



# VIEWER VOICES

## COMMENTS & ANSWERS TO FAREED'S QUESTION OF THE WEEK

(to remove your name or entire comment please [email](#) webmaster)

Last week we asked “Do you think the upcoming runoff elections in Afghanistan will be free and fair?”

Most of you predict that the runoff elections will not be free and fair, in fact the number of pessimistic emails we received doubled the number of optimistic emails.

**Here are some of your responses and comments:**

No, I do not believe the upcoming Afghanistan elections will be free and fair. It seems to be considered wise by the politicians there to do everything possible to win, free and fair or not. Hopefully I am wrong.

## Shirley Stearns

I think that most all eligible voters will be allowed to cast a vote. It is doubtful that the election will be fair, though. We have been at this voting business longer than anyone else and we still have trouble conducting fair elections. It is hard to see how there will not be widespread fraud there where democracy is more of a charade at our behest in a country that is really not set up for a meaningful central government. There is neither a senate nor a house nor a supreme court to effect the checks and balances in order to operate a decent democracy. Matter of fact, as long as we have been at this, we are barely able to claim a modicum of decency in this ourselves. Creating democracies in troubled areas is not really a good project for our security because troubled areas are not capable to operate democracies. Good luck, Afghanistan. We will come home one day and leave you alone to operate things your way. Meantime, vote your best and hope a lot.

## George Cooper

I don't think the elections in Afghanistan this week will be free and fair. Even though it seems that proof of fraud would work against Karzai, losing the election is the much greater concern for him so both he and the people who benefit from him being in power will do what they

can to stay in power. Also, the corruption there appears to be so endemic to his regime, that influencing elections would be the default process.

John Giffin  
Minneapolis, MN.

this depends on the karzai gov't and nato's handling of a free,safe,peace,organize,and orderly election.i believe that nato have lots of power to secure the flawlessness of the coming repeat election. the the nato can not secure a clean electon there,they better get out of there and stop wasting resources.the afghans need to participate in freeing themselves more than ever

-Anonymous

Karzai's having ballot boxes stuffed by people he pays with his cut from the drug dealers. Meanwhile his army is selling their weapons to the Taliban. Lower all expectations to a safe bunker.

Alicia  
Montpellier, France

The circumstances on the ground have not changed in any way so there is no

reason to believe that the outcome will better represent the will of the people in Afghanistan. To think otherwise is to be in dreamland.

Sylva Apelian

There's still competition between presidential candidate Dr Abdullah Abdullah and concurrent president Hamid Karzai. People might have said that they do not fear of Talibaans in front of media but there's still a majority of people who won't be voting or voting against their will because of Taalibaans. However, this election is just to pretend that whoever will win the election will be winning with fair election campaign but this might not be absolutely true. To conduct a fair election, terrorism should be solved somehow and people should be let to choose their leader without any fear.

Abinash Paudel Brigham Young University Provo, UT

PS: Is Chris Lawrence safe in Kabul?

We have to be optimists, otherwise we can never imagine better times in Afghanistan. So I am going to say its definitely going to be better than what it was the last time. Its not going to be 100% perfect, but it will be fair.

Regards,

Deepak

NO. I do not think that it will be free or fair. Reason: You do not change what is now culture 'just like that'!

-AG/CM Estrada

60% of more of Afghanistan is controlled by Talibans and they have already announced the punishment for the citizens who will vote for this runoff and sure enough we will see less than 10% voting in most of Afghanistan. That is why this will never going to be a free and fair election. Also Karzai will utilize his regime and power to win this election again by doing fraud, vote tampering.

Thanks

Saibal Dasgupta

Fareed, the elections will not be fair. Why? Nothing has or will be changed in governance, structure, or oversight. If anything, this runoff will be more corrupt than the election proper!

Thanks for your intelligent commitment to good reporting, analysis, and serious issues!

C. Scott Romans

Who really cares! Whichever govt. the Afghanis end up with will be corrupt, inefficient, and totally incapable of dealing with the Taliban. Plus ca change plus c'est la meme chose!

Philw  
Florida

Whether the Afghan election is free and fair depends on whose side one is. On the whole, only the Afghan people will decide!

Pius Ikwuegbu

Why on earth would you expect a "less fraudulent" election. Karzai is a sleaze bucket who can't be trusted to do anything more than line his own pockets. Once a thief always a thief. The sooner NATO gets out of there the better. If we had an honest government that is trying hard to establish democracy staying on would be justified.

Chris Cllemence, Toronto



Not as fair as we would like but better than the recent election.

However, given our history of clandestine meddling in other countries' elections, who's to say that a relatively clean election is not itself a "fixed" charade to support further enhanced action in Afghanistan.

After all, if we are not "supporting democracy", how can the administration "sell" an escalation?

DICK MASON

Other comments:

I was very disappointed that the Republican panelist was allowed to get away with the usual distortion of facts about Reagan on last Sunday's GPS. Like most Reagan revisionists, the panelist failed to mention that the unemployment rate continued to increase for nearly two years after the major Reagan tax cut, that the decrease in the unemployment rate was due in part



to the change that was made in how the rate was calculated, and that Reagan signed TEFRA and several other tax INCREASES in subsequent years to reduce the deficit, which reversed a substantial proportion of his tax cuts.

Other than this problem, I enjoy the show!

Dayan Edwards  
Joplin, Missouri

Fareed Zakaria is head and shoulders above anything on TV of it's kind, except for Charlie Rose. I always record it for convenience, so imagine my disappointment when I sat down to watch it and found a news conference that I could have see on any channel that took up 3/4s of his program! You have something great there, don't mess with it.

Judy Johnson  
Georgetown, Texas

There won't be Chinamerica. It's likely Mexicana.

TJ  
Ohio



I believe you should also interview Dr Abdullah now before the Afghan run-off since you saw it necessary to interview Karzai. I cry equal time! The world needs to hear Dr Abdullah's side of the story! Thank you,  
[Kathy Gallagher](#)

First I just want to thank you for your great show and great intelligence. I enjoy GPS and watch it on Sundays whenever I can.

I am Iranian-American and was raised in America from when I was 6 years old. My family left Iran after the mullahs made the country into a repressive backward place and they are completely incompetent, evil, selfish, deceptive and they don't like Persia or Iran and only care about thier perverse version of politics.

In any case, I wanted to comment on your recent show.

I did not like Mr. Skidesky's comment that [deficits don't matter]

MY comment is that Deficits do matter....

[Pedram "Pete" Vahid](#)

I really enjoy GPS. Fareed Zakaria does a great job as hosting. He brings a fair and balanced approach when conducting interviews. The show does a great job at presenting different points of view on a variety of issues. I would like to see the show continue with this format.

Anthony  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Wallison (10-17) wrong on unemployment rate- Maybe! He said that the recession under Regan was worse than under Obama, because the employment rate was higher under Regan....Did Mr. Wallison make this adjustment to either Regan's or Obama's unemployment rate?

Kelley R. Benningfield  
Pocatello, Idaho

Thank you for covering the balloon boy 45 minutes into the only show on your program that is worth watching (GPS). This is why I don't watch any of your shows other than the one I mentioned. Shame on you. A boy in a balloon is more important to you guys than the wars we are fighting. Absolutely shameless. I will never watch any of your programs except for GPS. Keep

asking yourselves why your ratings are falling and you will have your answer - you are TMZ.com without the humor!

Bill

Irvine, California

Dear Fareed, Corruption can not be switched on and off on demand.

To change

culture of corruption takes a decade or two, even in advanced democracies like America. We have failed with campaign finance for so many years.

Campaign

contributions are nothing but legalized bribes. Congratulations, you doing a good job.

Prosanto

Since I am not a member of international circles, I really appreciate your broadcast. Your show provides me with the human face of global politics, superior to other new outlets. Thank you.

Sandy Pontius

Butler, Pennsylvania

In my country, recession has affected all people and I was so sorry to hear that in Britain which is my favorite country recession has progressed to such a

long extent. I would encourage you to reveal in public the political agenda for all politicians and their secret motivations since we depend on politics for our prosperity. Keep up the good work.

Irene Vraila

Petroupoli-Athens, Greece

I'm surprised to find that I'm encouraged and feeling optimism as I read your "Post-America" book. The breadth and depth of your knowledge and perspective are impressive.

Linda Kimmel

Packwood, Washington

I am a big fan of your program because I am very much interested not only in what happens here in the US but also outside the US. However, I am little disappointed with you because you have never brought the east African problem to the American people's attention, specifically the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia... I hope you will try to balance your program. Thank you for listening.

Thanks. Winta Haile

Mr. Zakaria, just to let you know that I find your program informative, balanced and...elegant, serene and hopeful. Thank you,

Maria

Thank you for not letting human right abuses in Iran be forgotten.

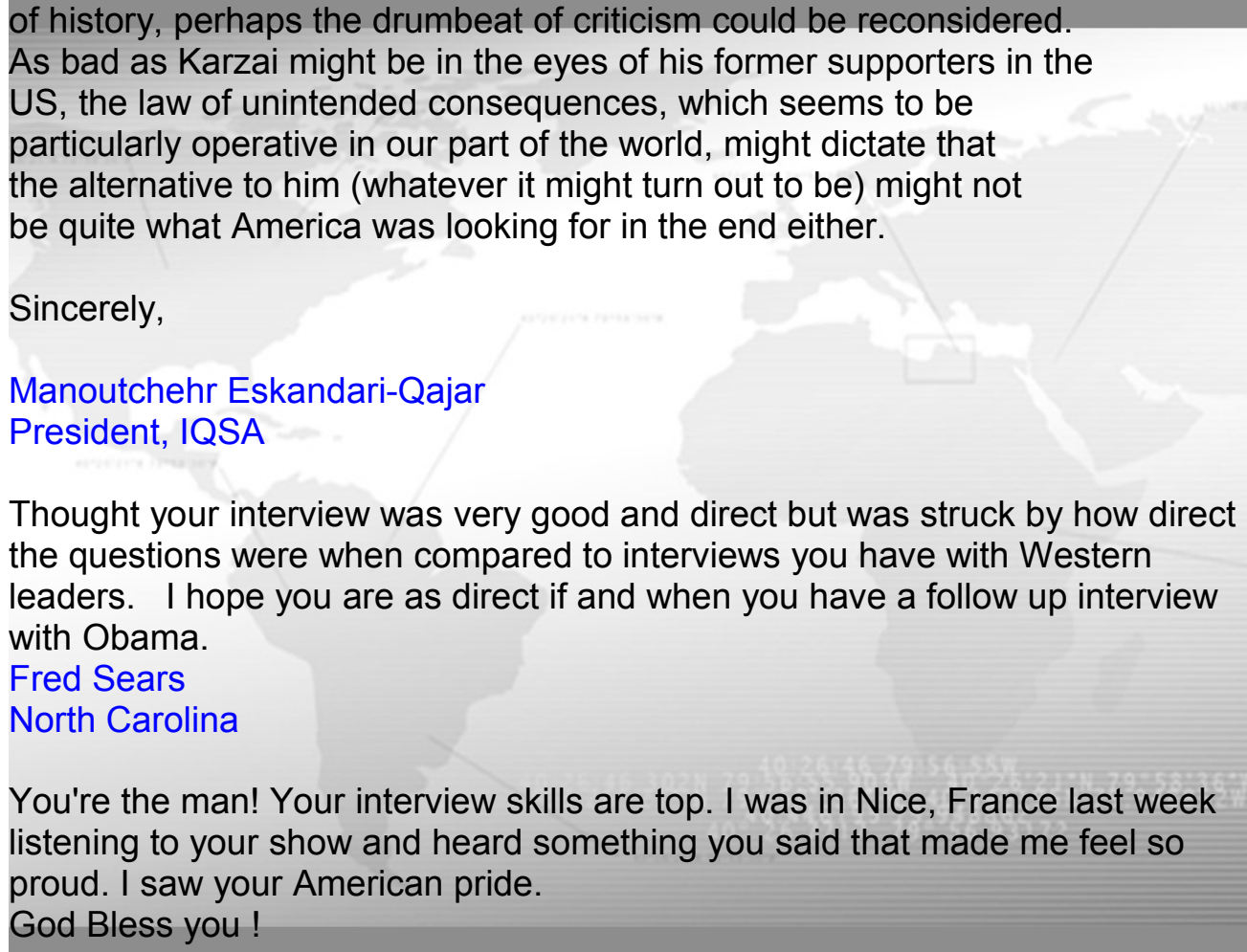
Neda

Hi I am married to someone from Egypt so issues overseas are a big deal for me. I really appreciate your international coverage...the only good place I can get it is from you and Christine Amanpour and national public radio. And as a Muslim there is often non-balanced news about Muslim issues but yours is very balanced and I really appreciate that. If you go on Fox News right now you see pictures of Palestinian youths (no Israelis) talking about how they are throwing rocks and hurting the Israelis...when the Israelis are going on what is for Muslims sacred ground. A proper news agency would show both fighting like CNN.com is doing rather than pictures and an article making Palestinians look like monsters.

Thanks for being truly fair & balanced,

Lisa

America's policy in 1978-9 in Iran paved the way for the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. America's policy towards Karzai today might pave the way for a return of the Taliban, now bloodied and angrier still at America than it was in late 90s. Given this record



of history, perhaps the drumbeat of criticism could be reconsidered. As bad as Karzai might be in the eyes of his former supporters in the US, the law of unintended consequences, which seems to be particularly operative in our part of the world, might dictate that the alternative to him (whatever it might turn out to be) might not be quite what America was looking for in the end either.

Sincerely,

Manoutchehr Eskandari-Qajar  
President, IQSA

Thought your interview was very good and direct but was struck by how direct the questions were when compared to interviews you have with Western leaders. I hope you are as direct if and when you have a follow up interview with Obama.

Fred Sears  
North Carolina

You're the man! Your interview skills are top. I was in Nice, France last week listening to your show and heard something you said that made me feel so proud. I saw your American pride.  
God Bless you !

JC

I think it was the worst example of responsible journalism when you went to commercial break after asking Karzi about U.S. statements of the fact that Al Qaida is in Pakistan so why are we in Afghanistan? His answer was "the U.S. came to Afghanistan after 911 and we, U.S., and Pakistan are doing what we have to do." Fareed, Why would you accept such an answer? Why not a little editorial note by way of educating your audience to the non-answer!

Clarence

Fabulous show as always, it is a great comfort to know that America, at last, has the benefit of thinkers from around the world. Glad too to find it aired more than once on Sunday. The show had so much substance last week I ended up not just watching the first part that I had missed, but the whole thing thru again. Great stuff!!!! Am looking forward this reading this week's book recommendation.

Ingrid Furlong  
Michigan

I am a political junkee just like you. Born in Sri Lanka,educated in Scotland,and later at NYU on a Fulbright,I am retired, married with three Ameican kids.



The reason for this letter is that your shows are excellent. Today you really brought home the facts about Afghanistan. How about one on Sri Lanka. The Obama government is really unaware about the facts in Sri Lanka, and so are the state Dept chaps. How about a show with the Sri Lankan Rep to the UN, Dr Kohne., myself and a few others with Bob Blaske Asst. Secretary of State and a few others. These yanks are really not aware of the facts. So please do a show on Sri Lanka. I have a blog ; [Srilankanamericansforobama.com](http://Srilankanamericansforobama.com). Thank you. Dr C.K.Fernando Chairman . Sri Lankan americans forobama.com.

-Anonymous

I would like you to talk about Arab countries...I am not agreeing with what is happening in Iran but it is much better than these Arab countries and you have yet to mention how many people are suffering in Arab countries. They are producing more extremists than any other countries in the world.

Zafar Rizvi

Ohio

I absolutely love the show! Great interviews and guest. I can't believe CNN does not promote such an important show about the most volatile area of the world. Keep up the great job.

Jim Durkin

## Sacramento, California

It is a shame that you are quoting some one who says that Taliban are in Pakistan and not in Afghanistan . Don't you think it is sheer incompetence of Americans that even after a long war in Afghanistan they have not been able to figure out where Taliban are and still confusions on the terms used to describe them ? As if it was a question of mathematics, al-Qaeda +Taliban = enemy  
[...] GPS is the best program for serious minded and reasonable people.  
Syed Tanweer.

Make no mistake Karzai is not telling the truth.....if we continue to help in this mess....we will be the victims.

Thank you for a great show....

Patricia Gorman

I'm so happy to hear about your friend Mazria's release. I've been wondering about his fate. It's like the good news, bad news regarding the others who are still imprisoned. It's so interesting to me that in studying history the bad, sociopathic, psychotic people rise to the top. Time and again this seems to be true. Yes, there have been

plenty of good leaders but when they're awful they're really awful, go figure. There's a whole program for you why does evil rise to the top?

Thank you,  
[P.Baat](#)

You got it backwards. Forty five minutes with Mr. Tharoor would have been enlightening and well worth the viewing; that much time with Karzai just rehashed what we already know from every other source. A wasted opportunity.

I hope you don't squander a similar amount of time with Mr. Musharref (sp?) next week.

[George Schaefer](#)  
[Dunedin, Florida](#)

Thank you for your informative and intelligent programs. I try to watch them whenever I can. I have seen several of these programs on Iran, but I have never heard anything about the treatment of the Baha'is there. The treatment that the political prisoners are receiving today is what the Baha'is have been getting for a long time [ ...] I highly recommend that you have a program on the plight of the Baha'i community in Iran. I look forward to watching it on your show. Thank you very much.

[Jaleh Kilpatrick](#)

Instead of waging war against the opium-trafficking druglords in Afghanistan, why can we not turn the tables on them, and use the crop instead as a valuable trade commodity? Is opium not the base for many drugs commonly used in modern medicine? Could our Western drug companies not benefit from direct free trade with the Afghani farmers? Would Afghanistan not in turn prosper, as one of the world's leading producers of pharmaceutical-grade opiates? Factories and refineries, laboratories and universities would all be necessary to produce the finished product. Could such building and research produce anything but good for the Afghani people? This was merely a question which occurred to me, while watching CNN through my rose-colored glasses today.....

Michele  
Ohio

I was rather disappointed by your interview of Shashi Tharoor and your almost too friendly reporting on Indian position on Pakistan. I think there are too many instances where there is a very legitimate position held by Pakistan beyond Kashmir such as involvement in anti-Pakistan activities in Afghanistan and Baluchistan as well as backing out on joint statements in Egypt due to internal pressures. It almost seemed like that the only reason Mr. Tharoor was on your show was to promote his book.

BTW - I'm a very pro-Indian Pakistani living in Canada due to the fact that my community has been persecuted in Pakistan - Ahamadyya Muslims (based from Qadian Indian Punjab) - so you wont think that my comments are just derived by typical Pakistani views. I just think you could have done a better job keeping Mr. Tharoor honest too.

Thanks nevertheless for the great reporting!

Imran Khan

Since your appearance in CNN , I am watching your programs frequently, including your interview with President of Afghanistan today with great success . I am delighted to see that a very capable and knowledgeable journalist covering various issues particularly matters related in Iran, Afghanistan , Iraq free of biasses and personal input. Thank you.

Professor Raji  
New York

I am a 71 year old American Conservative Hispanic male who really appreciates and enjoys your show and the way you approach our international problems.

I have been involved with international affairs for over 50 years.

Keep up the good work! ... Thank you for your time and insights. You are a fine American and an inspiration to our youth.

Ramon Gonzalez  
Virginia

Fareed's interviews are simply the best going on Sunday news talk shows.

Re: Weekly test.

You humbled me today! Uncharacteristically I blew all but one. Good thing I was a Marine schooled in Marine Corps history!

Keep up great work.

Richard Mason  
Kansas

Hi Fareed,



My family and I watch your show quite religiously and are always excited to see material on India, particularly post the transformative elections earlier this year.

One topic I would love to see discussed is the Congress Party's concept of "inclusive growth." A major historic criticism of India has been that its growth has been fueled predominantly by the minority upper/middle class, leaving nearly 70% of the country with poor access to financial markets, education, healthcare, and other consumer goods & services. The chasm between these two very different segments of India's population seems to be narrowing now (thanks to public policy & growing private enterprise in this area), and I would personally love to see a discussion with some of the people and initiatives that are enabling a more "inclusive" growth story. The inclusion of India's poor has tremendous implications for both the credibility and the magnitude of India's growth and emergence as a world superpower. Thank you very much,

Ambika Kapoor  
Soros Fund Management LLC

Thoughtful, reasoned and calm. The very best. Thanks for your work at CNN and Newsweek.



Jim Warner  
Michigan

