

The Final Round¹

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Darien High School and Glastonbury High School

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Resolved: The U.S. should withdraw all regular combat forces from Afghanistan.

A Note about the Notes

I've reproduced my flow chart for the final round at Glastonbury High School augmented by what I remember from the debate. The notes are limited by how quickly I could write and how well I heard what was said. Others may have slightly different versions. I'm sure the debaters will read them and exclaim, "That's not what I said!" I apologize for any errors, but I hope debaters will appreciate this insight: what a judge hears may not be what they said or wish they had said.

There are two versions of the notes. The one below is chronological, reproducing each speech in the order in which the arguments were made. It shows how the debate was actually presented. The second is formatted to look more like my written flow chart, with each contention "flowed" across the page as the teams argued back and forth. It's close to the way I actually take notes during the debate.

The Final Round

The final round at Glastonbury was between Hamden (Hannah Grigg and Nick Gauthier) on the Affirmative and Hamden (Cassie Webb and John Tebes) on the Negative. The debate was won by the Affirmative.

1) First Affirmative Constructive

- a) Introduction
- b) Statement of the Resolution
- c) Afghanistan ("AF"²) is not a country.
 - i) It is composed of tribes, the forms of a Western nation-state have been pushed on it
 - ii) Our problems there have occurred because we have ignored history
- d) Definitions
 - i) "Regular combat forces" excludes special forces and advisors
 - ii) "withdraw" means to remove within a few years, as advised

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² Defines "AF" as an abbreviation for "Afghanistan."

- e) A1³: Military victory is unobtainable in Afghanistan
 - i) The only one to ever conquer the country was Alexander the Great
 - ii) The country is difficult to conquer because it lends itself to asymmetric warfare
 - iii) There is no real central government, just tribal chiefs.
 - f) A2: Withdrawal will permit stability by other means
 - i) Withdrawal may lead to collapse of the central government
 - ii) This is not necessarily bad
 - iii) It would be better to work through the tribal chiefs
 - (1) AF was ruled this way for thousands of years
 - (2) Stability is best result for US foreign policy interests
- 2) Cross-Ex of First Affirmative**
- a) Do the tribal chiefs want to help stabilize the country? Yes. They are frustrated due to lack of power
 - b) Why did we go into AF in the first place? To get rid of the Taliban
 - c) Isn't the Taliban supported by the tribes? No, the tribal chiefs kept them out
 - d) Who has control of AF? The US military, chiefs, others. Depends on where.
 - e) How would you go about supporting the chiefs? We already have. By contacting them and giving them support.
 - f) Aren't the tribal chiefs anti-US? Yes, some are. But anti-US sentiment would decline if we withdrew. Supporting them would also reduce anti-US sentiment
- 3) First Negative Constructive**
- a) Intro
 - b) Resolution
 - c) We accept the Affirmative definitions
 - d) N1: Withdrawal will further destabilize the region
 - i) Withdrawal admits that we haven't accomplished our objective
 - ii) Al Qaida and other terrorists will try to gain control
 - iii) Need to educate and provide economic aid to show we came for good reasons
 - e) N2: Withdrawal will harm world's image of the US
 - i) We have been unsuccessful since 2001
 - ii) Withdrawal will permit terrorists to conquer the country
 - iii) Our goal should be to help AF and the US
 - f) A1: The US needs its military in AF
 - i) Tribal chiefs will turn to religion and are anti-US
 - ii) Withdrawal is the same as giving Osama bin Laden control
 - g) A2: You cannot stabilize through terrorism
 - i) Need to keep troops to prevent others from asserting control
 - ii) Difficult doesn't mean the US cannot succeed
- 4) Cross-Ex of First Negative**
- a) The US shouldn't leave AF until it has accomplished its mission? Yes
 - b) What is its mission? Neutralize the terrorist threat
 - c) So if it's neutralized, we can leave? We want suitable conditions
 - d) Which are? No rising terrorist power

³ "A1" indicates the Affirmative first contention, "N2" the Negative second contention and so forth.

- e) What about the tribal chiefs and their religious beliefs? The people in power need to be ones we can believe in.
- f) Is AF stable? Not now. We need regular combat forces.
- g) Why will it change? Withdrawal will make it worse.
- h) Will it stabilize if we continue? Yes, if we send more troops.

5) Second Affirmative Constructive

- a) Intro
- b) A1 vs N1 and N2: the Neg. believes in a certain date for victory
 - i) AF is ideal for asymmetric warfare
 - ii) This matches US firepower with familiarity with the terrain and local knowledge
 - (1) This is what defeated the Soviets
 - iii) The US can't win an asymmetric contest
 - (1) We can only lower the cost by bringing the locals on to our side
 - (2) There are hundreds of different tribes in AF
 - iv) Look at Alexander the Great
 - (1) Formed alliances with the tribal chiefs
 - (2) His soldier married local
 - v) Nothing has changed since that time
- c) A2: If the gov't collapses without US power, is it really a gov't?
 - i) The Taliban are terrorists, but get the tribal chiefs to fight them
 - (1) Tribes know who the terrorists are and where they are
 - (2) The US army can't do this
 - ii) This isn't a matter of pride. We should care what others think. We should do what works!

6) Cross-Ex of Second Affirmative

- a) You believe we should rely on the tribal chiefs? Yes.
- b) Do the tribal chiefs all agree with each other? They don't, that's the point. But they do have the power.
- c) Has the US gone into AF for nothing? No. We needed to get rid of the Taliban and we did.
- d) But the Taliban still exists and is a threat? Yes, but they have less power. The US can't prevent them from coming back.
- e) The tribal chiefs can suppress the Taliban? Yes. The tribal chiefs are the only ones who can.
- f) Aren't the tribal chiefs less well armed than the central gov't? The tribal chiefs have men and guns.
- g) Weren't the Soviets in AF during the Cold War? Yes

7) Second Negative Constructive

- a) Intro
- b) Resolution
- c) There are three main disputed points:
 - i) The Aff believes we can use the tribal chiefs and ignore past years of action.
 - (1) This doesn't deal with the problem
 - (2) Many are against the US due to religion and ideology
 - (3) Tribal chiefs themselves are vulnerable to terrorists

- (4) Terrorists could re-take AF
- (5) This is why AF needs a strong central gov't
- (6) Currently Kabul is stabilized, as is northern AF, and elections have been held
- ii) The Soviets provide a false example
 - (1) The Soviet invasion was part of the Cold War
 - (2) The US supported the mujaheddin
 - (3) AF was site of a conflict between two foreign powers
- iii) Aff says Neg wants to wait for victory
 - (1) Neg says victory is needed now
- d) N1: The 80,000 US troops are a major force for stability in AF
 - i) Withdrawal would forfeit the progress made
 - ii) The tribal chiefs would fall to terrorists
- e) N2: Withdrawal admits defeat
 - i) After 9/11, Al Qaida and the Taliban were defeated
 - ii) Withdrawal will lead Europeans and others to see US as weak
 - iii) Our efforts in AF are working
 - iv) Paying the tribal chiefs will just lead to corruption
- 8) Cross-Ex of Second Negative**
 - a) What are the root causes of terrorism in AF? There are many, religious differences, tribal. You can't impose a Western ideology.
 - b) If the cause is religious, how can we hope to stop it? The Afghans want their own gov't. We shouldn't desert them.
 - c) Doesn't terrorism result from the US presence? No, from the Taliban.
 - d) What would be the result of a US pullout? Some areas would fall to the Taliban, some would stay with the gov't in place.
- 9) First Affirmative Rebuttal**
 - a) Intro
 - b) N1: AF is not stable now
 - i) The central gov't is weak. Elections have been postponed to help Karzai
 - ii) AF is getting worse
 - iii) More troops will not help against asymmetric warfare
 - c) N2: Military withdrawal is not turning our back
 - i) We will continue to provide aid
 - (1) E.g. in Somalia the area of Puntland is stable under tribal control
 - ii) Negative is against tribal control
 - (1) We can't impose a different gov't.
 - (2) Tribal control is appropriate the Afghans
 - iii) Other countries will be impressed by our change in strategy
 - (1) The Middle East will see our support of tribal chiefs as respect
 - d) A1: The US has never won a contest with asymmetric warfare
 - i) We need a new approach.
- 10) First Negative Rebuttal**
 - a) Intro
 - b) A1: In C-X the Aff says we should reply on tribal chiefs only
 - i) The tribal chiefs may not support US goals

- ii) The result is likely more corruption
- c) A2: Tribal chiefs have differences among themselves
 - i) They may choose not to help us and do what they want
 - ii) With US forces and aid there will be benefits for AF and the US
- d) N1: Anti-US terrorism will rise again if we withdraw
 - i) This will again pose a major threat to the US
 - ii) There will be no safety and stability
- e) N2: Leaving shows that we did not accomplish our goals
 - i) We have no idea what the tribal chiefs will do if we leave

11) Second Negative Rebuttal

- a) Intro
- b) N1: If we withdraw, the tribal chiefs won't protect Afghans from terrorism
 - i) Al Qaeda and the Taliban caused many deaths in AF
 - ii) Tribal chiefs do not have forces to resist them
 - (1) US aid is not enough
 - iii) Therefore terrorism will grow, and AF will again become a base for global terrorism
- c) N2: If tribal chiefs fail, what will the world think of the US?
 - i) They will blame us
 - (1) This is what helped Osama bin Laden in the 1990s
 - (2) Now he threatens the world
- d) The issue in this debate is how best to protect the Afghan people
 - i) We can't let the Taliban or Al Qaeda take over.
 - ii) The US believes every life is important
 - iii) AF needs US forces to resolve the issue
 - iv) The Neg does not advocate more troops.

12) Second Affirmative Rebuttal

- a) How do we stabilize AF?
 - i) If we stop terrorism, we stop the Taliban
 - ii) The Aff says the root of instability is the Taliban
 - (1) Al Qaeda is helped by the Taliban
 - (2) The opposition in AF supports the Taliban
 - iii) The Taliban is a reflection of anti-Americanism
 - (1) Afghans are fiercely independent
 - (2) E.g. look at their response to the Soviets
 - (3) Now they are responding the same way to the US
 - (4) We are causing the problem
- b) The solution is to let the tribal chiefs rule
 - i) This is how AF has been ruled for thousands of years
 - ii) The tribal chiefs want to govern themselves
 - iii) The existing "democratic" gov't is failing
 - iv) The cause of the failure arises from outside
- c) What if the Afghans don't want our help?
 - i) They want aid and development, not troops
 - ii) Can't justify our armed forces simply by keeping armed forces in AF