



In conversation with Terry Waite

Terry Waite on how academics can influence policy making

John:

How can academics help in this process? As a practitioner in reconciliation and peace building, what would you like to see academics such as myself doing to help and support that process?

Terry Waite:

Well academics have got to get themselves in a sense, noted. [LAUGHS] An academic to my mind will be able to provide amongst other things a good, historical framework and context. Politicians would have done better if they had had a better historical understanding.

Look at Afghanistan. You know? Iraq, Syria. All those nations. You know, can you - I can't believe it, I really can't believe it that a person in prominent political position could wipe them off as belonging to the Kingdom of Evil. For goodness sake, what an insult! What an insult, to nations that have a culture and a history that goes back generations. And that is still, that has within them intelligent, able people.

Well now, the academic will provide us with that historical framework. He will, or she will provide us with the framework, and hopefully get the politicians the people are in position of decision making to read what, or to understand what it is they're saying, and that's the problem. Getting it across to them. So the academic has to be a communicator also.

He or she has to be able to communicate to decision makers the results of his research and understanding. Just that for a start might help.