

## SECTION B – WRITING IN CONTEXT (Creating and Presenting)

Prompt: 'Conflict is always present when progress occurs.'

"Unfortunately our only point of agreement is going to be that violence *has* occurred, and I know that you (US military media spokesperson) are going to argue with the focus of this simplification, but we are never going to reconcile our views of how progress will come to Afghanistan".

These are not my humble words, but those of the newly elected Afghani parliamentarian Malali Joya, of Farah province an People's Democratic Unity Movement (PDUM) spokesperson. Like me, she argues for change and takes a stand to fight injustice wherever she sees it. Like me, she risks her life to bring change.

I am a lucky man. I have a wife. I have children. I have the luxury of choosing to return home to my old homeland, and the luxury of then choosing to return to my new homeland in Australia. She is a lucky woman. She has the ability to use words, to fight with words and to use them to defend our people. Together we will make sure that the wheels of progress do not grind all of us backwards.

We are the voices of progress in a land that has been ravaged by bullets, raped by bombs and desecrated with the invasion of military forces. If Democracy is their catch-cry, then why are so many people being made to suffer more violence and bloodshed than ten years ago? Was not the tyranny of the Soviets enough? The West are progressing their interests at the cost of our innocence.

But wait, I must not turn myself into a politician.

As a humble rug maker, family man and now writer, I have set myself a task that works for peace. For I did not come to your land of Australia to preach more war and hatred. Mankind is always hungry for progress, and I will show how this can be achieved without a gun and without suffering.

The people of Australia are full of such generosity and intelligence. Yes, they have some curious customs, but I can thank this new way of thinking for it gave me my latest idea.

"Ambulances for Afghanistan sets the wheels of positive progress turning in the right direction. Najaf Mazari's return to his homeland with the generous support of Australian citizens is the sort of global solidarity that the supposed 'brotherhood of war' sadly lacks. What if every tank was exchanged for an ambulance, if every bullet for a bandage, and every hostile news report for a call to alms – not arms?"

Ah, you see! Every day she more and more poetic! I myself only collect the money from generous families. The Canberra Australians I will not bother, but the Afghani parliament, YES, they need to see that we can make a real change. For me, life in Australia has been hard, but

nothing like the terror experienced by those who stayed. Real progress must come from within, and it is from the heart of Afghanistan that I will help you to build a proud and strong people once again. Ambulances have only wheels and a siren, but it is the Afghani heart that will pump the lifeblood of change. Maybe when the Canberra Australians see an Afghani at the wheel skillfully negotiating the rocky Khyber Pass and nurses caring for their own people, maybe then, only then will the Canberra Australians realise that we are a strong and resilient people who can make a change for ourselves with only ambulances, bandages and alms.

“In recognition of his fearless and selfless service to the people of Afghanistan, I hereby bestow upon Mr Najaf Mazari the 2011 Kandahar Peoples’ Peace Award. To Mr Mazari, on behalf of the before-assembled community I offer my sincere thanks and gratitude for your unflinching pursuit of justice in extreme times of hardship and personal trial. Our nation and its people thank you.”  
(Applause)

In Najaf’s place a young man takes to the lectern

“Dear brothers and sisters, it is with great regret that I accept this reward on behalf of our friend Najaf. It often seems to many that violence has no end, but it is our role as responsible leaders to see that this ideology does not take hold.

Najaf could have died in the military air strike on his home in 2000, he could have died in the militia raids on Mazar-e-Sharif. He could even have died in Australia’s camp Woomera. But he didn’t. He was strong and he survived.

His recent death on our roads has to have meaning, even if only as a reminder of the unwavering commitment of our people to achieving peace.

On this day, progress has not ceased. Ambulances are still built, patients transported and tyranny defied.

Rest brother Najaf, a nation’s prayers are with you.