

**The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif** Research Task  
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1. Afghanistan War – now (inc. Aust and international involvement in the “War on Terror’.)

**A**

The Afghanistan War began in retaliation to the September 11 attacks in 2001 when two commercial planes flown by terrorists crashed into the Twin Towers in America. The president at the time-George W. Bush-launched Operation Enduring Freedom with the British Armed Forces and the Afghan United Front as allies. Australian and Canadian forces were also part of the campaign. Operation Enduring Freedom was initiated with the goal to dismantle all terrorist operations and end all use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base. This included both Al Qaeda-the terrorist group who were responsible for the attacks- and the Taliban regime, an extremist group based in Afghanistan.

In the Taliban’s refusal to give up harbouring Al-Qaeda, Operation Enduring Freedom’s first phase was to deploy forces to Afghanistan and oust the power of Taliban. Even when met with resistance, this became successful in a matter of weeks with the help of a large amount of US air support. The Taliban was stripped of power in Kabul and most of Afghanistan, with many of the Taliban senior leadership fleeing to next door Pakistan.

However, Taliban forces began an insurgency campaign in 2003, and from 2006 onwards, Afghanistan began experiencing an increase in Taliban activity. This led to a further 30,000 soldiers deployed in 2009 at the new president Barack Obama’s behest. This sparked outrage in Australia, whose citizens have since been chafing at the chain of obligation the country has to her allies. The issue of Australian soldiers being involved in the Afghanistan War is now being debated today.

**B**

The link between the Afghanistan War and Encountering Conflict is that of physical conflict. Two parties physically engaging in combat in order for one side to declare dominance over the other. The members of Operation Enduring Freedom would cement their dominance by eliminating the Taliban and Al-Qaeda regimes. The Taliban and Al-Qaeda-in defeating America-would prove themselves to be more dominant and the greater power. Neither side wishes to surrender, or in other words, relinquish their quest for dominance. And so the Afghanistan War will end only when one side wins.

**C**

The Taliban regime is relevant to Mazar-E-Sharif, as in the story, Najaf encounters the Taliban forces which leads to him running from his home country and illegally immigrating to Australia. However, this occurred before the Afghanistan War, and the Taliban forces were fighting the Russians and themselves rather than the Americans and her allied forces.