

## Afghanistan between Hope and Abyss

Reinhard Eroes , Joanne J. Myers

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### Introduction

**JOANNE MYERS:** I'm Joanne Myers, Director of Merrill House Programs, and on behalf of the Carnegie Council I'd like to welcome our members and guests.

This afternoon we are really pleased to have with us Dr. Reinhard Eroes, who will be discussing his experiences in Afghanistan.

The story of Afghanistan, as many of us know, is not a happy one. In the last twenty years of fighting, it has been reported that over 1 million men, women, and children have died and more than 6 million have fled their homeland. And, more often than not, the lives of those left behind were also destroyed. Denied health care, education and enough food to eat, the tales of these refugees are stories of brutal killing, civil wars, and terror under the Taliban.

It is easy to think about these refugees as victims of war, as anonymous people, but of course they are not. Fortunately for them, there are individuals who are sympathetic to their cause and risk their own lives in order to give them some relief.



[Joanne J. Myers](#)

Today our speaker is a man who personifies compassion. He volunteered his services, leaving his home and career to aid the sick and destitute of Afghanistan. Dr. Reinhard Eroes first went to Afghanistan in 1985 in an effort to help with the desperate medical situation brought about by the Soviet occupation. He soon joined Doctors Without Borders and in 1986 moved with his family to Peshawar, which is on the Pakistan-Afghan border, where many of the Afghan refugees had fled.

In 1998 he returned to Afghanistan and established [German Aid for Afghan Children](#). This is a foundation which provides education and health care to refugee women and children in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. This organization is better known as Kinderhilfe Afghanistan and has won praise as the leanest and perhaps the most effective aid organization in Afghanistan.

In the last five years, Dr. Eroes has traveled there over fourteen times, spending about eight months a year there. He has been responsible for building more than one dozen girls' schools and basic health units in the rather dangerous eastern provinces.

For his work as a physician in Afghanistan under the Soviet occupation he was awarded the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, and he was the youngest German ever to receive this honor.

His book *Tea With the Devil*, which has not yet been translated into English, is a book he wrote about his experiences and is one of the most successful German non-fiction works to be published in Germany.

Please join me in giving a very warm welcome to a man who *Der Spiegel* has referred to as "the Albert Schweitzer of Afghanistan." I thank you for joining us today. Thank you for being here.

### Remarks

**REINHARD EROES:** Good afternoon. Thank you for the nice introduction and the opportunity to speak at the Carnegie Council.

After twenty-five years of war, we have no accurate idea of the population of Afghanistan. A father of a Pashtun family will never allow an official government officer to visit his house and count his daughters or his women. The

population could be 18 million; it could be 28 million. The only precise information we have is the size of the country – 656,000 square kilometers.

The last time we had this many years of war was in Europe 400 years ago, the Thirty Years' War from 1618 to 1648. The Ten Years' War killed every tenth Afghan, and seriously wounded, handicapped or crippled every ninth Afghan. One in three Afghans fled – the highest per capita number of refugees in the history of mankind.

After this first war, we had another four years of so-called "Brother War," as the Afghans call it, between Afghans.

Next we had the war coming from Pakistan into Afghanistan, and the emergence of the Taliban. The Taliban is not a creation inside Afghanistan, but rather of the Saudis and the Pakistanis, who transformed them into religious people with military training.

They invaded Afghanistan from the south in August 1994, and within two years had occupied the country. In 1996 Afghanistan was more or less a Taliban state, a state of Sunni Islam, like the Shi'ia Islam was in Iran ten years before under Khomeini. Four years later, in August 1998, was the first time that Western countries became aware of what was occurring. From 1994 to 1998 nobody had shown much interest in the situation.

What happened in 1998? You remember that the two U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi were blasted by suicide attackers, and then immediately the police determined that al-Qaeda was behind it. And where is al-Qaeda located? They are hosted in the eastern parts of Afghanistan, and your President immediately gave the order to launch seventy-seven cruise missiles. Forty-four went to the city of Kandahar and thirty-three went to the city of Khost. The damage was slight.

And then it was over again for the next two years until September 11th. The real awareness of what is going on in Afghanistan began on September 11th. If this attack had not occurred, Afghanistan would still be under the command of the Taliban, and our interest would still be almost nonexistent.

We should be ashamed that we ignored Afghanistan. In 1989 when the Russians left, we directed our interest to Iraq. Yet this was the biggest chance we had ever had to take preemptive action against Islamic terrorism. If we had taken the same steps in 1989-1999 as we have taken since October 7, 2001, it would have been much cheaper in terms of cost and loss of lives, and Afghanistan would have been spared many moral, cultural and personal losses and defeats.

As a doctor I am used to diagnosing why a patient is sick, establishing a clear diagnosis before I prescribe a treatment, let alone administer the treatment. I often have the feeling that what we have done in Afghanistan is to administer a treatment without a clear diagnosis.

From my perspective, the biggest obstacle to establishing democracy in Afghanistan is that about one-third of this country is completely physically destroyed—about 10,000-to-12,000 villages and about 50 percent of the major cities, particularly Kabul.

The physical reconstruction of the country is the easiest task. The dollar cost is about \$30-to-\$35 billion, or 30 billion euros. This is very little compared to what we have already spent in Afghanistan on the military.

Since October 7th, 2001, each month costs you as U.S. citizens \$1.1-\$1.2 billion, just for military purposes in Afghanistan, to hunt Taliban leaders and al-Qaeda. Only about 10 percent of this figure—less than \$3 billion – has been spent on rebuilding Afghanistan. Ninety percent of this \$3 billion has been spent in Kabul.

Kabul is as atypical for Afghanistan as central Manhattan is for the rest of the United States. Afghanistan is a rural country—85-to-88 percent of the people live in villages. But 90-to-95 percent of the information that we get now in Europe and the U.S. comes from Kabul.

There are now five-star hotels, perfect restaurants and pizzerias, and you pay New York prices. I had a little office during the Taliban time, together with other NGOs, in Kabul, in a wonderful, Western style building, built in the 1970s, used in the 1980s. We paid about \$350 per month for the office space in a very good part of Kabul. Now a UN organization rents the building for \$9,000 per month.

And it is not only one UN organization, it is not only one NGO; I am talking about 1,300 NGOs which are located in Kabul. Bad guys like me call this "humanitarian overkill."

Salaries in Kabul are twenty times higher than outside, even in cities. For instance, one of my major projects is running the medical faculty at the University in Jahalabad. The professors are paid \$15-to-\$25 per month.

A smart, young Afghan man, twenty or twenty-five years old—jeans, leather jacket, more or less fluent English, some computer experience, driver's license gets \$500-to-\$700 per month in Kabul. A year ago my professors said, "Please, if we don't get a normal salary, we'll go to Kabul to be taxi drivers or interpreters."

What do you know about Jahalabad? What do you know about the University of Khost? Nothing. But they exist. Ninety percent of the population of Afghanistan does not live in Kabul, they live outside. The eastern provinces, where I work, are the most forgotten.

This makes people angry—against Kabul, against their own government, because the people in the eastern regions think, “These people in Kabul are taking all the money from the UN, from U.S., from Europe, and we in the eastern provinces don’t see any rupees, any afghanis (the Afghani currency).” They are not only angry but aggressive.

This part of the country is my second home. I speak the language. I know the people. These people have filled up their houses and villages with guns and ammunition, for the next twenty years’ war. If they get real angry, then we will have another war, the fifth war this time.

Concentration on Kabul is counterproductive for the rest of the country. It is also counterproductive for Kabul, which is now attracting more and more of the population.

Two years back, about 2-to-2.5 million refugees were living in Pakistan, most of them remaining from the Russian time, some of them new refugees during the Taliban. Ninety percent of them have returned to Afghanistan in the past one and a half to two years.

Ninety-nine percent of them went back to Kabul, even if they are not from Kabul, thinking, “In Kabul we will find work, get money with all the Western NGOs, the UN, the ISOF(peacekeeping forces), the 5,000 military. They pay good salaries. So we’ll go to Kabul because nothing is going on in the south and the east. Our children will have no chance to go to school in the east because there are no schools.”

Three schools have opened in the past week in Kabul. Check the Internet and see if you find a new school in the eastern provinces. If you go to my home page, you will find that we have started another one, but it is the only one.

Out of these 1,300 NGOs working in Kabul, maybe two or three also have some projects outside Kabul, most of them in the north and the western area. The eastern part is forgotten, but the eastern part is the most dangerous. Why?

First of all, the Taliban recruited and have been recruiting out of the tribe of Pashtuns. These people have been living for 3,000-4,000 years in the eastern and southeastern area of Afghanistan. All Taliban are Pashtuns by race or tribe or ethnicity.

Because of the situation in Kabul and in Pakistan, this Taliban movement gets more support from the people. Not because they like this perversion of Islam, but because this is the only group that cares for the people. They are offering medical help, food, and other facilities which are not offered by Kabul or by the UN.

Since the Taliban were kicked out, since October-November 2001, how many foreign aid workers have been killed in Afghanistan? Two. How many foreign military personnel have been killed in Afghanistan since October 2001? Fewer than 300.

But if I ask people, “What do you think is going on?”, they say, “Afghanistan is a massacre. If you go there as a foreigner, you will be killed within ten minutes if you cross the border.” This is complete nonsense. I feel as safe in the eastern provinces as I feel in Germany or New York or Princeton, and maybe a bit more so, because I don’t know the cities here.

This imagination, this demonization of the situation in Afghanistan always makes me wonder what is behind this. Who has benefited from this misinformation?

I don’t want to blame the UN or NGOs or any military. The supplementary salary which you get in Afghanistan working for the UN depends on the security level. If the security level is very low, you do not get much additional salary. If the security level is very high, you get double or three times your income. So why should you tell your staff in New York, or in Geneva, that the security is okay? You will lose money.

A German soldier, a simple private without any college, gets a regular salary of about \$1,200 a month, and he gets an additional \$44,000 because of the security in Afghanistan. So why should he or his commander tell people, “We feel safe”?

Mines are another important issue. According to UN figures, we still have 10-to-12 million undetected mines, not spread over the country, but mostly in the east, in villages and urban areas. These mines have already killed and seriously wounded, handicapped, about 2 million people.

The UN or International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) figures also tell us that 11.5 children are blown up by

mines each day. This number has only decreased by perhaps one-tenth of a percent since American and British forces have been there.

If you want people to return to their former villages that they left in the 1980s or 1990s, you have to guarantee that there are no more mines.

About 90 percent of these mines are from the former Soviet Union. How many Soviet specialists—now Russian specialists—how much Soviet money, is involved in detecting and demolishing these mines? Zero.

Who is doing this work? European and American NGOs and UN staff. Why doesn't the UN tell the Ambassador of this now new Russia, "Please, Mr. Ambassador, tell your President that he may take this stuff back to his country, because it is killing innocent Afghan children every day"?

Now it is also killing foreigners, NGO personnel. When I was in Afghanistan in January, two Afghan volunteers were blown up by mines. It is going on every day and nobody is even discussing this issue and pointing to the people who are responsible.

The most important issue from my point of view is the drug problem, the problem of poppy, of opium. If you go back to August 2003 and before, it was not an issue in the media.

Now, when it is almost too late, it becomes an issue. We had a chance in 1989 to 1990. We had the best chance in 2001 when the Taliban were kicked out.

I remember my first lectures in Switzerland and Germany after the end of the Taliban regime. I started with the words, "The biggest problem from my point of view for the next years in Afghanistan will again become the drug problem."

They told me, "What's going on is not a drug problem. We need to kill all the Taliban leaders, to kill all the al-Qaeda." I don't disagree with that.

But the major problem now will become the drug problem, and if we are unable to find a solution, we can forget any support for political reconstruction.

There is so much money involved. If you compare it to the U.S. budget, it would mean that we are talking about \$500 billion per year. In Afghanistan you are talking about \$3-to-\$4 billion this year, in the second half of 2003. This is an incredible amount in this small country.

It would have been very easy to stop it from the beginning, just to offer the farmers alternatives to growing poppy.

I had an invitation six months ago from the General Federal Police, the Bundeskriminalamt, Drug Office. The German police working in Afghanistan wanted a bit more background on this drug. Since I work in the eastern provinces and the main province of drug production is Nangarhar, I have twenty years of experience with drug production in Afghanistan. I was invited to the last harvest.

I had the chance two years back to discuss this with farmers in three districts in Nangarhar. I convinced them to stop growing opium poppy, and instead to grow wheat, which they did. They had the best harvest in thirty years in 2003, in three districts of Nangarhar.

And you know what happened after that? The UNDP and FAO imported hundreds of thousands of metric tons of wheat and distributed it free of cost to the people. So these farmers could not sell any of their wheat. Now they are angry with me and told me, "We never will believe your promises again. How can we feed our families?" We are talking about 1,200 families. I have to support them financially because all they could do was burn their wheat.

So it is not the Afghan farmers who are the bad guys, who want to kill Western children with heroin. Ninety-five percent of the Afghan farmers even don't know the word heroin. They are uneducated. I am not talking about drug dealers. I am talking about the farmers growing this poppy in the mountains.

Producing opium is a lot of work. It is much less work to raise wheat, corn, tea or potatoes. But they get the money they need from opium. The farmer with a twenty- or twenty-five-person family earns about \$1,500-to-\$2,000 per year for poppy. If he grew potatoes, he would earn 10 percent of that, and he cannot survive on \$200.

So we have to make it possible for him to survive by growing potatoes or wheat in order to give him extra additional money first, and then the same acreage of fields that he had twenty years ago.

The size of the fields was reduced during the Russian war down to 25-30 percent of what they had had before.

Let's say a typical farmer in the province of Helmand, which is the most productive in poppy now in all of Afghanistan, had ten acres before 1980. The Russians destroyed seven out of these ten by bombing or mining the irrigation system. Now he has only three.

So what do you have to do? Restore his ten acres. Give him the tools, the tractor, the equipment, to demine his fields, and to reconstruct the irrigation pipes. Then he will grow potatoes, wheat or corn again.

He has no interest in killing Westerners. I told my farmers what happened with this heroin in Europe, and showed them pictures of heroin victims. When I told them that even my children could become victims, they told me, "We've never heard of this. Nobody had ever told us." There is no television, there is no broadcasting, there is no news. These people are uneducated. They have never been in the city. And we blame them.

The millions and billions go to very special places. I am not talking about the mafia. I am talking about the top of the top in politics, in the military, in the police, in the judicial system.

If you go to the major cities on the border with Pakistan, the places where 70-80 percent of the heroin during the 1980s was transported via Pakistan to Western countries, you will find hundreds, maybe thousands, of very expensive marble villas. Each villa costs about \$5-6 million.

On the nameplates on the doors, you will not find the name, "Sheikh So and So from Dubai"; you will find, "Retired Judge, High Court," "Retired Major General, Pakistani Defense Forces," "Retired Member of Parliament," "Retired Minister of Traffic." Very honorable jobs, very honorable persons in the past, but their pension is between \$500 and \$700 per month. How can they afford a villa for \$5 million?

I still know some of them from the 1980s, and if I asked, "Please, can you tell me how did you get this beautiful villa? Did you win the lottery?" , they would tell me, "No. You know that. You were here in the 1980s. It's the white powder."

They speak very openly about this. And nobody is doing anything about it. We are blaming the Afghans inside Afghanistan, the farmers, and we may drop bombs in the northern Badakhshan, to burn it. We will burn the survival of farmers. We will not burn the survival of these big people.

If I were not an optimist, if I did not see the light at the end of the tunnel, I wouldn't work in Afghanistan. I am very optimistic about Afghanistan—not because of my work; not because of the UN's work; not because of the EU's work, or Germany's or the Americans'—but because of my understanding of what Afghans are.

The time is too short to explain to you what an Afghan or a Pashtun is. These are people who have survived twenty-five years of war. They defeated the most powerful military power in the world for the first time. The Russians had defeated Hitler, the Russians had defeated Napoleon, but they were defeated by the Pashtun.

I believe in these people. I admire them. I am very optimistic. But I have been explaining the negative aspects, because we must first try to stop the bad things, and then we can discuss the positive.

**JOANNE MYERS:** I would like to open the floor to questions now.

## Questions and Answers

**QUESTION:** How do you assess the current political situation in Afghanistan, the Karzai government, the people beyond it, and the potential there for developing a real leadership in Afghanistan maybe six months, a year, five years from now, especially after the Karzai government has run its course?

**REINHARD EROES:** The current administration now in Afghanistan is an imported government. After the two meetings in Germany, Karzai as President and all his ministers were announced by others, not by Afghans.

This has to be changed as soon as possible because this is atypical for Afghans. Afghans will never accept an imported government in the long run, despite what they think about Karzai.

They didn't do it during the 200 years when the British were ruling India. The British tried many times to import or to implement a king or a ruler, and they did it by force, and by money, but it did not work.

When we talk about Afghanistan, we talk about the 5,000 years of culture, we talk about a code of values, of virtues, which is 4,000 years old, the so-called Pashtunwali. Even lots of money and military pressure will not change this within a few years.

The population is 90 percent illiterate. If you want change, you can only do it by education, by training these people. They have to teach themselves, by learning how to read and write and make a life for themselves.

Any kind of external imported structure may work in countries like Rwanda, maybe in West Timor. This is

different. It is also different from Iraq, it is also different from Pakistan.

If you have a Punjabi, for instance, from the eastern part of Pakistan, and a Pashtun on the other side, they look the same to you. After two minutes, every one of you will know who is the Pashtun and who is the Punjabi, because if you speak to a Punjabi a bit loudly, he will say, "Yes, sir," because he was trained that way by 200 years under the British. A Pashtun will never say, "Yes, sir" to you.

In the government in 2002, the heads of the central ministries—Internal, External, and Defense—were composed of three people from the same village and not from a majority of the population, the so-called "three Panjiris." This was a very big mistake.

The Pashtuns are still the majority. The Pashtun area is the problem area. The northern area is not the problem, the western is not a problem. The problems are in the East—Taliban, al-Qaeda, drugs, Pakistan.

These people came from a particular village, a particular ethnic group, not the majority, and it is completely impossible in Afghanistan to have a government where the three central ministries are led or run by non-Pashtuns.

President Karzai is without a doubt one of the most honest people I know in Afghanistan. But he does not have the people behind him, and thus no physical power.

Without military power, without money, the only person an Afghan will trust is someone from his own tribe, clan, social network. "If something happens to me, if I get sick, if my children get sick, if I lose my job, then he will take care of us."

"Can Karzai take care of me?" This is the question. If he can, maybe in two, three, five years, that's wonderful. But now he cannot. So why should they follow him rather than their clan leader? This is the problem.

You have never faced a totalitarian system or a dictatorship in your country. In Europe for centuries we have had the alternatives of democracy, or a kind of democracy, and dictatorship or totalitarian state. The alternative in Afghanistan and countries like Afghanistan is not the same. They only know the alternatives of dictatorship and chaos.

When the Taliban took over, the chaos of the previous years came to an end. This made the Taliban not as bad as we think to the Afghans. I have about 800 Afghan women on my payroll, doctors, teachers. If I ask them, "My lady, if you had the choice of going back to the Taliban time or going back to the years before, which would you choose?" 99 percent of women would say, "The Taliban, because under the Taliban, we were not in danger of being raped."

From 1994 to 1998 there was no criminality at all in the areas which were ruled by the Taliban. If they found a thief or a robber, they cut off his hands. If he ran away, they cut off his leg. If he lied to the police, they cut off his tongue. If he had committed rape, they cut off something else. It was a brutal dictatorship with clear rules, and if you followed the rules, nothing happened to you. The alternative was not democracy; the alternative was chaos.

We have to make them see now that the future is not the alternative between chaos and dictatorship, but dictatorship or democracy. They have never known democracy. How should they believe us? You have to prove it, you have to show them by physical results, not by words, not by a constitution. A constitution is necessary, but the constitution is paper. You have to make this paper reality.

You have to start with the children, schools, medical centers. Then they believe you. If you just speak to them and give all the money to Kabul and avoid their problems, then the people in the villages will not believe you.

**QUESTION:** Who's in charge now? What you say is so logical about the problems with the farmers and the wheat and spending more money out of Kabul. But who's in charge? Is it Karzai? Is it the UN? Who is making these decisions?

**REINHARD EROES:** Theoretically or in terms of practical politics, it's the government. There is a government in Kabul, even if it is imported rather than elected. By summer or fall, they will elect a government. But this government has no power outside of Kabul. What can you do if you are in charge and have no power?

The provinces are working very well. They have Governors, and these Governors have what they call Directors, which means Ministries, State Ministers of Education, Health, Reconstruction. They only problem is that they don't get enough financial or physical support.

My Ministers of Education in the four provinces where I work—Konar, Nangarhar, Laghman and Khowst—receive a salary of \$35 per month. The central government has a special amount of money available which they can distribute for salaries.

First of all, they pay their own salaries in Kabul. So the salaries in Kabul are higher than in the provinces. I'm talking about the open salaries. Then you have some "back salaries" also, which we would call corruption. The more money you have in one spot, the better the corruption works. If there is little money, like in the provinces, the possibility of corruption is low.

The Ministers in my provinces have very little chance to be corrupt because they have no money. I am paying my Ministers of Education an additional 50 euros per month so they can survive. They can just survive, not have a good life.

They have nothing, not even a telephone, much less a computer. They have a pen and a book. They have no registration facilities. They have to teach their secretaries how to read and write. If 90 percent of the population cannot read or write, how can you make a government work?

They have no car, there is no telephone system, no communication. They have to travel by rent-a-car to visit another Minister. So the Ministers of Education in two provinces use an old pickup of mine to travel to Kabul, because every month they have to see the Minister of Education.

There are a lot of rich people in the provinces, but a Minister of Education has no influence, has no access to money. A Minister of Security, a Minister of Transportation and Border Issues has access to money, particularly the Minister of Traffic. Why the Minister of Traffic? Because he controls the highways. He can order his staff to stop cars and trucks, and to take 100 or 1,000 rupees from each. They earn millions a year. That's how the system is working.

And how can you stop it? With which force? The military force which we have in Afghanistan is concentrated in Kabul. ISOF and U.S. forces are just hunting Taliban and al-Qaeda.

About two years ago, we began training new police, but it takes a long time to not only train them but for them to gain self-confidence. How can they have self-confidence with no power? They have a salary of \$10 per month.

**QUESTION:** For many years I was on the Board of the Afghan Relief Committee. I appreciate your insightful, substantive identification of the problems. Also, you are one of the few people with some insight into ideas relating to dealing with the drug problem. Would you talk a little more about that, because it is so critical in making any changes? How, for example, would it be dealt with on a local level by the ministers or governors of a region? The lack of money facilitates the various levels of corruption. What other ideas would you have for substitute crops and methodologies to deal with it?

**REINHARD EROES:** I have no problem with ideas and plans. The problem is execution. I am not Allah, I am not the head of the United Nations.

When I last returned to Jahalabad, there was a small group of UN volunteers in the city to prepare the elections. These people came from Kosovo, from Nepal, one was from The Gambia. They are now supposed to train Afghans for democracy. They are paid very little. They are afraid to go out of the house. They send their Afghans out. Then you can imagine what is going on. It's a vicious circle.

We have a perfect system in the world, the Western world particularly—Europe, NATO, and the United States armed forces—for preparing military strategies. I don't know how many thousands of perfectly trained general staff officers have prepared for the Iraq or the Afghan war here in the Pentagon, in NATO headquarters in Brussels. We have had military schools for hundreds of years.

But we don't have an equivalent structure for rehabilitation, nation-building, reconstruction of failed states.

I was at the UN for nine months in 1992 as the first medical personnel during the mission in Cambodia, so I know a bit of the internal structure. The UN is not a homogeneous structure like a general staff college is, or like a Pentagon is. If you hope to be promoted next year from the A-15 to A-16, you have to change from UNICEF to UNESCO. These are the daily problems. But there is not a system like in the military.

We have no overall strategy. We perhaps have a solution now for Cyprus, but it has taken forty years to find it. Now we have a completely different situation in Afghanistan, which is also different from East Timor. We need a theoretical basic structure of how to deal with this reconstruction/nation-building system in the world.

And we need to spend a lot of money on that, at least 25-30 percent of what we use for destructive work. We are spending \$1.2 billion or more, every month for hunting the Taliban, and yet not one of the Taliban leaders has been captured or killed in Afghanistan. That makes me ask: Why? Are our officers so stupid? Don't they know their work? Are they not professional enough? Why can't they find one single Taliban leader?

Now we come back to the culture problem, to the disloyalty problem between the tribes. If you don't understand this culture, then you can kill all the people, but you cannot succeed the regular way. If you don't understand a

foreign culture, you cannot succeed in this new kind of warfare. You can win a war within two weeks, that's not a problem, but afterwards you have to communicate with the people. If you don't understand the language, how can you communicate, how can you make them convinced that you are a good guy? Your only language is the gun.

And Pashtuns don't like foreign guns in their country. I speak very fluent Pashtun. I can communicate. I can convince them by talking. They love talking. It takes nights, you have to drink liters of tea. But at the end you come to a solution. It's a consensus. They talk, talk. Force doesn't work. Money doesn't work.

**JOANNE MYERS:** I would like to thank you for your passion, commitment, and optimism for the people of Afghanistan.

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