

# **Governance in Afghanistan: Context and Possibilities**

**A Monograph  
by  
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## **Abstract**

Governance in Afghanistan: Context and Possibilities by Major Jason A. Yanda, United States Army, 56 pages.

Since 2001, the capabilities of the Afghan state have been a priority on the world stage. The reign of Amir Abdur Rahman, who established the current state of Afghanistan, is critical in understanding the development of the current state, and the possibilities that are open to the current government. When Amir Abdur Rahman ascended to the throne of Kabul, he ruled little more than the city itself. Over the course of his 21 year reign, he established institutions that enabled the first peaceful transition of power in the history of Afghanistan, and formalized the state that currently exists.

Understanding the methods used by Abdur Rahman, the context in which he used them, and the results of the application of those methods shed light on the understanding of the Afghan state and the possibilities for the current Afghan state. Abdur Rahman's "internal imperialism" and cooption of the Islamic religious authorities successfully extended state authority, but allowed the foundations of alternative power structures to remain. Abdur Rahman's military modernization, governmental bureaucratization and economic development again facilitated short term stability, but again allowed the return of instability over time. Finally, the imposition of boundaries on Afghanistan by the external state system changed the nature of boundaries and shaped the extension of state power. This context, the methods employed, and the results of those actions provide insight into the propensities of the Afghan system in relation to the state. This insight then shapes the understanding of the possibilities that are open for extending the power of the current state in relation to similar actors in a similar system.

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## Introduction

Since the overthrow of the Taliban government in 2001, the United States has struggled to find, establish and support a stable, legitimate government in Afghanistan. The current President, Hamid Karzai, is derisively referred to as the Mayor of Kabul.<sup>1</sup> Because control of Afghanistan has been continuously and violently contested since the Soviet invasion in 1979, studying the foundations of the singularly successful Afghan government prior to the current period of destabilization should provide insights to consolidating the power of the Afghan government today. Although the roots of the Afghan state lie in the 18<sup>th</sup> century empire of Ahmad Shah Durrani, the first and only Afghan leader to establish a state that outlived its founder was Amir Abdur Rahman, who reigned 1880-1901. Studying the processes used by Abdur Rahman to consolidate the power of his central government provides a useful case study of successful governmental development in Afghanistan. It may also serve to illustrate how the United States can support the development of the central government of Afghanistan in ways that are relevant to that unique context. Abdur Rahman employed five means to consolidate power in the central government: “internal imperialism”; religion; military modernization; governmental and industrial development, and boundary definition.

This research is a historical case study of the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman that analyzes his methods of power consolidation in order to better understand the possibilities available for developing governance in Afghanistan and to better support the development of stable central government in Afghanistan. Amir Abdur Rahman’s methods of consolidating power in the

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<sup>1</sup> Simon Robinson, “Karzai's Kabul: Fit For a King?” *Time*, April 18, 2002, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,231457,00.html> (accessed November 24, 2010); Mir Adnan Aziz, "The Bellicose Mayor Of Kabul," *Crosscurrents.org*, July 19, 2008, <http://www.countercurrents.org/aziz190708.htm> (accessed December 2, 2010); Jackie Northam, “In Afghanistan, U.s. Success Depends On Karzai,” *National Public Radio*, December 21, 2009, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=121509106> (accessed November 24, 2010); Robert Haddick, "This Week at War: War Is Hell. COIN Is Worse," *Small Wars Journal*, August 20, 2010, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2010/08/this-week-at-war-war-is-hell-c/> (accessed December 2, 2010).

central government can shed light on what is possible in the Afghan context. The foundation of the argument reflects current thinking on state power development theory, which has provided the basis for developing central government power in Afghanistan. After the theoretical foundation, the history of Afghanistan prior to Abdur Rahman's reign will set the context of Abdur Rahman's reign.

The work of Jeffrey Herbst, which describes a power consolidation model for African nations, can be seen as relevant to Afghanistan. Like many African countries, Afghanistan as a territorial state was artificially created and defined by externally imposed boundaries rather than coalescing around a shared security requirement.<sup>2</sup> Herbst's model of the costs of extending power, the strength of boundaries, and the characteristics of the regional state system provide the framework to compare the actions of Amir Abdur Rahman and the current Afghan government.

The focus of this monograph is the consolidation of power in the central government by Amir Abdur Rahman, during his reign from 1880 to 1901, in relation to Herbst's model. Abdur Rahman's activities fall into five general categories: "internal imperialism," religion, military modernization, bureaucratic development, and boundary definition. These activities are easily understood in the light of Herbst's model. Faced with an international situation that bounded his expansionist traditions, Abdur Rahman focused his energy on the military subjugation of the groups inside his boundaries, a process that Dupree termed "internal imperialism."<sup>3</sup> In expanding the influence of his central government, Abdur Rahman also coerced the support of the Islamic religious establishment. In support of his "internal imperialism," Abdur Rahman expanded and modernized his army, creating a force that allowed him to impose his will on internal opponents. Abdur Rahman also developed bureaucratic institutions to enable the enforcement of his will

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<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 417.

through civilian bureaucratic systems. Finally, although more imposed *upon* him than driven *by* him, Abdur Rahman signed agreements that formalized his state's boundaries that have endured through the present. After another historical sketch, demonstrating the results of Abdur Rahman's developments, the monograph will summarize and propose possible solutions to the development of central government power in Afghanistan.

One of the primary difficulties in discussing this topic is defining the name of the political entity we are discussing. Through most of recorded history, the current state of Afghanistan did not exist; the current political boundaries were only defined during the reign of Abdur Rahman, and have been subject to disagreements through the present. The earliest modern western contact in the area, Elphinstone, called the area that is now Afghanistan "the kingdom of Caubul," and even then acknowledged the difficulty in defining the kingdom and its limits.<sup>4</sup> Even in the late-1800s, Bellew restricted the term "Afghan" to a subset of the Pashtun tribes, while using "Afghanistan" for a territory that did not coincide with either the Pashtun tribal territory, or the territory of the "Afghan" portion of the Pashtun.<sup>5</sup> This monograph will use the term "Afghanistan" to refer to the modern territorial boundaries, even prior to their existence. Contemporary terms will refer to other political, dynastic or other organizations.

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<sup>4</sup> Monstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, and its Dependencies, in Persia, Tartary, and India, Comprising a View of the Afghaun Nation and a History of the Dooraunee Monarchy* (London: Richard Bentley, 1839), 112-114.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Walter Bellew, *Afghanistan and the Afghans* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1879), 180-208. Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1908), 23-24, divides the peoples of Afghanistan in Afghan (Pashtun) and non-Afghan "races."



## Literature Review

A review of two bodies of literature is necessary to this research. Examining the theoretical thinking about the concept of the state, in particular the Afghan state and development of state power, provides a framework to analyze Abdur Rahman's development of state power in Afghanistan. Studying the personality and reign of Abdur Rahman provides context to that development. Synthesizing these two bodies of literature will provide a useful way of thinking about state power in Afghanistan and provide insights for future actions to strengthen the power of the Afghan state.

### State Theory

The foundation of understanding the centralization of state power in Afghanistan is the concept of "state." States are "coercion-wielding organizations that are distinct from households and kinship groups and exercise clear priority in some respects over all other organizations within substantial territories." In contrast, modern states or nation-states are states "governing multiple contiguous regions and their cities by means of centralized, differentiated and autonomous structures."<sup>6</sup> Sarah Lister, from the Crisis States Research Centre, summarized the Lockean and Weberian views of states, arguing that states provide three core functions: security, representation and welfare.<sup>7</sup> Barnett Rubin, who is a leading Afghanistan expert, and Herbst both described the development of nation-states as a result of conflict, and propose that conflict strengthens the state, defines boundaries, develops institutions to strengthen capitalist systems, and creates strong relationships between state and citizen. Rubin contrasted this high level of interaction between nation-states and their population with "weak engagement" between rulers and ruled in

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1990* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Lister, Sarah, *Understanding State-Building and Local Government in Afghanistan*, Working Paper no. 14, (London: Crisis States Research Centre) 2007, 2.

“premodern” states, that did not result in the development of broad-based, centralized institutions.<sup>8</sup> Fragile and failed states share two primary characteristics, the inability to provide security for their population and the incapacity to meet basic needs of their population. These two factors, alone or in combination, undermine the legitimacy of these governments.<sup>9</sup>

Building on European state theory, Herbst argued that African states are different because of the peculiar problems faced in extending authority over distance. Herbst contended that, despite the fact that all current states maintain the form of the European state, the European process of state making is not applicable to much of the rest of the world. Instead, Herbst proposed that understanding state development in Africa can be gained by understanding a trio of “dynamics: the assessment of the costs of expansion by individual leaders; the nature of buffer mechanisms established by the state; and the nature of the regional state system.” Like the African states analyzed by Herbst, Afghanistan developed as a buffer state between British India and the Russian Empire, without the internal or external conflict that produced state institutions in the model European nation-state. The geography of Afghanistan, similar to many of the African states, mitigated the spread of consolidated state power.<sup>10</sup> These similarities make Herbst’s model a useful reference for analyzing developments in the development of the state in Afghanistan.

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<sup>8</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1995), 5-7, and Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 13-15.

<sup>9</sup> Monika Francois and Inder Sud, “Promoting Stability and Development in Fragile and Failed States,” *Development Policy Review*, 24, no. 2, 2006, 141-160, 149.

<sup>10</sup> Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 21-23.

## The Afghan State

There are several views of the current state in Afghanistan. These views cover the spectrum of the applicability of the concept of state in relation to Afghanistan. Some observers have contended that state governance is irrelevant to Afghanistan because “the graveyard of empires” is essentially ungovernable. Shah M. Tarzi described Afghanistan in 1992 as a “Hobbesian State of Nature.” He claimed that the ongoing civil war in Afghanistan was threatening the state itself, with minorities, particularly Tajiks and Uzbeks with ethnic links to other nations, dominating the Afghan national government for the first time.<sup>11</sup> In warning against the United States’ involvement in Afghanistan, Milton Beardon, the CIA’s station chief in Pakistan from 1986-1989, described Afghanistan’s “natural state” as ethnic and factional squabbling.<sup>12</sup> At its core, this view would hold that the western state system is only aspirational for Afghanistan, given the historical and cultural context.

While not as extreme as Beardon in his rejection of the viability of the Afghan state, many have described the Afghan nation-state as essentially untenable, owing to the necessity for tribal support to sustain a functioning government. This view has largely been accepted by the U.S. military, based on past success with tribally based security and support to central government in Iraq.<sup>13</sup> Major Jim Gant, a U.S. Army Special Forces officer with experience working with tribal Afghans, said that progress in Afghanistan depends on a tribal movement

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<sup>11</sup> Shah M. Tarzi, “Afghanistan in 1992: A Hobbesian State of Nature” *Asian Affairs*, vol. XXXIII, no. 2, (February 1993): 165-174.

<sup>12</sup> Milton Beardon, “Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires,” *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 6 (November-December 2001): 17.

<sup>13</sup> GEN McChrystal’s COIN guidance as Commander, ISAF, mentioned “tribes” or “tribal” three times, and referenced local power groups several more times. GEN Petraeus’ COIN guidance, while not specifically referencing tribes, focuses on local solutions to issues. In addition, the creation of tribal security forces (Sons of Iraq) was a centerpiece of GEN Petraeus’ operations in Iraq.

supported by the U.S.<sup>14</sup> Others see dependence on tribal support as generating short term legitimacy but inhibiting long term stability by leaving the state open to “fluctuations and fissure” because of the temporary nature of tribal politics.<sup>15</sup>

Other analysts have proposed some variation of a federal system for Afghanistan. Major Bryan E. Carroll suggested a federal solution for Afghanistan in his 2009 SAMS monograph. Arguing that a federal solution will alleviate historical ethnic grievances against the central government, ethnic tensions and economic disparities, Major Carroll contended that a federal system will enhance governmental penetration in Afghanistan, enhancing legitimacy and strengthening the state.<sup>16</sup> Federalism is an attractive solution to the issue of both ethnic and territorial representation in the state.<sup>17</sup> As early as 2001, however, others have countered the call for a federal Afghanistan. S. Frederick Starr, an analyst at the Johns Hopkins University Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, called such proposals “not only wrong-headed but dangerous.” Starr contended, instead, that Afghanistan needs a strong central system to create a “functioning center” and overcome “an excess of centrifugal forces,” not a limited central authority, as established in the United States, Germany or Canada.<sup>18</sup>

Without advocating a federal solution, others see local efforts at governance and stabilization as key to state-building in Afghanistan. Lister proposed development of governmental infrastructure in the provinces of Afghanistan, especially through public

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<sup>14</sup> Jim Gant, *One Tribe at a Time: A Strategy for Success in Afghanistan*, 2nd Ed., (Los Angeles, CA: Nine Sisters Imports, Inc, 2009), 5.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Cramer and Jonathan Goodhand, “Try Again, Fail Again, Fail Better? War, the State, and the ‘Post-Conflict’ Challenge in Afghanistan,” *Development and Change* 33, no. 5, 901.

<sup>16</sup> Bryan E. Carroll, “Afghanistan as a Federal System with Autonomous Regions”, School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph (Fort Leaveworth, KS: 2009) 61-66.

<sup>17</sup> Nigel J.R. Allan, “Rethinking Governance in Afghanistan,” *Journal of International Affairs*, (Spring, 2003): 201. Allan never uses the term “federalism,” but his argument is clearly supportive of it. In fact, he refers to the idea of a strong central government as “a fantasy of social democratic European governments.”

<sup>18</sup> S. Frederick Starr, “A Federated Afghanistan?” *CACI Analyst* (November 7, 2001), <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/167> (accessed October 17, 2010).

administration reform.<sup>19</sup> These efforts to bring local governance under a single set of centrally controlled rule have generally failed since 2001.<sup>20</sup> Hamish Nixon, of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, has also researched this failure. Nixon attributes this failure to the lack of a sub-national governance policy, and poor implementation of sub-national governance programs.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, some proposed solutions to the conflicts in Afghanistan require action that extends beyond the state of Afghanistan itself. As early as 1957, John H. Herz discussed the end of the current concept of statehood based on territoriality. Territorial states, the assumed “ideal” type of state in the current world political system, have been in decline since Napoleonic times because mass armies and economic warfare override the assumptions upon which they rest. The ultimate conclusion of this decline is achieved by nuclear weapons.<sup>22</sup> S. Frederick Starr, chairman of The Johns Hopkins University Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, sees revival of the glory days of Central Asia, from around 800-1100 A.D., as the key to revitalization throughout the area, including Afghanistan. Pointing to the re-creation of trade routes and renewed interest in education since the end of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Taliban, Starr postulates that emphasizing the rich, cosmopolitan past of the developing states of central Asia is key to their further development.<sup>23</sup> Starr and others specifically proposed a “Silk Road Strategy” for Afghanistan, which would integrate Afghanistan into the international system through

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<sup>19</sup> Sarah Lister, *Understanding State-Building and Local Government in Afghanistan*, Working Paper no. 14, (London: Crisis States Research Centre) 2007, 6-10.

<sup>20</sup> Lister, Sarah, *Understanding State-Building and Local Government in Afghanistan*, Working Paper no. 14, (London: Crisis States Research Centre) 2007, 14-16. Charles Tilly discussed homogeneity and heterogeneity in European state-making, describing how homogeneous populations were more likely to remain loyal to a regime, and that homogenous populations facilitated the development of a single, effective national policy regarding interaction between government and governed. Homogeneity is patently not present in Afghanistan. Charles Tilly, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 77-82.

<sup>21</sup> Hamish Nixon, *Subnational State-building in Afghanistan*, Synthesis Paper (Kabul: 2008), 55-57.

<sup>22</sup> John H. Herz, “Rise and Demise of the Territorial State”, *World Politics* (Cambridge University Press: July 1957): 485-489.

<sup>23</sup> S. Frederick Starr, “Rediscovering Central Asia,” *The Wilson Quarterly* (2009) 33-43.

transportation networks from India to Turkey and on to Europe. This regional strategy would potentially improve the lives of Afghans, and others in the region, and provide the Afghan government with a sustainable income stream.<sup>24</sup>

## Historiography of Abdur Rahman

The historiography of the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan is fairly limited. Abdur Rahman wrote a partial autobiography, which was finished by one of his court attendants after his death in 1901. This obviously self-serving account minimizes the influence of the British on the Amir's activities, and focuses on what he considered to be the positive developments of his reign.<sup>25</sup> J.L. Lee studies the reign of Abdur Rahman from the perspective of Afghanistan's conquest of the ancient emirate of Balkh, in the area that is currently northwestern Afghanistan. This conquest, and the subsequent settlement of Pashtuns in the area, was completed by Abdur Rahman during his reign. Obviously, Lee judges Abdur Rahman much more harshly than Rahman himself. Lee also offers a broad critique of Afghan historiography in general, decrying its focus on the perspective of the European colonial empires and ignoring the history of the area when not influenced by Europeans.<sup>26</sup> Hasan Kakar's work reflects this same general trend in Afghanistan writing, which has been criticized by Lee. It offers a generally positive review of Abdur Rahman's reign, especially in its treatment of his centralization of Afghanistan as a buffer state for British India.<sup>27</sup> Most other considerations of the reign of Abdur Rahman understand his reign simply as part of the larger context of Afghan history, without singling him out as atypical

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<sup>24</sup> S. Frederick Starr and Andrew C. Kuchins, *The Key to Success in Afghanistan: A Modern Silk Road Strategy*, Silk Road Paper, (Central Asia-Caucasus Institute: 2010), 7-12.

<sup>25</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900).

<sup>26</sup> J.L. Lee, *The 'Ancient Supremacy,' Bukhara, Afghanistan and the Battle for Balkh, 1731-1901* (Leiden, E.J. Brill: 1996), xiv-xx.

<sup>27</sup> Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979).

among the rulers of Afghanistan. Rubin discusses the influence of Abdur Rahman's dependence on British support in establishing a rentier state, his failure to make connections to tax his population due to external support, and traces weaknesses in the Afghan state to these policies.<sup>28</sup> Bijan Omrani portrays Abdur Rahman as having "sewn the seeds of unity" in Afghanistan by his governmental and social reforms, but said he was unable to completely solidify his achievements because of the intractable nature of Afghan society.<sup>29</sup>

Despite varying opinions and discussion regarding the future, and even applicability of the Afghan state, the current international system perpetuates its existence. In the aftermath of the US invasion of Afghanistan in response to the September 11 attacks, the US government has made support to the Afghan government a national priority. As such, understanding the context of Afghan perception of governance, and the ways and means of maintaining government power in Afghanistan should influence US decisions regarding the support of that government. This

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<sup>28</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) and Barnett R. Rubin, "Lineages of the State in Afghanistan," *Asian Survey*, vol. 28, no. 11, (University of California Press: November 1988), 1192-1195; Barnett R. Rubin, "Political Elites in Afghanistan: Rentier State Building, Rentier State Wrecking," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1, (Cambridge University Press, February 1992), 77-99. A rentier state is a government that receives most of its income from external sources, either from selling natural resources or "economic aid, loans,...and grants" (Hootan Shamayati, "The Rentier State, Interests Groups, and the Paradox of Autonomy: State and Business in Turkey and Iran," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 26, no. 3, (City University of New York: April 1994), 307-331). While this prevents economic interest groups from attacking the state, it enables to rise of culturally and ideologically based interest groups. Because the state requires only internal sources of revenue, it never develops the ability to enforce taxation, and its relationship with its population remains limited and its role related to distribution of wealth. Likewise, domestic production often remains undeveloped, since the state has no pressing reason to encourage development. Douglas A. Yates, *The Rentier State in Africa: Oil Rent Dependency and Neocolonialism in the Republic of Gabon* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1996), 12-40; Karen Barkey and Sunita Parikh, "Comparative Perspectives on The State," *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 17 (Columbia University Press: 1991), 523-549; Hootan Shamayati, "The Rentier State, Interest Groups, and the Paradox of Autonomy: State and Business in Turkey and Iran," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 26, no. 3 (City University of New York: April 1994), 307-331; Michael Herb, "No Representation without Taxation? Rents, Development and Democracy," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 37, no. 3 (City University of New York: April, 2005), 297-316; Kiren Aziz Chaudry, "Economic Liberalization and the Lineages of the Rentier State," *Comparative Politics*, vol.27, no. 1 (City University of New York: October, 1994), 1-25; Ahmet Kuru, "The Rentier State Model and Central Asian Studies: The Turkmen Case," *Alternatives*, vol. 1, no. 1, (Center for International Conflict Resolution: Spring, 2002), 51-71.

<sup>29</sup> Bijan Omrani, "Afghanistan and the Search for Unity," *Asian Affairs*, vol. XXXVIII, no. II (Routledge: July 2007), 149-154.

monograph will explore the context and development of Afghan governance, particularly the centralization of government power by Amir Abdur Rahman, and the results of that establishment of state power. From that discussion, and relying on Herbst's model as a way to analyze state power consolidation, the monograph will propose some lessons useful in the development of the current state in Afghanistan.

## **History of Afghanistan Prior to Abdur Rahman's Reign**

### **Afghanistan- Crossroads of Empires and Trade**

From earliest recorded history and evidence, Afghanistan was well connected with the rest of the world. Circumstances, however, held back the development of connections between the people of Afghanistan and emergent centralized governments. Instead, the Afghan people developed cultural, economic and religious ties throughout Central Asia, while governmental development remained limited to local village and tribal elders loosely organized into massive, hegemonic empires. The history of this development is the context that shaped Abdur Rahman's reign.

From the earliest evidence available, Afghanistan was a pathway of trade and conquest between India, central Asia and the Middle East. Evidence of trade between Afghanistan and India dates to more than 7000 years ago, and Afghan trade with the eastern Mediterranean existed more than 3000 years ago. The Indo-Aryans that dominate much of India today came from or through the Iranian Plateau and Bactria, or northern Afghanistan.<sup>30</sup> Zarathrustra, the founder of the dominant religion of the Persian Empire, may have been born in northwestern Afghanistan,

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<sup>30</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 10, and Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture* (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), 11-12. The evidence consists of Afghan lapis lazuli, from Badakhshan in northeastern Afghanistan, found in a grave in Mycenae and tin that may be from Afghanistan found in a ship wreck near Turkey.



and was killed near Balkh, in northern Afghanistan.<sup>31</sup> The Achaemenian Empire of Cyrus and Darius conquered what is now Afghanistan and Pakistan for Persia, naming it Khorassan and making it the easternmost province of their empire.<sup>32</sup> Persian satrapies in Afghanistan included



MAP 1: Achaemenian Empire<sup>33</sup>

Bactriana, modern Balkh in Afghan Turkestan; Aria, modern Herat; Margiana, modern Merv; Gandharia, the modern Kabul valley from Kabul to Jalalabad; Arachostia, modern Quetta and Kandahar; and Sattagydia, modern Ghazni to the Indus River Valley.<sup>34</sup> The Persian satrapy

<sup>31</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 272-274, and Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture* (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), 11. Zoroastrianism, or Zoroaster, founded the religion of Zoroastrianism, which was common in Persia until Islam, and survived until modern times in small groups in Iran, Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. He converted the mother or grandmother of Darius the Great.

<sup>32</sup> Henry Walter Bellew, *Afghanistan and the Afghans* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1879), 180-181, and W.K. Fraser-Tyler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 16-17.

<sup>33</sup> Iran Chamber Society, "Achaemenid Empire," [http://www.iranchamber.com/history/achaemenids/images/achaemenid\\_empire\\_map.gif](http://www.iranchamber.com/history/achaemenids/images/achaemenid_empire_map.gif) (accessed March 5, 2011). Author added approximation of current boundaries of Afghanistan in red.

<sup>34</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 274; Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture* (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), 11; Martin Ewans,

system allowed each subject people to maintain its own leadership, and despite the fairly close relationships between them, the Afghan satrapies probably felt little routine influence of the Persian government.<sup>35</sup>

Alexander the Great conquered the area that is now Afghanistan, founded cities among the Indo-Aryan peoples living there, and married Roxana, a Bactrian princess. Alexander's empire died with him, however. Afghanistan once again divided, with control disputed by the Seleucids, the Greco-Bactrians, the Parthians and Indo-Greeks from the Mauryan dynasty.<sup>36</sup> The Kushan Empire, from around 130 BC to 500 AD, merged Central Asian, Hellenic and Indian elements into the Graeco-Buddhist or Gandharan civilization that created the Bamiyan Buddhas.<sup>37</sup>

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*Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 12; George MacMunn, *Afghanistan, From Darius to Amanullah* (Quetta, Pakistan: Gosha-E-Adab, 1977), 8-9; and W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 17.

<sup>35</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 276; Bruno Jacobs, "Achaemenid Satrapies: the administrative units of the Achaemenid empire," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition, August 15, 2006, available at <http://www.iranica.com/articles/achaemenid-satrapies>; R. Schmidt, "Achaemenid Dynasty: dynasty that ruled Iran from ca. 700 to 330 B.C.E," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition, December 15, 1983, available at <http://www.iranica.com/articles/achaemenid-dynasty>. According to Dupree, even the Greek colonists in Asia opposed Alexander's "liberation".

<sup>36</sup> George MacMunn, *Afghanistan, From Darius to Amanullah* (Quetta, Pakistan: Gosha-E-Adab, 1977), 10-11; W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 18-20; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 13; Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture* (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), 12; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 283-285.

<sup>37</sup> W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 20-22; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 13-15; Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture* (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), 12; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969) 13; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 286-295. The Taliban destroyed the Bamiyan Buddhas in early 2001, causing international outrage. Barry Bearak, "Over World Protests, Taliban Are Destroying Ancient Buddhas," *New York Times*, March 4, 2001. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/04/world/over-world-protests-taliban-are-destroying-ancient-buddhas.html> (accessed November 20, 2010); and Amir Shah, "Taliban Destroy Ancient Buddhist Relics," *Independent*, March 3, 2001. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/taliban-destroy-ancient-buddhist-relics-694425.html> (accessed November 20, 2010).

Arab Muslims defeated the Sassanid Persians in 637 AD and 642 AD, and occupied Herat and Balkh by around 650 AD, but conflicts among the Umayyid and Abbasid Caliphates slowed their continuing eastward advance.<sup>38</sup> Continued Arab, Persian, and Turkish Muslim expansion toward India gradually brought Islam to most of Afghanistan to Islam by about 1000 AD. Despite the unifying influences of a common religion, which created cosmopolitan cultural bonds, the political rule of Afghanistan continued to be undertaken by a rapid succession of changing dynasties that surged and then were rapidly replaced.<sup>39</sup> Owing to the high costs of extending power, especially in the difficult terrain of Afghanistan, most rulers settled for a compliant population in internal affairs, purchased support of the population in external affairs, and left the majority of Afghanistan's population to their own devices.<sup>40</sup>

One of the most successful, and a fairly representative example, of the multiple dynasties was the Ghaznavids. The Ghaznavid dynasty began as Turkish soldiers that ruled the city of Ghazni for the Samanid Dynasty in Bokhara. Mahmud of Ghazni, who reigned from 998 AD to 1030 AD, conquered most of Afghanistan as well as the Indian provinces of Punjab and Sind.<sup>41</sup> The Ghaznavids (and their successors the Ghurids and Seljuks) refined the development of a military feudal system that rewarded the Afghan tribes for attacking India.<sup>42</sup> They also

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<sup>38</sup> W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 24; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 15.

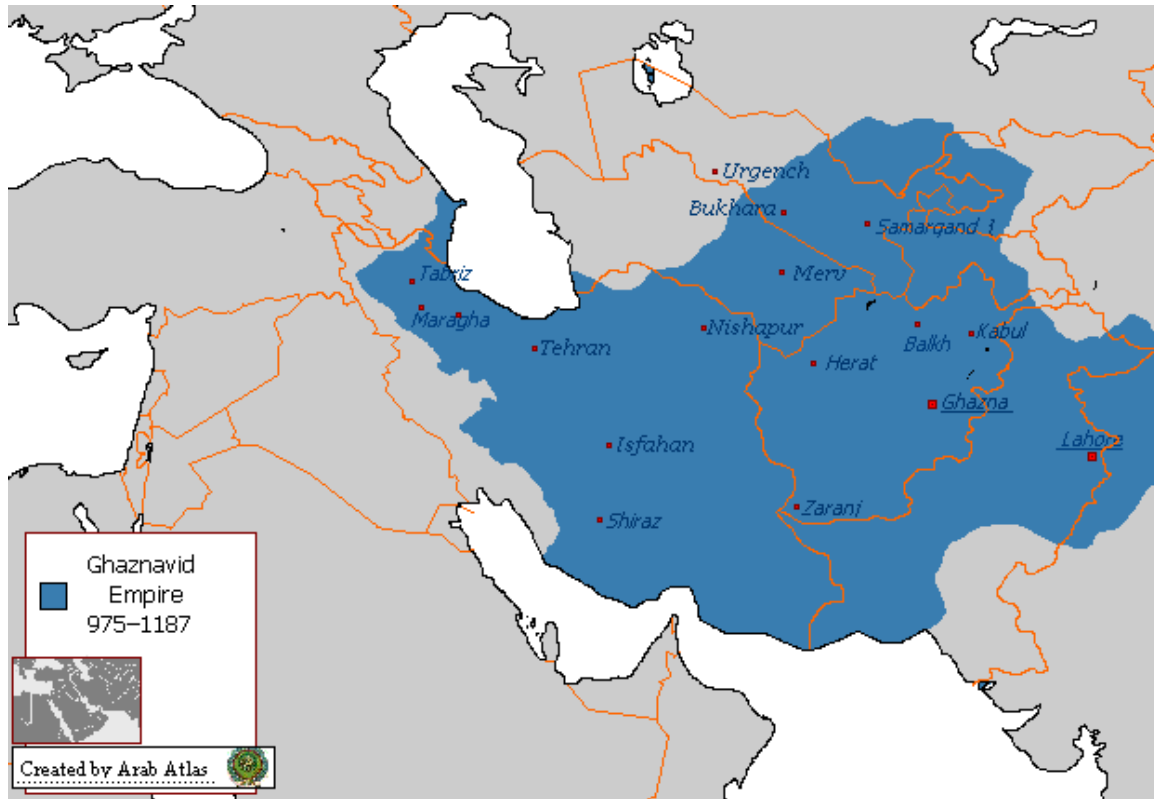
<sup>39</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 13-15; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 312-313; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 15; W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 23-25.

<sup>40</sup> These rulers often "purchased" the support of their population for foreign adventures by promises of loot following successful conquests.

<sup>41</sup> W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 25; C. Edmund Bosworth, "Ghaznavids," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition, December 15, 2001, available at <http://www.iranica.com/articles/ghaznavids>.

<sup>42</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 15.

contributed, however, to a continuance of the cultural and intellectual development initiated by the integration to the Muslim world.<sup>43</sup>



**MAP 2: Ghaznavid Empire<sup>44</sup>**

Through the early history of Afghanistan, the development of government was focused on local village and tribal elders, with the next level of government provided by massive detached empires connected to the local leaders through personal feudal connections. The influence of these empires on local affairs was limited by the high costs of extending their power, especially into the difficult terrain of Afghanistan. Most decisions and interactions were therefore

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<sup>43</sup> S. Frederick Starr, "Rediscovering Central Asia," *The Wilson Quarterly* (2009) 33-43; C. Edmund Bosworth, "Ghaznavids," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition, December 15, 2001, available at <http://www.iranica.com/articles/ghaznavids>. Starr proposes the revitalization of all of Central Asia, based on the shared history of this post-Islamic, pre-Mongol peak.

<sup>44</sup> Arab Atlas "Ghaznavid Empire: 975-1187", available at [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/archive/9/96/20100703012806!Ghaznavid\\_Empire\\_975\\_-1187\\_\(AD\).PNG](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/archive/9/96/20100703012806!Ghaznavid_Empire_975_-1187_(AD).PNG) (accessed March 5, 2011)

conducted locally, and contact with the empire was limited to provision of troops and resources in times of conflict. Despite limited governmental connections, much of Afghanistan possessed cultural, religious and economic ties with the wider world, and possessed a relatively cosmopolitan outlook.

## **Afghanistan- Regression to a Backwater**

The Mongol invasion was “one of the most cataclysmic events of Afghan history.”<sup>45</sup> Although Genghis Khan’s empire began to disintegrate almost immediately after his death, the effects of Mongol conquest on Afghanistan remain. Many Afghan cities were destroyed, including cultural, economic and political centers such as Balkh, Kabul and Ghazni.<sup>46</sup> The population and agriculture in the area never returned to pre-Mongol levels, and the feudal system employed by the Mongols contributed to the abandonment of many small towns and delayed renewed urban development.<sup>47</sup> The pagan Mongols were quickly converted to Islam and provided little lasting construction, being seen as merely another in a long line of absentee overlords.<sup>48</sup> Despite the destruction wrought by the Mongols, Marco Polo found Badakhshan to be relatively independent, and still ruled by a dynasty claiming descent from Alexander.<sup>49</sup> The

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<sup>45</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 16.

<sup>46</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 17; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 61-63; Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban* (Philadelphia: De Capo Press, 2009), 81-101. These cities remained unreconstructed more than a century later.

<sup>47</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 19.

<sup>48</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 316; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 61-63. Ghengis Khan’s grandson Hulagu attempted to destroy Islamic culture, but his great-grandson attempted to reunify the same culture.

<sup>49</sup> W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 29. Fraser-Tytler says that this claim was probably false, but it demonstrates continuity from the Graeco-Bactrian culture.

Mongols provided little institutional change, and exercised their absentee power primarily through Turkish governors and military garrisons for about a hundred years.

Timurlane, a Turko-Mongol who claimed descent from Genghis Khan, attempted to restore the Mongol Empire in the late-1300s. Although he succeeded in overrunning an area from Turkey to India, neither he nor his descendents were able to create any lasting governmental institutions in Afghanistan.<sup>50</sup> The limited influence of the Mongol and Turko-Mongol empires is illustrated by the fact that travelers in the early 1400s found Persian as the dominant language of Afghanistan, and the Persian language was even adopted by some Turkic and Mongol ethnic groups.<sup>51</sup> After the collapse of Timurlane's Empire, Afghanistan fractured into many semi-independent domains, with various attempts to consolidate or conquer from the outside. In the west, the Safavid dynasty consolidated control of Persia and attempted to extend their control into the area around Herat. Meanwhile, in India, the Mogul dynasty, founded by Babur, who descended from Genghis Khan and Timurlane, consolidated control of northern India and attempted to expand their control northwest. The meeting place was Afghanistan. From 1500 until the mid 1700s, the Persians generally held Herat and western Afghanistan, and the Moguls generally held Kabul and eastern Afghanistan. Kandahar passed back and forth, and Afghan Turkestan was contested by the Persians and Central Asian Turks.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 317-319; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 19-20; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 18-19; W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 30-33; and Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture* (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), 14-15.

<sup>51</sup> W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 32.

<sup>52</sup> Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture* (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), 14-16; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 18-20; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 318-322; George Bruce Malleson, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 183-200.



MAP 3: Mogul Empire<sup>53</sup>

The changing nature of global trade also hindered the recovery of Afghanistan following the devastation of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. The development of maritime trade routes diminished the value of Afghanistan, since it no longer dominated the only trade routes between the Middle East and India and the Far East. The decreasing volume of trade and the feudalization and conflict in Afghanistan and Central Asia formed a reinforcing system, where increased conflict drove up the cost of goods and decreased trade, which increased conflict.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> [http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/dbcourses/dehejia/large/mughal\\_stronge02\\_map\\_062102.jpg](http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/dbcourses/dehejia/large/mughal_stronge02_map_062102.jpg); Author added approximation of current boundaries of Afghanistan in red.

<sup>54</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 21-24.





marginalization from the global economy due to the rise of sea travel and the collapse of the Silk Road also compounded the cost of extending power within the country by limiting the availability of economic resources available to sustain the government and by removing the source of previous resources.

## Rise of the Pashtun- Ahmad Shah Duranni and Creation of an Afghan Empire

It was during this time of conflict between the Moguls and the Safavids that the Pashtun tribes began to increase in population and influence, expanding their area of influence from their home area in the Suleiman Mountain Range.<sup>56</sup> The first Pashtun tribes to assert this power were the Ghilzai.<sup>57</sup> Taking advantage of a dislocation of the Abdali Pashtun by Shah Abbas of Persia,

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(accessed March 28, 2011)

<sup>56</sup> Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture* (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), 16; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 90-95; G.P. Tate, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch* (Bombay: Bennett Coleman & Co., 1910), 20-35; J.P. Ferrier, *History of the Afghans* (London: John Murray, 1858), 7, 19-24.

<sup>57</sup> Monstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, and its Dependencies, in Persia, Tartary, and India, Comprising a View of the Afghaun Nation and a History of the Dooraunee Monarchy* (London: Richard Bentley, 1839), 200-235. Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans, 550 B.C – A.D. 1957* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958), 3-25; George MacMunn, *Afghanistan, From Darius to Amanullah* (Quetta, Pakistan: Gosha-E-Adab, 1977) 21-22; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 43-45; Henry Walter Bellew, *Afghanistan and the Afghans* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1879), 209-222; and Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture* (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), 40-42. The Ghilzai are, numerically, one of the largest divisions of the Pashtun- more of a tribal confederation than a tribe. Elphinstone calls all the Pashtun "Afghauns," but acknowledges that is the Persian name, and that they call themselves "Pooshtauneh" or "Pookhtauneh". Elphinstone describes four main groups, allegedly the descendents of the four sons of Kyse: Serrabun, Ghoorghoosht, Betnee and Kurleh, with the "Ghiljie" as a component tribe—"oolooss"— of one of the four groups—which he also calls "tribes". Caroe lists the same four groups, and lists the Ghilzai as part of the Bitani/Betnee descent. Gregorian lists the Ghilzais, and the Abdalis/Durrani, as tribes. Bellew describes three Pashtun divisions: the Durrani (Abdali) as the "true Afghan," the "Pukhtun or Pathan", and the Ghilzai, who are supposedly descendents of Turks who migrated into Afghanistan in the 10th century, but MacMunn says it is more probable that they were Pashtun ("Aryan hill folks") who were conquered by Turks, or else led into their current country from elsewhere by Turks. Current international analysts in southern Afghanistan and US Army analysts reference five major Pashtun groupings: Ghilzai, Durrani, Ghurghust, Karlani, and Khaki/Ghoriah, while offering further detail on the Ghilzai and Durrani that effect their area [RS(S) Tribal

the Ghilzai had extended their influence around Kandahar by supporting the Persians.<sup>58</sup> In 1709, the Ghilzai leader Mir Wais Hotaki led a revolt that resulted in Persian recognition of his governorship of Kandahar until his death in 1715. Mir Wais' son, Mahmud, conquered Isfahan, the Safavid capital in Iran, and briefly held the Persian throne. After a vicious descent into insanity, Mahmud was overthrown by his cousin, Ashraf. Ashraf won recognition from the Ottomans as the legitimate ruler of Persia, in exchange for recognizing the Ottoman Sultan as the head of the Muslim world.<sup>59</sup>

The Ghilzai were driven out of Persia by Nadir Shah, a Turk in the service of the Safavids. After subduing the Abdali Pashtun in Herat, Nadir Shah consolidated his control of the Persian Empire, and made himself ruler by deposing the Safavid heir.<sup>60</sup> Now allied with the Abdali, Nadir Shah re-conquered Kandahar from the Ghilzai in 1737, and returned the Abdali to the Kandahar area. In 1739, Nadir Shah invaded India, and sacked Delhi. During the next 8

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*Structure* (<http://blogs.rnw.nl/vredeeneiligheid/files/2010/01/tribal-structure-isaf-rc-south1.jpg>), comment on "The Tribes of southern Afghanistan," [http://blogs.rnw.nl/vredeeneiligheid/?ibegin\\_share\\_action=get\\_content&id=2264](http://blogs.rnw.nl/vredeeneiligheid/?ibegin_share_action=get_content&id=2264); Center for Army Lessons Learned, Center for Army Lessons Learned Newsletter 10-64-Afghan Culture (Fort Leavenworth: Center for Army Lessons Learned, 2010), 69-70]. Discussion on the Pashtun Forums, <http://www.pashtunforums.com/pashtun-history-8/pashtun-tribes-4935/index5.html>, accessed March 5, 2010, accepts a division into five major groups—Durrani, Ghorghusht, Ghilzai/Bitani, Karlani and Sarbani—while disagreeing on the subdivisions under them. Of note, the initial Taliban leadership was primarily Ghilzai (Mullah Omar is a Hotak Ghilzai), but since 2001, Durrani have achieved a larger share of leadership positions in the Quetta Shura, *The Quetta Shura: A Tribal Analysis* (Williamsburg: Tribal Analysis Center, October 2009, accessed November 18, 2010); available from <http://www.tribalanalysiscenter.com/PDF-TAC/Quetta%20Shura.pdf>; internet.

<sup>58</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 322; Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans, 550 B.C – A.D. 1957* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958), 250-253; George Bruce Malleon, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 210-215; J.P. Ferrier, *History of the Afghans* (London: John Murray, 1858), 22-24.

<sup>59</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 323-328; George Bruce Malleon, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 243-256; G.P. Tate, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch* (Bombay: Bennett Coleman & Co., 1910), 40-55; J.P. Ferrier, *History of the Afghans* (London: John Murray, 1858), 38-64.

<sup>60</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 329-330; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 20-21; Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture* (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), 16-17; W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 40-41; George Bruce Malleon, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 257-271.

years, Nadir Shah extended Persian control north into Central Asia, and fought many campaigns toward the west, in Turkey and the Persian Gulf. In 1747, Nadir Shah was assassinated.<sup>61</sup>

Among Nadir Shah's Pashtun allies was a young Abdali leader named Ahmad Khan. When Nadir Shah was assassinated, Ahmad Khan escaped with his Abdali Pashtun cavalry contingent, and seized a caravan with Indian tribute intended for Nadir Shah. Part of this treasure was the Koh-i-Noor diamond, from which he took the name Durr-i-Duran. Returning to Kandahar, Ahmad Khan was selected as Shah by a jirga of the Abdali sub-tribes.<sup>62</sup> From 1748 until his death in 1773, Ahmad Shah Durrani conquered an area from Mashad in eastern Iran to Delhi in India. In addition to all of what is currently Afghanistan, he ruled parts of Iran, most of Pakistan and parts of India.<sup>63</sup>

Ahmad Shah Durrani was never able to consolidate control of his empire, however, and his leadership depended on his ability to fill the interests of the leaders of the sub-tribes, who regarded him as a first among equals, not a superior leader. He split the top positions in his

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<sup>61</sup> W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 42-43; J.P. Ferrier, *History of the Afghans* (London: John Murray, 1858), 65-68; G.P. Tate, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch* (Bombay: Bennett Coleman & Co., 1910), 49-68; George Bruce Malleon, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 260-266.

<sup>62</sup> Donald N. Wilber, *Afghanistan: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture* (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), 17-18. Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 22-23 and Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 333; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 46-47; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 69; George Bruce Malleon, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 273-276. As a result of Ahmed Shah's name Durr-i-Duran, the Abdalis are now called Durranis. Ahmad Shah was a Saddozai Abdali, which was one of the smaller branches. He was elected when the larger Barakzai branch supported his election. In return, he appointed the Barakzai leader Hajji Jamal Shah as his hereditary vizier.

<sup>63</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 23-26; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 333-341; W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 61-65; J.P. Ferrier, *History of the Afghans* (London: John Murray, 1858), 68-95; George Bruce Malleon, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 278-292.

administration between the different clans and made them hereditary.<sup>64</sup> He continued the feudal system of land in exchange for military service, with Durrani tribes receiving more land for fewer soldiers than other tribes, and the tribal leaders retained leadership of the military contingents they furnished.<sup>65</sup> The council of nine tribal leaders retained the power to choose the next king.<sup>66</sup> In the end, the Durrani Empire remained a collection of various tribal systems, with no consistent framework of support to the monarchy.

The first two attempts to create an Afghan state resulted in short-lived empires that were managed in the form of the foreign empires that had traditionally ruled Afghanistan. Because of the continued high cost of asserting central government power in many areas, the minimal impact of outside states and the continuing fluidity of boundaries, central government remained weak, operated through local strongmen, and had little impact on the daily lives of the population. The government sustained itself through conquest, and depended on personal relationships between the leader and his subordinates for influence.

Although the Durrani empire can be viewed as the initial expression of the Afghan state, it can also be viewed as simply one more in the succession of tribal empires. What distinguished it was in its local ruler and its base in the Pashtun tribes.<sup>67</sup> Despite this base in the Pashtun tribes,

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<sup>64</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 46-47; G.P. Tate, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch* (Bombay: Bennett Coleman & Co., 1910), 68-70; Monstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, and its Dependencies, in Persia, Tartary, and India, Comprising a View of the Afghaun Nation and a History of the Dooraunee Monarchy* (London: Richard Bentley, 1839), 228-233; ; George Bruce Malleson, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 276-278, 294-295.

<sup>65</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 47-48; Monstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, and its Dependencies, in Persia, Tartary, and India, Comprising a View of the Afghaun Nation and a History of the Dooraunee Monarchy* (London: Richard Bentley, 1839), 234-235.

<sup>66</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 47-48.

<sup>67</sup> Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban* (Philadelphia: De Capo Press, 2009), 121-122.

the Durrani empire expanded well beyond these areas and established varying connections with its diverse subject groups. Thus, the connection between the core Durrani Pashtun and the state was different from the connection established with the Ghilzai Pashtun, the Persian, the Turk and the Sindhi. The boundaries of the empire were formed by conquest and personal allegiance, with little expectation of permanence. Finally, the Durrani empire depended on the continued invasion, conquest and pillage of new territories to maintain the feudal loyalty of its core of Pashtun tribes and to sustain the economic requirements of government. While the decline of the Mogul empire in India appeared to open a way to sustain the empire, the increase of British power in India and British support to the developing Sikh kingdom in Punjab would block this outlet to the detriment of the Durranis.



**MAP 5: Durrani Empire<sup>68</sup>**

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<sup>68</sup> Afghanland.com, “Afghanistan 1772: Ahmad Shah Durrani Empire,” [http://usuarios.multimania.es/superjulio/IMPERIOS%20DE%20ASIA%20CENTRAL%20\(SUR%20DE%20RUSIA,%20KAZAJISTAN,%20MONGOLIA,%20CHINA%20OCCIDENTAL,%20KIRGUISTAN,%20TAYIKISTAN,%20TURKMENISTAN,%20UZBEKISTAN,%20AFGANISTAN\)/Mapas%20Imperiales%20Imperio%20Durrani1.jpg](http://usuarios.multimania.es/superjulio/IMPERIOS%20DE%20ASIA%20CENTRAL%20(SUR%20DE%20RUSIA,%20KAZAJISTAN,%20MONGOLIA,%20CHINA%20OCCIDENTAL,%20KIRGUISTAN,%20TAYIKISTAN,%20TURKMENISTAN,%20UZBEKISTAN,%20AFGANISTAN)/Mapas%20Imperiales%20Imperio%20Durrani1.jpg) (accessed March 28, 2011).

## Dissolution, Chaos and Outside Interference

Even before his death, Ahmad Shah's empire was under attack in India, where the Sikhs gained independence for Punjab in 1769.<sup>69</sup> Upon Ahmad Shah's death, two of his sons were declared his successor—Timur in Herat and Sulaiman Mirza in Kandahar. Although Timur quickly defeated his brother and secured his seat on the throne, he never consolidated his hold on state power effectively.<sup>70</sup> Raised in Persia, he alienated many of the Durrani and other Pashtun tribes by moving the capital from Kandahar to Kabul, by employing non-Pashtun Shia Qizilbash as his private bodyguard and most trusted military force, and by executing esteemed leaders who had supported his brother Sulaiman. Timur was unable to retain the loyalty of many outlying territories, including Sind, Balkh, Sistan, Khurasan and Kashmir against external opponents.<sup>71</sup>

After Timur's death, the Durrani Empire fell apart, as Timur's 23 surviving sons contested the succession. The three primary khanates of Kabul, Kandahar and Herat were sometimes united, but often ruled by competitors. Several other Pashtun areas were independent or semi-independent, and non-Pashtun areas usually remained independent of the Saddozai

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<sup>69</sup> Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban* (Philadelphia: De Capo Press, 2009), 121-122; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 73; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 339. The amir of Bokhara also succeeded in re-establishing control of the area north of the Amu Darya river.

<sup>70</sup> Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 73-74; ; George Bruce Malleson, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 292-294. Timur was successful because of the support of the Barakzai leader, Payinda Khan.

<sup>71</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 340-341; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 49-50; and Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 74-75; G.P. Tate, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch* (Bombay: Bennett Coleman & Co., 1910), 90-93; J.P. Ferrier, *History of the Afghans* (London: John Murray, 1858), 96-108; George Bruce Malleson, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 296-300. Near the end of his reign, Timur ordered his Qizilbash troops tortured and executed the leaders of a Pashtun rebellion, despite the fact that Timur had negotiated their surrender in return of their pledge of loyalty, sworn on the Koran. This violation of the Pashtun code further alienated the Pashtun support for his dynasty.

government.<sup>72</sup> While internal disorder fragmented Afghanistan, outside threats were also emerging. In the west, Persia re-asserted claims of hegemony over Herat. In the north, the Russian empire expanded through Central Asia, and in the southeast, the Sikhs with British support asserted dominance in India. By 1818, the Sadozai dynasty descended from Ahmad Shah had mostly been replaced by Barakzais.<sup>73</sup> British fears of Russian influence in Afghanistan led to their invasion and defeat in the First Afghan War, from 1839-1842. This war also involved the British in the Barakzai-Sadozai disputes, since the British installed a deposed Sadozai ruler, Shah Shuja, in Kabul to replace the Barakzai, Dost Mohamed, who returned to power after the British withdrawal.<sup>74</sup>

Under Dost Mohamed and his successor, Shir Ali, the Afghan state made “impressive territorial gains,” but was unable to follow up with centralized administration and consolidation of those gains. Both leaders faced continued threats to their rule from dynastic challengers and members of other tribes. Neither was able to establish any formal governmental structures.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 343-361. The situation is so complex that Dupree describes it using a chart. For more detailed accounts of the details of this period, see Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans, 550 B.C – A.D. 1957* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1958), 264-298; J.P. Ferrier, *History of the Afghans* (London: John Murray, 1858), 108-214; and George Bruce Malleson, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 301-360.

<sup>73</sup> Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 75-78; George Bruce Malleson, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 300-346; G.P. Tate, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch* (Bombay: Bennett Coleman & Co., 1910), 94-130.

<sup>74</sup> Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2002), 129-201; G.P. Tate, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch* (Bombay: Bennett Coleman & Co., 1910), 131-150; T.A. Heathcote, *The Afghan Wars, 1839-1919* (Staplehurst: Spellmount Limited, 2003), 32-83; George Bruce Malleson, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 372-414; David Loyn, *Butcher and Bolt: Two Hundred Years of Foreign Engagement in Afghanistan* (London: Hutchinson, 2008), 26-75.

<sup>75</sup> Christine Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826-1863)* (Richmond: Curzon, 1997), 228, 252; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 402; and W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 124-125. Although Noelle characterizes the territorial gains as “impressive,” they are much smaller than those of Ahmed Shah Durrani and other earlier leaders. In contrast to the Sadozai shahs, Dost Mohamed failed to recognize the traditional council of nine tribal leaders established by Ahmed Shah Durrani, and did not appoint any Durrani leaders to their “hereditary” government offices, instead concentrating power in the hands of his

Dost Mohamed, particularly, relied upon British aid to support his regular military and maintain his rule. This rule remained a loose control of allegiance to the Amir of Kabul, evidenced by the shifting of alliances and revolts faced by Dost Mohamed as he led the re-conquest of Herat from the Persians.<sup>76</sup> Dost Mohamed's death in 1863 was followed by the familiar pattern following the death of a ruler—fighting over the succession. This fighting continued through the “reign” of his successor, Sher Ali.<sup>77</sup>

Whatever its weaknesses, the reign of Dost Mohamed saw the reconsolidation of the Amir of Kabul's rule over all four major areas of Afghanistan: Kabul, Turkistan, Kandahar and Herat.<sup>78</sup> This consolidation was lost in the civil wars following the death of Dost Mohamed, as his sons and grandsons established regional power bases to contest for the rule of Kabul. Russian expansion from the north also threatened and undermined the attempts to consolidate control of a single Afghan government.<sup>79</sup> British fear of Russian expansion southward toward India led to

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immediate family. Also, even during the height of the Indian Mutiny, when the British were considering acknowledging Dost Mohamed's rule over Peshawar and other frontier areas, Dost Mohamed refused to interfere.

<sup>76</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 402; George Bruce Malleson, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 416-420; Christine Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826-1863)* (Richmond: Curzon, 1997), 256, 258-266; G.P. Tate, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch* (Bombay: Bennett Coleman & Co., 1910), 150-161. Despite the British subsidized regulars, most of the army remained feudally recruited and organized.

<sup>77</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 405; George Bruce Malleson, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 424-430; G.P. Tate, *The Kingdom of Afghanistan: A Historical Sketch* (Bombay: Bennett Coleman & Co., 1910), 162-170. Sher Ali even lost control of Kabul for a brief time, resulting in an interrupted “reign” although he never relinquished his claim to the title of Amir.

<sup>78</sup> Christine Noelle, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826-1863)* (Richmond: Curzon, 1997), 264, 291. Dost Mohamed re-conquered Herat only two weeks before his death.

<sup>79</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 405-407; Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha International, 1992), 306-395; Theophilus Francis Rodenbough, *Afghanistan and the Anglo-Russian Dispute*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1885), 1-12; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 87-89.



their return invasion, the Second Afghan War, in 1879.<sup>80</sup> Returning from Russian- supported exile in Samarkand and Tashkent, Abdur Rahman declared himself Amir of Kabul in July 1880. In the face of rising tribal resistance, the British acquiesced to this declaration in order to extricate themselves from Afghanistan.<sup>81</sup>

## **Reign of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan: Establishment of an Afghan State**

Bounded by the expanding Russians to the north, and the British in India, Abdur Rahman was unable to follow the expansionist model of his predecessors. The changed international system prevented the expansion traditionally executed by Central Asian and Afghan empire-builders to purchase the support of their core populations, and ultimately resulted in definition of the present boundaries of the state of Afghanistan. Instead, he focused his military energies on reinforcing his control inside Afghanistan, in a process that Dupree called “internal imperialism.” Following his military conquests, Abdur Rahman used developments in governance and

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<sup>80</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 407-413; Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2002), 203-217; George Bruce Malleon, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 431-452; T.A. Heathcote, *The Afghan Wars, 1839-1919* (Staplehurst: Spellmount Limited, 2003), 84-141; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 89-92; David Loyn, *Butcher and Bolt: Two Hundred Years of Foreign Engagement in Afghanistan* (London: Hutchinson, 2008), 99-116; George Bruce Malleon, *History of Afghanistan* (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), 431-450.

<sup>81</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 407-413; T.A. Heathcote, *The Afghan Wars, 1839-1919* (Staplehurst: Spellmount Limited, 2003), 142-165; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 142-146; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 91-93; David Loyn, *Butcher and Bolt: Two Hundred Years of Foreign Engagement in Afghanistan* (London: Hutchinson, 2008), 116-121. Abdur Rahman was in exile after supporting his father's unsuccessful attempt to win the amir-ship over his uncle, Shir Ali, in 1867-68.

economics, as well as forced relocation of tribal populations, to extend his power throughout the country and limit the traditional sources of power.<sup>82</sup>

## Internal Imperialism

### Mohamed Ayub: Dynastic Conflict to Achieve the Throne

The first challenge to Abdur Rahman's position as Amir of Kabul came from his cousin, Mohammed Ayub Khan, who was the ruler of Herat in western Afghanistan and had been a hero of the resistance against the British at the Battle of Maiwand during the Second Anglo-Afghan War. After the British left Kandahar to Abdur Rahman, Ayub moved from Herat to seize Kandahar. Because of the support Abdur Rahman received from the British, many Islamic leaders supported Ayub. Abdur Rahman's Kandahar garrison moved to intercept Ayub, and was defeated near Girishk. Mobilizing support from the Ghilzai Pashtun tribes, Abdur Rahman left Kabul with another force, at the same time ordering another army from Afghan Turkestan against Herat. Abdur Rahman's force defeated Ayub's at Kandahar, while the Turkestan force defeated the garrison left in Herat, preventing Ayub's return to his base. Ayub fled to exile in Persia.<sup>83</sup> This victory secured Abdur Rahman's claim to the amir-ship and, in his words, "made me master of the whole of the kingdom of my father and grandfathers."<sup>84</sup> This demonstrates that Abdur

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<sup>82</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 417-419. Dupree lists 17 campaigns conducted by Abdur Rahman inside Afghanistan. This monograph will examine only four representative cases.

<sup>83</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 66-69, 72-73; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 418, Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (New York: Routledge, 2001),; Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan* (London: John Murray, 1900), 211-218; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 93; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 144-146; Stephen Wheeler, *The Ameer Abdur Rahman* (New York: Frederick Warne & Co., 1895), 68-100. Girishk is located between Kandahar and Herat, in what is now Helmand Province.

<sup>84</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan* (London: John Murray, 1900), 217.

Rahman, at least initially, accepted acquiescence to overlordship as all that was necessary for government. Over the course of time, his understanding of governance would develop in response to continued challenges to his authority.

### Ghilzai Revolt: Solidifying Control of the Pashtun

Another challenge to Abdur Rahman's rule came from the Ghilzai Pashtun, one of the three largest "tribes" in Afghanistan.<sup>85</sup> Despite their early accomplishments under Mir Wais Hotaki, the Ghilzai had remained outside the circles of power in Afghanistan from the ascension of Ahmed Shah Durrani. Although the Ghilzai initially supported Abdur Rahman against his cousin Ayub, Abdur Rahman attempted to re-assert central government control over the Ghilzai mullahs and khans, who had increased their independence during the "bad administration and weakness" of Shir Ali and Yakub, the two previous Amirs. Abdur Rahman attributed the Ghilzai revolt primarily to this centralization; he also acknowledged additional reasons, all of which make the rebellious Ghilzais appear as reactionary and criminal, although the Ghilzai leaders were defending traditional tribal autonomy.<sup>86</sup>

The Ghilzai rebellion began in the fall of 1886, when several Ghilzai tribes attacked various government detachments. Elements of the Afghan Army moved to Ghazni and engaged in several skirmishes, but winter brought a pause to the fighting.<sup>87</sup> Fighting resumed in the spring of 1887, when Afghan Army units advanced into Ghilzai areas from Kabul and Kandahar. In June 1887, Ghilzai units stationed in Herat mutinied, spreading the fighting to western

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<sup>85</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan* (London: John Murray, 1900), 250. As noted above, the Ghilzai are group of tribes or tribal confederation, rather than a single large tribe.

<sup>86</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan* (London: John Murray, 1900), 250-252; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 147-149; Zalmay A. Gulzad, *External Influences and the Development of the Afghan State in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 148-149.

<sup>87</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan* (London: John Murray, 1900), 254. In the winter of 2005-2006, the author experienced winter closures of ground movement between Ghazni and Gardez.

Afghanistan. Ayub Khan, who Abdur Rahman had defeated with Ghilzai support in 1881, tried to return from his exile in Persia in support of the Ghilzai Rebellion, but forces loyal to Abdur Rahman prevented his entry into the country.<sup>88</sup>

Despite the difficulty of, and resistance to, the spread of centralized state authority into the Ghilzai tribal areas, Abdur Rahman was able to assert central authority through military force. Following the rebellion, Abdur Rahman displaced Ghilzai tribes into other areas of Afghanistan to restrict the ability to unite them against the central government and solidify their dependence on the state.

### Hazarajat: Solidifying Pashtun Control

The next group that Abdur Rahman subordinated to the central Afghan government was the Hazaras. The Hazaras, generally reputed to be the descendents of garrisons left by Ghengis Khan around 1240 A.D., are a primarily Shia, Dari-speaking people of mixed descent.<sup>89</sup> The

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<sup>88</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan* (London: John Murray, 1900), 256-260; Zalmay A. Gulzad, *External Influences and the Development of the Afghan State in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 149; Stephen Wheeler, *The Ameer Abdur Rahman* (New York: Frederick Warne & Co., 1895), 142-149.

<sup>89</sup> Henry Walter Bellew, *Afghanistan and the Afghans* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1879), 226; John Alfred Gray, *At the Court of the Amir of Afghanistan* (New York: Keegan Paul, 2002), 206; Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 19-43. Bellew and Gray, among others, repeat claim that the Hazara are the descendents of Ghengis Khan's Mongols, although Gray notes that it is only a claim by the "Hazara proper" and that the true establishment was probably "slow, extending over several generations and was more the migration of a nation than a purely military conquest." Mousavi reviews the varying theories of the origin of the Hazaras: that they are the original inhabitants of central Afghanistan, that they are the descendents of Mongols established there in the 1200-1400s, and that they are a mixed people. In his "new perspective", he concludes that the truth is somewhat a merger of all three theories, in that the current Hazaras are based on some of the oldest inhabitants of the region, but that they have been deeply influenced by many of their neighbors, particularly the Mongol and Turkic soldiers that garrisoned the area after the conquests of Genghis Khan and Timurlane.

Hazarajat, their home area, encompasses the central area of Afghanistan.<sup>90</sup> Until the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman, they had remained generally independent of outside rule.<sup>91</sup>

Upon assuming the throne, Abdur Rahman established contact with the Hazara leadership when he invited them to Kabul in 1881 and affirmed their leadership in return for support to his government. This provided him leverage to influence the divided Hazara leadership.<sup>92</sup> In addition to establishing himself as a power-broker between rivals during intra-Hazara conflicts, Abdur Rahman also increased the taxes of the *Mirs* and then began to imprison Hazara leaders, despite their early support to his rule.<sup>93</sup> In 1888, when Ishaq Khan revolted against Abdur Rahman, some of the Sheikh Ali Hazaras joined him. Using this as an excuse, Abdur Rahman established a Pashtun ruler over them, and provoked inter-sect fighting among the Sheikh Ali Hazaras.<sup>94</sup> Abdullah Khan, the Pashtun ruler of the Sheikh Ali Hazaras, fined both sides for this fighting. Because neither side could pay the fine, fighting erupted when government military forces supported the tax collectors. The Sheikh Ali Hazara revolt was defeated relatively quickly,

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<sup>90</sup> Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 67; Hasan Poladi, *The Hazāras* (Stockton, CA: Mughal Publishing, 1989), 45-79.

<sup>91</sup> Henry Walter Bellew, *Afghanistan and the Afghans* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1879), 226; John Alfred Gray, *At the Court of the Amir of Afghanistan* (New York: Keegan Paul, 2002), 207; Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 65, 121. Mousavi acknowledges that the Hazara *Mirs* had paid taxes to Afghan Amirs prior to Amir Abdur Rahman.

<sup>92</sup> Niamatullah Ibrahim, *Divide and Rule: State Penetration in Hazarajat (Afghanistan) From the Monarchy to the Taliban* (London: Crisis States Research Center, 2009), 4.

<sup>93</sup> Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 121; Hasan Poladi, *The Hazāras* (Stockton, CA: Mughal Publishing, 1989), 183-185, 189.

<sup>94</sup> Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 121; Hasan Poladi, *The Hazāras* (Stockton, CA: Mughal Publishing, 1989), 185-186. The Sheikh Ali Hazaras were mixed Sunni and Shia.

and the surviving Sheikh Ali Hazaras were displaced, with Pashtun nomads from eastern Afghanistan taking over their lands.<sup>95</sup>

By the end of 1891, Abdur Rahman had succeeded in establishing his control over most of the Hazarajat, at least to the point that the Hazaras accepted taxation and provided draftees to the Afghan Army. In order to increase his control over the Hazarajat, Abdur Rahman continued to replace many Hazara leaders with Pashtun governors and military commanders. He gave these leaders freedom to persecute the Hazaras in the name of enforcing government rule.<sup>96</sup>

By 1892, the Hazara population erupted in revolt in response to this persecution. Leading Hazaras, including those who had previously supported Abdur Rahman, joined the popular revolt. In the *Jirga-e Au Qoal*, a meeting of most of the leading Hazaras, these Hazara leaders officially declared war on Abdur Rahman, and stated their goal of overthrowing the Kabul government.<sup>97</sup> In response, Abdur Rahman declared a jihad against the Hazaras and mobilized Pashtun tribal forces with promises of land and slaves in return for fighting the Hazara.<sup>98</sup> These loyal forces converged on the Hazarajat from all four directions, and the Hazaras were ultimately suppressed. In addition to the Hazaras sold as slaves throughout Afghanistan, significant numbers of Hazaras fled Afghanistan, with large communities settling in eastern Iran and in British India—now known

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<sup>95</sup> Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 122; Hasan Poladi, *The Hazāras* (Stockton, CA: Mughal Publishing, 1989), 188-197.

<sup>96</sup> Niamatullah Ibrahim, *Divide and Rule: State Penetration in Hazarajat (Afghanistan) From the Monarchy to the Taliban* (London: Crisis States Research Center, 2009), 4; Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 123-125.

<sup>97</sup> Niamatullah Ibrahim, *Divide and Rule: State Penetration in Hazarajat (Afghanistan) From the Monarchy to the Taliban* (London: Crisis States Research Center, 2009), 4; Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 125; Hasan Poladi, *The Hazāras* (Stockton, CA: Mughal Publishing, 1989), 215.

<sup>98</sup> Niamatullah Ibrahim, *Divide and Rule: State Penetration in Hazarajat (Afghanistan) From the Monarchy to the Taliban* (London: Crisis States Research Center, 2009), 5; Hasan Poladi, *The Hazāras* (Stockton, CA: Mughal Publishing, 1989), 244-255. The Afghan government also benefited by taxing the sale of Hazara slaves and the seized Hazara properties.

as Pakistan. A few Hazaras continued to resist, but were defeated by the end of 1894. The displaced and enslaved Hazaras were often replaced with Pashtuns nomads, who received government sponsorship to settle in vacant lands in Hazarajat.<sup>99</sup>

## Kaffiristan / Nuristan: Extending Power to the Boundaries of the State

The final area of Afghanistan that remained independent of Abdur Rahman's control was Kaffiristan (modern Nuristan), inhabiting the mountainous areas in the northeast of the country.<sup>100</sup> Since Kaffiristan was included in the boundaries Abdur Rahman negotiated with Britain, he first attempted to win their loyalty and submission with "kindness and clemency," but decided on military action when they refused to acknowledge his suzerainty.<sup>101</sup> In the winter of 1895-1896, a large Afghan force invaded Kaffiristan in four columns, and conquered the area in about 40 days.

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<sup>99</sup> Niamatullah Ibrahim, *Divide and Rule: State Penetration in Hazarajat (Afghanistan) From the Monarchy to the Taliban* (London: Crisis States Research Center, 2009), 5; Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 129; Nigel J. R. Allan. "Rethinking Governance in Afghanistan." *Journal of International Affairs* 56, no. 2 (April 1, 2003): 193-202. Pashtuns were settled in their place. In Oruzgan, one province of Hazarajat, 16,000 Pashtun families were settled on Hazara land.

<sup>100</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), I 287; Amar Singh Chohan, *A History of Kaffiristan: Socio-Economic and Political Conditions of the Kaffers* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1989); George Scott Robertson, *The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush* (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1896), 62-88, 157-174. The Kaffirs (Arabic for unbelievers) or Nuristanis are a separate ethnic and linguistic group. They speak several related languages that represent a unique sub-group of the Iranian group of the Indo-European language family, and are often fair-haired, fair-skinned and blue-eyed. Sometimes rumored to be the descendents of Alexander the Great's Greeks (see Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King*), they are probably a unique remnant, since the people of this area were noted as different when Alexander passed through the area. Bellew and Robertson agree that they are "ancient Indians," but that conflicts with modern studies of the Nuristani language. They maintained a pagan religion until conquered and forcibly converted by Abdur Rahman. The Kaffirs had contacted the British at Jallalabad in 1839, claiming relationships with the invaders based on physical resemblance, but did not remain in contact. The Kaffirs and the Pashtun tribes near them constantly raided back and forth, with Kaffir slaves highly prized by the Pashtun.

<sup>101</sup> Amar Singh Chohan, *A History of Kaffiristan: Socio-Economic and Political Conditions of the Kaffers* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1989), 145; Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), I 287-289. Rahman also claimed to fear Russian encroachment into Afghanistan, on the pretext of aiding the Kaffirs.

Many Kaffirs were killed, and the rest accepted Islam.<sup>102</sup> Abdur Rahman acknowledged the use of tribal auxiliaries in the conquest of Kaffiristan—further evidence of his central government’s dependence on tribal support.<sup>103</sup> After their conversion, Abdur Rahman renamed Kaffiristan, calling it Nuristan—land of light.<sup>104</sup>

Throughout the course of his reign, Abdur Rahman’s policy of internal imperialism was effective, but in eliminating his opposition, he also eliminated political discourse. He succeeded in passing his kingdom peaceably to his son, but left a legacy of unfinished efforts which created structural weaknesses in the Afghan state. Although he sought to monopolize violence in the organs of the state, he supplemented his official forces with feudal and tribal support to eliminate opposition. These groups often contained the seeds of the next violent opposition with them.

## **Co-option of Islam: Controlling the Religious Establishment and Their Message**

In addition to his coercive policy of internal imperialism, Abdur Rahman adopted other means of increasing the power of his central government over the Afghan people. Throughout his reign, he steadily increased his control over the Islamic religious establishment—the *Ulema*. Once in control of the *Ulema*, he then used that control to establish a religious justification for his rule. By the end of his reign, Abdur Rahman had successfully garnered the support of the *Ulema* for the central government.

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<sup>102</sup> Amar Singh Chohan, *A History of Kafferistan: Socio-Economic and Political Conditions of the Kaffers* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1989), 147-158. Rahman ordered that all males who refused to accept Islam be killed, and women who refused be sold into slavery, but later revoked the order regarding enslaving the women. This provoked an outcry in England and India, but the British government ignored it and abided by their agreements to leave Rahman sovereign in internal affairs.

<sup>103</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), I 292.

<sup>104</sup> Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 150-151. 10,000 Nuristanis were recruited into the Afghan Army, and they retained an important role in the Afghan Army until the Soviet invasion.



Prior to Abdur Rahman's reign, the religious establishment—along with tribal leadership—had been instrumental in orchestrating the national resistance to two British invasions.<sup>105</sup> This had led to conflicts between the central governments and the religious establishment. By the end of his reign, Abdur Rahman had totally transformed the religious establishment in Afghanistan, ensuring its subjugation and support to his central government. In order to control the religious leadership's influence on the population, Abdur Rahman established himself as the chief authority for religious doctrine, coerced and co-opted religious leaders into a uniform religious doctrine—which coincidentally supported his centralization activities—and controlled their previous access to economic support.<sup>106</sup>

Abdur Rahman's conflict with the religious establishment began even before his firm ascension to the throne, when religious leaders in Kandahar issued a fatwa against him as a tool of the British.<sup>107</sup> Once he was victorious, Abdur Rahman executed two of the prominent leaders.<sup>108</sup> At the beginning of his reign, Abdur Rahman assessed that “Many of these priests taught as Islamic religion strange doctrines which were never in the teaching of Mahomed, yet which have been the cause of the downfall of all Islamic nations in every country,” and that

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<sup>105</sup> Ashraf Ghani, “Islam and State-Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan: 1880-1901,” *Modern Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (1978): 270; Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2002), 211; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 122-123.

<sup>106</sup> Ashraf Ghani, “Islam and State-Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan: 1880-1901,” *Modern Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (1978): 270-272; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 134-136.

<sup>107</sup> Ashraf Ghani, “Islam and State-Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan: 1880-1901,” *Modern Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (1978): 273; *Abdur Rahman, The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), 210; Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 153.

<sup>108</sup> Ashraf Ghani, “Islam and State-Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan: 1880-1901,” *Modern Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (1978): 273; *Abdur Rahman, The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), 216; Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 153.

“every priest, mullah, and chief of every tribe and village considered himself an independent king.”<sup>109</sup>

Departing from the previous justification of the amir’s authority through tribal selection, Abdur Rahman developed a justification similar to the western concept of the “divine right of kings.”<sup>110</sup> Beginning in 1885, Abdur Rahman initiated an examination for the religious leaders who received public subsidy for descent from Mohamed or for learning.<sup>111</sup> In addition to nationalization of religious endowments (*awqaf*), this undermined the economic power of the religious leadership, made them dependent on the state for sustainment and provided Abdur Rahman the influence necessary to transform the *Ulema*.<sup>112</sup>

Once Abdur Rahman had control of the *Ulema*, he was able to use his influence to standardize religious doctrine. In addition to creating state-run schools to teach Islamic law, Abdur Rahman appointed a committee to draft handbooks and pamphlets of religion, which he personally reviewed before publication. These writings were distributed throughout the country, and mosques indoctrinated the people with their teachings.<sup>113</sup> In addition to directing the content

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<sup>109</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), 218, 217.

<sup>110</sup> Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics Afghanistan* (Richmond, Surrey: Routledge, 1995), 10, 62-64; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 130. Despite attempting to bypass the tribes, Olesen says that Rahman was unable to deny the influence of the jirga selection of the amir, evidenced by Rahman’s acknowledgement, in justifying his failure to appoint a successor, that “the people have full authority to choose their king; and kings, who have been forced upon the people against their wish, have lost not only the kingdom but their heads as well!” despite his claim that “the throne is the property of the Almighty King of kings, our Creator, who appoints kings as shepherds to guard His flock, and into whose care He confides the creatures of His hands.” Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), (II) 2.

<sup>111</sup> Ashraf Ghani, “Islam and State-Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan: 1880-1901,” *Modern Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (1978): 273; Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics Afghanistan* (Richmond, Surrey: Routledge, 1995), 76-77.

<sup>112</sup> Ashraf Ghani, “Islam and State-Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan: 1880-1901,” *Modern Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (1978): 273-4; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 134-136.

<sup>113</sup> Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics Afghanistan* (Richmond, Surrey: Routledge, 1995), 75-76;

of religious teaching, Abdur Rahman limited those who were allowed to preach, reserving that privilege to those mullahs who had passed his examinations. In addition, he established *muhtasibs* (overseers of morals), paid by the state, to report on the contents of the mosque sermons.<sup>114</sup>

Abdur Rahman emphasized the doctrine of *jihad*, stressing that *jihad* must be fought under the orders of the Islamic ruler. One of his tracts stated “the King is like a shield under whose protection Jihad takes place.” By emphasizing the duty to fight when the ruler declared *jihad*, Abdur Rahman gave religious support to his military drafts.<sup>115</sup> Abdur Rahman even declared *jihad* against religious minorities inside Afghanistan (the Shia Hazara and the pagan Kafirs). This was only partially successful in accruing power to the central government, however, because tribal levies had great success in these campaigns, increasing the power of tribal leaders outside the central government, although nominally controlled by it.

By the end of Abdur Rahman’s reign, he had been successful in co-opting the Muslim religious establishment into support of the centralized state power. By establishing control of the *Ulema*’s economic livelihoods, and then leveraging that control to guide the published and publically delivered doctrine, Abdur Rahman shifted the religious support to the state. The peak of his success was when the *Ulema* granted him the title of *Zia al-Millat-I wa al-Din*, the Light of the Nation and Religion, and later gave him the title ghazi (religious warrior), following his conquest of Kafiristan in 1896.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Ashraf Ghani, “Islam and State-Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan: 1880-1901,” *Modern Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (1978): 275-6.

<sup>115</sup> Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics Afghanistan* (Richmond, Surrey: Routledge, 1995), 68; Ashraf Ghani, “Islam and State-Building in a Tribal Society Afghanistan: 1880-1901,” *Modern Asian Studies* 12, no. 2 (1978): 279-280; Stephen Wheeler, *The Ameer Abdur Rahman* (New York: Frederick Warne & Co., 1895), 227-230.

<sup>116</sup> Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics Afghanistan* (Richmond, Surrey: Routledge, 1995), 88; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 135-136.

## Military Modernization: Monopolizing the Use of Force to the State

Perhaps the most important of Abdur Rahman's reforms, because it enabled his internal imperialism policies, was his institutionalization of a modern army. Although both Dost Mohammed and Sher Ali Khan had attempted to create a regular standing army, their forces had disintegrated, either in the civil wars following the death of Dost Mohammed or in the face of British invasion in the case of Sher Ali. Prior to Abdur Rahman, the primary effective forces in Afghanistan had been tribally based, feudal levies. Despite Afghanistan's limited resources, Abdur Rahman hoped to build the strongest army in Central Asia, and to make Afghanistan a world power. In reality, his dual purpose was to eliminate rivals to his centralized rule and to guard Afghanistan against foreign invasion.<sup>117</sup>

Building on the reforms attempted by Dost Mohamed and Sher Ali, Abdur Rahman established greater modernization policies. He divided the army into three branches—artillery, cavalry and infantry. Replacing the tribal based *qomi* system that assessed conscription based on clans, Abdur Rahman's system, *hashtanafari*, conscripted one out of every eight men in the population, although this system was imperfectly implemented.<sup>118</sup> Some regiments remained tribally based, while others were recruited on a local or religious basis.<sup>119</sup> Because the local

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<sup>117</sup> Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 93-96; Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), II 57; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 139-140. Rahman stated that his goal was 1,000,000 fighting men with modern weapons.

<sup>118</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 140; Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), II 52-53. Police, militia, militia cavalry and volunteers were all included in the infantry branch.

<sup>119</sup> Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 98; John Alfred Gray, *At the Court of the Amir of*

garrisons were controlled by the provincial governors, and the army lacked local tribal connections, this system partly replaced the tribal system with provincial governments.<sup>120</sup>

Abdur Rahman also instituted regular cash payments to his military, and regularized the organization, with each standard regiment having a mullah, a physician and a surgeon.<sup>121</sup>

Striving to obtain self-sufficiency, Abdur Rahman developed factories in Afghanistan to make munitions, including percussion and time fuses, with English machinery. His quest for autonomy conflicted with this goal, however, because he did not develop the other institutions to sustain this military- only British subsidies allowed for his successful military development.<sup>122</sup>

Because of Abdur Rahman's fear of external influence, he accepted only a few foreign advisers. By recruiting native commanders from the rich and landed gentry, Abdur Rahman strengthened their ties to the state. This also limited the effectiveness of military development, because the native officers had to rely on translated Persian manuals, and officer development remained erratic.<sup>123</sup>

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*Afghanistan* (New York: Keegan Paul, 2002), 418; Frank A. Martin, *Under the Absolute Amir* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1907), 220-221.

<sup>120</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 420.

<sup>121</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 140; Stephen Wheeler, *The Ameer Abdur Rahman* (New York: Frederick Warne & Co., 1895), 217; Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 98-99, 104. Unlike the civil service, military pay was proportionately high, and mostly in cash, not in kind.

<sup>122</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), II 57; Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 103; Jeffery J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 28. In 1895, reports indicated that Afghanistan was producing weapons equivalent to European products, and by 1900, Kabul had manufactured more than enough weapons for all the men in Afghanistan fit for military service.

<sup>123</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 141; Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 97; Frank A. Martin, *Under the Absolute Amir* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1907), 173-212; John Alfred Gray, *At the Court of the Amir of Afghanistan* (New York: Keegan Paul, 2002). Although only briefly mentioning the Afghan military, Gray provides a personal account of a foreigner serving the Amir. Gregorian says that most of the foreign military advisors were a few Indian Muslims Rahman tolerated performed multiple functions for the army.

In addition to the regular army, Abdur Rahman maintained the irregular tribal and feudal forces that had traditionally provided the bulk of Afghanistan's military strength. Feudal khans were allowed to retain their armed followers, and required to train them, muster them for annual inspections, and maintain government supplied weapons for them. Abdur Rahman used these requirements to deepen their dependence on the state, and increased the number of recognized khans in order to weaken their individual power. Abdur Rahman also instituted programs to formalize the tribal militias (*eljaris*). Although only mustered during wartime, Abdur Rahman employed *eljaris* in most of his internal wars, particularly the Ghilzai and Hazara revolts. Based on the *eljari* system, Abdur Rahman attempted to develop a reserve of trained and armed men in each village, with government issued arms and uniforms.<sup>124</sup>

Despite continuous attempts at centralization of military power, Abdur Rahman was unable to completely overcome regional and tribal attachments, even in the regular army. Although regular army elements did sometimes fight rebellious members of their tribes, on other occasions regular army units supported their rebellious tribesmates.<sup>125</sup> Permission to loot defeated opponents, a traditional privilege of the feudal and tribal forces, also contributed to inter-tribal tensions in the country.<sup>126</sup> Overall, Abdur Rahman's employment of military development as a tool of government centralization was only partially successful. Because of limited means to develop his standing army, and continued resort to tribal and feudal organs to raise the military

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<sup>124</sup> Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 108-112; Frank A. Martin, *Under the Absolute Amir* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1907), 220-223; Stephen Wheeler, *The Ameer Abdur Rahman* (New York: Frederick Warne & Co., 1895), 144-146. Rahman also continued to supply weapons to khans located east of the Durand line, in the British area of influence.

<sup>125</sup> Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 113; Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), I 256-257.

<sup>126</sup> Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 114; Niamatullah Ibrahimi, *Divide and Rule: State Penetration in Hazarajat (Afghanistan) From the Monarchy to the Taliban* (London: Crisis States Research Center, 2009), 5.

forces required to defeat his enemies, Abdur Rahman enabled the survival of centers of power outside his government, and allowed them continued access to military means.

### **Governmental Bureaucratization: Regularizing Central Administration**

When Abdur Rahman began his rule, following the Second Anglo-Afghan War, the Afghan central government was in disarray. Abdur Rahman stated that “the various departments of the Government were so mixed up with each other, that one could hardly say whether there were any departments.” He claimed that a single minister with a staff of 10 clerks conducted all governmental affairs.<sup>127</sup> Since the central government had lost whatever control it had maintained of Herat, Kandahar and Afghan Turkistan, this reduction in capability matched a reduction in effectiveness- the central government was essentially the Kabul government.<sup>128</sup>

During his reign, Abdur Rahman increased the number of ministers and secretaries, but at the same time reduced their power. Recruiting primarily from Qizilbashs, Tajiks, Hindus and certain Pashtun tribes, Abdur Rahman expanded the number of government bureaucrats working in numerous new offices, particularly those responsible for tax collecting, customs and other economic activities. These offices collected the government’s revenue, and then distributed it to those entitled to government subsidies.<sup>129</sup> Abdur Rahman also reestablished the postal service

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<sup>127</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), II 49-50.

<sup>128</sup> Ironically, as noted, Afghan President Hamid Karzai is derisively referred to as the Mayor of Kabul. See Simon Robinson, “Karzai's Kabul: Fit For a King?” *Time*, April 18, 2002, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,231457,00.html> (accessed November 24, 2010) and Jackie Northam, “In Afghanistan, U.s. Success Depends On Karzai,” National Public Radio, December 21, 2009, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=121509106> (accessed November 24, 2010).

<sup>129</sup> Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir ‘Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 27-32; Frank A. Martin, *Under the Absolute Amir* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1907), 245-251. Martin's portrayal of the government bureaucrats is much less flattering than Kakar's.

and expanded the duties of the chief of transport.<sup>130</sup> In order to increase the prestige of the civilian administrators, Abdur Rahman granted them military titles equivalent to their civilian ranks. These elements masked personal control of the departments, however. Abdur Rahman's ministers acted merely to enact his decisions, not to advise and govern independently. This continued the Afghan traditional of personal relationships in governance, and limited the development of sustainable bureaucracy independent of personal relationships to a ruler or ruling house.<sup>131</sup>

Abdur Rahman also created a council with two bodies, an upper house and a lower house. Membership included Durrani clan leaders (*sardars*), other tribal elders, and representation of the *Ulema*, the Islamic religious establishment. This council never wielded great power, but did provide Abdur Rahman a means to keep influential leaders in Kabul and to gain insight into the opinions of the population.<sup>132</sup>

In an effort to curb the power of local governors, Abdur Rahman consistently divided the provinces into smaller units, minimizing the area that could be controlled by any single opponent. At the beginning of his reign, Afghanistan was divided into four provinces: Kabul, Kandahar, Herat and Afghan Turkistan. Over the course of his reign, Abdur Rahman split Afghan Turkistan into Maimana, Turkistan and Badakhshan. Farah, Girishkh, Zamindawar and Chakhansur, formerly subordinate to Herat or Kandahar were subordinated separately and directly to the Amir.

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<sup>130</sup> Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 33-35; Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), II 78.

<sup>131</sup> Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 27-28.

<sup>132</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 134-135; Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 23-25.



Another method used to decrease the power of the governors was to create a separate military commander in each province, depriving the provincial governors of significant military power.<sup>133</sup>

Despite his attempts to modernize and reform the Afghan governmental bureaucracy, Abdur Rahman continued to rely on traditional relationships and personal loyalties between the central government and its subordinates. Beneath the forms of a modern state, Abdur Rahman's structures retained the traditional reliance on personal loyalties to the ruler or dynasty, rather than loyalty to the entity of the state. His systems also never developed direct connections to ensure the loyalty of the people to the state—the majority of the population remained loyal to their local and tribal leaders.

### **Economics: Sustaining the State's Power**

Abdur Rahman's policies of conscription and self-reliance and the nearly constant fighting during his reign meant that agriculture fared poorly. Falling agricultural production increased the portion of the population who were barely subsisting. Abdur Rahman's government purchased and stored grain, and distributed it to the needy or sold it at times. To increase self-sufficiency in production, Abdur Rahman's government loaned money to farmers to increase the amount of cultivated land, and government owned land was leased—and later sold—to those who would establish farms on it. Irrigation canals were also built or refurbished at government expense, and Abdur Rahman supported the introduction of new crops and animals in an effort to

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<sup>133</sup> Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan*, (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 48-49; Angus Hamilton, *Afghanistan* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 242-259; *Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series: Afghanistan and Nepal* (Calcutta, Superintendent of Government Printing, 1908), 55-90. Each source gives a different breakdown of administration within Afghanistan. Whatever the exact breakdown, it is certain that Abdur Rahman increased the divisions from the traditional four great provinces and reduced or distributed the powers of their governors.

increase production.<sup>134</sup> These agricultural policies tended to over ride local affiliations to bring people into direct dependence of the central government.

Abdur Rahman's initial interest in development of industry was in support of military self-sufficiency.<sup>135</sup> Besides manufacturing of weapons and other military goods, Abdur Rahman supported the development of state-owned workshops for making boots, soap, candles, carpets, paper glass, needles and agricultural tools.<sup>136</sup> As with Abdur Rahman's agriculture policies, these government directed activities increased the portion of the population tied directly to the central government.

Abdur Rahman's policies toward trade were somewhat schizophrenic. Abdur Rahman's government constructed and repaired the roads and bridges along the major trade routes, and the new central army increased security. The government regularized the collection of customs, duties and tolls, but also increased them dramatically. The government also introduced tight regulations on commerce: instituting government monopolies on certain items, banning the import or export of others, and regulating the movement of the population without permission. The net result of Abdur Rahman's policies was a decrease of trade, with increased government influence on the trade that remained.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 189-192; Frank A. Martin, *Under the Absolute Amir* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1907), 239-242.

<sup>135</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), II 58-59; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 142-143.

<sup>136</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 143; Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan, the Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1979), 192-195.

<sup>137</sup> Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 145-147.

## Boundary Definition: The Limits of Sovereignty

The boundaries of Afghanistan, although drawn during Abdur Rahman's reign, were imposed upon him by outside powers. Prior to Abdur Rahman, the territorial boundaries had meant less than the shifting loyalties of the population. During Abdur Rahman's reign, the international community defined, often over Afghan objections, the territorial boundaries of the Afghan state. Instead of cementing the loyalty of the population to the state, as boundaries in Europe tended to do, these Afghan boundaries confused the power of the state by separating loyal supporters of the Amir from his control. At the same time, the boundaries forced the Afghan state to assume responsibility for people opposed to it, and that it did not wish to control, in order to satisfy strategic or political interests of outside powers.

### Russian Boundary

The first boundary conflict during Abdur Rahman's reign was over Afghanistan's northern boundary with the Russian Empire. Historically, the area known as Afghan Turkistan had shifted between the Amir of Kabul, the Persian Empire, and Uzbek and other Turkic khanates to the north.

In the early 1880s, the Russian Empire was completing its expansion in Central Asia east of the Aral Sea (what is now Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan), completing its conquest of the Turkmen with the subjugation of the Merv Oasis in 1884.<sup>138</sup> The next step south was the Panjdeh Oasis, populated by ethnic Turkmen, but often tributary to Herat and thus claimed by Afghanistan.<sup>139</sup> Following the Russian conquest of Merv, fear of war between England and Russia had led to both nations to agree to a joint boundary commission to map the boundaries in

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<sup>138</sup> Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansah International, 1992), 402-417; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 421-422; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 75-76.

<sup>139</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 422; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 75-76.

the area.<sup>140</sup> The Russians delayed the departure of their boundary commission, however, and their army continued to push south toward Panjdeh.<sup>141</sup>

In March, 1884, in response to Afghan provocation (the Afghan force at Panjdeh had moved north to intercept the Russian force that had moved to within 25 miles of Panjdeh), the Russians attacked the Afghans and secured the Panjdeh Oasis, despite the presence of the British portion of the joint boundary commission.<sup>142</sup> This almost provoked a war between England and Russia, but an agreement signed in September averted a major war. Demarcation of the Russian boundary with Afghanistan continued until 1887, without further incidents, although much more diplomatic maneuvering. At the time of the Panjdeh incident, Abdur Rahman was visiting the new British Viceroy in India.<sup>143</sup> Abdur Rahman did not seem to attribute much importance to Panjdeh, either in his immediate reaction or in his biography, but did allow the British to assist in fortifying Herat, and his representatives did press hard for local grazing grounds in later negotiations.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), II 150; David Loyn, *Butcher and Bolt: Two Hundred Years of Foreign Engagement in Afghanistan* (London: Hutchinson, 2008), 125-129. Rahman claims to have requested the British commission to protect himself from encroachment by the Russians.

<sup>141</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 76; Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansah International, 1992), 418-432; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 421-424.

<sup>142</sup> T. Hungerford Holdich, *Through Central Asia* (New Delhi: Bhavana Books & Prints, 1901), 129-131; W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 165-166; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 76-77.

<sup>143</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 76-77; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 422-424.

<sup>144</sup> Percy Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1975), 160-167; Asghar H. Bilgrami, *Afghanistan and British India* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, Ltd., 1972), 206-211; T. Hungerford Holdich, *Through Central Asia* (New Delhi: Bhavana Books & Prints, 1901), 137; Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900).

## British Indian Boundary (The Durand Line)

The establishment of the boundary between Afghanistan and British India was more problematic than the Russian boundary, and issues there still remain. Running through an area populated mostly by non-Durrani and non-Ghilzai Pashtun tribes, the Amir of Afghanistan was acknowledged as the first among equals, if at all, by the tribal leadership. Once Abdur Rahman's internal control of Afghanistan was secured, he turned his attention to solidifying his control of these Pashtun tribes, to the point that one of his campaigns in Bajor "seemed designed to bring dominant Afghan control right down to the borders of Peshawar." Abdur Rahman's relations with Britain were also strained because of the British construction of a railroad to New Chaman, which Abdur Rahman interpreted as a violation of the Treaty of Gandamak.<sup>145</sup>

In order to define their respective areas of influence among the tribes, Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, foreign secretary to the government of India, met with Abdur Rahman in 1893.<sup>146</sup> Although applied as an international boundary, the Durand line was probably understood as a delineation of spheres of influence, which Abdur Rahman agreed to in order to increase his British subsidy and resume arms deliveries. The tribes continued to look to the Amir for support against the British, and Abdur Rahman continued to exert influence with tribes on the British side of the line.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Zalmay A. Gulzad, *External Influences and the Development of the Afghan State in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 182-185; T. Hungerford Holdich, *Through Central Asia* (New Delhi: Bhavana Books & Prints, 1901), 226-228. Due to limited influence by the Amir, the British maintained direct relations with the tribes, especially those that controlled important areas like the Khyber Pass.

<sup>146</sup> Jeffery J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 29; Abdur Rahman, *The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan*, Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan (London, John Murray, 1900), II 154-162. Rahman claims to have initiated the boundary discussions, and to have attempted to retain the Pashtun tribal areas to prevent "fighting and troubles with them."

<sup>147</sup> Jeffery J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 29-30; T. Hungerford Holdich, *Through Central Asia* (New Delhi: Bhavana Books & Prints, 1901), 226-229.

After completion of the agreement, four boundary commissions set out to mark the boundary on the ground, but were immediately delayed by misunderstandings and lack of common maps.<sup>148</sup> Abdur Rahman's and his successors', continued interference across the line, combined with the resistance of the tribes themselves, prevented the British from attaining the stability they desired, while the division of tribes and the prevention of Abdur Rahman's control of the tribes set the stage for issues that remain to this day. Because neither Abdur Rahman nor the British colonial administrators successfully expanded government control into the tribal areas, these areas remained independent, an area of support to resistance and a cause for disagreement about the status of the tribal areas.

## Subsequent Development

Abdur Rahman was succeeded as Amir by his son Habibullah in 1901, in one of the few peaceful transitions of power in Afghanistan's history.<sup>149</sup> Habibullah, although fascinated with western technology like automobiles, made only minor refinements to his father's internal administration of Afghanistan. In foreign affairs, he attempted to assert his country's independence, but eventually conceded to continued British control of Afghanistan's foreign affairs. Despite pressure, he also maintained Afghanistan's neutrality in World War I.<sup>150</sup> Habibullah was assassinated in 1919.

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<sup>148</sup> Zalmay A. Gulzad, *External Influences and the Development of the Afghan State in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 195-196.

<sup>149</sup> T.A. Heathcote, *The Afghan Wars, 1839-1919* (Staplehursts: Spellmount Limited, 2003), 166; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 181-182; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 428. This was the first peaceful transition in recorded.

<sup>150</sup> Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 15-16; T.A. Heathcote, *The Afghan Wars, 1839-1919* (Staplehursts: Spellmount Limited, 2003), 167; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 175. Habibullah entertained a joint Ottoman and German mission in 1915, but declined to enter the war without assistance that the Germans and Ottomans could not possibly provide. He also maintained contact with the British in India throughout the mission's time in Kabul. Jeffery J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in*

Habibullah's son, Amanullah, succeeded his father after quickly subduing a revolt led by one of his uncles, Nasrullah, who Amanullah tied to Habibullah's assassination.<sup>151</sup> Amanullah almost immediately started a short war with Britain, the Third Afghan War, which ended fairly quickly, with Britain recognizing Afghanistan's complete independence. The Afghan Army performed poorly in the Third Afghan War, but Pashtun tribal levies, motivated by nationalism and jihad, enabled Amanullah to gain this recognition from Britain, weary from World War 1. Amanullah's use of jihad and tribal levies won him support among the tribal and clerical groups that had supported his uncle's claim to the throne, but also undermined the power of the central government by recognizing other centers of power within the state.<sup>152</sup>

Amanullah attempted to modernize and liberalize Afghanistan in an effort to develop a sustainable state government. Among these reforms were introduction of a written constitution, regularization of taxation, expansion of private property rights to land, and development of plans for a new transportation network to facilitate trade.<sup>153</sup> In response to these reforms, particularly

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*Afghanistan* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 37-40. In a 1905 re-affirmation of the Durand treaty, the British recognized Habibullah as the "Independent King of Afghanistan," but he continued to use the title amir. The ruler of Afghanistan would not use the title king, or shah, until 1926. Habibullah also allowed the return of leading Pashtuns and others exiled by his father.

<sup>151</sup> Percy Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan* (New York: AMS Press, 1975), II:264-268; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2001), 86; T.A. Heathcote, *The Afghan Wars, 1839-1919* (Staplehurst: Spellmount Limited, 2003), 169; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 179-181; Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 53-54. Amanullah was associated with a nationalist-modernist faction known as the Young Afghans (modelling themselves after the Young Turks), while Nasrullah was associated with the more conservative Ulema and the Pashtun tribes in British India.

<sup>152</sup> Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 54; W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 194-196; Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2002), 218-219; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 181-182; T.A. Heathcote, *The Afghan Wars, 1839-1919* (Staplehurst: Spellmount Limited, 2003), 170-205; Percy Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan* (New York: AMS Press, 1975), II: 270-286. The Afghan government also lost the fiscal support of the British, which withdrew the subsidy they had paid since Abdur Rahman assumed the throne with their support.

<sup>153</sup> Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 55; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New*

the tax on trade across the Durand line, the Mangal Ghilzai Pashtun tribe in Paktia revolted in 1924, and created a temporary halt in the implementation of reforms.<sup>154</sup> After a 1927 tour of Europe, Turkey, Persia and the Soviet Union, Amanullah returned to Afghanistan and began to push even more radical reforms.<sup>155</sup> Response to this initiative was swift. Led by conservative mullahs, revolts broke out among Pashtun tribes, with the Shinwaris taking control of Jalalabad, and Zadrans and Jajis taking control of Khost. While Amanullah and the Afghan Army were pre-occupied with these threats, a mixed force lead by a Tajik bandit from the north caused Amanullah to abdicate and forced him to flee to Kandahar.<sup>156</sup>

Although Amanullah tried to rally Pashtun support from Kandahar, he turned back when the Ghilzai tribal leaders opposed his passage through their tribal lands on the way to Kabul, and soon after he fled Afghanistan to exile. Meanwhile, Nadir Khan, a successful leader in the Third Afghan War and collateral member of the royal house, returned from his diplomatic post in France, and rallied the Pashtun tribes against the Tajik usurper.<sup>157</sup> After much fighting, and

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*History* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2001), 92-96; W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 200-215. Fraser-Tytler gives a first hand account of portions of Amanullah's European tour, and events in Afghanistan after his return.

<sup>154</sup> D. Balland, "Afghanistan X. Political History," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition, December 15, 1983, available at <http://www.iranica.com/articles/afghanistan-x-political-history>; Jeffery J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 40-46; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 183-187. Because the military had neglected to pay for modernization reforms, Amanullah was forced to call on tribal support to put down the rebellion.

<sup>155</sup> Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 20-21; D. Balland, "Afghanistan X. Political History," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition, December 15, 1983, available at <http://www.iranica.com/articles/afghanistan-x-political-history>. Among his proposals were: constitutional monarchy on the western model, separation of state and religious power, and women's rights.

<sup>156</sup> W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 214-216; Percy Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan* (New York: AMS Press, 1975), II:302-318.

<sup>157</sup> Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 77, 111.



having called on Pashtun tribal fighters from the British side of the Durand line, Nadir Khan seized Kabul and assumed the throne as Nadir Shah.<sup>158</sup>

Nadir Shah's main contribution to governmental development was the Constitution of 1931. Described as a "hodgepodge of unworkable elements," this constitution combined elements of Turkish, Iranian and French constitutions, and was never effectively executed in practice. Much of the document is idealistic rather than realistic because many of the elements of the constitution were never implemented. Although the 1931 Constitution generally summarized the ideals of the Afghan state, it contained many contradictions, and failed to provide for effective enforcement of many of its provisions.<sup>159</sup>

Nadir Shah's reign lasted only three years, before he was assassinated and succeeded by his son, Zahir Shah, in 1933.<sup>160</sup> For the first twenty years of Zahir Shah's reign, his uncles served as his Prime Minister and effectively ruled in his place. World War II stressed Afghanistan's attempts to maintain neutrality, and the separation of Pakistan from India in 1947 raised the issue

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<sup>158</sup> Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 194-195; W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 216-222; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2001), 99-101; Jeffery J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 51-52; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 458-460; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 281-292. Nadir Khan was a Mohamedzai descendent of Dost Mohamed and a third cousin of Amanullah on his father's side, while his mother was a Sadozai relative of Ahmed Shah Durani. His sister was also married to Habibullah. See Barakzai dynasty family tree in appendix A.

<sup>159</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 464-471. Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 301-307. Among the idealistic elements are the "General Rights of Afghan Subjects", compulsory education, equal rights for women, freedom of the press, parliamentary approval of royal decrees, and regulation of the civil service.

<sup>160</sup> Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 22-25; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 476; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 338-343. Dupree provides an interesting counterfactual regarding the aftermath of Nadir Shah's assassination. Instead of the traditional fighting between the brothers and sons of the dead King, Nadir Shah's brothers supported Zahir Shah, allowing the second peaceful transition of power in Afghan history.

of “Pushtunistan”, which dominated Afghan foreign policy for several years.<sup>161</sup> Internal development, however, remained limited. A 1949 attempt at liberalization failed because of opposition from entrenched interests and failure to gain support outside the educated, urban elites.<sup>162</sup>

Issues arising from the failure of the “Liberal Parliament,” as well as dissatisfaction with foreign policy and economic development caused Daoud Khan, the king’s cousin, to oust his uncle, Shah Mahmud, as Prime Minister in a bloodless coup in 1953. For the next 10 years, Daoud instituted economic and social reform, but continued to repress opposition to autocratic rule.<sup>163</sup> Afghanistan once again became a region of conflict between superpowers, with the United States and the Soviet Union both competing for influence using economic development aid.<sup>164</sup>

Daoud was generally successful in slowly developing economic and political reforms inside Afghanistan.<sup>165</sup> In foreign policy, however, he was not as successful. After the United States failed to support the military development he desired, Daoud abandoned traditional balance

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<sup>161</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 471-494; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 382-392.

<sup>162</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 494-498; Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 342-374.

<sup>163</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 499-510; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 120-121.

<sup>164</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 514-522. Dupree calls Afghanistan an “economic Korea”, with the Soviet Union financing projects in the north, while the US backed projects in the south. Against the backdrop of the Cold War, Afghanistan attempted to maintain its independence of both sides, while sustaining development.

<sup>165</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 530-531. In 1959, female members of the royal family and other senior leaders appeared in public without veils. Although this caused protests from the religious conservatives, the public generally supported and emulated the move, the opposite of its reaction to similar moves by King Amanullah thirty years prior.

and non-alignment by accepting significant amounts of Soviet military aid.<sup>166</sup> Compounded by economic distress caused by closure of land routes through Pakistan over the Pashtunistan conflict, Daoud stepped down as Prime Minister in 1963.<sup>167</sup>

The departure of Daoud allowed King Zahir Shah to step into the forefront after 30 years of rule in his name by others. Despite varied and conflicting reasons for support, most of the population was optimistic following the departure of Daoud.<sup>168</sup> Zahir was able to capitalize on the announcement of several economic aid measures, and made diplomatic moves to resolve the impasse with Pakistan. Zahir also presided over the re-writing of the Constitution, resulting in the Constitution of 1964. A *loya jirga* held to approve the draft Constitution was fairly representative, and actually debated and approved changes to the proposed document.<sup>169</sup>

Despite this promising start, however, lack of economic development and prospects for educated Afghans led to student demonstrations, even disrupting the functioning of the parliament in 1965. Increased freedom also led to increased influence by Soviet sponsored communists. Understanding of the new power of the legislature led to a conservative backlash in

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<sup>166</sup> Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 522-526; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 120-122; Ralph H. Magnus, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx and Mujahid* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 46-47; Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival* (New York: I.B. Taurus & Co., Ltd., 2004), 121-132; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 106-109. The United States saw Afghanistan as unimportant, and wanted no disruption of its relationship with Pakistan.

<sup>167</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 116-118; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 538-558.

<sup>168</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 119; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 559-560.

<sup>169</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 120-121; Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 570-587. Among the changes in the Constitution were closer definition of the royal succession; limitations of the appointment of royal family members to high political office and other participation in political parties; increased rights for women; general preference for secular Islamic law, although the prohibition against laws “repugnant to the basic principles of Islam” remained; and extensive revision of the judicial system. Dupree’s opinion is that the 1964 Afghan Constitution is “the finest in the Muslim world.”

the 1969 elections, with the lower house, *Wolesi Jirga*, having a much more conservative bent.<sup>170</sup> Further economic troubles, including widespread famine from 1969-1972, further destabilized the government. In 1973, Daoud returned to power leading a coup carried out by young military officers, educated in the Soviet Union.<sup>171</sup> Although Daoud had seized power with communist and other leftist support, he maintained autocratic rule, never formally acknowledged the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), and soon began to remove PDPA members from political and military leadership positions. His poorly executed modernization efforts failed to gain popular support, and without the support of the Soviet Union and Afghan leftists, Daoud was overthrown and murdered by the PDPA in the Saur Revolution of 1978.<sup>172</sup>

## Proposed Way Ahead

As can be seen from the brief overview of Afghan history provided, development of centralized state power in Afghanistan is a difficult task. If US policy continues to see the development of a central Afghan government, the methods used by Abdur Rahman to centralize state power provide insight on possibilities in the Afghan context, and should serve as a source of lessons learned, system propensities, and possible solutions for US supported Afghan policies.

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<sup>170</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 121-127. In spite of Soviet influence, the Afghan communist party, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, split irrevocably in 1967, over personal differences between two leaders.

<sup>171</sup> Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 127-130; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 127-130. At the time of the coup, Zahir Shah was traveling in Europe, and remained in exile.

<sup>172</sup> Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 61-66; Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, *A Brief History of Afghanistan* (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 130-134; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 128-137; Ralph H. Magnus, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx and Mujahid* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 118-120; Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival* (New York: I.B. Taurus & Co., Ltd., 2004), 172-186; Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 210-216, 225-226.

## **Cost of Extending Power**

Development of Afghan National Security Forces is well underway, and these forces are the primary means of extending state power in the short term. In response to recent Taliban offensives, the Afghan government, with US support, has taken the dangerous step of sanctioning local, tribally- based militias in order to provide security. Although potentially successful in the short term, the experience of Abdur Rahman's reign shows that sanctioning local military forces offers the potential, and maybe even the propensity, to accelerate internal disputes and undermine the stability of the state. Where these local forces have been established, they should be transitioned into formal, centrally controlled institutions as soon as possible.

Development of civic government institutions—especially at provincial, district and other local levels—has been slower than security force development. Much of the sub-national governance of Afghanistan remains rooted in tribal politics that override the power of the central government. In order to establish long term stability, the state must develop the loyalty of the population to the states structures, instead of using the state structures to reward those who have the loyalty of the population. Although done in a brutal manner, Abdur Rahman succeeded, at least temporarily, in breaking the authority of the tribal and religious leaders. Rahman's ways and means are no longer acceptable to the international community, but the ends must still be accomplished.

Economic development, especially road development, has also played a significant factor in external support to the Afghan government. Continued road building will decrease the costs of extending state power into rural areas, but that is only one component of economic development. The state must reduce the cost of extending its power in order to create a system that allows sustainment of that projection. Infrastructure development is key to this reduction, and to facilitating the relation of the state to the population that allows the state to sustain its power projection.

## **Strengthening Borders**

The Afghanistan-Pakistan border continues to pose a significant issue, both to the Afghan government and to the wider regional system. As a continuation of dispute over this border, the Pakistani government sees value in a weak Afghan government and continued access across the border. At the same time, the limited security of the border provides a threat to Pakistan as well as Afghanistan, with militant opposition to both governments using the border to establish sanctuaries. The US should work with both governments to establish a stronger border, and assist both governments in extending their influence to the border. In some cases, this may mean rationalizing the border to ensure it conforms with the patterns of the population on the ground.

## **The International State System**

The final component of maintaining state power is the international state system in which the state resides. Like the African states studied by Herbst, the present state system accepts the territorial boundaries of Afghanistan as delineated during Abdur Rahman's reign. Because of the ways that the boundaries were delineated, however, the populations divided by the established boundaries generally disregard those boundaries unless forced to comply with them. During Abdur Rahman's reign, the British Empire felt free to act within his boundaries, and to block participation of other outsiders in Afghanistan, with coerced compliance by Abdur Rahman. In the current system, external actors expect the government of Afghanistan to control the activities within its borders, regardless of its ability.

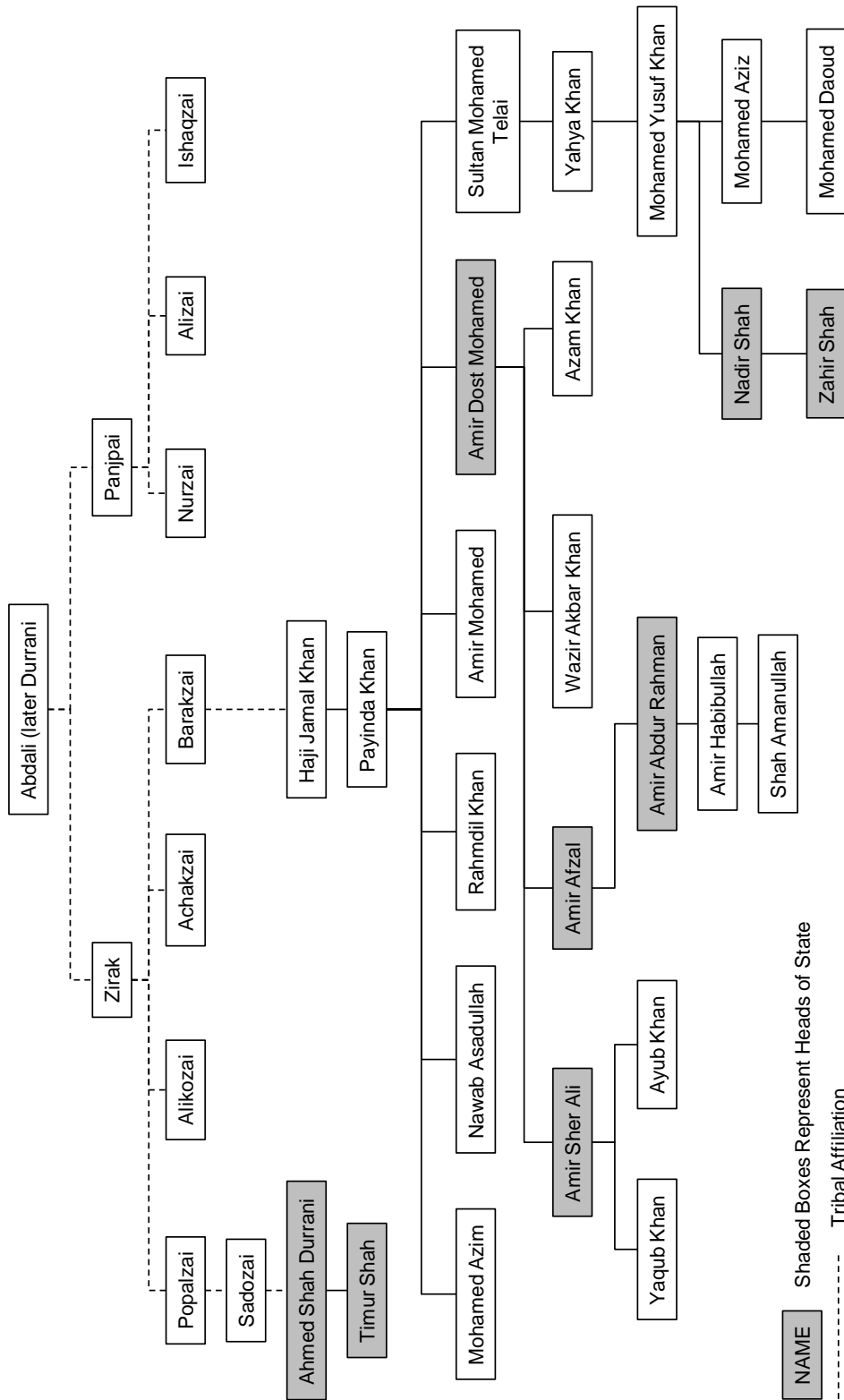
## **Conclusion**

The reign of Amir Abdur Rahman from 1880 to 1901 was critical in the development of the current Afghan state. Although Abdur Rahman developed a state with institutions that ensured his peaceful succession and endured beyond his death, he also instituted built in weaknesses that facilitated propensities that resulted in long-term instability in the state.

Understanding the methods used by Abdur Rahman, the context in which he used them, and the results of the application of those methods shed light on the understanding of the Afghan state and the possibilities for the current Afghan state. Abdur Rahman's "internal imperialism" and cooption of the Islamic religious authorities successfully extended state authority, but allowed the foundations of alternative power structures to remain. Abdur Rahman's military modernization, governmental bureaucratization and economic development did facilitate short term stability, but allowed the return of instability over time. Finally, the imposition of boundaries on Afghanistan by the external state system changed the nature of boundaries and shaped the extension of state power. This context, the methods employed, and the results of those actions provide insight into the propensities of the Afghan system in relation to the state. This insight then shapes the understanding of the possibilities that are open for extending the power of the current state in relation to similar actors in a similar system.

## Appendix A

### Rulers of the Durrani Pashtun Dynasties



NAME Shaded Boxes Represent Heads of State  
 - - - - - Tribal Affiliation  
 ——— Immediate Descent

Not all individuals are shown.  
 Author created graphic based on information found at:  
 Daniel Balland, "Barakzai Rulers of Afghanistan," Khyber.org, <http://www.khyber.org/pashtotribes/trees/barakzairulersofafghanistan.gif> (accessed March 28, 2011); "History of Afghanistan: Principal Ruling Families," afghanmagazine.com, <http://www.afghanmagazine.com/afghanhistory/royalfamilies.pdf> (accessed March 28, 2011); and Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, A Brief History of Afghanistan (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2007), 75, 77, 111.



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