

# Rasul Rasekh - Episode 832

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## SPEAKERS

James Geering, Rasul Rasekh

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**J** James Geering 00:00

Welcome to the behind the shield podcast. As always, my name is James Geering. And this week it is my absolute honor to welcome on the show Rasul Rasekh. Now Rasul is arguably one of the most powerful voices of hope for his native country of Afghanistan. For many of us were acutely aware of the conflict in his country lasting 20 years, and equally aware of the rapid withdrawal that occurred a couple of years ago. But sadly, the plight of the Afghan people has recently been forgotten by many. So the purpose of this conversation is not only to educate us of how his country was before the Soviet invasion, lead us through that conflict, the Civil War, the events after 911, the withdrawal, and most importantly, what is going on now, whether at the hands of oppressors or simply hunger and cold, people are still dying in droves. So I urge you to listen to his powerful message, share this conversation and ask yourself simply how can I be part of the solution? So with that being said, I introduce to you Rasul Rusekh enjoy. Well Rasul I want to start by saying, firstly, thank you to ej caterzen, for connecting us. And secondly, I want to welcome you on to the behind the shield podcast today.

**i** 01:41

Pleasure to be here. And thanks for having me. AJ is a great friend of mine. And appreciate you guys hooked me up to be on your podcast.

**J** James Geering 01:53

So we're going to paint a picture of some of the history of Afghanistan. And then we're going to walk through to, you know, really the last couple of years when we we all went through the allied forces withdrew, it kind of fell off the radar when it came to the storytelling. The Ukraine, for example, seems to get a lot more airtime at the moment, but the Afghan people are still suffering. So I want to make sure that we kind of paint the story, the backstory of the country of Afghanistan, and so you can kind of lead us through and educate us, and then we can advocate for the people that are still struggling even though our nations have left.

R

Rasul Rasekh 02:31

Sure, sure. I'm originally from Panjshir Valley, Afghanistan. My childhood in Panjshir Valley, I remember it was very peaceful village with no paved road, no electricity. But the for war, we had peace. And I was young and I was born in pen share, never left pen share till the age of nine. I used to hear a lot of stuff, good stuff about COBOL. And, and you know, nightlife and pretty much it was just a regular Western city. That's how I heard it before. I wonder, I want to call it wasn't too far. It was 100 kilometer from Kabul, but the age of nine when I went to Cabo. It was literally, I mean, this was during the war, during the Soviet already invaded. And I was everything I saw in Kabul beside the war. Of course, there were traditional people with a burqa with the hijab with, you know, from villages from outside the cities, they always in the big cities, life was normal, like every other European countries. I remember they used to call Cobble, little Paris. They had a fashion show or I heard, they had bars, they had wineries they had it'll just it was normal life, even during the Soviet time. Was war going around the country, but the cities were, you know, you could see what the jeans woman wear jeans, no hijab? No. I see them a skirt, you know, it just but the same time. You see a lot of people with hijab and And burka, it was after I think it was around 8019 85 or 86. Things got worse while I was in military school, and you could see the rockets and you know, walrus getting closer to the city. It was normal life from people who lived in Kabul. I always heard good thing before the war, after the war, there is nothing good about it. It is just death and destruction. But before the war, it was nice country. Outside the city, you know, heavy was very popular. I'm pretty sure a lot of people see, you know, especially Europeans, hippies was all around the country. cities were, you know, they had bars, they had alcohol, there was nothing, which you see now.

J

James Geering 06:08

Now educate us. We'll talk about, again, pre Russian invasion, you know, what is the the layout of Afghanistan, because, again, for someone who's kind of new to the country, there's a there's an understanding, oh, it's an entire nation that's unified. But talk to me about the tribal element and how many different groups of people are actually in that one country?



06:32

Well, according to the Ministry of Education, and an other news organization, which is what I saw is about maybe there is more than 32 languages in the country. And, you know, the biggest tribes are Tajik pushed on, and after that, there's Hazara and and Uzbeks. So, and there is 32 plus tribes in the country, languages people speak. They all they have different, I mean, no Afghans, but when you go to the villages, they all have different tradition, slightly different than than, than others. The south, the North, if you look at it, always, always throughout the history, the North was more educated, they weren't, you know, people want more school than then the south. The government didn't pay attention to the south, after 2001. When I started traveling all over South, those villages, 1000s of villages never been a school or road or nothing. But nothing like that was up north, no matter how the, you know, the provinces or from the, the city or the capital, they had school at this. So the tribe it's very, very important people to know about tribes in Afghanistan, it's very important. And when you're a foreigner, even asking question, you need to know what kind of question you can ask not to offend them. In the villages. I gave you one example. You can ask villagers, if they're not educated. Their

wife's name, that door daughter's name. And won't give you those names. It is they get offended. That mother's name. So then one of the one of the examples, these are the kinds of things which is, you know, you don't see any harm, you know, asking when you do some kind of transaction or whatever kind of stuff. Yeah, that's good. What's your name? What's your father name, Grandfather name. And when you come to ask wife or daughter or mother's name, they might not say anything to you, they won't be happy, they won't give you the name. So it is this one an example. And we can go on from here. So

 James Geering 09:41

what about education in the Northeast that there was more education was educating men and women boys and girls more accepted then because as we as we fast forward, we'll talk about you know, the the removal of education, especially for young girls. So what was it like when you were growing up?

 10:01

When I was growing up, even in Panjshir Valley, which is there was no road, no electricity, just like South, nothing. And we had school, but that we had to walk an hour there. And when I traveled to South, a lot of the provinces and the villages on the south, were even worse situation, the value or whose situation than they are, but they never had a school. In Panjshir Valley, I remember when I was little, we used to walk an hour to school, but there was a girl also going to school. And before the Soviet time, in the villages, girls are separate classes than boys, but in the cities, it was mixed, the universities was mixed. So in the villages, and I'm talking about the villages and Baca Panjshir, the girls go to school, they wear a headscarf, white headscarf, but in Kabul, you have the option not to wear it, in the cities in the south part of the country. Girls in the cities, yes. But in the villages, no girls school. The area, the district centers when they or the schools are at, only to see boys at school. So this, I mean, what I what I saw throughout my time in Afghanistan, from the beginning to now, South was pretty much in 2001, after the 2001. Pretty much 50% of the southern provinces border to Pakistan. They were hungry for education, majority of the students, they all tried to get into school one way or another. And because of technology, everybody, especially the young generation, the past few years. And they were they were starving for knowledge. So they were they went at it really hard. And that generation and 20 years, I was the most educated generation, the history of Afghanistan. That's how I look at it. multilang Well, they know you know, the internet basically gave him

 12:58

the upper hand to learn. And, and unfortunately, it's been that way for for a long time, over 40 years.

 James Geering 13:16

So going back to pre Russian, you have some areas, as you said, with no girl schools at all, you know, some some of the the interpretations of Islam in our burgers and some are a little bit more. I guess. arguably westernized as you said in Cabo being referred to as Paris. So you have

more, I guess, arguably westernized as you said in case being referred to as fans. So you have a very diverse spectrum of cultures within your nation. What talk to me about when the Russians invade, what impact does that have on your nation as a whole?

 13:48

Well, when the Russian invaded, it was pretty much my family started fighting the communist government before the Russian invasion. So my family was entered way before and a lot of them get captured, killed, disappeared. My my brother, my cousins, my uncles, they're all captured, killed and disappeared in prison. No one knows what, how they got killed. But from from my side, like people 90% of people I knew even the school. They look at our country is being invaded by infidels. So you have to find a way to fight these people. The Invaders by the same time on the other side. The Communist regime I paint a different way. They have different picture of calling the resistance as dogs and you know you name but I, when I was young, this was pretty much the I don't know how to describe it, it is just your duty to defend your country at all costs, you've been invaded, you haven't done anything to anybody, but you've been invaded your country has been invaded. And, and here is the religious part comes in.

 15:45

Literally, the word they use jihad is is a time like this. That's how you recruit young people. You die, you're gonna go to heaven. You live, you did your duty, you're gonna go to heaven. So either way. I mean, if you participate, defend your country in this jihad. This is how, at the beginning was the young people especially we were, and I didn't, I did not need recruitment or anything. My goal was clear. My family path was clear. My I was just waiting to get ready, learn how to prepare myself and go in the mountain and fight. That was pretty much from from Mujahideen side view, and people I know.

 James Geering 16:48

Speaking of Musa Deen, talk to me about Massoud, and because it seems like in we've talked a couple of times already, when you think about an individual that maybe was able to bring some of these Afghans together some of these tribes together, it seems like you know, he is one of the figures that was revered. And as you as you mentioned by some not all. So what impact did he have on the resistance against the Russians?

 17:19

Well, if you look at the history of jihad, Massoud was one of the most genius guerilla war Glera guerrilla warfare commander in geopolitics. He was an amazing, amazing human being he was good at everything he was doing at a time like this. He had intelligence every day when the Russians were like going to be attack. That's how good he was. And he was not like, other tribals he was, he were he had personal projects on his bags, all the educated people who escaped from Afghanistan, from Kabul from communist regime where they go and share. That's the only place they go because they know they have a safe passage. Either you stay or go

Pakistan, whatever. They go through there. A lot of young people stay for training and stay with Massoud. Some of them leave left the Massoud help them through the mountain go to Pakistan from there, they can decide where they want to

 18:47

migrate. So Massoud was in contact with many many commanders around the country not only North Kandahar Hillman Herat he was in contact with all these commanders. And and and he was very successful. The Russian couldn't you know, they gave up I mean, I was there for two, two and a half years with him fighting we couldn't stand by it face to face with this person. It's but ambushing them day and night. Was that was a tactic. They could you know, do it. I mean, it was literally they had no way of winning this war in the Hindu Kush mountain because the region is the train is Unbeliev verbally unconquerable. So group of 1015 mucho mucho even guys like me popping out in droves and plays and blowing him up set up a landmine or it was just how the whole thing went down no matter what the Russian did the next day. And it was the same thing. So that's Massoud played the most major role defeating Russia in Afghanistan. But unfortunately, he was in the crossfire of politics, politics around the region. He was a victim of politics. He was defending his country, he was doing an impressive job defeating the superpower standing up against them. But unfortunately, he never receive political support from outside.

 James Geering 21:06

Now, why was that? Well, they threatened by the fact that he was so successful, do you think?

 21:11

Absolutely, because the game was different from day one. He was the most successful and against Soviet. So the whole international community sees him as a one of the best guerrilla warfare commander and the hero of Afghanistan. But the words never interest, the region.

 James Geering 21:43

What is interesting that you educated me on is, as far back as this time is when there began to be an assimilation or or a formation of what we would know to be the Taliban. So talk to me about what was going on in Pakistan initially to be part of the fight against the Russians.

 22:05

Well, when people right now they talk about Taliban fight Russians. Taliban didn't fight Russians. During the talk, during the during the Russian Taliban didn't exist. Taliban never fought Russian. Yes, those people those mooch commanders, leaders around the country. They fought that generation has gone but Taliban never fought Russia. These are I mean, Taliban. Of course, the Afghan Taliban are the you know, children's of Afghan the Fathers fought but not the current Taliban. Some of them but majority of Taliban are Pakistanis. So they're back in the

days around the country, from north to south east to west, every majority leaders commanders that were poking at the Soviet you know, you can fight them face to face but you know, it's a guerrilla warfare, you have to ambush them, you know, do all those use all those tactics? That's what they did around the country in a small groups. But what Massoud the Massoud created a very disciplined fighters. Massoud no one could even smoke a cigarette. The suit did not allow anybody to even smoke a cigarette. And no matter how life was hard and it was he had judges he had prisons. And when when when prisoners went during the fight, I was involved the hundreds of capturing communist regime we weren't allowed to touch them. Let the legal system we just treat him really good send him to prison. If they're that's how he determine if they're a foot soldier foot soldier although soldiers that given back then they giving 5000 Afghani give an option to what we'll send you to Pakistan. You can go wherever you want to or you can stay here and the officers who are there call cod which is the intelligence in service of Communist regime, those guys was held for six months just to serve their time for cooking, cleaning for majority Dean's in the mountains, you know, helping around. After six months they were sent. And, and if they're if they were involved in high rank involved in some other crimes, they stay in prison. So he had a system. And no matter how many times he could attack, always the system was in place moving from one village to another village or one place another place, but the system was there.

 James Geering 25:51

So what was happening in Pakistan that became the beginning of what we know now is Taliban then

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all we have to go way back this whole thing. The whole international community is still asking the whole world Muslim world to support the jihad in Afghanistan. So especially Middle Eastern country was the big banker. So the way to do it, you have to create in a lot of madressa to train them. So it was over 50,000 madressa was back then created and they start bringing young kids from all over orphan orphans, non orphans is from all over, they start teaching them the Taliban, that's how Taliban was born. And, and, and it was way before the Soviet was defeated, left the country. So when when the G Belaz, government fell, gave up to Massoud a surrender, and he was at the UN compound. And from that point on the next chapter to start.

 27:29

So just think of Massoud charismatic leader, powerful known by the world is good at everything. And he had enemies in every corner, neighboring countries. The reason she had enemies he didn't want to any country to interfere in Afghanistan. You want to be a friend, dear friend.

 28:05

So this kind of he wants to Afghanistan. Free and that's pretty much like every human being in every corner of the world. They want elections, human rights, women's rights, everything. So he wasn't suitable for the policy of some of the country, neighboring country. And pretty much

it was way back in this. This after the Taliban took over probl when I saw the suit, and right before it, they took over Cabo. And the whole thing, the the way, he explained it to me it was changed from before. And understood it was about 2am And was your Akbar Han, one of the guesthouse when I sat down with him before he went to bed for about 45 minutes. And he was talking about geopolitics, things are changing. And we are not in a good situation. That's what I understood. From that point on when I analyzed and I knew

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Afghan long as he is here, if he he doesn't have any direct support from any government, anybody

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I knew things going to be really bad. And after that, when the Taliban took over Kabul and it was the way the policy, whoever behind Taleban work will take over in six months. So actually, it didn't work for them, they weren't happy. And they saw Massoud was bigger than who he is. So you have to go in order for policy to go forward. So this is how the whole thing happened during that time, this is my understanding. And, and over the years, when I understood, you know, how this politic works, who are the players, and I knew Massoud was doomed. There was nothing he can do. But he wasn't going to surrender. That I knew

 James Geering 31:22

we'll go and buy into I'm sorry, please carry on.

 31:26

And that was when I when I left and I start rethinking what to do.

 31:38

And pretty much when when he was killed they were on him way before that. I don't know how he survived that loss. And that was a big loss for the country.

 James Geering 32:00

So when I go back to when the Russians were defeated, and they withdrew, educate me on the void that was left and the need for international support that wasn't there at that time.

 32:17

So when the Russian left there was too powerful mage. Mujahideen parties, which is jam yet

Islami and Hezbollah salami, which is gulbadin Hekmatyar was the leader of Hezbollah Islami, and former president Burhanuddin Rabbani was the leader of Jimmy Islami, and Masood Ahmed Shah, Massoud was the main commander of majority in the north. In Pakistan, Massoud asked all the leaders You are the leaders. You decide to create your interim government I I'm the commander on the ground. He was no part of it. So whatever it happened, it happened in Pakistan, they created a interim government. And I remember before Massoud interCall bowl, he had big dispute with Hekmatyar Hekmatyar did not want to play the game to be the, in a prime minister of Afghans actually he was the sign that he was the prime minister of Afghanistan, but he has a different goal in mind. So he was part of the policy the politic. He didn't want any of Masood or anybody else. So, Massoud wanting to Cabo and he accused him to go in and Cabo that's how the whole thing is started. And countries neighboring countries, start feeling it. All the you know, every majority leader was supported by somebody. So the Civil War, chaos start in Kabul, Hekmatyar starts shutting kabul 3000 trucks a day. It was pretty bad. So till they lost cobble collarbone took over and mystery to once again back in the mountains and the Hindu Kush mountains. And he wasn't going to surrender. But he asked for election he asked for peace. He was even. I remember one time he literally got on his chopper with one of his buddy got one inside the Taliban in Logar province to meet with him by himself.



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And he captured many Taliban leaders, release them. Treat him like a guest. And no matter what he did, this is not what the people who were behind all of this wanted any of this. So it was impossible for Masood to do anything else. But to fight these people. They weren't accepting peace negotiation, they weren't interested in anything.



James Geering 36:15

So then 911 happens here in the US, walk me through through your eyes, the kind of events leading up to that, and then how that impacted your country when we sent Allied troops into Afghanistan.



36:32

Well, after before 911 He was assassinated on September 9 When he was assassinated after that, pretty much the Taliban, al Qaeda, the whole groups of these terrorists that we're celebrating and say that's it, that's all work. You're going to take over not. I mean, Massoud was the most powerful person hips, Hindu Kush mountain north, defending himself, but who benefit from it. Every Central Asian countries all the way back in Soviet Union. They were in Massoud fell.



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It was going to fall like dominoes. Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and goes on. And Masood, defending his country. Again the international community, whoever was behind all of this and supporting these people.





38:01

Believe it or not, they thought Massoud was bigger than they thought they muttered. Massoud was literally defending Afghanistan. So they saw it basically, they saved all those countries must will save them without Massoud it was impossible so and there was another four neighboring countries to promote and pursue this pro Russia Soviet pro all that No. There wasn't he was just defending his country and happened to be the most important geo politic location in the region. So there was a lot more to it. So this was Massoud fall into basically came into a lot of ran into a lot of problem which was not his fault. He was defending his country so that's how I look at it and that's how we'll want and I talked to a lot of people they pretty much they viewed the same way what happened and and when 911 happened the whole thing actually, this is another chapter completely change. So now everybody will I mean especially my phone was ringing, I was waiting what is next and till we started going went into Afghanistan.



James Geering 40:03

Now talk to me about the initial impact. And I'll preface this, we talked last time as well. A lot of the Special Forces Special Operations community of which, you know, the one of the very first boots on the ground were the the horse soldiers in the Green Berets. They all seem to align with the fact that training camps needed to be closed down key targets needed to be taken out whether it was Bin Laden or some of the other people, but then to leave again. So I'll get to the fact that we didn't, and we were there for 20 years. But when we first sent these forces in, talk to me about the reception that these allied forces had from the Afghani people.



40:46

Well, I'm not going to say when they went, I was one of the guy who was early on. When I'm there. I was there, I witnessed everything. from north to south, from east to west and Afghanistan. People actually, welcome me American. For them, it didn't matter if it was a village elder or a moolah in a mosque, or a young kid in school or younger or old lady. It just they basically, they were reborn. The joy, the freedom, they can walk without getting killed with it, it was undescrivable a lot of people people were a lot of operators, military forces, everybody was busy doing their own mission. But I was listening to all sides. And they were 95 This is how I experienced it. The early days, all around the country. 95% of people were enjoying every single day of their life. So they it was like they were free from shackle or something it was so desperate for for everything. This generation had very, very, very rapid life. Every family lost numbers of families, son, daughter, mother, father. And it just it was pretty bad. And they were excited. And like I said, like every soldier, every person who served in that country in Afghanistan, they did their job. Absolutely. With everything they they had and proud to say every single one of you. And so they get to learn a job and one day you know, you you're a one place and another day you another place you just because there was no government in place yet. You can govern the whole country. So all these special forces ever that that were just out there to chase al Qaeda and Taliban. There was no government. And the Northern Alliance was multi tribal commanders, you know, that we're still in a different kind of mood when I always they asked me one of the questions you guys Americans going to leave again, or they're going to stay. And they see the whole international community, they always they say, American because that's always as an American is going to leave again, or they're

gonna stay here probably 1000s of time, as I promise as an African American Where are leaving? And so that's how much people you know, support everything about the Western world, rescue them from I mean, they never live that generation without hearing bombs and bullets flying around. Now finally, they have peace of mind, of course, a suicide bomber once a week twice a week goes off here and there is you just like a chump change for them was they could walk day night, anywhere it was, people were free, listen to music concert everywhere that people living. And so the Afghan people are always, you know, not enough lucky to have the worst luck in the world. And Iraq war started, everything was rerouted to Iraq from Afghanistan and they start in the international community, there's no part the Taliban is going to regroup and because Pakistan, brought them back in there and retrain them and then kept them there. And the international community start was busy in Iraq. So slowly, and, you know, if we don't have support, I mean, security in the villages in town, people, the Taliban comes in, and then people change. The Taliban slowly keep moving in and slowly, slowly until they get stronger. So at the beginning, absolutely. 95% of the people around the country I came across the way they describe it, they say just you, I don't know how to explain it, one of the elders in Khost Province, at the border area, he use us in a way in a local term, he say, when you feel the most happy, in the morning, sun is shining. I don't know how to use the word that like a poetry, you know, the old man was explaining, I feel, I just, I'm reborn, that's how happy this guy was. And all around the country, but slowly, like I said, you know, there was till the government was established and you know, security force or train that takes a long time. And Taliban slowly came back and reclaimed the villages.

J

James Geering 47:40

Now, a lot of the Special Forces, people that have come on here, like I said, that initial come in, in a hunt, the hunt, the main targets, shut down the training camps, etc. But then there was a withdrawal element to what we saw was a lot of the big army as they call it moving in and bases. And a lot of the soldiers have said, If someone came into my country and started building bases, I would probably take up arms and become resistance to so what elements did that part of the strategy have on turning what were allies into enemies over time?

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48:20

Well, this was the biggest mistake is from my understanding, because I was a guerrilla fighter. I was a Mujahideen. I was I knew the game. I know how it works. This was the biggest mistake which the way it was this like, the terrorists can go ahead and whatever and leave the villagers who support you to, to do this. Now the talk about us, they're not stay, they don't stay there. They leave. The Taliban comes in. They find out one way or another, who helped them. A lot of this from the villagers. Nobody reported. Those villagers get killed for helping even the problem was that tribal problem goes for centuries. Even some of those people they had nothing to do with the Taliban, helping them American or British or Australian. But that other tribe didn't like that person. They report him. The Taliban Hey, he works for he was the one behind helping the infidels Taliban never asked question. They're a knife they cut the head off. So all the special forces of course they weren't happy. You just go somewhere. You just Whatever, you know, do your job and leave. And the enemy comes back at night. So this was what was happening at the beginning, it was pretty much it was the kind of operation, you just go out there. And in a day or two, you're done, you'd leave the place. And Taliban comes back in. And, and, and the villagers and the people start understanding this is not going to work because Taliban is going

to kill us. So slowly, people start missing, trusting the international community. The Taliban was the, you know, the madressa, the mosque, and their propaganda was out of control. And they could do this in the villages easily. And, of course, the villages. Nobody wants that kind of life.

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But when you know, you have no choice these people, the Taliban. Gonna be coming back. The next day, there is nothing you can do. You can't help anybody.

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So all over the country, especially in the in the terrorist camp area, all those Tora Bora in the on the border area, of course, it's a griddle war fair, they are

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mobile, you spot them in one place, you go after them and just leave. There is no security to protect those villages, those people's. So the special forces on the upper operation they did I mean, I,

 52:13

I've talked to a lot of them, they say, Hey, this is our job. And they need to go in, take care of business and leave. But this was a mistake. And I don't think they had any choice on the choice. And other things. I look at it, because there was no security force. Yes, there was no Alliance, northern allies without Massoud.

 52:42

No, not no allies, a bunch of sharks. Some of these people aren't good people. It was Massoud kept them together. So now the suit is gone. They need security force. We use northern lines, every I mean, all the forces that always depend on some of these Northern Alliance commanders and fires around the country.

 53:22

So it was kind of very, very difficult time. And sometimes you can get angry and mad and blame it. But sometimes you look the other ways it was there was no the choice.

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But all this military forces, they did their job, all the special forces, they did their job perfectly. Their job wasn't, you know, put a security post for the village.



54:01

So they go after a terrorist comes and destroy it and get out of there. So it was it was actually a look at it. They should have something in place to have those area the provinces secure. But time was tough.



James Geering 54:25

So you mentioned about the fact that in some areas, you know, it was the first time that a lot of young Afghan boys and girls could get education. So there was a lot of good things that came out of it. I've heard members of our military or the Allied military talking about you know, the the hospitals and the veterinary surgeons and all that the good that was done by as you said the men and women that were actually out there trying to help 20 years go by, and now there's there's a talk of us withdrawing. So again, through your eyes can lead me through that phase and then we'll talk about out there, the impact of leaving that void as we talk today.



55:06

So like I mentioned early on, when I grew up and pen share, we didn't have paved road or electricity. So 2020 for the first time the same thing and every corner of the country I'm giving this credit to PRT military, they call them PRT around the country, they have done most of this project. Not the Afghan government, they were corrupt as hell. The reason you have paved roads around the country and the school and mosque and all these bills, majority of this bill by the international community, PRT was working hard in every corner. Yes, the Afghan government was involved, and a lot of projects. And it was the money was not there. It was comes from one hand is gone the other hand, no one knew where the money goes. And later on, we find out it was ministers brother or cousin his family, somehow the money just they went to Pakistan. A lot of these people, people they got awarded the contract they left, you know, just make easy money. It was no accountability. The majority of the road to school was built by PRT. And your Cid and other European international community, you know, help all the schools and, and I don't give I give Afghan government maybe five or 10% credit of all of that. The rest was the military a pure tea and international community was helping doing it. schools around the country, the girls boys, it was packed. Universities there were more girl going to score boys at one point.



James Geering 57:46

So that was the place that you were at as we progress into, you know, the 20 years. Talk to me then about the impact of the sudden withdrawal and the void that was left when all these allied forces that were there to protect the Afghan people were now taken away.



58:09

Well, let me put it this way. As a human is so human nature, we always focus on negative. Negativity is just pretty much we are obsessed with negativity. We don't talk the positive

negativity is just pretty much we are obsessed with negativity. we don't talk the positive stuff. Most of the time. past 20 years of international community Afghanistan. People live the best life ever in Afghanistan, even before the Soviet invasion, how peaceful it was. It was peaceful but no leadership to help educate the Afghan people. So that was different. But this 20 years was different. There is a lot of good thing happened in Afghanistan. People don't talk about it. We all talk about bad stuff. So there's right now Yes, yes. What happened to Afghanistan when the international community they left? This was I don't know how to describe it. When this happened, the still talk to him right now. All throughout my life. I've been involved in this. Trying to understand that I came to a point. Yesterday, the day before yesterday, I was talking to ej I told him the straight up essay. I feel like I'm in the middle of desert and everything direction and look is desert like so like I have no way of you know direction which way is right which way is wrong and I know which way is right but I don't know how to which direction this that's how I feel that's how I feel about Afghan people uncertain future and the hardship their end and I'm sorry I went off the question I apologize

 James Geering 1:00:42

no no don't apologize at all so we talked about all the good the schools the roads you know the fact that you've got so many women being educated the security the happiness that that one gentleman felt when he you know like you said the feeling of the sun rising in the morning so, so much goop was done. But you have this this group of people kind of lurking on the outside wanting to seize control again of your country. We withdraw the Allied troops from Afghanistan what you know talk to me about that shift and the void that's left today

 1:01:17

that shift the void pretty much set Afghanistan back 100 years just like that overnight, the hope the future everything is gone dark just turning the light off at night that's how it happened. How people feel how I seen it

 1:01:41

well like I said, I do not understand the international community according to cigar report, almost over \$2 trillion was spent in our country life loss international community and ambassador that country Delta military best military Security Forces Afghanistan was on the right path. Yes, corruption was the problem every country go goes through from the beginning and everything was going in the right direction but whatever the policy was there is no explanation the way it happened. I don't think anybody can explain you just after the whole I'm literally I'm talking about international community calm and they need to answer this question. Why? How would happen you have everything in the palm of your hand you have security you have the whole country Yes, you have a resistant which is the Taliban firing. But how could you lose all of this overnight when I talk to some of these generals, some of these commanders they just don't understand. So we were asked to stand down

 1:03:33

just why would it just it is it is very very difficult for me to to figure out who's at fault here. It's

not just one country was 49 countries I serve international community NATO everyone is in there

 1:04:06

and no no no one could you know, oppose no one say anything. No one did anything. Just pick up and get out.

 1:04:18

This is one of the area that bothers me. It wasn't like the Afghan military was I mean, believe it or not, they were trained by the best

 1:04:45

they were Patriot don't know if if the international community knows how many I Afghan soldiers ama kit was killed in the past. I mean, before taken over a past year and a half before that

 1:05:11

a lot a one point it was the first quarter was 20 1000 How they die, they then receive ammunition to fight

 1:05:30

so this the Afghan security force, I mean that when you go higher up, they're all corrupt majority of the majority of but the soldiers that were they did everything they gave their lives. And they're still I talk to probably some of the commander's hiding Special Force commanders, Afghans, if basically, sooner or later, he's going to be caught and killed. And sometime I talk to them and they don't understand. And sometimes they ask me so what are all those friends we have? You know? Australian, British American, you name it, you know, the people they serve with work with? Have no answer for them. So they do their job. And and they did. Absolutely. Everything I hear.

 James Geering 1:06:52

Well, I know a lot of those men and women feel so much guilt about it as well, you know, because I think it's, it's, it gives them some satisfaction that they know, in their heart of hearts that when they were there, they did make a difference. But that mission that they were told they were a part of, you know, one day we're in the next day, we're not. And I hear this from so many people in uniform, they were disgusted the way it went down. And now they look back when the Taliban has retaken certain areas that they fought for. What was it all for? You know, and again, like I said, they did good while they were there. But there's that real sense of

betrayal from the men and women some of whom watched their Afghan, you know, allied fighters die their American, British Australia and New Zealand, wherever they were from, they lost lives. They lost limbs, they brought back trauma. And then, you know, again, the door just slammed shut. And it's not about the conversation of should we have tried and concluded the war in some way. Of course, no one wants to be at war forever. But the way it was done, like you said, just cutting the legs off people from from both sides. That's the thing that jars not only with the military here, but obviously with you as well.

 1:08:09

Absolutely, absolutely the same. Some of these security guys, military guys, I've known them, believe it or not.

 1:08:21

When they talk to me for the first five minutes, they can't even control themselves. They're disgusted and, and I, I always tell him, I say, you did your job man disturbed. Whatever happened happened, there is nothing we can do. I mean, I've been in it all my life.

 1:08:51

And probably, right after the Taliban, I was the only person completely I devoted myself and leaving, and I'm going to the frontline. I'm not coming back. That's how every veterans, every person who's served, that's how I felt they felt. I remember one of them, told me so you're the luckiest bastard is What do you mean? Because you're African American, you can go out there and do just one second. You can go out there and do something. You know, every country everywhere. They have laws, you know, you can go to other countries and you have to follow them. very restrictive rules, but I'm African American. So I can go fight terrorist or help people find terrorists. So it is 444 I'm pretty sure sooner or later this all of these people start. They're going to come out and they're going to raise their voice.

 James Geering 1:10:15

Well, I know that's what you're trying to do is rally people together because as you said, there's a multifaceted issue. You've got all these nations that were there initially to help, then there was withdraw. You had trained fighters that everyone was hope would be a resistance, but they lay down their arms, you know, he had corruption of money given to leaders that should have I'm assuming provided ammunition and arms to these fires that never got down to the people that needed it. Before we get to the call for action, talk to me about Afghanistan now, you know, paint the picture of what is happening to the women in Afghanistan, what is happening to the poverty, the starvation, the winter that is coming. Let's kind of illustrate the trouble that so many men women and children are in and your country at the moment

 1:11:08

for the question, the answer that question. After will, will draw on Afghanistan, I want to

for the question, the answer that question. After will, will draw on Afghanistan. I went to Tajikistan right away. from Tajikistan, I the border area I witnessed the first winter. Just going to give you a little glimpse of that and we'll talk about

 1:11:32

place. This one it was mass of refugee just same thing was, you know, you see the Kabul airport. It was the same thing was at the borders of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and people tried to keep them away because the border were all closed. I was getting report. During that winter, hundreds of 1000s or hundreds of 1000s of people moved from all over the country came up north. So they can cross Tajikistan Uzbekistan get out of the country. But the border was closed. So there was in the morning, I used to get report and they used to send footage of all these refugees living in a worse condition and they they show 1520 Children infants during the year there die of hunger or the mostly the cold. It was up in those area is minus five degrees as cold as Wendy's bone chilling. So I was asking what are how many children you say sometime every morning we bury 1015 20 just children forget about the ogres and woman others and and in Afghan tradition. When somebody passes away. There's a funeral. There's people feed people, there's all of that out the window. All they did is one person take a body go dig a hole and bury them. People cannot afford to eat forget about having a funeral. They used to do it like 1015 at a time in the morning because people help the ground is frozen. It was day and night. I'm talking about just three four province of North. Hundreds of people used to die overnight. There's no one I knew. God knows how many hundreds died every day. I didn't knew nobody reported. So I'm gonna come to your question now this winter. I talk to a lot of people every day. The same concern is the hunger and cold is going to take a lot of lives. Yes, the international community sent support but never reaches what I hear because when I was in Tajikistan, literally I started working to find ways how to get the, you know, some kind of humanitarian offers or something we can get, you know, send food out there. Even I spoke with Tajikistan government's actually asked me if you can do one thing to try to support and get help, like food blankets. So we can, we are countries that say we do help, but we don't we can. So if you do this, we will help you with Red Crescent, and all that get it crossed these people. I tried very hard and EJ, try very hard to see working on it to create some kind of humanitarian office or something. So I can go out there and send these food out there. So I was working. So because of that I was promising a lot of families. So we were working, trying to get food in there in the past few months. The same thing every winter, they calling me and asking me what are we going to do now? Say, keep praying, there is nothing I can do. I'm working, I'm doing everything to I was hoping to get some kind of humanitarian relief or somebody so I can go out there. And actually, in Tajikistan, government will promise will help in every way. The good deeds donation to support for the refugees cross the border, if you will, if you can work it out. So nothing's happening yet. But the reason I mentioned this, the same thing, I'm getting a lot of color, everyone I talk, they're concerned about winter. They're predicting a lot of people going to the same thing is year before and this year is going to be more because people can afford to eat. Forget about having coal or wood. Use this. A lot of people living below, I think the last report I saw is over 60% of the country below poverty and just barely making it. So these are different people having different polls in the country, but I don't know how much they accurate, but it is very bad. And I want whatever happened happened. But right now, I will appreciate the international community to focus to save the rest.

 James Geering 1:17:51

Now what about all the indigenous people that helped the Allied Forces? You know, that's had



now what about all the indigenous people that helped the Allied Forces? You know, they've had someone on the show for him Fazli. And while it hasn't been, but they you know, they made it to America safely. There's a lot of people that helped, you know, the resistance, the Allies, however you want to phrase it when we were there that were kind of left, vulnerable after we left? What are you hearing about some of these, these families that were supporting the Allies now that we're not there to protect them anymore?



1:18:24

Well, every single one of them, I'm talking to them. I know them from way 2002 Either they were in the government or not in the government. And they fully we call them Northern Alliance back in the days. Those people the the individuals, the leaders, individuals who helped the Taliban throughout the years because they were all involved this how and they survive and they live always but soldiers, people who serve I don't know if you guys saw the forage, they kill them like flies. If one day they allowed me to, you know, put on YouTube or put YouTube videos, no human scenes in their life the way they you know, the way they kill it just as vicious and just one of my security guy, he's hiding his son. I believe he turned 21 And he before Parliament took over. He joined up lease for a few months before the the Taliban took over. And that kid was hit with a machete in his head. He was in coma and then and they took him to Pakistan everywhere can get help. When they brought him back, Taliban found out. He was with the police. They drag him he was in coma, put them in the back of the truck, put them in prison. He's in prison now. Yesterday I get a message as he was. Probably he's not going to make it because there is no medical attention. There's what is the charge? He joined the police and police issued him pistol he have to bring a pistol. This is exactly the word of the Taliban and his father have to go through different channels to find out, pull out his record, which is everything is in that ministry of em why they left everything for Taliban. So it shows he was never issued a pistol. But they don't care. Because he is a theory from Punisher and he is a threat.



1:21:29

Even he is in coma I am talking about right now I spoke this father yesterday. So the people who supported the international community one way or another, they will be captured and killed more than people who serve them the nds or MOI or a INEC.



1:22:00

One way or another they're hiding. between police and the US and ama it was almost 700,000 forces. And they are all out there hiring.



James Geering 1:22:19

Let's talk about that then. So obviously, we withdrew. You had all these people that fought valiantly when they were in a Northern Alliance. Some of them have been trained by Allied forces. But you mentioned about the kind of dropping of arms, you want to rally these people back together again, you want to take back your country. And as you mentioned, in the last

time we spoke, even some of the people that were kind of brought into Taliban, you know, and there's obviously poverty and lack of education and a whole bunch of elements of facets that contribute to that. You've got Pakistan and you've got Afghanistan. So talk to the Afghan people about coming together and reclaiming their country.

 1:23:12

Well as an African American, and and I I mean, that's my birthplace. That's my country. I birthplace as an African American, my advice the Afghans are

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your brave people, you've gone through unbelievable, harshness throughout your lives, especially, you know, talking about this 40 years of war in that country. And they need to there is two way they need to ask the international community once again the undo what they did there is I can tell you if there are national community wants Afghanistan, they can make it happen in a week. Still, the Afghan people as a whole and if that don't happen the other way is civil war. There is no other way. But there is more chance of peacefully fixing this problem the Afghan people need to rise in every country wherever they are. They need to ask for help to rescue Afghanistan from this terrorist organization. So this is I believe This is the best way if the international community wants to do this as the best way to get that country back and if that doesn't happen Afghanistan is is a country predator around the world is waiting to use them again. More of my word what I'm saying is to the Afghan people

 1:25:44

don't let your country take by our terrorist right now they're claiming they're completely 100% Afghanistan under control no

 1:26:01

maybe 95% 98% 99% But the resistance still live in the mountains of Hindu Kush

 1:26:09

and in every province in the country pockets of resistance they're just waiting for their right time who are these people the same soldiers the same soldiers and international community special forces train them throughout the years

 1:26:29

the same people and and if that's the international community don't do this help the Afghan people and get their country back create an interim government



1:26:52

and pretty soon those vultures around the neighbors going to invest on these people invest right now there is no one is helping resistance no one is helping resistance South is going to change is going to change and then I will like to see the international community act as soon as possible do something before this country becomes a super terrorist country as not that far right now. 27 terrorist comm



1:27:44

is established based in Afghanistan from Pakistan they all move out there so it looks very very bad right now. But there's still



1:28:03

I believe is still the hope and the Afghan people still no matter what happened, they still believe us made a mistake and then we'll come back after this terrorists that's how they look at it so the other if this doesn't happen, and the country is going to go back to war, civil war that's going to be really bad ones. And the resistant the people are going to be fighting them



1:28:49

they will kill everything in their path because of some of these people lost everything



1:28:57

and that's gonna go back to civil war. Like in the 90s even worse. So my advice to the Afghan people no matter which who you are, what tribe you are.



1:29:22

If you want to free Afghanistan raise your voice no matter where in the world you are.



1:29:33

If you can go out there do something raise your voice. Ask for help. And this can happen with all these players want to do the right thing. And no one's no one wants I swore again in that country. And right now, earlier, when I mentioned, I feel like I'm in the middle of desert, Sam, take the whole people, no country don't know what to do where to go. And they are waiting for slow death. And hundreds or hundreds of young activists, arrested gone, no one knows



1:29:43

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majority of the females who participated on those early days, they want to die or be free and they were on the street. And jority of him are no longer around. And what the thing is, I mean, I'm pretty sure that an actual community here is some of these every day but I don't understand what's happening, but like I said, my message to Afghans or raise your voice. With your with us. That's all you can do at this point. So ask for help get our country back. And sooner or later, like I said, there are going to be those vultures. They're going to jump in and use these fighters use these people and other civil war. And who's going to die? Those put Afghans again, the same people been getting killed left and right for four decades. Just for different reasons. Wars. So this, will we add the specially and the question you asked the Afghans are people who loves democracy

 1:32:26

once the good their country back, have a peaceful life. Make sure raise your voice. And that's all I can. I'm not encouraging anybody to go out there and blow yourself up kill somebody, you know. Let's find ways to get this help and peacefully get these people. That's one way in other ways war has been a war is free much. The next very option for for the Afghan people. And no matter how much I hate this terrorist, I don't like to see Laura again in that country.

 James Geering 1:33:24

Well, I hope that this not only as a call to action for people, you know, in Afghanistan or Africa, you know, Afghans around the world as well, but also the rest of us. You know, it was kind of that that chapter was slammed shut. I hope that this conversation has educated people listening as much as it has myself. I mean, you've, you've painted a completely different picture. And I think that we do need to revisit, like you said, whether that's diplomatically or whatever it looks like to not just remove Afghanistan from everyone's consciousness. So I want to let you go but before we do, is there anything else you want to add before we close out?

 1:34:06

I had a few things to say but right now I completely it's not coming back once again, James. My message, I'm going to repeat it again. The international community to every single person who served please. If you're American Australian British unit, whatever you serve, whatever level you need to raise your voice. Ask for help for Afghan people. But right now right now. I'm asking the international community to save Afghan lives during this winter. is going to be harsh is going to people are going to die a lot of people especially young infant, an infant, because it cold and anger. And whatever they can do, I mean, they do receive help in the capitals, but nothing goes in the provinces. People really needed

 James Geering 1:35:19

it, just want to thank you so much for sharing everything that you have today on here, you know, we want to get this out to as many people as possible. We want to empower the civilians, the, you know, the the veterans of the time that they spent in Afghanistan and maybe feel

empowered to do a little bit more, even if they're not even in uniform anymore. But also, obviously, the Afghan people around the world. So I want to thank you so much for coming on here, trusting me with with this message and being so generous with your time today.



1:35:52

Thank you very much, James. I appreciate you giving me this opportunity to raise my voice and ask everyone who served right behind you whatever you want to. Anyway, you can help these people in Afghanistan, raise your voice, whatever. I would love to participate in any meetings anywhere to get help for Afghan people, what's happening today. And once again, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to raise my voice