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**NAVAL
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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF
CENTRAL GOVERNANCE IN AFGHANISTAN**

by

Abraham B. Marcelo

December 2010

Thesis Co-Advisors:

James Russell
Feroz Khan

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**UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF CENTRAL GOVERNANCE
IN AFGHANISTAN**

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Lieutenant, United States Navy
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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from the

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ABSTRACT

Three of the most iconic rulers of Afghanistan are Ahmad Khan Durrani, Abdur Rahman, and Mohammad Zahir Shah. The efforts of Ahmad Khan Durrani and Abdur Rahman were focused on building an Afghan nation and development of a central government authority that possessed some capacity to rule over the Afghan territories. Neither ruler sought to politically include the Afghan population in the affairs of the state beyond the cooperation of the tribal leaders who possessed the ability to commit or withdraw the manpower and resources of their tribes, which were necessary to militarily sustain their respective regimes. It was not until the reign of Mohammad Zahir Shah that central government in Afghanistan attempted to politically include the Afghan population in state affairs. However, this was only accomplished on a limited basis. The international community and President Hamid Karzai have been attempting to implement 220 years of nation-building and central governance development in Afghanistan over the past nine years. If successful, these efforts would create a government and a state that has never before existed in Afghanistan's history. This thesis argues that current efforts should be informed and mindful of the experiences of these three iconic rulers.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| ANA | Afghan National Army |
| ANAAC | Afghan National Army Air Corps |
| ANSF | Afghan National Security Forces |
| ANCOP | Afghan National Civil Order Police |
| ANP | Afghan National Police |
| AP3 | Afghan Public Protection Program |
| APPF | Afghan Public Protection Force |
| ASFF | Afghan Security Forces Fund |
| AUP | Afghan Uniformed Police |
| CSTC-A | Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan |
| DoD | Department of Defense |
| EUPOL | European Police Mission Afghanistan |
| GIROA | Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan |
| ISAF | International Security Assistance Force |
| MoD | Ministry of Defense |
| MoI | Ministry of Interior |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NTM-A | NATO Training Mission Afghanistan |
| UAE | United Arab Emirates |
| UNAMA | United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan |

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis examines the dynamics of the historical relationship between central governance and the tribal systems of Afghanistan. This examination will be used to synthesize an analysis of how the central government presently being established by President Hamid Karzai, with the assistance of the international community, particularly the United States, compares to past attempts of centralized governance in Afghanistan. It is my preliminary hypothesis that even though there have been historical improvements in the quality of life for the people of Afghanistan since the removal of the Taliban from power in 2001, these improvements have been mainly due to the presence and individual efforts of international forces assisting with the reconstruction of Afghan governance at both the local and central government levels. The system of centralized governance being established by the Karzai regime does not appear to be radically different from systems of centralized governance that have existed in Afghanistan's past. Conducting a comparative historical analysis of how the more iconic rulers of Afghanistan and their associated systems of central authority administered governance and comparing them to the system of central governance that is being established by President Karzai and his regime may assist in defining specific political and security conditions that would permit the phased withdrawal of U.S. and international military forces from Afghanistan.

B. IMPORTANCE

Over the past nine years, the international community has been assisting the people of Afghanistan to rebuild their country and combat Taliban violence. This task has been challenging to say the least. The Bonn Agreement signed in December 2001 provided a basic theoretical roadmap for how central governance in Afghanistan could be rebuilt. In sum, this roadmap promoted the establishment of a democratic system of governance with Afghan nuances. Interestingly, this theoretical roadmap was not necessarily proposed because democratic government was an appropriate system of governance for Afghanistan based its historical experience with central governance. It

was chosen because democratic government is the only template to implement that the United Nations possesses in its bag of nation building. This template of democratic government is also the most familiar system of governance with which the representatives of the United States assisting with the rebuilding of Afghan governance are familiar. The signing of the Bonn Agreement provided the political leaders of the international community with hopes and dreams that democratic governance in Afghanistan was an achievable endeavor. However, accusations of governmental corruption, the continued prevalence of violent acts associated with the Taliban, and the increasing presence of international military forces in Afghanistan is beginning to generate dialogue aimed towards reevaluating what elements of good governance can realistically be achieved in Afghanistan with the assistance of the international community.

Both the international community and the Afghan people do not want Afghanistan to return under Taliban rule.¹ From the perspective of the United States and the international community, Taliban control of Afghanistan equates to terrorist organizations once again being allowed to use its territories to train followers and launch terrorist attacks against those communities that do not share their ideologies, particularly the United States. From the perspective of the Afghan people, Taliban control of Afghanistan would result in a return to an intolerable existence of draconian rule. Neither circumstance is a desirable end state for both the international community and the Afghan people. These two circumstances are the conditions that the international community and people of Afghanistan would agree define the lower bound of what can be achieved in Afghanistan. Security, stability, and long lasting peace under democratic governance defines the upper bound of the conditions that would permit the withdrawal international military forces from Afghanistan. Determining what conditions can be realistically achieved that would permit the withdrawal of international military forces from Afghanistan is vital to both the international community and the Afghan people.

¹ Richard N. Haass, "We're Not Winning. It's Not Worth It. Here's How to Draw Down in Afghanistan," *Newsweek*, July 26, 2010, 33–34.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESIS

Historically, Afghanistan has never experienced rule under a strong system of centralized government that was able to extend governance over all territories within the country's internationally recognized borders. At most, Afghan central governance has only been able to effectively apply governance within the boundaries of the country's urban areas, particularly Kabul. In the past, the rural areas of Afghanistan have traditionally been under the control of tribal systems of governance. Typically, tribal leaders were permitted to autonomously rule over their respective territories with minimal intrusion so long as they agreed not to challenge the central government.² Even though this type of cooperative relationship may seem inefficient and systematically problematic from the perspective of Western democratic expertise, it is a familiar system of centralized governance that seems to have an established record of being able to provide a degree of normalcy to the Afghan people. This is not to suggest that the Afghan people did not harbor any objections to the central government systems of past times.

At present, the United Nations, with the United States as lead, and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) are working together to establish a system of centralized democratic government in Afghanistan. However, allegations of corruption at multiple levels of President Karzai's regime seem to suggest that establishment of a system of democratic governance as envisioned by the Bonn Agreement is in actuality merely providing opportunistic governmental personalities with an alternative means to exploit the Afghan population instead of providing stability, security, and good governance. This is one of the drawbacks that governments transitioning to democracy are highly susceptible. Many seem to forget the hundreds of years that it has taken Western democracies, particularly the United States, to establish a functional and accountable democratic system of governance. Rather than introducing and implementing yet another completely foreign system of governance in Afghanistan, it may be useful to gain familiarity with the strengths of the systems of centralized governance that have been able to maintain a relatively normal, familiar, and

² Jeffery J. Robertson, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), XII.

comparatively stable existence for the people of Afghanistan. Understanding the role that central governance has played throughout the history of Afghanistan seems key to understanding what can be realistically achieved by the combined effort of the GIROA and the international community. Determining what can be realistically achieved in Afghanistan by the GIROA with the assistance of the international community may help provide better direction to those that are advising with the reconstruction of Afghanistan so that the people of Afghanistan at both the local and state level can become empowered with the capacity to better determine their own destiny. This in turn would facilitate the more timely withdrawal of international military forces and resources from the country, an objective that is becoming increasingly important to both the countries contributing military forces as well as the Afghan people.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is a preliminary survey of various publications that will be consulted to formulate this thesis. As one becomes more familiar with the nuances and dynamics of Afghanistan's historical experiences with various forms of central governance, the "top down phenomena" of Western European state-building that many have used to analyze nation-building in Afghanistan becomes less applicable. The Afghan nation-building experience is unique.

Francis Fukuyama's *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* provides an overview of the conditions of governance in Afghanistan. According to Fukuyama, "Afghanistan never had a modern state" and has never met the definition of a nation-state. From 1748–1973, Afghanistan never actually developed beyond a "tribal confederation" since the monarchy was never able to extend direct state administration and control beyond the capital in Kabul.³ Ever since the removal of the Taliban from power in 2001, state building in Afghanistan has begun from the ground up. According to Fukuyama "the subsequent years of communist misrule and civil war eliminated everything that was left of that already weak state." The political elites of

³ Francis Fukuyama, *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 101.

Afghanistan have exclusively relied on guidance and resources of foreign donors to rebuild the institutional bureaucracies and administrative capabilities of Afghanistan's central government. Presently, the United Nations and the United States are the foreign donors contributing resources and providing guidance to the GIROA using models of democratic governance.

Democratic governance is not necessarily being advocated and implemented in Afghanistan because it is the most appropriate system of governance. It is the most familiar form of governance to those who are advising the GIROA. According to Gabriele Rasuly-Paleczek, the people of Afghanistan are once again having to adopt yet another model of governance and nation-building that is alien to Afghan rulers and their society, values, and traditions.⁴ Given the growing literature on democratization and state-making, the installation of democratic governance by the United Nations and the United States is adding additional complication to an already complex society that is unfamiliar and misunderstood by Western civilization.⁵ Even more importantly, the qualitative analysis of regime transition and democratization conducted by Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder must be taken into heavy consideration since their analysis concludes that the very process of democratization increases a nation's likelihood to go to war.⁶

In *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, Olivier Roy provides detailed discussion of the tendency to resist strong central governance that has persisted throughout Afghanistan's history. Establishment of a strong, all-inclusive system of central governance has never been fully support by the people of Afghanistan. This should not be surprising since no form of central government through the history of Afghanistan has been able to garner long-lasting support from the population. Throughout the history of Afghanistan, central governance has made numerous attempts and utilized multiple

⁴ Gabriele Rasuly-Paleczek. "The Struggle for the Afghan State: Centralization, Nationalism, and Their Discontents." In *Identity Politics in Central Asia and the Muslim World: The Struggle for the Afghan State*, edited by Willem Van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher. (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2001), 149.

⁵ Francis Fukuyama, *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*, 101.

⁶ Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War," *Foreign Affairs*, 75, No. 3 (1995): 79–97.

methods to gain access to local structures of governance. Each attempt has been met with increased resistance and eventual revolt. This cycle has repeated itself over many different Afghan regimes using varying models of government. In a state like Afghanistan, when the government tries to establish legal and political control throughout a given area, the process requires turning tribes into taxpaying peasants. This relationship represented a direct challenge by the central authority to the tribal structure and a direct attack on social and economic hierarchies that have existed in Afghanistan for centuries.⁷

Olivier Roy, Gabriele Rasuly-Paleczek, Barnett R. Rubin, and Jeffery J. Robertson collectively provide specifics of how central governance was perceived by the rural societies of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is composed of traditional communitarian, nomadic, and tribal societies where social organization and identification may be based upon multiple ethno linguistic, tribal, regional, religious, socio-religious, or social divisions.⁸ Most tribes and villages have remained self-sufficient and autonomous, accepting central control only when it was in their material interest or when faced with overwhelming force.⁹ The recent history of Afghanistan is one filled with revolt against the central power and of resistance to the penetration of the countryside by the state bureaucracy.¹⁰ The tribes of Afghanistan have historically perceived central government as a foreign and unfamiliar power trying to take control in areas of society that traditionally have been governed by tribal codes and laws. For the average Afghan, national politics has been of little concern. However the majority of Afghans have consistently been concerned with keeping the state's influence at the local (village, tribe, etc.) levels as low as possible and securing the power balance that has developed over the last few decades between the state and local socio-political entities.¹¹ This deep distrust

⁷ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 15.

⁸ Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*. (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 18.

⁹ Jeffery J. Robertson, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan*. XII.

¹⁰ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 10.

¹¹ Gabriele Rasuly-Paleczek, "The Struggle for the Afghan State: Centralization, Nationalism, and Their Discontents," 151.

of any central authority has been a great impediment to all central government attempts to create any genuine social and political change thought would bring about democratic development. Resistance to the central government has occurred at local levels and from different segments of society that are poised to lose their power with the creation of an all-inclusive central government. For these reasons, historically, Afghan rulers have failed in their attempts to create a strong, independent, and central state nor have they been able to attain the resources to accomplish such a task while in power.¹² The autonomous solidarity groups within Afghanistan have prevented the creation of a western defined Afghan nation-state. However, Afghanistan has been able to sustain a loose confederation of ethnic and tribal groups within a shared internationally demarcated border.

Asta Olesen provides some detailed explanation of how central governance in Afghanistan was able to establish a system of cooperation with the tribal leaderships. Despite its inherent instability, the tribes and state in Afghanistan have been able to maintain a single system.¹³ The Pashtun tribes were the military and political backbone of the Afghan kingdom with political elites primarily composed of Durrani Pashtuns. In 1747, the confederacy of Pashtun tribes elected Ahmad Khan Durrani as Shah of territorial Afghanistan. Ahmad Khan Durrani was titled the monarch, but was regarded by the tribes as more of a “superior chief” who was subject to the same limitations of other Pashtun tribal chieftans. He was expected to consult with the nine tribal Pashtun chieftans on state matters to ensure their cooperation.¹⁴ The state was rather limited in scope, primarily consisting of the internal administration of justice, provision of military protection against external aggression, and revenue collection to finance these functions.

The internal administration of law was mainly based on Sharia (Islamic law) incorporated with elements of Pashtunwali and customary law (called *rawaj*). Judicial officials called *qazis* appointed by the Shah administered institutional rule of law in the

¹² Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 15.

¹³ R. Tapper 1983, 4: The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan, cited by Asta Olesen in *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*. (Chippenham: Curzon Press, 1995), 29.

¹⁴ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*. (Chippenham: Curzon Press, 1995), 29.

urban areas. However, *qazis* often only interjected in civil matters. Tribal councils called *jirgas* addressed criminal matters. *Jirgas* also maintained rule of law in the rural countryside.¹⁵

The various tribes residing within the internationally recognized territorial boundaries of Afghanistan provided troops and funding to resource the national military. According to Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani, “the western regions gave him warriors; the eastern regions gave him money.”¹⁶ Durrani Pashtun clans contributed troops in exchange for rent-free land grants from the Shah. These troop contributions primarily held the officer ranks. A similar strategy was employed to obtain troop contributions from the non-Pashtun tribes. Non-Pashtuns made up the majority of the subordinate ranks. All clans were expected to augment the national military with their militias in case of foreign invasion. At first, the principal income for the state came from revenues from land and produce, much of which was territory that later ceded to British India. Once the British seceded the India territories, the revenue lost was compensated through British subsidies in exchange for their cooperation and that of the regional tribes.¹⁷

Thomas Barfield also provides analysis of the cooperation that existed between the tribal societies of Afghanistan’s rural territories and central government. He also attempts to identify conditions that sustained the cooperation between tribal and state leaderships that have existed throughout the history of Afghanistan and in order to determine if similar conditions are present within the Karzai regime. Barfield describes the Durrani Pashtuns as “professional rulers” that abandoned the democratic and federal political institutions commonly used among the Pashtun tribes at the local level, and replaced them with autocracy in order to maintain political power of the state exclusively

¹⁵ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Chippenham: Curzon Press, 1995), 31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

within their own dynastic lines.¹⁸ Tribal groups were content to remain distant from the dynastic struggles of the Durrani Pashtuns so long as any victor continued to respect their traditional rights or pay them off.¹⁹

Despite the discontent for central government discussed Roy, Robertson, and Rasuly-Paleczek, Barfield has identified reasons why Afghan regional leadership found it important to maintain a central government rather than pursuing a divided state. Since the mid 19th century, the Afghan central government had relied on foreign subsidies, largely from the British based on their own strategic territorial goals with respect to Russia, to help them finance their governments, equip their armies, and build infrastructure without taxing their own people.²⁰ Afghan factions understood that the existence of an Afghan central government allowed them to more effectively tap into the resources of the international community since the outside world only had to deal with a single institution instead of each individual faction.²¹ Even though each faction was divided into distinct regional and ethnic groups that could conceivably live without each other's company, there has been little pressure to break the country up into smaller parts. Maintaining Afghanistan as a single state was advantageous because a larger state served as a barrier against regional neighbors meddling in Afghan affairs.²² Afghan regional leaders recognized that if Afghanistan were broken into smaller pieces, Afghan territories could potentially be more easily dominated or attacked by their neighbors. The presence of a central Afghan government permitted continued associations between Afghan regions and neighboring states while maintaining external meddling within tolerable bounds.²³

Barfield acknowledges the general conclusion produced by Western models of nation building that Afghanistan is a failed state. However, Barfield does contend that Afghanistan is not a failed nation. A strong sense of national unity "forged during the

¹⁸ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 4.

¹⁹ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 315.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 280.

²² *Ibid.*, 8.

²³ *Ibid.*, 279.

Soviet war as well as the refugee experiences in neighboring Pakistan and Iran” does exist. An ideology of Afghan nationalism is rooted in the will of the Afghan people to persist together, particularly during times of occupation by unwanted foreign invaders. The will to persist together seems to have transcended ethnic and regional differences. Understanding that all Afghan factions wished to hold the country together, and not divide it along ethnic lines into even thinner parts, is an underappreciated Afghan strength that would allow its leaders to rebuild a central government through a process of consensus.²⁴

The international community’s efforts to rebuild central governance in Afghanistan seems to have failed to recognize that historically for the Afghan people, a government’s function is more important than its form. Ordinary Afghans desire security, economic stability, and a chance to live normal lives.²⁵ The international community focuses on the primacy of processes and institutions whereas the Afghan people have focused their attention on quality of leadership and actions.²⁶ The traditional Afghan template for legitimizing leadership has been based upon actions rather than the processes (such as elections) that created it.²⁷ President Hamid Karzai has yet to validate his legitimacy to the Afghan people through his actions. In the eyes of the Afghan people, President Karzai has yet to prove that he can live up to the role he now fills and provide the people with what they expect: security, economic improvement, and a functioning government. Electoral victories mean nothing to the Afghan people if he fails to do so.²⁸

Nation building is a complicated endeavor for any civilization to undertake. The challenges involved are numerous, requiring great patience and perseverance to work through and solve. The processes of nation building are of particular interest today due to the involvement of the United States and the international community in the rebuilding and reconstruction of the Afghan state. The scholars that have contributed to Francis

²⁴ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 277–278.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 305–306.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 302.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 301.

Fukuyama's *Nation-Building: Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan* appear to possess logical and relatively similar views on what requisite elements of statehood must be established in order to systematically rebuild the state of Afghanistan. According to Marvin Weinbaum, one of the contributing authors in *Nation-Building: Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan*, the requisites for rebuilding include:

- The provision of functioning state institutions
- Invigorated economy
- Sustained foreign assistance
- The resolution, or at least management, of outstanding, divisive political and constitutional issues
- Reviving and strengthening of constructive national myths
- State building may falter without reasonably capable, legitimate, and visionary leaders.²⁹

There is much evidence to support the claim that the international community has made relatively tremendous progress in assisting the people of Afghanistan with either assisting with or achieving the first four requisites of Weinbaum's nation-building list. However, the international community cannot necessarily assist with achieving the fifth and sixth requisites. With respect to the fifth requisite, the international community does not necessarily possess the familiarity with Afghanistan's historical experiences to effectively provide assistance.

The sixth requisite of Weinbaum's nation-building list is of particular interest and will be focused on within this analysis of the Afghan central government. According to Weinbaum, "leadership is essential to providing purpose and direction for an Afghanistan emerging from its long national trauma."³⁰ On a more basic level, what Weinbaum seems to be suggesting is that even if first through fifth requisites are accomplished, state building or nation building will still require the individual efforts and actions of people, and in this particular case, the people of Afghanistan, to succeed. Nation building in Afghanistan is not unique to the twenty-first century. Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani, the

²⁹ Marvin B. Weinbaum, "Rebuilding Afghanistan: Impediments, Lessons, and Prospects." In *Nation-Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*. Edited by Francis Fukuyama, 125–144. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 126–128.

³⁰ Marvin B. Weinbaum, "Rebuilding Afghanistan: Impediments, Lessons, and Prospects," 126–128.

Father of the Afghan nation, Amir Abdur Rahman, “The Iron Amir”, and King Mohammad Zahir Shah were rulers of the Afghan nation that engaged in a form of nation-building during their respective periods of reign. The nation-building efforts of these three rulers were largely focused on the establishment and sustainment of central governance authority. The following chapters will discuss how Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani, Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, and King Mohammad Zahir Shah established and sustained central governance in Afghanistan during their respective periods of reign. The nation-building endeavors of these three rulers will reveal the relevance of the sixth requisite of Weinbaum’s nation-building list within Afghanistan’s historical context.

E. METHODS AND SOURCES/ THESIS OVERVIEW

This historical comparison of the structural dynamics between Afghanistan’s tribal societies and central government will be conducted using peer reviewed scholarship primarily published by academic university presses and independent research organizations such as The Brookings Institution. The regimes of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani, (July 1747–October 1772), Abdur Rahman, a.k.a. “The Iron Amir” (May 1880–October 1901), and Mohammed Zahir Shah (November 1933–July 1973), will form the basis of this historical comparison. In the opinion of this author, some of the more historically relevant Afghan experiences with central governance are associated with the reigns of these three rulers, and will be used to formulate a discussion of the current circumstances of central governance that presently exist in Afghanistan today. The regime of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani was selected, since this monarch is known as the father of the Afghan nation. The regime of Abdur Rahman Khan was selected because of his ability to consolidate central government authority, create institutionalized central government authority, and his application of mechanisms that were able to pacify tribal resistance. The reign of Mohammed Zahir Shah was selected because of his efforts to incorporate liberalized governance to Afghanistan. It is my belief that a comparative analysis of these three regimes can shed some insight and understanding of the aspects of central government that have been able to establish cooperative relationships between the tribal leaderships and central governments of Afghanistan in order to establish and sustain a degree of stability throughout the history of the country. The findings of this

comparative case study will then be used to determine if President Hamid Karzai is pursuing similar avenues of governance. I suspect that this comparison will reveal that President Karzai and his regime are not pursuing the establishment of a progressive system of democratic governance with the assistance of the international community. Since the events of Afghanistan continue to unfold, journal articles, press releases, and Internet sources will be used to form the basis of the analysis of the Karzai regime. Internet sources, such as the Afghan Research Unit, will be referenced to develop an analysis of the prevailing public opinion of the Afghan population towards President Karzai and his regime. Given the limited amount of time available to complete this project, travelling to Afghanistan to develop a firsthand experience and evaluation of the Afghan public's opinion towards President Karzai and his regime, is unrealistic.

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II. SHAH AHMAD KHAN DURRANI (1747–1772)

Leadership is essential to providing purpose and direction for an Afghanistan emerging from its long national trauma.³¹

The Afghan experience with central governance begins with the reign of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani. As previously mentioned, Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani has been identified as the father of the Afghan nation, possessing a personal valor and political insight that Afghans of the time identified as the characteristic qualities of successful leadership.³² The purpose of this section is to discuss how the monarch (or Shah) was able to develop and sustain central governance rule in Afghanistan during his reign. It is the author's preliminary hypothesis that Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani was able to sustain his rule of Afghanistan by reinforcing the strength of an army loyal to him while simultaneously establishing a system of patronage between the monarchy and the leadership of the Afghan tribal communities. Although the Shah may have ultimately wanted to be able to have central government authority over all territories of Afghanistan, it is evident that he understood that such an objective was unrealistic. The more achievable and realistic objective of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani was to sustain the monarchy through the cooperation of the Afghan tribes while simultaneously maintaining a level of independence from their influence. This system of cooperation between the central government and the tribal leaderships provided Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani with the necessary resources to sustain the monarchy while still preserving the relative autonomy of the Afghan tribes.

A. ASCENSION TO POWER

Afghanistan did not begin as a typical nation state with definite boundaries. After centuries of fragmentation and rule by invaders, Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani shaped Afghanistan into a confederation of loosely unified tribes and khanates composed of

³¹ Marvin B. Weinbaum, "Rebuilding Afghanistan: Impediments, Lessons, and Prospects," 126–128.

³² Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 46.

ethnic groups possessing common customs, traditions, language, and ancestry.³³ This Afghan empire extended from the Central Asia to Delhi, and from Kashmir to the Arabian Sea. Even though some scholars of Afghanistan have described Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani as “rising to greatness in the tradition of Afghan warrior poets, a charismatic leader who fused but left fission in his wake,” he did not ascend to the position of the monarch of Afghanistan solely on his personal merits.³⁴ His abilities as a military and political leader were most likely a product of his position within the regime of Nadir Shah Afshar, the Shah of Persia who had ruled the Afghan territories under the Persian Empire from 1736–1747. At the time Ahmad Khan Durrani was the leader of the Abdalis, the elite corps of Nadir Shah Afshar’s army. In 1747, after the death of Nadir Shah Afshar, Ahmad Khan Durrani was able to terminate ties with the Persian Empire and declare the independence of the Afghan territories.³⁵ Even though Ahmad Khan Durrani still possessed access to part of Nadir Shah Afshar’s treasury, in addition to approximately 4,000 veteran cavalymen, these monetary and military resources alone were not necessarily sufficient to force the cooperation of the relatively autonomous Afghan tribes, particularly the Durrani Pashtuns, for the Afghan monarchy.³⁶ The Pashtun tribes have historically formed the military and political backbone of the Afghan empire.³⁷ Of all the Pashtuns clans, the Durrani Pashtuns of the time represented the militarily strongest and the most economically prosperous segment of the Afghan population between the urban areas of Herat and Qandahar.³⁸

The appointment of Ahmad Khan Durrani as the Shah was based upon tribal affiliations, traditions, and processes and that the sardars (tribal leaders) of the Durrani Pashtuns believed could be exploited in order to limit the capacity of the position to serve their own interests. Selection of Ahmad Khan Durrani as the Shah of Afghanistan by the

³³ Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), 245.

³⁴ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 340.

³⁵ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 46.

³⁶ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 333.

³⁷ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 14.

³⁸ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 30.

leadership of the Pashtun tribes was largely based on his tribal and clan affiliation. Ahmad Khan Durrani was a member of the Sadozai clan, an offshoot of the Popalzai clan of the Durrani Pashtuns. The Sadozai clan was smaller and comparatively less influential than other Durrani Pashtun clans. The Durrani Pashtun sardars presumed that since Ahmad Khan Durrani belonged to a relatively weaker Pashtun clan, they could remove him from power if he did not act in their interests.³⁹ According to author Asta Olesen, the position of the Shah was traditionally viewed as that of a superior chief amongst the Durrani Pashtun sardars. Based on this perception, the individual selected to the position of the Shah was most likely subject to the same limitations defined by the traditional tribal structural systems that were imposed on the sardars.⁴⁰ A council of nine Durrani Pashtun sardars appointed Ahmad Khan Durrani to the position of Shah. This process effectively bound the Shah to the will of the Durrani Pashtun sardars since his ability to rule depended upon their cooperation since each sardar possessed the authority to either commit or withhold the support and resources of their respective clans.⁴¹ This relationship of dependency made it mandatory for Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani to consult the council of nine Durrani Pashtun sardars on all major issues in order to obtain their cooperation, thereby limiting the Shah's freedom of action despite his position as the ruler of Afghanistan.⁴² This relationship of dependency between the ruler of Afghanistan and the tribal leaders created a dilemma that would face Ahmad Khan Durrani's successors for many years to come.⁴³

B. BALANCING INDEPENDENCE AND COOPERATION

Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani's service to Nadir Shah Afshar most likely influenced him to conclude that the Afghan nation required the formation of a centralized monarchy based on the Persian model. Since the military and monetary resources that Shah Ahmad

³⁹ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 46.

⁴⁰ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 29.

⁴¹ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 46.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 49.

Khan Durrani possessed at the beginning of his reign were small and limited in comparison to the resources of the Durrani Pashtun tribes, he required their cooperation to sustain his reign. However, in order to establish a centralized monarchy capable of asserting authority over the tribes, the Shah would have to gain a degree of independence from them while still obtaining their cooperation.⁴⁴ Author Vartan Gregorian writes that the Ahmad Khan Durrani was astute enough to recognize that the individualism of the tribes was too strong to truly permit the assertion of central authority over them.⁴⁵ Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani attempted to break the monarchy's dependence on the tribes by building an army that possessed loyalties to him. Since the manpower and monetary resources for the monarchy's army had to come from the tribes, the continued cooperation of the tribal leaderships for the Shah was obtained through the granting of land allotments as well as their preferential appointment to state offices responsible for managing conscription of soldiers from the tribal populations and the collection of taxes.

C. THE ARMY OF THE MONARCHY

Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani began to sever, but only to a limited extent, the dependence of the monarchy on the support and cooperation of the tribes through the establishment and formation of an army. The Shah believed that an army loyal to the monarchy, regardless of the ethnicities of the soldiers from which its members originated, was the true body politic.⁴⁶ Building an army that possessed strength and numbers that could rival, but not necessarily surpass, the strength and numbers of the Durrani Pashtun militias would allow the monarchy to gain some independence from tribes without necessarily threatening their autonomy. Thus, Ahmad Khan Durrani's main objective early on in his reign was the creation of a standing army that possessed loyalties to the monarchy. At his ascension to power, the army of the Shah was made up of approximately 16,000 soldiers. Of these 16,000 soldiers, 4,000 were veteran cavalrymen

⁴⁴ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 49.

⁴⁵ Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 44.

⁴⁶ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 101–102.

from the reign of Nadir Shah Afshar.^{47,48} As the years progressed, the army expanded to 40,000 soldiers. This exponential expansion in numbers of soldiers was primarily due to the system of conscription in exchange for land allotments, known as *jagirs* that the leadership of the Afghan tribes and the Shah had agreed upon. Generally speaking, the number of conscripts contributed by the Afghan tribes to serve in the army of the Shah was directly proportional to the size of the *jagirs* granted to the tribal leaders by the Shah. Since the Durrani Pashtuns were in possession of a relatively large amount of territory, they were also required to supply the majority of the soldiers.⁴⁹ However, the Shah did not necessarily uniformly apply this practice. The Alikozai, a Durrani Pashtun subtribe, received almost twenty-five percent more land than the Nurzai tribe, another Durrani Pashtun subtribe, but provided fewer soldiers.⁵⁰ Other non-Durrani Pashtun tribes, such as the Ghilzai, and non-Pashtun tribes, such as the Qizalbash, provided sizeable conscript contributions, even though their *jagirs* were much less in size in comparison those granted to the Durrani Pashtun tribes.⁵¹ This was most likely due to the non-Pashtun tribes being militarily weaker, and thus unable to offer any substantial resistance to the strength and influence of the Pashtun tribes. By the height of his power, the Shah's army had grown to approximately 120,000 men.⁵²

D. ACQUIRING REVENUE FOR THE ARMY

Even though Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani possessed access to portions of the treasure of Nadir Shah Afshar, this treasure alone was not sufficient to cover the total operating costs of the army. At the height of the Ahmad Khan Durrani's reign, the army was costing approximately 30 million rupees annually.⁵³ In order to acquire the necessary revenue to sustain the operating costs of the army, the Shah needed to impose a

⁴⁷ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 100.

⁴⁸ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 333.

⁴⁹ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 104.

⁵⁰ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 47.

⁵¹ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 100.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 101–102.

system of taxation on the Afghan population without adversely impacting the monarchy's cooperative relationship with the tribes. This was accomplished by the preferential appointment of tribal leaders to state offices responsible for the collection of tax revenues as well as managing the conscription of soldiers from the tribal populations.

Land tax revenues were the principal means that Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani's monarchy could extract income from the Afghan population. Taxation was mainly applied to agricultural produce according to fixed proportions. These fixed proportions varied with the nature of the land and from province to province.⁵⁴ The approach of the Shah was to govern tribes lightly while levying heavy taxes on the nontribal parts of the empire.

The practice of government has been to exact little from those in the west, and use them for defense alone; but to avail itself of the resources of the eastern provinces, and of the means they afforded for the extension of territory.⁵⁵

"Those in the west" were the Pashtun tribes. As previously mentioned, they were the most militarily superior tribe of all the Afghan tribes.⁵⁶ Their military superiority also meant that the Pashtun tribes also became the most privileged of the Afghan tribes since Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani required their cooperation and support in particular to sustain his rule.⁵⁷

The cooperation and support of the Pashtun tribes was acquired through exemptions from capitation taxes. Pashtun tribes were also exempted from taxation of their land, cattle, orchards of fruit trees, and vineyards.⁵⁸ Since the Shah understood that the tribal chieftans and feudal lords were bent on preserving their privileged positions, aside from confirming landholdings onto them, he also bestowed many of the important state offices of the monarchy upon various Durrani Pashtun khans, making these offices

⁵⁴ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 32.

⁵⁵ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 104.

⁵⁶ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 47.

⁵⁷ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 32.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

to either explicitly or implicitly be held within specific clans.^{59,60} Some Durrani khans became the local administrators of the jagir system previously mentioned. As the administrators of the *jagir* system, these Durrani khans established quasi-independent baronies. Doing so effectively preserved the relative autonomy of the khans while simultaneously fostering a cooperative relationship with the monarchy by placing them in a position to serve the state.⁶¹ Even though it was common practice for the Durrani khans to progressively take an ever-increasing proportion of the collected tax revenues for their services, there did not seem to be any objections so long as the tribes continued to provide their support for the monarchy. Not only did the Shah now have agents of the monarchy in place to collect tax revenues for the state, these khans were also able to ensure that the tribes continued to provide their requisite numbers of men to serve as conscripts in the Shah's army.⁶² This was particularly important since the bulk of the Shah's army was composed of "irregular troops" vice professional soldiers.^{63,64} Luckily for the Shah, providing these "foot levies" of tribal and non-tribal peasants and artisans to take part in warfare under the leadership of feudal khans and other elders was a customary practice.⁶⁵ In order to foster the continued cooperation of the tribes, the leaders of the Duranni clans were permitted to retain their tribal subdivisions within the monarchy's army, with head of each clan commanding the contingent of men provided to the king.⁶⁶ This dependence on "irregular troops" to fill ranks of the monarchy's army indirectly permitted the tribes to restrict the Shah's power.

⁵⁹ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 47.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶¹ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 32.

⁶² Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 47.

⁶³ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 32.

⁶⁴ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 101–102.

⁶⁵ M. Hasan (Kawun) Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Abd al-Rahman Khan*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 111.

⁶⁶ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 48.

Ahmad Khan Durrani possessed a talent for war and was aware that the Afghan people appreciated such ability.⁶⁷ As previously mentioned, the Shah had served as the leader of the elite corps of Nadir Shah Afshir's military known as the Abdalis.⁶⁸ This experience most likely influenced the Ahmad Khan Durrani into pursuing expansionism of the Afghan empire.⁶⁹ Not only did the Shah possess a familiarity with the relative weakness of Afghanistan's territorial neighbors, but he also knew that directing the restless energies of the Afghan tribes towards an exterior target would prevent them from pursuing the traditional path of campaigning to overthrow existing khanates, or in the case of the Ahmad Khan Durrani, the monarchy.⁷⁰ During his reign, the Shah led eight expeditions into the territories of India. The justification for war against the Sikhs and Hindus residing within the territories of India was framed within an Islamic context in order to more easily garner the support of the Afghan population.⁷¹ The cruelty associated with the attacks he applied towards the Sikhs and Hindus of British India have been described as merely a reflection of the customs of the times and practices of his opponents.⁷² These expeditionary campaigns resulted in the incorporation of the Punjab, Kashmir, and Multan into the Afghan Empire.⁷³ In addition to expanding the territories of the Afghan Empire, the expeditions into the British India territories also provided Ahmad Khan Durrani and his army with necessary spoils of war that would be used to supplement the revenue needed to monetarily sustain the army of the monarchy. However, since the "irregular troops" were unwilling to spend more than a year away from home, Ahmad Khan Durrani was often forced to end his expeditionary campaigns prematurely in order appease their discontentment.⁷⁴ When funds grew short, the Shah

⁶⁷ Arnold Fletcher, Arnold. *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), 44.

⁶⁸ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 46.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁷⁰ Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 44.

⁷¹ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 101–102.

⁷² Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 57.

⁷³ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 49.

⁷⁴ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 101–102.

would collect his army from the tribes and return to the battlefields.⁷⁵ After the secession of the Indian provinces from where the bulk of revenue was extracted, Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani, as well as his successors, fell victim to the British policy of subsidy—which ultimately became the essential means of consolidating the state vis-à-vis the tribes.⁷⁶

E. CONCLUSION

The nation-building efforts of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani were largely focused on the building of an army loyal to the monarchy and maintaining the cooperation of the tribal leadership that had appointed him to rule. By the end of his reign, the Shah had created an Afghan nation possessing a system of central governance that was heavily reliant on establishing and sustaining a cooperative relationship with the tribes through a system of patronage. Land allotments, preferential appointment to government stations, and exemption on taxation to the Pashtun tribes were used to sustain this cooperative relationship. This discussion of Ahmad Khan Durrani's reign also shows that the administration of governance by the Shah and his regime did not go beyond the sustainment of the monarchy's cooperative relationship with the tribes. This trend will also be evident in the following discussion of the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan.

⁷⁵ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 101–102.

⁷⁶ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 32.

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III. AMIR ABDUR RAHMAN KHAN (1880–1901)

Few kings so great have been more hated than Abdur Rahman.⁷⁷

Abdur Rahman has been described as an outstanding monarch, a man of shrewdness, clear judgment, and iron will.⁷⁸ He inherited a country that had been weakened by wars and foreign occupation in addition to being torn by internecine warfare.⁷⁹ When Abdur Rahman became the Amir of Afghanistan, the conditions within the country were volatile and chaotic. However, by the end of his rule, he did leave behind a nation. Author Arnold Fletcher writes that the Amir was a hard man, who “ruled a hard people.”⁸⁰ He possessed the reputation of being brutally oppressive.⁸¹ By the force of his unrelenting personality, he goaded his people out of the Middle Ages and into something resembling the eighteenth century.⁸² With the assistance of foreign military and monetary subsidies from the British, Abdur Rahman was able to turn Afghanistan into a relatively pacified nation-state ruled by a centralized government. It was during this period in Afghan history that the foundation for the modern nation-state was laid. The basic structure of this centralized government was composed of a Pashtun ruler, a nominally centralized bureaucracy, and a national army that heavily relied on the support of foreign aid from the British Empire.⁸³ This basic central governance structure has endured until 1992. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss how Amir Abdur Rahman was able to develop and sustain central governance rule over Afghanistan during his reign. Like Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani, Abdur Rahman envisioned an Afghanistan that was under the rule of a central authority. Both rulers understood that cooperation with the tribes was necessary to administer governance, particularly in the collection of

⁷⁷ Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 142.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 129.

⁸⁰ Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 153.

⁸¹ Richard S. Newell, *The Politics of Afghanistan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 44.

⁸² Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 142.

⁸³ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 21.

revenue from the Afghan population through taxation. However, like Ahmad Khan Durrani, Abdur Rahman also sought to sever the dependence of the monarchy on the tribes.

A. ASCENSION TO POWER

Abdur Rahman was the first monarch of Afghanistan to justify his rule through religion. Before his death, Dost Mohammad Khan nominated his son, Abdur Rahman, to be his successor as the ruler of Afghanistan. Ever since the reign of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani, the sustainment of the monarchy was linked to the support of a council of tribal sardars (also known as a *jirga*). Since the monarchy relied upon the support and cooperation of the sardars to administer governance on behalf of the central authority, particularly in the collection of taxes and the conscription of men for the army of monarchy, the sardars inherently possessed the ability to confer or challenge the legitimacy of the ruler. Like Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani, Abdur Rahman realized that the monarchy needed to gain independence from its reliance on the support of the Afghan tribes while still retaining their cooperation. Therefore, Abdur Rahman began to redefine the source of the monarch's legitimacy from the *jirga* to the religion of Islam by proclaiming that God had bestowed upon him the "divine right" to serve as the ruler of the Afghan nation.⁸⁴ "Divine right" provided Abdur Rahman with a powerful justification for his rule as the monarchy of Afghanistan that could not be easily contested by the *jirga*. Islamic legitimization of his rule was also an easily comprehensible and a relatively convincing rationalization for the Afghan people to accept. By framing the legitimization of his rule within an Islamic context, Abdur Rahman was able to circumvent the traditional endorsement of the *jirga* and directly obtain the support of the Afghan people.

B. BALANCING INDEPENDENCE AND COOPERATION

During Abdur Rahman's reign as the Amir (or King) of Afghanistan, he was still forced to achieve a balance between breaking from the support of the Afghan tribes,

⁸⁴ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 130.

while still retaining their support. He was able to achieve this balance by progressively relying less upon the resources of the tribes to support the army of the monarchy while establishing state level consultative institutions in which tribal leaders could participate in the administration of governance on a limited basis. As the strength of the monarchy grew through the growth of the army, rule of law administered by the central authority, the establishment of a robust security apparatus to enforce the laws of the state, the reliance on the tribal leadership to support the central government of Afghanistan diminished.

1. The Army of the Amir

Abdur Rahman understood that his regime required an army loyal to the monarchy that could consolidate his dynasty by eliminating his rivals and establishing an absolute government and to shield Afghanistan against foreign invasion.⁸⁵ The army would serve as the Amir's institution for control of the Afghan nation and the implementation of central government authority.⁸⁶ The creation of a standing and centralized Afghan army would become Abdur Rahman's single greatest achievement.

Abdur Rahman inherited an army that was feudal and tribal in character. He was eventually able to transform the army into a professional and disciplined force that was paid and independent of tribal control. At beginning of Abdur Rahman's reign, the army was weak in administration, discipline, logistics, and armaments, and lacked a trained officer corps despite the assistance of foreign advisors.⁸⁷ Unlike his predecessors, Abdur Rahman neither sought the services of foreign officers nor showed willingness to accept the council of British officers or engineers. The Amir began to strengthen his army by improving its organization and training.⁸⁸ In terms of organization, Afghan commanders were recruited from the politically most reliable groups, which were largely composed of

⁸⁵ M. Hasan (Kawun) Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Abd al-Rahman Khan*, 96.

⁸⁶ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 421.

⁸⁷ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880-1946*, 139.

⁸⁸ Richard S. Newell, *The Politics of Afghanistan*, 45.

the landed gentry and the well-to-do.⁸⁹ This practice ultimately created an identification of the Amir's military with the elders and well-to-do of the Afghanistan.⁹⁰ Regular soldiers for the army were obtained through conscription and the pacification of militarily weaker tribes. For many of the tribes, conscription remained a traditional practice where men between the ages of 14 and 50 were first recruited into the army first on a voluntary basis.⁹¹ Village or clan elders would then administer the system of indirect conscription where each group of eight 20–40 year old men would be obligated by the tribe to serve in the army of the monarchy while the remaining households were taxed to monetarily provide for their support.⁹² As the Amir pacified revolting tribes, the general rule was that recruitment for the army would be made from them.⁹³ This process of recruitment followed the changing loyalty of the tribal communities: the Hazara, the Qizilbash, and the Ghilzai, who were dominant up to 1880, gave way after various uprisings to a majority of the Durrani.⁹⁴

Unfortunately, the social and ethnic diversity of the army did possess inherent difficulties that stemmed from traditional and historic tribal and regional rivalries. For example, since the officers were recruited from the landed gentry and well-to-do, this often led to prejudicial treatment between them and the soldiers. Another example was the practice of placing army units raised in one tribal region and stationing them in another. As a rule, troops were stationed outside their respective provinces of origin in order to separate soldiers from their own people so that they could be used against other tribes when necessary. Interestingly, this practice has continued under all later

⁸⁹ Giles Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 29.

⁹⁰ M. Hasan (Kawun) Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Abd al-Rahman Khan*, 97.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁹² Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 48–49.

⁹³ M. Hasan (Kawun) Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Abd al-Rahman Khan*, 97.

⁹⁴ Giles Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present*, 29.

governments.⁹⁵ Additionally, the Amir did not permit soldiers stationed in a region to mix with the local people. He presumed that they might lose the fighting spirit if this fraternization were allowed to occur.⁹⁶

Equipping of Abdur Rahman's army was carried out using both indigenous and foreign resources. The Amir increased the government's capacity to manufacture its own military equipment by establishing factories that produced modern small arms, field artillery, and numerous other noncombat items.⁹⁷⁻⁹⁸ However, this means of resourcing the army was not as substantial as the funding and arms obtained through British subsidies and contributions. Between 1880 and 1895, the British presented the Amir with, 80 cannons, 17,342 shots and shells, 33,302 rifles, 3,200 carbines, and 21,308,000 cartridges.⁹⁹ In 1889, the British government of India provided approximately an additional 74 cannons, 25,000 breech-loading rifles, 11,500 muzzle-loading rifles, and several million rounds of ammunition.¹⁰⁰ From the perspective of the British Empire, these arms contributions along with additional contingents of British ground forces were used to bolster the security of Afghanistan's Northwest Frontier since this territory served as a geographic buffer between the territories of British India and territories belonging to Russia. From the perspective of Abdur Rahman, possession of all this weaponry provided the army of the monarchy with a technological superiority that had surpassed that of the tribal militias.

British subsidies provided the monarchy of Abdur Rahman with substantial revenue that would be used to pay his professional army. From 1880–1881, he received 3,615,009 rupees in foreign monetary assistance. In 1882, the British granted the amir a yearly subsidy of 1.2 million Indian rupees. This amount was raised to 1.8 million Indian

⁹⁵ Giles Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present*, 29.

⁹⁶ M. Hasan (Kawun) Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Abd al-Rahman Khan*, 113–114.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁹⁸ Richard S. Newell, *The Politics of Afghanistan*, 45.

⁹⁹ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, 48–49.

¹⁰⁰ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 130.

rupees after the formal demarcation of the Durrand Line in 1893, and to 1.85 million in 1897, when the British and Russians forced the Amir to accept the addition to his realm of the Wakhan Corridor.¹⁰¹ The money received through British subsidies enabled Abdur Rahman to employ troops rather than solely relying on tribal levies or conscripts received in exchange for land allotments.¹⁰² The loyalty and morale of the army was considerably improved since soldiers were for the first time being paid salaries at levels that were meeting subsistence needs.¹⁰³

C. BUILDING THE CAPACITY TO GOVERN

Since Abdur Rahman was now receiving substantial numbers of arms and foreign subsidies from the British, he was now able to rely less on the support and resources of the tribes to sustain his army. Military recruitment, however, remained based upon universal conscription from the tribes.¹⁰⁴ However, the Amir no longer had to heavily rely upon the collection taxes from the tribes to raise revenues for the monarchy. This however did not necessarily mean that the collection of tax revenues ceased. The strengthening of the monarchy's army through the receipt of British arms and subsidies provided Abdur Rahman with the opportunity to expand the capacity of the central authority to administer governance that was still able to obtain the cooperation of tribal leaders. Expansion of the monarchy's capacity to administer governance took the form of the establishment of state consultative institutions, the creation of state laws, and the implementation of a security apparatus to enforce state laws.

1. State Institutionalization

Even though Abdur Rahman now relied less upon the tribal councils to provide legitimacy to the monarchy and resource the army of the monarchy, he did still require their cooperation. Tribal sardars still played a significant role in maintaining order, collecting tax revenues for the state in rural area that the state was still unable influence,

¹⁰¹ The Wakhan Corridor was a mountainous strip of territory with little value, except to ensure that British India and Russia would have no border, and hence no border incidents.

¹⁰² Barnett R. Rubin, Barnett R. *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, 48–49.

¹⁰³ Richard S. Newell, *The Politics of Afghanistan*, 45.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

and provide conscripts to the army. One means by which Abdur Rahman was able to obtain the continued support of the tribal leaders was through the establishment of state institutions.

The *darbar-i shahi* was a state institution composed of a council of tribal chiefs. The purpose of this state institution was twofold. Abdur Rahman was able to obtain the continued support of the tribal chiefs by providing them with the sense that he still desired their counsel with respect to the affairs of the state. This state institution was composed of a general assembly made up of three categories of representatives:

- Sardars (aristocrats, chiefly members of the royal family or clan)
- Khawanin mulki (commoners, mainly khans or landed proprietors)
- Mullahs (religious representatives)

The inputs received from this institution remained strictly consultative.¹⁰⁵ This council did not possess any executive or legislative authorities. In order to ensure that the assembly did not challenge the authority of the monarchy, the selection of the assembly's members was subject to the approval of Abdur Rahman. The Amir also formed a selective body known as a *khilwat* to serve as a supreme council or cabinet. The function of this council was to execute the will of Abdur Rahman.¹⁰⁶ The state institution of a consultative assembly, also known as a *Loya Jirga* (Pashtu for Great Assembly), has endured throughout the reigns of subsequent rulers to Abdur Rahman. Even though this practice has evoked the traditions of tribal republicanism, this assembly in almost nearly every case was composed of appointed representatives who assented to the decree of the ruler.¹⁰⁷

2. Rule of Law

Law had special interest to the Amir. Since Afghanistan did not possess a uniform code of laws, Abdur Rahman pursued the establishment of codified laws. In order to ensure that these laws were relatively well received and understood by the Afghan people, they were written to conform with the principles of Islamic law, or *Sharia*

105 Giles Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present*, 43.

106 Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 134.

107 Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State*, 23.

as interpreted by Abu Hanifa, to local Afghan customs, and were in the spirit of Afghan tribal code.¹⁰⁸ Keeping in mind that Abdur Rahman's objective was to establish and sustain order within the Afghan kingdom, the new criminal code prescribed harsh punishments for cases threatening the welfare of the Afghan people or disrupting the peace and stability of the country.¹⁰⁹ Since Abdur Rahman was a firm believer in the preventative power of terror, his criminal law was savage. The application of torture for violations of the criminal law was frequent and imaginative. One example of the brutality of the punishments imposed by the laws of Abdur Rahman included robbers being caged alive and left for dead on along the King's highway to warn others of the price to be paid by those who disturb the peace on the highway. Another example of Abdur Rahman's brutality was when an official who had outraged a woman was stripped naked and placed in a hole. Since it was mid-winter, water was poured upon him until he was converted into an icicle and frozen alive. In another case, two men who were overheard talking about a forbidden subject were ordered to have their lips stitched together so that should never offend again. A man who came to the palace of the Amir and openly accused him of depravity and crime had his tongue torn out by the roots.¹¹⁰ Luckless prisoners were expected to purchase their food and pay rent for their cells.¹¹¹ Rebellious leaders were usually branded as traitors and outlaws, and were sentenced to death.¹¹²

Abdur Rahman relied upon a robust security apparatus to enforce the laws he had established and maintain order. A ruthless police force accompanied by a network of spies and informers were deployed to uncover conspiracies and confound enemies, both within the confines of the court as well as the distant corners of his kingdom.¹¹³ Abdur Rahman's brutality and repressive tendencies were further perpetuated by the arrests, torture, and eliminations of both real and potential disobedient officials and suspected

108 Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 145–150.

109 Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 137.

110 *Ibid.*, 137–138.

111 Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 145–150.

112 Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 132–133.

113 David B. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 115.

opponents made by his security apparatus.¹¹⁴ This security apparatus, which was reinforced by the strength of the Amir's army, demonstrated particular effectiveness at crushing challenges to the state and deflecting all forms of protest short of open rebellion.¹¹⁵ Wholesale executions and deportations usually followed the suppression of each rebellion.¹¹⁶ From the Amir's point of view, such practices were necessary to ensure his monopoly on power.

Abdul Rahman's brutality and repressiveness gave rise to forty disturbances, including ten major rebellions, four of which he called civil wars. Three more notable rebellions that tested the army and the monarchy took place in 1886 against the Ghilzai, in 1891 against the Mongol Shia Hazaras, and the conflicts against the Kafirs of Eastern Afghanistan.¹¹⁷ In 1886, the Amir's insight of tribal politics enabled him to exploit the historical rivalry between the Durrani and Ghilzais to suppress the Ghilzai rebellion and force them to pay regular taxes—and in fact against all the feudal lords and tribal chieftans who revolted against the monarchy.¹¹⁸ His familiarity with religious politics allowed him to appeal to the orthodoxy and fanaticism of Sunni Muslims in order to secure thousands of volunteers and ghazis (fighters of the faith) in order to subdue the rebellion of Shia Hazaras in 1891. In order to garner forces against the Kafirs of Eastern Afghanistan, Abdur Rahman exploited the stirrings of political consciousness, evoking memories of the former greatness of the Durrani Empire, to muster the support of the Afghan tribes in his attempt to reestablish firm control over the ethnically non-Afghan territories of Eastern Afghanistan.¹¹⁹ Undoubtedly, Abdur Rahman set himself the task of ensuring by military means his domination over most of the Afghan territories. However, a number of regions did still enjoyed de facto autonomy.¹²⁰

114 Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, 51.

115 Giles Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present*, 40.

116 Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 418.

117 Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 145–146.

118 Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 132–133.

119 Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 132–133.

120 Giles Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present*, 41.

D. EXPANDING THE INFLUENCE OF THE STATE

The growing strength of the monarchy's army accompanied with the effectiveness of the security apparatus at administering rule of law enabled Abdur Rahman to apply a sort of "internal imperialism" in order to spread his influence and control throughout the territories of the Afghan nation.¹²¹ The reputation of the Amir was once again perpetuated through the means he employed, of which included the impartial use of bribery, murder, torture, and treachery.¹²² Much time and energy was devoted in attempts to penetrate and pacify zones of relative inaccessibility.¹²³ Abdur Rahman's state administrative apparatus was relatively successful to extend into the provincial and sub-provincial level of the Afghan territories. Provinces were established in the more urban regions of the cities of Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-i-Shari. Unlike prior rulers, Abdur Rahman kept his sons in Kabul and appointed loyal followers as provincial governors. These provincial governors were given a free hand so long as they maintained order by administering justice and sent the required taxes collected as well as conscripts to Kabul.¹²⁴⁻¹²⁵

Abdur Rahman's process of internal imperialism applied a policy of mild repression toward the frontier areas. The Amir's administration of governance was not necessarily conducted in a uniform basis.¹²⁶ Force, bloody reprisals, matrimonial alliances, bribes, and intrigues were all used to manipulate and overcome tribal resistance to his authority. Abdur Rahman used his own marriages in addition to those of his sons to tighten ties with tribal sardars, religious leaders, and important members of non-Afghan ethnic groups. He also employed a feudal policy by inviting feudal sardars to Kabul in order to grant them subsidies in some cases, destroy strongholds and fortifications in other cases, and taking hostages.¹²⁷ Abdur Rahman Khan devoted his

121 Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 417.

122 Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 145.

123 Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 418.

124 *Ibid.*, 420.

125 Richard S. Newell, *The Politics of Afghanistan*, 46.

126 M. Hasan (Kawun) Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Abd al-Rahman Khan*, 65.

127 Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 132–133.

efforts to crushing, not institutionalizing tribal coalitions.¹²⁸ These acts prevented any one group from creating alliances with other tribes and achieving a level of sufficient military strength to challenge and overthrow the monarchy. Each local kinship based group (*qawm*) remained isolated, tied to the nation-state only by personal ties to individuals in the state apparatus of the monarchy.¹²⁹ Rather than integrating the various sectors of the population into a common national political system, Abdur Rahman's feudal practices created an ethnically stratified hierarchy of intermediaries that provided resources to their respective groups of kinship-linked patrons.¹³⁰ Governance merely became the managing of conflicts between patrons competing for the *lagrasse* (or generosity of the monarchy).

One means used by Abdur Rahman to manage feudal conflicts was the forced migration of dissident tribes residing within Afghan territories. The objective of the forced migrations was to break the power and independence of these tribes.¹³¹ From the late 1880s to the early 1890s, Abdur Rahman ordered the forced migration of approximately 10,000 Ghilzai Pashtun families from their southern and south-central territories near the Ghazni region north to the Hindu Kush where they dwell today.¹³² The purpose of this act was two-fold. Removing the Ghilzai Pashtun from their ethnic homeland areas weakened their ability to promote revolt against the state within their historic territories of influence. Second, shifting the Ghilzai Pashtun north created a force loyal to the Amir. Ghilzai Pashtuns residing within their historic tribal territories territorial zones may have been hostile towards Durrani-Pashtuns, and thus Abdur Rahman. However, Ghilzai Pashtuns residing in northern non-Pashtun territories were forced to ally with Durrani Pashtuns and the monarchy in order to receive their support and assistance if required.¹³³ In order to keep groups in the territories where they had been forced to migrate, Abdur Rahman would in general deny the right for Afghans to

128 Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State*, 23.

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.

131 Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 429.

132 Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 132–133.

133 Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 419.

travel freely within the country as well as outside of the country without the expressed consent of the government.¹³⁴ Even journeys of only more than a few kilometers outside Kabul had to be authorized by the police.¹³⁵ This policy remained law until the constitution of 1964 that permitted Afghans the right to free movement inside and outside the country.¹³⁶

Overall, despite the brutally repressive imperialism practiced by Abdur Rahman, he somehow still managed to unify the Afghan nation politically, establishing the first thoroughly centralized regime in the country.¹³⁷

E. ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

As mentioned previously, the state of Afghanistan was created as a geographic buffer between the eastern territories of South Asia of the British Empire and the northern territories of Central Asia that belonged to Russia.¹³⁸ Abdur Rahman again demonstrated his political capacity by exploiting the Anglo-Russian colonial rivalries to further his own objectives.¹³⁹ He recognized that in order to consolidate his authority over the Afghan nation, he had to ensure that both the British and Russians would accept his regime.¹⁴⁰ In 1880, the Amir agreed to British supervision over the foreign affairs of Afghanistan in return for a subsidy and their noninterference in his attempts to gain control over the entire country.¹⁴¹ The British agreed to have only one representative in Afghanistan, an Indian Muslim. Russia agreed that it had no interest in extending its influence into the territory of Afghanistan.¹⁴²

¹³⁴ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 429.

¹³⁵ Giles Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present*, 40.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880-1946*, 132–133.

¹³⁸ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 17.

¹³⁹ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880-1946*, 130.

¹⁴⁰ Richard S. Newell, *The Politics of Afghanistan*, 48.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁴² Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State*, 19.

In general, except for a handful of military technicians, such as British physicians and engineers, Indian printers, French engineers, in his personal employ, Abdur Rahman tended to block the introduction of foreigners and their influences into Afghanistan while still maintaining accessibility to foreign aid and technology.¹⁴³⁻¹⁴⁴ He was indeed aware of the potential of the natural resources of Afghanistan and of the benefits that European technical advice could bring that could improve the financial handicaps generated by the regime's relative inefficiency in extracting substantial monetary revenue from the Afghan population. However, he also persisted in not opening up Afghanistan and permitting foreign interests to exploit the country's natural wealth. Making Afghanistan easily accessible would permit foreign powers to easily enter and spread themselves throughout the country.¹⁴⁵ For Abdur Rahman, Afghan independence and military security needed to be sustained, regardless of the economic costs of maintaining the country in isolation to minimize unwanted foreign intrusion and influences.¹⁴⁶ The Amir's strong desire and intent to preserve the dominion of Afghanistan was evident in the following statement to his sons.

I would most strenuously advise my sons and successors not to give the monopoly of their minerals to any foreigner, nor to let their mines be worked by any foreign companies, otherwise they will be immersed in any complications, thereby giving an excuse to foreign nations to interfere in the affairs of the country, for the sake of greed, which is growing unbearable from day to day.¹⁴⁷

Interestingly, this philosophy has persisted throughout the years and had been the basis of Afghan foreign and domestic policy.¹⁴⁸ Instead, he continued to rely on the continued

¹⁴³ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 152.

¹⁴⁴ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 428.

¹⁴⁵ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 153.

¹⁴⁶ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, 49.

¹⁴⁷ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 155.

¹⁴⁸ Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 153.

receipt of British subsidies, stiff taxes on the Afghan inhabitants, and the relatively small amounts of income derived from his workshops to finance his regime.

F. CONCLUSION

By the end of his reign, Abdur Rahman had created a powerful police state that was so brutally repressive that subversive talk could land a person in jail or worse.¹⁴⁹ By convincing himself of his own divinely favored status, Abdur Rahman Khan was able to act in a fearless manner, supporting his conviction through action, thereby fulfilling his self-proclaimed destiny as the ruler of Afghanistan.¹⁵⁰ His ability to impose the will of the monarchy upon the tribes was principally due to the financial subsidies and arms that were provided by the British from 1880–1919.¹⁵¹ These weapons and cash enabled the Amir to establish an absolutist state that employed a brutal police force capable of crushing more than forty revolts by local tribal force when supplemented by the monarchy's army.¹⁵² The Amir was unwilling to compromise or jeopardize his power or the independence of Afghanistan in any way.¹⁵³ The greatest safety of Afghanistan lied in its natural impregnable position.¹⁵⁴ This discussion of Abdur Rahman's regime has shown how accepting arms and foreign subsidies from the British enabled the Amir to shift away from solely focusing his efforts on building an army loyal to the monarchy and breaking ties from the powerful and autonomous tribes. The Amir was able to administer governance through the creation and administration of rule of law and expanding central government authority into the rural territories.

¹⁴⁹ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 143.

¹⁵⁰ David B. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier*, 97.

¹⁵¹ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 17.

¹⁵² Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State*. 21.

¹⁵³ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946*, 154.

¹⁵⁴ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880–1946.*, 153.

IV. KING MOHAMMAD ZAHIR SHAH (1933–1973)

The role of central governance in Afghanistan has evolved substantially since the reign of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani. Some of the more drastic nation-building definitely took place during the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman through the growing independence of the central authority to sever its reliance on the support of the tribes to effectively administer governance. During the reigns of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani and Amir Abdur Rahman, the efforts of these rulers were largely focused on building the capacity of the central authority to rule the Afghan nation rather than administering governance. Abdur Rahman was eventually able to transition efforts from capacity building to governance, but this was only after he was able to enforce rule of law through the brutality of his punishments and the presence of a robust security apparatus supplemented by a professional army loyal to the monarchy. King Mohammad Zahir Shah is perceived by Afghan people with a respect and admiration equaled only to the founder of the Afghan nation, Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani.¹⁵⁵ After 30 years of tutelage, King Mohammad Zahir Shah exhibited a strength few realized he possessed. He hoped to move Afghanistan towards more responsible governance and eventually establish a constitutional monarchy based upon democratically chosen representation.¹⁵⁶ King Mohammad Zahir Shah's administration of governance possessed more liberal tendencies in comparison to the practices of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani and Amir Abdur Rahman Khan. The liberal nature of his governance did however limit King Mohammad Zahir Shah's ability to rule in the absolute sense.¹⁵⁷ The characteristic that is most unique about the reign of King Mohammad Zahir Shah is that his period of rule was known to many as a long "springtime of peace and gentility."¹⁵⁸ Afghanistan was for the most part politically stable and able to avoid both international conflicts as well as any significant internal rebellions. During this time, a few changes to the administration of governance were

¹⁵⁵ Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest*, 279.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 555.

¹⁵⁸ David B. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier*, 13.

introduced and incorporated, but only at a “glacial pace.”¹⁵⁹ The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the administration of the governance by the King was able to foster this period of relative peace in Afghanistan.

A. ASCENSION TO POWER

King Mohammad Zahir Shah was the designated ruler of Afghanistan from 1933–1973. However, he did not actually govern the state until 1963. The first 30 years of the King’s reign were governed by Mohammad Zahir’s uncles since he was not yet of proper age to govern. This practice was befitting of Islamic and Afghan cultural traditions. From 1933–1946, Muhammad Hashim ruled the territories of Afghanistan autocratically. In 1946, Shah Mamud replaced Muhammad Hashim and ruled until 1953.¹⁶⁰ In 1953, Muhammad Daud, the cousin of Zahir Shah ruled until he finally took over on 09 March 1963.¹⁶¹ This period of rule was known as the regime of the *Musahiban*. During his reign, King Mohammad Zahir Shah actively made his presence known to the Afghan people by travelling widely throughout the Afghan territories, mingling paternally with the population. Before his appearance, some of the more remote and isolated tribal communities still believed that Habibullah (1901–1919) or Amanullah (1919–1929) still ruled the country.¹⁶² Many of the remote villages that were visited spoke fondly of the King.¹⁶³ Today, the stability and peace of *Musahiban* era has been praised as a “golden age.”¹⁶⁴

B. FOSTERING RELATIVE PEACE

The reign of the *Musahiban* gave Afghanistan its longest interval of relative peace. The *Musahibans* maintained their rule over Afghanistan by focusing the efforts of the central authority on the sustainment of internal stability. Their vision for Afghanistan was composed of a structured relationship between the state and society aimed at

¹⁵⁹ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 169.

¹⁶⁰ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, 58.

¹⁶¹ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 554.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 555.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 170.

modernizing the country and facilitating economic development. A strategy of limited and gradual social change was pursued with the hope of avoiding internal rebellion based on the preservation of Afghan conservatism. Changes would begin in Kabul and move outward in a manner that would facilitate change without it appearing as if the monarchy was imposing it.¹⁶⁵ In the 1960s, Afghanistan experienced economic and social development at a pace that the country had ever experienced in the past. This period of accelerated economic and social development was partially attributed to the regime opening the country up to the outside world, effectively ending the practice of isolation that had been imposed by Amir Abdur Rahman Khan.¹⁶⁶

The *Musahibans* realized that many of the Afghan rural rebellions that had taken place in the past that were justified in an Islamic context had initially been provoked by attempts of the central government to impose economic pressure or taxation on the rural territories in return for greater political subservience. As the decades have progressed, the revenue amounts collected from the rural territories of Afghanistan have declined. Eventually, these revenues were no longer a significant source of funding for the state.¹⁶⁷ Revenues acquired through trade tariffs, government monopoly on commercial business activities, and in particular foreign aid and loans became the primary sources. As the state began to rely less on revenues obtained through rural taxation, the need for corrupt tax officials who commonly siphoned more than their fair share was eliminated. Tensions between Kabul and the communities of the rural territories eventually eased since the monarchy relied even less on the direct taxation of the tribal populations, effectively making the central government less invasive in the affairs of the rural communities.

Political stability in rural Afghanistan under the *Musahibans* rested on the implied recognition of two distinct power structures: the provincial and subprovincial administrations. Both the provincial and subprovincial administration served as arms of the central government embedded within the tribal or village structures indigenous to

¹⁶⁵ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 198.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 198.

each region.¹⁶⁸ Provincial officials, who were the local representatives of the central government, carried out a limited agenda.¹⁶⁹ Their function was to use their limited resources and influence to keep the peace, suppress banditry, oversee that the traditional practice of conscription was still carried out, and continue to collect whatever small amounts of tax revenue that were required by the central government. Provincial officials were not expected to engage in social service projects that might require greater local cooperation than the government was able to facilitate.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, the invasiveness of the central government in the affairs of the rural tribal communities was limited to monitoring and influencing local political structures to prevent them from causing trouble for the central authority.¹⁷¹ The aim was not to replace or transform the deep-rooted traditional social organizations, or *qawms*, that most people lived their lives. The *qawm* still remained the primary provider of support to the community that was outside the official channels of the central government.¹⁷² The *qawm* was crucial to the conduct of daily life.

When it was necessary for the Musahiban government to become more invasive in the affairs of the rural populations, they were only effective when a specific target was identified for punitive action. In 1975, the central government was relatively effective at expelling, capturing, or killing Islamic radicals attempting to raise rebellions in the countryside of Eastern Afghanistan. The action of the central government was so determined and immediate that villages began to expel rebellious ringleaders because they were perceived as bringing trouble to people who wanted no part of their ideological objections and conflicts with the central government.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 220–221.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 220–221.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 224.

C. IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

King Mohammad Zahir Shah was the first ruler of Afghanistan to implement relatively functional and institutionalized central governance. This was evident in the creation of the 1964 Afghan constitution. The Yousug Cabinet was established shortly after Mohammad Zahir Shah assumed power in March of 1963. The purpose of this cabinet was to appoint a seven member constitutional committee that would be tasked with writing a more liberalized constitution for Afghanistan. The constitutional committee was composed of prominent Afghans possessing the reputation of being oriented towards the adoption and implementation of governmental reforms. In February 1964, the committee completed the draft of the new constitution.¹⁷⁴ A twenty-nine member Constitutional Advisory Commission, of which two of the members were women, was then appointed to review the submitted draft constitution before a *Loya Jirga* was to approve it.¹⁷⁵ After months of debate amongst the *Loya Jirga*, the constitution was signed on October 1, 1964.¹⁷⁶

The Afghan constitution of 1964 instituted the election of a consultative parliament, or *Shura*. The *Shura* was composed of an upper house known as the *Meshrano Jirga* (House of Nobles) and a lower house known as the *Wolesi Jirga* (House of the People).¹⁷⁷ During the decade that Afghanistan was under constitutional rule, which was known as “New Democracy”, two national elections were conducted by the central government. Few Afghans actually participated in the first elections. The majority of the ninety-five percent non-literate Afghans that lived in villages and nomadic camps throughout the rural territories of Afghanistan knew little of King Mohammad Zahir Shah’s new Constitution and the “New Democracy” administering central governance from Kabul.¹⁷⁸ The relatively small percentage of the Afghan population that were interested in the reforms articulated within the constitution were the growing

¹⁷⁴ This draft constitution was based on a draft constitution that had been transferred to Zahir Shah by Muhammad Dauod.

¹⁷⁵ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 565–566.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 586.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 587.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

factions of the intelligentsia that had risen from the state's newly expanded educational system.¹⁷⁹ These intelligentsia primarily inhabited the urban centers of Kabul, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, and Kunduz, and began to organize politically, launching nationalist, communist, and Islamic movements with corresponding links to the international community.¹⁸⁰⁻¹⁸¹ Even though the state relied on this group to run the expanding bureaucracy, as well as staff the growing army, its members did not possess political power or institutionalized channels of participation to affect the central authority.¹⁸² Even though the members of the intelligentsia were not permitted to form political parties and compete in the parliamentary elections, this did not stop their criticisms of King Mohammad Zahir Shah or his "New Democracy." One critical critique of the monarchy was the relative slowness at which central governance of Afghanistan, or more specifically the urban areas of the country, was moving towards what they perceived as a "true" democracy. From the position of the monarchy, what these dissident (Western educated) intellectuals desired was an "instant democracy" where one would take a dry constitution, combine with fluid elections and stir, and voila, "instant democracy"—without the agony of generations of development. It was later realized that the members of the intelligentsia were actually seeking to institute an Afghan brand of socialism.¹⁸³ "The people won't wait," they said, but what they really meant was that, "We [the intelligentsia not in power] won't wait. We want power to implement our own ideas and create an Afghanistan in our own image."¹⁸⁴

D. CONCLUSION

The reign of King Mohammad Zahir Shah differed from that of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani and Amir Abdur Rahman. The efforts of King Mohammad Zahir Shah were more focused on the administration of governance as opposed to the building the capacity to govern that so preoccupied the regimes of Ahmad Shah and Abdur Rahman.

¹⁷⁹ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State*, 25.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 587.

¹⁸² Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State*, 25.

¹⁸³ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 587.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

The King was able to economically and socially advance the state of Afghanistan by permitting the introduction and incorporation of foreign influences. Even less reliance on the cooperation of the tribes was necessary due to foreign subsidies, tariffs on foreign trade, and monopolies on government owned commercial business becoming the primary source of government revenues instead of taxation imposed on the Afghan population. The creation and implementation of an Afghan constitution in 1964 provided the first signs the incorporation of democratic practices through the conduct of parliamentary elections.

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V. PRESIDENT HAMID KARZAI (2001–PRESENT)

For the past nine years, President Hamid Karzai has been involved in central governance development and nation building in Afghanistan of the likes that in the opinion of this author have not been undertaken since the reign of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani. President Karzai and his administration, with the assistance of the international community, is attempting to establish and develop a level of central governmental institutionalization that hasn't been pursued in Afghanistan by an Afghan ruler since the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman, that possesses the liberal political inclusion that was fostered by and characteristic of the reign of King Mohammad Zahir Shah. As President Karzai attempts to take on the scope of nation building that is presently underway in Afghanistan, he is doing so as a ruler that does not possess the domestically recognized and respected legitimacy, indigenously developed firm and repressive state institutionalization, or the majestic regality that were respectively characteristic of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani, Amir Abdur Rahman, and King Mohammad Zahir Shah. The following discussion will be a description of the system of central governance presently being established by President Karzai and his administration. Comparisons will be drawn between this system of central governance and those employed by Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani, Amir Abdur Rahman, and King Mohammad Zahir Shah in order to determine whether or not this system of central governance being developed is radically different than systems of central governance that have existed in the past. This determination will then be used to assess the impact that the development of central government in Afghanistan plays in considerations for commencing the withdrawal of international military troops from Afghanistan in the near future.

A. ASCENSION TO POWER

Like Ahmad Khan Durrani, Abdur Rahman, and Mohammad Zahir Shah, Hamid Karzai is a Durrani Pashtun. He was the son of a senator that served in the government King Mohammad Zahir Shah. In 1999, Hamid Karzai's father was assassinated in Quetta, Pakistan, by suspected Taliban elements. After this father's assassination, Karzai

was named the clan chief of the Popalzai-Durrani Pashtuns. As the chief of the Popalzai-Durrani Pashtuns, this positioned him for a high-level leadership role in the post-Taliban Afghanistan.¹⁸⁵ Hamid Karzai did not come to power as the leader of the Afghan nation through the traditionally familiar processes that Ahmad Shah Durrani, Abdur Rahman, and Mohammad Zahir Shah ascended to the throne.

1. The Bonn Agreement

The Bonn Agreement of December 2001 created the agenda and process for re-establishing governance in Afghanistan. According to Thomas Barfield, the Afghan delegates in attendance in Bonn were not looking for an “uberwarlord.” They wanted someone who could deal with the outside world and access resources that would be critical to bringing stability to Afghanistan. None of Afghanistan’s existing faction leaders possessed the necessary traits: education, linguistic skills, cultural sophistication, and experience in dealing with the outside world.¹⁸⁶ However, they well understood that the resources of the international community could only be effectively tapped if there was a single national figure to deal with the outside world, even if only to cash checks and redistribute the money.¹⁸⁷ With the assistance of vigorous lobbying by the government of the United States, the Afghan and international delegates in Bonn selected Hamid Karzai to serve as the head of an interim power-sharing council that would take office on December 22, 2001.¹⁸⁸ As the head of the Interim Authority, Hamid Karzai would serve as the designated leader of the Afghan nation. According to the Bonn Agreement, an Emergency *Loya Jirga* would then convene to establish a Transitional Authority that

¹⁸⁵ Thomas H. Johnson, “Afghanistan’s Post Taliban Transition: The State of State-building After War,” *Central Asian Survey* 25 (2006): 4.

¹⁸⁶ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 289–290.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 280.

¹⁸⁸ Thomas H. Johnson, “Afghanistan’s Post Taliban Transition: The State of State-building After War,” 3. (The government of the United States was unlikely to have settled for any Afghan interim leader other than Karzai since he was the only credible Pashtun leader whom the USA knew well and, more importantly, trusted.)

would be responsible for leading Afghanistan until a fully representative government could be elected. In June 2002, the Emergency *Loya Jirga* selected Hamid Karzai as the President of the Transitional Authority.¹⁸⁹

2. Elections

The first presidential elections of the Transitional Authority were held in October 2004. Hamid Karzai was elected with 55.4 percent of the vote, three times more than any other candidate.¹⁹⁰ Analysis of the election trends revealed that no presidential candidate received significant support outside of their particular ethno-linguistic group. The Afghan ethnic groups tended to vote along ethnic lines rather than cross-over to candidates from other ethnicities. Even though Hamid Karzai possessed the majority of the votes, he was not elected with a majority of the vote from any ethnic group outside his own dominant Pashtun base. This analysis therefore concluded that Hamid Karzai did not possess support for his presidency across ethnic lines.¹⁹¹ While the Presidential election strengthened the legitimacy of Hamid Karzai and his administration in the eyes of the international community, it did not have as strong an impact within Afghanistan.¹⁹² The conduct of the Presidential election was more procedural than substantive.¹⁹³ In November 2009, a second Presidential election was conducted. On November 2, 2009, Hamid Karzai elected was once again elected to the Presidency. However, this election was not without its controversy. Abdullah Abdullah, Hamid Karzai's opponent for the presidency, withdrew from the run-off election claiming that the electoral processes of President Hamid Karzai did not facilitate a "fair and transparent" election.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁹ Thomas H. Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post Taliban Transition: The State of State-building After War," 4.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁹² Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 300.

¹⁹³ Thomas H. Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post Taliban Transition: The State of States-building After War," 14.

¹⁹⁴ Jason Stratziuso and Robert H. Reid "Karzai Widens Lead in Afghan Election Race." *Associated Press*. August 30, 2009. www.iri.org/news-events-press-center/news/associated-press-quotes-iri-afghanistan (accessed 20 November 2009).

3. Critiques of the Karzai Administration

Afghans judge the legitimacy of a state by its actions rather than the process that created it.¹⁹⁵ Even through elections have enabled Hamid Karzai to receive the acknowledgement of the international community for his presidency, he has been less successful at proving himself as a capable leader of the Afghan people. Holding elections did not compensate for his administration's failure to meet bedrock benchmarks of establishing security and extending government control throughout the country. In the eyes of the Afghan people, President Karzai needed to prove that he could live up to role he now filled and provide the people with security, economic improvement, and a functioning government. An electoral victory would mean nothing if he failed to do so.¹⁹⁶

President Karzai has also failed to be perceived as independent of foreign control. Afghan rulers whose power rested on the protection of foreign troops were naturally perceived as suspect. "The weaker their regimes, the greater the risk of rejection."¹⁹⁷ Even though President Karzai has managed to set up a state government that is increasingly dominated by Durrani Pashtuns, he has been unable to deliver the generous subsidies and political favoritism that had flowed to the Pashtun tribe in earlier times. The best that President Karzai has been able to do is shield the opium production that takes place in traditionally controlled Pashtun regions from outside interference. However, in doing so, President Karzai to some degree has alienated his regime from its international backers while subsidizing enemies of the Afghan state, in particular the Taliban.¹⁹⁸

Widespread complaints of insecurity, governmental misconduct, corruption, and abuses of power are steadily reducing domestic confidence in the administration of President Hamid Karzai in the absence of any serious steps to curb them. Even the urban residents of Kabul, whose grievances are most likely to be addressed by the central

¹⁹⁵ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 302.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 301.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 341.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 323.

government authority in comparison to those Afghans residing in rural areas, have complained that the central government was incapable of meeting such basic needs as electricity, drinking water, and transportation. In the rural territories where most Afghans live, there exists is a growing dissatisfaction at the relatively slow pace in the improvement of the country's agricultural economic development, of which they heavily rely upon for sustenance.¹⁹⁹

4. Growing Progress

The April 2010 governmental report to the U.S. Congress submitted by the Office of the Secretary of Defense has some indications that governance in Afghanistan is moving in a slow, but positive direction. A national survey conducted by the International Assistance Security Forces (ISAF) in March 2010 indicated that 59 percent of the Afghan population believes their central government is headed in the "right direction." This 59 percent was an increase of 0.5 percent in comparison to the survey results of December 2009, and an 8 percent increase in comparison to the survey results from September 2009. The March 2010 survey also indicated that 45 percent of the Afghan population surveyed reported that they had confidence in the national government. This was a 6 percent increase in comparison to the September 2009 survey.²⁰⁰ Confidence in the overall performance of the provincial governor was 47 percent, a 5 percent increase from the survey conducted in the previous quarter. Confidence in the overall performance in district governors was 44 percent, a 6 percent increase from the survey conducted in the previous quarter.²⁰¹

Despite these general positive trends in surveyed Afghan attitudes towards governance, there still exists a predominant negative perception of government corruption amongst the population.²⁰² There is a relatively even split in whether or not governmental corruption is more or less prevalent. The March 2010 survey also

¹⁹⁹ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 318.

²⁰⁰ *Report on Progress Towards Stability and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces* (Washington, DC, April 2010), 44.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 46.

indicated that 30 percent of the Afghan population perceived the central government to be less corrupt, whereas 24 percent believed that it was more corrupt. An overwhelmingly 83 percent of Afghans stated that government corruption affected their daily lives. 33 percent of those surveyed reported that they perceived their provincial governors as corrupt, with 34 percent reporting that they perceived the district governors as corrupt.²⁰³ During the January 28, 2010, London Conference, President Karzai committed his administration to the institution of reforms aimed at combating governmental corruption.²⁰⁴ However, the effects of these reforms are yet to be seen and evaluated. The April 2010 report identified that the political will to prosecute those charged with corruption remains a significant obstacle to progress against corruption in the country.²⁰⁵

B. SUSTAINMENT OF THE REGIME

Like the regime of Abdur Rahman, the ability of Hamid Karzai to sustain his regime against insurgency is linked to the establishment of a robust security force. At present, ISAF is the only military force in country with the manpower and resources to hold Taliban militants, who represent the primary military threat to the Karzai Regime, at bay. The ANSF is composed of two primary components, the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP).

1. Afghan National Army (ANA)

Discussion of the state of the ANA seems largely focused on agreement on end-strength numbers. However, simply focusing on this aspect does not provide a complete picture of the state of the ANSF. In August 2009, end-strength goals for the ANA were projected to be 134,000 by October 2010. This number was based upon providing the ANA with sufficient numbers on the ground to combat the insurgency. Training focus was placed on building infantry-centric units to assist ISAF forces early on in

²⁰³ *Report on Progress Towards Stability and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, 45.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

counterinsurgency (COIN) operations, with a plan to rebalance the force in future years to enable self-sufficiency. Recruiting within the ANA has exceeded goals between October 2009 and March 2010. ANA was actually able to recruit more personnel than they had the capacity to train. During the January 2010 London Conference, the objective of 171,600 was set.²⁰⁶

The NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTM-A) and the Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) have been assisting with developing the capacity and quality of the ANSF to eventually take the lead for security in Afghanistan.

The Afghan National Army Training Command (ANATC) is the primary training institution for the ANA. The Basic Warrior Course focuses the training of recruits. The ANA Bridmal Academy conducts training and development of ANA non-commissioned officers (NCOs). Officer training is conducted in partnership with international officers serving as mentors. Training is provided at all levels of officer progression, beginning with the Basic Officer Training Course, Company Commander's Course, Command and General Staff course, and culminating with the Strategic Command and Staff Course.²⁰⁷ A NTM-A/ CSTC-A Medical Training and Advisory Group is working to develop and train an ANA medical corps. The Commando Training Center Garrison is the primary ANA institution to train future commando leaders and soldiers through the School of Excellence. The Logistics Directorate and the Logistics Training and Advisory Group, of the NTM-A/ CSTC-A, have provided policy development, training, mentoring, equipment, and infrastructure to improve ANA logistics capabilities. 107 advisors and mentors are embedded in the Ministry of Defense, General Staff, and ANA national logistics system and assisting them with improving logistics enterprises at both the national and operational levels.

The Afghan National Army Air Corps (ANAAC) provides another dimension in maneuver capability, enhancing freedom of action, battlespace situational awareness, intelligence, and air combat support for national military and police forces. Once

²⁰⁶ *Report on Progress Towards Stability and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, 103.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 106.

organized, trained, and equipped, the ANAAC is envisioned to perform a wide range of missions including presidential airlift, aero-medical evacuation and casualty evacuation, battlefield mobility, airlift, training, and close air support. The ANAAC is currently comprised of approximately 3,100 personnel and 46 aircraft. The ANAAC possesses a fleet of five AN-32s and one AN-26 fixed-wing propeller-driven aircraft that provides medium cargo lift. In October 2009, the ANAAC acquired its first two U.S.-manufactured C-27 Spartan fixed-wing, propeller-driven aircraft. These aircraft will also perform the medium airlift mission.²⁰⁸

Despite these efforts to build the capability of the ANA, the focus on achieving force end-strength numbers is plagued with retention concerns. Even though the ANA has normally been able to achieve and exceed its retention goal of 60 percent over a six-month period, this has not been the case over the most recent last six months. Attrition (defined as the unplanned loss of ANSF personnel) has been identified as the primary cause. Absent without leave (AWOL) personnel remain a significant contributor to attrition rates, with the percentages growing over the past year from six percent in May 2009 to a high of 12 percent in November 2009. For the last twelve months, AWOL has averaged nine percent. The NTM-A and the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) has instituted pay raises and the initiatives to provide better equipment as a means of mitigating further decreases in retention rates.²⁰⁹ Another obstacle is within the ANA officer corps where corruption is presently an issue with reports of personnel buying positions. One means that has been instituted to address this issue is the implementation of a lottery-based assignment system at the graduation of the cadets at the National Military Academy of Afghanistan that will ensure that personnel are randomly assigned to all regions of Afghanistan.²¹⁰

Overall, even though the ANA has been able to meet recruiting goals and possesses a fairly robust capability building program, the low retention rates and high attrition rates are impacting the operational effectiveness of the ANA. The low retention

²⁰⁸ *Report on Progress Towards Stability and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, 111.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 107.

rates and high attrition rates translate into new personnel continuously cycling into operational ANA units. Less experienced ANA units are tackling ongoing combat operations characterized with increasing operational tempos.²¹¹

2. Afghan National Police (ANP)

The Afghan Ministry of Interior (MoI) and European Police Mission Afghanistan (EUPOL) are responsible for operational level reform and development of the ANP. The CSTC-A coordinates with the MoI to select senior MoI officials and ANP officers. Presently over 160 CSTC-A military and civilian contractors are involved in the mentoring of the ANP. The ANP is composed of four bodies: the Afghan Civilian Police, the Afghan Gendarmerie, the Afghan Border Police, and the Specialized Police.²¹² At present, all four components still require ISAF and international community assistance in building a legitimate, respectable, and professional police force.²¹³

Even though the ANP has for the most part been able to meet recruiting objectives, the key challenge in building the capacity of the ANP has been training. The multiple international participants involved with building up the capability of the ANP are providing multiple and competing inputs from the different participants. These multiple and competing inputs have often resulted in disjointed and confusing approaches to police training.²¹⁴

Additionally, a “recruit-assign” model has been commonly employed by the MoI to meet capacity objectives for the ANP. 60–70 percent of the ANP has been hired and deployed with no formal training.²¹⁵ For example, to achieve security for the August 2009 elections, 9,800 personnel were recruited into the ANP. Due to compressed timelines, 6,900 recruits completed only three weeks of the eight-week training program.

²¹¹ *Report on Progress Towards Stability and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, 111.

²¹² The Afghan Civilian Police was formerly the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP). The Afghan Gendarmerie was formerly the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP).

²¹³ *Report on Progress Towards Stability and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, 112.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 114.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 118.

The remaining 2,900 recruits were placed on duty with no training. Once the elections were complete, a program was then implemented ensure all recruits completed the required training program by July 2010.²¹⁶ In March 2010, the NTM-A/ CSTC-A has coordinated with the MoI to implement a “recruit-train-assign” model in order to ensure that all new ANP officers have undergone training before being assigned to official policing duties.²¹⁷

A major concern of the international actors providing mentorship and assistance to the ANP is the prevailing lack of accountability. For one, depending on the districts, there are accounts of police force member performing policing duties without being paid, as well as accounts of “ghost police” that are being paid, but are actually present or conducting their duties. Personnel Asset Inventories have been implemented by the coordinated efforts of the MoI and NTM-A/ CSTC-A in order to combat this corruption. This process includes managing the registration, drug testing, vetting, weapons verification, and biometric data collection of all ANP personnel.²¹⁸

In order to augment the growing, but limited capacity and capability of the ANP, an Afghan-led Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3) was piloted in the Wardak Province in Regional Command East (RC-East) in March 2009. AP3 is a community-based security program possessing uniformed members, known as the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) “Guradians.” The APPF “Guardians” are an official MoI force that reports to the Wardak Provincial ANP Chief of Police. APPF elements answer to local ANP commanders down to the district level. U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) presently mentors the conduct of the AP3. There are currently 1,010 trained APPF “Guardians.” Training courses that began in March 2010 are expected to train additional APPF “Guardians” in order to achieve the desired force strength of 1,212. Anecdotal evidence has indicated that the AP3 has improved the security situation in the Wardak Province and is generally respected by the local population. However, the U.S.

²¹⁶ *Report on Progress Towards Stability and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, 115.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 118.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Department of Defense (DoD) at present does not plan to expand the AP3 program due to the large amount of resources that are needed to implement the program.²¹⁹

C. GOVERNANCE

In the opinion of this author, the primary means of governance that have been instituted by President Karzai and his administration that have the greatest impact on the sustainment of the regime are the Afghan Constitution, State Funding, and Taliban Reconciliation.

1. Afghan Constitution

As the President of the Transitional Authority, Hamid Karzai was required by the Bonn Agreement to participate in the development of an Afghan constitution within 18 months of the establishment of the Transitional Authority. A Drafting Commission, the Constitutional Review Board, and the Constitutional Loya Jirga were formed to create the new constitution. The United Nations, through the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) provided assistance. The final version of the draft constitution was deliberated and adopted by the 502 member Constitutional Loya Jirga from 13 December 2003 to 4 January 2004.²²⁰

The constitution established a strong executive, a bicameral legislature, and a state judicial system. The president was designated as both Head of State and the Head of the Government. The president would be elected by a majority of the popular vote and would be eligible to serve two five-year terms. The bicameral legislature, which largely resembles in structure the legislature of Abdur Rahman and Mohammad Zahir Shah, was composed of a *Wolesi Jirga* (Lower House or House of the People) that would promulgate laws, ratify treaties, and approve budgets. The *Meshrano Jirga* (Upper House or House of Elders) possessed the authority to approve proposed laws and the budget. The *Meshrano Jirga* was composed of both elected and appointed members. As a means of checks and balances, the constitution provided the bicameral legislature with

²¹⁹ *Report on Progress Towards Stability and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, 117.

²²⁰ Thomas H. Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post Taliban Transition: The State of State-building After War," 9.

the authority to impeach the president. The state judicial system was composed of a Supreme Court, along with High Courts and Appeals Courts. Even though the constitution did not formally establish religious courts, powerful Islamists are possessing growing influence in the emerging Afghan judiciary.²²¹

2. State Funding

Similar to the regimes of the Ahmad Khan Durrani and Abdur Rahman, the majority of the revenues used to fund the operations of the state are received in the form of foreign subsidies and contributions. Since the GIROA is unable to implement policies and reforms to foster substantial domestic economic development in order to generate revenues for the state, the state must rely on revenues received through a combination of donations and aid from both international governmental and non-governmental organizations. One area that the GIROA has been able to raise substantial revenues domestically is from customs. Customs taxes provide 39% of revenue to the GIROA. Some examples of revenues for the state provided to the GIROA from the international community include the U.S. Department of Treasury and the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Economic Governance and Private Sector Program. This program provided \$70 million in assistance to the GIROA over four years and ended in August 2009. The Economic Growth and Governance Initiative will take over where the Economic Governance and Private Sector Program left off and will provide up to a maximum of \$93 million over the next five years beginning in August 2009. The Trade Access and Facilitation in Afghanistan project will provide \$63 million over a five-year period. The World Bank's International Development Association and the International Monetary Fund, under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country initiative, provided the GIROA with \$1.6 million in debt relief based on the country's progress in implementing reforms in public finance management, the mining sector, and health and education service's transparency and accountability.²²² President Karzai has disclosed in

²²¹ Thomas H. Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post Taliban Transition: The State of State-building After War," 9–10.

²²² *Report on Progress Towards Stability and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, 60–61.

public statements to the media that several countries have given money to his office. One example provided was the \$1.5 million provide by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) nine years ago during the formation of Afghanistan's Interim Government.²²³ More recently, the media has reported that the government of Iran provided monetary assistance to the GIROA. President Karzai has publically disclosed that once or twice a year, Iran has provided his office anywhere from \$700,000 to \$975,000 for official presidential expenses.²²⁴

In addition to mentoring, the government of the United States is assisting the formation and development of the ANSF through monetary assistance. The Secretary of Defense is provided with Title 10 funding through the National Defense Appropriations Act to man, train, equip, and sustain the ANSF through the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF). Congress appropriated \$6.6 billion in FY 2010 for ASFF. In February 2010, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) submitted the FY 2010 ASFF Supplemental request of \$2.6 billion and the FY 2011 Overseas Contingency Operations ASFF request of \$11.6 billion. For the ANA, the ASFF provides funding for the manning, training, equipping, and fielding of 72 infantry battalions, 12 special operations forces (SOF) battalions (commandos and security forces), 13 combat support battalions (reconnaissance, artillery, and engineering) and 21 combat service support battalions (logistics). For the ANP, ASFF provides funding for support to existing police forces in addition to ANP growth to 96,800. The ASFF also provides funding for infrastructure required to field two Afghan Gendarmerie battalions, a MoI National Logistics Center, and a MoI transportation battalion.²²⁵ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has established an ANA Trust Fund that receives monetary contributions from several international partners in amounts totaling \$155 million. The United Nations Development Program overseas the Law and Order Trust Fund-Afghanistan (LOTF-A).

²²³ Deb Riechmann, "Karzai Says His Office Gets Cash From Iran, US." *Associated Press*, October 25, 2010. news.yahoo.com/s/ap/as_afghan_iran (accessed 19 November 2010).

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ *Report on Progress Towards Stability and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, 93.

LOFT-A provides funding for salaries and other ANP development programs. From 2002 to 2009, approximately \$625 million was donated to LOTF-A from the international community.²²⁶

3. Taliban Reconciliation

One means by which President Karzai is attempting to bolster support for his regime from powerful tribal groups within Afghanistan is through the reconciliation and reintegration of former Taliban into Afghan society. President Karzai has formed a seventy member council to try to reconcile with the Taliban and find a political solution to the insurgency. Even though Taliban hardliner top leadership has denied that any of their representatives have been involved in reconciliation and reintegration discussion with the GIROA, there are reports from U.S. representative in Afghanistan indicating that individuals who have fought alongside the Taliban—apparently not necessarily Taliban leaders themselves—have been reaching out.²²⁷ Even though the Afghan people are weary after nine years of war, there exists strong opposition to the GIROA pursuit to reconcile and reintegrate former Taliban. This opposition is primarily from ethnic minorities and women's groups who are concerned that negotiations will open a path for the Taliban to regain power or “exact painful concessions.”²²⁸ The efforts and effectiveness of this program have yet to be seen and evaluated.

D. CONCLUSION

Central governance development in Afghanistan continues to progress. The challenges facing President Hamid Karzai are similar to those that were faced and dealt with by Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani, Amir Abdur Rahman, and King Mohammad Zahir Shah. The common similarity between all four of these regimes is that their efforts are

²²⁶ *Report on Progress Towards Stability and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, 94.

²²⁷ Kathy Gannon, “Taliban Hold Secret Talks With Afghan President.” *Associated Press*, October 31, 2010, news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101031/ap_on_re_as/as_afghanistan_taliban_talks (accessed 19 November 2010).

²²⁸ Deb Riechmann and Anne Gearan, “US, Reversing Course, Backs Afghan Peace Effort.” *Associated Press*, October 14, 2010. news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101014/ap_on_re_as/as_afghan_peace_talks (accessed 19 November 2010).

primarily focused on the sustainment of the central authority as opposed to the administration of governance to the Afghan people. One can argue that the administration of governance cannot occur without the establishment and sustainment of the central authority. During the reign of Ahmad Khan Durrani, the sustainment of the regime was heavily reliant upon the cooperative relationship between the monarchy and the state. Even though Ahmad Khan Durrani focused efforts to bolster the strength of the monarchy in comparison to the strength of the tribes by building an army that was loyal to the monarchy, he was not quite able to completely sever his dependence on them to sustain his regime. It was not until the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman that the monarchy was for a large part able to sever its reliance on the monetary and manpower support of the tribes. This was accomplished primarily through accepting British foreign subsidies and arms. Even though Abdur Rahman was able to sever the monarchy's reliance on the tribes in that particular aspect, he did still seek to include tribal leaders in the administration of governance, but only in a limited capacity. Still, Abdur Rahman was so successful in suppressing opposition to the Kabul government that his successors remained unchallenged for more than a generation.²²⁹ It was not until the reign of King Mohammad Zahir Shah that the focus of central government had shifted from merely the sustainment of the regime to the administration of governance aimed at including the Afghan people in state level politics. This was largely due to the Musahiban regime making the sustainment of internal stability the priority of the central government in addition to efforts to slowly incorporate aspects of foreign influence in Afghan society. It has taken over 220 years, from the reign of Shah Ahmad Khan Durrani to the reign of King Mohammad Zahir Shah, for central governance in Afghanistan to achieve a state of existence that has been described as "springtime of peace and gentility," a figurative "golden age."^{230, 231}

President Karzai has pursued the sustainment of his regime through his cooperation with the international actors, particularly the United States. The majority of

²²⁹ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 321.

²³⁰ David B. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier*, 13.

²³¹ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, 170.

the central government development that has taken place during the reign of the Karzai administration has largely been to obtain the continued international support for his regime. So far, almost all processes of nation-building and central government development that have taken place during Hamid Karzai's presidency have been carried out with international support. Even though this cooperation sustains the regime, it is negatively impacting President Karzai's domestic reputation and support since his cooperation is characterizing him as a "puppet" of the international community, not a strong Afghan leader that is capable of unifying the nation of Afghanistan under his rule.

The bottom line here is that despite all the blood and treasure that has been sacrificed and committed to the rebuilding of Afghanistan, the affairs of the state remain messy. Throughout the history of Afghanistan, the central government authority has not been able to sustain its rule without the assistance of foreign interests. Even Abdur Rahman, who was a strong advocate of Afghan isolationism, could not develop his system of central governance without the assistance of the British. Cooperation and stability, regardless of the means by which it was attained, was the priority of the central government authority. A strong, representative, central government has never been characteristic of the nation of Afghanistan. Even though this altruistic objective of the international community is a noble goal, it is not necessarily a requirement for continued international military presence in Afghanistan. Substantial, and indeed historical, achievements have taken place since the fall of the Taliban.²³² Cooperation with the United States and the international community has brought major improvements to Afghanistan, particularly in the areas of education and health care. Creating a strong, representative, central government that can build and sustain a functioning economy and infrastructure in Afghanistan is an endeavor that will take years, if not decades for the people of Afghanistan to achieve.²³³

²³² Thomas H. Johnson, "Afghanistan's Post Taliban Transition: The State of State-building After War," 21.

²³³ Malou Innocent, Malou and Ted Galen Carpenter. "Escaping the Graveyard of Empires: A Strategy to Exit Afghanistan." (Washington: The CATO Institute, 2009), 8.

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