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Kandahar Riots Show Rising Resentment in Key Province

Posted By [Jason Ditz](#)

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Who knew that opening fire on a busload of innocent civilians would be such a hot-button issue?

The US was quick to take responsibility today, and NATO was quick to express regrets, but the [attack earlier today on a civilian bus, leaving five civilians dead and 18 others wounded](#), sparking protests and later riots.

Hundreds took to the streets, [chanting “death to America,” burning tires, blocking the main road into town and generally causing a ruckus](#). Certainly such attacks have been a source of consternation for Afghans, but with their alarming regularity the US killing only five civilians in one go is for many just “another day in Afghanistan” and in many parts of the nation would’ve past barely acknowledged.

Rather the fury reflects not only the outrage at yet another civilian massacre, but also the serious resentment among residents of Kandahar, one of the most corrupt cities in the nation and one for which NATO is planning a massive invasion. It is exactly the same [resentment which Karzai attempted to tap into in last weekend’s visit](#).

But it also spells disaster for the June invasion. The Pentagon has made tackling corruption and winning the “hearts and minds” in Kandahar the two centerpieces of the victory. They [have already made it clear that ousting Wali Karzai, one of the driving](#)

[forces behind the corruption, simply isn't happening](#). Now it seems the “hearts and minds” portion isn't going to happen either, as if the US can't avoid killing civilians on the open highway they certainly won't be able to avoid killing far more in a densely populated urban environment.