

Afghanistan's Ghosts: 2006

("Whatever else Happens – we have the Maxim gun and they do not!")

My concern about this analysis, as with all the other experts that I have been looking at in COIN and counter-terror, is based on the fact that the modern analyst's mind, no matter how brilliant, consistently fails to sink deep enough to engage modern Jihadist terror at its core. What do I mean by this? Simply this: 99.999% of the Western analyst's work from a basis wherein their minds are attuned to supposedly rational and secular philosophies, actions, reactions and goals. This will never permit them to come to grips with the Medieval mind of the Jihadist. We think in terms of pressure and coercion that will eventually bring about the semi-rational response we want from them and then we will have victory. Let me speak plainly now: we will never have victory until we change ourselves. You simply cannot defeat that which is based on the hereinafter with prescriptions that would only have effect on those worried about the here and now. Hence the failure or weakness of the modern when he comes up against the Medieval!

Recently, in preparation for a book that I am writing on Afghanistan's military history (has there been any other kind?) I came across some old British reports on how the Afghan warriors appeared and disappeared like 'ghosts;' it struck me that I had heard this before when perusing former Soviet soldiers comments on the Mujihideen specter-like qualities and, now, I recall some Canadian soldiers had made the same comments to the press. Of course these similarities in reports spanning 100 years are worthwhile taking a second look at because they denote a fundamental truth – i.e., that the Afghan fighter, is superb at his ambush and withdrawal tactics. Moreover, these Mujihideen will persist in such fighting even when all looks bleak for even the remotest possibility of victory. In his seminal work, "Among the Afghans," Arthur Bonner noted that their fight against the constant raw fire-power of the Soviets didn't seem to be going anywhere; we have all heard and read the reports of how NATO forces are decimating the Taliban in a similar manner and yet, and yet, they keep coming back. Perhaps it is time that we took a long hard look at the history of that land and its warrior traditions?

This examination should begin with our own pre-conceptions about war and how we expect our foes to behave. For example, we think we have what Larry Cable would call "*the credible capacity to coerce*" the Taliban. But do we? Simply killing them is, evidently, not enough as they do not look at death the way we do. Yet, had we paid more attention to our own history (or if it had been taught properly in our schools instead of the pc nonsense that is shoveled out these days) we could have accessed the hard-earned wisdom that states:

"Any consideration of warfare over the last 200 years, and particularly in the twentieth century, points to a societal capacity to endure that is not to be underestimated. Human resilience, and the

capacity of people bound together by common identity, language, culture, and institutions to adapt and to continue to offer resistance even in the most appalling of circumstances, has been demonstrated not just in the two world wars of the twentieth century but also, and perhaps even more significantly, in other conflicts since 1945. This, and the ability of non-Western societies to survive conditions that would deeply divide democracies, represents a clear indication of the critical importance of moral as opposed to material factors in the conduct of war. Any suggestion that the ability to destroy the capacity to resist on a scale and at a pace that are unprecedented will profoundly alter the will and ability to resist would seem to have little historical basis. At the same time the level of expectation and demand in terms of war being portrayed as clean, swift, minimal in its claim on life and, critically, carrying with it the certainty of victory may well present those who insist upon the efficacy of modern doctrine and weaponry with all but impossible problems of fulfilling wholly unrealistic public expectation.”¹

This is very sobering to consider because it suggests that our pre-conceptions about Afghanistan and the Taliban may well be held in grave error! If this is true, then we need to return to the drawing board and rethink what it is that we want to accomplish and if reality will permit such an accomplishment. I state this because all tactics that work must be founded in reality and they can only maintain this linkage to reality if the strategic thought that compels them is also wedded to reality.

I too, as an historian, have become familiar with ghosts and right now I see many of the same ghosts that haunted the counter-insurgency operations in Vietnam—renewing their practice in Afghanistan; the comparison of Karzai with Ngo Dinh Diem I find ironic and compelling. Both are decent men in their own right yet they have to preside over governments that are deeply flawed with corruption from the outset. Karzai more so than Diem as, at least Diem was able to deal firmly with the lawless warlords such as Bay Vien and his river pirate private army, the Binh Xuyen, right when he was in the process of taking and consolidating his political power—whereas Karzai was forced to take on board a monstrosity arguably worse than the Taliban—the redoubtable Rashid Dostum!² The similarities are so myriad as to make one wonder if we are not all caught up in the COIN version of ‘Groundhog Day?’ i.e., we are going to keep repeating this process until we learn something and get it right! The myth of Sisyphus also comes to mind.

If then things are not quite right where did we go off course and how do we correct it? Let’s begin with some basic questions:

1.) Was it necessary to oust the Taliban in order to get at Al-Qaeda?

- 2.) What was the true strength of the Taliban in the country? How entrenched were they and how would this hold under the stress of being forced out of power?
- 3.) Were they, the Taliban, politically legitimate (how we perceive them is not relevant) in the eyes of most Afghans or even a large minority of Afghans?
- 4.) Was it wise to make deals with the like of the nefarious Rashid Dostum (who switched sides more times than anyone could keep track of during the war with the Soviet Union and after)?
- 5.) If our plans to remove the Taliban from power rested on making unscrupulous warlords our allies – how did we propose to have a truly legitimate Afghan government after the ousting of the Taliban?
- 6.) Is it still necessary to keep the Taliban out of the Afghan political process and if so, why (that we don't like them is not an answer)?
- 7.) How closely wed are the Taliban and Al Qaeda? Can they be 'divorced'?
- 8.) What sorts of deals has Pakistan been making with the tribal leaders along her border with Afghanistan (i.e. Taliban)?
- 9.) Why has Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf accused President Hamid Karzai of not telling the truth about the state of affairs in Afghanistan – particularly as they relate to the Pushtuns and the Taliban?
- 10.) What is the state of the Afghan National Police?
- 11.) What is the balance of forces: i.e., how many policemen for every soldier fighting the insurgency?
- 12.) Is intelligence flowing from the police or to the army, to both, or mainly one as opposed to the other?
- 13.) What is the state of the economy?
- 14.) What is the state of security? Is any area conclusively 'white' after several years of conflict?
- 15.) How many militias exist outside of central government control?
- 16.) How long can the Taliban keep their fight going?
- 17.) How long can we stay there fighting Taliban and possibly other groups—such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's?

For obvious reasons, some of these questions cannot be answered at this time,, yet we need to keep them in mind as we stay involved in Afghanistan.

If we can agree that the back-bone to sound counter-insurgency policy is the political legitimacy of the incumbent government, in this case Hamid Karzai's, what must we do on the ground to ensure that possibility becomes an eventuality?

The rule-book, as penned many years ago by the likes of Sir Robert Thompson, suggests that we look for the following to be in place:

- 1.) ***First principle. The government must have a clear political aim:*** to establish and maintain a free, independent and united country which is politically and economically stable and viable.

2.) **Second principle. The government must function in accordance with the law.** There is a strong temptation in dealing both with terrorism and with guerrilla actions for government forces to act outside the law, the excuses being that the processes of law are too cumbersome, that the normal safeguards in the law for the individual are not designed for an insurgency and that a terrorist deserves to be treated as an outlaw anyway. Not only is this morally wrong, but, over a period, it will create more practical difficulties for a government that it solves. A government which does not act in accordance with the law forfeits the right to be called a government and cannot expect its people to obey the law...Detention is perhaps the most controversial power which a government may exercise. If the power to arrest and detain is clearly laid down within certain limits and the individual is given a full opportunity to appear, represented by counsel, before a tribunal presided over by a judge who advises the government whether or not the case against the detainee is adequate, then there are sufficient safeguards to prevent the power from being used for purely arbitrary arrests....**As a corollary to preventative detention, it should be the firm policy of the government to bring all persons who have committed an actual offence to public trial...Trials in camera, martial law and military tribunals can never be satisfactorily justified. They are in themselves a tacit admission that responsible government has broken down. In the long term, adherence to the law is a great advantage to the government.** It helps to make all officers and civilian officials responsible and accountable for their actions. It puts torture and the shooting of captured terrorists in their proper place: however great the provocation, both are crimes and the latter is murder. It puts the government in a position in which it is represented as a protector of those who are innocent, and it puts terrorists in the position of criminals. This creates the proper psychological attitude in the country as a whole, with the government as the 'cops' and the terrorists as the 'robbers.' If the government does not adhere to the law, then it loses respect and fails to fulfill its contractual obligation to the people as a government. This leads to the situation in which officers and officials cease to be responsible for their actions, with the result that, instead of an insurgency, there is to all intents and purposes a civil war within the country in which neither side can claim to be the government. In such circumstances there is so little difference between the two sides that the people have no reason for choosing to support the government.

I remember saying to General Khanh, then Prime Minister in Vietnam, that when I heard of a case of a peasant suing the government for a buffalo killed by the army during operations and being paid compensation, we would be winning the war. A police constable stopping a general's car and summoning him for a traffic offence would have been too much to hope for

3.) **Third principle. The government must have an overall plan.** This plan must cover not just the security measures and military operations. It must include all political, social, economic, administrative, police and other measures which have a bearing on the insurgency. Above all it must clearly define roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure that there are no gaps in the government's field of action.

It is essential, too, that there should be a proper balance between the military and the civil effort, with complete co-ordination in all fields. Otherwise a situation will arise in which military operations produce no lasting results because they were unsupported by civil follow-up action.

4.) **Fourth principle. The government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas.** This is obviously the case in the build-up phase before the insurgency has started, but it holds equally well during the insurgency. Unless the communist subversive political organization in the towns and villages is broken and eliminated, the insurgent guerrilla units will not be defeated. If the guerrillas can be isolated from the population...then their eventual destruction becomes automatic.

5.) **Fifth principle. In the guerrilla phase of an insurgency, a government must secure its base area first.**

This principle should, to a large extent, be reversed in the build-up phase before the open insurgency starts. Considerable attention should be paid to security and economic measures in the remoter rural areas. If, however, such preventative action fails, priority in respect to security measures should be given to the more highly developed areas of the country. These contain the greatest number of the population and are more vital to the government from the point of view of its communications and the economy of the country. This may mean accepting that the insurgent movement gains control over certain remoter areas and that there will be a degree of infiltration across inaccessible borders (which cannot be prevented anyway at this stage). Such infiltration will initially be limited, in any case, by the absorptive capacity of the areas under insurgent control. But, if the area under the insurgents' control expands and the base of their support broadens, the absorptive capacity will increase. It must therefore be one of the government's aims to limit that capacity by securing its own base areas and working methodically outwards from them. The second advantage in this approach: the more highly developed areas of the country are easier to secure and control and the government will therefore start the campaign with some successes. This instills confidence, which is quite the most important ingredient for further success. A thoroughly methodical approach to the problem, which may appear rather slow, encourages a steam-roller outlook

which provides the people with faith in ultimate victory. By preparing for a long haul, the government may achieve victory quicker than expected. ***By seeking quick military victories in insurgent controlled areas, it will certainly get a long haul for which neither it nor the people may be prepared.***³

Before moving on from our old friend Bob Thompson, I want to consider one last critical area, quite apart from the critical area of intelligence gathering services. This area is one of the most critical when it comes to fighting insurgents: i.e. the police and the balance of forces related to this central issue.

*In Malaya there were basically two government forces: the armed forces and the police. Their approximate strengths have already been mentioned, and it should be noted that the strength of the police force was more than twice that of the armed forces, including the Commonwealth battalions. There was a third organization, the Home Guard, which operated under police control although it was separately recruited and administered. The original police strength at the outbreak of the Emergency was 11,285 all ranks. This was built up to nearly 30,000 regulars plus 30,000 special constables. The latter were used mainly in a defensive role in villages and on estates and mines. As part of the police force there was also established a field force composed of platoons and companies equivalent to very light infantry. The police were therefore able to carry out their normal functions, to provide protection and to undertake semi-military operations requiring units up to company strength. **The armed forces acted in support of the civil power, and this, coupled with the dominance of the police force, resulted in political stability and the continuance of the rule of law throughout the insurgency.***⁴

This golden rule of Thompson's has been taken far too lightly with regard to operations in Afghanistan (and in Iraq too,) but we have seen it work out in reality and its casual dismissal gives any observer of these sorts of conflict cause for concern. In Kenya, the Home Guard (really, an auxiliary police force) along with the Kikuyu Tribal Police accounted for forty-two per cent of all Mau Mau killed during the Emergency there.⁵ One cannot help but suspect that, where the US military gets involved, the very notion of working with police forces is swept out of the way or, at the very most, placed on a remote back-burner. We saw this pattern develop in Vietnam with both Diem and Thompson arguing for greater development of police forces--and with MAAG shooting back--that Thompson should mind his own business while attempting to placate Diem with the notion that the size of Viet Cong operations were already well-beyond the capacity of the police to contain.⁶ Not realizing that by so stating such a development--they were tacitly admitting to effective COIN failure!⁷ In other words, if the job cannot be done

by police, supported by the military in occasional tough situations, then the very foundational structure of the COIN campaign is severely flawed!

While Thompson was one of the first COIN experts to delineate the basic principles, anyone who studies this kind of conflict will come across their mention in various formats. As such, it is no surprise to note that Leroy Thompson (no relation to Sir Robert) created a short list in 2002:

- 1.) ***The Civil power should remain paramount over the military power.***
- 2.) ***The minimum military force possible to accomplish the objective should be used.***
- 3.) ***Action must be taken in a firm and timely manner.***
- 4.) ***Civil and military authorities must co-operate.***⁸

It is significant that one constantly comes across references for the need of the civil power to remain as the pre-eminent authority even above the military. This makes immanent sense because the rule of law must come from the civil authority; and it is this authority that wants political legitimacy to remain within its purview—not transferred to the insurgents via reckless or invasive armed force action against civilians.

Taliban: Beginnings

The very word Taliban--Arabic in origin--is the plural form of 'Talib' and it means 'the seekers.' Basically, they came into being out of Saudi funded religious schools (madresahs) set up along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan. Different Islamic organizations ran the schools but the vast majority of Taliban leaders came from those schools that were run by the JUIP--***Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islami Pakistan***. A particular leading hotbed of Islamic fundamentalism could be found emanating from ***Jamiat-ul-Uloom-al-Islamiyyah***--Mullah Omar's alma mater!⁹

Mullah Mohammed Omar Mujahed:

- 1.) He was (probably still is) the supreme leader of the Taliban.
- 2.) He is a Durani Pushton (either Popalzai [like Hamid Karzai] or Noorzai)
- 3.) He was a religious teacher at a madresah before the Soviet's invaded Afghanistan
- 4.) During the war with the Soviets, he commanded a group of local Mujahideen who held control of an area north of the Kandahar-Chaman highway
- 5.) He lost an eye in his fight against the Soviets
- 6.) After the Soviets had departed and Najibullah's government fell, he returned to the madresah--becoming the head
- 7.) He rapidly became disenchanted and disgusted with the murderous behaviour of his Mujahideen comrades of the war--as they squabbled

for political power causing much suffering and casualties amongst ordinary Afghans.¹⁰

- 8.) He quickly built up a reputation as a modern-day 'Robin Hood'— assisting the poor and downtrodden and dealing out swift justice to those Mujihideen who had been behaving so poorly in his area.¹¹

The Taliban emerged out of the Kandahar area (being largely Durrani Pushtuns) around 1994 approximately. The reason for this was simple enough-- they were 'the-last-man-standing' after months of brutal infighting with the Islamicists vs. the traditionalists. The final result was the virtual elimination of the traditionalist leadership.¹²

In the immediate post-Soviet years, as it would happen (and often does with guerrilla armies that have military success,) the Mujihideen displayed a total lack of any sort of reasonable ability to govern Afghanistan; one group after another would fight for power over Kabul and, as such, the warlords and their associated factions became detested by the Afghan people.¹³

As we now know, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his armed faction Hizbi-I-Islami (Party of God) was not what one would call reasonable and he managed to bring quite a bit more violent misery into the lives of Afghans during these years of post-Soviet chaos. But he was backed quite heavily by ISI (Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence agency,) and he had received considerable funding from the CIA during the era of the Soviet's direct incursion. Obviously, the Pakistani's wanted a certain degree of 'persuasion' over political events that went on in post-war Afghanistan (and I use the word 'post' advisedly here.) Their own strategic interests compelled them to work with a faction that they thought they could more easily control than the other Mujahideen organizations. This made perfectly reasonable sense and it also did to the Americans who deferred to the Pakistanis over this issue. Hekmatyar, however, proved capable only of unleashing violent chaos and his inability to bring this violence under control lead directly to the birth and the rise of the Taliban.¹⁴

The Pakistanis, however, were not fools and they knew their neighbors very well indeed, and, as such, they had also placed considerable support behind the Taliban. So, having arrived with a vengeance on the Afghans political scene in the late summer of 1994, the Taliban began their steady rise to 'national' power (again, I use the word 'national' advisedly when referring to Afghanistan because I am not convinced that they, the various tribes of Afghanistan, truly grasp or even like the concept as we understand it to be in the West.)¹⁵ Here are some notable events along the Taliban's rocky road to power:

- 1.) *The initial group of Taliban that congregated around Mullah Omar was fewer than fifty men***

- 2.) ***The Taliban core group was formed from the Pushton Mujahideen war veterans of the Kandahar area (many had seen actual combat under the leadership of Nabi Mohammadi and his Harakat-I Inqilab-I Islami.***
- 3.) ***The Taliban's first operation of any size was conducted in October of 1994: they captured the southern border town of Spin Buldak.***
- 4.) ***They captured Kandahar in November of 1994.***
- 5.) ***Heart was captured in September of 1995.***
- 6.) ***They captured Mazar-i-Sharif and lost it in 1997. They recaptured it again in August of 1999.***
- 7.) ***Bamiyan (famous for the Buddha that they blew up) was captured in September of 1998.¹⁶***

How is it possible that within five years of their inception, inaugurated with an original group of just under 50 men, that the Taliban were able to control Afghanistan? Well, the short answer is that they had a commitment and substance, backed up by non-corruption, that caused all other squabbling factions in the country to look vain in comparison. They had garnered political, social and religious legitimacy unto themselves in a timely fashion that all other groups had failed to. Here are five of the most critical factors in this remarkable political and military accomplishment:

- 1.) ***They started out by controlling an area where they shared the same ethnicity as the majority: i.e., they were Pushtun.***
- 2.) ***They placed an emphasis on religious piety that appealed to the war-weary Afghan civilian population. They have always presented themselves in fundamentalist religious terms and this has appealed to many Afghans—especially in the countryside. In their early advances, they often were able to avoid combat by carrying the Koran in front of their advancing troops. This was not an act. They kept to their word--their first order of business was always religious. When they came into a newly acquired area, men were forced to attend prayers in mosques, women had to veil themselves, and popular music was banned as un-Islamic!***
- 3.) ***The Taliban, unlike the other Mujahideen groups, also kept to their word in that they remained uncorrupted by power. This piety really appealed to the war-weary in both Kandahar and Kabul.***

4.) Flush with money from Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states, the Taliban were able to buy off opposing commanders as they came into a new area.

5.) The deep and multifaceted levels of support coming from Pakistan were also critical to Taliban success. Some have called the Taliban Pakistan's proxy army in Afghanistan!¹⁷

Afghanistan's Taliban political forces are comprised of three major categories:

- 1.) Talibs and mullahs who graduated from religious schools and seminaries in rural Afghanistan
- 2.) Mullahs and Talibs who took refuge in neighboring countries—such as Pakistan—and attended school there as well.
- 3.) Pakistani students and JUIP (Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Pakistan) activists.¹⁸

The politics of the Taliban's military forces gets a little more intricate but, basically, can be noted as follows:

The Taliban military forces formed another group that was divided into two sections. In 1990 to 1992, when the influence of the non-Pushton factions of the ex-PDPA members and the northern militia dominated, De Hezb-e-Watan led by Najibullah, many of the Pushton officers of the army, particularly the ex-Khalqis, feared losing their position in the power game in the country. The military coup, led by Shahnwaz Tanai against Dr. Najibullah, in 1990 was rooted in this power game among the political forces in Afghanistan. Even though Tanai's coup failed, a large number of the army officers defected to Hekmatyar forces, these officers, including Tanai and his group, were recruited into the Taliban army units. According to an Afghan source, there are over 1,600 ex-Khalqis working with the Taliban. The Taliban also attempted to recruit ex-army officers who were refugees in Pakistan, in particular those who had ethnic Pushton backgrounds. These officers, like Molla Bore Jan, an ex-PDPA officer, became the core of the Taliban army and were familiar with the use of advanced military air and ground machines.

The second part of the Taliban armed forces was comprised of the ex-Mujahideen commanders and personnel who fought the PDPA and the Soviets in Afghanistan. This group had battle experience, but in small scale military operations; therefore they operated under the leadership and guidance of the Pakistani army officers. The ex-Mujahideen groups and commanders became a

significant source of local support for the Taliban in the areas under their control. The majority of this group had neither any source of income nor any professional skills other than fighting. In the past, these groups enjoyed the U.S./Saudi financial support. But with the Soviet withdrawal and collapse of the Najibullah regime, the Mujahideen parties lost this international financial support. Now, working for the Taliban provided them with privileges and a large amount of cash, especially for those commanders who worked for the Taliban opposition and switched sides.

It is ironic for us to now be able to behold the depth of our own involvement in the creation of the Taliban that we now face.

So, it would seem that along with deep tribal roots amongst the Pushtun, the Taliban were also able to garner a certain respectability amongst many other Afghans. This was primarily because they were not corrupt as their rivals, including Rashid Dostum, more certainly were!

Let's go one step further and take a brief look at what lies at the heart of their conflict with us, **even in defending Muslims, such as al-Qaeda, who have turned the Koran on its head (i.e., by making the 'little jihad' [i.e., the fight against physical enemies of this world] the 'big jihad' and the 'great jihad' [i.e., the fight to overcome one's own inner corruption] into the 'little jihad')!**

In taking this further step, let's add into the fundamentals two views of the world that can not be reconciled: i.e., the modern Western secular materialistic view vs. the Medieval God-centered view of the Taliban leadership (and many Muslims). Here's the problem as most succinctly put by the British philosopher Roger Scruton:

What exactly is Western civilization, and what holds it together? Politicians, asked to define what we are fighting for in the "war against terrorism," will always say freedom. But, taken by itself, freedom means the emancipation from constraints, including those constraints which might be needed if a civilization is to endure. If all that Western civilization offers is freedom, then it is a civilization bent on its own destruction. Moreover freedom flaunted in the face of religious prohibitions is an act of aggression, inviting retribution from those whose piety it offends.

*Islamic civilization involves a common religious belief, based on a sacred text whose law may be misapplied but never altered. It defines itself in terms not of freedom but of submission. Islam, **salm**, and salaam—"submission," "peace," and "safety"—all derive from the verb **salima**, whose primary meaning is "to be secure," "unharmless," or "blameless," but which has a derived form meaning*

“to surrender.” The muslim is the one who has surrendered, submitted, and so obtained security. In that complex etymological knot is tied a vision of society and its rewards far different from anything that has prevailed in modern Europe and America.

Western civilization also grew from a common religious belief and a sacred text, and, like Islam, originated in a religious movement among Semitic people—albeit people living under an imperial yoke, for whom submission was already a day-to-day reality. Western civilization has left behind its religious belief and its sacred text, to place its trust not in religious certainties but in open discussion, trial and error, and the ubiquitousness of doubt. But the odd thing is that, while Islamic civilization is riven by conflict, Western civilization seems to have a built-in tendency to equilibrium. Freedoms that Western citizens take for granted are all but unheard of in Islamic countries, and while no Western citizens are fleeing from the West, 70 percent of the world’s refugees are Muslims fleeing from places where their religion is the official doctrine. Moreover, those refugees are all fleeing to the West, recognizing no other place as able to grant the opportunities, freedoms, and personal safety that they despair of finding at home.

Equally odd, however, is the fact that, having arrived in the West, many of these Muslim refugees begin to conceive a hatred of the society by which they find themselves surrounded, and aspire to take revenge against it for some fault so heinous that they can conceive of nothing less than final destruction as the fitting punishment. Odder still is the fact that those Muslims who settle down, integrate, and acquire some kind of loyalty to Western institutions and customs often produce children who, despite being brought up in the West, identify themselves in opposition to it—an opposition so fiercer as again to verge on the desire of annihilation.

A superficial response to these disturbing facts is to put the blame on Islam—to argue, with an undeniable degree of plausibility, that Islam is a medieval fossil, unadapted to modern conditions, and unable to adjust to the enormous social, economic, and demographic changes that have shaken our planet. But then “modern conditions” are precisely those conditions which result from the global outreach of Western technology, Western institutions, and Western conceptions of political freedom. Why blame Islam for rejecting them, when they, in their turn, involve a rejection of the idea on which Islam is founded—the idea of God’s immutable will, revealed once and for all to his Prophet, in the form of an unbreachable and unchangeable code of law?¹⁹

Scruton is basically stating that Western intrusion, not al-Qaeda and their vicious terror crimes, is primarily responsible for making the little jihad the great jihad!

Mullah Omar, when confronted with the choice of turning over al-Qaeda or being thrown out of power made a startling and most illuminating statement to the effect of **“even if all of Afghanistan were destroyed, he would not turn over fellow Muslims to the infidel as this was impermissible under Islam.”** This was almost verbatim the description that Toynbee gave as to the difference between the ‘modern’ man and medieval man—i.e., that medieval man would destroy an entire city on principle whereas modern man would compromise his principles without thinking twice about it (as we witness nearly everyday in Washington, DC, and Ottawa, Ontario)!

The very idea that the intrusion of Western democracy will change the Islamic world seems to many observers, who have looked at this issue as problematic at best, as that you simply cannot reconcile that which will not be reconciled!

What do we do in Afghanistan then? In a nutshell, we go back to the drawing board. Hamid Karzai has a lot of fence-mending to do with the devout Islamic community in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Denying the influence of Pakistan on events in Afghanistan is almost exactly the same error that the United States made when it denied the influence of Laos on South Vietnam’s guerrilla war. America insisted on making it a ‘neutral’ country [on paper]—something it never was!

Truly Afghan/Islamic institutions must be permitted to be brought to the fore by Afghans (not by us.) This means an ANP that is respected and believed in by the Afghans. The Taliban must be studied for fissures and potential factions, watching for leaders who can be weaned away from the al-Qaeda hardliners. This is pretty much what Musharraf has been stating.

¹ H.P. Willmott; *WHEN MEN LOST FAITH IN REASON: Reflections on War and Society in the Twentieth Century*; Westport, Ct.: Praeger Publishers; 2002; pages: 251 – 252.

² General Abdul Rashid Dostum was very much like Bay Vien – in that he switched sides, along with his militia, whenever it has appeared most profitable to do so. Neamatollah Nojumi was one of many authors who noted this in his book *THE RISE OF THE TALIBAN IN AFGHANISTAN: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region*; New York: Palgrave, 2002; page: 18.

³ Sir Robert Thompson; *DEFEATING COMMUNIST INSURGENCY: Experiences From Malaya and Vietnam*; London: Chatto & Windus, 1966; pages: 50 – 58.

⁴ *Ibid.* page: 103

⁵ Leroy Thompson; *THE COUNTER-INSURGENCY MANUAL*; London: Greenhill Books, 2002; page: 72.

⁶ For anyone interested in pursuing a study of the history of this debate, “Soldiers vs. Policemen,” – I can provide considerable documentation gleaned from declassified State Department documents.

⁷ I have had students in Iraq telling me that virtually the same skewed logic is hard at work, yet again, all these years later! US policemen have been training Iraqis, and have been impressed with their courage and the inroads they were making with their fellow countrymen, but that the resources simply were not there to

expand these police-building programs to anywhere near the balance of forces that Thompson had demonstrated would work best.

⁸ Leroy Thompson; *The Counter-Insurgency Manual*; London: Greenhill Books; 2002; page: 17.

⁹ Neamatollah Nojumi; *THE RISE OF THE TALIBAN IN AFGHANISTAN: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the future of the region*; New York: Palgrave, 2002; pages: 119 -120.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; pages: 120 -121

¹¹ Ahmed Rashid; *TALIBAN: Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia*; New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 2000; page: 25.

¹² Ahmed Rashid; *TALIBAN: Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia*; New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 2000; page: 19.

¹³ Robert D. Kaplan; *SOLDIERS OF GOD: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan*; New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 2001; page: xvii

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; pages: xviii - xix

¹⁵ Larry P. Goodson; *AFGHANISTAN'S ENDLESS WAR: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban*; Seattle, Wa.: University of Washington Press, 2001; page: 108.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, page: 108

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; pages: 109 - 110

¹⁸ Neamatollah Nojumi; *THE RISE OF THE TALIBAN IN AFGHANISTAN: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the future of the region*; New York: Palgrave, 2002; pages: 125 - 126

¹⁹ Roger Scruton; *THE WEST AND THE REST: Globalization and the Terrorist Threat*; Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2002; pages: viii – x.