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PANJWAYEE
The Taliban's Pathway to Power

Conflict in the Middle East dominates the news and television. America's Global War on Terror (GWOT) affects current events and politics worldwide dramatically. This two front war is controversial at best. It is the largest and longest war for American troops since Vietnam. The comparisons to the debacle Vietnam abound and some are not without merit as we find shifting strategies, political dispute and stumbling blocks in the US perception coupled with rampant corruption in the Afghan Government. There is also an international tower of Babel in Afghanistan where staff and headquarters from almost every European country are mixed and matched and outnumber the actual combatants. Most commands rotate out with another every six months, each having a different approach than the last. Also in Afghanistan, oddly enough, some of the oppressed peoples seem indifferent as to who lords over them, as someone has always been their master. Some view oppression under a Taliban type regime as preferable than having *infidels*, non-believers in their country, such is the intensity of their beliefs.

The first hurdle for success in any endeavor in Afghanistan is the terrain. Winter movement is difficult from snow and storms. Summer is an unbearable heat that abuses men and equipment alike. The people have naught but the dirt they dig in and some clothing. A well is a lucky item for a village to possess but it still may carry impurities and a health risk on its own. Often the people have worse problems to worry about than whether or not there are armed zealots of their own religion running around with guns.

The terrain also maps out specific ways that forces can travel. History shows them clearly, especially the history of Kandahar which dominates the south and controls traffic and commerce to the north.

A strategic analysis of Afghanistan would mean nothing without taking into consideration the significant factor of the hard heart, the determination of the Islamic fundamentalist fighter. It does not matter where you go in the world you will be very hard pressed to find a people that believe in something more completely than the fundamentalist followers of Islam, "drawing upon a deep reservoir of hatred and a desire for revenge."[\[1\]](#) Few Afghans denounce violent actions of the zealots, many praise or fund them but most tolerate and believe that all things are preordained so in effect no one controls their own destiny.

The atrocities of the Taliban and Al Qaeda are well known, from forbidding children to fly kites and forbidding women education or to be seen in public, "...one of the Taliban's defining policies: banning education for girls and work for women."[\[2\]](#) Also the brutal punishments or sentences willfully and publicly carried out for violations of these policies. Rampant fanaticism is the fuel of the fighter and fervent belief warms him in the winter and thoughts of paradise cool him in the blasting summer sun.

The Panjwayee Valley of the Kandahar Province of Afghanistan holds the key and example for success of the Taliban through its physical make-up, geographical importance, historic and symbolic nature, and the zealous tenacity of the Islamic fundamentalist fighter.

Afghanistan is a part of Southwest Asia, landlocked and rugged. It is dominated by mountain ranges with some elevations over three thousand meters high. It has very little for vegetation and if not for the dozen rivers and seasonal rivers that cut across the dust it would

have no vegetation at all. It is roughly the size of Texas and has an estimated twenty-eight million inhabitants.

Afghanistan is the poster child for the term “Third-world nation” and it is interesting to note that only a few decades ago had trees on thirty-three percent of its soil. Only one or two percent of the land has vegetation now after centuries of foraging, over cutting for fuel and soil fertility decrease. Deforestation and desertification plague a land that is given to drought and natural disasters. Earthquakes and landslides are common throughout the Hindu Kush and flash floods can overtake the low grounds when a downpour does occur.

It is logical that the cities center on the rivers and that the main roads and highways parallel them. The Highways and roads are in desperate shape after years of war. Virtually no railways exist and modernization is in reverse. Cement or mud are the only real building materials of note. The mud is of incredible quality like concrete as the dust and dirt is fine as talcum powder and can be found knee deep like snow. Bricks of this mud are also baked in the sun by the thousands.

Southern Afghanistan has less elevation than the central and eastern regions and is easily accessed in multiple locations from both Iran and Pakistan. It is strategic in its importance and holds the remnants of the Taliban regime that currently numbers between twenty and thirty thousand fighters. Kandahar is the largest city in the south and it is the hub of communications and commerce. Kandahar is second only to Kabul in importance in Afghanistan and comparative in population. Kandahar has always been the capital of the different amalgamations of the Afghan state throughout time until relatively recently.

As Kandahar is the conduit of the south and the south a key to the nation, so also does the city have its own door way. As you follow the Arghandab River southwest of the city it joins with the Dari Rud River on the edge of the Rigaud or Red Desert. The valley in between these two rivers is called Panjwayee. Panjwayee is the “breadbasket” of Kandahar and southern Afghanistan. But don’t let that term fool you, it is still a poor, filthy and scary place.

Structurally speaking, Panjwayee is amazing. It is almost entirely covered with interlocking villages. Thousands of mud walls surround countless courtyards, fields and irrigation ditches. Acres upon acres of grapes, marijuana, corn and pomegranates cover the valley. The grape vineyards are a maze of mud rows that allow the vines to grow down these piled walls. Each vineyard has its own rectangular blockhouse of three-foot thick walls with slots in them, called grapehuts. This extraordinary array of construction has taken place over centuries of hand labor. Most roads are pathways that severely limit vehicle traffic and canalize movement to only the paths direction. The military term for small features such as these is micro-terrain and, to state it plainly, this micro-terrain is advantageous to the insurgency.

The regional political seat of the valley is in the town of Panjwayee and the Panjwayee Bazaar. It is situated on the north end of a ridge called Masum Ghar that sits on the east side of the Arghandab. If you expect something special out of the provincial governors office in Panjwayee, don’t. Uniformed officers mill about a dirt courtyard and cement building. It has a steel sign and is painted white but otherwise looks like any other building in town. It is, however, conveniently located outside the protective gate of the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) Forward Operating Base (FOB) Masum Ghar.

Highway 632 comes into Panjwayee Bazaar and is in good condition because ISAF has grown tired of roadside Improvised Explosive Devices (IED’s) and keeps it paved to deter their easy emplacement. South of Panjwayee bazaar is a road known as Route Fosters

and it is the only real road leading deeper into the valley. Just off of Fosters juts a pointed hill that commands much of southern Panjwayee valley. This lone hill is named Sperwan Ghar and is the last ISAF combat outpost into the area. A little further still is a razorback hill called Zangabar Ghar. Foster's itself is engulfed in the Taliban mud held compounds of the villages around and westward from Zangabar Ghar. These are Zangabad (1), Zangabad (2), Talikan (1), Talikan (2) and Mushan. Multiple mud villages surround the larger ones with homes along water ditches and fields just beyond. After these villages the Arghandab and the Dari Rud pinch the valley off in the west where they join and run off to the Helmand River, the largest river in the south.

The majestic and deadly Rigaud or Red Desert extends south from the Dari Rud all the way to Pakistan. It only takes a couple days overland drive for hearty individuals by truck to cross the international boundary.

The micro-terrain is the finest guerrilla environment imaginable. The grapehuts become bunkers that can withstand even anti-tank rounds; the mud walls reduce artillery shell burst effectiveness down to a few feet. Ingress and egress are fully facilitated by the endless 'ratlines' of walled irrigation trenches and paths. Mounted movement is virtually impossible save for motorcycle, bicycle, camel or donkey.

The crops and especially the marijuana fields do not offer the same protection from direct and indirect fires as the mudded grape vineyards but the leafy weed hides all within two or three steps into the pungent smelling plants. An army could disappear into the greenery in moments.

The enemy tactics that have allowed them to exploit this valley hinge almost solely on the terrain. IED's are placed on the main supply routes (MSR), Highway 632, Route Fosters and further south on Route Lake Effect, which parallels the southeastern boundary of the valley along the ridgeline called Khyber Ghar.

The ISAF outposts are located on the high ground, dug in, wired, sandbagged but send out little or no patrols to deter and disrupt enemy movement. They are similar in some ways to the French at Dien Bien Phu but on the hillsides. Static presence can never be the tool to overpower an enemy, building schools to have them taken over by the Taliban to utilize as command posts and training areas when the construction is done cannot win this cause. Aggressive patrolling and killing the enemy wherever he may move, sleep or hide can be the only answer in battle. The enemy mortars ISAF outposts and destroys a vehicle every few convoys and ISAF just takes it. They dig deeper and their resolve to do nothing becomes more entrenched in the stagnant self-created situation. When ISAF finally mounts offensive operations the enemy's spies know all the times, and maybe the scheme of maneuver as well. The Taliban will fight ferociously for a day or two and then melt away. ISAF will suffer a few casualties, enough to make them feel they beat the enemy out of the area. The Taliban will suffer a few hundred dead and wounded without really skipping a beat in their operations over it.

The views of battle by ISAF and the enemy are diametrically opposed. The Taliban "[t]hey measure success differently: They define death and destruction as achievements in themselves...Adversity is seen as a test of their commitment."^[3] The enemy allows the international forces to roll through the area and a great victory is declared. Media tells of the offensive but the enemy filters back in when the clamor dies down. This was exhibited exactly in this manner for the ISAF Operation Medusa in the Panjaway valley in July and August of 2006.

The broken, corrupt and near useless Afghan Ministry of Defense (MOD) forces, the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) units follow ISAF

around as a little dog, hoping to gather scraps dropped by the big one. They cannot effectively mount any type of operation unilaterally. Their ineptness is what truly allows the enemy forces to reoccupy a given area. Without a competent presence to hold and backfill in the wake of an offensive the enemy will regain freedom of movement every time, they walk right back in.

The enemy moves with weapons hidden because they will not be engaged by ISAF due to their overly restrictive rules of engagement (ROE). If the enemy displays no hostile intent they are not checked. Just 'probably' being enemy will not get them killed if weapons or intent are not positively identified. They have learned to be very careful and limit their night movement as the exceptional technologies in aircraft night vision and precision munitions allow for ridiculous amounts of pinpoint accuracy and heat signature identification in the darkness.

The populace in Panjwayee also gives the Taliban great freedom of movement and anonymity. Local nationals are either cowed into toleration or openly supportive of the enemy. They suffer greatly in the fighting and each time an offensive looms have an exodus and seek refuge in Kandahar. Once the offensive is over, like the Taliban, or with the Taliban, they return.

Kandahar and Panjwayee have held military significance over the millennia. Through Kandahar along the Arghandab River is the only western and southern approach to Kabul and the north. Provincially Kandahar is less harsh for winter and areas like Panjwayee are easier to supply and subsist through the cold months.

A colorful part of Afghanistan is the slurry of ethnic groups. Pashtun, Tajik, Aimak, Uzbek, Hazara, Turkmen, Baluchi, and Pashai are the major tribes of the nation. Their relationships between each other and customary thoughts or practices are a confusing swirl, to some of the Afghani's themselves as well as the outsider. Many of these tribes are groups formed from migrations and invasions past, like the Hazara who are direct descendants of the Mongol invaders. You can readily identify Hazara's from their facial structure. The Pashtuns are the controlling tribe in Kandahar.

The most celebrated military conqueror of the ancient world, the Macedonian Alexander the Great ventured into the uncharted frontier of Afghanistan after defeating Darius III's Persian army of 200,000 in the battle of Guagamela in what is now Iraq. He followed the Helmand River to the Arghandab and conquered Kandahar in 330 B.C. "Kandahar is one of the oldest cities that the world has known, which dates back in history to the time of the epic *Mahabharata* (possibly 3120 BCE Indo-Aryan era)." [4] The ancient city was named *Mundigak* but was renamed Alexandropolis as Alexander had a habit of naming many of his conquests after himself. The name Kandahar is most probably an adaptation of Alexander's name from Pashtun.

Kandahar has long been strategic to Southwest Asia because it controls the main trade route that connects Asia and India with the Middle East and Persia. Both the Achaemenid and Mauryan Empires incorporated the territory after Alexander's exit to see to his affairs from his throne in Babylon. "Only a mutiny by his worn troops, weary of the excessive demands made upon them, prevented Alexander from continuing to campaign farther east." [5] In 323 BC, at the age of 33 he suddenly died of a fever, perhaps even assassinated by poisoning.

Expanding Islam from the middle east came next in line for conquest. "In 674 AD, the Muslim armies reached western Afghanistan, conquering Kandahar by 750 AD. However, between then and 809 AD, the Abbasids (second phase of Muslim Arab conquerors) attempted to conquer Kandahar on several occasions but were defeated by the local Afghans

of the area.”[6] The region finally accepted Islam which would change the social and political dynamics forever.

A Persian group known as the Ghaznavids were the next in the conquest line and they controlled the region for two hundred years until ousted by the Mongol Genghis Khan in the twelfth century. Timur Lang the Turco-Mongol founder of the Timurid Empire followed in 1386. On the heels of Timur “the Lame” came the Moghal Empire who lost Kandahar to the Persians for a generation but gained it back only to lose it and the rest of the territory to another Persian sect. Kandahar remained the capitol of the region and went through several kings and shahs. Amed Shah Durrani is considered the father of modern Kandahar, he was one of the few who was not overthrown or assassinated. He died of old age in the city and is revered to this day as a mighty ruler.

In the nineteenth century the glorious British Empire pushed into Afghanistan and gained the city. The First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-1842) saw the British move up from India, Kashmir and the Khyber pass. The Great Game had begun, the name that has been given to the time when the Russian and British Empires struggled to control Afghanistan as a buffer between the powers but also as control over the overland connection between India and Persia. The Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-1880) marked a withdrawal of the Brits and self-rule returning to the Afghan tribes. Kandahar and the battle there, although won by the British was the key terrain that both sides needed for victory. The British even after securing the battle withdrew leaving Afghanistan to its neutral buffer status it had enjoyed prior to the opening of the Great Game.

The next significant turmoil came for Afghanistan as local communists seized power in 1978. They began to demonstrate a military inability to secure the country against rebels, called the *Mujahideen* and the Soviet Union chose to invade and occupy to support the fledgling communist Afghan government. Over the ten years of Soviet occupation (1979-1989) a full three quarters of all Soviets troops suffered from disease, wounds or were killed in action. The Soviets had 13,833 killed in action to be precise.[7] Soviet operations centered around the air avenues for resupply and then the MSR's. Kandahar and it's airfield became the hub of this movement and yet again in history was the hinge pin of the south. The Mujahideen remained strong and unchecked in the Panjwayee valley which was only entered by a Soviet column once to force the Mujahideen out of the Panjwayee Bazaar after they had secretly infiltrated. “Eventually, the Soviet/DRA combat power made the Mujahideen position untenable. The Mujahideen withdrew in small groups under the cover of darkness. The regime restored the district government in Panjwayee.”[8] This restoration of the provincial seat only secured the Panjwayee Bazaar itself and the Mujahideen still moved freely in the valley.

The Mujahideen were able to mount huge coordinated ambushes on Soviet convoys up to ten-miles in length along Highway One, the main artery to Kandahar from the west and just north of the valley, drawing on large forces hidden in Panjwayee. “Simultaneous attack on the enemy column along its entire depth was perhaps the most decisive element in this ambush. In this case, the Mujahideen had approximately 40 combatants to a kilometer of ambush. This was much denser than usual Mujahideen ambushes and reflected that they were fighting from a green zone [Panjwayee] which could accommodate more combatants.” [9] These forces eventually projected into Kandahar city and with its fall the Russian defeat was marked.

Gul Agha Sherzai controlled Kandahar with the retreat of the Soviets until a radical group of extremist muslims calling themselves Talibs (student) seized Kandahar in 1994. “It was truly an indigenous band of religious students who, seemingly out of nowhere, seized the

southern city...”[10] The Taliban took two more years to secure almost all of Afghanistan under its gruesome and medieval rule. Kandahar again the entrance to power.

Kandahar was returned to the control of Sherzai by the American forces invading in response to the attacks of September 11th, 2001 projected from Afghanistan Islamic fundamentalists onto U.S. soil. With some assistance the country established an Islamic Republic of Afghanistan government with international support and for the most part of a democratic structure.

Currently Taliban forces have occupied key valleys almost unchecked in the south. Panjwayee is one of these. It is easy to see why they believe projecting from Pajaway to Kandahar will give them eventual control over Kabul and all of Afghanistan. They wish to recreate the expulsion of the Soviet Union, a similar force of modern and high tech ability that was ejected in this exact manner.

The strength of any force can often be determined by the will of its fighters. Surely a motivated few can accomplish the same amount as a disheartened mass and often more. This principle is a gilded hope of the insurgency, that out-numbered, out-gunned and out-resourced that they can convince the world their victory is inevitable as demonstrated in their tenacity. Eventually the cause of the west and the legitimate government of Afghanistan will be lost because nothing can match their dogged resolve and *insha Allah*, the will of God.

This resolve does not always have to be a reality in order to serve the ends of the guerrilla. The saying that “perception is reality” applies in the realm of Information Operations (or IO in military speak, a modern age term for propaganda). If an aircraft were to go down in Afghanistan, enemy forces would immediately claim through any media or Internet source that they had shot it down, whether or not they had actually done so. It all becomes an avenue to appear powerful or better yet, more powerful than reality. To anyone who would doubt the resolve of the terrorist factions of the Middle East and their ultimate goal of destruction against the west would only need remember the images and planning necessary to produce a strike as horrific as the events of September 11th, 2001.

Resolve and fanaticism are rooted deep in Islam back to the beginning when a disenfranchised youth formed enough of a religious following to become a warlord. Mohammed may have begun his religious revelations believing they brought good for all of his followers but clearly by his victory over the tribes of Mecca and the fact that he had only lost around two-hundred and fifty followers in eighty-two battles he was overwhelmed by hubris and his revelations served him personally. In one day he had over nine hundred Jews slaughtered. “In the flush of victory, he proceeded to attack the last Jewish tribe in Medina, Banu Qurayzah, which he accused of disloyalty and complicity with the Meccans. This time, mere expulsion and robbery would no longer do. Muhammad offered the men conversion to Islam as an alternative to death; upon their refusal, up to 900 were decapitated at the ditch, in front of their women and children. Torches were lit so that the slaughter could be accomplished in one day.”[11]

He began receiving revelations from Allah allowing his prophet to bend the rules of the revelations he had received before, as when he took an Egyptian Christian for a wife because he desired her. “An Egyptian slave woman by the name of Maryah, and a Christian at that, aroused Muhammad’s passion for nights on end, which provoked a rebellion in the harem. Divine assistance was in the end needed to restore order in the household, with Kuranic verse, Allah approvingly telling Muhammad not to restrain himself...”[12] When his others wives protested he conveniently had a revelation stating that Allah would give him new wives and rid him of the others if they did not listen to the words of God and his holy

prophet. Additionally the rape of captured women became allowable by another holy decree. “Muhammad’s revelations had already sanctioned the rape of captive women...”[13]

Muhammad’s bloodlust that produced for him more power and prestige remained unchecked and with that as an overtone it became a ripple for a religion that would grow to 300 million followers of the modern day. It will always reverberate to varying degrees among them.

Some of these reverberations can be seen in the actions of the Islamic fundamentalist fighter. First of all indoctrination is heavy and immersed. Over 800 madrassas (Islamic schools) are in Pakistan alone, receiving funding from Saudi Arabia and other wealthy Arab nations to crank out the believer warrior. “During the early 1980s General Zia ul-Haq [Pakistan’s dictator] supported madrassas along the Afghan-Pakistan border to serve as recruiting grounds for those who participated in the holy war against the Soviets.”[14] To those who have little or nothing the promise of grandeur in the afterlife is more attainable than the never seen riches of this earth. “In 1997, in Punjab province alone, there were more than 200,000 students at the madrassas, which have supplied tens of thousands of recruits to the Taliban...”[15] Demonizing the west, those who have so much when you have so little is a very easy achievement and easier to accept than shouldering the responsibility and enormous hard work it would take to change such a situation. Afghanistan remains desperate in terms of economy as personal income is around thirty dollars a month for the national average and is the highest in the world for child mortality. Afghanistan is doubtlessly one of the worst places on earth to be born. Many other Islamic countries follow suite but retain a monetary link to rich Islamic brothers who somehow obtain piety by showering money on the less fortunate who will pursue *jihād*. How convenient to wash away sins by the destruction of others.

Foreign fighters also flock to the battlegrounds of Iraq and Afghanistan to prove their dedication to the cause and their god by waging the holy war and upholding the violent thread of their religious extreme. Chechens, Jordanians, Syrians, Saudis, Palestinians, wealthy, poor, all shapes and sizes wish to prove their mettle in combat with the great Satan to gain respect in the here and reward in the hereafter.

Islamic value of life on earth is very low compared to western standards. First of all people are things that die and that is Allah’s will. His is a will that is pre-ordained and cannot be changed. Secondly, life on earth will never be near as splendid as the life after, paradise offers enormous pleasure and riches to martyrs, combatants and true believers. In the Rand study on “Countering Al Qaeda,” Brian Jenkins states in what he calls realistic assumptions in regards to the resolve of the fundamentalist jihadist: “Al Qaeda, its associates, and its successors will fight on. It draws upon a deep reservoir of hatred and a desire for revenge, and U.S. efforts have reduced, not eliminated, its ability to mount significant terrorist operations.”[16]

Hardly would a reasonable person doubt the determination of the fundamentalist fighter but a question of just how much this willpower can translate into kinetic action remains. A look at their adaptation of tactics quickly answers this. Fighters in Afghanistan first drew upon *Mujahideen* lessons learned from the Soviet defeat, using them against U.S. and international forces. When improvised explosive devices (IED’s) and suicide borne IED’s (SVBIED’s), and all their variations, technology showed success in Iraq links of Al Qaeda were establish or re-established to bring the training to the Afghan. The sheer amount of suicide bombers alone is a testament to the mentality and drive in the insurgency. Over nine suicide bombings have taken place in Kandahar in the last two weeks. This is above the gruesome reality that the suicide bomber inflicts damage to the enemy by the commitment of

their body to the ripping blast. A more chilling example of resolve would be impossible. These have been carried on bicycles and motorcycles as well. A *fatwa*, a religious edict, was issued in Kandahar this year declaring 20 civilian deaths is an acceptable loss to obtain just one coalition force casualty.

Strategically, Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda have always believed that the Vietnam example of victory is invaluable to utilize all measures to convince the people of America that their loss in lives is not worth an un-winnable conflict compelling them to overrule political and military decisions. Al Qaeda believes what worked once can work once again.

On the ground fight, Al Qaeda have used the Russian “kill-sack,” a u-shaped ambush in attempt to overpower otherwise superior forces by luring them into a “box canyon” of fires. They have adapted well and have even attempted to stand toe-to-toe with conventional forces in a non-guerrilla manner as seen against the Canadian Battlegroup in Panjwayee during Operation Medusa of July and August of 2006. This however proved to be a mistake as the terrorists were forced to melt away as a guerrilla force should. This was of little matter really as coalition forces cannot cover all the vast real estate of Afghanistan. The fighters often walk right back into an area after their “defeat” and reoccupy their same haunts.

Coalition forces often monitor enemy ICOM radio traffic. The enemy adapts to this by using code words, radio silence or languages that hopefully will not be able to be translated. The enemy also accepts their losses in stride. Large amounts of casualties for the fighters will not slow down their operations or force them to change their plan until they become too great.

The presence of the foreign fighters already mentioned illuminates the inherent determination of the guerrilla force. Traveling hundreds of miles in the Middle East, dodging observation aircraft and braving the harsh elements just to fight the infidel is quite demonstrative of their will. Some foreigners will have their own interpreters with them, as they cannot even speak Dari or Pashtun.

Above the religious mentality the Afghans seem to have a cultural knack built into their society bent on survival. For example Afghani’s have little guilt about betrayal if it puts them on the winning side. It is not dishonor but good judgment. Many families will have a son in the Taliban and one in the Afghan Army. This is a way to hedge their bets so they are prepared for either outcome. In Afghanistan corruption is rampant. ANA officers sell on the black market government fuel or equipment given to them by the coalition. Self-preservation seems the surface quality of a society torn by warfare and quests for power since time immemorial.

The Afghani way of war has come from their social makeup, tribal society, and the forbidding and restrictive terrain of the region, mixed with the binding tie of Islam. Their timeless success in guerrilla warfare is irrefutably based on these. This harsh environment, with its hardened people promotes unconventional warfare, breathes, lives, guerrilla war. There is a typical way for the Afghani to wage war, he is the guerrilla, and he has always been.

The doggedness of the fundamentalist fighter is extraordinary, their resolve enormous. They learn from history, from other theaters other forces and from their own battles. This cornered-badger type of will displayed by the insurgency is by far one of the top reasons they will attempt to exploit the Panjwayee valley in effort to unlock success that will spread throughout the country with the efficiency of leprosy. There is no doubt it will move to another part of the body and surely kill the host; it is only a question of when. “Religious conviction gives them strength, but the armed struggle is what holds them together. Violence

is their *raison d'être*. The enterprise...provides status, power, and psychological satisfaction.”^[17]

The west debates over which action and direction will provide democratic process or at least enough of one in order to allow the international community to step back from Afghanistan and let a legitimate host nation government control its own.

Many problems loom in the path of this goal, corruption, education, economy and infrastructure, health, autonomy and on. “The condition that perhaps more than any other has shaped the political environment of the Muslim world, and the Arab world in particular, is the widespread failure of the post independence political and economic models.”^[18] Nothing threatens the future of Afghanistan as much as a victory in the southern region by the Taliban. Kandahar falls and the dominoes follow. This is proven by strategic location history and propped up by religious zeal. Any strategy of the future will have no success without properly addressing and attempting to resolve them.

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- [12] Ibid, 46.
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