

TRANSCRIPT OF GOVERNANCE UNCOVERED, EPISODE 51

Understanding Ceasefires: A Conversation with Marika Sosnowski

In this episode, we're joined by Marika Sosnowski, a postdoctoral research fellow at Melbourne Law School. Marika and host Ellen Lust discuss Marika's new book "Redefining Ceasefires: Wartime Order and State Building in Syria." The book challenges traditional notions of ceasefires and examines their effects on governance beyond just halting violence.

Marika emphasizes the complexity of ceasefires in Syria, particularly in the context of local governance. She discusses the case of the 2016 nationwide ceasefire and how it affected governance dynamics in different areas in Syria. She mentions that while violence decreased overall, targeted assassinations of key governance figures increased, leading to unexpected consequences for local governance efforts.

The conversation also explores the disconnect between international perspectives on ceasefires and the perspectives of those living in conflict zones. Marika suggests that a human-centered view of ceasefires, focused on the needs and goals of those directly affected, could yield different outcomes.

Overall, the interview sheds light on the multifaceted nature of ceasefires, their impact on governance, and the importance of considering local perspectives and needs when analyzing their effects.

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My name is Marika Sosnowski and I'm a postdoctoral research fellow here at Melbourne Law School.

Thank you. Thank you, Marika, for joining us today. I'm excited to talk to you about your book that just came out from Cambridge University Press. It's entitled *Redefining Ceasefires: Wartime Order and State Building in Syria*, and I think it's a really, really interesting look at ceasefires in a way that we don't usually think about them, right. So you make the case that often we think about ceasefires, in terms of what it does for the conflict, but not very much about what it does for governance and particularly local governance, so I was excited to read the book and and I think it's a really, really, really interesting account. But I want to start with a very basic question, which is what is a ceasefire?

Thanks Ellen, so great to be here. And just because we do that in Australia where we are at the moment, just wanted to acknowledge the traditional custodians here, which is the Wurundjeri people and which the the law school is based. And also I think it's nice because it's, sort of, as we think about who, who this land belonged to and how it was taken, it sort of orients our gaze towards, you know, the people that what we study, how they're affected by these things, like conflict and like state violence. And that's really relevant to the book, this book on ceasefires, which we're talking about today. What is a ceasefire, is actually one of the main questions I try to answer in the book. And I take a bit of a different view to what is generally being seen to be a ceasefire, which

and they've generally been defined around sort of an agreement to stop or halt violence for a period of time. Basically all the, more or less all the existent literature and practitioners sort of see a ceasefire like that. And what I do in this book is try and look a little bit broader. And so I see them more as sort of a codification of a particular military and political state of affairs at any sort of given time throughout a conflict. And then within that space, and I kind of conceptualised that as wartime order, certain things can happen that are broader than just stopping violence and that's where we get to sort of the details of the book, which go into things like local governance, citizenship and property rights, and all sorts of different aspects that ceasefires can affect beyond just halting violence for a certain period of time. Or often, not even doing that, which is what they ought to do, obviously.

Right, no and and I thought that one of the things that you also detail and talk about is differences among ceasefires, right, because I think a lot of times there's some work that distinguishes different types and certain natures of ceasefires, but you sort of have a twofold typology, if you will, one that's about the asymmetric versus symmetrical distribution of power of the signatories at the time of the ceasefire and the other which gets to this question of how detailed is it relatively vague or or sort of detailed text itself. And can you tell us a little bit about why we why we should care about those two dimensions and what they mean?

Sure, this sort of idea of a typology or sort of breaking the idea of ceasefires apart into different types came about, I guess, from thinking more broadly about ceasefires. And then I did an analysis where I read probably over 200 ceasefire agreements, taken from the PA-X database, which is out of Edinburgh University. They have this most amazing sort of compilation of ceasefires and peace agreements, that's such a great resource for academics and other researchers. So what I did, it was twofold, looking at a lot of the cases I have in the book from Syria and then looking at this sort of vast array of ceasefire agreements, it seemed to me that taking these two elements into account, the text of the agreement and the power disparity could give us clues as to what ceasefires might affect if we were looking at ceasefires in this kind of broader way that I propose. And I come to that, those two elements, I guess of the typology well #1 because I guess text is important and I guess it has clues for what calculus of those parties that are negotiating the ceasefire might be. So the basic idea is that if the text of a ceasefire is quite specific and detailed, for example security provisions in a lot of ceasefires like mention specific roads or they mention metres that troops are meant to be distance from one another or things like that, and I my thinking behind that was that if there's a lot of thought and effort that goes into negotiating those specific terms, if the parties to that agreement have sort of relative power disparity, power parity, they're sort of more invested in those terms and kind of holding by those terms. And so vice versa for a lot of the other ones, like a lot of ceasefires have written into them, some sort of monitoring mechanism and that kind of takes centre stage in what the ceasefire is actually all about. It's quite vague textually, apart from this monitoring mechanism and what was happening that I was seeing in quite a lot of conflicts beyond Syria's was these monitoring mechanisms, they can be called a variety of things, but basically they're there to sort of monitor the conflict. They were kind of used as a way to buy time or to roll on to a next agreement that also then often, inevitably, had another monitoring mechanism. And so it was quite a bit of a way to kind of an optical win for the parties I think on a scale of ohh look we've signed a ceasefire aren't we great, but then didn't necessarily do a lot,, or you know parties to the conflict could keep on doing what they were doing before the ceasefire anyway, so it didn't have a lot of direct impact on the ground potentially.

Does it also affect the space under which power is being negotiated or renegotiated during the time of ceasefires? Cause I guess that's how I had understood it, right. You talked a lot about the local

stakeholders, if you will, right, and that they can be tribes, they can be rebels. There's a whole range of actors that come into play. And I was understanding it also that the more detailed the ceasefire is in a sense, it takes some of these issues that can be negotiated and contested off the ground. Is that part of your thinking there or have I, have I interpreted something that you didn't intend?

Yeah, I think it could be. I think it's tricky. I think that's, I mean it's a very embryonic theoretical project I think and it needs a lot more deep case study analysis beyond the case of Syria, which I do in the book to, you know, make it more robust. It depends I guess, what level the ceasefire is happening at as well. So so in the book I talk about local level ceasefires, but then also national level agreements or agreements between different state parties to the Syrian conflict. And so I think the point I'm trying to make is that what those parties are getting out of the ceasefire could be very different to what local parties get out of the ceasefire. And it is hard to kind of predict what those different parties are going to get out of it, but I guess the typology was envisaged as a way where we can start to maybe think about a bit more broadly about what some of those things are like local governance initiatives or smuggling routes or citizenship and property rights and those kind of things.

Right. You're very clear in the book that this is intended to be essentially a theory building exercise right? That you're looking at the case of Syria, I think you add a lot of insights into just how we think about the case itself and what we know about what's taking place. But you also intend it to be a starting point of further work and further discussion, which is why I'm glad that we're having this discussion and getting this out. So you focus on the case of Syria and of course, most listeners know a lot about Syria, or at least have seen the news for the last decade or so. But can you tell us what you see as the most important points to keep in mind when we're thinking about the role of ceasefires and sort of what they mean for local governance?

So the Syrian case, but it's obviously unique. Every conflict is unique, and that's definitely one of the points I make in the book. But I think because of the amount of actors involved in Syria, the complexity of a state regime that won't give up control and never was going to give up control, a lot of dynamics kind of map on to other conflicts like what's happening in Ukraine in some ways. You know, in some ways, not always. And I think broadly speaking, the dynamics in Syria, what I tried to bring out in the book is a little bit it depends what kind of ceasefire we're talking about. So for example, the 2016 nationwide ceasefire cessation of hostilities, I look at that in the book and how that affected local governance dynamics in the southern province of Daraa. And it was actually much more complicated than I first would have thought. And actually, before we talk about that, just to go back, this book came out of a development project I was working on around 2013 that was sort of aimed to support the moderate opposition as it was then called in Syria, developed kind of local governance initiatives, right. And then when we talked to Syrians about how those initiatives were going like courts or like police services, different things like that, local councils they'd all say ohh they were going really well. This was mainly in the North and South of the country. They were going really well until Assad comes over and bombs us and then they all fall apart, so that was the initial setting for the actual PhD that became the book was like thinking, ohh well if we could have a ceasefire, you know, that stopped violence for a period of time, would these local governments initiatives develop further then? And that's basically Zachariah Mampilly talks about that in his book about rebel governance as well. And his assumption was more or less the same as mine at the beginning as like, if there's a ceasefire, violence stops and then local governance can continue, you know, which which is seems logical. Then when I started to look at it in more detail in the South after the 2016 cessation of hostilities what I found, which was quite interesting, I mean lots of different dynamics which we can go into different areas of it, but one thing that happened was for example, the level of overall

violence in the South decreased in accordance with the ceasefire. But what happened was during that overall decrease in violence, targeted assassinations of really important local governance figures increased quite dramatically. So the head of the court was assassinated around that time. People got really skittish because they knew that these assassinations were taking place and so that kind of had a massive effect on local governance in the area and like all sorts of different dynamics between councils, tribes, courts, things like that, and smuggling routes, economic networks, things like that. So, for example, because the targeted assassinations increased, people became a lot more skittish. The border became closed and then smuggling routes were impacted by that. And then the price of things started to go up and all that kind of stuff. So it's hard to draw a direct causal line, but I think there are some things that we can map on to how the ceasefire affected those dynamics? So I think that's really interesting and so far, I mean that was not what Mampilly and others and me included in the beginning were thinking it's like, oh, I see ceasefire, it's good, it's positive, let's have a ceasefire and then everything will be great. Yeah, which wasn't necessarily the case always.

And it's twofold, right? It's because the ceasefire doesn't necessarily mean the cessation of violence. Right. And and it may mean changes in the nature of it or where it moves to, but it doesn't have to be the cessation of it. I think that's the point that you make very clearly and that and that's important. And then, because of that, these spillover or these other sets of effects that come out, and you're right, maybe it's not, it's difficult to sort of fully predict and it's difficult to make a direct causal links to it, but they they all seem to be the sort of part of a dynamic that gets disrupted in a sense, and then reformulated, if you will.

That's exactly right, yeah. I mean the other really good example, I think that's in the book is these reconciliation agreements that were rebranding of local ceasefires or local truces. I mean, there were really strong agreements, you know, they were marketed by the Syrian regime and by Russia, and they were called reconciliation agreements. But actually they were kind of more like strangle agreements or forced agreements that different rebel held communities were forced to sign under massive amount of duress, bombardment, you know, for long periods of time. And then the terms of the agreement was supposedly a choice, but they had actually no choice. If they'd been part of local governance efforts in those areas, Syrians had to then be displaced to Idlib as part under the terms of those agreements that was called the sort of settlement of status project that's still underway in Syria. And under the terms of that that people had to say Ohh can I settle my status that was written specifically into these local ceasefire agreements, you know, if you can settle your status, you know, show up to a security point and we can settle your status. Otherwise you have to be relocated to Idlib and it's supposedly offered this choice. But actually, for so many Syrians, it wasn't a choice at all. And so in the book, I say, you know, this is how ceasefires were very coerced, and reconfigured these rights to citizenship and property that lots of Syrians had that when they were forced not to have by the regime as part of these agreements.

Right. Which is fascinating. And also, incredibly troubling, but also fascinating. If you're thinking about the current trajectory and the current dynamics inside Syria, have things changed since the time of your work? Of their, do you see it as a continuity? How should we understand them?

Hmm, I think that's a really good question. I mean, I've been thinking a lot about the current dynamics based on the deescalation zone agreement, actually. And I I can see, I mean, one of the chapters in the book is dedicated to that, the deescalation zone agreement and between sort of notionally Russia, Iran and Turkey. So the Syrian regime kind of technically wasn't part of that agreement, but it really carved up the country notionally into these four zones of control. Three of them have since been taken over by the regime and Russia, with Russian help. And one of those zones which is effectively Idlib still remains, and I think a lot of the dynamics we see now as part of

the conflict are a direct result of that deescalation zone agreement. Basically, yeah. So I think that agreement has a lot to it, a lot to answer for, basically. Yeah. I mean it sort of froze those lines of control around basically tasked Turkey with some control over parts of northern Syria, which then still manifests today. And Turkey has an interesting relationship with, you know, the interim government elements in the north in the area that it's, you know notionally occupied now and then it also has the tacit relationship with Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham and the salvation government in Idlib as well. And a lot of those were able, I think to be consolidated because of the deescalation zone agreement. Yeah, and a lot of those dynamics came out of that agreement, for sure. I think I mean and definitely though the the fact that the regime was able to retake the other three de escalation zones around 2018, was a direct result of that agreement as well unfortunately. I mean it very much chose which regions of Eastern Ghouta first in terms of a display of power. And then when it went take over the South once again, the South basically surrendered because it had seen how harshly it had treated other rebel held communities. So it felt like, I think the negotiations were based on those prior ceasefire agreements and what had happened in other communities. Yeah, and I mean, and just to say, I guess with the, with the reconciliation agreements and these de-escalation zones, I think the assumption again has been that these agreements stop, stop violence and so in some ways you, I think if we were going off that traditional definition, you would go, oh, they're very successful like they did stop violence actually completely in a lot of these areas. But of course, the the ceasefires themselves were very violent in the way they affected the population. And I think that's important to understand. I think so far the the understanding about ceasefires has been if not positive, then at the very least benign, yeah. So I think it's important to understand how they could have, like, more negative consequences as well.

Yeah, I totally agree. And I think it's the parallel to me has been always thinking about what people used to think about, say, elections, right. They also thought that best to like lead to democracy, worse they'll be neutral, essentially right, and I think a lot of times we don't think that something that seems on its face to be a good thing can actually have negative consequences or at least negative consequences for some, right, because that's the other part of it is to think about the variety or the variation in the implications.

And it's really hard, I think, I mean and you've probably thought about that too. It's hard, I had a conversation with Benedetta Birdie who's head of policy planning at NATO. And her point was, well, we don't want to throw out the baby with the bath water thing. I mean, ceasefires have been around for thousands of years and elections have, you know, been going on in some way, shape or form for a long time as well. So. If we do have this knowledge of, like, yeah, they're not always great, what do we do with that? Yeah. And I'm not. I'm not totally sure I know, I mean, you've probably thought about this a lot as well. I'm not totally sure I know the answer, but I think part of it is that we just need to look more broadly about what these things can affect. So that people, we or whoever can make better choices about going into these things.

Can you say a little bit more about the property rights and the citizenship aspects? I thought I found that very fascinating, and something that on the one hand we may be more inclined to expect that ceasefires would affect local governance, relative power, or who's sitting at the table, who's on the councils, I think that is important to look at, but maybe not as surprising to me as thinking about the property rights or citizenship and these other issues.

So yeah, this is in the book as well, but also right about the settlement of status process in a semi recent article for International Studies Quarterly for those that are interested. And I guess the basic idea is that, you know, Syrians, they're citizens. I mean, all Syrians are citizens of the state. And so when these reconciliation agreements or local ceasefires, settlement of status happens beyond now

these just these agreements as well when Syrians go back to Syria, or areas in the South, for example, with retaken Syrians, had a choice about whether to settle their status or not, they are citizens of this state. But in terms of their settlement or status process that is mandated by the terms of these agreements, they kind of have to call themselves out effectively as being traders to the state, I think that's the way I conceptualise it anyway. And then if they basically if they can't settle their status, if they feel they can't because you know, if they're worried about those things, that's a real worry for Syrians, they go to a security centre, they can be arrested and all that that entails in Syria. So they have to call themselves out effectively as not being politically loyal to the regime. And that effectively means being banished from the state. They'll be deported to Idlib via the green buses that a lot of listeners probably would have seen, you know, in news articles about Syria. As long as the regime is in power, they have no real rights, vis a vis the Syrian state and so that's why I say these agreements are actually, you know, reconfiguring the citizenship rights of many thousands of, hundreds of thousands, actually of Syrians. And to do with property rights, a lot of these communities, particularly around Damascus, but also Homs, a lot of the communities that were held for certain periods of time, like Daraya and old Homs, considered prime real estate by the regime. And so there's lots of dynamics going on because also of issuing property documents and things like that got lost during conflict as well. So there's quite a few dynamics, but I guess in terms of the displacement of those people from these regions, and particularly someone like Daraya, it was mandated by the regime that actually all people from that area had to leave. Some people did stay within regime controlled areas but were displaced. Another camp called In Hadjallah (?) and many were, went to Idlib, but now the area of Daraya is slated for complete redevelopment in a way that citizens from that area cannot afford or go back to, basically because they were seen as being completely disloyal to the regime.

So it's effectively dispossession, yeah.

Complete dispossession from that area and old Homs very similarly. Yeah, so it's it's really very sad that these agreements are the precursor to this complete dispossession of both property and citizenship rights for so many Syrians. I think again, really important why we don't think about these things that are kind of thought of as being positive, and particularly I think in the in the term of reconciliation, I think there is this push to see them as positive because that's often how we see reconciliation as thought of in the West particularly. One of my interlocutors, the Syrian negotiator, has said, you know, he said if there's a ceasefire, you think the devil is coming, you know, so it's a completely different other view of what ceasefires can do and yeah.

What it means? Yeah, like I said, it's fascinating when you think of it, right, from the perspective essentially of those who are living it, not the perspective of those who are writing or pushing it, particularly from the international community, it's a very different thing.

Yeah, exactly. Yeah. And I think that's right, it's really important in terms of practicalities, just to particularly who negotiates ceasefires, what their interest in those ceasefires, can be really different depending on where they're at. You know, like Western mediators have a very different idea, I think of ceasefires and what they have to do, than, say a Syrian from Daraya or from old Homs, yeah.

In a sense, you're turning our attention to the various levels of outcomes or the implications of these ceasefires. What do you see as sort of the next set of questions, either that you've started to explore or that you think are key for us to start to dig in and unpack more? It's sort of similar to what you've done.

I think in the ceasefire vein, I mean, I haven't done any work on it already, but I've been thinking about it and it relates to what we were just talking about it. I have been wondering whether there's some difference between who negotiates ceasefires and I think the point of the ceasefires. So I've been terming them in my, when I think about them in my head, I've been thinking about them as human centred agreements versus sort of violent centred agreements, because I think a lot of ceasefires that are negotiated on that international level by international mediators are kind of focused on the violence element and reducing violence. Whereas a lot of the other ceasefires I see, I don't think they're necessarily have to be local, but they're often more intimately arranged, like for example mothers and sisters and wives of prisoners in Yemen, organised a ceasefire to get their husbands and brothers out of jail, you know? So there was a very human centred reason for negotiating a ceasefire, likewise in different parts of Africa, there's been ceasefires to, you know, be able to access lands for agricultural purposes, or in Afghanistan, there's been ceasefires to allow children to go to school for certain periods of time. Which is, violent is, you know, the reduction of violence is part of that. But I think in the way I'm thinking about it, it's not the primary purpose. And so that's, I guess, where I've been thinking about maybe doing some work next is whether there's there is a difference between these type of ceasefires. I don't like to think about ceasefires as like being more successful than others. That's not like the way I look at it. It's kind of like what are, what do ceasefires do and what they do and what do they affect? Yeah. And so that's quite interesting to me, whether if we shift the focus to something that's more human, are those people getting more of the outcome that they envisage basically.

And you know, when you were speaking earlier, I was thinking a similar thought about the difference between when the international community is particularly invested in it. You're calling it a reduction of violence. I'm almost thinking of it as an end of material resources, right? So so you can make an argument that over time, the international community got exhausted from the Syrian conflict, so it wants to end it and it's nice to think that we want to end it because we want to reduce violence and I think there's definitely an element of that, right. But it's also because it takes a lot of time and resources and energy. And again, that's not the same kind of human centeredness of those who are living the experience and who either want to get their brothers and husbands out of jail, or who want to be able to farm their land, or who want to be able to essentially live a life. And so you would have different points being highlighted and being key when they're thinking through what are acceptable agreements essentially, right.

Sure. I mean we see that a lot in Syria, particularly with everyone's involvement in terms of external states. But you know, the US pivoted completely away from the Syrian opposition as soon as they felt ISIS became a kind of, a threat to them. Material resources were basically withdrawn from support of the peace process to combating ISIS instead, which had direct relationship on what was happening in the conflict for sure. So yeah.

And you actually have a, I think, a very nice description of the frustration from the special envoys, right? But essentially they sort of, one after another like OK, I'm done with this and just sort of basically peeling off from it because, and you also I think, had a very nice description of the of the Syrian regime, where you sort of like in it to a tornado, right where everything sort of gets sucked in. And your argument, I mean, some people may disagree, but your argument is, OK, they were never going to give up power. So put those two things together, that is a position of the Syrian regime and then the increased frustration of basically the international community trying to do something, right. And you can see where we end up with agreements that may not have been about whether or not this is going to leave to the best livelihoods of those who are in Idlib or Daraa, et cetera, but are really about, let's stop this. And that's a very different perspective.

Yeah, yeah. Finding it really interesting at the moment. I mean, I'm not following it super closely, but just looking at what's happening in Ukraine and my understanding is that Zelensky is actually refusing a lot of the offers of ceasefires that Russia is offering. And I think you know, Russia definitely is trying out a lot of the same playbook in Ukraine that it was using in Syria. And it's interesting to see him just be like, no, not not going there, because I think they've obviously learned from that conflict as well. This ceasefire is a ploy, basically. I mean, look. And it was ever thus, like you know, it's not like I'm saying anything new by saying ceasefires, you know, can be just, you know, used deceptively. But I think definitely, well I sense that his awareness about why Russia is like asking for those ceasefires, he thinks, obviously, that that's much more nefarious than than useful. Yeah. Yeah, basically.

If you were to to advise either Zelensky or to advise others, either whether they're the international community trying to lessen violence and even promote human welfare. Or if they're domestic actors on opposition, or, what kind of advice would you give them based on what you've done?

It's a good question, cause I actually a few years ago just about a year before the Taliban retook Kabul, I was contacted by NATO in Afghanistan to offer some advice from the academic work. And I'm, I mean, I'm always really hesitant. I've got mixed feelings about academic translation to policy, but think the biggest finding from the book, which is pretty clear in the book and can be utilised by practitioners, is basically look broadly. Don't think about ceasefires as being only about stopping violence. Think about, think about everything that you can to do with the local level environment or everything that you can to do with what these ceasefires could potentially affect before you make any decisions about these documents. And I guess also the text of these documents does matter in many ways. We're still only starting to think about how these texts specifically matters, not just in terms of what is specifically said, but how that can affect other dynamics. So I think thinking about what those ceasefire agreements actually include is really important as well. So I think they're probably the best kind of practical takeaways that I've got from the research that I've done for the book.

Fantastic. I really appreciate the insights and and you're sharing them. Do you have any other last words, any other last things that you would like us to make sure that we take away and know?

I was only going to mention that part of the research that I did for this project obviously involved interviewing a lot of Syrians. So I think basically it's an advertisement for steep, you know, deep engagement with local interlocutors because out of that work came or what I'm now working on is a lot of stuff on legal identity and life cycle documents, mainly because of like one little line that a Syrian in the South said about that they were registering births, deaths, and marriages still at registry offices in the South and I was like, oh, how are you doing this? Because there's no state there, which then set off many years work subsequently, now funded by the Swedish Research Council, of a lot of work into legal identity documents issued by non-state actors. Lots, obviously in the Syrian context about elsewhere as well, so I think, just really listening, engaging, listening to what people are telling you, because I think often we come as researchers, and particularly Western researchers, into these different environments, having ideas about the questions we want to answer. And I think sometimes it's really great to be guided by people that know a lot more than us about what's happening in their own environment, so yeah, so it's, I think that's exciting and I'm definitely trying to do that with the future work.

No, that's absolutely great advice. I mean, you don't know what we don't know is the first part. And I think that it's combined with the notion of we can some think that something is very important and be determined to answer it, and it may be very important from a theoretical debate in political

science or in other disciplines. But whether or not it actually matters to the people on the ground, can sometimes be a different issue, right? So I think that it's both listening to what insights are surprising that we don't even expect. But also, listening to what people care about, which I think is an undertone throughout your work that I really, really appreciate.

Yeah. Thanks, Ellen. You know, and I think you know this better than most with the great book you've written about research in difficult environments and we've got dear friend and colleague Elizabeth Serkov, who's recently been kidnapped in Iraq. And I mean it, it's really, it's really difficult to do that well, I think. And it's not without risks, I think, but it's really important, I mean, not just necessarily for me as a Western researcher, but I think we can use our privilege you know, I don't have skin in the game and I think it's good to recognise that and to see what can I do with my relative privilege that can help Syrians or whoever in the best way possible, and I mean, I'm sure Elizabeth was doing that when she was in Iraq. And I think it just goes to show that it's a real shame that research in these areas is not without risks. And yeah, it's very affecting for a lot of us, I think, and thinking about what we do.

Again, thank you so much. I really, really appreciate your taking your time. Thanks.

That's great, Ellen. Thank you. Thanks.