

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

Christian Science Monitor

## US colonel: Don't believe US statements on progress in Afghanistan

By Dan Murphy

02/07/2012

**Lt. Col. Daniel Davis just finished a year in Afghanistan and says don't believe claims of progress.**

I spent five years covering the Iraq war, and at the end of it I was not inclined to believe anything official spokesmen had to say about Iraq anymore. I heard denials an insurgency was erupting in 2003, watched President Bush's "mission accomplished" moment after Saddam Hussein was captured, and was earnestly told Iraq's insurgency was on its last legs in 2005.

Again and again, the gap between observed reality and official rhetoric was wider than the ocean. I've only taken one reporting trip to Afghanistan, but follow the story from a distance and know many reporters who have lived there for years. Most of them believe, much as the Baghdad press corps did back in the day, that military spokesmen are running an information operation, not a clearing house for facts and honest opinion.

Now a colonel who just finished his tour in Afghanistan is backing that position up, in some of the most candid and critical comments you'll ever read from a serving officer. Many are certain to disagree with Lt. Col. Daniel L. Davis' conclusions in Truth, lies, and Afghanistan. But his argument against continuing the war there is as straight and clear as a tracer bullet, particularly coming from a serving officer.

Davis spent most of last year in Afghanistan working with the Army's Rapid Equipping Force, a job he says took him "into every significant area where our soldiers engage the enemy. Over the course of 12 months, I covered more than 9,000 miles and talked, traveled and patrolled with troops in Kandahar, Kunar, Ghazni, Khost, Paktika, Kunduz, Balkh, Nangarhar and other provinces. What I saw bore no resemblance to rosy official statements by U.S. military leaders about conditions on the ground."

He writes: "I witnessed the absence of success on virtually every level." He also reports low moral among soldiers, doubtful the risks they're taking are doing much good, and incidents of Afghan soldiers trained and equipped by the US working with the Taliban.

The assessment differs sharply with the tone of progress emerging from the top brass. For instance, a press release from the end of January from the US Department of Defense information office begins:

"Almost a month into 2012 -- a year both Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen, the top commander in Afghanistan, called pivotal to operations there -- International Security Assistance Force officials said last year's accomplishments have set the stage for continued success."

But Colonel Davis provides a different assessment from those on the ground. He recounts a conversation in September he held with an Afghan official who serves as a cultural adviser to the US commander in Kunar Province. Davis asked him if Afghan security forces would be able to hold out against the Taliban when US troops withdraw from the province.

"No. They are definitely not capable," the adviser told him. "Already all across this region [many elements of] the security forces have made deals with the Taliban. [The ANSF] won't shoot at the Taliban, and the Taliban won't shoot them."

Davis also echoes John Kerry's famous question to Congress in 1971 after serving in Vietnam: "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?"

"How many more men must die in support of a mission that is not succeeding and behind an array of more than seven years of optimistic statements by US senior leaders in Afghanistan? No one expects our leaders to always have a successful plan. But we do expect — and the men who do the living, fighting and dying deserve — to have our leaders tell us the truth about what's going on."

Colonel Davis, who did a previous combat tour in Afghanistan during 2005-2006 and in Iraq from 2008-2009 was clearly shaken by what he saw this go around. His public statements are unusual in the extreme for a serving officer. In case you missed the link to his piece in the Armed Forces Journal the first time, here it is again.