

VFW Demands Accountability, Transparency in Afghanistan War Investigation

The following is a message from VFW National Commander Fritz Mihelcic

Jan 25, 2022

“It has been more than four months since U.S. military operations in Afghanistan came to an end, and yet we still don’t have clarity as to what went wrong and why it ended the way it did. As politicians, the media and society seem to have moved on, Gold Star families, our Afghan allies, and veterans of the war in Afghanistan still bear the physical and mental burden of our disastrous withdrawal after 20 years of blood and treasure sacrificed in response to the attack on Sept. 11, 2001. There still needs to be accountability and our government owes us answers.

In September 2021, less than a month after the withdrawal, Congress hastily attempted to get those answers. However, both the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Sept. 14 hearing [“Examining the U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan”](#) and the House Armed Services Committee Sept. 29 hearing [“Ending the U.S. Military Mission in Afghanistan”](#) seemed to be just political posturing and theatrics instead of genuine scrutiny of those responsible for the deadly evacuation, and the embarrassing abandonment of our Afghan allies and U.S. citizens. Very little ownership was taken by representatives of the Administration, and the American public was left with most of its same questions unanswered, the most puzzling being the one I asked back in August 2021, “How is it that we placed our trust, the security of our operations and the lives of our nation’s sons and daughters in the hands of the violent extremists we have been fighting against for the past twenty years?”

On Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin will both testify before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in a closed hearing on the U.S. Policy on Afghanistan. While we understand the need for operational security, there needs to be more transparency as to what our nation’s policy was and is toward the Taliban and their new regime. The terroristic threat to the U.S.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

still lurks in Afghanistan even though we are no longer at war there.

Wars and rumors of wars are in the 24-hour news cycle more and more these days. Before we decide to deploy droves of our men and women in uniform off to another conflict on foreign soil, we must remember how the last one ended - with the tragic death of 13 U.S. service members heroically doing what their nation called them to do despite senior leadership's miscalculations and failure to adjust appropriately to conditions on the ground.

Again, the American people deserve more answers, expect more from our elected officials and demand more accountability from the ones who continue to send our loved ones into harm's way."

Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic
Commander-in-Chief
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.