**Module 6: America At War**

**Mark 13: 7-8**

**7But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. 8For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These *are* the beginnings of sorrows.**

**The nation’s epic, expanding fight against terrorism overseas**

By Smithsonian magazine

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In the matter of war, the American language creates its own fog. We speak not only of wars, but also of armed conflicts, military engagements, combat operations, expeditions, policing actions, raids, airstrikes and shows of force. And even with so many labels, we use the term “war” pretty loosely. Does the Honey War really count? The 1836 Missouri-Iowa border dispute—named for the chief on-the-ground casualty, three beehives—was settled at the Supreme Court. The Aroostook War? It was another 19th-century border dispute, in Maine, which the United States and England settled bloodlessly.

The Global War on Terrorism, declared in 2001, surely counts, but it has barreled onward through a fog of its own, a series of vagaries concerning territory, scale, foes and metrics for success. Exactly when the war in Afghanistan surpassed the Vietnam War as America’s longest overseas war is debated—the comparison depends on which benchmarks you use. Last September, however, the United States reached an indicator that clears away at least some of the confusion: The first cohort of Americans who were born after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, became old enough to enlist in the war that followed. Whatever else it is, the Global War on Terrorism is now a second-generation war.

With that in mind, this double issue of *Smithsonian* brings into focus who is fighting this war, and why, and where, and even what they’ve left behind. These men and women make up a tiny fraction of the U.S. population, and 17 years is a long time. But our awareness of this conflict shouldn’t become so normal that, to borrow one general’s valediction, it fades away.

**A Nation at Arms**

By one count, the United States has been at war at some time in 93.5 percent of the calendar years between 1775 and 2018\*. Of course, this depends on how you define “war.” We defined it as using military force, or the imminent threat of force (as in the “gunboat diplomacy” of the 1850s), to achieve national ends.

\*As of November 2018.

(Sources: Globalresearch.ca; Congressional Research Service; Office of Indian Affairs Bulletin and other reports)

**Operation Enduring Freedom**

**Operation Enduring Freedom** (**OEF**) was the official name used by the [U.S. government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._government) for the [Global War on Terrorism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_War_on_Terrorism). On October 7, 2001, in response to the [September 11 attacks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11_attacks), [President George W. Bush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_George_W._Bush) announced that airstrikes targeting [Al Qaeda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Qaeda) and the [Taliban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban) had begun in Afghanistan.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-10) Operation Enduring Freedom primarily refers to the [War in Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001%E2%80%93present)),[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-Philipps-11)[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-Dempsey-12) but it is also affiliated with [counterterrorism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterterrorism) operations in other countries, such as [OEF-Philippines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom_%E2%80%93_Philippines) and [OEF-Trans Sahara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom_%E2%80%93_Trans_Sahara).[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-HELPING-GEORGIA-13)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-Lamothe-14)

After 13 years, on December 28, 2014, [President Barack Obama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_Barack_Obama) announced the end of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-15) Continued operations in Afghanistan by the United States' military forces, both non-combat and combat, now occur under the name [Operation Freedom's Sentinel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Freedom%27s_Sentinel).[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-16)

* [Operation Enduring Freedom – Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001%E2%80%93present)) (OEF-A), 7 October 2001 – 31 December 2014. Succeeded by Operation Freedom's Sentinel.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-OEFover-17)
* [Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom_%E2%80%93_Philippines) (OEF-P, formerly Operation Freedom Eagle), 15 January 2002 – 24 February 2015[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-18)[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-19)
* [Operation Enduring Freedom – Horn of Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom_%E2%80%93_Horn_of_Africa) (OEF-HOA)
* [Operation Enduring Freedom – Pankisi Gorge](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Operation_Enduring_Freedom_%E2%80%93_Pankisi_Gorge&action=edit&redlink=1)[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-20)
* [Operation Enduring Freedom – Trans Sahara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom_%E2%80%93_Trans_Sahara) (OEF-TS; see also [Insurgency in the Maghreb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insurgency_in_the_Maghreb_(2002%E2%80%93present)))
* [Operation Enduring Freedom – Caribbean and Central America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom_%E2%80%93_Caribbean_and_Central_America) (OEF-CCA)[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-21)
* [Operation Enduring Freedom – Kyrgyzstan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transit_Center_at_Manas#Operation_Enduring_Freedom),[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-22) 18 December 2001 – 3 June 2014[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-Bolger-23)

**Etymology**

The U.S. government used the term "Operation Enduring Freedom – Afghanistan" to officially describe the [War in Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001%E2%80%93present)), from the period between 7 October 2001 and 31 December 2014.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-OEFover-17)[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-24) Continued operations in Afghanistan by the United States' military forces, both non-combat and combat, now occur under the name [Operation Freedom's Sentinel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Freedom%27s_Sentinel).[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-25)

The operation was originally called "Operation Infinite Justice", but as similar phrases have been used by adherents of several religions as an exclusive description of God, it is believed to have been changed to avoid offense to Muslims who are the majority religion in Afghanistan.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-BBC_News-26) In September 2001, U.S. President [George W. Bush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush)'s remark that "this [crusade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crusade), this war on terrorism, is going to take a while", which prompted widespread criticism from the Islamic world, may also have contributed to the renaming of the operation.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-BBC_News-26)

The term "OEF-A" typically refers to the phase of the War in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014. Other operations, such as the [Georgia Train and Equip Program](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia_Train_and_Equip_Program), are only loosely or nominally connected, such as through government funding vehicles.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-HELPING-GEORGIA-13) All the operations, however, have a focus on [counterterrorism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterterrorism) activities.

Operation Enduring Freedom – Afghanistan, which was a joint U.S., U.K., and Afghan operation, was separate from the [International Security Assistance Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Security_Assistance_Force) (ISAF), which was an operation of [North Atlantic Treaty Organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Atlantic_Treaty_Organization) nations including the U.S. and the U.K.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-27) The two operations ran in parallel, although it had been suggested that they merge.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-28)

**Overview**

In response to the [attacks of 11 September](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11_attacks), the early combat operations that took place on 7 October 2001 to include a mix of strikes from land-based [B-1 Lancer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-1_Lancer), [B-2 Spirit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-2_Spirit) and [B-52 Stratofortress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B-52_Stratofortress) bombers, carrier-based [F-14 Tomcat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F-14_Tomcat) and [F/A-18 Hornet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F/A-18_Hornet) fighters, and [Tomahawk cruise missiles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BGM-109_Tomahawk) launched from both U.S. and British ships and submarines signaled the start of Operation Enduring Freedom – Afghanistan (OEF-A).

The initial military objectives of OEF-A, as articulated by President [George W. Bush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush) in his 20 September Address to a Joint Session of Congress and his 7 October address to the country, included the destruction of [terrorist training camps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorist_training_camp) and [infrastructure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infrastructure) within Afghanistan, the capture of [al-Qaeda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda) leaders, and the cessation of terrorist activities in Afghanistan.[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-29)[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-30)[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-31)

In January 2002, over 1,200 soldiers from the [United States Special Operations Command Pacific](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Special_Operations_Command) (SOCPAC) deployed to the Philippines to support the [Armed Forces of the Philippines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Forces_of_the_Philippines) (AFP) in their push to uproot terrorist forces on the island of [Basilan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilan). Of those groups included are [Abu Sayyaf Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Sayyaf) (ASG), [al-Qaeda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda) and [Jemaah Islamiyah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jemaah_Islamiyah).[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-32) The operation consisted of training the AFP in counter-terrorist operations as well as supporting the local people with humanitarian aid in [Operation Smiles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Smiles).[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-Smiles-33)

In October 2002, the [Combined Task Force 150](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combined_Task_Force_150) and United States military Special Forces established themselves in Djibouti at [Camp Lemonnier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Lemonnier). The stated goals of the operation were to provide humanitarian aid and patrol the [Horn of Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horn_of_Africa) to reduce the abilities of terrorist organizations in the region. Similar to OEF-P, the goal of humanitarian aid was emphasized, ostensibly to prevent militant organizations from being able to take hold amongst the population as well as reemerge after being removed.

The military aspect involves coalition forces searching and boarding ships entering the region for illegal cargo as well as providing training and equipment to the armed forces in the region. The humanitarian aspect involves building schools, clinics and water wells to enforce the confidence of the local people.

Since 2001, the cumulative expenditure by the U.S. government on Operation Enduring Freedom has exceeded $150 billion.[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-34)

The operation continues, with military direction mostly coming from [United States Central Command](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Central_Command).

**Operation Enduring Freedom – Afghanistan (OEF-A)**

**The Taliban**

Seizing upon a [power vacuum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_vacuum) after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan after their [invasion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_invasion_of_Afghanistan), the [Taliban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban) had the role of government from 1996–2001. Their extreme interpretation of Islamic law prompted them to ban music, television, sports, and dancing, and enforce harsh judicial penalties (See [Human rights in Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_Afghanistan)). Amputation was an accepted form of punishment for stealing,[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom" \l "cite_note-35)[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-36) and public executions could often be seen at the Kabul football stadium.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-37)[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-38) Women's rights groups around the world were frequently critical as the Taliban banned women from appearing in public or holding many jobs outside the home.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] They drew further criticism[[*by whom?*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Manual_of_Style/Words_to_watch#Unsupported_attributions)] when they destroyed the [Buddhas of Bamyan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhas_of_Bamyan), historical statues nearly 1,500 years old, because the Buddhas were considered idols.

In 1996, Saudi [dissident](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissident) [Osama bin Laden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) moved to Afghanistan upon the invitation of the [Northern Alliance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_Northern_Alliance) leader Abdur Rabb ur Rasool Sayyaf.[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-39) When the Taliban came to power, bin Laden was able to forge an alliance between the Taliban and his [al-Qaeda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda) organization. It is understood that al-Qaeda-trained fighters known as the [055 Brigade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/055_Brigade) were integrated with the Taliban army between 1997 and 2001. It has been suggested that the Taliban and bin Laden had very close connections.[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-40)

**U.S.-led coalition action**

On 20 September 2001, the U.S. stated that Osama bin Laden was behind the [11 September attacks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/11_September_attacks) in 2001. The US made a five-point ultimatum to the Taliban:[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom" \l "cite_note-41)

* Deliver to the U.S. all of the leaders of al-Qaeda
* Release all imprisoned foreign nationals
* Close immediately every terrorist training camp
* Hand over every terrorist and their supporters to appropriate authorities
* Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps for inspection

On 21 September 2001, the [Taliban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban) rejected this ultimatum, stating there was no evidence in their possession linking bin Laden to the 11 September attacks.[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-42)

On 22 September 2001 the United Arab Emirates and later Saudi Arabia withdrew their recognition of the Taliban as the legal government of Afghanistan, leaving neighboring Pakistan as the only remaining country with diplomatic ties.

On 4 October 2001, it was reported that the Taliban covertly offered to turn bin Laden over to Pakistan for trial in an international tribunal that operated according to Islamic [shar'ia law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia_law).[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-43) On 7 October 2001, the Taliban proposed to try bin Laden in Afghanistan in an Islamic court.[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-44) This proposition was immediately rejected by the US. Later on the same day, United States and British forces initiated military action against the Taliban, bombing Taliban forces and al-Qaeda terrorist training camps.[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-45)

On 14 October 2001, the Taliban proposed to hand bin Laden over to a third country for trial, but only if they were given evidence of bin Laden's involvement in the events of 11 September 2001.[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-46) The US rejected this proposal and military operations ensued.

The [UN Security Council](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN_Security_Council), on 16 January 2002, unanimously established an arms embargo and the freezing of identifiable assets belonging to bin Laden, al-Qaeda, and the remaining Taliban.

**Combat operations start**

On Sunday 7 October 2001, American and British forces began an [aerial bombing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_bombing) campaign targeting Taliban forces and al-Qaeda.[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-47)

The [Northern Alliance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_Northern_Alliance), aided by [Joint Special Operations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Special_Operations_Command) teams consisting of Green Berets from the [5th Special Forces Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/5th_Special_Forces_Group_(United_States)), aircrew members from the [160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/160th_Special_Operations_Aviation_Regiment_(Airborne)) (SOAR), and [Air Force Combat Controllers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Air_Force_Combat_Control_Team), fought against the Taliban. Aided by U.S. bombing and massive defections, they captured [Mazar-i-Sharif](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mazar-i-Sharif) on 9 November. They then rapidly gained control of most of northern Afghanistan, and took control of Kabul on 13 November after the Taliban unexpectedly fled the city. The Taliban were restricted to a smaller and smaller region, with [Kunduz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kunduz), the last Taliban-held city in the north, captured on 26 November. Most of the Taliban fled to Pakistan. After the [September 11 attacks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11_attacks) in the United States in 2001, the United Front succeeded in retaking Kabul from the Taliban with air support from US-led forces during Operation Enduring Freedom. In 2019, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense [Michael Mulroy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Mulroy) remarked that the U.S. partnership with the [Northern Alliance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Alliance) was a very successful model that was later followed in northern [Iraq](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq) and [Syria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria). [[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-48)[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-49)

The war continued in the south of the country, where the Taliban retreated to [Kandahar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kandahar). After Kandahar fell in December,[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom" \l "cite_note-50) remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaeda continued to [mount resistance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban_insurgency). Meanwhile, in November 2001 the U.S. military and its allied forces established their first ground base in Afghanistan to the south west of [Kandahar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kandahar), known as [FOB Rhino](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Rhino).[[51]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-51)

The [Battle of Tora Bora](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Tora_Bora), involving U.S., British and Northern Alliance forces took place in December 2001 to further destroy the Taliban and suspected al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. In early March 2002 the United States military, along with allied Afghan military forces, conducted a large operation to destroy al-Qaeda in an operation code-named [Operation Anaconda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Anaconda).

The operation was carried out by elements of the United States [10th Mountain Division](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/10th_Mountain_Division_(United_States)), [101st Airborne Division](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/101st_Airborne_Division), the [U.S. special forces](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._special_forces) groups TF 11, TF Bowie, TF Dagger, TF K-Bar, British [Royal Marines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Marines), the Norwegian [*Forsvarets Spesialkommando*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forsvarets_Spesialkommando) (FSK), [*Hærens Jegerkommando*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%A6rens_Jegerkommando) and [*Marinejegerkommandoen*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marinejegerkommandoen), Canada's 3rd Battalion [Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princess_Patricia%27s_Canadian_Light_Infantry), Canada's [Joint Task Force 2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Task_Force_2), the German [KSK](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kommando_Spezialkr%C3%A4fte), and elements of the [Australian Special Air Service Regiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Special_Air_Service_Regiment) and of the [New Zealand Special Air Service](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Air_Service_of_New_Zealand) and the [Afghan National Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_National_Army).

After managing to evade U.S. forces throughout the summer of 2002, the remnants of the Taliban gradually began to regain their confidence. A U.S. and Canadian led operation (supported by British and Dutch forces), [Operation Mountain Thrust](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Mountain_Thrust) was launched in May 2006 to counter renewed Taliban insurgency.

Since January 2006, the [NATO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO) [International Security Assistance Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Security_Assistance_Force) undertook combat duties from Operation Enduring Freedom in southern Afghanistan, the NATO force chiefly made up of British, Canadian and Dutch forces (and some smaller contributions from Denmark, Romania and Estonia and air support from Norway as well as air and artillery support from the U.S.) (*see the article* [*Coalition combat operations in Afghanistan in 2006*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coalition_combat_operations_in_Afghanistan_in_2006)). The United States military also conducts military operations separate from NATO as part of Operation Enduring Freedom in other parts of Afghanistan, in areas such as Kandahar, Bagram, and Kabul (including [Camp Eggers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Eggers) and [Camp Phoenix](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Phoenix).)

**International support**

The United States was supported by [several nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom_-_Afghanistan:_Allies) during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan in 2001–2003 and in subsequent coalition operations directly or indirectly in support of OEF. See the article [Afghanistan War order of battle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan_War_order_of_battle) for the current disposition of coalition forces in Afghanistan.

The U.S.-led coalition initially removed the [Taliban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban) from power and seriously crippled [al-Qaeda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda) and associated militants in Afghanistan. However, success in quelling the Taliban insurgency since the 2001 invasion has been mixed. Many believethe Taliban cannot be defeated as long as it has sanctuary in neighboring Pakistan[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom" \l "cite_note-52) and that Operation Enduring Freedom has transformed into a continuing full-fledged war with no end in sight.

On 9 October 2004, Afghanistan elected [Hamid Karzai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamid_Karzai) president in its first direct elections. The following year, Afghans conducted the [Afghan parliamentary election, 2005](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_parliamentary_election,_2005) on 18 September. Since the invasion, hundreds of schools and mosques have been constructed, millions of dollars in aid have been distributed, and the occurrence of violence has been reduced.

While military forces interdict [insurgents](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insurgency) and assure security, [Provincial reconstruction teams](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provincial_reconstruction_team) are tasked with infrastructure building, such as constructing roads and bridges, assisting during floods, and providing food and water to [refugees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_refugees). Many warlords have participated in an allegiance program, recognizing the legitimacy of the government of Afghanistan, and surrendering their soldiers and weapons; however, subsequent actions have led to questions about their true loyalties.

The [Afghan National Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_National_Army), [Afghan National Police](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_National_Police), and [Afghan Border Police](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_Border_Police) are being trained to assume the task of securing their nation.

On 31 December 2014, Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan concluded, and was succeeded by [Operation Freedom's Sentinel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Freedom%27s_Sentinel) on 1 January 2015.[[53]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-53)

**Criticism**

Hardliner newspapers in Iran and religious scholars in Lebanon suggested "Infinite Imperialism," "Infinite Arrogance," or "Infinite Injustice" might have been more appropriate name for the operation.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-BBC_News-26)[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-54)[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-55)[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-56)[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-57)

AFP, reporting on a news story in the Sunday, 3 April 2004, issue of [*The New Yorker*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_Yorker),[[58]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-58) wrote that retired Army Colonel Hy Rothstein, "who served in the [Army Special Forces](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army_Special_Forces) for more than 20 years, ...commissioned by [The Pentagon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pentagon) to examine the war in Afghanistan concluded the conflict created conditions that have given 'warlordism, banditry and opium production a new lease on life'..."

The conduct of U.S. forces was criticized in a report entitled *Enduring Freedom – Abuses by U.S. Forces in Afghanistan* by U.S.-based human rights group [Human Rights Watch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_Rights_Watch) in 2004. Some Pakistani scholars, such as [Masood Ashraf Raja](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masood_Ashraf_Raja), editor of [Pakistaniaat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistaniaat:_A_Journal_of_Pakistan_Studies), have also provided a more specific form of criticism that relates to the consequences of the Global War on Terrorism on the region.[[59]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-59)

**Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines (OEF-P)**

**Abu Sayyaf Group**

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) Al Harakat Al Islamiyya, is deemed a "foreign terrorist organization" by the United States government. Specifically, it is an [Islamist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamist) separatist group based in and around the southern islands of the Republic of the Philippines, primarily [Jolo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jolo), [Basilan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilan), and [Mindanao](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mindanao).[[60]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-:0-60)

Since inception in the early 1990s, the group has carried out [bombings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombing), assassinations, [kidnappings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kidnapping), and [extortion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extortion) in their fight for an independent Islamic state in western [Mindanao](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mindanao) and the [Sulu Archipelago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sulu_Archipelago).[[60]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-:0-60) Its claimed overarching goal is to create a Pan-Islamic superstate across the *Malay* portions of Southeast Asia, spanning, from east to west, the large island of Mindanao, the Sulu Archipelago (Basilan and Jolo islands), the large island of [Borneo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borneo) (Malaysia and Indonesia), the [South China Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_China_Sea), and the [Malay Peninsula](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malay_Peninsula) ([Peninsular Malaysia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peninsular_Malaysia), Thailand and [Myanmar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myanmar)).

**Jemaah Islamiyah**

Jemaah Islamiyah is a [militant Islamic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Militant_Islam) terrorist organization dedicated to the establishment of a fundamentalist Islamic [theocracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theocracy) in Southeast Asia, in particular Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, the south of Thailand and the Philippines. Jemaah Islamiyah originally used peaceful means to achieve its goals, but later resorted to terrorism because of its connections with al-Qaeda.[[61]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-61)

Financial links between Jemaah Islamiyah and other terrorist groups, such as [Abu Sayyaf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Sayyaf) and [al-Qaeda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda), have been found to exist.[[62]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-62) Jemaah Islamiyah means "Islamic Group" or "Islamic Community" and is often abbreviated JI.

Jemaah Islamiyah is thought to have killed hundreds of civilians. Also, it is suspected of carrying out the [Bali car bombing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002_Bali_terrorist_bombing) on 12 October 2002, in which suicide bombers attacked a nightclub killing 202 people and wounding many more. Most of the casualties were Australian tourists. After this attack, the [U.S. State Department](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Department_of_State) designated Jemaah Islamiyah as a [Foreign Terrorist Organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._State_Department_list_of_Foreign_Terrorist_Organizations). Jemaah Islamiyah is also suspected of carrying out the [Zamboanga bombings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zamboanga_bombings), the [Metro Manila](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metro_Manila) bombings, the [2004 Australian embassy bombing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_Australian_embassy_bombing) and the [2005 Bali terrorist bombing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2005_Bali_bombings).

**U.S. actions**

In January 2002, 1,200 members of [United States Special Operations Command, Pacific](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Special_Operations_Command) (SOCPAC) were deployed to the Philippines to assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in uprooting al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyah and Abu Sayyaf. The members of SOCPAC were assigned to assist in military operations against the terrorist forces as well as humanitarian operations for the island of Basilan, where most of the conflict was expected to take place.

The United States Special Forces (SF) unit trained and equipped Special Forces and scout rangers of the AFP, creating the [Light Reaction Company (LRC)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light_Reaction_Battalion). The LRC and elements of SOCPAC deployed to Basilan on completion of their training. The stated goals of the deployment were denying the ASG sanctuary, surveiling, controlling, and denying ASG routes, surveiling supporting villages and key personnel, conducting local training to overcome AFP weaknesses and sustain AFP strengths, supporting operations by the AFP "strike force" (LRC) in the area of responsibility (AOR), conducting and supporting civil affairs operations in the AOR.[[63]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-autogeneratedmil-63)

**Result**

The desired result was for the AFP to gain sufficient capability to locate and destroy the ASG, to recover hostages and to enhance the legitimacy of the Philippine government. Much of the operation was a success: the ASG was driven from Basilan and one U.S. hostage was recovered.[[63]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-autogeneratedmil-63) The Abu Sayyaf Group's ranks, which once counted more than 800 members, was reduced to less than 100. The humanitarian portion of the operation, Operation Smiles, created 14 schools, 7 clinics, 3 hospitals and provided medical care to over 18,000 residents of Basilan. Humanitarian groups were able to continue their work without fear of further kidnappings and terrorists attacks by the Abu Sayyaf Group.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-Smiles-33)[[64]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-64)

**Operation Enduring Freedom – Horn of Africa (OEF-HOA)**

Unlike other operations contained in Operation Enduring Freedom, OEF-HOA does not have a specific terrorist organization as a target. OEF-HOA instead focuses its efforts to disrupt and detect terrorist activities in the region and to work with host nations to deny the reemergence of terrorist cells and activities. Operations began in mid-2002 at [Camp Lemonnier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Lemonnier) by a [Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Combined_Joint_Special_Operations_Task_Force&action=edit&redlink=1) (CJSOTF) augmented by support forces from [Fort Stewart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Stewart), [Fort Hood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Hood), and [Fort Story](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Story). In October 2002, the Combined Joint Task Force, Horn of Africa ([CJTF-HOA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CJTF-HOA)) was established at Djibouti at [Camp Lemonnier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_Lemonnier), taking over responsibilities from the CJSOTF. CJTF-HOA comprised approximately 2,000 personnel including U.S. military and Special Operations Forces (SOF), and coalition force members, [Combined Task Force 150](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combined_Task_Force_150) (CTF-150). The coalition force consists of ships from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, India, Italy, Pakistan, New Zealand, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The primary goal of the coalition forces is to monitor, inspect, board and stop suspected shipments from entering the Horn of Africa region. Since 2003, the U.S. Military also conducts operations targeting Al-Qaeda-linked fighters in Somalia, these operations had reportedly killed between 113 and 136 militants by early 2016. On 7 March 2016, a further 150 were killed in U.S. airstrikes on an al Shabaab training camp north of Mogadishu.[[65]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-65)

CJTF-HOA has devoted the majority of its efforts to train selected armed forces units of the countries of Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency tactics. Humanitarian efforts conducted by CJTF-HOA include the rebuilding of schools and medical clinics, as well as providing medical services to those countries whose forces are being trained. The program expands as part of the Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Initiative as CJTF personnel also assist in training the forces of Chad, Niger, Mauritania and Mali.[[66]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-66)

**U.S. action**

"Operation Enduring Freedom"

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) patch

* 7 October 2001 – 28 December 2014
* Casualties U.S. Coalition: 3,486 Dead
* Taliban/Al-Qaeda:25,500–40,500 Dead

Anti-piracy operations were undertaken by the coalition throughout 2006 with a [battle fought in March](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_of_18_March_2006) when US vessels were attacked by pirates. In January 2007, during the [war in Somalia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Somalia_(2006%E2%80%9309)), an [AC-130](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AC-130) airstrike was conducted against [al-Qaeda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda) members embedded with forces of the [Islamic Courts Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Courts_Union) (ICU) operating in southern Somalia near [Ras Kamboni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ras_Kamboni). US naval forces, including the [aircraft carrier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aircraft_carrier) [USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Dwight_D._Eisenhower), were positioned off the coast of Somalia to provide support and to prevent any al-Qaeda forces escaping by sea. Actions against pirates also occurred in June and October 2007 with varying amounts of success.

"Operation Resolute Support/Freedom's Sentinel"

* 1 January 2015 – Present
* Casualties U.S. Coalition: 1 January 2015 - Present | 70 Dead\* - Subject to change[[67]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom#cite_note-67)
* Taliban/Al-Qaeda:

Effective 1 January 2015, Secretary of Defense Hagel announced that the new U.S. mission in Afghanistan will focus on training, advising, and assisting Afghan security forces and designated as Operation Freedom's Sentinel. 19 About 13,500 U.S. troops are expected in Afghanistan through 2015 and will be assisted by troops from NATO allies.

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