threat to the homeland goes up so significantly that it is
- 10 worth having those troops in harm's way there to keep us
- 11 safe here at home? And beyond your yes, can you explain
- 12 why?
- 13 General Miller: Senator, of the three groups you
- 14 named, Taliban, ISIS, and al Qaeda, I would put the Taliban
- in a separate category, a threat to forces in Afghanistan.
- 16 And I would put ISIS and al Qaeda in a threat in an external
- 17 piece. You mentioned we discussed in the context of my
- 18 current work. I go back to I know these are
- 19 transnationalist groups. I know that they communicate
- 20 external to Afghanistan. They trade tactics, techniques,
- 21 and procedures. They share them. There is funding. There
- 22 is the media. There is inspiration that is driven out of
- 23 these two groups. So I see both of them as clear
- 24 transnational threats with the desire to attack the United
- 25 States or Western interests.

- 1 Senator Scott: And without our presence there, their
- 2 desire plus their capabilities would pose a real immediate
- 3 or imminent threat to the United States.
- 4 General Miller: Yes, Senator. There needs to be
- 5 pressure on them, military pressure, as well as
- 6 consolidation post military pressure to disrupt and start
- 7 breaking them down.
- 8 Senator Scott: Thank you, sir.
- 9 I would like to take this opportunity to ask a question
- 10 pertaining to your current position as Commander of the
- 11 Joint Special Operations Command. The men and women you
- 12 lead have been instrumental in killing or capturing
- 13 terrorists on the battlefield who would like nothing better
- 14 than to attack Americans, as you just suggested, here at
- 15 home. However, the National Defense Strategy identifies the
- 16 need to counter near-peer adversaries such as Russia and
- 17 China. Although it does not specifically say so, one could
- 18 argue that it means less emphasis on places like
- 19 Afghanistan.
- 20 Given the extra resources needed to field the fifth
- 21 generation aircraft and next generation combat vehicles and
- 22 advanced technology weapons, those resources will have to
- 23 come from somewhere else. Does the National Defense
- 24 Strategy change how you think about training and employing
- 25 the forces you command today?

- General Miller: Senator, yes, it does change. But I
- 2 will tell you it changes all the time. The men and women of
- 3 Joint Special Operations Command -- I would call them a full
- 4 spectrum organization or SOF writ large is full spectrum.
- 5 So while concentrating on violent extremist organizations
- 6 certainly since 2001 very directly, indirectly in other
- 7 cases, SOF is also preparing for other challenges, as
- 8 indicated in the National Defense Strategy.
- 9 As for the resourcing, certainly you can expect from me
- 10 -- what my leadership expects from me -- is best military
- 11 advice on how the current fight ought to be resourced, and
- 12 then I expect them to make the decisions based on a broader
- 13 global look.
- 14 Senator Scott: Thank you, sir. I think you basically
- 15 answered my second question. I will ask it anyway. Are you
- 16 concerned at all that the National Defense Strategy will
- 17 take resources away from the priorities in Afghanistan, and
- 18 do you have the freedom and the flexibility to ask for the
- 19 resources that you need once you are on the ground and
- 20 having a new view? I think Senator Graham did a really good
- 21 job of pointing out the fact that you spent about 4 years of
- 22 your career in Afghanistan. So you have an understanding
- 23 and appreciation of the terrain and the difficulties and the
- 24 challenges that we face. But if you need more resources, I
- 25 hope you will have the flexibility and the freedom to ask

- 1 for those.
- 2 General Miller: Senator, if confirmed, I am confident
- 3 I have the flexibility and freedom to ask for those
- 4 resources. I know my chain of command will listen to what
- 5 would come from the ground up. I know they have been
- 6 listening to General Nicholson over the past 2 and a half
- 7 years as well.
- 8 Senator Scott: Good enough.
- 9 Let me just use my closing time that I actually do not
- 10 have to say thank you for your service. It is certainly
- 11 good to see your son behind you. It helps me understand and
- 12 appreciate your sense of urgency as it relates to getting
- out of places that we do not need to be but also staying in
- 14 those places if there is actually no other choice for us
- 15 other than to be there or risk more lives here at home.
- 16 Thank you both for your service. God bless.
- 17 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Scott.
- 18 Senator Sullivan?
- 19 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- 20 And, General, welcome. I am just very thankful that
- 21 you are willing to take on the job. I want to thank your
- 22 family as well. I think in terms of qualifications, you
- 23 might be uniquely qualified for this task. We do not get
- 24 many generals in front of this committee that not only have
- 25 the experience you have but Purple Hearts and exceptional

- 1 awards for valor. So I want to thank you for that. Like I
- 2 said, I want to thank your family as well.
- 3 Your JSOC command I think particularly is relevant for
- 4 your next assignment. I certainly plan on supporting you
- 5 fully. You are seeing the themes here about 17 years and a
- 6 long time, many turning points, but really not at the
- 7 turning points. The CT mission is critical. Pakistan is a
- 8 safe haven. I think there have been a lot of good questions
- 9 here.
- I want to ask you maybe to take this opportunity to
- 11 educate us and the American public, who have a lot of
- 12 interest in this, on a couple of issues. Right now, you are
- 13 going to be going into a broader mission that is focused on
- 14 an advise and assist mission as part of Resolute Support,
- 15 but also a CT mission. Can you explain the difference and
- 16 then how these two are related? Because they are different
- 17 but important.
- 18 General Miller: Senator, as I have talked or heard
- 19 discussions on CT, counterinsurgency, and the rest, they are
- 20 absolutely linked. And as part of the CT mission, the
- 21 Afghans in some cases take the lead there as well. So that
- 22 also has a train, advise, and assist component.
- When you look at the larger train, advise, and assist
- 24 with the other parts of the Afghan National Army and the
- 25 police in some cases, this is the piece that drives Afghan-

- 1 led. It is the security forces that extend the writ of the
- 2 government, if you will. It creates an environment. So the
- 3 train, advise, and assist is meant to enable those Afghan
- 4 forces to be successful.
- 5 From a personal example, I mentioned earlier to the
- 6 committee I have not seen the special security forces lose.
- 7 I have seen them take hits. I have seen them bleed. I have
- 8 seen them take casualties, but they win their fights. They
- 9 win their fights. They are even better when they have the
- 10 right enabling support from us, and I anticipate that is the
- 11 same for the entire Afghan National Army.
- 12 Senator Sullivan: Can the CT mission be successful
- 13 without the train, advise, and assist mission? Are they
- 14 that interrelated? Or can we just say, hey, you know what,
- 15 we will just keep JSOC over there and a robust CT mission to
- 16 protect the homeland, but we are going to give up on the TAA
- 17 mission?
- 18 General Miller: Senator, as I have watched CT
- 19 operations that are largely focused on kinetics, my personal
- 20 assessment is those are fleeting. They are disruptive but
- 21 not necessarily a decisive or enduring operation. The TAA,
- 22 the Afghans coming in behind, that is your reliable
- 23 partnership that starts driving towards what I would refer
- 24 to as a consolidation of gains which oftentimes are more
- 25 political than they are military.

- 1 Senator Sullivan: Can we ever secure our national
- 2 interests either from the train, advise, and assist or CT
- 3 perspective if there is a safe haven in Pakistan?
- 4 General Miller: Senator, a safe haven makes this
- 5 infinitely more difficult.
- 6 Senator Sullivan: So is that a no?
- 7 General Miller: We have to squeeze out safe havens if
- 8 we are going to be successful here.
- 9 Senator Sullivan: You know, a former four-star Army
- 10 general, who I think you and I both know well, General
- 11 Abizaid talked many, many years ago about the long war. And
- 12 a lot of the themes here really relate to this idea of the
- 13 long war. We do not want to be there necessarily, but we
- 14 also do not want to subject our citizens to the risks of a
- 15 catastrophic attack on the homeland or American citizens.
- 16 So we need to be forward deployed to be ready to take out
- 17 these kind of threats.
- Can you talk a little bit about that particularly from
- 19 your JSOC mission? I agree with Senator Scott that we need
- 20 to look at the JSOC breadth of mission, particularly with
- 21 regard to the National Defense Strategy, but there are
- 22 certain areas where that mission is critical. Afghanistan
- 23 is one because of the violent extremist organizations that
- 24 have a global reach.
- 25 Can you talk about and maybe help us understand what

- 1 General Abizaid talked about, a generational fight that we
- 2 just need to be ready to deal with to keep our citizens
- 3 safe? As the JSOC Commander, in many ways you are the
- 4 leader of that battle and long war focus.
- 5 General Miller: Senator, I actually remember when
- 6 General Abizaid used to talk about the long war.
- 7 Senator Sullivan: Well, we are in it. Are we not?
- 8 General Miller: We absolutely are.
- 9 Senator Sullivan: 17 years.
- 10 General Miller: And I think those who have been in it
- 11 now recognize it has been generational.
- 12 There have been adjustments to it over time. As you
- 13 look at the threat, Afghanistan is a prime example, and it
- 14 comes back to the TAA. In years past, the United States
- 15 would try to lead, do most of the fighting, and what you see
- 16 now is the adjustment, which I know is broader than
- 17 Afghanistan, where we enabled the local security forces to
- 18 be able to take care of their problem. And that drives the
- 19 TAA, knowing that you are not going to be able to sustain
- 20 Americans or other NATO partners around the world doing
- 21 unilateral operations. Better if done by local security
- 22 forces. And that is the approach here.
- 23 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- 24 Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Senator Sullivan.
- 25 Senator Reed and I would entertain if someone who has

- 1 maybe one final question to ask. All right. Fine.
- 2 Senator Sullivan: I just have one follow-up to that.
- 3 I am here. Right? Might as well do it and it is important.
- 4 So how should the country think about the idea of the
- 5 long war? You have been in charge of it. We are overseeing
- 6 it. There is discomfort here 17 years in. But do we need
- 7 to just have a different mindset the way General Abizaid
- 8 talked about this 15 years ago?
- 9 General Miller: Senator, if it is helpful, as I work
- 10 within my organizations and we discuss this, part of this is
- 11 building the force for the long haul. Are you sustainable?
- 12 If this is going to be an enduring -- and I am not talking
- 13 specifically Afghanistan here -- how do you posture the
- 14 force? How do you array the force? How do you get it set
- 15 to handle the security challenges of the future here? And
- 16 we have many discussions on that. A lot of the arrayal of
- our force is based just on that, as well as our interagency
- 18 collaboration and cooperation and multinational engagement
- 19 as well.
- 20 Senator Sullivan: Thank you.
- 21 Senator Inhofe: General Miller, I think you have
- 22 sensed that from both sides of the aisle during the course
- of this meeting, there is obviously an expectation that you
- 24 will bring something in that is going to offer something
- 25 new. And I think you probably ought to, after you have been

- 1 on the job for a while after you are confirmed, come in and
- 2 give some new insights because to continue to do the same
- 3 thing that has led us into 17 years is not going to be
- 4 acceptable. And again, I would repeat what some others have
- 5 said that I think you are the right person. You have the
- 6 right background. So we will expect a major change from
- 7 you. And we thank you very much.
- 8 General Miller: Thank you, Senator.
- 9 Senator Inhofe: We are adjourned.
- 10 [Whereupon, at 10:57 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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