



# Zahir Shah's Cabinet, Afghanistan 1963

# MUNUC 33



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## CHAIR'S LETTER

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Afghanistan! My name is Karina Holbrook, and I am the Chair (aka Zahir Shah) of this committee. As chair, I hope to be fair to everyone; more importantly, I want the committee to be fun. The goal of this conference is pedagogy, and I believe that this can best be done through an immersive, interactive experience - in other words, in a continuous crisis committee! I hope that this committee will give all delegates the opportunity to truly shine, both in the frontroom and in the backroom, in the pursuit of a new Afghanistan.

On that note, there are a couple of things I would like to address. First, we will not be tolerating any remarks about the Taliban; not only is it completely inappropriate (and will be addressed accordingly), but it is also completely irrelevant to our time - we are, after all, in the 1960s, long before the Taliban even existed. Also, in that vein, I will not be tolerating any Islamophobic, racist, or sexist comments, either "in character" or to a delegate. "Historical accuracy" or "because my character was like that in real life" is not an excuse - after all, at the end of the day we are delegates in 2020, and we can choose to be mindful where our characters did not. As I said before, I want this committee to be a place for everyone to shine, and that is only possible in a welcoming, respectful environment. If you ever feel uncomfortable in session because of something either I, or a delegate, said or did, please let us (or MUNUC administrators) know - again, our main goal is for MUNUC to be a fun, comfortable, and enjoyable experience for everyone.

On a lighter note, have fun! Don't be afraid to make mistakes, speak up, try some cool ideas out! The beauty of MUNUC crisis committees is that it's like a sandbox. Go crazy (but be respectful), come up with crazy ideas, speak out in moderated caucus, and reach out to your fellow delegates. Andre and I are here for anyone that needs help or advice. I believe that every one of you has the potential to be a wonderful delegate - just don't be afraid to try!

In terms of the actual committee itself, I urge delegates to try to think about what they want to do. What sort of vision do you have for Afghanistan? What are we striving for? Who should we listen to? Questions like these might be useful in figuring out what we as a committee should be doing, and what our end goal might be. I truly believe that all of our characters had Afghanistan's best interests in mind, and I think that we as delegates should keep this in mind while we're in committee. In any case, as the Shah of Afghanistan, I hope that nothing bad happens to me - but of course, you never know what can happen!

On a more personal note, I am a third year majoring in Public Policy and Russian Studies, and I'm from Washington, DC. Previously at MUNUC, I served as an AC to Japan: 1970s. I'm honored to be running this committee with Andre, who is so knowledgeable and passionate about the subject, and all of you. Outside of ChoMUN, I am involved in ChoMUN (UChicago's college conference), EUChicago, and MODA (the school's fashion magazine). Feel free to contact me for any questions or comments at [usg.cc@munuc.org](mailto:usg.cc@munuc.org). I'm looking forward to seeing you all soon!

Warmly,

Karina Holbrook

## CRISIS DIRECTOR'S LETTER

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Dear Delegates,

We're very happy to welcome you to MUNUC XXXIII! My name is Andre Altherr and I'll be your Crisis Director for Zahir Shah's Cabinet, 1963. I'm from New York City and am currently a Third Year at the University of Chicago majoring in History and Political Science. Despite once having had a social life, I now spend my free-time on much tamer activities like reading obscure histories of the Byzantines and Central Europe and relaxing with the best of Stephen King and 20th century sci-fi anthologies. When not reading, I enjoy hiking, watching *Frasier*, and trying to catch up on much needed sleep.

I've helped run and participated in numerous Model UN conferences in both college and high school, and I believe that this activity has the potential to hone public speaking, develop your creativity and critical thinking, and ignite interest in new fields. Karina and I care very deeply about making this committee an inclusive space in which all of you feel safe, comfortable, and motivated to challenge yourself to grow as a delegate, statesperson, and human. We trust that you will conduct yourselves with maturity and tact when discussing sensitive subjects. If you have questions about what conduct is and isn't acceptable, feel free to email me at [usg.cc@munuc.org](mailto:usg.cc@munuc.org).

With all of that being said, Model UN should be an activity that is, first and foremost, fun! We hope that you will work collaboratively and honestly, and that you will leave this committee with new friends and new interests.

All the best,

Andre Altherr

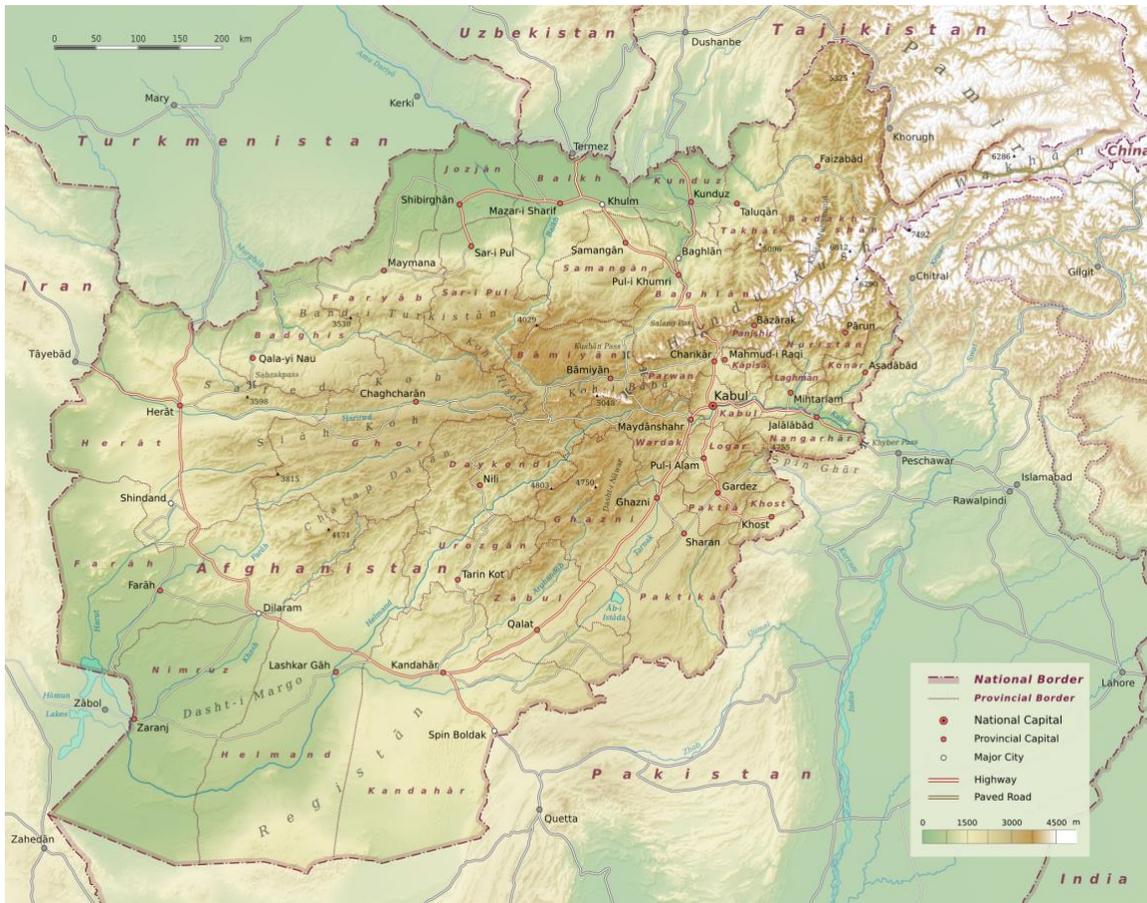
# A BRIEF HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN

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## *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Brief History*

The Kingdom of Afghanistan (1926-present) is a landlocked country in South-Central Asia that is home to about 12 million people and covers 250,000 square miles. The Kingdom is a majority-Muslim, multiethnic state, and the official languages are Dari and Pashto. The territory has historically benefited from its location as a crossroads of multiple empires and trade routes, serving as a key corridor between Central and South Asia. However, this has led to extended periods of foreign domination. Afghan history has seen the rise and fall of a series of empires, each creating a new layer in the society that forms the current Kingdom of Afghanistan.

The following is a brief history of Afghanistan, focusing on the Durrani Empire, the Emirate of Afghanistan, and finally the Kingdom of Afghanistan. Owing to the limitations of this format, the history is quite condensed and simplified; we have attempted to highlight the important parts of history that have direct consequence to current-day problems that the Kingdom faces.



### ***Pre-State History: An Extremely Brief Overview***

The territory of modern-day Afghanistan has been continuously occupied for around 5,000 years.<sup>1</sup> As it is strategically located between Central and South Asia, the territory has held great import for the many empires that have occupied it, with each empire leaving its own mark in the area.

The biggest influence in Afghan pre-state history was the Persian Empire.<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan was under direct Persian rule for most of its history, and, in the intervening years, was indirectly ruled by Persian proxy states. In ancient times, Afghanistan fell under the rule of the Achaemenid and Sasanian Empires, where it was considered to be an integral territory and was home to countless important Persian figures. More recently, the Iranian Safavid Empire, the Afsharid Empire, and the

<sup>1</sup> "Country Profile: Afghanistan" (PDF). United States: Library of Congress Country Studies on Afghanistan. August 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica. "Historical Beginnings (to the 7th Century Ce)." Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Historical-beginnings-to-the-7th-century-ce.

Persian-influenced Khanate of Bukhara have governed various parts of the region. All of these empires have left their mark through the architecture, governmental structure, language, and culture of the occupied territories.

Indeed, Persian influence in the region is enormous. Dari, one of the official languages of Afghanistan, is an Eastern Iranian language that is the most widely spoken language in the country. Persian art and poetry heavily influence Afghani traditions in art and literature, and holidays such as the Persian New-Year festival of Nowruz continue to be celebrated nationwide. In addition, many Tajiks, an Iranian ethnic group, live in the country. Herat, a culturally important city in Afghanistan, temporarily served as a capital for the Persian Empire. Despite years of independent rule, these influences remain dominant.

The Arab invasion of Afghanistan, beginning in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, Islamized and, to a smaller degree, Arabized, Afghan society. Many popular Afghan names are Arabic in origin, and the influence of the Arabic language and script are heavily seen in modern-day written Dari and Pashto, both of which use the Arabic script.

Afghanistan has also fallen under the rule of nomadic tribes, most notably following the Mongol and Timurid invasions of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> The Mongol invasions led to the destruction of many important cities, including Herat, as well as widespread population decline and territorial concessions. The Turkic Timurid invaders conquered much of Western Afghanistan. Ultimately, the Turkic culture of the Timurids and the Persian influences already present in the region merged to create the beginnings of what would define modern Afghani culture.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid

## ***The Foundations of a Modern State***

The foundations of the current Afghan state lie in the Durrani Empire. Founded by Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1747, this empire lasted for over a century and, at its largest extent, included the territories of modern-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran.

The most important ruler from this dynasty is the founder, who ruled from 1747 until his death in 1772. An ethnic Pashtun, he was selected at age 16 to command a military regiment. At the time, the ruler of the area was Nader Shah, one of the most powerful Iranian rulers in history and a military genius in his own right. Nader Shah's empire covered vast swathes of territory across Western and Central Asia, including most of modern-day Afghanistan. However, he was suddenly assassinated in 1747, after which Durrani was "unanimously accepted" as the "sovereign ruler of Afghanistan."<sup>4</sup>

Thus began Durrani's rule, which included an extensive military career and nation-building activities. Key victories during Durrani's military campaigns led to the capture of most of Pakistan as well as parts of Iran and Turkmenistan. As a result, his empire was ethnically diverse, containing Pashtuns, Persians, Tajiks, Turkmens, Uzbeks, and Balochis. This legacy is reflected in the current makeup of the modern Afghan state, a multiethnic Kingdom (as per the committee, which takes place in the 1960s). Indeed, Durrani maintained an ethnically diverse military that hailed from all provinces of the empire, unusual for its time. However, his government was still dominated by ethnic Pashtuns, a trend which continues to this day. Because of his achievements and his creation of an independent Afghanistan, Durrani is called the Father of Modern-day Afghanistan and is widely respected in the country to this day.

After Durrani's death in 1772, his son, Timur Shah, became emperor. Less notable than his father, his main contribution was moving the capital from Kandahar to Kabul, where it remains today. He also continued his father's legacy of military conquests as a means of raising much needed funds.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Vogelsang, Willem (2002). *The Afghans*. Wiley-Blackwell. p. 228. ISBN 978-0-631-19841-3. Retrieved 23 September 2010.

<sup>5</sup> William Dalrymple *Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan* pp 9 Bloomsbury Publishing, 4 Feb. 2013 ISBN 140882843X.

Descendants of the Durrani family continued to rule after his death, and the dynasty survived until the mid-1800s.

The Empire declined due to a couple of factors. The Persian and Sikh empires threatened the territorial integrity of Afghanistan from both sides. The Afghan-Sikh wars, which occurred sporadically from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s, resulted in significant concessions in modern-day Pakistan and took a great toll on the strength of the Durrani Empire.<sup>6</sup> In addition, there was the serious problem of infighting within the ruling dynasty, often out of competition for the throne. Oftentimes, individuals from within the Durrani family assassinated the sitting ruler in a never-ending power struggle. As a result, outsiders (not only European powers, but also Persian, Turkic, and even Georgian) were able to wage war, stage uprisings, and declare independence, moves that undermined the political power of the empire and diminished its territory. Indeed, in the latter half of the Empire, the Empire existed in name only, barely holding onto power as territories rebelled. The final fall in 1823 can be viewed as a formalization of a reality long in the making.

Most consequential, however, was the sudden rise of European influence, specifically Russia and the UK. Indeed, it was this European influence that was decisive in the fall of the Empire and the reshuffling of political authority within the region. Dubbed "The Great Game," this jockeying for power ultimately led to the decline of the Empire and the installation of a new British protectorate called the Emirate of Afghanistan.

### ***The Great Game: Russia, the UK, and the Emirate of Afghanistan***

Timur Shah had several sons, all of whom competed for power, exacerbating political tensions both inside and outside the country. Amid this conflict, the Durrani empire fractured into smaller political entities, each fighting for supremacy. One of these political entities was the Barakzai Dynasty, founded by Dost Mohammad Khan from Kabul. After a political struggle, he declared himself Emir and founded the Emirate of Afghanistan.

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<sup>6</sup> Dupree, Louis (1980). *Afghanistan*. Princeton University Press.

The history of the Emirate of Afghanistan was largely characterized by "The Great Game," the political struggle between Russia and the UK. The period officially started on January 12, 1830, after a British attempt at establishing trade routes to Bukhara and Russian offers of Afghanistan as a neutral buffer state resulted in a souring of relations between the two powers.<sup>7</sup> The struggle was centered around Central Asia and South Asia, which were key territories in the Russian and British Empires respectively. Afghanistan, due to its geostrategic significance, was often a point of contention. The British were highly concerned by Russian threats to territories in the Indian subcontinent, which were considered to be the "jewels of the crown" and economically and strategically significant.<sup>8</sup> The Russians, in turn, were concerned about English expansion into Central Asia, where the Russian empire maintained valuable possessions such as Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The result was an atmosphere of tense distrust between the two powers, and the threat of war loomed large. In fact, open hostilities did often break out between the two nations, though these mainly consisted of proxy wars, such as the Anglo-Afghan and Anglo-Sikh wars.

### ***The Anglo-Afghan Wars***

The Anglo-Afghan Wars were a series of three wars fought over a span of almost a century (1839-42, 1878-80, 1919). The main participants of the wars were Great Britain, Afghanistan, and the Russian Empire. As mentioned above, they were an extension of the Great Game. British behavior was guided by a desire to control Afghanistan (a strategically important country) and limit the Russian Empire's influence. On the other hand, the Afghans struggled in a delicate balancing act between the two world powers while struggling with internal turmoil.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In Defence of British India: Great Britain in the Middle East, 1775-1842 By Edward Ingram. Frank Cass & Co, London, 1984. ISBN 0714632465. p7-19

<sup>8</sup> Edward Ingram. The International History Review, Vol. 2, No. 2 (April 1980), pp. 160-171. Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40105749> Great Britain's Great Game: An Introduction

<sup>9</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Anglo-Afghan Wars." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2 June 2020, [www.britannica.com/event/Anglo-Afghan-Wars](http://www.britannica.com/event/Anglo-Afghan-Wars).

### *The First Anglo-Afghan War and Dost Mohammad Khan*

The First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-42) is most significant as the war that gave birth to the Barakzay dynasty, who ruled Afghanistan in the 19th and 20th century until the election of Mohammad Nader Khan as king.<sup>10</sup> It also saw Afghanistan attempting to walk the fine line of non-alignment in a region dominated by two Great Powers.

As mentioned earlier, the twilight of the Durrani Empire saw a lot of internal turmoil. In the midst of this civil war, Dost Mohammad Khan (1793-1863, founder of the Barakzay dynasty) managed to gain control of the country, ascending the throne in 1826.<sup>11</sup> As a ruler caught in the Great Game, Dost Mohammad took a policy that favored neither country and instead focused on recovering territory lost during the civil war. The British reacted poorly, feeling that Dost Mohammad would be hostile to the British and allow for greater Russian control of the area. After unsuccessful negotiations, the British decided to invade Afghanistan through India, starting the Anglo-Afghan War.

At first, the British were highly successful; they captured the major southern city of Kandahar in 1839, and crowned Shoja', an Anglo-friendly exiled Afghan, as shah. Dost Mohammad was driven out of the country, arrested, and finally deported to India. However, Shoja' was unpopular among the people, leading to many insurrections, and ultimately, his death. In 1842, the British decided to leave Afghanistan, costing many lives. The following year, Dost Mohammad, who had been leading various partisan groups against the British from exile, finally returned to Kabul and was crowned once again.

### *The Second Anglo-Afghan War and the Durand Line*

The Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80) was fought primarily out of British concerns about Russian influence in Afghanistan. The main consequence of this war was the crowning of Abd al-Rahman as

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<sup>10</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Bārakzay Dynasty." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 20 Aug. 2015, [www.britannica.com/topic/Barakzay-dynasty](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Barakzay-dynasty).

<sup>11</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Dōst Moḥammad Khān." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 5 June 2020, [www.britannica.com/biography/Dost-Mohammad-Khan](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Dost-Mohammad-Khan).

emir. His rule would see the establishment of the boundaries of modern Afghanistan and the reform of its administrative system.<sup>12</sup> Aside from settling border issues, Abd Al-Rahman also brought in foreign experts to Afghanistan, introduced new tools and agricultural tools (including machinery for munitions), and established Afghanistan's first modern hospital.

The details of the Second Anglo-Afghan War are not as important as its outcomes. Most relevant to the committee is the establishment of the Durand Line. Drawn in 1893 between Afghanistan and British India, this line was originally intended to mark respective spheres of influence.<sup>13</sup> In modern times, the Durand Line denotes the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, two countries that have a traditionally strained relationship. In practicality, the boundary of their spheres of influences is quite blurred. The region's Pashtun inhabitants saw their territory split by this artificial line. The Pashtun tribes on both sides share a language and many customs to this day.

### *The Third Anglo-Afghan War and WWI*

The Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919) was an inconclusive, month-long war that resulted in the formation of a "special relationship" between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, which continues to this day. It also enabled the rise of Amanullah Khan, who led Afghanistan to full independence from British influence.

Up until that point, Afghanistan had fallen under some level of British influence, either overt or though hidden pressures. Upon his coronation in 1919, Amanullah Khan declared total independence from the British, leading to a month of fighting. In the end, the Afghans and British signed a peace treaty recognizing the independence of Afghanistan in 1919.

At the same time, Afghanistan signed a treaty with the recently formed Soviet Union, making them one of the first countries to recognize the Communist power and leading to the special relationship

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<sup>12</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Abd Al-Rahmān Khān." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 1 Jan. 2020, [www.britannica.com/biography/Abd-al-Rahman-Khan](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Abd-al-Rahman-Khan).

<sup>13</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Durand Line." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 9 Apr. 2020, [www.britannica.com/event/Durand-Line](http://www.britannica.com/event/Durand-Line).

between the two countries. This influence is still seen to this day, as the two countries continue to have good relations.

### ***Early Centralization and the Reign of Nadir Khan***

Shortly after ascending the throne, Amanullah Khan pushed for a series of Western-style reforms in areas such as education, legislation, and the emancipation of women. These reforms alienated many religious and tribal leaders and were generally unpopular. In 1928, this culminated in a revolt by one of the Pashtun tribes, starting the Afghan Civil War.<sup>14</sup>

The Afghan Civil War (1928-1929) lasted for a year and resulted in Amanullah Khan's permanent exile. In its aftermath, a descendant of Dost Muhammad Khan, Mohammad Nadir Khan, entered Afghanistan in 1929 and was declared Shah of Afghanistan.

Nadir Shah's rule was short, lasting for only 4 years. During his rule he was mostly occupied with quelling various revolts and consolidating his power. His cabinet consisted mainly of family members. He created a new constitution with a constitutional monarchy that served to strengthen his power within the government.

Nadir Khan reversed most of Amanullah Khan's reforms, however, he did create some reforms of his own. He established Afghanistan's first university in 1931, improved road construction through the Hindu Kush, and improved communication. In addition, he created commercial and diplomatic links with many countries, started a banking system and long-term economic planning, and created a military force of 40,000.<sup>15</sup>

In 1933, Nadir Shah was assassinated, and his 19-year son Mohammad Zahir Shah ascended the throne.

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<sup>14</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Dōst Moḥammad Khān." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 5 June 2020, [www.britannica.com/biography/Dost-Mohammad-Khan](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Dost-Mohammad-Khan).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

## ***Early Life and Reign of Mohammed Zahir Shah***

Zahir Shah was born in 1914 in Kabul and was educated in Kabul and France.<sup>16</sup> After his father was murdered, Zahir Shah saw that the assassin was “tortured and then executed by quartering along with most of his relatives,” ushering in a practice of the Afghan government going after political rivals.<sup>17</sup> Though he remained at the helm of government for the next two decades, he never truly exercised his power, ceding much of it to his paternal uncles.<sup>18</sup>

He was described as someone who “never did become a dynamic ruler, always seeming more like a gentleman farmer at home on his property with a new breed of milk cows or fresh plantings of strawberries.”<sup>19</sup> Zahir Shah did eventually become vocal on social reforms and consistently leveraged religion into a unifying force for Afghanistan. In a testament to this religious maneuvering, he took the title “Confident in God, Follower of the Firm Religion of Islam’.”<sup>20</sup>

## ***Afghan Tribal Revolts (1944-1947)***

### *Origins*

In 1944, insurrections against the Afghan state began by members of the Zadran, Safi and Mangal tribes, among others. These revolts were caused by several factors.

One reason was Zahir’s brutal taxation policies, primarily *sekoti*, under which “farmers and landlords were required to forfeit one-third of their harvest to the government.”<sup>21</sup> The grain forfeited to the government had to be transported to government warehouses (*godowns*). These warehouses were

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<sup>16</sup> Profile: Mohamed Zahir Shah. (2001, September 23). Retrieved September 09, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/23/terrorism.afghanistan1>

<sup>17</sup> Bearak, B. (2007, July 24). Mohammad Zahir Shah, Last Afghan King, Dies at 92. Retrieved September 09, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/24/world/asia/24shah.html>

<sup>18</sup> Dupree, Louis (1980). Afghanistan. Princeton University Press.

<sup>19</sup> 4A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan. (2011, May 04). Retrieved September 09, 2020, from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan>.

<sup>20</sup> Barak, Mohammad Zahir Shah.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Mason, W. (2011). The rule of law in Afghanistan: Missing in inaction. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

located only in the Bar Kunar (Asmar) and Kuz Kanar (Khewa) districts, and animals were the only method of transport. At the *godowns*, farmers faced additional challenges, as “government officials would delay acceptance of the deposit and question the quality of their produce.”<sup>22</sup> This required farmers and landlords to pay bribes to have the produce accepted.

Another factor driving the revolts, particularly in the case of the Safi tribes, was a change in mandatory conscription rules.<sup>23</sup> Previously, the *qaumi*, or “tribal,” method was used. This involved individual tribes being able to supply a certain number of members, with the soldiers often knowing one another well, and being able to serve together close to home. This was beneficial to tribes and tribal elders, as it granted them a certain amount of local autonomy, and “allowed the tribes to explicitly share in the exercise of force in the kingdom.”<sup>24</sup> In the 1940s, the government looked to consolidate the recruitment process for itself by eliminating tribal elders as intermediaries for conscription. Safi leaders were outraged by this and, in response, captured a unit of government soldiers that were sent to collect tribal conscripts.

The most significant cause of the tribal rebellions was loyalism to Amanullah Khan as the King of Afghanistan. This sparked the revolt led by Mazrak Zadran, a chieftain of the Zadran tribe and loyalist (“Amanite”), the fiercest and longest lasting of the tribal rebellions. In February of 1944, Zadran, led an insurrection against government troops in Afghanistan’s Southern Province. After his first rebellion was quelled, Mazrak led several more over the following few years alongside other tribal leaders. While several other rebellions were defeated relatively quickly, Mazrak continued to stage revolts until early 1947.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Edwards, D. B. (2003). *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> British War Cabinet Empire Report April 1944 : British War Cabinet : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming. (1944, May 25). Retrieved September 09, 2020, from [https://archive.org/details/cab-66-50\\_British\\_War\\_Cabinet\\_Empire\\_Report](https://archive.org/details/cab-66-50_British_War_Cabinet_Empire_Report)

## *The Revolts and World War II*

Many of the revolts occurred during the Second World War, allowing Afghanistan to appeal to both the Allied and Axis powers in order to maximize support in suppressing the uprisings.

Along with the firearms provided by the British Raj, the Afghan government also relied on aircraft supplied by British forces, using them for reconnaissance and air raids. The purchase of Italian aircraft and the provision of an Italian mission pressured the United Kingdom into providing further aid to the development of a relatively modern Afghan Air Force.

The defeat of Mazrak in early 1947 spelled the defeat of the Safi rebellions, and multi-year period of tribal uprisings as a whole.<sup>26</sup> Following Mazrak's defeat, the government perpetrated a period of ethnic cleansing in the Kunar Valley, killing many Safi Pashtuns and forcing others into exile.

## ***Rule of Mohammed Daoud Khan***

Mohammed Daoud Khan gained prominence during the era of the Tribal Revolts, when he helped lead Afghan forces against Safi rebels during the mid-to-late 1940s. Later, during the early 1950s, he served as a general in the Afghan Armed Forces.<sup>27</sup>

In 1953, Daoud was appointed Prime Minister of Afghanistan, replacing his uncle, Shah Mahmud Khan, and officially beginning his rule.<sup>28</sup> Daoud's rule was characterized by a steady progress of reforms. In 1956, he adopted the First Five-Year Plan, which improved significant elements of Afghanistan's infrastructure and public services, including providing for paved roads. Although the policy shares its name with a series of ill-fated plans for the centralized Soviet economy, it was actually carried out with the help of the United States.

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<sup>26</sup> Isby, D. C. (2011). *Afghanistan: Graveyard of empires: A new history of the borderlands*. New York, NY: Pegasus Books.

<sup>27</sup> Bearak, Mohammad Zahir Shah.

<sup>28</sup> Adamec, L. W., Clements, F. A. (2003). *Conflict in Afghanistan: A historical encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clío.

Later, however, Daoud also sought to expand the role and power of the military, for which the United States was unwilling to provide assistance, forcing Daoud to turn to the Soviet Union. Daoud also implemented several social reforms, including a 1959 curtailment of a requirement for women to wear a *chadaris*, or veil.

### Daoud and the Durand Line

In 1947, following the defeat of the Safi insurrections, war broke out on the Indian subcontinent between newly-formed India and Pakistan.<sup>29</sup>

Due to the heavy Muslim influence and Afghanistan's significant population of Pashtuns, Afghanistan took the side of the Pakistanis. This meant Pashtun Muslims could freely cross over the Durand Line, which separates Pakistan and Afghanistan, and into Kashmir. While not ideal for Afghanistan, stopping this flow of people was not possible without sparking serious unrest.

Almost immediately after the war, Afghanistan began to challenge the legitimacy of the Durand Line in an effort to begin re-integrating the Pashtun population.<sup>30</sup> First, the Afghan government put diplomatic pressure on Pakistan by voting against its admission into the United Nations in 1947. In 1960, Daoud began a military insurgency against Pakistan, but his forces were few in number and quickly defeated. At the same time, Afghanistan also engaged in an aggressive propaganda campaign to promote the issue of Pashtun reintegration.<sup>31</sup>

The following year, Afghanistan increased its military presence near Pakistan. This caused Pakistan and Afghanistan to sever ties entirely, including a complete, bilateral border closure. This was disastrous for the Afghan economy, and in particular Afghan nomadic pastoralists. The economic

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<sup>29</sup> Leake, E. (2017). *The defiant border: The Afghan-Pakistan borderlands in the era of decolonization, 1936-1965*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>30</sup> Ayooob, M. (2015). *The Middle East in world politics*. London, UK: Routledge.

<sup>31</sup> Afghanistan: Daoud as Prime Minister, 1953-63. Retrieved September 09, 2020, from <http://countrystudies.us/afghanistan/26.htm>

crisis caused Afghanistan to rely much more on the Soviet Union for support, both in terms of trade and military assistance.<sup>32</sup>

Because of this enormous economic toll, King Zahir Shah pressured his cousin Daoud to resign, which he ultimately did in March of 1963. King Zahir Shah moved into a more hands-on governing role, and Dr. Mohammad Yusuf Khan took over as the Prime Minister.<sup>33</sup>

### ***New Government Under Zahir Shah***

Following Daud's resignation, Zahir Shah implemented significant government reforms. Immediately upon taking power, Zahir Shah appointed a committee to draft a new constitution.<sup>34</sup> In 1963,<sup>35</sup> he convened a *loya jirga*, or "a country-wide gathering" that included prominent political leaders, including members of the existing *Wolesi Jirga* (House of Representatives of the People), *Meshrano Jirga* (Senate), Supreme Court, the newly-appointed constitutional commission, as well as several others who were directly elected or appointed by Zahir Shah.<sup>36</sup> In late September, the new constitution was ratified by all members of the *loya jirga* and by King Zahir Shah.

The constitution codified several significant governmental reforms. First, it prevented the royal family from taking part in politics, aside from the King. It also specified the term Afghan to refer to all citizens of Afghanistan. Finally, it granted women the ability to vote and serve in government. While the constitution declared that no law could exist against basic principles of Islam and incorporated religious judges into the judicial system, it granted supremacy to secular law.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Pike, J. (n.d.). Pashtunistan. Retrieved September 09, 2020, from <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/pashtunistan-1961.htm>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Afghanistan: The King Reigns: The Last Decade of the Monarchy, 1963-73. Retrieved September 09, 2020, from <http://countrystudies.us/afghanistan/27.htm>

<sup>35</sup> **NOTE:** For the purposes of this committee, this date has been slightly altered

<sup>36</sup> Smith, S. S. (2019). *Loya Jirgas and Political Crisis Management in Afghanistan: Drawing on the Bank of Tradition*. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

The committee takes place shortly after the completion of the Constitution and the inauguration of the new government in late 1963.

## CURRENT ISSUES

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### *Foreign Relations*

#### *The Cold War*

The Cold War is at its height, and few areas of the world are safe from the continual struggle for supremacy between the superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union. Afghanistan is no exception, and every foreign policy consideration, not to mention responses to most internal issues, will have to consider the possible reactions of the superpowers and the potential for aid or punishment by either.

Mohammad Zahir Shah has proclaimed his intention of channeling Afghani foreign policy away from its Daoud Khan-era Soviet alignment into a true “third way” of neutrality between the two superpowers,<sup>38</sup> gaining aid and maintaining friendly relations with both while firmly committing to neither. Yet even at this early stage, it is clear that attempting to navigate this road will face challenges from numerous quarters looking to pull Afghanistan closer to either superpower camp. On one side sits Soviet-trained bureaucrats and members of the armed forces who have fond memories of Soviet support for military development, large construction projects, and Pashtun-nationalist policies. On the other side sits reformers and largely western-trained intellectuals who see the patronage of the United States as the best hope for the further development of liberal democracy in Afghanistan and the most effective source of long-term economic aid and industrial ties. In the mix also stands large numbers of more traditionalist tribal groups and rural inhabitants whose views on the struggle shift based on the effects on such issues as social reform, rural

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<sup>38</sup> Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflict, and the Failures of Great Powers* (New York: Public Affaris, 2011) 99.

<sup>46</sup> A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan. (2011, May 04). Retrieved September 09, 2020, from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/asia-jan-june11-timeline-afghanistan>.

<sup>47</sup> A Guide to the United States’ History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, by Country, since 1776: Afghanistan. (n.d.). Retrieved September 09, 2020, from <https://history.state.gov/countries/afghanistan>.

development, and the Pashtunistan dispute. Although some members of the government have staked out firm positions for themselves on the foreign alignment issue, many are willing to alter their stances to fit their own personal goals and the ever-changing attitudes of the superpowers.

There are numerous ways in which the cabinet can alter their position in the Cold War. Most directly, there exists the potential for foreign visits, with King Zahir Shah, an enthusiastic traveler, potentially serving as a way to gain personal connections with foreign leaders and goodwill with foreign populations. There are also numerous foreign policy issues, notably the Sino-Soviet Split and the Pashtunistan debate, in which the government's position and actions, or lack thereof, could lead to a warming or souring of relations with the Americans or Soviets. The superpowers will also take an interest, although of varying degrees of intensity, in Afghanistan's internal reforms, with more market-friendly reforms gaining greater goodwill from the Americans, while more statist measures will be viewed with pleasure from Moscow. Additionally, the government may choose to request specific aid from Washington or Moscow, with such a request bringing Afghanistan closer to the superpower in question while raising fears in its opponent, with acceptance being based upon both specific negotiations and the superpowers' current attitude towards the Afghan government.

Navigating the Cold War environment will be perhaps the largest challenge that the new Afghan government faces, with the possibilities of great rewards from deep-pocketed superpowers desperate for any Cold War advantage and great risks from superpowers equally unwilling to see Afghanistan "fall" to the other side.

### United States

Afghanistan's relationship with the United States is one of its more complicated, with the western superpower existing simultaneously as the eternal hope of Afghan modernizers and an unreliable partner frequently distracted by more significant strategic priorities. When Daoud Khan first took power in 1953, he turned to the United States for arms and technological assistance, yet was rudely rebuffed by the Eisenhower administration. Although interested in gaining an ally in Afghanistan, the United States proved far more interested in maintaining its alliance with the Pakistanis, who

were threatened by Daoud Khan's bellicose stance on the Pashtunistan issue.<sup>39</sup> The subsequent Afghan reliance on Soviet aid left the Eisenhower administration suspicious of Afghani officials, further poisoning the relationship between the two countries.

American attitudes have changed under the Kennedy administration, which looked to wean Afghanistan off of Soviet dependence into a more genuine neutrality through more generous aid provisions. Although American training of promising Afghani officers did little to offset Afghanistan's military reliance upon the Soviets, American education and economic aid has proven far more fruitful. The United States recently initiated a program in partnership with American universities to help train Afghan teachers in the West and send American academics to teach at Afghan high schools and universities, most notably the Western-dominated Kabul University. Construction has also begun on a series of major infrastructure improvements, including the 312-mile-long Kabul to Kandahar highway to connect a significant part of the population, investment in Afghanistan's Ariana Airlines by the FAA and Pan-American Airlines, and aid to the ambitious Helmand River project to reinvigorate agriculture through irrigation works in the Helmand River Valley.<sup>40</sup> Although these projects were started in partnership with the Daoud Khan government, many are hopeful that distancing Afghanistan from the Soviets could allow for even greater American investment. However, although some have pushed for full alignment with the United States as a way to both gain more aid and cement Afghanistan's turn towards liberal democracy, many remain fearful that aligning too closely with the Americans might force Afghanistan to cede ground on its disputes with Afghanistan and Iran, not to mention the threat of angering the Soviet beast without security guarantees from the Americans. Unlike the Soviet Union, the United States has posed little threat to the sovereignty owing to the significant distance between the two, yet this distance also leaves the Americans far less interested in Afghani affairs and concerns than the Soviets, making them a far safer, yet potentially far less rewarding ally than the Soviet Union.

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<sup>39</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 90.

<sup>40</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 94-95.

## Soviet Union

The Russians have always displayed an interest in Afghanistan, and for over a century have loomed like a hungry bear over the strategically important Afghan passes. Russian involvement in Afghan affairs dates back to the Great Game, when the Russian Empire intermittently attempted to bring Afghanistan into its sphere of influence and supported it against British military attempts to bring it into theirs.<sup>41</sup> Although the situation became less exciting during the period of relative calm following the Second Anglo-Afghan War,<sup>42</sup> the strategic importance of Afghanistan to the security of Russia's southern border remained. This situation continued through the 1930's with the Soviet Union tolerating Afghanistan as a buffer with British India during Stalin's brutally effective consolidation of power<sup>43</sup> and joining with the British to force Afghanistan to expel its German diplomats during the Second World War.<sup>44</sup> This acceptance of Afghan neutrality changed in 1953, with the ascension of Khrushchev, a man more interested in the Third World than Stalin had been, and the premiership of Daoud Khan.<sup>45</sup>

Daoud Khan's hostility towards Pakistan and the resulting denial of American aid led him to accept Soviet military aid and a visit from Khrushchev in 1955. The Soviets and the Communist party, who had previously been held at arm's length and actively suppressed, were quickly embraced in Daoud Khan's efforts to rapidly modernize Afghanistan. Over the next decade, Soviet technical and financial support has allowed for the construction of many of Afghanistan's first industrial facilities and major infrastructure expansions near the Soviet border, although the resulting Soviet economic influence has been somewhat balanced by the more recently inaugurated expansion in American aid.<sup>46</sup> One area in which the Soviets have remained supreme is in their influence is over the armed forces, which, entirely dependent upon Soviet weaponry and technical support for both the army and air force, are subject to an unknown, yet certainly worrying, level of Soviet influence, even after

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<sup>41</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 38-39..

<sup>42</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 41.

<sup>43</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 77.

<sup>44</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 85.

<sup>45</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 90.

<sup>46</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 91-92.

the removal of Daoud Khan.<sup>47</sup> Although we have no firm evidence, many also fear that the KGB and GRU are responsible for the worrying increase in support for Communism amongst many young Pashtuns, although others have suggested that this is simply the natural result of greater exposure to foreign ideologies.<sup>48</sup> While many feel that Soviet aid has given the USSR too great a role in the Afghan economy and military, none can deny that they have been fairly free with their purse-strings, allowing for the first tentative steps in Afghanistan's modernization process, making their support an enormous boon for Afghanistan so long as their influence can be delicately managed.

### Pakistan

Aside from the superpowers, Afghanistan's most important foreign contact is its neighbor, Pakistan. The two countries are closely linked economically, with Afghanistan relying upon trade routes which run through Pakistan and over a million Afghan Pashtun nomads migrating seasonally between the two countries.<sup>49</sup> However, the relationship between the neighbors has been spoiled since the beginning by the issue of "Pashtunistan." Following the conclusion of the Second Anglo-Afghani War, the Pashtun-majority tribal areas to the west of the Indus were divided between Afghanistan and British India along the Durand Line<sup>50</sup>. Following the independence of Pakistan in 1947, some Pashtuns within Afghanistan and Pakistan began to agitate for the unification of the Pashtun lands, with the Durand line being seen as a colonial relic which served to limit the "natural" borders of a Pashtun-dominated Afghanistan. Under Daoud Khan, the issue of Pashtunistan dominated relations between the countries, with unsuccessful Afghan-organized infiltrations into Pakistan's tribal areas resulting in a severing of diplomatic and economic ties and Khan's resulting turn towards Soviet aid which would ultimately result in his fall in 1963.<sup>51</sup> The removal of Daoud Khan represents an opportunity for a reset in the relations between the two countries, especially as the more multiethnic reform government is less reliant upon the Pashtun nationalist support that Daoud Khan cultivated.

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<sup>47</sup> Richard Cronin, *Afghanistan: Challenges and Options for Reconstructing a Stable and Moderate State* (Library of Congress, 2002), 25.

<sup>48</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 92-93.

<sup>49</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 96.

<sup>50</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Durand Line." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 9 Apr. 2020, [www.britannica.com/event/Durand-Line](http://www.britannica.com/event/Durand-Line).

<sup>51</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 96.

Nevertheless, significant challenges remain. Economic ties, although nominally restored, remain far fewer than before the 1961 economic blockade, and many Afghan Pashtun nomads, already suspicious of the reformist government, would not take kindly to the complete abandonment of the Pashtunistan dream<sup>52</sup>. Furthermore, although Pakistan is currently enjoying a period of relative peace and rapid economic expansion under the rule of general-turned-president Ayub Khan, the possibility of conflict with India and the country's notoriously self-assertive military creates the potential for rapid changes in Pakistan's attitude towards her neighbors.<sup>53</sup>

### Iran

Iran and Afghanistan have a long and complicated history, with rulers from both regions frequently waging wars of conquest targeting the other. The only notable current dispute between the two nations is over water rights to the Helmand river, with Iran arguing that Afghanistan, where the river originates, draws too much water. Although a treaty was signed in 1939, it was never ratified by Afghanistan, with many inside the country arguing for unrestricted water rights or recompense for limiting their consumption<sup>54</sup>. In general, however, the two countries enjoy fairly warm relations, especially with the removal of Daoud Khan, whose pro-Soviet policies the American-aligned Iranians took exception to. Additionally, Iran, being on relatively friendly terms with both Afghanistan and Pakistan, has been raised by many as a possible mediator in the dispute of Pashtunistan and the full resumption of economic ties.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Dupree, Nancy Hatch, and Louis Dupree. "Afghanistan." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 17 Aug. 2020, [www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Mohammad-Zahir-Shah](http://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Mohammad-Zahir-Shah).

<sup>53</sup> The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Mohammad Ayub Khan." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 10 May 2020, [www.britannica.com/biography/Mohammad-Ayub-Khan](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Mohammad-Ayub-Khan).

<sup>54</sup> Samii, Bill. "Iran/Afghanistan: Still No Resolution For Century-Old Water Dispute." *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, 8 Apr. 2008, [www.rferl.org/a/1061209.html](http://www.rferl.org/a/1061209.html).

<sup>55</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 98.



## Internal Issues

### Economic Modernization

Afghanistan was left behind for much of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in terms of economic development, especially when compared to the fairly rapid economic modernization that occurred in the neighboring states of Iran and Pakistan. At the time of committee, domestic production remains centered around cottage industries and mostly consists of textiles for domestic consumption, with limited amounts exported abroad. Afghanistan also exports relatively small amounts of pomegranates, wool, and cotton, although export capacity is limited by an undeveloped

infrastructure network and its dependence upon trade routes through Pakistan.<sup>56</sup> Most modern production and foreign-affiliated businesses are based in and around Kabul, enriching the capital and its citizens, but further widening the gulf between the city and the rest of Afghanistan.<sup>57</sup> One area of potential growth is the tourism industry. The past few years have seen a significant uptick in middle-class tourism from the United States and Europe, with crowds drawn to Afghanistan's vibrant culture and natural beauty. However, the industry is hampered by inadequate infrastructure. Another unexplored possibility is mining; there have long been rumors of great mineral wealth in some of the northern mountains, although without properly funded expeditions, such conjecture is useless.<sup>58</sup> All this contributes to a lack of hard cash which hampers large-scale modernization projects. Afghanistan is forced instead to depend upon foreign aid and investment. The greatest struggles of previous governments, and with all likelihood future ones, are the twin issues of attracting such funding to a remote and relatively unknown country and ensuring that such reliance doesn't breed dependence. As Daoud Khan's experience with Soviet aid shows, foreign support can provide a range of benefits, but it can also be a poisoned chalice politically.

### Infrastructure and Rural Development

Despite the lofty goals of modernizing production and growing urban areas, for the foreseeable future, most of Afghanistan will continue to rely on subsistence farming and pastoral herding for their economic security. Only about one eighth of the country is made up of arable land, with the rest being relatively mountainous areas only suitable for pasturage.<sup>59</sup> Even the relatively few areas suitable for farming are underdeveloped, with the lack of proper irrigation and efficient farming practices leaving much of the soil poor and the crops vulnerable to failure. It is for this reason that initiatives such as the Helmand River Project, currently being financed with the help of the Americans, are essential, as they have the potential to bring about far greater crop yields, providing

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<sup>56</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Agriculture and Forestry," Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 17 August, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Agriculture-and-forestry>.

<sup>57</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 79.

<sup>58</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Agriculture and Forestry," Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 17 August, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Agriculture-and-forestry>.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

both greater food security and the potential for greater crop exports.<sup>60</sup> Another growing concern is the lack of regulation of Afghanistan's already limited forests, whose depletion in recent years as a result of greater fuel demand has potentially ruinous implications for soil health and ecosystems.<sup>61</sup> Afghanistan's mountainous terrain also means that transportation is often impossibly difficult, with modern or even dirt roads nonexistent in much of the country, limiting the capacity for both economic and political centralization. Although recent infrastructure projects financed by the Soviets and Americans are a good start, sustained substantial investment in road and rail networks is extremely important. Whatever choices this new government makes, it must remember that a failure to properly modernize, through agriculture reform or other large-scale rural development projects, will leave Afghanistan vulnerable to famine and drought.

### *Tribal Politics and Centralization*

The perennial challenge of every Afghan government since the beginning of the century has been that of attempting to centralize the state in the face of tribal resistance. Outside of the small but expanding urban areas, most Afghans, particularly in the north of the country, live in communities dominated by tribal traditions and governance that have been in place for centuries. The tribal codes that determine how most Afghans see each other and the world are often difficult for outsiders to understand. They are rooted in a complex combination of pre-Islamic legal codes and cherry-picked Islamic norms. These social structures, while typically very regressive concerning areas such as the rights of women, have proven remarkably durable and provided a somewhat stabilizing presence, helping to avoid large scale tribal feuds. The defining feature of the Afghan tribal structure is the premium it places upon asserting continued independence from outside control.<sup>62</sup> While this thirst for freedom has been extremely beneficial when Afghanistan has found itself resisting hostile armies, it has proven far less helpful to efforts to centralize and modernize the state.

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<sup>60</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 95.

<sup>61</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Agriculture and Forestry," Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 17 August, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Agriculture-and-forestry>.

<sup>62</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 47.

Despite the complications of governing such a heavily tribal country, centralization of authority has, in fact, been the area of modernization in which the government has made the most progress over the past few decades. The pace of this centralization has varied from radical and rapid under Amanullah,<sup>63</sup> to slower and more conciliatory under Nadir Shah.<sup>64</sup> Despite the importance of developing proper infrastructure, the greatest impediment to centralization remains the resistance of tribal groups. Without the cooperation of tribal leaders, it is almost impossible to govern large swaths of the country, particularly the North, yet even with their cooperation, Kabul's ability to exert control remains limited. The last 20 years have seen the government turn to a measured pace of centralization, securing the cooperation of some tribal groups through beneficial development projects, while using the growing armed forces to keep the others in line.<sup>65</sup> As this new government proceeds with its ambitious attempts to remake Afghanistan, navigating the tribes will be one of its most important challenges, and there are a wide variety of possible strategies that can be utilized. The government can proceed with the current centralization measures, continuing the growth of bureaucratic control over ever larger areas, but at an extremely slow pace. The government could also try to integrate tribal leaders into a broader national consensus, either by emphasizing Afghan nationalism in a manner similar to Daoud Khan or simply by educating future leaders in ways that integrate them into the growing middle class. It is also possible for a sufficiently large Afghan military to force the tribes into complete submission, although such a strategy would bring with it a near certainty of widespread unrest. Whatever path is chosen, it should be negotiated with care, for the degree to which this government can enforce its will upon the provinces will in large part determine the reach of its reforms.

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<sup>63</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 69.

<sup>64</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 77.

<sup>65</sup> Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 79-80.

## ROSTER (NON-RANKED)

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- **Chair** -King Zahir Shah
- **Dr Mohammed Yousuf** - Prime Minister
- **Abdul Wali** - Chief of the Royal Bodyguard
- **Wais Abdullah** - Minister of Agriculture
- **Nasir Ahmad Osani** - Minister of Commerce and Industry
- **Najibullah Kwaja Nili** - Minister of Communications
- **Abdullah Danish** - Minister of Defense
- **Mohammad Masoom Atmar** - Minister of Intelligence
- **Aakrama Jahani** - Minister of Education
- **Shavkat Dostum** - Minister of Energy and Water
- **Zahir Sarkhosh** - Minister of Finance
- **Mohammad Nur Ahmadi Etemadi** - Minister of Foreign Affairs
- **Emomali Latifi**- Minister of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs
- **Najiba Popalzai** - Minister of Labor
- **Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal** - Influential Newspaper Editor
- **Shegufa Sherzai** - Representative of the Northern Rug Cartel
- **Sher Mohammad Wali** - Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Afghanistan
- **Storai Zadran** - Minister of Interior Affairs

- **Hasani Abdullo** - President of the Afghanistan Cartographic Institute
- **Abdul Zahir** - Minister of Health
- **Mohammad Musa Shafiq** - Director of the National Museum of Afghanistan
- **Laleh Rahmanzai** - Fruit Magnate
- **Dornaaz Jalbani** - Minister of Rural Development
- **Abasin Kareem** - Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation
- **Nasrin Hussani** - Minister of Urban Development and Housing
- **Jamila Karzai** - Leader of the Afghanistan Women's Council

## BIOGRAPHIES - ALPHABETICAL (BY DESCENDING FIRST NAME)

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### ***Aakrama Jahani - Minister of Education***

Growing up as the second son of an intellectual family from Kabul, Aakrama Jahani spent most of his youth in various schools around the city. Dismayed by his own experience with the poor standard of education offered to children, he decided that he wanted to become a schoolteacher to improve the local schools. He enrolled in Kabul University and graduated top of the class. He taught as a teacher for a few years before being recruited into the Ministry of Education, where he quickly rose to become the Minister of Education. As Minister, Aakrama Jahani cares deeply about the education of Afghani youth, especially in rural areas, where public schooling is practically nonexistent. He is wary of the Shah's promises of purely secular educational reform; as the grandchild of an imam, he is careful to balance secular and religious forces in education. As education is tightly related to tribal affairs (language of instruction, vocational training, etc.), the Ministry often works in tandem with other ministries, including the Ministry of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs.

### ***Abasin Kareem - Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation***

The youngest son of a minor Pashtun tribal leader, Abasin was sent to Kabul to be educated following a failed tribal rebellion. Ever since he first laid eyes on an airplane on his first day in Kabul, he has lived to fly, dreaming of escaping the rough terrain of Afghanistan to freely move through the sky. After graduating from Kabul University, he traveled to Pakistan to become a certified airline pilot. In 1955, he became the first Afghan hired by Afghanistan's Ariana Airlines, making him a minor celebrity overnight. His level of fame further increased when he also became the first Afghan pilot to successfully execute a crash-landing in rough terrain. Although now unable to fly due to his injuries, he brings his youthful energy and enthusiasm for the air into his new post as Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, where he dreams of bringing the joy and advantages of flight to all Afghans. Whether Afghanistan has the capacity to support such dreams remains to be seen.

### ***Abdul Wali - Chief of the Royal Bodyguard***

The only son of a household servant to the royal family, Abdul Wali found himself the unlikely recipient of royal charity upon the untimely death of his mother. Initially “adopted” by the royal family to be a friend for the crown prince, his honesty and sense of responsibility gained him the close friendship of Zahir Shah and a place of respect within the royal household. His loyalty to Zahir Shah in the aftermath of the Nadir Khan’s assassination cemented their friendship, and his subsequent distinguished service during the Khost disturbances in the late 1940s earned him the prominent position of Chief of the Royal Bodyguard. Although lacking the prestige of a foreign education, his access to the king’s ear has allowed him a great deal of influence over the decades, and he played a major role in the dismissal of Daoud Khan. Imbued with a fierce loyalty towards the royal family, he is determined above all to ensure that the king’s position remains secure against radicals of any stripe. His word is his bond, and, having given an oath to defend the Zahir Shah, he fully intends to discharge that oath until his dying breath.

### ***Abdul Zahir - Minister of Health***

Abdul Zahir is the somber and serious Minister of Health. He comes from a long line of medical practitioners; his father was one of the first students sent to the West to study medicine, and Abdul Zahir himself was trained as a doctor at Kabul University. His time as a student led him to realize that the Afghani medical system faces deep, systematic problems that make it difficult for good public health. As the head of an important ministry, his duties include maintaining public hospitals, distributing vaccinations, and improving the outdated medical system, especially in more rural areas. In a country that still faces high rates of child and birth mortality rates, as well as a constant shortage of trained medical staff and supplies, the Minister’s jobs are long and complicated; many of them require coordination with other ministries. Abdul Zahir is ambivalent towards working with the cabinet, as he thinks that the Shah’s connections to the West will help bring new medical technology, knowledge, and aid into the country. However, he is wary of the Shah’s consolidation of power, which he thinks will lead to internal turmoil and violence.

### ***Abdullah Danish - Minister of Defense***

The youngest son of a peasant family from outside Ghazni, Abdullah Danish joined the Afghan army at a young age, looking for the action and career advancement that he could never hope to achieve at home. Through diligence and a certain amount of charm, he rose through the ranks. He served with distinction in the army's suppression of the recalcitrant tribes during the Khost disturbances, where he made effective use of his division's modern weaponry and a liberal dispensation of bribes to ensure the quick reduction of resistance. His career languished, however, during the decade-long rule of Daoud Khan, owing to his personal enmity with the prime minister and especially due to his opposition to Soviet advisors, whose influence over the younger cadres of the armed forces he found dangerous. Now that he has finally reached the summit of the armed forces, he aims to modernize the tactics and weaponry of Afghanistan's armed forces. Although he respects the authority of the king, he has little patience for bureaucrats, seeing the armed forces as the only honest group in the nation, imbued with a respect for authority yet also a chance for meritocratic advancement.

### ***Dornaaz Jalbani - Minister of Rural Development***

Dornaaz Jalbani grew up in the countryside of Southeast Afghanistan. A member of the minority Baloch people, her hometown was underdeveloped, with most families struggling to survive. As a daughter of an imam, she was able to go to a nearby vocational school and train as a seamstress. Dissatisfied with her life, she moved to Kabul, where she found a job as a secretary at the Ministry. Her charm and personal experience attracted the experience of her seniors, who trained her into higher positions until finally becoming the Minister of Rural Development. As a member of a minority tribe and hailing from a rural community, she understands firsthand the importance of rural development to better Afghanistan. She approaches the Shah's cabinet with skepticism, thinking that the cabinet spends too much attention on urban matters.

### ***Emomali Latifi - Minister of Frontiers and Tribal Affairs***

The eldest son of a Tajik tribal leader in northern Afghanistan, Emomali Latifi found his education in the complicated world of tribal politics and negotiations. Although he fought against the

government during the Khost disturbances, he eventually played an important role in reconciling the local tribes with the government in Kabul following the army's successes. Invited to join the new government, owing to his influence over the tribes and his willingness to work with the government, he feels somewhat out of place amongst the well-educated and relatively worldly members of the cabinet. While they operate by the more Western norms of the "new" Afghanistan, he still lives by the honor-bound tribal ethos of his forefathers, never betraying an oath and never forgiving a grudge. He is, however, privy to knowledge that none of the other ministers seem to be aware of. He knows that for all of its talk of reforming the country, the government only rules the country so long as the disunity of the traditional tribal leaders allows it to do so.

### ***Hasani Abdullah - President of the Afghanistan Cartographic Institute***

Born to a prosperous Pashtun family in Kabul, Hasani Abdullah has always stuck out for his intellectual bend and fantastic dreams. While other students who traveled to the West returned with prestigious degrees in economics or politics, he returned with doctorates of geology and cartography, giving him the distinction of being the only Afghan expert in his fields. Upon his return, he spent almost a decade traveling around Afghanistan's mountainous hinterland, carefully recording important geological features and gaining friends amongst many isolated tribal groups. He returned with a far better understanding of the resources and terrain of Afghanistan than any other man in Kabul, winning him the favor of the King. Now as the head of the Afghanistan Cartographic Institute, he and his small team of loyal associates are working on the ambitious project of mapping the entirety of Afghanistan - a plan complicated both by limited resources and the innate difficulties of mapping such a mountainous country.

### ***Jamila Karzai - Leader of the Afghanistan Women's Council***

Jamila Karzai is the energetic, charismatic leader of the Afghanistan Women's Council. She was raised in a family of intellectuals from Kabul and graduated with a degree in education from Kabul University. She became a member of the Afghanistan Women's Council through a family friend, who was a prominent female poet. Seeing the status of women in the country, she decided to focus her energy on the Council, ultimately becoming its leader. The Council focuses on a broad range of

issues, including education, legal and medical rights, and vocational opportunities. She approaches the cabinet with skepticism, not sure about the cabinet's commitment to women's rights; however, she is a strong supporter of the Shah, as she thinks that the Shah's Western outlook, as well as his American support, is a positive force for women's rights in the country.

### ***Laleh Rahmanzai - Fruit Magnate***

Laleh Rahmanzai is the head of a successful fruit distributing company in Afghanistan. Born to a family of wealthy orchard owners in the South, she was able to use her connections to expand the company into the nation-wide enterprise it is today. As the owner of a company, her interests may not necessarily align with the state's own interests. However, because of her position as a leading businesswoman, her interests can be considered the interests of Afghanistan's ruling elite. Her company is looking to expand overseas. As such, she is interested in policies that would encourage more trade - in other words, good relations with nearby countries and no direct wars. Her company recently has been having troubles with infrastructure and communications, problems that plague most businesses in the country. She does not particularly care for the political games of the council and is willing to work with anyone that would give her a competitive edge.

### ***Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal - Influential Newspaper Editor***

Born to a prosperous shopkeeper in Kabul, Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal spent his early days listening to the grievances of urban laborers that clashed with his middle-class family. As a result, he became convinced that Afghanistan needed radical change, yet that such change must proceed slowly and with tact to be successful. Shortly after graduating from high school, he founded his first newspaper, the Kabul Chronicle; the paper's low costs and efforts to raise circulation amongst the literate lower classes of the city allowed it to quickly grow into one of Afghanistan's larger papers. Within a few years he was the editor-in-chief of several large newspapers around the country, giving him a platform by which he could communicate with much of the nation. He has made good use of this platform, decrying, at first subtly and then more openly, the abuses of Daoud Khan, and thereby playing an important role in bringing about his removal. Since the formation of the new government, he has been a tireless advocate for evolutionary socialism. He proclaims his loyalty to the monarchy

while gradually pushing Afghanistan towards a socialist state, which he believes will bring prosperity to all.

### ***Mohammad Masoom Atmar - Minister of Intelligence***

The son of one of the wealthiest and best-connected families in Kabul, Mohammad Masoom Atmar has spent his entire life mired in the intrigue of the court and government in Kabul. When the previous Minister of Intelligence was found dead in his office after an apparent suicide, he was the obvious choice to become the next minister. After serving Daoud Khan for years, crushing his political opponents with skillfully targeted brutality, he sensed the weakness in his master's position. He covertly backed the current Shah's coup against Daoud Khan, ensuring his place in the new government. He has been called at various times a communist, republican, and a reactionary, yet none of these terms aptly describes the enigma that is the longstanding Minister of Intelligence. Unlike many others in the new government, he is no idealist, holding his own self-interest as his only true concern. Although for the moment he has chosen to align himself with the forces of reform, no doubt that should the winds change, he will not hesitate to change his stripes once again.

### ***Mohammad Nur Ahmadi Etemadi - Minister of Foreign Affairs***

Born to a mildly successful landowner in the city of Kandahar, Mohammad Nur Ahmadi Etemadi spent much of his youth traveling throughout Afghanistan and neighboring countries. His early travels excited a fascination with the politics of the region, and following his studies at the University of Kabul, he was recruited into the Afghani foreign service. While serving in both Tehran and Islamabad, he worked his way up through the ranks not through his brilliance but rather through his determination and aversion to risk. Now, having finally reached the summit of the diplomatic corps, he is determined to leave his imprint on Afghani foreign policy. Aware of the dangers of aligning too completely with either the Americans or the Russians, he instead hopes to forge more productive relationships with Afghanistan's neighbors, ideally leaving the region more stable and Afghanistan's position more secure.

### ***Dr Mohammad Yousuf - Prime Minister***

Born to a wealthy Pashtun family, Dr. Mohammad Yousuf possessed from an early age a fascination with the world beyond the confines of his mountainous homeland. Desiring a better education than Afghanistan could provide, he pursued degrees in political science and international relations at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and the University of Göttingen, where he witnessed his friends and teachers cowed by the ideological brutality of Nazism. Returning to Afghanistan shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War, he taught at the University of Kabul before being appointed Deputy Minister of Education. This relatively uneventful position was followed by more distinguished service as the minister of Commerce and Industry, during which he championed economic partnerships with foreign firms, helping to make Afghanistan a far more accommodating locale for foreign investment. With the ousting of Daoud Khan, Dr. Yousuf has made history by becoming the first non-royal prime minister in Afghan history. His position grants him a great deal of authority and influence (if not real power) in a nation which, despite its democratic trappings, is still thoroughly dominated by the king.

### ***Mohammad Musa Shafiq - Director of the National Museum of Afghanistan***

Mohammad Musa Shafiq is the spry and humorous director of the National Museum of Afghanistan. He was born to a large family in the northern provinces, in the ancient city of Balkh. Growing up in the old city, which was an important center for Buddhism, Islam and Zoroastrianism, he felt a very strong connection to history as a child. This encouraged him to study history at Kabul University, where he graduated at the top of his class. As the director, he is often in contact with Afghanistan's rich and multicultural history, making him an expert on the many current-day tribes and their customs. Perhaps because of his insular nature as an academic, he believes that the solutions of Afghanistan can be found within the country, and views outside influence with suspicion. He is a firm believer in the Afghanistan state and its multicultural nature, and opposes tribal divisions; he thinks that such divisions had led to internal turmoil and civil wars in the past that should not be repeated.

### ***Najiba Popalzai - Minister of Labor***

Najiba Popalzai is the Minister of Labor hailing from Kunduz. She is the daughter of mechanics who were trained in the Soviet Union. As a result, she was able to attend the People's Friendship University in Moscow, where she graduated with a degree in engineering. As the Minister of Labor, she focuses on vocational training and industrial labor, seeing these industries as key to improving Afghanistan's place in the world. She is also interested in increasing women's access to labor markets, especially in more male-dominated areas. (Women in Afghanistan tend to work in home-based industries, such as sewing, which are harder to industrialize on a mass scale.) As a product of the Soviet education system, she has favorable views towards the Soviets and sees the West with relative skepticism.

### ***Najibullah Kwaja Nili - Minister of Communications***

Growing up as the oldest of 5 children in Mazar, Najibullah spent his formative years as a businessman. However, his business was never able to take off due to the lack of an effective intercity communication system. He moved to Kabul when he was 25 years old, working at first as a government accountant in the Ministry of Communications. His skills in accounting and his previous experience as a businessman helped him climb the ranks and ultimately become the Minister of Communications. As Minister, his main goal is to increase connectivity within the country, whether that be through State TV, the postal service, telephones, or other essential services. Although there is still a long way to go, the Minister has faith in the Shah's centralized power, especially due to the Shah's good relations with the West, as much of the system he runs is based off of the West.

### ***Nasir Ahmad Osani - Minister of Commerce and Industry***

The eldest son of a prosperous Kabul builder, Nasir Ahmad Osani spent his formative years handling the family business' accounts, work that was ultimately rewarded when he eventually inherited the construction firm. His hard-earned prosperity would collapse, however, when the Second World War disrupted his already tenuous supply chains, leaving his business in tatters. Although he would eventually rebuild the company after years of hard work, the experience left him convinced of the

need to cultivate Afghani industry. Having seen firsthand the inherent dangers of overreliance on foreign production, he knows that only a strong domestic industry will allow businesses like his to grow and multiply. Although eager to receive any international aid that might come Afghanistan's way, he is suspicious of ceding too much to foreign companies at the expense of local industry.

### ***Nasrin Hussani - Minister of Urban Development and Housing***

Born to Iranian parents in the city of Farah, close to the Iranian border, Nasrin Hussani attended university in the Soviet Union and received a degree in architecture. After graduation, she worked to build housing blocks in Uzbekistan. She was recruited by the Ministry for her experience in public housing projects and quickly rose in rank to become the Minister. As Minister, her main concerns are housing the massive influx of migrants from the countryside, many of whom live in substandard housing in the outskirts of major cities. She is often frustrated at the state of infrastructure in the country, which hampers the Ministry's ability to execute urban development. Another important goal of hers is to urbanize the country, as she believes that mass urbanism is essential to a strong Afghani state. A product of the Soviet system, she outwardly supports Soviet influence within the country. Secretly, however, she hopes to emulate Western cities, which she views as more prosperous than their Soviet counterparts.

### ***Shavkat Dostum - Minister of Energy and Water***

Born to an Uzbek landowner outside of Sherghan, Shavkat Dostum spent large parts of his formative years visiting relatives in the Uzbek SSR. Although frightened by tales of Soviet brutality, he was nonetheless fond of their invaluable help improving the electric grid of the country, particularly in northern regions. After studying at Moscow Polytechnic University, he returned to Afghanistan to work on infrastructure and energy projects. He served an effective tenure as the chief Afghani engineer on the Darunta Dam project, where he worked closely with Soviet contractors. Where others see only rivers, he sees the potential of a fully electrified Afghanistan, and he views his new post as a vehicle to marshal the funds and manpower to achieve his dreams, no matter the cost.

### ***Shegufa Sherzai - Representative of the Northern Rug Cartel***

The only child of a moderately prosperous Tajik rug merchant in Kunduz, Shegufa Sherzai had to take over her father's business at a young age following his untimely death at the hands of a local protection racket. Forced to survive in a hostile and unforgiving business environment, she refused to bow to the pressure of local gangs, instead playing them off each other and hiring her own group of "guards" to protect her business concerns. In the decades that followed, she used skillful "persuasion" to convince other northern rug merchants to form a cartel, naturally headed by her, to regulate prices and ensure maximum profitability. Thanks to her efforts, no rug sold north of Kabul goes through a non-cartel distributor, making her immensely rich in the process. Her only aim now is to ensure that her business interests are safeguard against all threats, whether than be ruinous taxation, foreign imports, or trade disruptions.

### ***Sher Mohammad Wali - Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Afghanistan***

One of the oldest men in the cabinet, the world of 19th century Afghanistan that Sher Mohammad Wali was born into would be alien to most of his peers in the cabinet. Yet, this world has remained essentially unchanged for the majority of the people that the cabinet governs. He was one of the first prominent Afghan's to leave the country for his education, studying law in British India before returning to Afghanistan in 1910. He has served every monarch since Habibullah Khan in some capacity, gaining experience throughout the decades that has granted him a great deal of prestige in the eyes of the country. Although hardly a radical or liberal by any means, over the years he has striven to rationalize and centralize Afghanistan's laws, looking to replicate some of the order that he witnessed in the subcontinent. As Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, he wields a great deal of influence over the interpretation of laws and commands a platform from which he may communicate readily with all learned Afghans.

### ***Storai Zadran - Minister of Interior Affairs***

Storai Zadran hails from Kabul and is the eldest daughter of a police officer. After graduating from the University of London, she was trained as a diplomat and worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

for a number of years. During her many tours, mainly to European nations, she was able to get a firsthand view on law enforcement and public safety bureaus. Inspired by this, as well as her father's experience with crime in Kabul, she transferred over to the Ministry of Interior Affairs, working her way up from an officer of the Afghan National Police to the Minister. As Minister, she is most concerned with safety within the country, particularly in the border regions along the Soviet Union and Pakistan. She is worried about foreign influence, as the Ministry finds it hard to monitor and maintain control of the country when there is overt foreign influence. However, she likes the strong-handed rule of the Shah, as she believes that it brings order and stability to the country.

### ***Wais Abdullah - Minister of Agriculture***

Growing up as the fifth of seven children in a small village north of Herat, Wais Abdullah worked from a young age on his family's small plot of land. While meeting with government representatives in Kabul to demand greater investment in irrigation systems, he caught the eye of Daoud Khan, who included him amongst a group of students sent to study in the USSR. During his studies at Moscow State University, he was given the opportunity to observe Soviet agricultural methods under Khrushchev's agricultural expansion firsthand, being particularly impressed by the promise of mechanization and competent technocratic management. Having returned to Afghanistan flushed with new and ambitious ideas, he is determined to pull Afghanistan's agricultural sector into the 20th century by any means necessary.

### ***Zahir Sarkhosh - Minister of Finance***

The only son of a wealthy Hazara merchant, Zahir Sarkhosh was marked as unique from an early age for both his intelligence and seemingly boundless optimism. While studying economics at the University of Zurich during the Second World War, he was horrified by the collapse of Europe into a mass of warring nation states, comparing it unfavorably with the relative stability and prosperity he saw in multiethnic and democratic Switzerland. He spent the years immediately after the War touring Europe, greatly impressed by the positive effects of the Marshall Plan on the prosperity and stability of its recipients. Now as Minister of Finance, he hopes to encourage Western investment and economic advice as he looks to place Afghanistan on a sound financial footing in this new era. As

one of the few members of his ethnicity to have gained national standing, he has enthusiastically embraced the multiethnic and democratic ideals of the new government, seeing participation in a stable democracy as the most promising path to prosperity for his long-oppressed people.

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