

ILL-CONSIDERED TRASH TALK MCCHRYSTAL'S IDEA OF WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS

✘ Politico reports that Stanley McChrystal saw today's big Rolling Stone article before it was published but didn't object to anything in it (and the Hill reports there was even more devastating trash talk that was off the record).

Rolling Stone's executive editor on Tuesday said that Gen. Stanley McChrystal did not raise any objections to a new article that repeatedly quotes him criticizing the administration.

Eric Bates, the magazine's editor, said during an interview on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" that McChrystal saw the piece prior to its publication as part of Rolling Stone's standard fact-checking process – and that the general did not object to or dispute any of the reporting.

Asked if McChrystal pushed back on the story, Bates responded: "No, absolutely not.

Now, given the use of the pronoun "they" in the follow-on quotes, I'm assuming by "McChrystal" Bates means "McChrystal's office," which may well mean only that press aide that McChrystal already fired reviewed the article.

Nevertheless, this article was not—should not have been—a surprise. McChrystal's team was at least okay with all this trash talk being published, if not intended for it to be published.

So take a step back and think about what that means for McChrystal (and should mean for the question of whether or not he gets fired for

this). Stanley McChrystal, the guy in charge of winning hearts and minds in Afghanistan, okayed this article, presumably intending it to win hearts and minds in the US.

And McChrystal presumably knows US culture better than he knows Afghanistan culture.

This article is McChrystal's idea of winning hearts and minds.

Argue what you will about whether McChrystal's insubordination requires his firing. Argue what you will about his unique qualifications for the job.

But if this is McChrystal's idea of how to win hearts and minds then we will never achieve success in Afghanistan so long as he's in charge.

(Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

Update: Rolling Stone tempers that somewhat. Though note the Hill piece and CNN pieces linked include similar, though weaker, claims.