

The Last Ambassador

Review: A Spiritual Sequel to *No Other Land*

March 22nd, 2025

The Last Ambassador is a new documentary I recently had the opportunity to screen in advance. The Afghan ambassador in Vienna, Manizha Bakhtari, has found herself in a bizarre situation since the Taliban took over. Despite financial and logistical isolation, Bakhtari is defying the Taliban to continue her fight for the rights of Afghan woman and girls as an ambassador.

Through her 'Daughters' program, she enables secret education to Afghan schoolgirls while organizing political resistance against the Taliban as an ambassador. Under increasingly difficult conditions, she becomes one of the most important international spokespersons for the women of Afghanistan. When this, along with another film that I will review tomorrow, came across, I knew I needed to check them out, but I had no idea what this would really be about. Even when a synopsis is brought to my attention, I try avoiding it to go in fully blind, which may have been the best way to watch this, because this was a genuine surprise. Anyone familiar with this year's documentary Oscar winner for *No Other Land* will be pleasantly surprised here.

One of the biggest challenges documentaries continue to face is having to be a fly on the wall. Sometimes the illusion will fade when the subject material will knowingly acknowledge the camera. Sure, they will do so during the interviews, but when it focuses on everything else, you'd have no idea the people know they are being filmed. It's like the film has the opportunity to give us something raw & unfiltered. Besides the subject material, this is something quite similar to *No Other Land*.

I try not to compare films to others just for the sake of hyping one up, but when it comes to documentaries, it's not always necessary. This one just feels like an avalanche of what *No Other Land* started. We get more information on a subject area than ever before, just when I thought I knew it all. This one feels like it will be even more difficult to find an American distributor due to how much it reveals about America. It's disheartening, maddening, and extremely complex, yet the film is incredibly transparent with its information.

While the film reveals a lot about America's impact on the situation, I couldn't help but feel like there was a strong parallel between the two countries. Some may see it as ironic due to the two countries histories. Politics aside, the film is completely thorough with its research to have viewers on both sides of the aisle understand the situation more and be even more sympathetic to the cause. It's going to be difficult for those who are

fighting back to ever return. I'm just glad to see the people are remaining optimistic and that there are allies they can turn to.

The more viewers become familiar with the name Manizha Bakhtari, the more I can see her becoming a worldwide hero. It's incredible to see her stand up to the Taliban when they outnumber her. She is headstrong in her beliefs, making her the perfect person to follow this story. Her optimism will go on to inspire others. I genuinely hope she wins in the end.

At 80 minutes, some viewers may want more. The film provides a lot of information, but the editing is so well paced that it also reminded me a lot of *No Other Land*. Both films are shot like a thriller. This one focuses a lot on the dialogue from the interviews to the debates between politicians, offering not only some great viewpoints, but allowing us to completely witness what's going on.

Due to how complex the situation is, a longer runtime could have fleshed more of the details out. The film has to consistently focus the direction on new plot points that I often found myself having to remember context from another situation. This is just an overly uneasy situation that the film does a great job at capturing. Personally, I think a longer runtime to flesh out more of these different points would suffice.

Overall, I was completely amazed by the quality of *The Last Ambassador*. It provides so much more context into a situation that happened not that long ago. Its thrilling & informative nature will entice viewers and Manizha Bakhtari will go on to motivate the world. This is a documentary that demands to be seen as soon as you can.

VERDICT: 4.5/5 (Amazing)

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