

Episode 48 Transcript

Andrew Donaldson

Anytime. I'm always thrilled to talk to you, my friend and I'm a fan of the podcast, and it's been fun being your colleague these last couple of years writing with you. So anytime we can chat a little bit, I'm thrilled to do it, my friend.

Dennis Sanders

Cool. Well, I think I wanted to kind of start with a general overview question concerning Afghanistan, and it's the kind of a question is, where are we now with all of this now that the last transport plane is out, how would you describe where we are at as a nation in this whole conflict? What's our location?

Andrew Donaldson

We're in kind of a lull the beforehand, the pregnant pause where we were wondering if we were going to get everybody out or not. Now we've gotten past that. So now we're in the phase where we're probably going to quickly shuffle it back to the back burner, which is where Afghanistan has occupied the American consciousness for the last 16, 17, 18 years until the next thing flares up. I'm very glad that let's take it this way. I'm glad the evacuation ended with a whole lot of people gone and relatively light casualties.

Andrew Donaldson

I'm horrified at the Abbey Gate bombing like everybody else. But compared to where we were that first weekend, if you had told most Americans, we're going to get out of there with only 13 dead, they would have took that deal. That sounds harsh, but that's the reality because we were thinking it was going to be a lot worse than that. We say that knowing that there are people that are still there that we don't know about, we know there's Americans, Afghanis that have travel papers, things like this that were left behind.

Andrew Donaldson

So that's going to have to be reckoned with at some point. We also don't know what Afghanistan is going to be. We understand what the Taliban is saying. We know what the Taliban was like 20 years ago, but this is a different Afghanistan. This is mostly the same Taliban, especially their senior leadership. They have to run this country now. They don't know how to do that. They admit it much because they can't even open the airport right now. They've cut deals with Turkey and the United Arab Emirates to try to come in and run the airport for them because they don't know how to do it.

Andrew Donaldson

So things like that, they have to run an entire country. Now. Kabul is a city of what 4 million people can they do sewer and trash? Can they effectively run a city. We don't know these things. They're also fighting in the Northern regions, the old remnants of what we call the Northern Alliance. They still have people that will push back against their rule, fighting against them. They have to consolidate power. So we don't even know what Afghanistan is going to be like yet. So we're really in a law of kind of days at what just happened, taking restock of what just happened.

Andrew Donaldson

But understanding that whatever is getting ready to happen next is in the gestational stage here where there's a lot more unknown, unknowns than known, known at the moment. So that's where we are. Is that a better situation than we were three weeks ago when Kabul was getting overrun in the Taliban, probably tactically, at least strategically. We're going to find out over time.

Dennis Sanders

There has been a lot of talk about, on the one hand, that people have been we've air lifted a lot of people and we have. But there's also, I mean, I've heard some news reports and I don't I know that sometimes this is still early and it's probably not always accurate, but that we left a huge amount of people who had the SIV visas who are still in Afghanistan and an unknown number of Americans. And yet we kind of there seems

to be at least from some people, both politicians and also people in a general public that are treating this as if it's over.

Dennis Sanders

But it seems like when you have that number of people, it doesn't seem like it's over.

Andrew Donaldson

Now it's a matter of perspective. You put 100,000 people in Michigan football Stadium. That's just a typical Saturday in Ann Arbor. You put 100,000 people in an urban airport surrounded by enemy and you got to get them out of there. Now you got something historic to get done. So let's take this into two parts. When they pulled everybody to the airport that first weekend that Kabul fell, and we saw that Mad dash. And then that Monday, we started seeing the viral videos of people just running on the runways and people, unfortunately, falling off the aircraft and all this stuff.

Andrew Donaldson

It was chaos. About two days after that Tuesday night, Wednesday morning, they got the extra troops in there. They kind of restored some order and got it a little bit more orderly through the rest of the evacuation. So people are saying, who did you get out? So there's two parts to this, the people that were on the airfield that are Loading the planes, they're just getting as many people on aircraft as they possibly can. And that's their job. They're not worried about who they are. Just get them on their get them out.

Andrew Donaldson

Let's get it done. Then there's the diplomatic part at the gates and elsewhere of who was getting on to the airfield. And it seems like that's where the breakdown was people that actually made it to the airport. They got almost all those folks out. The problem was there was people that didn't get through the gates or couldn't get to the airport. And remember, we're just talking about Kabul here. We're not talking about the whole rest of the country that got overran very, very quickly. So that's where the break is.

Andrew Donaldson

Yes, we did a great job of air lifting the people. We could get out at the airport because the United States military, that's a core competency of them. They do it better than anybody in the world, the diplomatic side of that and where we criticize a lot of the planning is the people that couldn't get through the gates, couldn't get to the gates, couldn't be identified. We don't even really know a good count on how many people are in the country. The administration is saying it's 100 to 200.

Andrew Donaldson

I would suspect that's a very optimistic number. I suspect it's much higher. Let me pause here for just a second. It's not all the administration's fault because the United States does not require people in a foreign country to register with the embassy, like most countries do-we just don't. Having said that, we knew that this summer we were going to be getting out of Afghanistan, so they should have had a better plan than they did. Now we got that out of the way. The diplomatic side of who did we get out, why didn't they get out?

Andrew Donaldson

It's going to take a long time to parse that out, because again, we're evacuating, folks, is we don't even know how many were evacuated. You're really talking about shoveling water out of the river here. In a lot of ways, it was an impossible situation, the military end of it. They did absolutely everything they possibly could. We've got the reports now where General Donahue, 82nd Airborne commander on the ground, actually kept the gates opened right up to the last second. He could possibly keep them open.

Andrew Donaldson

They got out as many folks as they could. But diplomatically, the SIV visa people? American nationals? Remember, there's quite a few Afghan folks that had gone back to Afghanistan because we were in control that were American citizens and had children here. And then they went back there to homestead for lack of a better term, those kind of people we don't have a good number on- it's going to be a long time before you find out. And frankly, with the Taliban in control as they start going through some of these people themselves, we may never know.

Dennis Sanders

Which then leads me to this question. And I think this is something that you picked up in the article is, how much do you think we as a nation, actually kind of care about Afghanistan? It seems to me that it's something that as you've written in that article over the last 20 years, we've thought about very infrequently every so often you might think about it. And I think one of the things that some people are think is that once everything is dying down and asking and things are dying down, that we'll put Afghanistan in the back burner again.

Dennis Sanders

So all the kind of concerns, maybe about the role of women and all that will just be forgotten and we'll move on. Why do you think that that has been the case? Is it just kind of American provincialism or is it something else?

Andrew Donaldson

America has always had an isolationist streak to it. Remember, America was very much isolationist until Pearl Harbor drug us into World War Two. We've just always had that we don't like getting involved in foreign affairs. And broadly speaking, of course, we have our moments. But America has always had a little bit of that to their just ingrain national character. When you have something like 9/11 happen, which was a Pearl Harbor type event for folks, it changes that equation for them. So then when they're like the people that did this, the people in this Taliban group and this Al Qaeda group is in Afghanistan, and these Taliban Fellers are giving them safe Harbor, we're going to go do something about that that makes sense to people.

Andrew Donaldson

Okay. Objective goal. Let's go get them. Where we lose interest is in what happens after the victory. And people talk about nation building and throw it away. But we have history on this. We still have troops right now today. Remember, we flew these people. A lot of the people we flew out of Afghanistan went to Ramstein, Germany. Why do we have a base in Germany? I was stationed in Germany twice. Okay. We still have bases in Japan, and those are very different culture in very different circumstances.

Andrew Donaldson

But it's just going to show you that the reason we kept bases in Germany was because we had the cold war and we needed to project power and we needed to keep a foothold there. Were we going to do that in Afghanistan? Well, the plan has been on and off over the years is what we need to be in Afghanistan to stop worst things happening. One part of this, too, people keep talking about. Well, it's the graveyard of empires and all this. Okay, that's fine. But the other side of that coin is why do empires keep having to deal with Afghanistan?

Andrew Donaldson

It really is the crossroads between Southwest Asia, Central Asia now in our modern times. And we've seen this in remember, radar and I'm probably pronouncing his name wrong. But who's now going to be the head of the Taliban government? He was meeting with the Chinese foreign Minister three weeks ago in China. He met with the CIA director at least once that we know of probably twice. Now that it's been reported, if he's meeting with the CIA director of America, and he's meeting with the Chinese foreign Minister, there's not going to be a secession of interest in this area.

Andrew Donaldson

Okay, but America doesn't do Geopolitics very well. And we certainly don't do plan ahead. Geopolitics Super Super. Well, so unless the troops were in the ground or unless there was a big body count, and I hate to put it that way, but that's just the truth of it. That's the only time you ever heard about Afghanistan is if we were surging troops or if we had a big loss, like the Red Wings loss or Extortion 17 when it went down. Those things pop those things, get movies made about them.

Andrew Donaldson

But other than that, they just didn't pay much attention to it at all. And we can prove it because we have the media numbers. The media didn't talk about Afghanistan hardly at all since the Trump deal was put into place until Biden changed the deadline. Then it popped back up again. It's just the fact I'd love to have a good, clean answer why America just doesn't seem to care about overseas things very much unless it directly

affects us. But a lot of it is just it's probably true in France or Germany or pick your country.

Andrew Donaldson

People just don't want to be bothered with overseas when they have domestic problems going on. They don't want to talk about these foreigners, especially when it's violent, especially when it's really hard to understand, especially when it's really, really messy, like Afghanistan. And then I would proffer that for the last ten or so years, when we knew at some point we were going to have to get out and it was going to be bad and it was going to be an ugly ending, you kind of push off the embarrassment of having to deal with it.

Andrew Donaldson

And I think a lot of the coverage we had this week and the reason I wrote that kind of in the course of events was, hey, they just want to be done with it. And that's why I went to the imagery of washing your hands is like it's not even a winter loss or embarrassment or anything like that. People just don't want to hear about it anymore. They just wanted to go away. A lot of folks do. And I don't think I'm wrong taking that angle on it because I think the facts of the last few years and the facts of the last few days and the fact that we're now on the Saturday after finishing it, and you don't see a lot of headlines about it anymore.

Andrew Donaldson

I think that's all been proven out, unfortunately,

Dennis Sanders

Of course, when you use the word the phrase washing of hands, that's biblical term. (Andrew: Yes, Pastor it is.) It comes with Pontus Pilate, basically, when he has to make a decision of whether Jesus gets truth, fight or not, he washes his hands to the matter. It's a way of kind of saying this is not my responsibility anymore. Is that what's happening here in America? And is that a good or bad thing? I think in the Bible, we

tend to think that what Pontus Pilate did was not good. It was a way of kind of cowardly in a way that he didn't take responsibility, if that's what's happening here.

Andrew Donaldson

Yeah, it's been a while since I talk hermeneutics. But if I remember correctly, Pilate washing his hands is the book into Christ washing the Disciples feet. But that's a free sermon starter. You can use that as you will.

Dennis Sanders

I will.

Andrew Donaldson

But that's the point. It's a lack of responsibility. It's like, all right. I don't think this is right, but I don't want anything to do. Remember Pilot himself said, I find no fault of this man or whatever the verbiage there was depending on your translation. He didn't really understand either. He just wanted the crowd to go away and be quiet. I think there was the political decision to leave Afghanistan. There was not a little bit of I just want the crowd to go away and be quiet.

Andrew Donaldson

I don't want this thing hanging over my head anymore. We don't want to talk about it anymore. We don't want to deal with anymore. I take the present forward for it, and I believe him because it's consistent with what we know about President Biden. I really think he just did not want any more dead troops on his watch. I believe him when he says that and I it's consistent with his character and what we know about it. I think he was probably horrified by the 13 dead at the Abbey gate.

Andrew Donaldson

He did not want dead troops on his watch. And that's a perfectly valid leadership point. Now how he went about that? I've got some disagreements on, but he wanted to wash his hands of it because he didn't want any more troops on his own conscious, which I don't blame him for. President Bush has talked since he's left office and President

Obama. I haven't seen it directly, but I'm sure if he asked him the same thing, these things weigh on leaders and regardless of the politics, unless they're just stone cold human beings, which I don't think any of those three men are.

Andrew Donaldson

Those things weigh on you. There's a reason former President Bush spends a lot of time with troops that don't make the news since he's left office. I'm sure was on him. Those 13 people will be before President Biden's eyes for the rest of his days because he's been around politics. He knows that was his call. They were there. He because he put him there. I'm not going to criticize him for that, but he wanted to be done with it. He didn't want it. The American people as a whole didn't want any more cost.

Andrew Donaldson

They didn't want any more burden to bear here. So I went with the washing hands analogy or the imagery, if you will, because that's that's where I feel like a lot of them are. They just don't want it to be on them anymore. We're a full generation from when we went into Afghanistan. Now, to be fair, a lot of Americans feel like, look, this wasn't our decision. We didn't have anything to do with it. You have some of the guys that died at the Abbey Gate were babies when 9/11 happened, when we went into Afghanistan.

Andrew Donaldson

Barely. We were on the verge of people not even being born yet serving in Afghanistan, which is just mind blowing when you think about it. So I don't know of a better imagery. Then they just want to be done with it. And we don't want any more, either national, nationwide or individually. We don't want any more blame on what's going on over there because it is an ugly region. It's a complicated region. We have corruption issues and the way that we handled it with the money and the contractors and the corrupt government that we propped up.

Andrew Donaldson

So we have a lot of blame there, and, you know, not to come back to spiritualism again. But as a pastor, you know, people's usually people's initial response to guilt is to try to

ignore it and make it go away. That's just the natural human response to guilt and things like that. We have some national guilt to deal with here. And most people would rather just go away and let's not talk about it at all.

Dennis Sanders

One of the things, a questions that I have and I've always been. It's something that I wrestle with. There are those that say that we could have stayed there longer with kind of the amount of people that we have. And there is a part of me that I don't know about the numbers people say more or less, but that sees the necessity of that. But I also know that's also a hard thing to tell the American people, whether it's right or wrong. It just seems like it's a difficult thing.

Dennis Sanders

Could we have stayed or was this a situation where we just had to go?

Andrew Donaldson

Sure, we could have stayed? We talked about the last time we talked about this or not, the hard question that nobody wants to talk about because no politician would ever say this out loud. Is it worth ten to 20 American lives a year to stay in Afghanistan? Because that's about what we were doing now, the last 18 months, two years since President Trump made the deal they talk about? Well, that's a false fantasy that there have been zero casualties because we know the Taliban had pulled back and they were keeping their powder dry because they were preparing for the summer offensive and exactly what happened happened.

Andrew Donaldson

They were just waiting so they could take over the country. So that's kind of a false thing. There's no point discussing that. But prior to that, ten to 20 guys a year was the average of what we were losing over there. And remember, your one car bomb or one aircraft going down to double or tripling that number at any time. So the question was, what we were doing in Afghanistan, whatever we were attaining, was it worth ten to 20 American lives? That's a hard question. That's a brutal, brutal question.

Andrew Donaldson

The problem is it's not a clean question because we had a government in Afghanistan that was propped up, that was a government named only because of the corruption issues, not not in any small measure by our own design, because of the way we had been popping them up. We had a system where it was very monetarily profitable for a whole lot of powerful people to keep this thing going. There was a lot of again, I hate to keep coming back to guilt, but there's a lot of dirty American stuff all over this thing that really makes it icky to say it's worth ten to 20 American service members life to keep it going.

Andrew Donaldson

Now, if you take it from the humanitarian side and presented that way, is it worth millions of women's rights? Ten to 20 American service members? That's a different equation for people. Is it worth keeping terrorism, having an anal to hammer terrorism that are otherwise hard to find in the world. And when we're there, we at least know where they will concentrate and try to hit us. That's an anal for the hammer of the US military, which otherwise would have a hard time finding those kind of people.

Andrew Donaldson

That's an argument people will entertain. That's worth ten to 20 American lives, ten to 20 American lives for a corrupt government that wasn't going to stand on its own without our help. That's such an ugly thing to even ask. People don't want to talk about it. It's like we're not going to sacrifice Americans for corruption. And that's the argument you're hearing now. It's like, well, as corrupt is going to AIL anyway, there's no way it was worth it. But remember that's a little bit of a hindsight thing.

Andrew Donaldson

Could we have done something to lessen the corruption? Could we have cut down on the money, the river of money that we have dumped into that country that we now know as for not could we have fixed those things? And then your equation is it worked ten to 20 American laws for the humanitarian reasons, for the human rights issues, for the

geopolitical strategy of keeping places like Pakistan, which has been the problem in Afghanistan all along. That's an adult conversation we just don't want to have for some reason.

Andrew Donaldson

I that's the conversation for that with the corruption, 20 years of mess, people just don't want to hear it and they don't think in American life is worth those things. I don't think they're wrong in that assessment. By the way. I just know that you're pushing too high up a mountain to try to sell that to the American people. When you have that much ugly around. What is basically a good question of what about the people of Afghanistan? They're just buried in all the bad things, unfortunately, and they're going to pay the price for it again.

Dennis Sanders

What do you think about the I guess one of the things that I've been curious about is the role of leadership all around and wrote another article actually about the Coronavirus and the vaccines with President Eisenhower. And what I found fascinating in that article was Eisenhower. Really, I think try to explain the situation, what was going on here's, how we're handling this. And it seems to me these days, and I don't want to put this just on Biden. I think it's it's kind of found throughout leadership that we don't have people that can sit down and say, here's the deal.

Dennis Sanders

This is what's important. This is what we need to do. We don't have that anymore. So I guess I'm wondering, why is that? Do you agree that there was some problem with leadership all around? Political, military, all of it?

Andrew Donaldson

Yes. Because everything rises and falls on leadership. So if stuff is messed up in the first place, you look is the leadership. It's so common sense that we have to explain it to people. It's ridiculous. If things are messed up in your home, it's because you got a leadership problem in your home and things are messed up in your Rotary club or your

school board or your Church or your synagogue or whatever organization that involves more than two or three people. If it ain't working right, it's because there's no leadership to make it work right.

Andrew Donaldson

This is just how human nature works. So when you're talking about a country of 330,000,000 people that versus what we have. Yeah. Everything rises and falls on leadership because it is not easy to get a pluralistic society of 330,000,000 people in a democratically representative government to do anything. It's hard. The leadership issue, the reason I used I did, you know, I don't know that you'd find much more of a revered figure just because of his World War Two service and the way he governed. You know, the reason Ike could talk to people like that is because he was Eisen how he built up that reputation.

Andrew Donaldson

And the reason I brought up the vaccine thing is they botched that roll out of the polio vaccine so bad they actually had accidentally put the live virus in what was supposed to be the vaccine. And they killed people, kill children. So Eisenhower coming out and saying this was a mistake. You know, you had to have an Eisenhower to talk that thing back down. The problem is we don't have anybody with that kind of cache in modern American politics that can do something like that. I can't think of one.

Andrew Donaldson

Maybe somebody else can point one out. But I don't think we have one. But the reason we don't have one is not just because there aren't great leaders out there. The reason we don't have one out there is because for the last I'm 41 years old. So I'll just talk the politics that I know in my lifetime in the last 40 years of American politics, politics is geared towards don't give me the leader that will give me what I want. We can go see it up with all kinds of fancy language.

Andrew Donaldson

But that's what it is is I want a leader that will get my side what I want. And sometimes and you can call me Pollyannish, which people on Twitter do all the time when I get on this ramp. But it's just true. You need people that can actually run the government and lead and handle crises. And sometimes the person that can give you your political favorite things is not the right person for that. And we're finding that out in a hurry when we have this crisis with things like COVID, and again with Afghanistan, where we had two Democrat and two Republican presidents.

Andrew Donaldson

So it's a bipartisan, as it could possibly be with Afghanistan, a George W. Bush, Donald Trump or both Republicans. Granted very different kind of Republicans. That's another podcast for another day. You had President Obama and President on the Democratic side. It was a bipartisan failure. But we want leaders that just want to do political leadership and not actually do run the government leadership. Now the argument to that is people will say, Well, the government is too big for any one person to make difference. How did that happen?

Andrew Donaldson

We didn't get any leaders anywhere along the line is to rein it in or to do anything different. It's all going to come back to we get the leaders we deserve because deserve the ugly side of deserve. Nobody wants to talk about talk about things like guilt. The ugly side of deserve is usually what you deserve is just the things you tolerate. You didn't actively decide, but you tolerated it until it grew into whatever actually happened. So yes, you still deserve it. We have actively tolerated not having good leadership in our government.

Andrew Donaldson

We fostered it. We allowed it to continue. So now we got to deal with it because we don't have good leaders. And when you're looking ahead going into an election year, I don't see any really good leaders in the pipeline coming. Let's be honest here. The last couple of elections have all been. The pitch has always been lesser of two evils, right? You could argue that the last two presidents we've had, President Trump and President Biden were elected more to vote against the other person than for themselves.

Andrew Donaldson

The polling data tells us Trump got elected because Hillary Clinton was not the most popular person in the world. You could argue Joe Biden was elected because a lot of people were just really tired of Donald Trump. I think we're going to do more elections of folks that, you know, against than four. And that speaks to a lack of leadership, if anything else is, if all we're doing is the lesser two evils election after election, after election, you've got a leadership void. And whose fault is it?

Andrew Donaldson

It's our fault that won't sell any clicks. That won't get magnet T shirts made up. That's just the fact if we got bad leaders because we tolerated and we tolerated it for a long, long time. And I don't know of a good fix to it in the short term, because leaders are made, they're not born. They don't fall out of the sky and I don't see any coming on the horizon. So we've got a mess. At some point. The American people is going to have to decide whether they're going to tolerate it anymore or not.

Dennis Sanders

And something tells me, I think we are going to be tolerating it for quite some time, knowing the people themselves.

Andrew Donaldson

I'm afraid so, because, you know, I love my country. We are a great country. We do so much good historically, but the trajectory that we're on with our leadership and our country is so great that we're surviving and thriving despite this mess, which tells you how great the country is. To be honest. But this is one of those things where folks have got to hit rock bottom themselves before they realize how bad it is and people's quality of life is so good in America. I just don't think they worry about things like good governance, because as long as they got a pretty decent standard of living, they don't really worry about it too much.

Andrew Donaldson

That's why the COVID stuff so messy. It's the first time people's lives have really gotten interrupted on a basic level. We don't have schools, you can't go to the grocery, it shook people up. But what I fear now is instead of going, hey, this is a great time with the COVID to examine how we do government and who's a good leader and who's not a good leader and what government regulations are good and what government regulations aren't good because we just arbitrarily stopped enforcing a bunch of them and the Republic didn't fall.

Andrew Donaldson

So maybe we don't need all that stuff, these sorts of thing instead of doing that. What are we doing now? Well, we're going to school board meetings and throwing stuff at each other over the same old cultural stuff. So I'm pessimistic that we're learning the lesson of the current crisis at hand that goes hand in hand to the after nistan thing. We didn't learn the lesson for 20 years of the crisis at hand, and this was the payment we just made on it and we're going to make another payment in the future.

Andrew Donaldson

I'm afraid it all goes to that leadership thing, and I hate to just rant and rave and harp on it. But if we don't have good governance and we don't have good leaders, the rest of this stuff just does not matter because it's not going to work. I mean, you can still have a good life and kick it down the road until your life's over. But at some point that bad leadership bill is going to come and our kids are going to pay for it. Our grandkids are going to pay for it.

Andrew Donaldson

And because of America's place in the world, the entire world is going to pay for it whether we like it or not.

Dennis Sanders

Kind of related to that with leadership. I'm guessing you did see the video and I cannot remember the person's name, but it was the British MP that spoke in Parliament, and he said a little bit about American leadership, and that leads me to wonder about our allies,

especially NATO allies. What are they thinking? And did we drop the ball on leadership there? And what are the ramifications of that?

Andrew Donaldson

I mispronounced the gentleman's name saw on it's like Tungsten or something like that. Yeah. I saw the speech of the MP, that gentleman who I was not familiar with, but I did look him up after that. He's actually decorated by the US military for his service. He's for real. He's legit. I found that, in fact, I think and we're talking on Twitter about it when it happened. I found it insanely moving. But I also found it infuriating that speech was part of excuse me. That speech was part of what's called Prime Minister Question Time, for folks unfamiliar, just real quick Prime Minister questions or every Wednesday on the East Coast of the United States, it's usually around noon, but it's Wednesday evening over there one.

Andrew Donaldson

It's around noon for them. And it's morning for us. That actual session of Prime Minister questions Boris Johnson was just getting his head kicked in. The Prime Minister of England over the Afghanistan pull out. Remember, this is the Wednesday they had taken Kabul. We had abandoned the embassy on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday where those real was the real ugly parts where the airfield was out of control. This is Wednesday morning in England on English time. This was at the worst of it. And the British Parliament actually censored the President of the United States, which was just a shock right after that speech.

Andrew Donaldson

That speech was part of a long line of speeches denouncing America. But the way he phrased it in the way he said it. And I'm not even going to try to quote a paraphrasing. Everybody should just go look it up. It's about us. I think he spoke for about four and a half minutes. You could tell there was anger under it, but mostly it was just very sorrowful. The tone he took, he was mournful, I think, would be a good description of it. He's a man of character as a soldier.

Andrew Donaldson

He was just offended by the whole thing. He felt like his honor had been impune, which is how a lot of us feel right now because he feels like it's a failure. And it is in a lot of ways, for our closest ally in England, the British people in the British government, the UK, to censor the sitting President of the United States and say, you left us hanging out here. And now we're just stuck. And they were angry because they felt their government had made us completely.

Andrew Donaldson

They felt the British government had left them completely at the whims of the American President was what they were very upset about. And then the American presidents like, we're leaving and they're like, Well, where was the plan at? I didn't think I would live to see that in my lifetime of the British Parliament condemning us like that and be right to do so. In my opinion, I think they have a legitimate grievance in a lot of ways. So we're going to have ramifications to this that people just don't understand.

Andrew Donaldson

The EU now is reviewing how they're going to do security. Nato is in horrific shape, and they were before this happened because a lot of reasons Turkey is absolutely. I'll just use the term, they're a traitor in the midst of NATO. You're not going to have a successful NATO with Turkey in it because they're too cozy with Russia.

Andrew Donaldson

Nato is a mess. Now you've got this on top of it, where you have the splinters to the allies that have kept Europe. And as long as continuous session of peace and the history of the world, Europe always fought before we part. Why do we still have troops in Europe? They didn't fight, and we didn't have anything other than the Cold War that didn't turn into shooting war because America parked itself in the middle and said, We're not going to allow it, because if you do it, you're dealing with us.

Andrew Donaldson

That's the only time of peace Europe has ever had of 70 some years and its history. Those people are always fighting. So for that relationship to be that damaged by something like this, where Europe is reviewing how they do anything. Can we count on the US's Word when they say we're going into a because remember, the Germans were there with us, the Polish were there with us. I can rattle off other countries that we're in Afghanistan solely because we asked them to be there with us.

Andrew Donaldson

So for them to go, we don't know if we can do a military operation with America because we're scared they're going to pull out on the and leave our people in a mess, which is what happened that's catastrophic to the world order. That's catastrophic because the British, they just don't have the projection of power. We do. The Germans have very good the Airbus A 400 that everybody all flying at a couple wonderful airframe. They don't have the logistic capacity like we do. They just don't have it.

Andrew Donaldson

So if we can all work together, you have a lessening of projected power from the quote, unquote good guys in the world when there's not just combat human humanitarian issues. If we have to go into a humanitarian situation, say, hey, we need aircraft to go do this and they're like, Well, how long are you staying? Do they trust what we say? You just don't understand how wide ranging, damaging those relationships are really bad, especially right now where you have an EU that is looking to assert itself as the counterbalance to America what did you just tell all those people that that kind of keep the EU at arms length or friendly with them.

Andrew Donaldson

But we're still closer to America than we are, like England is like the UK is were there. I had a our friend, Ben Harrison, my podcast during the 4 July because we thought it'd be fun. 4 July. Let's talk to a Brit for the 4 July about, you know, and this is one thing he always thought about is like, you got to understand, we keep the EU kind of at arm's length because in a lot of ways, we're closer to America's values and we're closer and allies shifted values.

Andrew Donaldson

Something like this changes that dynamic where they're like, well, the EU is right there, and we can't trust America as much. Does that dynamic start changing a little bit? And those things have wide ranging ramifications that we're not going to understand for probably a couple of years, probably until the next major thing, God forbid, terrorist thing, war thing happens where we need our allies. It's going to be in the back of their mind now, waiting a minute and let's call it what it is now. This is twice in the last five or six years where we've just straight up abandoned people.

Andrew Donaldson

We promised we did it in Syria, in the Levant when we pulled out. That was under Trump, and we've done it now in Afghanistan with the Afghanistan people. Okay. Our word ain't great. We can go back further. You want to talk about what we did the Iraqis the first time we were there where we told them to rise up. And then President GW. Bush said, no, we're not going to come in and support you after all. And they got slaughtered by thousands. America's word in the word in the world is not great right now.

Andrew Donaldson

And it hasn't been for quite a few years. And it's something we need to get cognizant about. And again, back to that term leadership. Our leadership better get a hold of it quickly, because if our word is not good, a lot of other things like projection of power, that depends on our perception of what America is. Those things start suffering a hurry, and we have some really bad actors in the world that would be very, very happy to take advantage of that.

Dennis Sanders

Yeah. I think maybe it was listening to David French somewhere that was talking about the fact that the one thing that America has. And I think what, at least in the past or European, as I've always looked to us for, is capacity. We just have a huge amount of planes and we know how to do logistics. And so that's what they have come to rely on

us for. And so they turn around and say, okay, you're going to help us here and wait. Where are you in that to me does have ramifications down the road.

Andrew Donaldson

And you saw it because in the Biden administration, recently pointed out, look how many people we got out in really hard conditions. Well, yeah, because we have amazing capability and our military folks, I can't get into it. But I was what happened with somebody that was actually there because those are my guys that I know, and that's what I did was our mobility, air transportation. I know what it took. They'll be writing books and papers about that airlift. This is Berlin airlift kind of stuff. Although that was a cargo movement, and this was a people movement, which is a totally different beast.

Andrew Donaldson

It really was historic. What the military accomplished here was amazing. The analogy I've been using for this, though, is just because the firefighters saved a lot of people out of the house doesn't mean we shouldn't discuss why the house burned down in the first place or the fact that there was a lot of destruction that they couldn't prevent and couldn't get out in time before the house burned down. Logistically, we have the capability to do that stuff, but it's also limited, and we saw the limits of that when you put them in a really bad situation and it's I'm glad it ended the way it ended with a slight of casualties that we had.

Andrew Donaldson

All of those were horrible. I still can't believe it wasn't worse than what it was. Whatever deals we made with the Taliban, which, by the way, I would really just to humor me, I would really like the administration to get on the record about what exactly our deals were because they keep talking about them, but they never say what our end of any of those were. And don't tell me it was for them to get the country they already had that nobody's negotiating the country. They already had that.

Andrew Donaldson

I mean, just humor me. Can we just go on the record going to say, no, we're not going to recognize the Taliban. No, we're not going to give them money. And no, we're not going to do this. I would just really like my government to do that, which they're not going to. But I'd really like them to the silence on that getting really, really loud in my opinion, anyway. But logistically, that's what we're talking about. Even with the greatest military the world has ever seen with capabilities that people just can't even get their heads around, you put them in a bad situation.

Andrew Donaldson

They have limits. And when we can't work with our partners effectively, which has started breaking down there where the Brits are like, we're getting out on this day. The Germans are like we're getting out on this day where you have an airfield that isn't secured, there's limits to what we can do, militarily. And those limits as we found out here, as we found out in Vietnam, as we found out in other places, the limits that affect our military being effective are usually diplomatic and political ones that are put upon them.

Andrew Donaldson

And when we put them in a bad situation to not succeed, they don't succeed. If we put them in situations to succeed, they'll do the job, they'll succeed. So again, it comes back to that leadership thing we keep harping on. They're not miracle workers. They're not a get out of jail free card to bad policy. And with the military, if you have bad policy, you usually wind up with a body count. And thankfully, this body count was relatively low to what it could have been is still tragic.

Andrew Donaldson

Those 13 lives at the end of this thing is just tragic. But I think we got very, very fortunate. It wasn't a whole whole lot worse because all you needed was one person to get trigger happy for 5 seconds and that thing explodes like a bomb. Or you know what? I didn't want to talk about this when it happened, but we have videos of planes coming up out of there and shooting flares as they rose a 400. That's completely a defensive system. The pilots don't control that.

Andrew Donaldson

That means somebody painted that aircraft for those. So somebody with some kind of a system was painting it at least practice. Senator, watching those are accidental. This was way more dangerous than TV made it look to be.

Dennis Sanders

Yeah, I remember seeing some pictures I can't remember where, but I don't know if it was America or one of the allies, but I do remember one of the planes taking off and you could see flares coming out.

Andrew Donaldson

It was on a 400. But you don't shoot flares off that low. For example, we had a C 17 had to shoot flares off in Baghdad right after taking off, basically the same. So it started a brush fire that went for two days. There's not a lot of brush, but when you put phosphorous flares off right against the ground, these things happens and it burned for two. They don't do that for no reason because it's dangerous. If they do it, it's for a reason. So this was a lot more dangerous than I think.

Andrew Donaldson

Tv allowed it. And people played it down. And we got everybody out of getting people. The Chinooks from the embassy just scared me to you got to understand those Chinooks. We did not fly those in Iraq during the daytime, in urban areas because they're so easy. They're so susceptible to small arms and ground fire. We only flew them at night because their top speed, like a 120, 130 miles an hour. They're flying 60, 70 miles an hour. Most of the time, you can literally throw rocks on the ground and hit a Chinook if it's going by, they're that low and they're that vulnerable.

Andrew Donaldson

Extortion 17 we talked about earlier. That was a Chinook red wing. That was a Chinook. They're susceptible those things in broad daylight in a small environment like that. I was just that was hard to watch. Now in the history. And those pilots are amazing and deserve all the credit because that was it's so much more dangerous than people will

ever realize what they were doing those shuttle runs out of the embassy and God bless them and they deserve every award and every medal we give them.

Andrew Donaldson

Same with the Blackhawk pilots. Same with the C 17 and 130 drivers that were coming out of Kabul. What our pilots did and then the security people keeping the perimeters. I know it's not straight combat where they're under fire all the time, but it's bravery. It's a lot of guts to do those sorts of operations. And I want to make sure we're criticizing policy and things like that here. We should take a moment and go, that was some gutsy, world class stuff our military pulled off and civilians to.

Andrew Donaldson

There's a lot of diplomatic people on the ground sharing the danger. There's civilian pilots going in. Now, those people deserve all the credit for doing something that really, really mattered when it really, really counted. I.

Dennis Sanders

Would agree. One of the things that I've also wondered is there seems to be I was reading an article, this is from Jeff Greenfield. That kind of made it sound like maybe this is the time that we get to question our role in the world. And you alluded to this earlier. And it's something that I totally agree with is that I think Americans by nature naturally isolationist. And I think sometimes that's by geography, we're bounded by two big oceans. All the other things are way over there.

Dennis Sanders

And there seems to be this desire to just kind of say, we don't want to deal with all this stuff anymore, and we want to kind of just focus inward. Do you sense that? And what are the what do you think could be the result of that kind of inward focus?

Andrew Donaldson

Well, we know from history what the result of that inward focus is bad stuff happens, and eventually the bad stuff will show back up on your doorstep. Now, my libertarian

friends will cringe when I say that because their theory on it is nonaggression policy. But, you know, we've got a couple thousand years of recorded human history that tells us how these things work. In my opinion, my humble but accurate opinion when America isolates from the world, bad stuff happens in the world, that's just a fact for the last hundred plus years.

Andrew Donaldson

Now, I will caveat that with this. I don't know that America is in a particularly healthy place itself right now. The amount and I wrote about this as well is in America that cannot hold its own government accountable, is not going to be able to project power and policy to the rest of the world. I think we got a lot of in house stuff we need to clean up. So I'm not against the theory of it is that we need to just get our own house in order.

Andrew Donaldson

I completely agree. The problem is the rest of the world doesn't stop turning while that's happening. So what are we going to do? I think we will go through a good isolationist phase for the next little bit. I think we've been there mentally for a while, just talking as an American consciousness when people people want to talk about buzzwords like, forever wars, like, I really don't want to be I don't want to be ugly to them. But I was like that's warm blanket child crap. War is the constant peace, the exception in the history of the world.

Andrew Donaldson

It just is. Forever wars. Wars are forever because people are always going to be fighting. Now, if you want to argue, we shouldn't be involved in every single one. I'm sure I'm with you on that. Should we pick our spots? Yes. When we go, should we go with an objective, get in, get out and go home? Absolutely all for. I'm with you. But we kind of live in this Buzzword culture right now. That is the Vanguard on that isolation, a streak. We talk about where they just want to talk about forever wars and let the world figure their own problems out and things like that.

Andrew Donaldson

But that's just not how an integrated world works. We don't want our cheap stuff at Walmart all made in China and then say we don't want to do anything with geopolitics like that doesn't work. Guys, that's not how that works. The world is integrated, whether you like it or not. And an integrated world means integrated conflict, which means we can pretend like nothing's going on in the rest of the world. And we're going to for the next few years. I suspect I strongly suspect, especially with the current foreign policy of the current administration.

Andrew Donaldson

Is that's not even a big? That's just what it is. And not that President Trump was great on the foreign policy front, either. He made some atrocious decisions, but we're just in an isolation. You could argue President Trump was rather isolationist in a lot of ways. I think we're just going to go through this period like this. How does that shake out? How do we get thrown out of that? Historically, something really bad happens. I pray that's not the case, but that's usually how these things go.

Andrew Donaldson

And then our attention will get drawn back to the wider world, whether we like it or not. So as a people, I would say we need to hold our own government accountable. I wrote about it this way after Vietnam. The reason we have such great military is the military sat down, stripped itself down and rebuilt itself from the ground up top to bottom, and remade itself after the lessons of Vietnam. Our government never did that. Our government continued with the same mistakes. We need to have a season where we completely rethink how we do government in America.

Andrew Donaldson

I don't think we're going to, but we need to. If we were to do that, then we would be better prepared for the next thing. Historically, though, what will happen is something really battle happen. And then we'll have to adjust on the fly and try to rise to the occasion, think will rise to the occasion because we're America. That's what we do. But it'll be a lot harder than it needed to be, and a lot worse than it should have been because we aren't going to be properly prepared for, like, 9/11 happened like a Pearl Harbor that happened.

Andrew Donaldson

We're going to get shocked out of it, and then we're going to have to adjust to it. That just seems to be our habit. We don't learn our lessons very well. I wish we did. We're kind of fat, dumb and happy as a country right now, despite the COVID and the economic things. Just generally speaking, most people just want life to go back to normal and not be bothered by these things. At some point, they're going to get bothered. I fear, catastrophically by world events. And then we're going to start this cycle all over again.

Andrew Donaldson

That started the cycle. 9/11 started a cycle. And we're talking like Afghanistan is going to be the end of the cycle. It's really not to the point that it's the end of a cycle. It's really just the start of the next cycle because that's how these world events do, because the world spins in a circle for a reason. It's going to keep going, it's going to keep coming. And I think the standard of living we have gives Americans the privilege to ignore a lot of the problems of the world, and that's what they're going to do.

Andrew Donaldson

And I wish they didn't. But it's just you got to be honest about it.

Dennis Sanders

Well, I think the question I had was about counter terrorism. There has been some talk about I think the phrase is over the horizon, kind of use of drones and some other things. But is that really going to work or or can it?

Andrew Donaldson

Well, let's talk about the phrase. First of all, this is a lovely little buzz word that is come into usage recently "over the horizon." What are they talking about? The United States military has an incredible ability with our drone strikes that somebody sitting in Nevada can push a button and kill anybody in the world. Pretty much the way that happens, though, is you got to know who to push the button on where to send the drone.

Andrew Donaldson

So, the point being, you can have all the drones in the world. But if you don't have the human intel to tell you who to go push the button on, it's not going to matter. How are we going to get human intel with nobody there? Now, let's not be Poly Hanish to use that term again. We're still going to have clandestine people in Afghanistan for the rest of the time. But we don't have the military footprint and the support system like an embassy to run clandestine operations out of how are we going to do human intel?

Andrew Donaldson

We're going to trust the Taliban to give us good human intel on who to kill? Well, that's probably not a great idea, because guess what. Those guys have a nice, long list of folks they would love for us to kill and get all the blame for instead of them doing it right. These are the complicated matters you get into when we don't have a footprint in a place like Afghanistan. I'm not saying we needed to have 100,000 troops there all the time, but part of the reason you needed an embassy and at least a small footprint.

Andrew Donaldson

So you can do things like human intelligence, because now we got to try to run it. It makes it exponentially harder, something that was almost impossible in the first place just to kind of not show it. So drones are great. Special forces are great. You still have to have the intelligence in the foresight to know how to do that. There's no such thing as over the horizon human intelligence. You have to have somebody on the ground talking to somebody knows what's going on to tell you to do that.

Andrew Donaldson

A lot of that stuff is relational. You actually have to have people on the ground. We've made it really, really hard to do those sorts of things to get the good information we need. It's not impossible. But now we're going to be relying on some partners that are very unreliable and trying to get that information. And we already saw what happens when you don't have good information trying to do an air strike with a drone. We just

saw it this week where unfortunately, it appears, reportedly, we had quite a lot of collateral damage and civilian casualties trying to take out a target, which leads you to questions like, well, who gave us that target?

Andrew Donaldson

Who told us that we needed to hit a target? It could have been a completely legitimate I'm not getting into conspiracy theories. You light off a missile in an urban environment. This is the stuff that happens. So you better have the best intelligence you can get. How are we going to get that without us actually, in the country, officially in the country, not just our claim Destin organizations being there. It's a lot harder than it was before. And it was almost impossible before, as it was.

Andrew Donaldson

It's very, very polite speak to say that we're going to handle this with over the horizon drone strikes because the things that make those possible are going to be much, much harder. Now we're still going to be able to do it. But now you're talking about effectiveness as opposed to just making headlines of, hey, we're doing something. Are we actually doing anything that matters? I'm skeptical. I remember we just jerked everybody out of there the last second, too. It's going to take a long time to rebuild the networks.

Andrew Donaldson

We just evacuated everybody. So how long is it going to take us to rebuild networks? We don't even know who's in charge. We don't know who the Taliban power structure. It's going to take years to replace the networks of what you have in Afghanistan before, of at least knowing who the players are, where they are, these sorts of things. When the government says something like, over the horizon, we should always just always have a little bit of skepticism with that and be like, yeah, they're selling us something right now without having a whole lot of substance behind it.

Dennis Sanders

How likely kind of wrapping things up? How likely do you think that we will be back in Afghanistan for some reason? I mean, maybe not tomorrow, but somewhere down the one line.

Andrew Donaldson

Well, we have we have the school of thought of, and I've been reading it everywhere, and I'm sure you've seen it, too. There's a school of thought of, well, whatever happens in Afghanistan is now going to stay in Afghanistan. Well, historically, that's never been true. So I doubt it's going to be true this time. I think it's really not true this time because of the situation on the ground. So let's talk about the situation on the ground in Afghanistan, as we understand it. The Taliban has taken the country for the first time in 20 years.

Andrew Donaldson

But this isn't the same Afghanistan that they ruled. There is nearly twice the population of Afghanistan as it was when they were in charge in 1999. The medium age of Afghanistan is something like 25. It's a really young country. It's a supremely urban country because of all the security things. People came to the cities where there was more security. The old tribal systems are very different. The old tribal systems are pretty much collapsed in the last 10-12 years that the Taliban came out of originally. So they have to figure out how to actually run this country.

Andrew Donaldson

And are they going to be able to consolidate, maintain power? That's number one, number two is we're playing this stupid word game of who is Al Qaeda and who is Taliban? And who is the Hakani networks? Folks, if you can figure out which one of those are which you're better than people for the last 20-30 years because people that are there have trouble just figuring out who is who out of that group. So for our elected leaders, stand and go, oh, we know for a fact that the Hakani network is completely different than no, you don't.

Andrew Donaldson

You have no clue who's who and they switch side often and frequently, and there's a lot of overlap. Be adults. All right. So, yeah, there's a lot of bad people overlapping the quote, unquote new and improved Taliban that we're getting sold by of the world media, not just American media the overseas media is being very gentle on the new Taliban for reasons that I don't fully understand. So there's, yeah, there's terrorist organizations in Afghanistan right now, and at some point they're going to want to start hitting everybody else.

Andrew Donaldson

Their immediate attention looks like it's going to be directed at Kashmir. And the reason we know this is because they're telling us this, especially if you look at overseas media right now. They're openly saying we're going to do something about Kashmir next. Well, now that involves India, Indian, Pakistan, as we know, they've been fighting since pretty much forever over Kashmir, other weapons, and Pakistan has nukes, and India has nukes. We have fostered a great relationship with India over, especially the last 20 years, but especially during the Modi regime.

Andrew Donaldson

India is a great ally of ours. But they're also in a tough spot because they still mostly have Russian stuff that they buy militarily. It's kind of a touchy subject. But if the Taliban and the people that we're being told don't exist in Al Qaeda and other terrorist networks want to take a shot at Kashmir, now you got India and Pakistan involved. The other thing about this is we already mentioned it. The new leader of the Taliban government is already met with the foreign Minister for China in China, we have pictures of this.

Andrew Donaldson

You can Google them right now. He got the treatment where you stand in front of the flags and he got treated as a dignitary. China is going to recognize the Taliban very quickly. Here.

Andrew Donaldson

The reason they're going to do that is because they've already had some terrorist attacks in Pakistan on their infrastructure projects, because Pakistan is that end of the Belt and Road initiative. They've put something like \$60 billion in the Pakistan for that end of the Belt and Road initiative that China needs for their economic feature. Okay, so they're hoping to buy some goodwill to cut down on the terrorist attacks they're getting in Pakistan. Remember, the whole key to Afghanistan has always been Pakistan, but that's something nobody ever wanted to talk about.

Andrew Donaldson

These are all regional players that's going to keep showing up in American news feeds because we know we're in an economic competition with China, India and Pakistan. That thing can light off in any given time. And remember, we're talking about the old Northern Alliance. The fighting is in the north of Afghanistan now that's Tajikistan, Uzbekistan. Now you're dealing with Russia. And Russia is very much not wanting terrorist elements to come up through Afghanistan into their because they've got their own problems right now dealing with Ukraine and other things.

Andrew Donaldson

So you've got a lot of the heavy hitters of the world stage that have basically got themselves tied into Afghanistan for the foreseeable future. Tell me a situation where all of those things we just mentioned just kind of get better on their own over the next 10-12 years because I don't see one. But anyway. So the Taliban, they still got to consolidate the country themselves, which I think they're going to have problems with. I think they're going to have a hard time governing. I think they're going to get a lot of push back when they get pushed back what they're going to do, they're going to start us executing people.

Andrew Donaldson

They might get a full blown rebellion on their hand. There's a lot of questions there. What are these other countries like China, that Turkey and the UAE has already agreed to recognize the Taliban in exchange for running the airport. The UAE is going to be an interesting partner with us. And Qatar is going to be an interesting partner with us because they actually have relations with the Taliban, Qatar, especially because we

have the big base ID that's been the go between the agreement, the President Trump foster that was done in Doha, in Qatar.

Andrew Donaldson

So those are people who are going to rely on trying to deal with this, since we don't have a diplomatic presence there now, this is a lot of movement. Just the last four or five minutes, I've been talking just look at that list. China, India, Pakistan, Russia with us out of the middle. They're like, oh, they're happy that we're out of it. They're happy we're out of the way. But now it's their problem.

Andrew Donaldson

I don't know how much they're really benefiting by bus being out of the way, because now they're going to have to deal with China things. They're going to be able to deal with Afghanistan economically, where the Russians and the Americans failed militarily. They think they're going to succeed economically. And I got news for America, put a lot of economics into Afghanistan, and it didn't work out. So I'm skeptical that that's going to work out well for our Chinese rivals. But we'll see just as a student of history, when you look at that list of people that are involved, the graveyard of empires.

Andrew Donaldson

We're talking about Afghanistan. I don't think that's going to change anytime soon. It's still a crossroads of the world. It's still going to be the hot spot of the world that it's been for hundreds of years. I don't think it's going to change in the future. And just because we're going to pretend like we're not involved now, it doesn't mean we're not going to get involved at some again, because everybody I just mentioned America has a great interest in I don't think we're will invade anytime soon, like we did in 2001 and 2002, I think.

Andrew Donaldson

Well, we have to do some strikes, probably. Well, we do some of that over the horizon stuff we were talking about, probably 510, 20 years from now. Something going to happen. We're going to get involved wouldn't surprise me one bit.

Dennis Sanders

What is the old saying from The Godfather? They keep pulling me out. I keep going out and they keep pulling me back in the pulling me back in Paccino.

Andrew Donaldson

And then he had a diabetic stroke. But, you know, it's just amazing to me with this stuff. And you're a little bit older than me. So you tell me just the older you get. And being kind of a student of history, history does repeat, but it rhymes. There's some ramen to this. I got shocked. Somebody pointed out, did you know the original Sherlock Holmes? The reason he met Watson was Watson was on leave from Afghanistan! That's in the 1890s.

Dennis Sanders

I know you kind of wild. Yeah, because the modern version of Sherlock, of course, thing in Afghanistan, but that was that was the tie. Was that Watson was in Afghanistan in the 1890. So, yes, it's been around for a while.

Andrew Donaldson

And I'll throw you this one out, too. And I think it was Kyle Orton, who I followed for foreign policy stuff. He's based out of England. He had it on Twitter. I think the last night or this morning, I don't sleep. A lot of these things kind of run together for me. He pointed it out. He goes, hey, he's like, remember the Taliban and Al Qaeda and the Hikari network and all these terrorist folks? Remember they're running propaganda, too, because he's like, they're already mouthing off about one to attack Kasmir where he's like, Have you heard him say a thing about the Uighryrs in China?

Andrew Donaldson

Oh, well, China's got this deal with Pakistan. I wonder why they won't talk about their Muslim brothers and captivity. You know, there's there's always an angle to all this stuff.

And if you follow the money, even with hard bore, radical religious terrorists, follow the money, you usually start getting to the truth. I thought that was an excellent point when we talk about things going on down the road. Yeah, they have an ideology, but it ain't just an ideology. They got an agenda as well. So good luck solving that problem, China.

Andrew Donaldson

Have fun with that one. I don't know how much they're going to be able to buy off terrorism. Already had a train attack here back in the spring that killed some Chinese contractors in Pakistan, which is why they're kind of trying to be booty body. Now this is going to be a hot mess for the rest of our lifetimes. I want to probably longer. It's going to be morbidly fascinating to watch. It's good that we're not going to have our own troops on the ground there.

Andrew Donaldson

But do I have any confidence that American troops? Have we seen the last American die in Afghanistan? I would not bet money against it. I would say at some point, there's going to be some kind of us involved there again at some point in the future, just because of all those things I mentioned, there's no way the world is going to be able to ever ignore it. .

Dennis Sanders

I agree. I think as much as America wants to tune out the world, it's always there life is still going on. At some point, it's going to interrupt our lives again. That may not be now may not even be ten years from now, but it will be at some point.

Andrew Donaldson

The scary part will be when will the knock of the world come to America and America can't respond to it? That's the really scary one. And we're not there yet. Thank God. And I hope we never get there. But what was the old Reagan speech about? If this fails, there's nowhere else to go. You know, if the world can't call on America to help. And I don't mean going to Afghanistan for 20 years and the trillions of dollars and the 2400

lives. I'm not talking about that stuff I'm talking about when it really matters, and they needed us.

Andrew Donaldson

If the world doesn't have America there to help, that's a much, much darker, dangerous world. And I fear that day may be coming if we don't get our own house in order, if we don't get to where we can govern ourselves more effectively, if we can't get our physical house in order, if we can't get our accountability of government, are we going to have investigations into how this Afghanistan pull out happened? Are we going to find out why those decisions are made, why deadlines removed? What was the Taliban deals?

Andrew Donaldson

What did we promise them? What were they promised to us? We can go back to. We don't know all the details of the Trump deal yet because we weren't going to know until it was enacted and then it was changed. I'd still like to know how that all went down, wouldn't you? I think the American people have a right to know those things, but I fear that we're just going to do back to the washing of hands thing while bring that up. We're done. We're out.

Andrew Donaldson

That's going to be the argument. Like, why are we bringing that up? It's over now? Well, because we have a right to know what our government didn't do. And I think our government is going to have a lot of incentive to try to keep us from finding those things out. And a lot of people would rather just go away. And frankly, if this week is anything to show us, it probably will work because we're already back to well worn trenches of cultural warfare and other things, and it didn't even take a full week.

Andrew Donaldson

Not that those things aren't important, but, you know, we only got so much bandwidth and those folks over there, we feel bad for them, but we really don't have time to think about it. That's the default of the American year of our Lord 2021.

Dennis Sanders

And that's probably a good place to end it on that happy note, but thank you.

Andrew Donaldson

And we do a podcast sometime, or we just talk about, like, Bunnies or something because you always throw me the hard topic.

Dennis Sanders

I am all for talking about bunnies. At some point, I'm someone that I've always feel like we need to talk about these issues.

Andrew Donaldson

Sure.

Dennis Sanders

I'm the same one the way things are going. And I'm like you, I don't I see some bad days ahead.

Andrew Donaldson

Yeah. Being a father, my youngest daughter's birthday is today, actually. So she's 14 and she's the youngest. I got 23 to 14. I got two adults and two teenagers. You know, this stuff really weighs on you. Like, what kind of a country? Because before, like when I was in the military, I was just, well, all I got to do is do my duty and history will judge us. And it's not like that now because one, I'm not in the uniform anymore. And two is I have a different perspective on it.

Andrew Donaldson

And I have children. And I'm like, what what have we handed them? Because it's not even what I'm going to give them because they're there. I got two adults now they vote and we've handed it to them now, the generation that's our age, it is what it is. What did we give them? I think there's some soul structuring there that did not get done. And

those things as you get older and especially doing what we do with commentating and writing and these sorts of things. It weighs on me and it's a burden.

Andrew Donaldson

But I would love to just go do food, writing. But I feel a duty to do this stuff. And part of that duty is you have to you have to wrestle this stuff in your own mind, in your own soul to try to put out quality opinions and content about it, because if we don't take the time to really mull these things over as they're going, I think history is going to judge us really, really harsh. So I think it's important, even if we can't do anything but right about it.

Andrew Donaldson

I think we need to at least Lodge our descent or say, hey, there was people in this time period who said, no, this ain't right or yes, this was right, even though everybody else is wrong. I think it's important. So as long as I can do it and people want to listen or read or watch or whatever it is we're doing, I feel a responsibility to keep doing it, even though I'd rather go just talk about food. So you and me, we could sit and talk theology and Church history stuff for hours now.

Andrew Donaldson

I would love to do that. And I look forward to doing that. But I think we have a responsibility to talk about this stuff because somebody's got to and I see dark days ahead and the good people cannot be silent and see the space. And you're one of those my friends. And I appreciate you. And I try to be that myself.

Dennis Sanders

Well, you know, I was reading something recently about Churchill and in the 30s kind of in the lead up towards world war two when he was kind of basically saying that there were storm clouds gathering, we've got to get ready. And a lot of people just kind of ignore them. But this is some crazy war monger. Of course, he was proven correct. But, you know, I guess the thing here is that his words were not shouted into a void, even though at the time it seemed like it.

Dennis Sanders

And I think that that's what you're doing. I hope I'm doing that. At least when something happens, people can rely on those words or go back and maybe hopefully learn and get something right.

Andrew Donaldson

I think it's, you know, let me phrase it this way. I think the people always want to talk about there's this remnant of people. I don't know that there's even a remnant situation. I think it's a situation where there's always a small group of folks that can tell what's going on as it happened. And I want to work really hard to the best my ability to discern, to understand the times and discern what's going on in our world right now as it's happening and not just react to it because we have a reactionary society, social media and the media large.

Andrew Donaldson

It's all reactionary. We can't predict the future. But can we at least do that one more footstep with the light we got of? Well, this next step is this. Let's do that, right. And just try to be just that little inch more forward than just always reactionary of what's the consequences of this? What does historically this mean? We can't predict the future, but we can use usually at least say, well, we took the best path possible, and it takes discernment, and it takes taking that second to step back from whatever is trending and going, okay, does this matter or not?

Andrew Donaldson

And if it does matter what's the audience, I'm trying to reach to get the right message about this thing that matters, because there's a lot of stuff we spent years on that didn't put a single person on an airplane in Kabul. You know what I mean? I hate to be harsh like that. That's just true. There's a lot of things we debate that isn't putting a roof over anybody in Haiti's head right now with hundreds of thousands of people that you can pick anywhere in the world, those are just two on my mind.

Andrew Donaldson

Does anybody talk about that? Haiti had 220,000 people killed a decade ago. Like 220,000 people. Like some of these things don't look at what's going on. Myanmar right now. You can pick anything. The COVID are numb to us. What are we, 700,000 some odd now, close to it now it's 700,000 people, and we don't even. It doesn't register. It's just a number. I think it's important that there's always somebody that's contrarian enough to go. This is a bad time, and we need to just give it at least a glancing notice of, hey, we need to not lose our humanity by just reacting to things all the time because that reaction is an animalistic quality.

Andrew Donaldson

Reason is that higher level of human thought can we reason about what's going on in real time and it's hard and it's ugly and it's messy and you have to put yourself out there to do it because you're going to be wrong a lot of the times, but that's what's got to drive us, because that's how you get the history and the voices in history of people who are trying to make a difference when it happens. They didn't just react to stuff. They were like, hey, I think something Bad's happening here and I think historically this is telling us that this is going to happen next or when you see trends, you can go.

Andrew Donaldson

This trend ends if we're going to school board meetings and throwing chairs at each other. This is not going to get us better schools. I'm just picking something, you know, I can tell you that however you want, but it's been on my heart before the Afghanistan thing. It'll be on my heart next week when we do the 9/11 thing. These things weigh on you. I was on Twitter yesterday. I was like, I don't even know how to deal with the 9/11 thing this year. I don't write about it.

Andrew Donaldson

I don't know how to talk about it. I don't even know what I'm feeling about it. I think the Afghanistan thing is a really wild filter that has kind of thrown off. I think the Afghanistan thing is thrown off by 9/11 meters this year because it already brought it all up, but I don't know how to deal with it. I just don't. It's 20 years that's my whole adult life. I'm 41.

That was a lot of ranting about it. But the point of the matter is, can we discern the times we live in and go from there?

Andrew Donaldson

So anyway, that's enough talk. Sorry.

Dennis Sanders

Okay. Well, thank you again, Andrew, for your perspective on this issue, I really do treasure because I think it's important and we'll be talking to you soon.

Andrew Donaldson

I always will have time for you. I appreciate you. I love your podcast and your writing and any chance I can get to talk to you all do it, my friend.

Dennis Sanders

Alright, take care.

Andrew Donaldson

Thank you, sir.