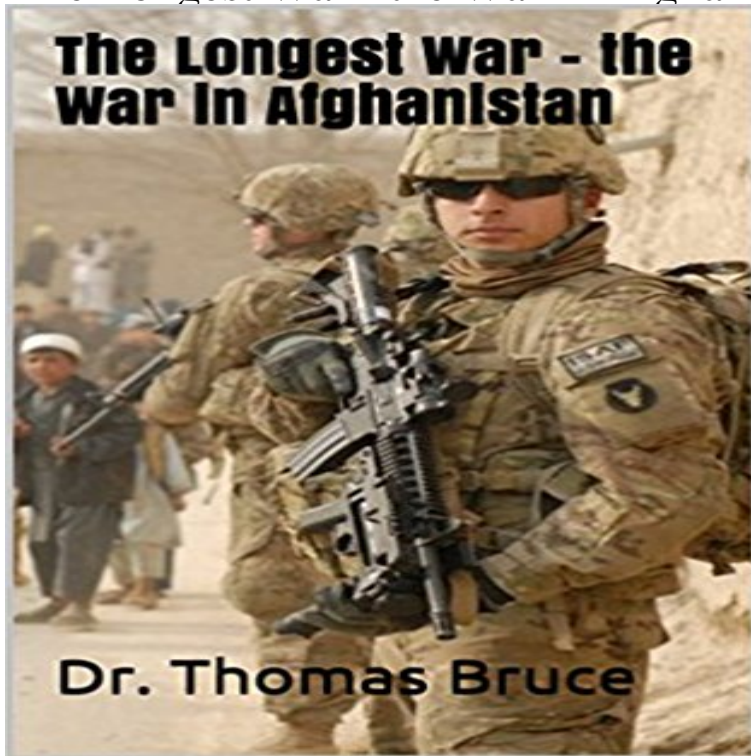


## The Longest War - the War in Afghanistan



The modern War in Afghanistan was the longest war in American history. Beginning in 2001 as a reaction to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11 of the same year, the last American forces would not leave the country until 2015. America's 14 year experience in Afghanistan would change both the character of that country and the nature of modern conflict. The attack on the World Trade Center was perpetrated by a terrorist organization known as al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda were sponsored by the Taliban government of Afghanistan, given sanctuary within their borders and protected by the Taliban following the horrific attacks on New York City. In response to the attacks, U.S. President George W. Bush ordered attacks on Afghanistan with the goal of the destruction of the terrorist organization. Specifically, they sought to eliminate the leader of al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden. Bush also sought the removal of the Taliban government and their replacement with a modern pro-Western one. The initial military operation was codenamed Operation Enduring Freedom, and involved units of both the United States and supporting members of NATO. As well the attacks were supported by the Northern Alliance, the group representing those tribes of Afghanistan actively resisting Taliban control through military arms. Thus, the United States became embroiled in a bitter war within the framework of an ongoing Afghanistan Civil War.

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