



# 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 “Is democracy possible in Afghanistan?”

Most of you believe it is not possible. In fact, seventy percent of our viewer responses predict that democracy in Afghanistan is NOT possible and only twenty-three percent of you wrote that you believe it is possible. Seven percent of you were unsure.

**[Here are some of your responses and comments:](#)**

Thanks for your late attempt to bring some clearance on the subject to the Western audience, Fareed.

Democracy and Afghanistan are as far away as heaven and hell.

As a Soviet officer I spent 2 years in the country in the 1980s.

With all due respect to the thousands of families whose sons are serving and now under threat, it is about time people in the US wake up to realize that the mission in Afghanistan has failed. It was in fact doomed from day one. It is time politicians start searching for an exit strategy, one which would allow to somehow contain the bees nest that has been agitated.

In my book and interviews to different media outlets back in 2001, when I was still based in DC, I warned about such a scenario.

[Mikhail Evstafiev](#) (former Senior Lt., Soviet Armed Forces)

Unfortunately, it's just not possible. Geographically, it cannot be policed. I'm surprising myself here -- but democracy demands law and order. Their GDP is based on opium, never a winning proposition. And were it to be a success despite these challenges, what then? Do we

chase "our enemies" into Pakistan? Tajikistan? Or the veritable Ends Of The Earth?

I've been on the fence but this has clarified things for me: Time to pull out and come home. Let's spend that budget on 'homeland security' ie training a battalion of translators and diplomats... in other words, becoming less the society they hate and more true to our own American spirit.

Debi Lee Mandel  
Oakland, CA

Yes, but not until the education levels rise and a middle class expands. People need to see the benefits of a democracy, which comes from education, and a strong middle class will seek to create and protect freedoms. As Vali Nasr suggests, as Turkey's middle class business grew, so did the strength of democracy because they sought to protect what they created by asking a simple question, is this going to be good for business. Once there is a vested interest by a critical mass of middle class who are educated with businesses that are interconnected with the outside world then there is a chance for Democracy to take root.

By the way, I love the show and watch every week, and record it while I am

away. I periodically visit the website to look for Fareed's take. I also like seeing the links found in the Briefing Book.

Keep up the excellent work!

Regards,  
[Michael Woline](#)  
[New York City](#)

My name is Onyeka from Nigeria. I think democracy will not be possible in Afghanistan because who you are fighting for don't want to fight for them self. So to my own view, for democracy to work there, the people of Afghanistan have to first stand and say yes to democracy.

Thanks,  
[Onyeka](#)  
[Nigeria](#)

NO, not at this time in Afghan history.

Afghanistan's history is one of weak central government, poverty and illiteracy, remote valleys, clans, non-integrated ethnic groups and small villages often ruled by fiercely independent war lords who fought outsiders

and/or each other for hundreds of years. Growing poppies is the major source of income at all levels. The central government is not recognized as a legitimate source of authority and the recent election was a farce that was viewed by most Afghans as a fraud. U.S. troops are regarded as occupiers, propping up an illegitimate government and are deeply resented.

I believe that Bush launched a war in Afghanistan and in Iraq without understanding the history, the culture or religions of either country and his goals were never achievable, leaving our young men and women to fight and die for a Pollyannaish ideal. We have incurred over 35,000 casualties and spend about a trillion dollars in both countries in the past eight years, without much hope of achieving these goals. We must stop now and set realistic goals.

Fareed's book, *The Future of Freedom, Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*, should be must reading for every informed citizen and those people in government involved in deciding what to do in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Best regards,  
[Michael Lardner](#)

Sure! Democracy will come to Afghanistan too! More likely it will come there than in the Arab countries!

[Sudhir Nair](#)

Democracy presupposes an educated citizenry and as we know, the majority of Afghans lack the most basic education. They also lack the tradition of democracy. Democracy is, after all, a complex and sophisticated political form and requires education of the citizenry in the concept and its mode of operation. Secondly, in a country of scarce resources, it is more efficient to centralize these resources and use them for the common good. (Of course this also presupposes the lack of corruption....)

[Sylva Apelian](#)

Yes Democracy is possible in Afghanistan - Because there is always a starting point for everything in life.

[Regards, Engr. Barau, Nigeria](#)

More freedom and better life conditions for the common people, yes. If we want to introduce the Jeffersonian democracy in Afghanistan, it will have to take years before the people realize what is good for them. The culture in this country is so much different. In the remote mountainous regions people don't care, what the president in Kabul thinks. They listen to what their tribal chiefs say.

Best regards

[j. von hettlingen](#)

No, I do not think democracy is possible in Afghanistan; not until the religious extremists change their stance on the treatment of women and children, and allow female children to be educated; not until the corruption in the government is eliminated; not until the country can rule itself without financial aid from other countries. That does not look possible in the foreseeable, or even distant, future.

Jeanne O'Brien

Who needs democracy especially in Afghanistan? Democracy is for the affluent and elite in a country. Dictators and kings can do a better job of ruling a fractious populace. Read Machiavelli.

Virgil H. Soule  
Walkersville, MD

NO -- not in the near future of 10-20 years. Education is required first.

Afghanistan can be modernized by a totalitarian government (like China) in a shorter period of time.

Jim Low Senior

Center Conway, NH

I think it is possible because as an Afghan-American who has studied and written about the history, democracy in a republican form has existed in Afghanistan for about 5,000 years. It is through the tribal system and what I term as tribalocracy. We should work and cultivate that instead of imposing a Western-Style democracy. People choose an elder or someone to represent their tribe or clan and it is that elected official that represents the different tribes in a loya jirga, where they have discussed new kings, laws, and other national issues. That is similar to our democracy.

Thanks,  
[Luis Durani](#)

NO! What is the matter with us? We learn nothing from History and Matthew Hoh confirms it. Billions of taxpayer dollars and thousands of lives thrown into a tribal theocracy. Wind it down and get out. In the meantime, China and other countries without the need to nation build and send armies all over the place will move ahead in health care and education for their citizens.

[L. Badgley, Lakewood, CO](#)

My short answer is: not anytime soon.

Reaching Democracy is a process that takes time. Afghans don't understand democracy neither do many other people in that region. They have lived thousand of years under dictatorship and authoritarian rule.

We can not force democracy on any country and that's why that effort in Iraq failed miserably. Afghanistan is far from Democracy but it could happen gradually and after the population us educated thru the process. Some thing that I think is happening in Iran however painful it is proving to be.

Mehrdad

Fareed -- Afghanistan is not prepared either intellectually or financially for a sustainable democracy. There is no long tradition of "the press" to keep any elected official honest. There is, however, an ad nauseam tradition of corruption, tribalism, and extremism. No room for democracy here. Ever.

Sincerely,

Charles Witt  
Austin, Texas

Democracy exists when the population desires it and works for it. No one, no country, will accept - for long - a new government imposed by armed force.

Bob Camp

No, sadly no....

We need to give up on the noble idea, democracy, we need to embrace their culture as one of diversity and autonomy. I have never met any other culture so gracious and giving and loving than my Afghanistan friends. Democracy is not their nature, their true human nature is survival in the smallest of ways, within the family, the village and their elders. American needs to adopt a more humanistic view and let loose of the militaristic grip our government has on Afghanistan, it is not feasible. We must let go.

Thank you,

Kathie

My short answer is no, not in the sense of what is really needed in that country - UNITY.

More importantly, I will ask this question. To what extent does the answer to this question matter regarding the war on terror? Will an established democracy and central government in Afghanistan mean that we will not be

attacked again by a terrorist group in the US? Matthew Hoh's comments intrigued me. I think the premise of his comments question our whole response to and approach to the idea of terrorism. Even if there is an established "minimal state" of democracy, will that mean the entire country of Afghanistan will not harbor any radicals from then on?

I think it is politically very difficult at this point to call it quits in this country, but, I fear the reality is that Mr. Hoh's comments were spot on. It is a matter of time then until our public simply demands troop withdrawal - how much time is this is the question to answer.

Regards,  
Ellery Curtis,  
Birmingham, AL

Afghanistan has a democracy, its own form of democracy, a form of feudalist system that most majority of people there are comfortable with it. Democracy in west took its time for centuries to be at this stage, and it is still a work in progress. Democracy is not destination but a never-ending evolution, it is a living, adapting and self-reinventing miracle.

-Anonymous

Mr. Zakaria,

Democracy in Afghanistan is possible only if the tribal approach to socialization can be disrupted enough to allow significant seeds for democracy to flourish and mature. I believe that if the tribal mechanisms, for making political decisions, can not be demonstrated as inferior to democratic mechanisms, then no motivation exist for the people of Afghanistan to convert. The tribal approach is much older, then their relatively newly developed religion of Islam. Even if a large number of Afghanistans are not devoted followers of the Islamic faith, they are still instinctively tribal in their approach to social interactions and evolution. For this reason I say democracy in Afghanistan depends on a paradigm shift away tribal thinking. This is one huge mission.

[Daniel S. Bulanda](#)  
[Brockville, Ontario](#)

Yes. I do believe that democracy is possible in Afghanistan. In perhaps two hundred years. Afghanistan is a country of rugged terrain. High mountains and isolated valleys separate fiercely independent tribes with different languages and values. Once an interstate road system is built tying the country together democracy will be possible. This would be a good use for poppy monies.

Robert A. Wells  
Winston-Salem, NC

Democracy will not work for a people as tribal and decentralized as Afghanistan. Now is the time for the U.S. to start backing out.

Susan London

My opinion is that such an accommodation is more likely if the country, as a whole, is demilitarized. Compartmentalize, compartmentalize, compartmentalize.

Bernard Chase  
San Diego, California

Democracy in Afghanistan is possible ONLY if there is first the development of an independent middle- or upper-middle-class in not just the urban areas Mr. Hoh mentioned on the show, but also in those rural, Pashtun communities that "just want to be left alone." This can only be achieved through the development of modern infrastructure in those areas, which can in turn only be achieved if they want assistance from the government or American troops, which in turn probably necessitates the end of their civil war, and so on. To

be honest, we cannot really control whether or not any of that occurs. Experience shows, however, that those countries in which legitimate liberal democracies have formed progressed naturally to such a state after the establishment of a modern socio-economic structure and extensive development. Whether or not this can occur in Afghanistan remains to be seen

-Anonymous

There is no way that Afghanistan can become a democracy. This country is tribal, with the denizens loyal to their own local leaders, warlords. The Taliban controls most of the country, and all we can hope to do is to kill a few of them.

We went in this country because that is where Osama Bin Laden was based. Those responsible for 9/11 are no longer there, and it is too late to go after them. Our mission needs to be changed quickly. Our resources should be spent on the many problems existing in our own country. We should not be sacrificing any more lives.

Joan Stupler  
Yonkers, NY

I know this has been mentioned in the past. But to understand the wrong approach in promoting democracy, the film "Battle of Algiers" should be required viewing. In tandem with the inevitable and necessary fights on the battlefield, U.S. officials need to be fighting for the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. The war is in desperate need of a PR campaign there, the foundation of which I believe is to convince people there of the benefits and value of a democratic society. So far, I have seen no evidence of this front being waged (or at least it's not being covered). Without this effort, the Afghans will see us as merely an occupier and not a benevolent force protective of their interests in the long run. Thank you for indulging my thoughts.

Regards,  
[Tony Cantu](#)

Miracles are always possible, but after reading Three Cups of Tea, I don't think any military of any nation can bring democracy to tribal people. They will or won't establish it on their own, when and if they want it. It is discouraging that the US feels a need to be the nation builder of democracy for the world. We are a young nation and need to learn from our 'elder' nations. War is not the answer and revolutions occur from within a people. We just can't do it

all.....

Pat Ranney

Millersville, Md.

No, because their society has been based on a localized tribal system and the people do not understand, nor trust, centralized governments. Bribing tribal leaders not to support the Taliban only reinforces what has been ingrained in this society, and undermines the principles of a democratic society.

-Anonymous

Canada

No. Because it is not inherent to the history and culture of the country. Perhaps, democracy could take hold with much blood, sweat, tears and expenditures on the part of the US. But is it what the Afghans want? Is it the best form of government for them? We consistently assume that our form of government is the best for the rest of the world. Unfortunately, that's not always the case.

leslie j. yerman

No. The populations of Afghanistan have no experience or institutions of democracy....Hoh is right. We cannot create a democracy for other people; they must create it themselves, and Afghans (at least the

powerful ones) show no interest in doing this. We have nothing to gain there and a lot to lose. President Obama faces a tough choice because an exit strategy, so we don't leave total chaos, is not clear. He is also facing a General, Petraeus, who has obviously allowed General McChrystal to make public his views and now Petraeus has as well in order to corner the President. I believe Petraeus intends to run for President as a Republican in 2012. Who else do they have? He is popular with the right and traditional Republicans who have always liked Generals. If Obama sends troops, he is creating his own quagmire. If he does not, the right wing noise machine will blame him for our "loss," and Petraeus may resign and try the MacArthur route. McChrystal may also resign. A political disaster for the President....

Thanks for your excellence in journalism. There is far too little today.

Catherine Burke  
San Gabriel, CA

Yes, because history, apparently tells us that Muslims, in the past, have contributed to the advancement of our world (in functional societies) and the 'grandfather's clock pendulum' will swing back.

Gary Lortscher  
KS

No, democracy is not possible in Afghanistan without many decades of education and development in the rural areas presently riven by inter-village and tribal animosities who have no allegiance to a corrupt central government. We don't have the resources either military or financial to continue this charade. If we have the political will to make a long term commitment to working with local and international NGO groups we might gradually win over the majority of the population and have some success in rebuilding the country. In any case we should dismiss the military as soon as possible.

In the real world however I have no doubt that we will escalate our military involvement there. Our government has been completely taken over by the military industrial complex that Dwight Eisenhower warned against. They will ensure that we are always at war, if not in Afghanistan, then in other countries around the globe.

Sincerely,  
Shirley Fredricks

You have a terrific show!

I believe US or "Western" style democracy is unlikely in Afghanistan, but that a form of democracy based on traditional Afghan tribal values may be able to grow based on commonly shared interests. It is unrealistic and naive to expect successful national elections in a country where there is no strong central government, and what central government currently exists there has little relevance or real impact for the average Afghani.

A successful modern-style democracy requires a reasonably educated electorate, which includes access to reliable information as well as the ability to reasonably comprehend that information and see a relevance to their personal well being. As long as tribalism remains the principle form of social organization in Afghanistan then any democracy can only exist and prosper meaningfully within the constraints of tribal customs and interests.

[Rob Whitehead](#)  
[Mexico](#)

The question of whether democracy in Afghanistan is possible is irrelevant. It's pointless to ask. Are the loggers in that small valley who have their own

language clamoring for democracy? The thousands of small villages, have they been fighting for democracy? Why do we think that every country is supposed to have democracy. Are we fighting over there so that they can have democracy? Blowback is like karma: the sooner we stop interfering in other countries and trying to "protect our strategic interests" (stealing other countries' resources), the sooner this endless cycle of violence will start to wind down.

Thomas Derenthal  
[Marquette, Michigan](#)

Your interview with Matthew Hoh was the most enlightening piece I have ever seen on Afghanistan, thank you.

His insights have persuaded me that democracy, as we understand it within a structure of federalism, is not possible in Afghanistan as long as there remains a large number of rural Pashtun that simply do not wish to be governed.

I have been of two minds regarding Afghanistan. Of the two wars waged by the Bush administration, I have always believed Afghanistan is the one that came to us. But Mr. Hoh's insights have clarified, for me, that the invasion of Afghanistan has already failed (or perhaps only partly succeeded) in its objective, which was the destruction of Al Qaeda and the apprehension of

Osama Bin Laden. Bin Laden remains at large and Al Qaeda is no longer in Afghanistan.

As debate has raged over how many troops will be sent to Afghanistan, what has scared me the most is that President Obama will adopt some sort of middle course. Commit more resources, but not enough that generals on the ground think that they need to accomplish military objectives. I have been torn between supporting a large commitment and conceding that there is little more we can accomplish in Afghanistan. After hearing Mr. Hoh's comments on your show today, I now agree with George Will and am persuaded that it is time to bring our troops home.

James Bernheimer, M.D.  
Hanover, MD

I do not think democracy is for Afghanistan because the people do not want it. On NPR they interviewed someone from Afghanistan and he commented that Afghanistan is a tribal country and always has been. Taliban is the ruling tribe and at times there are inner-tribal battles/civil wars. All they want right now is for all foreigners to get out of their country and leave them to their own ways. All of the publicity has done nothing but increase the flow of foreigners into Afghanistan in their search for Osama bin Laden. These foreigners are messing with the Afghani way of life and the natives must respond.

Keep your search where it belongs, in Pakistan. If he is found in Afghanistan, the Afghan people will take care of him by "ending" his visit.

~Leslie~

Jeffersonian democracy is NOT possible in Afghanistan..and rightfully so. The west, including the US, must not appear as an occupying force in Afghanistan. The make-up of the Afghan nation, dictates that "invaders"...i.e., Alexander, British, Soviets etc., are considered as "occupiers" and result in insurgency.

The key is not to be perceived as an occupier, but rather as an ally. Afghanistan is undergoing a civil war between various factions, and if the US interjects and is perceived as a supporter of any faction, it will be met by insurgency.

My humble suggestion is that the US pull back all its troops, but maintain a robust anti-terrorist capacity to keep the Taliban and Al Qaeda in check. I am also of the opinion that in view of the withdrawal of combat troops from the region, the US should reserve the right to deploy tactical nuclear weapons to deter terrorist organizations from gaining control of legitimate governments in the region.

I propose we pull out of Afghanistan, but be prepared to tactically nuke targeted regions in Afghanistan and Pakistan if necessary.

Alan G.Houston, B.Comm, CPC.  
Canada

First let me say what a great interview with Matthew Hoh. My only question is why in the world is our president not listening to Mr. Hoh? He is the most knowledgeable voice on Afghanistan that I have listened too.

As for the question of the week, after listening to Mr. Hoh, no I do not think democracy can come to Afghanistan. In fact after listening to Mr. Hoh I have changed my view on our troops in Afghanistan and I no longer support a troop increase.

Thanks for a great show!

Craig Rittenhouse  
West Lafayette, Indiana

History shows that democracy can be achieved almost anywhere if given enough time and interest. The transition from a tribal based society to a

centralized national government is time consuming in the best of circumstances and trying to do it in the midst of an armed conflict using a model imposed by an outside military force only makes it all the harder. It can be done, unfortunately there is probably neither the patience on the part of the west or significant influence on the part of a budding Afghan middle class to accomplish it soon enough to please us.

Richard Andriole

Democracy in Afghanistan is mission impossible - reasons:

1. With 19th Century social attitude, Afghans can't leapfrog to late 20th century concept.
2. Nearly half of population (women) will not have any democracy anyway.
3. Only 30% literate people, tribal society which has been served reasonably well by elders (Jirga) system.
4. Leading narcotic state, war lords and awash with arms to last next 10 generations.
5. Neighbors with much less problems finding hard to practice democracy.

If you do the math then the probability of democracy in Afghanistan is less than 5%.

Matthew Hoh: What a change from usual diplomats and military experts who have painted such a rosy future (Amanpour) for Afghanistan. He summed it all with simple close to ground approach. I hope Obama's war council was listening. They can try your solution for Afghanistan, before sending more troops to Afghanistan.

Best week of coverage.

Sid

It is a very difficult question, because experts suppose to develop democracy in this country will take several years, and, in addition, they believe it will not be possible without control and help from the international community as well as sustainable diplomatic talks. I would appreciate it very much, if the U.S. and your President Barack Obama, would receive more international support in general in this question, especially from the EU, as well as the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle.

With best wishes.

Sabine Soucek

Austria.

You must be kidding. Wherever fundamentalism, sectarianism and feudalism thrive, democracy has no chance. Just take a good look at the middle east.  
[dr. adel a. yunis, carlsbad , ca](#)

No. Democracy is not possible in Afghanistan at present. It is barely possible in the United States. People define democracy in many ways, all the way from a country that has an election to a country with a government of the people, by the people, for the people. I would add to the latter definition that it takes an informed population to support a meaningful democracy. Afghanistan is a long way from having that.

[L. John Martin](#)  
[Bethesda, MD](#)

No, unfortunately, I do not believe democracy is possible in Afghanistan. The people in a country have to WANT democracy, and it does not seem as if the people of Afghanistan even know what democracy is, much less want it..

[Shirley Stearns](#)

Short answer, yes.

Development of a form of democracy in Afghanistan is possible, but it is not possible to replicate the success of the democracy that exists in America. I see a serious disconnect between our expectations as Americans and what is possible in Afghanistan. It's like trying to squeeze a square peg in a round hole. Democracy, or the political structure of a nation state is usually a direct representation or is greatly influenced by the economy (yes, still clinging to that old 20th century framework) and of how information flows. Afghanistan's economy is powered mostly by 1 industry, cultivation of opium producing plants. And this is really Afghanistan's only connection to the world's economy. Information does not come over the internet, TV or even newspapers, but spread by word of mouth... and that word of mouth is often controlled by people that are not considered to be friendly to American interests. Despite our attempts, this has not changed.

Even as we are adjusting our own expectations of a what a democratic Afghanistan is, so we can rush to put this one in the history books, we as voters and leaders in Washington are still not comprehending the definition of success in Afghanistan, in our time. And what I mean, is that it is not up to us to form this definition.

Thanks for producing such an insightful program,  
[Matt in Taipei](#)

Yes, anything is possible. But I don't think the US should be trying to build that democracy in the way that we currently are.

I have a question: what are the short and long term problems involved in the US pulling out of the Afghanistan war, but leaving some troops there, sort of the way we did in Europe after WWII ? I suppose the troops we leave there could be for training of the Afghan Army, protecting the population ...

And Fareed: what do you think we should do ? I'm really leaning toward the Biden strategy at this point. The question I have is how can the President get the country behind whatever strategy he chooses ? .... would the country go for a draw down ... ? And frankly, i really want to know when my President is going to address the nation on this. I'm starting to get impatient.

-Anonymous

Superb show! Regarding the question of the week, my answer is...

NO, corruption and democracy are non compatible. All the time that the financial powers control the media, finance political campaigns, support the generals and control the electoral process, democracy is just an utopia. This applies to most countries that call themselves democracies. The more ignorant the people the more the manipulation and control of the "wisdom of

the crowd." The smaller the middle class, the less the masses are able to control their own governments. Essentially, these so called democracies are really oligarchies of the powerful and rich. This applies to Afghanistan as well as to the US. Without a strong middle class, true campaign finance reform and equal free media time allowance to all parties occurs no true representation and democracy can exist.

Dr. Ronald J. Koss  
Thousand Oaks, CA

Is the question a joke?

Of course western American idealist-styled Democracy is never going to happen in Afghanistan. This is impossible. It's also foolhardy.

The Bush Doctrine of which there are two components: prophylaxis or preemptive war and democratization of the Middle East is a fantasy of fevered cowardice. When will we return to sanity and reality? Frankly, I think we have in the election of Barack Obama and Democratic majorities in both Houses.

We need to get out of Afghanistan and we need to become much more pragmatic in our dealings with the world.

As favored, opportunistic patronage is the bane of democratization in Afghanistan, we have our own version that is a bane to our democracy in here in America. The Republican Party: which has become dysfunctional and delusional.

km

Democracy is not likely to succeed on a national level in Afghanistan due to the fragmentation of its population into isolated villages and tribal groups, with widespread illiteracy, language and cultural differences. There is no reason though why democracy cannot succeed at local levels within these various groups in the form of the tribal councils that traditionally have existed there. A democracy that functions with nationwide unity is not likely to evolve from these entities in our lives, and if it ever happens, will not result by the imposition of concepts regarded by Afghans to be alien to their circumstances...as we now sometimes seem to be doing.

John Kreiss  
Santa Monica, CA

No, I do not believe, at this time nor anytime in the near future, democracy can be had in Afghanistan. I do not believe the leaders want it as they would lose the control they currently have and, for now, the people of Afghanistan have no idea how to live in a democratic world. I think it would send them into more

chaos than they are in now. We cannot push our way of living on others if they are not 100% ready to accept it. I believe the Afghan people see the U.S. only as occupiers of their country, not helpers to make their lives better.

[Carol](#)

Possibly in 100 years or so. Somehow Americans make the invalid assumption we can "spread democracy," a la Woodrow Wilson, around the world. A worthy goal, but democracy is not "spread" from the outside in or the top down. It must be a grass roots movement by people who understand what it is and want it. A better approach would be to help Afghanistan economically and expose the people to the benefits of modern life and let them seek a democratic life for themselves. [Judy](#)

Democracy in Afghanistan is possible but only on their terms, not ours, their democracy should be decided by them only, our first democratic gesture, should be respecting their decision, their way not ours (Western World). Thank you, [Mrs.G.Shaarani](#)

Anything that Americans would call democracy would not be possible for the myriad of reasons explored on your program--tribal identity, not national identity, being primary. Promoting democracy in Afghanistan is pure nonsense. Which begs the question: What are our national interests there and would they best be promoted by withdrawing gracefully as soon as possible? Withdrawal would free up needed resources to help us address the real problem--the instability of Pakistan.

[Jeanne Johnson](#)

Yes, it is possible but basic human needs will have to come first. These include security, food and a hope that their children can live in peace.

[Paul Butler, Franklin, In](#)