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**IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIETAL FRAGMENTATION FOR
STATE FORMATION: CAN DEMOCRACY SUCCEED IN
AFGHANISTAN?**

by

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March 2006

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**IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIETAL FRAGMENTATION FOR STATE
FORMATION: CAN DEMOCRACY SUCCEED IN AFGHANISTAN?**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

Afghanistan is facing the daunting challenge of creating a stable, all inclusive and democratically based government that will be viewed as legitimate among all ethnic, social and religious groups. This will be a great trial for Afghans, who for decades have faced the realities of ethnic fragmentation and its impact on politics, culture and society of Afghanistan. The focus of this thesis will be on ethnic fragmentation, nationalism, and social structure, as they relate to state formation and democratic development. This thesis assumes these concepts are critical for democratic development in societies with multiple ethnic enclaves and multiple ethnic identities. Four former Afghan regimes are examined and used as case studies in this effort. Specifically, these regimes are analyzed in order to determine how each attempted to overcome cleavages within society during the process of state formation. The case study findings are then used prognostically to assess the current attempt to build a democratic Afghanistan. The thesis concludes with an assessment for success of the current Afghan government and presents recommendations for increasing the overall probability for Afghan democratic development and national cohesion.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Following the events of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush began implementing a new National Security Policy that stressed the importance of strengthening alliances world wide and defeating global terror networks while at the same time opening up societies and building the proper infrastructures for the development of democracy on a global scale.¹ As part of this new policy, the United States began increasing its military and political efforts in states that had recently been the breeding grounds for terrorist networks and organizations. Military actions in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002, allowed for the first time, since the beginning of the Global War on Terror (GWOT), for these policies to be implemented.

Afghanistan, the war-torn state and ethnically fragmented society, became a test bed of this new democratization policy. A tyrannical and fundamentalist regime was driven from power and a new government was established under the guidance of the United States and international organizations like the United Nations. The hopes of the Bush Administration and the United Nations were that the new democratic government would succeed, would conduct friendly foreign policies towards the United States and the remainder of the global community, and would no longer be a safe haven for terrorist organizations. Also, Afghanistan could become an example to other states that face the same challenges in the region as well as the Middle East – regions that are acutely diverse both ethnically and religiously, which can lead to fragmented societies.

Today, Afghanistan faces a daunting challenge. The challenge of creating a government based on democratic ideals that will have a strong cohesive administrative capability from the rubbles of a nation that has faced conflict and civil war over the last three decades. Complicating this effort is the simple fact that Afghanistan does not have a well established democratic past nor does its people have a memory of a successful and nationally cohesive central government. Most former Afghan regimes ruled from Kabul by using their own tribal affiliations, Islamic rhetoric, and a strong hand, in the form of a secret police and loyal military; a military that has been predominantly of one ethnic

¹ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington D.C.: The White House, 2002), 1-2.

background. All of these regimes shared a common trait, however, which was the failure to create a true national state/government and associated infrastructure. They failed because they instituted and enforced policies and reforms that were counter to the populace's religious, ethnic and tribal beliefs, which eventually brought them into direct conflict with their constituents and Afghan society as a whole.

The greatest challenge facing the current Afghan government is the task of overcoming Afghan society's deep tribal and clan-based distrust of a central authority, and the historical differences among the ethnic groups that have been the source of instability and conflict for hundreds of years. For example, since the creation of the modern state of Afghanistan, the Pashtun tribal confederation has ruled the nation. This phenomenon has led to deep rooted anti-Pashtun feelings in many different regions of the country and among the non-Pashtun ethnic groups. In addition, this dynamic has even created conflict among the different Pashtun tribes and clans that have had no access to the reins of power within the state and have been sidelined by their own Pashtun cousins. The creation of a truly democratic state could, theoretically, allow other ethnic groups, including the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras, to form coalitions in order to gain political power and introduce a new governing dynamic within Afghan society. It is highly unlikely the Pashtuns would allow themselves to be ruled by a non-Pashtun for an extended period of time. This has rarely occurred in history and when it has, it directly led to bloody revolt and conflict. This potential of a non-Pashtun head of state could, in turn, further fragment the already fragile society. This may lead to an internal power struggle which could further incite ethnic fighting.

This demonstrates the difficulty of overcoming ethnic differences and the sheer nature of Afghan politics that have, for hundreds of years, been politicized through an ethnic and religious means. There is now a great burden on the shoulders of Afghanistan's Pashtun President Hamid Karzai who has to balance his own allegiance to his tribe and ethnicity against the need to create and promote an Afghan national identity which will allow Afghans to overlook ethnic differences and feel free to identify with the nation as whole. This endeavor alone will determine Afghanistan's success or failure in the following years to become truly a nation-state for the Afghan people.

A. PURPOSE

This thesis will examine how Afghanistan as an ethnically fragmented society has attempted state formation. It will try to answer the question of whether or not a society that is as ethnically, religiously and culturally fragmented as is Afghanistan can succeed in forming a cohesive government and create the conditions for democratic development. Current theory on nationalism and state formation stresses the difficulty of forming a democratic, let alone cohesive government, when there is more than one ethnic group within any given state or society. There are numerous examples today of the challenges of this phenomenon in Africa, Asia, and the Balkans. Afghanistan's lack of established democratic institutions and a basic democratic culture helps lessen the chances of forming and maintaining a democracy, let alone a functioning central government that is considered legitimate among the general population. Finally, this thesis will examine the impact of a failed or successful Afghan state on the region and the United States in the near term.

B. MAJOR QUESTION AND ARGUMENT

The last one hundred years of Afghan history has been filled with many different experiences in government. Rarely has power peacefully transitioned from regime to another. Moreover, the collapse of many of these regimes was ultimately caused by their interactions, on all levels, with Afghan society. A direct conflict occurred when the central government forced its laws to supersede tribal-ethnic codes/laws that have always been deeply rooted within every Afghan's life. For the rural villager of Afghanistan, these new laws usually were perceived as attempts by the central government to extend its power in areas and in levels of society that they were not comfortable in allowing. Affinity, loyalty, and honor for Afghans (especially the Pashtuns), lies within the village, the village leaders/elders, religious leaders, the ethnic group, or in some cases, the rich landowning notables, known as the *khans*. The main argument of this thesis will be that it will be extremely difficult for the newly-formed government to establish or gain pervasive political control over Afghanistan, whose people still base their loyalties on traditional, ethnic and tribal values and hierarchies. Furthermore, it is extremely difficult to persuade the Afghans to relinquish control over their lives and livelihoods to the central government's authority. For the current government to succeed, implementation

of national programs and measures to solidify control needs to occur over a long period of time; meaning over generations and decades. The current government will only be able to lay down the foundation that future governments will have to build upon, however, the longer the process takes, the greater the chance for the creation of other dominant political forces, both on the local and national level. These new forces can pose a direct challenge, as it has happened in the past, to the central government and produce an alternate authority within the state causing the Afghan population, in simple terms, to choose a side based on the amount of impact either power center would have on their day to day lives.

The examples that will be used in this thesis will be case studies involving past Afghan regimes starting from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present. Case studies will allow for a broad analysis to be conducted of the interactions of Afghans with their government; with the addition of studying this interaction with four distinct governing methods (i.e. monarchy vs. parliamentary). Furthermore, this thesis will analyze the failures of each case study and compare them to the current Afghan government. Policies on economics, social issues, and laws will be examined and compared for each regime studied. This will allow for an accurate measure to test the effectiveness and acceptance of the current policies and will help to determine whether or not the current government has a chance for success in relationship to the experiences of the past. The regimes that have been chosen for comparison are diverse in nature and are examples of different forms of governing, starting with a traditional monarchy, then a constitutional monarchy, followed by a parliamentary system and finally ending with an attempt at a socialist form of government. Using these different systems allows for a comparison of a wide range of governing methods and helps further the theory that no form of government can easily overcome ethnic fragmentation and ethnic distrust within a nation-state.

C. RELEVANCE OF TOPIC

The success of a democratic and cohesive Afghan government, one that is able to foster a strong sense of nationalism over ethnic and tribal identity, is of high importance to the United States as it aggressively promotes the creation of democracy in other regions of the Middle East and Southwest Asia. If the current Afghan regime can

succeed, with American support, it will be the first time a truly democratic government will be able to govern the Afghan people and will help form the basic foundation for Afghan nationalism. The Afghan model of democracy, adapted per individual scenario, could be a good example for other states in the region and might form the basic model for American foreign policy pursuits.

D. THESIS CONTENTS BY CHAPTER

1. Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter introduced the purpose of this thesis and introduced the research question. It also attempted to present the reader with a basic prognosis for whether or not the current government of Afghanistan can achieve success. This idea being based off of the lessons learned from previous attempts in government formation and the creation of a national identity.

2. Chapter II: Research Design, Theory and Propositions

Chapter II will introduce the research design and methodology of this thesis in conjunction with discussion of the general theory and the expected results of the research. In addition, the thesis propositions will be discussed and a conceptual model for state formation and the impact of ethnic fragmentation on Afghanistan will be presented.

3. Chapter III: Literature Review

This chapter will review the current literature on state formation, national identity and democratic development. In addition, the literature review will introduce propositions that will be studied within this thesis and will present current discussion on each proposition as it relates to Afghanistan. Furthermore, the specific influences of ethnicity and national identity in regards to Afghan state formation will be analyzed.

4. Chapter IV: Case Studies

Chapter IV will introduce the case studies for this thesis and analyze them in regards to the propositions that will be defined in Chapter III. It will explore how reforms and policies carried out by these regimes countered traditional ethnic and tribal norms and how this process led to their collapse or to a violent transition to another regime. The four regimes that will be analyzed include those of Amir Habibullah Khan, Amanullah Khan, Zahir Shah and Daoud Shah. Picked because of their different approaches to governing and state formation, these regimes will be compared to the

current Afghan government lead by Hamid Karzai. The diversity of the regimes, from monarchies to constitutional monarchies, to parliamentary to socialist/communist, will allow for the analysis of a broad spectrum of approaches to state formation in Afghanistan and will provide a lesson learned for the current and future regimes.

5. Chapter V: Conclusion

The final chapter will summarize the findings of this thesis and will assess the possibilities of success in Afghanistan in the creation of a democratic and cohesive state that will be able to last generations, weighing heavily on past experiences as well as the current processes in state formation. In addition, this chapter will analyze the impact of the success or failure of Afghanistan to create a stable and democratic state on the region and the United States.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN, THEORY AND PROPOSITIONS

A. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This thesis is designed to study four past Afghan regimes and determine the way in which each tried to maintain central authority and compare those processes to the one occurring today. For this purpose specifically, four former regimes were selected that represent different types of governing methods by which Afghanistan has been ruled. These forms of government range from a monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, followed by a parliamentary system and ending with a socialist experiment in the mid to late 1970s.

The first regime analyzed is that of Amir Habibullah Khan (1901-1919), who gained power after the death of his father and continued ruling Afghanistan as a monarch with a strong connection to the religious establishment within the state. Amir Habibullah was followed by Amanullah Khan (1919-1929) the second regime of thesis focus, who tried to implement a new constitutional system and broad range of social and economic reforms that would eventually be rejected by the Afghan population. The third regime, King Zahir Shah (1933-1973) was able to rule Afghanistan for nearly forty years but in trying to implement a parliamentary system within a monarchy, failed to allow for increased participation on the part of the Afghan people and ultimately failed to bring about social change within the overall society. Finally, Daoud Khan (1973-1978) took power in a coup and tried to drastically change the Afghan social mores by enacting socialist based ideals, which left little room for religion and traditionalism within the Afghan state, eventually bringing about direct external intervention into Afghanistan, spurring a long and bloody civil war. These four regimes and their successes and failures will be highlighted in reference to the current government of Afghanistan, to create a basic litmus test to determine the possible reactions that it might face in its attempt to promote democratic development.

B. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

For this thesis, a basic conceptual model of state formation was formulated in order to hypothesize on the impacts of different societal forces upon state formation and democratic development. This conceptual model is graphically depicted in Figure 1:

Conceptual Model for State Formation. The model postulates the positive and negative influences that different elements within government and society have on the overall democratic process in Afghanistan and how each is related. As seen in the figure, ethnic fragmentation is hypothesized as having the greatest negative influence on the creation of a national identity, which in turn impacts not only on the state itself, but also on democratic development. In addition, ethnic fragmentation is hypothesized to have a negative impact on the central authority's legitimacy, especially if one ethnic group becomes the majority or dominate group within the state. Central authority is assumed required to create the state and democratic development, and must be considered legitimate in order to carry out the required steps for democratic development.

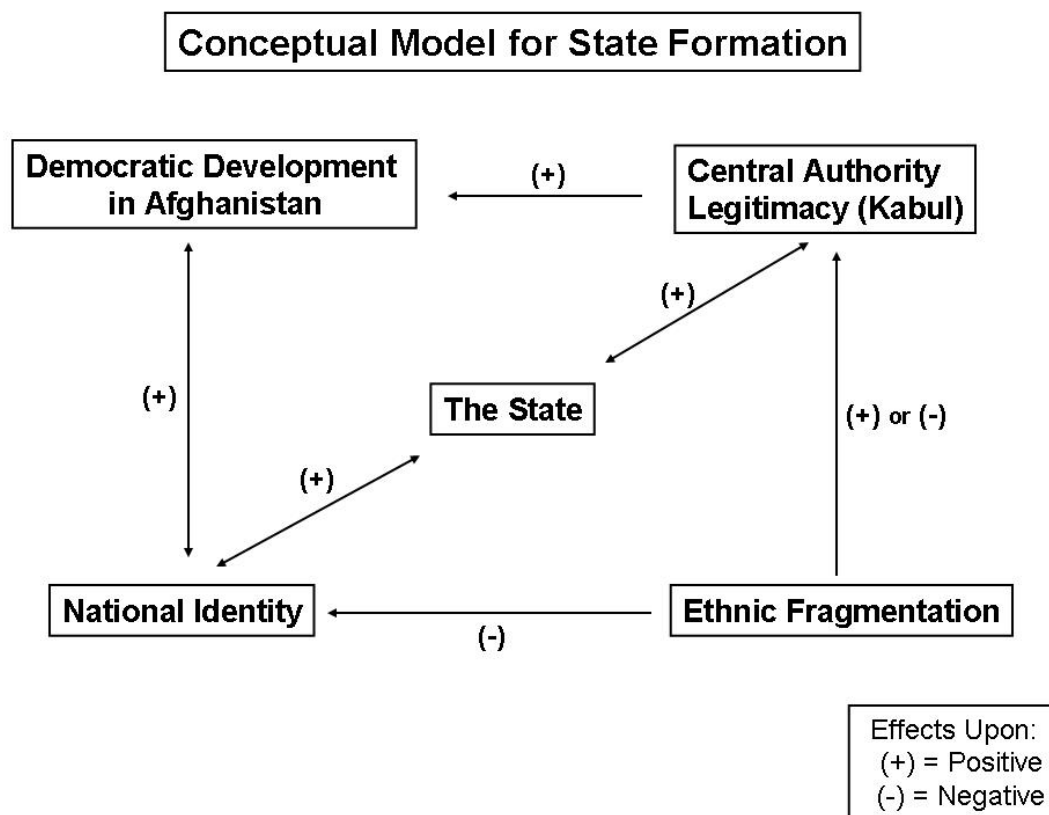


Figure 1. Conceptual Model for State Formation

C. THEORY AND PROPOSITIONS

Propositions derived from the conceptual model presented above will be assessed in the following chapter via a literature review of state formation and democratic development. Special attention will be focused on literature that examines the impact that an ethnically fragmented society may have on this process. By analyzing these propositions, it may be possible to determine the chances for success or failure of a state in fostering the proper conditions for the development of specific democratic infrastructures while facing the delicate issues of ethnic fragmentation and absence of national identity. In addition, current literature on this topic will help introduce the sheer difficulty any state faces in accomplishing its goal of democratic development while facing deep ethnic cleavages within society, combined with religious and tribal differences.

Figure 2: Propositions, presents two broad theories, the first being that a basic national identity is critical for democratic development. **(P1)**² In addition, central government authority and popular support of the government are critical for democratic development. **(P2)** Each proposition is disaggregated into sub-propositions. The first proposition has two sub-propositions which include the propositions that ethnic fragmentation and conflict hinders the development of a national identity **(P1.1)** and ethnic fragmentation within Afghanistan hinders the development of an Afghan national identity. **(P1.2)** The second proposition has an additional sub-proposition which states that ethnic fragmentation, tribalism and religion can challenge central government authority and legitimacy. **(P2.1)**

² During the reading of the analysis of each individual case study in Chapter IV, the reader will notice that periodically, at the end of a sentence or a section, there will be an annotation, such as (P1), (P2), (P2.1), etc... This is meant to signify the relevance of that sentence or section in regards to the corresponding proposition in Figure 2: Propositions. Figure 2: Propositions will be re-displayed at the beginning of Chapter Four for the reader's convenience.

Propositions

- (P1) A national identity is critical for democratic development.
 - (P1.1) Ethnic fragmentation and conflict hinders the development of a national identity.
 - (P1.2) Ethnic fragmentation within Afghanistan hinders the development of an Afghan national identity.
- (P2) Central government authority and popular support of the government are critical for democratic development.
 - (P2.1) Ethnic fragmentation, tribalism and religious notions can challenge central government authority and legitimacy.

Figure 2. Propositions

D. CONCLUSION

The process of creating a nation-state has been an undertaking, that over the course of history, has brought with it both success and failure. There are many key factors that can contribute to either outcome. Overtime, these factors can help predict the degree in which any society can coalesce under one national identity. The creation of a system of government that is democratic, or allows for the greatest number of participants from all levels of society in the governing process, has posed a great challenge to many nations that have attempted this process. Compounding this challenge has been the issue of ethnicity serving as a barrier against the development of national identity national

unity under a system of government that allows majority rule while protecting minority rights. Simply put, Horowitz writes that “the major failure of democracy is ethnic conflict.”³

³ Donald L. Horowitz, “Democracy in Divided Societies,” in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 35.

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III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION

Ethnic identity has been a driving force in human interaction for thousands of years. It helps form a common bond among humans and builds boundaries for interactions between separate groups and individuals. One's culture and ethnicity can become a dominate factor in one's approach to state formation and ideas of governing. In tribal societies, ethnicity plays even a greater role in the everyday lives of individuals and their interactions with others from different ethnic and tribal groups. Afghanistan is a prime example of a society with ethnic cleavages that help form an immense obstacle to the creation of a democratically cohesive government that is seen as legitimate in its rule over the masses.

There are many theories that try to explain the impact of ethnic identity and ethnicity on the development of nation-states and democratic institutions. According to Diamond and Plattner, "ethnicity is the most difficult type of cleavage for democracy to manage."⁴ This proposition has shown its relevance in the experiences of states throughout Africa and Asia in the last hundred years. Tribal and ethnic loyalties were, and are still today, placed before loyalties to governments that rule from far away capitals. The underlying failure of many of these states has been the non-inclusion of all minority groups in the rule of government and the government's willingness to favor one ethnic group over another.⁵ These ethnically charged relationships can lead to conflict within societies and form an insurmountable barrier to democratic development and state formation.

⁴ Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), XVII.

⁵ Donald L. Horowitz, "Democracy in Divided Societies," in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 48.

Today, as seen in Figure 3: Ethnolinguistic Groups in Afghanistan, a major problem for Afghanistan is the fact that it “is marked by an enormous heterogeneity of population in terms of ethno-linguistic and religious affiliation and socio-political organization.”⁶

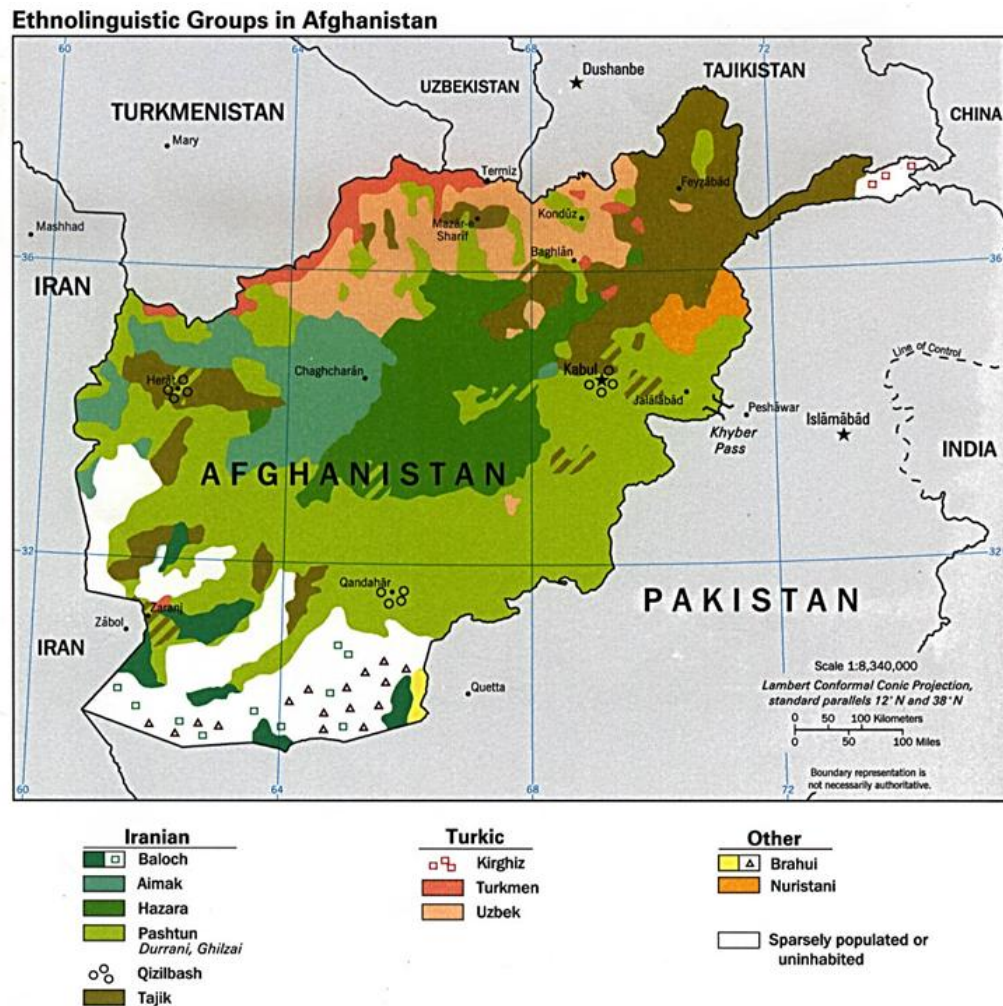


Figure 3. Ethnolinguistic Groups in Afghanistan
(From: http://www.brookings.edu/fp/projects/terrorism/maps_ethnolinguistic.htm)
[Accessed February 28, 2006]

Figure 3 suggests to enormity of ethnic diversity within Afghanistan and the sheer scope of the challenge faced by the current government in attempting to foster a national identity. The reality is that Afghans associate themselves with several kinds of social

⁶ Gabriele Rasuly-Palczek, “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*, eds. Willem Van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2001), 151.

groupings: with territorial groupings of varying scales, with kinship groupings, with Islamic sect affiliations (the *Sufis*), that are followers of holy men that are seen as “saints” or simply known as “*pirs*.”⁷ Forging a common identity by breaking the bonds of such social groupings has not been accomplished by any Afghan government of the last one hundred years -- ranging from monarchies to socialist based regimes. This deeply rooted affinity to traditions, family, and social/political units have seemingly created the greatest barrier for the creation of an Afghan national identity and democracy.

B. ETHNICITY, NATIONALISM, AND THE NATION-STATE

According to Hastings, “nation, ethnicity, nationalism, and religion are four distinct and determinative elements within world history.”⁸ They are core concepts for every human and help guide individual and group motivations while determining how these entities will react to certain situations. All four are closely linked to each other, and as Hastings argues, it is difficult to separate one from the others.⁹ To understand the interaction and importance of each of these terms on the overall creation of a national identity, they need to be further defined.

A nation is usually formed from one or more different ethnic groups. As defined by Smith, the nation is “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members.”¹⁰ Gellner further defines nation as “the artifacts of men’s convictions and loyalties and solidarities; the fusion of will, culture and polity to the limits of its boundaries.”¹¹ Nations are created from the human need to belong to a greater group that shares a common heritage and culture that can be identified by the

⁷ 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*, eds. Willem Van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2001), 159.

⁸ Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

⁹ Ibid, 1.

¹⁰ Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford and Melden: Blackwell Publishers Inc, 1986), 135-8.

¹¹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 13, 55.

individual. In short, a nation needs a shared common culture and recognition of individual rights and duties, as well as the virtue of the shared membership in that nation.¹²

The term “nation” is sometimes substituted for the term “ethnicity,” but in most instances, they should not be used interchangeably. The main difference between ethnicity and the nation, according to Smith, is the actual territoriality of nations; whereas nations possess territories, ethnicity and ethnic groups do not generally correspond to a certain geographic area.¹³ Smith further defines ethnicity as a “community with a collective proper name, a myth of common culture, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of common culture and an association with a specific (although not necessarily residence in) homeland.”¹⁴ A shared common language also is required, in addition to the above criteria, to create a more accurate definition of ethnicity. All these factors help create familiarity among a group of individuals that, with the addition of a territory with a defined border, can form a nation-state.

Nationalism is a strong feeling of unity among the ethnic groups that form a nation-state. Hastings writes that “nationalism derives from the belief that one’s ethnic or national tradition is especially valuable and needs to be defended at almost any cost.”¹⁵ In other words, citizens who are expected to fight and die for their country must come to consider themselves as part of one people or nation, even if they live vast distances from each other.¹⁶ This means that nationalism must overcome ethnic and religious differences to bond individuals solely on their identity as a nation. If this common bond, or in other words, nationalism, cannot be created, the nation-state will be faced with the prospects of a fragmented society that is more susceptible to conflict internally.

Finally, religion is an important factor that helps define the individual’s identity and in many cases, reflects directly on the individual’s ethnicity. Throughout history,

¹² Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 7.

¹³ Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford and Melden: Blackwell Publishers Inc, 1986), 94.

¹⁴ Ibid, 13.

¹⁵ Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4.

¹⁶ Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), XII.

religion has affected the creation of nation-states and in some cases, has even been the basis for forming a common bond between different ethnic groups and forging unity when no other force was capable of taking on such a task. Religion has become the dominate character of some nation-states and of some nationalisms.¹⁷ This phenomenon can be seen throughout the Middle East where Islam has become directly associated to both ethnicity and nationalism and has helped form the state structures of regimes in the region.

Ethnicity and nationalism are very important elements within any nation-state. They can be used to form a litmus test to help determine the chances for the creation of a stable and successful government. When nationalism has difficulty taking a strong hold within a nation-state with more than one ethnic group, conditions for ethnic conflict are created. Nationalism must supersede ethnic loyalties in order to avoid infighting between competing groups vying for political power. Today's successful nation-states have populations that have placed national identity before ethnic identity, while the failing states have still remained in an ever ethnically defined state structure, unable to forge unity and cohesiveness among the masses.

C. PROPOSITION (1): A NATIONAL IDENTITY IS CRITICAL FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

As discussed in the previous section, the creation of a national identity is extremely important. Not only does this create a sense of belonging and common identity among the population, but also creates conditions under which individuals are willing to act for the greater good of the nation as a whole, rather than for just a smaller segment of society. By doing so, individuals become more accepting of democratic ideals and democratic development, which stresses the importance of catering to the common goals of the entire population. Why have some states been able to successfully forge a national identity among its citizens while others have not? According to Tilly, "the absence of extensive kinship or tribal organization favored the development of the nation-state in Western Europe."¹⁸ Continuing on the same argument, Brinbaum and Badie argue that "Third World states generally face societies that maintain the persistence

¹⁷ Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4.

¹⁸ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 9.

of tribal or tribal structures, the crucial importance of kinship, and the limited individualization of property rights in land.”¹⁹ These ideas help demonstrate that strong ethnic identity is not conducive to allowing the growth and development of democratic institutions and a national identity that stresses the importance of the whole over that of the individual or the group. In short, “the tribe or ethnic group gives primary importance to ties of kinship and patrilineal descent, whereas the state insists on the loyalty of all persons to central authority.”²⁰

According to Rubin, “democracy, in the liberal tradition, consists of procedures for making the government accountable to society so that society can govern itself by means of the state.”²¹ He continues to say that, “the inclusion of citizens in the polity’s institutions and opportunities to contest power define a democratic regime.”²² This means that not only must the individual cede power to the state, but also that the state must respect the individual and the individual’s rights. If the state shows preference to one group or another and the inclusion of a certain group by the state means that they gain a larger share of the distribution of important material goods and non-material goods, including prestige, there increases the chance that “ethnic politics” will slow the development of democratic structures.²³

Another obstacle in developing and creating a multiethnic democratic state is the sheer difficulty any regime will have in promoting an all inclusive government and superimpose it on an ethically divided society.²⁴ Democracy, as a concept, stresses majority rule, which in multiethnic societies means there will always be groups that will feel left out of the political realm. Successful democracies build into their systems procedures and mechanisms that allow minority groups to have a voice within government and feel included in the overall governing process. The single failure of

¹⁹ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 9.

²⁰ Ibid, 10.

²¹ Ibid, 4.

²² Ibid, 4.

²³ Donald L. Horowitz, “Democracy in Divided Societies,” in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 35.

²⁴ Ibid, 42.

many states facing ethnic fragmentation has been the lack of the ruling group to allow the sharing of power with others within the nation-state, further disrupting any chances of creating a national identity.

The democratic concept of political parties also takes on an ethnic character in multiethnic societies, which can hamper the development of a national identity. These political parties tend to form along ethnic lines.²⁵ According to Diamond and Plattner, “democratic elections take on the character of a ‘census’ and constitute a zero-sum game: one ethnic group or coalition or party wins by its sheer demographic weight.”²⁶ They continue to argue that as these ethnic divisions come to the forefront as political parties, they produce “suspicion and mistrust, polarization rather than accommodation, and victimization rather than toleration.”²⁷ This phenomenon has occurred and repeated itself throughout the Middle East and Asia; Afghanistan being a prime example today.

With all of these impediments facing democratic development in multiethnic nation-states, can there ever be a chance for these issues to be solved and open the way for democracy to flourish? Lipjhart argues that there needs to be four power sharing features of any multiethnic state for democracy to succeed; they are: a grand coalition at the center, minority veto powers, federalism (where ethnic cleavages are territorially based) to produce autonomy for groups to manage their own affairs, and proportionality in the distribution of legislative seats, government posts and public funds.²⁸ These four factors allow minority groups to gain leeway when dealing with the center and create an atmosphere for mutual trust to develop between all ethnic groups. This trust can help enhance the appeal of democratic rule and forge the way for the development of a national identity with which citizens can begin to relate.

Thus far, the literature has argued the importance of national identity and the direct impact it has on democratic development. With this idea in mind, it is important to stress that Afghans still see themselves as members of their respective ethnic groups and

²⁵ Donald L. Horowitz, “Democracy in Divided Societies,” in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 49.

²⁶ Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), XVIII & XIX.

²⁷ Ibid, XIX.

²⁸ Ibid, XXIII.

have not been able to embrace a greater Afghan national identity in times other than conflict. In addition to being a hindrance for the formation of a national identity, ethnic identity creates conditions in which individuals become more concerned with local politics rather than national level politics. Afghans tend to revert to tribal and religious laws and codes over that of the state's established legal system when dealing with disputes or when prescribing punishment for crimes. Overall, this literature has shown that national identity has to be considered as a cornerstone of democratic development and the key component in uniting competing ethnic groups. So far in history, this lesson has been lost on Afghanistan and its people.

1. Proposition (1.1): Ethnic Fragmentation and Conflict Hinders the Development of a National Identity

The major failure of democracy is ethnic conflict.²⁹ According to Brown, states with "ethnic minorities are more prone to conflict than others."³⁰ So what causes ethnic conflict and how does nationalism overcome ethnic loyalties? These questions need to be answered before any presumptions can be made on the chances of success or failure in any particular state in its effort to form a democracy. In addition, the level of ethnic fragmentation of the particular state must be analyzed to further gauge the chances for national cohesion among the different ethnic groups. The underlying factor is that "ethnic affiliations provide a sense of security in a divided society, as well as source of trust, certainty, reciprocal help, and protection against neglect of one's interests by strangers."³¹ These reasons make ethnicity a strong force of identity among humans.

Ethnic conflict can breakout for many separate reasons. Diamond and Plattner write that ethnic conflict erupts "because ethnicity taps cultural and symbolic issues – basic notions of identity and the self, of individual and group worth and entitlement – the conflicts it generates are intrinsically less amenable to compromise than those revolving around material issues...at the bottom, they revolve around exclusive symbols and

²⁹ Donald L. Horowitz, "Democracy in Divided Societies," in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 35.

³⁰ Michael E. Brown, "The Causes of Internal Conflict," in *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, Eds. Michael E. Brown, Owen R. Cote Jr., Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1997), 6.

³¹ Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," in *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, Eds. Michael E. Brown, Owen R. Cote Jr., Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1997), 49.

conceptions of legitimacy, they are characterized by competing demands that cannot easily be broken down into bargainable increments.”³² In this theory, ethnicity is viewed as the individual’s and group’s identity and their view of entitlement based on that identity. Real world examples of ethnic identity leading to feelings of entitlement are seen in Afghanistan, where the Pashtun clans of the south feel that only members of their tribes can be the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan, since they have been the sole producers of kings and emirs for the last three hundred years.

On the other hand, according to Rubin, “ethnic conflict results from the integration of populations into a common territorial state, creating incentives to compete for control of the internationally recognized center.”³³ This is true for many states today which are products of a mixture of many different ethnic groups forming a nation-state; the most prevalent examples being the African and Eastern European States of the twentieth century. Most African countries remain severely divided and ethnic divisions have proved a major impediment to the attainment of stable democracy all over the continent.³⁴ Examples in Eastern Europe have shown that “democracy progressed furthest in countries that had the fewest serious ethnic cleavages but slower in divided ones.”³⁵ States, like Yugoslavia, fell into civil war along ethnic lines in an effort for different ethnic groups to gain self rule.

Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth Shepsle discovered in their studies of certain African and Asian states in the 1950s and 1960s, that “plural societies (essentially, deeply divided ones) where ethnic differences are sharpened through cohesive political organization, multiethnic coalitions inevitably breakdown, brokerage institutions disappear....issues are reflected through a prism of ethnicity, and ethnic moderation becomes untenable.”³⁶ The results of Rabushka and Shepsle’s study meant that

³² Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), XVIII.

³³ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 5.

³⁴ Donald L. Horowitz, “Democracy in Divided Societies,” in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 36.

³⁵ Ibid, 36.

³⁶ Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), XIX.

“democracy was not viable in an environment of intense ethnic preferences.”³⁷ Adding to this notion, Powell’s study of contemporary democracies concludes that “countries with extreme ethnic complexity experience high levels of deadly political violence, which severely strains the fabric of their democratic orders.”³⁸

Ethnicity and the conflicts it creates, become negative variables in the implementation and development of democratic structures, as well as the creation of a national identity. Afghanistan best illustrates this as it has attempted democratic development but has faced continued ethnic fighting and lack of a national identity. In short, as long as individuals place ethnicity before nationalism and there is a struggle for power between separate groups, the creation of a democratic government is unlikely. This is not only seen in Africa, but also in the republics that were created after the fall of the Soviet Union and in the Balkans. Given the chance, it appears that most will choose to side with their own ethnic groups and fight for control of the political system. If this is true, then multiethnic societies that lack feelings of nationalism are not conducive to forming a democratic government. These theories have demonstrated the difficulty any government in Afghanistan will have in fostering democratic development.

2. Proposition (1.2): Ethnic Fragmentation within Afghanistan Hinders the Development of an Afghan National Identity

a. Tribes and Tribal Dynamics

Afghanistan is a nation-state with a diverse ethnic make-up that has attempted state formation on numerous occasions over the years. These attempts have directly challenged the local tribal and social structures of society, eventually causing backlash and state failure. The underlying issue for Afghanistan’s governments has been their inability to create a sense of genuine national unity in times other than during crisis.³⁹ The lack of nationalism compared to the deep rooted ethnic identity of the majority of Afghans reflects the realities of how difficult it is for ethnically fragmented societies to coalesce into one unified nation-state. This shows that Afghanistan

³⁷ Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), XIX.

³⁸ Ibid, XIX.

³⁹ John C. Griffiths, *Afghanistan: Key to a Continent* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 78.

“illustrates well the problems of the transition to political society, particularly with regard to the question of tribalism and the state,” according to Roy.⁴⁰

Afghan society today continues to live within the governing structures of tribes and clans. Roy states that “the tribes see the state as existing on the periphery, responsible for administering land whose boundaries are constantly fluctuating on account of conquests carried out by the tribal confederations, in respect of which the state is no more than the means of continuity.”⁴¹ Rubin further develops this notion by writing that “the tribal model depicts tribes as largely self-governing groups of people united by a ‘group feeling’ based on a belief in common kinships, while the state claims authority over society within a territory, a tribes claims jurisdiction over a set of persons bound by kinship relations.”⁴² To the tribes of Afghanistan, the central government is seen as nothing more than a foreign and unfamiliar power trying to take control in areas of society that traditionally have been governed by tribal codes and laws. Most tribes and villages have remained self-sufficient and autonomous, accepting central control only when in their material interest or when faced with overwhelming force.⁴³

Further complicating the dynamics of Afghan society are the relationships between the tribes themselves and between the varying ethnic groups that compose the nation-state. Simply put, the relationship between tribes are generally marked by “competition and outright animosity,” according to Christie.⁴⁴ This is true of many nation-states, like Afghanistan, that possess large multiethnic groups within their boundaries. The failure of many past Afghan regimes has been their inability to bridge the gap between these competing groups and their willingness to play different groups against each other in order to consolidate their own power.⁴⁵ This exploitation of societal

⁴⁰ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 8.

⁴¹ Ibid, 14

⁴² Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 10.

⁴³ Jeffery J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), XII.

⁴⁴ Kenneth Christie, ed., *Ethnic Conflict, Tribal Politics: A Global Perspective* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), 5.

⁴⁵ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 47.

fragmentation in order to maintain power has been one of the single most destructive forces that has directly countered the growth of a true nationalistic identity among the tribes and Afghans as a whole.

b. *Issues of Ethnicity*

Historically, Afghanistan has been ruled and governed by the Pashtun tribes of the south. The Pashtuns form the largest demographic bloc within Afghanistan. This sheer numerical advantage has helped place them in the forefront of Afghan political development and rule over the last few hundred years. Unlike other ethnic groups, the Pashtuns stress the importance of tribal structures much more fervently, which is evident from the Pashtun emphasis on genealogically defined relations and their references to *Pashtunwali* (Pashtun Tribal Code).⁴⁶ This Pashtun dominance of government has created an atmosphere of tension between them and the remaining ethnic groups in Afghanistan, mainly Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras. These tensions have led to conflict as well as to the introduction of repressive measures to quell the power struggle of these ethnic minority groups.

Historically, the remaining ethnic groups have played certain specific roles within the society as a whole as well as within the government. However, not until the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan did these other ethnic groups truly gain power within the overall societal structure and establish themselves as a political and military force that the Pashtuns could no longer ignore. In the past, fighting for control of the center had occurred strictly between Pashtuns, but as these other ethnic groups rose in importance and made stabs at governing, there became a great struggle within Afghanistan that eventually led to outright civil war and the collapse of the Afghan government and state structure.

Currently, as ethnicity remains at the forefront of politics, Afghanistan faces an extremely difficult challenge of unifying a fragmented society and fostering the development of a national identity. As each ethnic group gains a foothold in government and tries to reduce past prejudices, there is a chance that conflict will occur as a result.

⁴⁶ Gabriele Rasuly-Palczek, "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*, eds. Willem Van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2001), 151.

Since this attempt at entering government is taken from an ethnic approach, rather than a regional or national one, the fragmentation of society will continue until either one dominant ethnic group controls all of the government, or ethnic politics will make way for increased internal conflict and eventual open warfare. In order not to arrive at these two outcomes, all of Afghanistan's parties and political leaders need to de-emphasize differences within the Afghan people and being promoting a national agenda.

c. *Afghanistan and Problems of State Formation*

A modern state system and a government that is administered by a central authority is not a new concept to the Afghan people. However, 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.⁴⁷ The reason for revolt has been due to the fact of the state coming into direct conflict with tribal and ethnic ways of life. In the end, "the formation and transformation of that state system created the contending forces of conflict," according to Rubin.⁴⁸ Simply put, the Afghans reacted only when direct force was applied to change the basic tribal structure within which the majority of Afghans had lived for generations.

There have been many different models and forms of government attempted by Afghans and their rulers in the process of state formation. These governments have varied from monarchies to constitutional monarchies to communist style regimes to an Islamic and Sharia based government. All have failed, in their own way, due to their interactions with the Afghan people and in the way in which laws and reforms were implemented by these governments throughout the state. Both enforcement of administration and jurisdiction by the state and the state's efforts to promote national identity led to further cleavages and controversies between state and society as a whole.⁴⁹ In most cases, these efforts to coalesce the Afghan people into one nation were conducted by repression and military action. The approach of these governments finally brought

⁴⁷ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 10.

⁴⁸ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 5.

⁴⁹ Gabriele Rasuly-Palczek, "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*, eds. Willem Van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2001), 151.

the Afghan people to revolt, both on the local level as well as the national. In the end, instead of forging a greater Afghan national identity among the populace, these governments paved the way for continued ethnic fighting and fragmentation.

On the other hand, there have been regimes in Afghanistan's history that have attempted to bring the general public into the national fold through peaceful means. However, Rasuly-Paleczek writes that "despite numerous attempts to integrate the various socio-political entities into one cohesive state machine and to create a common collective identity for the country's extremely heterogeneous society, the envisaged aims could not be achieved."⁵⁰ This failed peaceful approach proved that ethnic ties were too strong for a national government to overcome in a short period of time. The Afghans proved that there needed to be a process that allowed for the slow integration of all ethnic groups over a long period of time; this process would have to take generations to complete in order to be successful.

Afghanistan confronted modernity through its forced integration into a Eurocentric state system as a buffer between the Russian and the British Empires.⁵¹ This forced process left the Afghan people with a bitter sense of feeling about modernity and all that it entailed. Complicating the situation was the adoption of this modernity process by many Afghan leaders in recent history. Ultimately, according to Roy, it was not modernization that failed the Afghans but the ruler's notions of modernity. Simply put, he argues that "it is not modernization which brings problems, but modernity, the hypothesis which holds that modernity must necessarily involve a 'cultural revolution,' a transformation of the way of thinking and adoption of new social paradigms."⁵²

The idea of modernity brought with it new concepts to Afghanistan and its people, both on social levels as well as on governmental ones. Ideas such as women's rights, separation of "church" and state, property rights, implementation of secular laws,

⁵⁰ 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*, eds. Willem Van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2001), 149.

⁵¹ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 5.

⁵² Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 16.

and basic regulations, which were historically dealt with on the tribal level, were now being forced from the center outward. Modernization was rejected by the traditionalist Afghans mistaking it with modernity, a social concept. These wholesale rejections led to the weakening of many Afghan regimes, which were unable to bring the state out of a draconian mindset into a more ideologically advanced social structure and organization.

D. PROPOSITION (2): CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY AND POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT ARE CRITICAL FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

“You can not build a democratic state unless you first have a state, and the essential condition for a state is that it must have an effective monopoly over the means of violence.”⁵³ Simply put, this idea means that the state must have authority over its citizens and territory for it to be able to build the foundations for democratic institutions. In addition, the popular support that is bestowed upon a government by the population is also a key factor in the development of democracy and the creation of social institutions that pave the way for a civil society. Ethnic tensions and the fallout from any ethnic conflict, however, can derail this process and directly challenge the authority of the state and the government. These conflicts can create the conditions that are conducive for the birth of authoritarianism, rather than democracy, and allows little room for a free form of government to take hold within society.⁵⁴

It is important to note that if democracy is to flourish within an ethnically fragmented society, Horowitz points out two major problems that too; one being majority rule and the other being minority rule.⁵⁵ This problem of majority or minority rule simply means that there is a potential for one side or the other to disregard the rights of the segments of society that have no access to government or have any direct influence on the course on which the state is heading. This can undermine the authority of the government and reduce the direct support from the segments of society not in power. In

⁵³ Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 305.

⁵⁴ Donald L. Horowitz, “Democracy in Divided Societies,” in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 37.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 48.

societies that hold strong historical ethnic animosities, like in Afghanistan, this opens the door for conflict and increased ethnic tension that can lead to further cleavages and possible state collapse.

Charles Tilly defines states in general as “coercion-wielding organizations that are distant from households and kinship groupings and exercise clear priority in some respect over all other organizations within substantial territories.”⁵⁶ This definition illustrates the difficulty individuals may have in accepting the authority of the state, seen as a distant entity. Joe Migdal writes that the “ineffectiveness of state leaders who have faced impenetrable barriers to state predominance has stemmed from the nature of the societies they have confronted and the resistance posed by chiefs, landlords, bosses, rich peasants, clan leader, etc...”⁵⁷ This further cements the notion of this proposition and underscores the difficulty a central government would have in establishing its authority in a highly fragmented society; like that in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, 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 a new and all inclusive government. For these reasons, historically, Afghan rulers have all failed in their attempts to create a strong, independent, and central state and have not been able to attain the resources to accomplish such a task while in power.⁵⁸

For the average Afghan, national politics has been of little concern; however, the majority of Afghans are concerned with keeping the state’s influence at the local (village, tribe, etc.) levels as a low as possible and securing the power balance that has developed over the last few decades between the state and local socio-political entities.⁵⁹ Generally, this mindset does not allow the central governments to develop the institutions of governing throughout the state at any level, which would allow it to become a viable national authority that would have the mandate to truly govern its citizens. This deep

⁵⁶ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 5.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 14.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 15.

⁵⁹ 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*, eds. Willem Van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2001), 151.

distrust of any central authority will cause a great impediment to any government attempting to create any genuine social and political change and bring about democratic development.

In addition, tribal politics and tribal structures impact the way in which people view the central government and the authority which it wields. According to Roy, “tribalism is seen as the survival from of a folk past,” hence making it “sub-political.”⁶⁰ In addition, the difficulty that tribalism places on any central authority to co-opt is the sheer nature of this social structure which as a network “has no precise geographic location,” which “cannot be taken over by the state.”⁶¹ Ibn Khaldun wrote that “a dynasty rarely established itself firmly in lands with many different tribes and groups.”⁶² This is true of not only dynasties, but also of modern governments trying to establish legal and political control throughout a given area. In a state like Afghanistan, when the government tries to undertake such actions, the process requires turning tribes into taxpaying peasants which represents a direct challenge by the central authority on the tribal structure and a direct attack on social/economic hierarchies that have existed for centuries.⁶³

All these issues combined can weaken any nation-state and the structures on which it relies for governing. “When state structures weaken, violent conflict often follows; regional leaders become increasingly independent and, should they consolidate control over military assets, become virtual warlords, while criminal organizations become more powerful and pervasive.”⁶⁴ Brown further writes that this weakening can cause the border to be less effectively controlled and cross border movements of militia, arms, drugs, smuggled goods, refugees, and migrants therefore increase, causing the state in question to “ultimately fragment or simply cease to exist as a political entity.”⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 2.

⁶¹ Ibid, 26.

⁶² Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 14.

⁶³ Ibid, 15.

⁶⁴ Michael E. Brown, “The Causes of Internal Conflict,” in *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, Eds. Michael E. Brown, Owen R. Cote Jr., Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1997), 6.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 6.

In short, these ideas help summarize the importance of establishing a central authority within a state that is fully supported and recognized by the populace in order to facilitate democratic development. So far in Afghan history, as it will be demonstrated in the case studies in the next chapter, governments have not been able to garner a lasting popular support for themselves. Over time, this lack of support has brought into question their legitimacy and ability to rule over this diverse population. Due to this lack of support, most regimes reverted to ruling through non-democratic means, which simply reversed any democratic development that had taken place.

1. Proposition (2.1): Ethnic Fragmentation, Tribalism and Religious Notions Can Challenge Government Authority and Legitimacy

The underlying factor for the creation of ethnic conflict in the majority of multi-ethnic societies has been the question of inclusion of all parties into the ruling structure of the state. In severely divided societies, ethnic identity provides a clear line to determine who will and who will not be excluded; these lines seem to be unalterable.⁶⁶ If Horowitz's theory is correct, then these unalterable lines of exclusion produced by ethnic differences are the single most difficult barrier for nation-states of multiple ethnic groups to overcome. Diamond and Plattner continue this idea by saying, "in deeply ethnically divided societies, in contrast to other lines of cleavages, such as class or occupation, the lines appear to be permanent and all-encompassing, predetermining who will be granted and denied access to power and resources."⁶⁷ Further complicating this situation is the added historical memories of these groups, mainly the excluded or minority groups, and the deep rooted animosity felt towards the ruling or historically dominant group within the nation-state.

In the historical context, coalescing peoples against, for example, a European colonial power in order to gain independence have resulted in limited success, but the coalescing of peoples in "nation building projects in the Third World often failed

⁶⁶ Donald L. Horowitz, "Democracy in Divided Societies," in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 35.

⁶⁷ Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), XIX.

⁶⁷ Ibid, XVIII.

miserably.”⁶⁸ This was due to the fact that a common goal was lacking for individuals that would bond them against a greater “evil” than that of the prospects of a national government. This fragmentation and lack of trust directly undermined the local government’s authority and its ability to function. In addition, “many scholars have expressed profound skepticism about the possibility of stable democracy in societies in which ethnicity has become politicized” over time.⁶⁹ As ethnic politics becomes ever more entrenched within government, this reflects among society as well, further fragmenting the already fragile balance that may or may not exist. “In deeply divided societies, ethnic allegiances are all encompassing seeping into organizations, activities, and roles to which they are formally unrelated.”⁷⁰ Diamond and Plattner further write that “the permeative character of ethnic affiliations, by infusing so many sectors of social life, imparts a pervasive quality to ethnic conflict and raises sharply the stakes of ethnic politics.”⁷¹

At the root of the Afghan problem is the deep tribal and traditional way in which life is structured within society. According to the writings of Roy, Afghanistan has been the prime example of the difficulty of transitioning a solely tribal based society into one that is governed by a central authority; a society that recognizes the laws and overriding political power that a state government can have over its citizens.⁷² In addition, the simple structure of Afghan society, based on family and kinship groupings, which in some cases do not have a specific geographic location and cannot be taken over by the state but are able to penetrate the “very heart of the state,” is a cause for concern in regard to the relationship of the state to citizens.⁷³ In terms of state formation, this is a detrimental concept for the creation of stability within state structures in any given society.

⁶⁸ Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), XVI.

⁶⁹ Ibid, XIX.

⁷⁰ Ibid, XX.

⁷¹ Ibid, XX.

⁷² Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 8.

⁷³ Ibid, 26.

Further undermining state authority and legitimacy has been the fact that “representative government remained an anomaly to most Afghans, who traditionally avoided contact with central government officials, fearing increased taxes, conscription, and other forced labor.”⁷⁴ These fears, compounded with past experiences of abuse of the rural population, have and will for the foreseeable future, raise doubts in the minds of Afghans on the true intentions of any central authority and create a slower pace in which individual Afghans will succumb to the direct involvement of a central power in their lives. This process, over time, can only lead to weaken the Afghan state which will be unable to consolidate power. “When states are weak, individual groups within these states feel compelled to provide for their own defense...if the state in question is very weak or it is expected to become weak over time, the incentives for groups to make independent military preparations grow.”⁷⁵ This could open the door to civil conflict or even outright civil war within a state and can eventually lead to a failed state scenario. Afghanistan, today, faces this prospect as the central political structure still remains fragile and is having a difficult time in gaining the support from the periphery of Afghan society.

State formation and Afghanistan can not be discussed without studying the impact of religion on society. In short, religion is an important factor in Afghanistan in regards to state formation and internal politics. Theoretically, democracies are void of any direct influence on religion in government, but Afghan history has shown that when religion has been sidelined by government, it has caused a great uproar and eventual backlash from within society. “When the rural or to a less extent, the urban population, but especially, the religious tribal leadership, has perceived an internal challenge to its authority the opposition to that challenge has been clothed in Islamic garb.”⁷⁶ Simply put, “Afghan peasant life is permeated by religion; it provides the intellectual horizon, the system of values and the code of behavior, even though occasionally this may involve a clash with

⁷⁴ Jeffery J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), XII.

⁷⁵ Michael E. Brown, “The Causes of Internal Conflict,” in *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, Eds. Michael E. Brown, Owen R. Cote Jr., Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1997), 6.

⁷⁶ Eden Naby, “The Changing Role of Islam as a Unifying Force in Afghanistan,” in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi, and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 127.

other codes of conduct such as tribal system, it provides the only source of legitimization based upon universal values.”⁷⁷ For any government to be viable in the Afghan state today, the importance of Islam to the Afghans must be considered, or the prospects of creating a secular democracy based on Western ideals has a minimal chance of success.

Over the years, Islam has been the foundation for unity of Afghanistan’s diverse and multiethnic peoples while *jihad* has frequently provided the principle mobilizing factor for Afghan nationalism.⁷⁸ This dynamic has also helped, in the past, to unite disparate groups, “some often antagonistic to each other, bound by Islam” to wage battle against the same enemy, be it an external threat or the central government.⁷⁹ Realizing this phenomenon, Islam has been used by Afghan rulers, not only to legitimize their own rule, but to reinforce the notion and the authority of the state and its institutions upon the Afghan people. In eventuality, when forced to choose sides between the central authority and religious obligations, the Afghans have always sided with God. Over time, this dynamic had forced previous Afghan regimes to attempt to legitimize basic laws and overriding central authority through religion. Olesen writes that “through the nineteenth century, the legitimacy of power has almost constantly been at issue, both in the tribal mode as well as in any Islamic variant” with the “ultimate source of legitimacy being *Allah*.”⁸⁰

Ethnic fragmentation, however, does not automatically condemn a state to eventual failure. “The presence of even severe ethnic divisions need not condemn a country to ethnic violence and instability if it adopts political institutions that offer incentives for accommodation rather than polarization.”⁸¹ This successful implementation of policies and incentives is more likely to be successful in states that, even though they have a great ethnic diversity within society, have a greater historical

⁷⁷ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 8.

⁷⁸ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 82.

⁷⁹ Eden Naby, “The Changing Role of Islam as a Unifying Force in Afghanistan,” in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi, and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 124.

⁸⁰ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 299.

⁸¹ Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), XXII.

tradition of representative government. States that lack such political traditions must have political structures that are extremely accommodating to all ethnic groups, thus allowing for political and civic growth among the population as a whole over an extended period of time.

Ethnic fragmentation, tribalism and religious notions of governing have all been a part of the Afghan experience for hundreds of years. As demonstrated in this chapter and in the case studies that will be presented in the next chapter, these ideas have all had a hand in shaping the way in which Afghans have interacted with their governments overtime and the degree in which these governments were viewed as legitimate by the population. Government authority in Afghanistan cannot be fully established unless these ideas are co-opted or are willingly abandoned by Afghans keen on the creation of a government which is able to foster democratic development.

E. SUMMARY

Ethnicity and the issues that arise from ethnic fragmentation are key factors challenging any nation-state that is attempting to construct modern state institutions and norms. Nation-states with more than one ethnic group that still rely on tribal structures find it more difficult to accomplish this task. This has been the case, not only in Afghanistan, but also in Africa, Asia, and parts of Eastern Europe. As long as groups, within the state, place a greater importance on their ethnic identity than their national one, there will always be conflicting loyalties which allows for possible conflict to erupt. Afghanistan has become an example of how these propositions demonstrate that ethnicity can directly impact state formation and determine the success or failure of government.

In summary, according to Griffiths, Afghanistan's two main problems are "the real task its government has in establishing the unity of the peoples and the minorities question."⁸² He continues to say that conflicting "pressures, social and economic, of traditionalism and modernization, and the difficulties imposing sophisticated political methods and institutions on old tribal loyalties and attitudes," leads to political disarray within Afghanistan's governments, past and present.⁸³ Compounding these problems has

⁸² John C. Griffiths, *Afghanistan: Key to a Continent* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 78.

⁸³ Ibid, 78.

been the introduction of models of governance and nation-building that is alien to Afghan rulers and their society, values and traditions.⁸⁴

Over the past one hundred years, national politics have not been of much concern to the ordinary Afghan, who made decreasing the state's influence at local levels his number one priority.⁸⁵ This constant deflection of central authority in the everyday lives of the Afghans allowed for traditional governing structures to remain and slowed their evolution to more modern systems. As the central government fought to gain access to these local structures of governance, it was met with increased resistance and eventual revolt. The cycle repeated itself over many different Afghan regimes using varying models of government.

The challenge now facing the current Afghan government is the task of uniting the Afghan people while not repeating the mistakes of the past. The concept of national identity needs to be bolstered, but not at the expense of marginalizing ethnic traditions and norms that are valued deeply by the Afghan people. This tightrope act will, in the end, determine whether Afghanistan can succeed in forming a modern nation-state with democratic institutions and a large civil society.

⁸⁴ 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*, eds. Willem Van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2001), 149.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 168.

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IV. CASE STUDIES

A. INTRODUCTION

The last one hundred years of Afghan history have been filled with numerous examples of governments attempting to create cohesive and all encompassing state structures modeled after Western nation-states. The cases in this chapter will show how different regimes have attempted this process and how they have failed, either by disenfranchising the population, as a whole, or by creating a rift between the government and religious/traditional authorities in rural areas. As discussed in the previous chapter, Afghanistan is an extremely heterogeneous society comprised by many different ethnic groups, as well as many different Islamic sects, be it *Shia*, *Sunni*, or *Sufi*, which affects the way in which people interact with each other and government. Further complicating this process of attempted state formation is the deep reliance of Afghans on tribal and ethnic hierarchical structures, making it difficult for the creation of a strong central authority that is seen as legitimate in its rule throughout the state. All these conditions have made it nearly impossible for regimes to first, implement reform and modernization packages that would be widely accepted at all levels of society and second, to create an overriding national Afghan identity among the population in times other than conflict or war.

Four former Afghan regimes will be analyzed and will be compared to the current regime. The goal of this chapter will be to analyze each former regime by using this thesis's two main and three sub-propositions and try to illustrate how they reflect on the former regimes in regards to their reform programs, their foreign policy issues, economic agendas and religious interactions while still trying to govern over this ethnically fragmented society. When a proposition becomes relevant within the context of the writings, it will be denoted at the end of that particular section or sentence by using the proposition's number. In the end, this process will help pinpoint certain trends that occur within Afghanistan that can be applied to today's government, to gauge the overall chances for success or failure at the attempt to unify the Afghan people under one national identity and create the proper conditions for the development of democratic

institutions. To remind the reader of this thesis's propositions, they are redisplayed as Figure 4: Propositions, on this page.

Propositions

- (P1) A national identity is critical for democratic development.
 - (P1.1) Ethnic fragmentation and conflict hinders the development of a national identity.
 - (P1.2) Ethnic fragmentation within Afghanistan hinders the development of an Afghan national identity.
- (P2) Central government authority and popular support of the government are critical for democratic development.
 - (P2.1) Ethnic fragmentation, tribalism and religious notions can challenge central government authority and legitimacy.

Figure 4. Propositions

Specifically, the four former regimes that will be analyzed will be the Habibullah Khan Regime, which lasted from 1901 to 1919, the Amanullah Khan Regime, which was in power from 1919 to 1929, the Zahir Shah Regime, which lasted from 1933 all the way to 1973, and the Muhammad Daoud Khan Regime, which was in power from 1973 to 1978. These former regimes represent a broad spectrum of governing styles and government structures, ranging from Western models to basic monarchies, which allows for a wider range of variables that can be studied and analyzed over time.

B. AMIR HABIBULLAH KHAN 1901-1919

Habibullah Khan came to power in 1901 in a fairly uncontested fashion, which was rare up to this point in Afghan history. The death of his father, Abdur Rahman, placed Habibullah at the helm of a nation that was technologically backwards, underdeveloped, and still under the strong influence of foreign powers, mainly that of Great Britain. Initially, Habibullah was considered to be fortunate to have inherited,

thanks to his father's repressive policies, an Afghanistan that had little to no internal unrest.⁸⁶ However, as the years went along, there arose three significant points of contention between Habibullah and the Afghan people that would eventually create the conditions for his downfall and eventual overthrow. The most significant of these issues was his foreign policy challenges, which in the end, opened the door for his religious authority and legitimacy to come into question. **(P2)** In addition, also based on his foreign policy challenges, Habibullah would face a growing feeling of nationalism within Afghanistan and an ever growing discontent between him and the ruling tribal elites. Lastly, his modernization efforts throughout society would bring him into direct conflict with religious authorities and again with the tribal elites. **(P2.1)**

Habibullah began his reign by trying to reinforce his legitimacy through religion. **(P2.1)** This concept was very important for all past Afghan rulers before Habibullah, as well as future ones, for Islam had always been at the center of the lives of ordinary Afghans.⁸⁷ According to Rashid, "Islam had been the bedrock for the unity of Afghanistan's diverse and multi-ethnic people."⁸⁸ **(P2.1)** Upon his coronation, Habibullah took on the title of Amir (a religious nomenclature), rather than Shah, to reemphasize, again, the point that his rule was legitimized through religion. For this reason, initially the notion that the "divine source of the Amir's power and his principle duty as guardian of the Islamic country of Afghanistan against foreign threats" was widely accepted by the Afghan people, according to Shahrani.⁸⁹ Habibullah was also bestowed with the title of *Sirja al-Millat-I wad Din*, the Light of the Nation and of the Faith, by the traditionalist *ulema* (Islamic scholars).⁹⁰ Now that Habibullah's faith as a ruler was tied directly to Islam, little did he realize that his relationship with the British during World War I would cause a religious uproar that would spread throughout the nation and eventually undermine his authority as a ruler. **(P2.1)**

⁸⁶ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 111.

⁸⁷ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 82.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 82.

⁸⁹ Nazif M. Shahrani, "State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan," in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 41.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 41.

Afghanistan, like many other Muslim nations of the time, was going through a revival of pan-Islamism and anti-colonialism. According to Adamec, “domestically, the Afghan ruler faced a population that was gradually becoming politicized by fear of foreign domination which forced many to look straight in the ideologies of pan-Islamism and nationalism.”⁹¹ **(P1 & P2.1)** Seeing the possible challenge to his authority coming from the *ulema*, which was now gaining greater power throughout society, Habibullah began initiatives to co-opt these religious authorities, like his father had before him, and curtail their independent actions. **(P2.1)** He did this by bringing them within the state apparatus and institutionalizing their outputs by creating a board of seven to eight *ulema* whose sole function it was to ensure that the official policies of the state were in accordance to Islam.⁹² In addition, large portions of the “frontier” territories were placed under the religious jurisdiction of this newly created board, showing Habibullah’s willingness to, initially, please the broader religious base within Afghanistan, but also keeping a direct control over it at the same time.⁹³ **(P2 & P2.1)**

Before analyzing the foreign policy issues that became the largest source of delegitimization of Habibullah in the eyes of the Afghans, there needs to be a discussion of the domestic issues that contributed to his failed regime. Habibullah was characterized as a tolerant and good-natured man.⁹⁴ For this reason, he began setting back some of the more repressive policies of his father, like reducing the most “barbarous methods of punishment” in Afghan prisons.⁹⁵ He relaxed the “much resisted system of compulsory military service, established a State Council to handle tribal affairs, and introduced a system whereby tribal representatives could participate in the adjudication of tribal cases by provincial authorities,” states Olesen.⁹⁶ **(P2)** For an outside observer of the time, these might have seemed like huge steps forward for Afghanistan, but under the surface, the entire system was still built around the absolute rule of Habibullah. In addition, he

⁹¹ Ludwig W. Adamec, *Afghanistan Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), 7.

⁹² Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 96.

⁹³ Ibid, 97.

⁹⁴ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 110.

⁹⁵ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 94.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 95.

refined the “judicial authority and administrative policies of the state and created Afghanistan’s first parliament, which was nothing more than a thirty man advisory council appointed by him,” according to Roberts.⁹⁷ Finally, Habibullah began a campaign to modernize the Afghan education system, basing it on a 4 year curriculum covering religious topics, Persian, math, and geography, which would be taught at the first Afghan secondary school (strictly for boys) started in 1904.⁹⁸

All these steps brought Habibullah into direct conflict with three separate groups within Afghanistan. These groups were the religious authorities and *ulema*, the rural ruling class, known as the *khans*, and Afghan traditionalists. **(P2.1)** Not all reforms affected each group equally, but the combined effects of the reforms and the eventual coalition formed in opposition to counter Habibullah would create a strong force within Afghanistan. The strongest “party” within this grouping would be the religious authorities. They took offense to the new education plan set in motion by the king. Olesen writes that “education, up to this point, had been entirely within the religious dominion, but with these reforms, education became directly subject to the polity-expansion of the state through the foundation of a governmental school system.”⁹⁹ **(P2.1)** For these religious authorities, Islamic learning was important, because this knowledge helped strengthen the believers against “infidel” ideas. Opening the door to Western thought would be corrupting Afghans with un-Islamic notions and ideas, creating a weaker society which would be easier to dominate by outside powers. This became the overriding feeling of the religious class and *ulema*.

These reforms meant that the long lasting warm relations between Habibullah and Afghanistan’s *ulema* were beginning to cool. An example of how the *ulema* began working against Habibullah can be best illustrated by the events that occurred during a state visit to India, in 1907, when Habibullah was reported to have been initiated into the Freemasons society.¹⁰⁰ **(P2.1)** Back in Afghanistan, this news was quickly used within religious circles to promote the idea that the Amir, the “Light of the Nation and of the

⁹⁷ Jeffrey J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 37.

⁹⁸ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 98.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 98.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 97.

Faith,” had turned to Christianity and was willing to deal, if not simply handover Afghanistan, to foreign forces. These allegations were “quickly ended, when on his return, Habibullah had four *mullahs* hanged for spreading these rumors,” writes Olesen.¹⁰¹ As the *ulema* were turning against the Amir, so were the remaining segments of society. **(P1.1, P1.2 & P2.1)**

At this critical time, Habibullah’s social reforms were taking an effect, and the “urban conditions began to improve, however this was only true in Kabul,” according to Shahrani.¹⁰² Also, the Amir was becoming more preoccupied with organizing his court and leisure activities and less concerned about the overall state of affairs within Afghanistan. These reforms and court expenses were not cheap, and what eventually occurred was that “tax collection became the major task of the government, which in turn, created conditions for corruption, bribery, extortion, and fraud,” writes Shahrani.¹⁰³ **(P2)** This corruption and the abuse by central government officials of their positions paved the way for a major popular uprising of protest, in both the Paktya (1912-13) and Kandahar (1912) Provinces. The fallout resulted in the removal of certain government official from their positions, but no specific punishment was prescribed for their crimes.¹⁰⁴ This deeply angered tribal officials and, according to them, showed Habibullah’s lack of concern over the state of the inefficient central government and his inability to provide for the general population. **(P2)**

The one issue that became the catalyst for Habibullah’s removal was a result of the relationship between Afghanistan and Britain and the fallout from Habibullah’s stance during World War I. At the time of his reign, there began to appear a nationalistic force within Afghanistan.¹⁰⁵ **(P1)** This was due to the continual British control of certain aspects of Afghanistan’s government, mainly its foreign policy. This control resulted after the Afghan-British Treaty of Gandamak, which gave Britain full control of every

¹⁰¹ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 98.

¹⁰² Nazif M. Shahrani, “State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan,” in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 41.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 41.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 41.

¹⁰⁵ Ludwig W. Adamec, *Afghanistan, 1900-1923* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 8.

facet of Afghanistan's foreign policy. With Britain entering World War I and eventually, the Ottoman Empire joining the opposite side, Habibullah was forced to make a decision in regards to which side Afghanistan would support.

Complicating the situation for the Amir was the call for *jihad* (holy war) by the Ottoman Caliph against the Allied Forces. This reinforced the feelings of many Afghans that the great powers were launching another crusade against the Islamic world and the call for *jihad* had to be heeded.¹⁰⁶ However, pressured by Britain, Habibullah declared Afghanistan's neutrality for the duration of the conflict. According to Ewans, "this created a widespread belief that Afghanistan had betrayed her Islamic principles and had failed to grasp the opportunity to become fully independent" from Britain.¹⁰⁷ **(P2.1)** By denying this appeal from the Caliph, Habibullah risked accusations of being labeled a heretic by the religious authorities already opposed to him.¹⁰⁸ **(P2 & P2.1)**

As the war progressed, Habibullah's continued loyalty "to the Allies aroused bitterness and resentment among the country's tribal and religious leaders and among the emerging intellectual elite," writes Roberts.¹⁰⁹ **(P2.1)** A British observer of the time wrote that, in Kabul, "almost everyone was strongly anti-British and pro-Turkish, except the Amir, who seldom spoke in public" about the continuing war in Europe.¹¹⁰ This pro-British stance would bring together the groups opposing the Amir, that otherwise would not have formed a coalition, to include tribal leaders, religious traditionalists, and even the Amir's own brother.¹¹¹ **(P2 & P2.1)**

Realizing the growing threat to himself and his monarchy, Habibullah requested, from the British, total independence in both external and internal matters as a reward for his neutrality in World War I. By staying out of the war, Habibullah allowed the British

¹⁰⁶ Ludwig W. Adamec, *Afghanistan Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), 15.

¹⁰⁷ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 116.

¹⁰⁸ Jeffrey J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 38.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 38.

¹¹⁰ Ludwig W. Adamec, *Afghanistan Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), 27.

¹¹¹ Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 40.

to fully concentrate military forces in Europe and not have forces bogged down in Central Asia. However, the British were beginning to worry about the growing Bolshevik threat in the region and according to Ewans, “dragged their feet in giving him a response.”¹¹² This delay by the British was seen as a rejection by the people of Afghanistan and as the final straw in Habibullah’s rule. He was murdered in his sleep while away from Kabul on a hunting trip in February 1919.¹¹³

Habibullah’s rise and fall helped illustrate the dynamics of certain aspects of Afghan culture and how it related to the center, in other words, how it related to the rule of the leader. According to Olesen, “foreign political issues were dominating the internal Afghan debate and left many traces in the political as well as the intellectual life of the period.”¹¹⁴ **(P2)** Shahrani writes, that the Amir’s power was challenged, “not for the injustices to the majority of rural populations, but for its autocratic nature and for his devotion to the pursuit of a policy of friendship with the British during World War I, at the expense of Afghanistan’s external independence.”¹¹⁵ **(P2)** This opposition was not, like in Afghanistan’s past, tied to dynastic challenges, but to the ideals of constitutionalism, nationalism, reformism, and finally Islamic modernism.¹¹⁶ **(P1, P1.1, P1.2, & P2)** In the end, Habibullah managed to establish the pattern for Afghan politics that is still present today. The government came to be seen as the prime modernizing agent, which meant that it had to “balance between the demands of the modernizing elite for more rapid progress and great political participation and the conservative and religious concerns of the vast majority of the population.”¹¹⁷ **(P1.1, P1.2 & P2.1)** If Habibullah had been able to walk this tightrope he would, undoubtedly, have survived

¹¹² Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 116-7.

¹¹³ Ibid, 117.

¹¹⁴ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 107.

¹¹⁵ Nazif M. Shahrani, “State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan,” in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 43.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 43.

¹¹⁷ Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 41.

and continued implementing his gradual reforms throughout Afghanistan and would have spared the nation from the ultra-fast modernization programs and reforms of his son Amanullah Khan.

C. AMANULLAH KHAN 1919-1929

Amanullah Khan came to power shortly after his father's death in 1919. By being in Kabul during Habibullah's ill-fated hunting trip, Amanullah had the full control of the state's arsenal and treasury, which enabled him, through a judicious pay increase, to buy the loyalty of the Kabul garrison.¹¹⁸ This made it difficult for anyone to directly challenge his claim to the throne. Olesen writes that "Amanullah, initially, enjoyed widespread respect and support in religious circles, as he was recognized as a strong pan-Islamist and nationalist and had, in his administrative work as governor of Kabul, gained the reputation for personal honesty and integrity."¹¹⁹ **(P2)** By winning the support of religious and tribal factions within Afghanistan, Amanullah guaranteed there would be no one that could directly challenge his claim as the new leader of the state. After living under the rule of Habibullah, Afghans were now relieved that the nation, in their view, would be brought back to the right path of Islamic governance and finally be able to claim full independence from foreign powers. Time, however, would demonstrate that they would be correct in only one of these assumptions.

Recognizing the growing trend of Afghan nationalism, Amanullah's first proclamation, after his coronation, was a promise of total independence for Afghanistan; which could be seen as the only serious issue that could have united the traditionalists and modern nationalists under one banner.¹²⁰ **(P1 & P1.2)** Amanullah hoped that this cause would create, according to Shahrani, "a sense of nationality and nationhood that would transcend ethnicity and other claims of distinctiveness."¹²¹ **(P1 & P1.1)** His proclamation was quickly followed by a letter to the British viceroy of India, informing him of Habibullah's death and declaring Afghanistan an independent and free nation-

¹¹⁸ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 119.

¹¹⁹ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 111.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 112.

¹²¹ Nazif M. Shahrani, "State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan," in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 47.

state. Shortly afterwards, in another proclamation, he announced to the Afghan people the contents of the letter, which specified that Afghanistan was now entirely free, autonomous and independent, both internally and externally, and that it was now the appropriate time for a *jihad* against the British.¹²²

These steps were taken by Amanullah who understood that he needed to maintain the loyalties of the religious class, as well as cater to the wishes of the modernist who yearned to have a free Afghanistan. **(P2 & P2.1)** With the beginning of the Third Anglo-Afghan War, the entire country was united behind the new king and his popularity grew to new heights. Through this war, Amanullah had established his position in the Muslim world as an anti-imperialistic ruler and a prescriber to militant pan-Islamic ideals. Under all of this rhetoric, however, was his desire to claim lands past the Durand Line, separating British India and Afghanistan, which had been a part of the Afghan kingdom at one point in history. In the end, the war was a drain on Afghanistan's already dismal economy and Amanullah was unable to capture any new lands in the area of modern day Pakistan. Eventually, he gave up his ideas for territorial expansion, and in return, the British recognized Afghanistan's independence in both internal and external affairs.¹²³

Amanullah had achieved his overriding goal of winning independence from Britain. Adamec writes that now, "he began to devote all of his energies to initiating comprehensive political, administrative, and social reforms."¹²⁴ His reign would have two phases of reforms, one created shortly after the end of the Third Anglo-Afghan War, and a second, after a long and extravagant tour, taken by him, to visit European and Middle Eastern capitals. Prior to 1924, with the recollection of winning independence still refresh in the memories of Afghans, many of the king's political and social reforms were initially welcomed by many from different segments of Afghan society.¹²⁵ **(P2)** His reforms, according to Rubin, "resembled those that had transformed other absolutist

¹²² Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 120.

¹²³ Ibid, 124.

¹²⁴ Ludwig W. Adamec, *Afghanistan Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), 81.

¹²⁵ Nazif M. Shahrani, "State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan," in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 47.

states into nation-states and included radical new measures in all three areas identified by Migdal as necessary to the reconstitution of social control: taxes, land tenure, and transportation.”¹²⁶

If these reforms had been carried out to their full extent, there could have been a chance to transform the peasant/tribal rural society into an open, commercial society linked to both the state and the market.¹²⁷ However, these reforms and modernization programs were done without any long term planning and any regard to the capability of the state having enough resources, both in the financial sense as well as human capital.¹²⁸ Afghanistan again was being forced to change from the top down and would suffer the “growing pains” of this process at all levels of society.

The first step taken by Amanullah was the creation of a representative body to help share the responsibilities of running the day to day operations of the Afghan government. **(P2)** With this new body of representatives standing by, Amanullah drafted a new Afghan constitution in 1923. In this constitution, he tried to create the Turkish model, which meant that Afghanistan would be a secular state within which the “monarchy and government could operate” and a clear separation of religion and state would be present, according to Ewans.¹²⁹ Under this new constitution, “Islam and the nation as a source of legitimacy were not integrated and instead, the model of the legitimate transmissions of power became dualistic; meaning there were two separate sources of legitimacy.”¹³⁰ (Figure 5)

¹²⁶ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 55.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 55.

¹²⁸ Nazif M. Shahrani, “State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan,” in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 47.

¹²⁹ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 128.

¹³⁰ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 122.

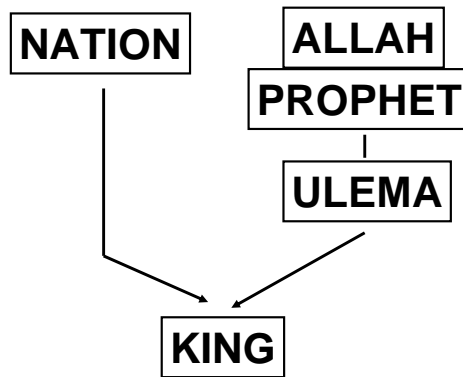


Figure 5. Government Legitimacy Under Amanullah Khan
(From: Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 122)

Modernists were unhappy with this system, since it still allowed for concessions to religious concepts, while the traditionalists took exception to the idea that the state might have a partly secular basis, rather than being under the expression of divine will.¹³¹ **(P2.1)** Amanullah further created animosity, on the religious front, by creating an independent judiciary and penal system based on a secular code. **(P2.1)** To address the concerns of the *ulema*, however, the new constitution stated that “all cases would be decided in accordance with the principles of *Sharia* (Islamic Law) and the general civil and criminal laws.” This usage of a dual system of guiding principles for judicial matters angered many, believing that the king had opted to use Western ideals in conjunction with Islamic ones, therefore, by default, placing worldly manmade laws at the same level as those of God’s. **(P2 & P2.1)** This resulted in religious demonstrations, in 1928, where the text of the new constitution was thrown to the ground in protest and was denounced as a communist publication.¹³² **(P2.1)**

Aside from legal reforms, Amanullah tackled many social issues, including that of the women’s rights. According to Olesen, he wanted women “to become equal citizens and, although Islam was the official religion of the state, citizens of other religions were

¹³¹ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 128.

¹³² Ibid, 128.

to enjoy the equal right and liberty of faith.”¹³³ This concept of equal rights was new for Afghanistan, which up to this point in history was a tribal kingdom of Pashtuns that had controlled the military and political power of the state since the Durrani Empire.¹³⁴ **(P1, P1.2 & P2.1)** By leveling the playing field and allowing all ethnicities equal rights, Amanullah undermined the power of the Pashtun tribal chiefs and leaders, who up to this point had not shared their control of state institutions with any other ethnic groups. **(P1.1 & P1.2)** These steps were taken so that instead of using Islam as a source of national cohesiveness, Amanullah tried to use Afghan national identity based on citizenship as the sole source for unifying the nation-state. **(P1)** This proved to be impossible in a society that was extremely heterogeneous and had established ethnic hierarchies. **(P1.1 & P1.2)** Up to this point in history, many Afghan rulers had maintained their power “through a skillful divide-and-rule strategy vis-à-vis the different tribes and religious ethnic groups,” writes Olesen.¹³⁵

Education was also addressed by Amanullah. He opened many new secondary schools, including a few for girls, and started a program of sending students abroad to continue their education. Students were being taught secular and vocational topics rather than religious ones. Also, religious education came under the direct control of the state by the forced schooling of *mullahs* and new education standards were established for the newly trained *mullahs*, who would be the only ones eligible to become Islamic judges, known as *qazis*.¹³⁶ These secular measures created a widespread belief that what Amanullah was trying to accomplish was incompatible with Islam and united many tribal and religious leaders against him.¹³⁷ **(P2.1)**

As for challenging the tribal hierarchy, Amanullah’s measures on taxation, conscription, and women’s rights brought him into direct conflict with many of Afghanistan’s well established social norms and ethnic traditions. First and foremost, by addressing women’s rights, Amanullah was seen as challenging the full authority of a

¹³³ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 123.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 123.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 124.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 128.

¹³⁷ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 129.

man over his family; which was seen as a violation of the religious notion of the sanctity of the family. In addition, Amanullah's actions were seen as a violation of one of the basic concepts of *Pashtunwali*, which allowed for the total sovereignty of the family patriarch, in actions and decisions, over the individual, the family and the lineage.¹³⁸ In Afghan society, women are seen as embodying the *nang* (disgrace) and *namus* (honor/chastity) of the entire kin-based social group. By dictating measures to circumnavigate these traditional social barriers, Amanullah directly challenged the Pashtun male and Pashtun tribal structure and for this, was keenly resisted at all levels. **(P1.2 & P2.1)**

In addition, Amanullah terminated feudal allowances and established local administrative divisions, undercutting local power brokers.¹³⁹ Rubin writes, "Amanullah regularized the system of taxation, abolishing tax farming and requiring all taxes to be paid in cash to the government directly."¹⁴⁰ This left many local *khans* out of the loop and disrupted the local power structures that had been established for centuries. These new governmental organizations created to maintain revenue flow brought with them problems of corruption and abuse of power. In traditional Afghan society, corruption to a certain extent was allowed in order to facilitate transactions and was seen as a system of favors and counter-favors between kinsmen; however, now with new government officials abusing the system, there was no way in which these traditional tribal favor relationships could function.¹⁴¹ **(P2.1)**

All of these new sweeping changes eventually led to a revolt, beginning in the Khowst and Paktya Provinces. **(P2.1)** This uprising, in 1924, was led by a religious leader, Mullah Lang, demanding Amanullah rescind many of these new reforms that were seen as un-Islamic and Western influenced. The resistance lasted approximately nine months and proved the ineptness of Amanullah's armed forces; for he had to eventually call upon local tribes in the region to put down the rogue religious elements. This whole event succeeded in damaging Amanullah's prestige and forced him to call upon a *loya*

¹³⁸ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 136.

¹³⁹ Jeffrey J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 44.

¹⁴⁰ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 55.

¹⁴¹ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 125.

jirga (grand council of tribal elders) to review the causes of the revolt. **(P2)** It quickly became apparent to the king, unlike the *loya jirga* that helped draft the 1923 constitution; this one would not be as friendly towards him.

Many of Amanullah's reforms were eventually endorsed during the meetings, however new changes were also introduced. Of the more notable changes was an amendment reestablishing the *qazi's* power to determine punishment in criminal cases, making official the Hanafi code of Islam as the only religious code of the entire nation, and reintroduction of discrimination against non-Muslim minorities, by creating an infidel tax and special dress code.¹⁴² **(P1 & P2.1)** All of these concessions allowed Amanullah leeway in governing and created a brief time period in which the king and his opposition enjoyed cordial relations. This would soon change with the departure of Amanullah on his Grand Tour of Europe and the Middle East in 1927.

King Amanullah became extremely inspired and motivated by what he had seen during his journey, especially of the modern advances that were taking place under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal in Turkey and Reza Shah in Iran. He had seen first-hand what a strong reform program could accomplish and believed that his previous reforms had not gone far enough. On his return, he enacted new reforms that were much broader based than the past reforms and were intended to be implemented over a shorter period of time. His first order of business was the summoning of another *loya jirga*, where all tribal leaders were humiliated by being forced to wear Western clothes and get hair/beard cuts.¹⁴³

He announced that Afghanistan needed to catch-up to the West and become a more advanced nation, which meant it would need a new and more liberal constitution.¹⁴⁴ This did not cause as much of a stir as his new social reforms package did, which included strict monogamy for government officials, a minimum age for marriage, further education for women, the abolition of the veil and strict adherence to the wearing of Western clothes in public throughout Kabul, education for *mullahs*, the creation of a secular law school, the complete liquidation of the *wapf* (religious endowments), the

¹⁴² Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 140.

¹⁴³ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 130.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 131.

abolition of *pir* and *murids* from the army, and the banning of *mullahs* educated in Deobandi (not only one of the most highly respected Islamic schools, but also the seat of anti-British activities).¹⁴⁵ **(P2.1)** This was seen as nothing less than a declaration of war in the eyes of the religious establishment.

Many *mullahs*, including the chief *qazi* of Kabul, began a petition against the reforms, but were quickly arrested and tried for treason, eventually being executed. With this, religious and tribal leaders came together believing that it “was now or never to defend themselves against the folly of the monarch,” writes Olesen.¹⁴⁶ **(P2.1)** Stories that the king had converted to Catholicism and had become deranged through drinking alcohol and eating pork spread like wildfire throughout Kabul and the countryside.¹⁴⁷ A revolt began and eventually Kabul fell. Amanullah quickly moved to rescind many of the reforms that had been enacted, but it was too late to save his throne. In January of 1929, he officially abdicated and fled Kabul, leaving his brother as the new king, who only survived three days in the position.¹⁴⁸ Afghanistan had been turned into a test bed for Amanullah’s ideas of development and Westernization, which eventually ended in disaster.

“Amanullah was a man blinded by his own egotism and fascination with the west into launching an ill-advised and overambitious set of reforms that his people were not prepared or ready to accept,” writes Edwards.¹⁴⁹ **(P2)** A Russian envoy of the time was recorded to have said “the tragedy of Amanullah’s case lay in the fact that he undertook bourgeois reforms without the existence of any national bourgeoisie in the country.”¹⁵⁰ The controversial nature of some of his reforms, mainly those dealing with women’s rights, religion, and social structures, were too much to bear for the extremely conservative Afghan society of the time. **(P2.1)** By promoting his reforms, Amanullah

¹⁴⁵ Martin, Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 131 & Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 144.

¹⁴⁶ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 145.

¹⁴⁷ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 131.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 132.

¹⁴⁹ David B. Edwards, *Before the Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002), 8.

¹⁵⁰ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 165.

took on the traditional power structures, the tribal and religious leaders, and threatened them with a serious loss of wealth, status, and privilege.¹⁵¹ **(P2.1)**

The outright attempt to create a nation of Afghan citizens had little acceptance in many levels of society. By trying to copy Mustafa Kemal's model for Turkey, Olesen writes, "Amanullah forgot that for centuries Turkey had been subjected to Europeanization, did not have tribes of any strength, had a well-ordered and centralized apparatus of power and had a strong and loyal army."¹⁵² **(P1, P1.1 & P1.2)** Afghanistan had none of these conditions present at the time Amanullah had taken power. Nation and citizen had no meaning to the ordinary Afghan, who was living in a society that had structures built around a strict relationship within tribe and clan and along ethnic lines. **(P1 & P1.2)**

In the end, Amanullah was seen as having assaulted all segments of society in one way or the other. This helped alienate him from the general population, who had initially stood behind their king with his victory over the British and the winning of true Afghan independence. Amanullah's downfall occurred because his reforms moved too quickly, they were done without the necessary finances and without the existence of any social groups that could support such reforms, and without an efficient central administration that could oversee the entire process which had legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people.¹⁵³ **(P2)** Finally, the added appearance of the un-Islamic nature of these reforms and policies resulted in Amanullah losing his Islamic credentials and becoming viewed as an illegitimate ruler.

D. MUHAMMAD ZAHIR SHAH 1933-1973

Muhammad Zahir Shah was only nineteen years old when he was crowned as the new King of Afghanistan, following the assassination of his father Nadir Shah. Since he was young and inexperienced, his uncles were left to rule the state and Zahir willingly left governmental affairs to be run by his close relatives.¹⁵⁴ This theme of allowing uncles and family members to rule the state and conduct the day to day affairs of the

¹⁵¹ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 129.

¹⁵² Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 165.

¹⁵³ Jeffrey J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 45.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 58.

Afghan government would be repeated many times during Zahir's reign. This problem arose from Zahir's own personality, which according to Edwards, presented a man that was not prepossessing, and "many in Afghanistan believed that his apparent weakness and unwillingness to rule with a strong hand started in motion the disastrous decline that accumulated" in his overthrow in 1973 and the following twenty years of civil war.¹⁵⁵

Zahir began his reign with the support of many of the traditionalist and Islamist forces that had, a few short years ago, helped remove King Amanullah from the throne. (P2) For this reason, Islam was invoked at every opportunity by Zahir and his uncles who regarded the religion as a source of national unity and a critical force preserving national independence; independence in the face of the European imperialism of the time period.¹⁵⁶ However, in private, Zahir was quoted to have said that "the strength of Muslim faith in Afghanistan did not necessarily guarantee stability and national unity" and religious forces and fervor could be "suborned to unworthy purposes."¹⁵⁷ (P2.1) This conflict would eventually become more apparent following 1963, when Zahir finally truly took power over the Afghan government, with the removal of the Prime Minister, and tried to create a new constitutional monarchy that had little use for Islam.

However, during the early years of his rule, Zahir Shah continued the tradition of establishing Islam as the core subject taught at schools across the country, with secular topics being a close second. By not directly attacking educational issues, Zahir Shah was able to reduce tensions between the Afghan government and traditionalist forces, and created a period of time in which there was relative peace within the country. In the end though, there were those that hoped secular education would eventually help weaken the traditionalist forces within Afghanistan.¹⁵⁸ (P2.1)

From 1933 to 1963, the education system of Afghanistan, under Zahir Shah, created semiliterate bureaucrats that were filling the expanding government

¹⁵⁵ David B. Edwards, *Before the Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002), 44.

¹⁵⁶ Nazif M. Shahrani, "State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan," in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 56.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 56-7.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 56.

administration apparatus at all levels.¹⁵⁹ This system of education, originally designed to help achieve national unity through religion and the training of loyal patriotic citizens, failed miserably. Coinciding with this failed education system was the initial beginnings of a noted change in the outlook of the urban Afghan society. The slow growth of the urban middle class created individuals that demanded, more and more, for political change in terms of the creation of a parliamentary democracy and the increase of civil rights.¹⁶⁰ **(P2)** Recognizing the growing tension within society and the inability of the current system to survive for an extended period of time, Zahir took action to control the Afghan government and tried to create a system that would help transform Afghanistan, eventually, into a democracy. **(P2)**

In 1963, Zahir Shah officially removed his cousin and brother-in-law, Muhammad Daoud Khan, from his position as Prime Minister and took the first steps to establishing a constitutional monarchy. According to Griffiths, “he deliberately abandoned two hundred years of autocratic rule and diminished his own personal power in order to give his country a system of government which could not survive as an absolute monarchy or from the stresses of the twentieth century.”¹⁶¹ This change was revolutionary for Afghanistan, since nothing like it had ever taken place before. Zahir’s decision to introduce this new form of government, that was more representative, was recognition that as the activities and size of the nation-state enclave expanded, it needed new forms of legitimization among both the traditionalists and intellectuals.¹⁶² **(P2 & P2.1)**

Zahir Shah was quick to begin the process of creating a new constitution that would help bring about the desired changes within Afghan society. A seven man committee was established, including one French constitutional advisor, and began work on creating a draft constitution which eventually was turned over to a thirty-two member Constitutional Advisor Committee for examination.¹⁶³ Olesen writes, “the 1964

¹⁵⁹ Nazif M. Shahrani, “State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan,” in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 57.

¹⁶⁰ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 201.

¹⁶¹ John C. Griffiths, *Afghanistan: Key to a Continent* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 161.

¹⁶² Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 73.

¹⁶³ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 165.

constitution was an attempt to accommodate the Afghan state and to change the socio-economic structure of the society, i.e. to provide a legal secular framework for the government in accordance with notions of legitimacy of power among the new middle class.”¹⁶⁴ **(P1 & P2)** The final version of the King’s new constitution officially turned Afghanistan into a modern democratic state.¹⁶⁵

In September 1964, a *loya jirga* was convened in order to consider the draft constitution and formally approve it. This process, like the one that Amanullah had gone through in 1923, brought out the traditional forces within Afghan society that had a strong stake in preventing Zahir Shah from sidelining Islam all together from the Afghan political landscape. **(P2.1)** Ewans writes that the “first text of the constitution showed a clear preference for a secular legal system, albeit within an overall Islamic context.”¹⁶⁶ In an essence, Islamic law became secondary to secular law for the first time in Afghan history. Also, while Islam remained the stated religion of the nation and the Hanafi doctrine the official Islamic code, religious freedom was granted to all citizens.¹⁶⁷ The most significant change was the basis of the legitimacy of the ruler, which was now the nation, not Allah or religious authority.¹⁶⁸ (Figure 6) However, to appease the traditionalists, there were still strong connections to tribal and religious notions of legitimacy, including the mention in the constitution that the king was still the protector of Islam within Afghanistan.¹⁶⁹ **(P2.1)**

¹⁶⁴ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 206.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 206.

¹⁶⁶ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 166.

¹⁶⁷ Olesen, Asta, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 208.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 207.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 207.

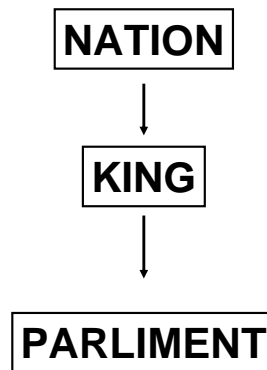


Figure 6. Government Legitimacy Under Muhammad Zahir Shah
(From: Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, 207)

The fact that Afghanistan was basically turned into a secular state “was hardly wasted on the not insignificant number of religious leaders participating on the *loya jirga*” according to Olesen.¹⁷⁰ In the end, the attempt to “harmonize” Islam with secular objectives of the constitution raised more problems than it solved.¹⁷¹ These objectives included the topics of education, women’s rights, citizenship, and the judiciary of the state. In the end, unfortunately, the newly created parliament became nothing more than a new forum in which old power brokers, be it the religious, tribal and rural leaders and the added small segment of urban elites, clashed over these controversial issues. **(P2 & P2.1)**

Among the educated elite and youth, the creation of the parliament brought hopes that political parties would eventually take center stage in politics. However, Zahir Shah refused to sign any new legislation allowing the establishment of political parties. According to Rubin, “political parties would have both given the intellectuals a recognized mechanism for seeking state power and allowed the rural power holders and the *ulema* to develop national networks.”¹⁷² Because there were no established party systems, elections ended falling along family and religious lines, instead of ideological

¹⁷⁰ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 208.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 210.

¹⁷² Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 73.

lines.¹⁷³ **(P2.1)** Landowners, who came to dominate the parliament, saw themselves coming to Kabul as one bloc, to govern the nation collectively.¹⁷⁴ Rubin further writes that these landowners “saw their position as an opportunity to use their influence to reduce unwanted state intrusion and to ensure that foreign aid would be spent in their districts under their supervision.”¹⁷⁵

The lack of political parties and the new liberal constitution also helped create new underground movements within Afghanistan, which until this point, did not exist. These new “movements” were all inspired by Western ideologies, like communism and socialism.¹⁷⁶ **(P2)** This new experiment that was intended to allow for a more democratic system was creating unintended consequences. Demonstrations by students began at Kabul University as well as at many high schools around the city.¹⁷⁷ Young men and women, looking for a political outlet, turned more and more to these newly created clandestine parties; now divided on two ideological lines: communism/socialism and Islamism. These students, however, were not only protesting the political situation, but also protesting the economic situation and the lack of any future prospects of employment. **(P2)**

Olesen writes that this radicalization “was the most dangerous, for it polarized society and made militancy an option to counter the government.”¹⁷⁸ Besides demonstration, open conflict began between student groups, leading to several fatalities.¹⁷⁹ Many of the names that became synonymous with the Islamic movements of the 1980s, countering the Soviet Union, were born out of these conflicts and ideological groups. “All this unrest reflected the growing division within Afghan society,

¹⁷³ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 167.

¹⁷⁴ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 73.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 73.

¹⁷⁶ Nazif M. Shahrani, “State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan,” in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 60.

¹⁷⁷ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 168.

¹⁷⁸ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 216.

¹⁷⁹ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 174

not just of the religious/ideological nature, but also between the successful members of the urban, educated middle class and those who were increasingly alienated because they could not aspire to their ranks, as well as between that elite and the majority, still cocooned in a traditional background,” writes Ewans.¹⁸⁰ **(P2.1)**

Zahir Shah had created conditions within Afghanistan where the rich landowners retained their power by being elected into office and the remainder of the population did not receive a political outlet by which to force legitimate change in government. It was the same power structure that had existed in Afghanistan for hundreds of years, cloaked under the guise of a democracy. The ruling class had no concept of a unified Afghanistan and the simple selection of political representatives clearly reflected the divisions within society.¹⁸¹ **(P1)** The atmosphere in parliament was anarchic, a quorum was never reached, and days were filled with “fanciful speeches” that resulted in no apparent meaningful passage of legislation or policy.¹⁸² “The comparative liberalization during the parliamentary interlude of 1963-1973 displayed the pent up political effects of half a century’s economic, social and education policies – policies which had aggravated some of the existing divisions of society and created new ones, such as rural-urban dichotomy and a widening gap between the aspirations of the educated and the uneducated,” writes Olesen.¹⁸³ **(P1.2 & P2.1)**

With the nation becoming ever more divided and a government becoming ever more dysfunctional, Muhammad Daoud Khan, the former Prime Minister, who was removed from office by Zahir Shah in 1963, took power in a coup d’etat while Zahir Shah was in Rome undergoing medical treatment. The attempt at democracy and a parliamentary system ended with Daoud. Roy writes that “the experiment in democracy was all form and no substance and the Western democracy is only meaningful under certain circumstances; mainly with the identification of civil society with the state and the

¹⁸⁰ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 174

¹⁸¹ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 25.

¹⁸² Ibid, 25.

¹⁸³ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 216.

evolution of a political entity which is something other than political theater.”¹⁸⁴ There was an apparent alienation of the political class from real politics, since the system became dominated by the old power brokers of Afghan society. The urban elite ended up combating the “democratic” parliament from which it felt it was excluded and “set up in opposition to two old accomplices, rural society and the tribal establishment.”¹⁸⁵ **(P2.1)**

Many believe that Zahir Shah had truly good intentions in his efforts to try to modernize the Afghan political establishment and create a system that would be democratic. He even went so far as to curtail his own power within the system and give the national parliament the say in running the nation in accordance to the will of the Afghan people. However, Afghanistan was not ready for a drastic change in the course of its political development and in the end, the old political hierarchies adapted to the new system in order to control it and remain in power. **(P2 & P2.1)** The loser, in the end, became the Afghan people that, with Daoud, would be one step closer to civil war which would ravage the nation for twenty odd years.

E. MUHAMMAD DAOUD KHAN 1973-1978

Muhammad Daoud Khan’s coup d’etat finally ended the rule of the Durrani Dynasty and deposed Zahir Shah, while he was conveniently out of the country for medical treatments. One of Daoud’s initial acts as the new head of state was to declare Afghanistan a republic and establish a presidency, which he himself would become. He was quick to reach out to the Afghan people with his agenda for the new government. **(P2)**

In his first radio address to the nation he said that “a republican system was more consistent with the true spirit of Islam” and promised to introduce “basic reforms aimed at the actualization of real democracy to serve the majority of the people as opposed to the ‘pseudo-democracy’ of the corrupt system, that was based on personal and class interest, intrigues and demagoguery.”¹⁸⁶ Initially, Daoud realized he still had to appeal to

¹⁸⁴ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 25.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 25.

¹⁸⁶ Nazif M. Shahrani, “State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan,” in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 62.

the traditionalist forces within Afghanistan, until he could truly secure power, and for this reason he tried to persuade these forces by linking the new republican form of government to Islam. **(P2.1)**

For the many urban based Afghans however, this message was lost and they came to see the change created by Daoud's coup d'état as something that could possibly create the conditions in which true democracy could flourish. However, there were some that were concerned by the fact that Daoud was brought to power with the help of leftist officers from the Afghan army, as well as with members of the leftist Parcham Party, led by Babrak Karmal.¹⁸⁷ This leftist support alienated, right away, the members of the Muslim Youth Organization and Muslim Brotherhood and other like-minded Islamist individuals who were not sold on Daoud's rhetoric and feared the total and complete separation of religion from government under his rule.¹⁸⁸ **(P2.1)** Unfortunately for the Islamist, their fears would be realized during the five years in which Daoud would head the nation.

The coup brought two new groups into power, which so far had been excluded from any political influence in Afghanistan. This was the army, which had never before played an active role of its own in politics, and a small group of historically urban, educated leftists.¹⁸⁹ However, Daoud was not troubled by the leftist support to his takeover since, in his view, "communism had no appeal in Afghanistan which was a society based off of both the traditional and educated classes which had a stake in the existence of social order, while the people at large, with their adherence to tribal, Islamic ways, were far removed from the proletariat."¹⁹⁰ **(P1.2 & P2.1)** However, the populist rhetoric of the coup itself and the formulations of the new constitution in 1977 clearly reflected, to Afghans at all levels of society, the strong leftist influences on government.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 12.

¹⁸⁸ Nazif M. Shahrani, "State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan," in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 62.

¹⁸⁹ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 220.

¹⁹⁰ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 153.

¹⁹¹ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 220.

Once the coup finally ended and Daoud appeared to have full control over the state, he assumed, in addition to the presidency, the offices of Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Minister of Defense.¹⁹² **(P2)** This allowed him to deal directly within society, as well as in the international community. This was especially important in regards to the Soviet Union and Afghanistan's economy since by the time he had seized power in 1973, Afghanistan had already become a rentier state with 40% of state revenues coming from abroad, mainly from the Soviet Union.¹⁹³ From 1956 to 1978, the Soviet Union had supplied Afghanistan with approximately 2.5 billion dollars worth of economic and military aid while the United States only supplied 533 million worth of aid.¹⁹⁴ This Russian support helped Daoud improve, at the outset of his rule, the Afghan economy and even achieve a small balance of payments surplus.¹⁹⁵ However, this external revenue also relieved Daoud of whatever incentives he might have had to make his government accountable to the people.¹⁹⁶ **(P2)** This lack of accountability and perceived dependence on an external force to help sustain the nation economically brought about feelings of humiliation among the traditionalist and rural Afghans and created the feelings that Daoud was becoming increasingly more of a puppet to the Soviets and of the leftist elite in Kabul.

On the reform front, Daoud promised new land reforms and nationalized all Afghan natural resources, economic sectors and big industry; also all businesses were to be regulated with the goal of eliminating exploitation.¹⁹⁷ He intended to create conditions where all economic classes would be protected by government regulation, but in doing so, for the first time in Afghan history, there was acknowledgement of class divisions, creating another level of fracture in the already highly fragmented Afghan society. **(P1.1, P1.2 & P2.1)** Land reform was meant to make land more accessible to the

¹⁹² Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 179.

¹⁹³ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 13.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 13.

¹⁹⁵ John C. Griffiths, *Afghanistan: Key to a Continent* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 181.

¹⁹⁶ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 75.

¹⁹⁷ Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 119.

rural populations so they could break away from the old feudal system and own the property upon which they worked. However, since many areas were considered as being owned by the entire tribe and its members or simply by the strong warlord or *khan*, this system was not feasible and only created more anger towards the central government from the countryside.

Beginning to realize that his association with the leftists was causing great consternation among the greater population, Daoud began the process of distancing himself from these forces. **(P2)** In 1975, he began a purge within the Afghan army to rid it of many Marxist and leftist thinking officers, and at the same time many young leftists were sent to remote tribal wilderness areas as administrators as a form of exile.¹⁹⁸ During the same time period, Daoud also clamped down on “Islamist religious groups, which increasingly were showing subversive tendencies” writes Ewans.¹⁹⁹ The cause of this “subversion” on the part of the Islamist was the objection to the degree of Daoud’s involvement with the Soviet Union.²⁰⁰ **(P2.1)** In addition, the Islamists felt that they had lost the freedoms they had enjoyed under Zahir Shah’s regime and saw the unbalanced approach that was being taken in regards to the freedoms allotted to the leftist and socialist groups of the time.²⁰¹ Daoud was quick to begin eliminating members of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as having large numbers of the Islamist jailed without a clear judicial reason. The eventual fallout of Daoud’s actions against the Islamists would result in the popularization of Afghans such as Ahmad Shah Massoud, Gulbuddin Hekmetyar, Burhanuddin Rabbani, and Abd-Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf. All four men would become key personalities as leaders of military groups countering the Soviet and Communist Afghan forces during the 1980s and become involved in a long civil war to try to gain control of the Afghan state.

However, in the near term, this clamp down and unjustified imprisonments caused a revolt and uprising in the Panjsher Valley, which was led by Ahmad Shah Massoud. These Islamists were able to capture one district and two sub-districts headquarters but

¹⁹⁸ John C. Griffiths, *Afghanistan: Key to a Continent* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 181.

¹⁹⁹ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 180.

²⁰⁰ John C. Griffiths, *Afghanistan: Key to a Continent* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 180.

²⁰¹ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 102.

had to retreat within 24 hours in the face of the Afghan army and a hostile population.²⁰² This revolt began to show the cracks that were forming within Afghanistan as lines were being drawn; one side with Afghans supporting the central government that was left leaning and on the other, the traditionalist/Islamist groups, trying to counter this new government which they saw as anti-religious and externally manipulated. **(P2.1)** For the time being, however, Daoud, with his army, won this battle in the Panjshir and the remaining free Islamist leaders were forced to flee to Pakistan. There they began creating political/military groups to counter the Daoud government, both on the battlefield as well as in the hearts and minds of the Afghan people.

At the same time as Daoud was trying to control the leftists and drive the Islamist forces out of Afghanistan, there was a growing concern among the educated elite of Kabul that the political promises of a more democratic state were not coming to fruition. **(P2)** No parliament was created from the time Daoud took control of the government to 1977.²⁰³ Also, since there was no judiciary arm of the government, because the Ministry of Justice had been merged with the executive, all judging powers were therefore placed in the hands of Daoud, allowing him to come down hard on any dissenting segments of society or individuals.²⁰⁴ Daoud, however, did realize that he needed to take steps to create a basic framework of government under a constitution in order to try to regain some legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan educated elite, as well as create a strong centralized system around himself in order to maintain his power within the state.

The first step he took was the creation his own political party, the *Hezbi Inqilab-i-Melli* (National Revolutionary Party).²⁰⁵ In 1977 a *loya jirga* was convened in order approve a new constitution, which was drafted by Daoud. There was little resistance from the members of the *loya jirga* in regards to Daoud's constitution and they ratified it and elected Daoud as the new president for a six year term.²⁰⁶ In short, with this new constitution and the way in which Daoud was ruling Afghanistan, the nation did not

²⁰² Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 103.

²⁰³ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 221.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 221.

²⁰⁵ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 181.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 181.

become a democracy, but instead, turned into a state run by autocratic rule that was highly centralized with an extremely strong presidency.²⁰⁷ **(P2)** What made this process more insulting to the Afghans was that the *loya jirga*, that set these political changes in motion, was composed largely of presidential nominees and representatives of the armed forces, as well as Daoud's National Revolutionary Party members.²⁰⁸ In addition, all the candidates for the new parliament would be nominated by the members of the National Revolutionary Party. As far as the traditionalists and rural power brokers were concerned, this totally alienated them from the government and cut off any chances for them to gain access to political channels to try to influence the government.²⁰⁹ **(P2.1)**

The constitution itself contained many ideas and concepts that were viewed as socialist and revolutionary and called for economic and social reform, as well as the elimination of exploitation of individuals and more aggressive land reforms and nationalization. The constitution was seen as extremely progressive with the addition of these concepts.²¹⁰ In the end though, as the Afghan people found out, the call for social justice, civil rights, and a parliamentary democracy were all nothing more than empty concepts, allowing Daoud greater power to control all aspects of their lives. Compounding this problem was the slow alienation of the leftist support, which Daoud had enjoyed for a brief period of time, because his government did not follow through with the promised reforms.²¹¹ In the end, this whole process only accomplished one thing; it formalized what was already in existence: an extremely autocratic, centralized and repressive regime, which drew its strength from the armed forces and the bureaucracy.²¹² This system was bound for failure and in 1978 it came crashing down around Daoud. He was finally removed from office, with Soviet help, in a counter coup by leftist forces which opened the door for greater direct Soviet influence on domestic and international politics of Afghanistan.

²⁰⁷ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 223.

²⁰⁸ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 181.

²⁰⁹ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Cruzon Press Ltd, 1995), 223.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 223.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, 223.

²¹² Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 181.

“When Daoud assumed the presidency in 1973, he cast aside more than two centuries of steadily growing legitimacy for the monarchy and replaced it with a republican system that has struggled for acceptance since then and has, in periodic moments of desperation, explored reestablishing some form of monarchy to assure unity,” writes Mangus and Naby.²¹³ Daoud had done little to transform the mode of governing to match the means in which he had taken power.²¹⁴ During the five years that he was president, no positive social, economic, or political change was seen by the Afghans. In addition, even with land reforms the living conditions of the rural population did not improve as promised.²¹⁵ What also convulsed the Afghan population in rural areas were the heavy doses of Marxist propaganda combined with abrupt, confused and arbitrary attempts of the newly posted, inexperienced officials to impose the new government reforms.²¹⁶ **(P2.1)**

Initially, Daoud brought with him the prospects of creating a truly democratic Afghanistan for its people and promised to right the wrongs of the past. However, not only did he create more fragmentation in the state, a fragmentation that was new and along class and ideological lines, but he also alienated factions that were his own power base, the leftists. The conditions that Daoud created in Afghanistan from 1973 to the present have “haunted all Kabul regimes since the end of the monarchy and their lack of creating the specter of legitimacy of the internal government,” writes Magnus and Naby.²¹⁷ **(P2 & P2.1)**

F. PROPOSITION ANALYSIS WITH REGARDS TO CASE STUDIES

Thus far, as the relevance of each proposition has become apparent, it has been annotated to show the reader the corresponding idea and correlation within the historical context of the research. This process has helped demonstrate the trends that exist in

²¹³ Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 161.

²¹⁴ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 75.

²¹⁵ Nazif M. Shahrani, “State Building and Social Fragmentation in Afghanistan,” in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 63.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 117.

²¹⁷ Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 161.

Afghanistan in relation to the ideas within the propositions and have also helped demonstrate whether or not any one single proposition had validity. To help present these findings, a graphic representation has been created as Figure 7: Proposition Validity in Relation to Individual Regime.

Proposition Validity In Relation To Individual Regimes

Propositions	Amir Habibullah Khan 1901-1919	King Amanullah Khan 1919-1923	Muhammad Zahir Shah 1933-1973	Muhammad Daoud Shah 1973-1978
(P1) A national identity is critical for democratic development.	Confirms	Strongly Confirms	Neither Confirms or Disputes	Neither Confirms or Disputes
(P1.1) Ethnic fragmentation and conflict hinders the development of a national identity.	Neither Confirms or Disputes	Confirms	Neither Confirms or Disputes	Neither Confirms or Disputes
(P1.2) Ethnic fragmentation within Afghanistan hinders the development of an Afghan national identity.	Confirms	Strongly Confirms	Neither Confirms or Disputes	Neither Confirms or Disputes
(P2) Central government authority and popular support of the government are critical for democratic development.	Strongly Confirms	Strongly Confirms	Strongly Confirms	Strongly Confirms
(P2.1) Ethnic fragmentation, tribalism and religious notions can challenge central government authority and legitimacy.	Strongly Confirms	Strongly Confirms	Strongly Confirms	Strongly Confirms

Figure 7. Proposition Validity in Relation to Individual Regimes

This figure helps demonstrate the sheer difficulty any single regime has had so far in overcoming ethnic fragmentation, tribalism and religious ideas as a counter to government legitimacy and overall authority. This has been true regardless of the type of government that has been presented to the Afghan people; from monarchies to socialist/communist based systems. In addition, the lack of support for the central government has hampered the development of democratic institutions and basic governmental infrastructure for democracy. Interestingly this research has also demonstrated that no Afghan government, thus far, has been able to successfully create a lasting national Afghan identity which would help pave the way for democratic

development. When Afghan rulers have had success in creating a unified front on a national level, they have been short lived and situational dependent, the most prevalent example being the rally around Amanullah Khan after his successful declaration of independence from British dominance early in his rein.

This graphic most importantly demonstrates that Afghans have not been able to forge ahead passed their ethnic differences and arrive at a stage in political development that would allow for the consideration of a national identity. Afghans have been stuck in the debate of government authority and legitimacy in the face of issues such as ethnicity and religion, which has prevented them from taking the proper steps to begin debating democracy and its development within Afghanistan. The lack of data, nearly across the board under proposition 1, only proves this point. Unless Afghans come to terms with government authority or are presented with an option that they see as a legitimate form of government, the conditions for democratic debate and development will never occur. Once the conditions within propositions 2 and 2.1 are resolved, Afghans and their government will be ready to consider and debate the ideas presented in propositions 1, 1.1 and 1.2. Keeping these findings in mind, the current government will now be analyzed and will be subject to the same test that the case studies have just undergone.

G. HAMID KARZAI 2001-PRESENT

The fall of the Taliban regime in early December 2001 helped create the conditions, for the first time in over twenty years of Afghan history, for the formation of a stable and democratic government that would allow participation of all ethnicities in the governing process. On December 5, 2001, in Bonn, Germany, an agreement was reached by members of different non-Taliban Afghan factions, factions that had ironically opposed each other through years of civil war, which helped set in motion the creation of a new Afghan Interim Administration that would rule over the state until national elections could be held. The Northern Alliance, consisting of mainly Tajik members, was granted prominent positions within this new Interim Administration, such as the ministries of Defense, Interior, and Foreign Affairs, while the presidency was given to Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun, whose appointment, according to Dorronsoro, “was intended by the negotiators to endow the Interim Administration with legitimacy in Pashtun

eyes.”²¹⁸ **(P2 & P2.1)** However, this dominance of the Northern Alliance in the key areas of government helped create the first cleavages between Afghan power brokers in contemporary times; mainly that of the Panjshiris Tajiks, General Dostam (an Uzbek), Ismail Khan (a Tajik), and Abd-Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf (a Pashtun).

The Bonn Agreement shaped the basic framework for the transformation of the Afghan political system, however, it was “extraordinarily ambitious in scope and it provided little detail on how it’s most essential aspects could or should be accomplished.”²¹⁹ In short, this agreement spelled out the powers of the Interim Administration and then that of the Transitional Administration, which was intended to take the lead in reconstructing Afghanistan, helping unify all current Afghan militia forces under the power of the central government. The agreement made the provision that an emergency *loya jirga* was to be held within six months from the formation of the Interim Administration to elect the new Transitional Administration. In addition, a new constitution had to be drafted within eighteen months of the creation of this Transitional Administration to be ratified by a constitutional *loya jirga*. The timetables were set in motion on December 22, 2001, once the Interim Administration was officially in office. As for a constitution, until a new one could be drafted, the 1964 version was to be used throughout the nation. However, the portions of the 1964 constitution dealing with the executive and legislative branches were excluded from use, eliminating the most meaningful provisions of that document.²²⁰ **(P2)** The wheels of government were now set in motion and the process of demilitarizing the militias and paving the way for the emergency *loya jirga* had begun.

In the days leading up to the emergency *loya jirga*, the former Afghan King, Zahir Shah, was considered, by many that would attend, the most viable candidate to lead the nation. In addition, the position of some of the delegates was in favor of also excluding the many former “commanders” from this process, commanders that were seen as power hungry warlords looking to benefit from the new government and were currently holding

²¹⁸ Gilles Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present* (New York and Paris: Columbia University Press, 2005), 329.

²¹⁹ Antonio Donini, Norah Niland, and Karin Wermester, *Nation Building Unraveled? Aid, Peace and Justice in Afghanistan* (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, Inc, 2004), 46.

²²⁰ Ibid, 47.

high positions within the Interim Administration.²²¹ As Dorronsoro writes, the “crucial decisions, in particular the choice of Hamid Karzai as the new president, had already been taken by the United States, at whose behest Zahir Shah was obliged to step aside.”²²² The American Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad held a press conference, a day before the emergency *loya jirga*, to announce the king’s decision to step aside from consideration and hold only a ceremonial position, which in turn produced significant Pashtun discontent.²²³

This situation helped start off the emergency *loya jirga* with feelings of suspicion, and in the future, would bring into question Karzai’s legitimacy among many Pashtuns that still held strong loyalties to their former king. **(P2)** There was also anger among the attendees in the way in which the United States had been seen as dictating who would be the Transitional Authority President. With all of these issues present however, the emergency *loya jirga* did have its successes by simply bringing delegates from around the nation to one location and creating a forum for peaceful discussion of the future of the state. On the other hand, the emergency *loya jirga* failed in three key areas, mainly concerning its inability to assert the power of civilian leadership, its inability in promoting democratic expression, and its inability in reducing the power base of the warlords.²²⁴ **(P1.2 & P2)** At the time, many delegates were concerned with the short term goals of the state and creating institutions that would promote security within Afghanistan rather than attacking the old traditional power structures that had existed for many years. **(P2.1)** By not curtailing the influence of the strong warlords, President Karzai would find himself in a difficult situation of attempting to rein in their power, and would eventually turn to the United States for help. **(P2.1)** Historically, Afghan rulers that have turned to outside forces to help control domestic issues have not fared well and have lost some legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people. **(P2)**

What was left after the emergency *loya jirga* was a timetable that was intended to being the process of democratizing Afghanistan. Under the surface though, what was

²²¹ Gilles Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present* (New York and Paris: Columbia University Press, 2005), 330.

²²² Ibid, 330.

²²³ Antonio Donini, Norah Niland, and Karin Wermester, *Nation Building Unraveled? Aid, Peace and Justice in Afghanistan* (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, Inc, 2004), 55.

²²⁴ Ibid, 54.

created was a Transitional Administration, followed by an elected government that had no true political or legitimate power outside of Kabul.²²⁵ **(P2)** The distribution of political power in the provinces was really along the old tribal and ethnic lines based on hierarchical relationships. **(P1.2 & P2.1)** Examples are as follows: in the south and east, fragmentation began to appear due to mounting security issues, forcing Afghans to ally themselves with strong rural warlords or within tribal structures that had historically provided protection against aggression, and the re-emergence of opium production began weakening any political and judicial authority that the central government had in these areas.²²⁶ **(P1, P1.1, & P1.2)** In Kandahar, for example, three strong warlords were vying for political power, independent of the Karzai government. They were Gul Agha Shirzai, who would eventually be appointed as governor of Kandahar Province by Karzai simply because of his large support base, Naqibullah, a former Northern Alliance commander, and Karzai's own brother, Wali Karzai. This same scenario repeated itself throughout the country. In the north of Afghanistan, the former parties of the Northern Alliance were quick to fill the void left by the Karzai regime, even though many of these parties were under the control of high ranking members of Karzai's own government. **(P2 & P2.1)**

Further undermining the Karzai government, in addition to its inability to exercise control over the entirety of the state, was the highly splintered nature of the government itself. Many former enemies, due to their ethnicity and religion, were within the close circles of Karzai and in 2002, this showed itself with the many attempts from within to subvert the government.²²⁷ **(P1.2, P2 & P2.1)** This time period saw assassinations, political in nature, occurring all around President Karzai. For example, there was the assassination of the Minister of Civil Aviation, Abdul Rahman, in February 2002 while he was preparing to board a flight at Kabul International Airport. Karzai himself was not spared attempts on his life during the same time period. There was a deep suspicion, within the Afghan government and state, that many of these attempts were politically motivated from factions within the government trying to send a message to President Karzai and the United States. These messages simply were the dissatisfaction many felt

²²⁵ Gilles Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present* (New York and Paris: Columbia University Press, 2005), 331.

²²⁶ Ibid, 331.

²²⁷ Ibid, 333.

with the closeness of Karzai and the United States. In the meantime, the Afghan people were left on the sidelines, watching this entire process through great skepticism of the government and democratic development.

Combined with the stresses of ethnic fragmentation, economics also became a growing concern for the Transitional Administration. Until this point in time, all Afghan government assets had been frozen due to the embargo that was placed on the Taliban regime, in addition the destroyed national infrastructure made it difficult to “kick start” the economic engine of the state. Karzai’s government became extremely dependent on international economic aid and loans. The 4.4 billion dollars promised at the Tokyo Conference in 2002 did little to help this process, since the Afghan government only received approximately sixteen percent of the aid directly.²²⁸ In addition, the international politics of the time, including American preparations for a war in Iraq, were refocusing the global community elsewhere, which affected the flow of aid into Afghanistan’s reconstruction and economic programs. The Transitional Administration was increasingly being criticized by Afghans for its inability to maintain the focus of the international aid agencies in helping to rebuild Afghanistan and its inability to produce the promised economic relief. Compounding the problem was the government’s own inability to mobilize its own domestic resources to deal with this problem.²²⁹ **(P2)**

The disarray in which Afghanistan was left made it almost impossible to create institutions for a tax collection process. Not until early 2004 was Karzai able to force local governors to turn over tax revenues and customs duties to the central government. Many provinces had begun flourishing under their own system, without support from the center, due to the taxation on trade and goods and services. The prime example was Herat Province, under Ismail Khan, which was able to create a small economic boom based on trade with the Islamic Republic of Iran. In fact, the city of Herat boasted greater development than the capital Kabul, including paved roads and electricity. These occurrences helped strengthen the ties of Afghans to local leaders, rather than to the central government, which had always been seen as far away, uncaring and unable to

²²⁸ Gilles Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present* (New York and Paris: Columbia University Press, 2005), 334.

²²⁹ Ibid, 335.

provide for the population. The National Reconstruction Plan, which was proposed by Karzai, moved at an extremely slow pace and was hampered by his lack of credibility outside of Kabul and the “difficulty of organizing citizen participation in a new democratic process after years of restrictive Taliban rule.”²³⁰

The Karzai government did have success, however, in dealing with certain power brokers in different regions of the state. These power brokers saw, for the time, a benefit in recognizing the central government and the international aid that it could divvy out to their regions. Widespread corruption had to be overcome, though, to free as much funding as possible for all regions in order for reconstruction to begin. Realizing that the central government needed to get ahead of these problems, in 2003 Karzai’s Interior Minister of the time, Ali Ahmad Jalali, moved to replace governors in certain provinces.²³¹ **(P2)** These moves were against governors of smaller provinces that did not have as strong a military or political power base, unlike governors like Ismail Khan, in Herat. This was a small, but crucial step in exerting the central government’s authority throughout Afghanistan. **(P2 & P2.1)** The goal would eventually be to remove all of these old power brokers from the areas under their influence and place them in positions close to the central government, like key ministries, followed by the appointment of governors loyal to the center to replace them.

Following along this theme and the guidelines set forth in the emergency *loya jirga*, the consolidation of militia forces was begun in order to place them under the direct control of the central Afghan government. **(P2)** Dorronsoro writes that “the Ministry of Defense was viewed as the fief of the Panjhiris, who almost entirely made up the garrison in Kabul and for that reason were not able to present themselves as the credible nucleus of a national army.”²³² Compounding the problem of creating a national army has been the lack of funds and the unwillingness of many warlords and militia leaders to turn over their forces and heavy weapons to Kabul for full control by the central government. **(P2)** The highly hierarchical structure of Afghan society makes this process even more

²³⁰ Maureen Hoch, *Karzai Government Faces Tests* (<http://pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/afghanistan/aug03/government.html>, 2003), 1, [Accessed January 13, 2006].

²³¹ Gilles Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present* (New York and Paris: Columbia University Press, 2005), 336.

²³² *Ibid*, 337.

challenging, because many militias are composed of entire villages loyal to their *khans* alone or are made up of certain ethnic groups that have historic hostilities, not only to other ethnic groups, but also to rival clans within their own tribes. **(P2.1)** This process proved that “the drive to reconstruct the state clashed with the efforts of the regional powers to remain autonomous” from the center.²³³ **(P1.2 & P2.1)**

On a political note, this new government, under the leadership of Karzai, has created more fragmentation within Afghanistan by creating conditions in which different ethnic groups have aligned themselves behind the strong warlords or political leaders that represent only their ethnicity. Examples include the Uzbeks standing behind General Dostam and the Hazaras allying behind Khalili during elections or in disputes within government. The interesting phenomenon has been the role of Pashtuns in this overall process. Since the members of the former Northern Alliance have dominated politics in Afghanistan in recent years, the Pashtuns, the traditional power brokers in Afghan politics, have not been able to find a true outlet in the political realm. President Karzai has not gained much credibility due to the perception of his government being propped up by the United States and his lack of any military credentials in the face of the Soviets during the war in the 1980s. In addition, the many Pashtun within the government today are simply viewed as technocrats that owe their jobs to the presence of international forces within Afghanistan, and have no credibility among the Pashtuns, especially those that stayed in Afghanistan and suffered through the Soviet invasion and Taliban rule.

On the religious front, the Afghan *ulema* have not been as prevalent in matters of government as they had been in past regimes. This could be attributed to the fallout from the Taliban regime and the antagonistic feelings of many within the Afghan government towards the repressive policies, however as un-Islamic as they were, that had been implemented during their rule of Afghanistan. “On the other hand, their exclusion from politics has enabled them to resume their earlier position as critics of the government.”²³⁴ **(P2.1)** In addition, the *ulema* have stepped in to fill the void left vacant due to the lack of trained individuals in rural areas by providing educational and juridical services. President Karzai’s lack of any religious educational background and his strong ties to the

²³³ Gilles Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present* (New York and Paris: Columbia University Press, 2005), 338.

²³⁴ Ibid, 343.

United States have also left him open for criticism, not only from the *ulema*, but also from regional power brokers that not only base their legitimacy on their relationships with their constituents, but also on their “pious” Islamic lifestyles and personas, Ismail Khan being a primary example.

The Karzai government has also been criticized among traditionalists for its open policies towards women and their growing role in not only Afghan society, but also in the political landscape of the state. **(P2.1)** Women have been allowed greater freedoms than ever before under the new regime and have even been mandated, by law, to make up a certain segment of the Afghan legislature. However, many women still remain under strong male influences in rural areas and not much has been accomplished by the central government to extend these new rights to the outlying regions. **(P2.1)** Even today, many Afghan women in Kabul, don the veil as they go about their day to day business in and around the city. The Karzai government has tried to play a delicate balancing act between international pressure forcing for more women’s right through aid stipulations while taking into consideration the nature of Afghan society and its views on women and their place within society. **(P2)**

The considerable presence of not only American forces, but also international militaries in Afghanistan has been a blessing and a curse to the Karzai regime. First, the continued efforts of the United States to search and destroy Al Qaeda and Taliban forces has led to many incidents that have resulted in wrongful targeting as well as direct intrusion into rural areas, drawing great anger among the local populations. On the other hand, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), established in various parts of Afghanistan by Coalition Forces, has helped with the transition of militia forces into the regular army as well as helped with economic projects in revitalizing these areas. The inability, however, of the Afghan government to conduct these projects on its own with strictly Afghan military forces has directed criticism at Karzai and his government. Seen as allowing for the free moment and unrestricted operations of Coalition Forces, President Karzai has gained the reputation as a “yes man” and is seen as not much different from the Afghan presidents of the 1980s, who in a sense, had the same relationship with Soviet Union and its military forces in Afghanistan.

Currently, the Afghan government is continuing the process set forth in the Bonn Agreement. The recent elections were deemed a success by the government, however, reports by United Nations observers of highly questionable balloting and allegations of fraud have cast a dark shadow over the process. The Karzai government has, since coming to power, been able to maintain a delicate peace within Afghanistan, peace that is only accomplished by the willingness of certain warlords and power brokers to adhere with the current process. No one can truly estimate how long this cooperation will last, since these past elections have shown how Afghans still voted strictly on ethnic lines and Karzai's attempted manipulation, in the form of not allowing political parties to participate, caused great consternation among the population.

The continued American and foreign military presence is likely to slowly wear on the Afghans, who historically, have been very antagonistic against any perceived foreign occupation of any sort. The lack of economic success, compounded with the slow progress of reconstruction, has also damaged President Karzai's government, who is seen as unable to deliver the promises of the past few years. **(P2)** The slow transformation of the military and added antagonism between historical military and political rivals within the government presents a picture to Afghans of a regime that has no solid footing or base, and in the end, their future might be more secure in the hands of their local power brokers. **(P1.2 & P2.1)** The Karzai government is a difficult case study since it still is developing and has, politically, significant more time left in office; however, with the many policies and outcomes thus far, it has shown that the lessons of previous failed regimes have not been fully digested and evaluated, causing deep concern for the current government and Afghanistan's political future.

H. PROPOSITION ANALYSIS WITH REGARDS TO THE KARZAI GOVERNMENT

Figure 8: Proposition Validity in Relation to the Current Government, demonstrates the relevance of each idea represented within the propositions of this thesis in regards to the current government and the issues that it is facing today. This graphic is displayed on the next page.

Proposition Validity in Relation to the Current Government

Propositions	President Hamid Karzai 2001-Present
(P1) A national identity is critical for democratic development.	Neither Confirms or Disputes
(P1.1) Ethnic fragmentation and conflict hinders the development of a national identity.	Neither Confirms or Disputes
(P1.2) Ethnic fragmentation within Afghanistan hinders the development of an Afghan national identity.	Strongly Confirms
(P2) Central government authority and popular support of the government are critical for democratic development.	Strongly Confirms
(P2.1) Ethnic fragmentation, tribalism and religious notions can challenge central government authority and legitimacy.	Strongly Confirms

Figure 8. Proposition Validity in Relation to the Current Government

So far, the Karzai government has been plagued by many of the same issues that were faced by previous regimes within the case studies. First and foremost, the challenges of overcoming ethnic fragmentation, tribalism and religious ideas as a counter to government legitimacy and overall authority have not been accomplished by this government. In addition, the widespread participation of non-Pashtuns in every level of government has, in some cases, increased ethnic tensions within Afghanistan and has created further fragmentation and animosity throughout society. In short, questions of legitimacy and authority need to be dealt with before Afghans will become ready to accept democratic debate and openly try to overcome ethnic differences. These finds demonstrate Afghans have a need to feel their government is securing their interest and conforms within the boundaries of their cultural and ethnic mores. This begs the question; can democracy in the western sense ever be acceptable to Afghans who hold strong to their local ethnic and tribal codes and cultural beliefs? Afghans and the world,

as a whole, will have to wait for the answer to this question as Hamid Karzai continues to lead his country through this political labyrinth.

I. SUMMARY

Beginning with Amir Habibullah to the present day head of state, Hamid Karzai, we can see the impact and the effects that Afghan society and Islam have had on the success and failure of each regime. Afghans are extremely loyal to traditional rules of governing and incorporate Islam into this notion by attributing a ruler's legitimacy through religion and tribal politics. **(P2.1)** This lesson was not learned thoroughly by twentieth century Afghan rulers who continuously repeated the same mistakes their predecessors had committed time and time again. Amir Habibullah allied himself too closely with a foreign power (the British), a power that was seen as an aggressor by his people in the early 1900s. By not jumping on the "jihad bandwagon" and supporting the Turkish Caliph during World War I, Amir Habibullah lost his Islamic credentials in the eyes of the Afghan people and was overthrown. **(P2.1)** Without the support of the *ulema* and traditionalist Afghans, the ruler had to rely increasingly on his own tribal affiliations to maintain power, which in itself helped antagonize the remainder of the Pashtuns and non-Pashtun power brokers that were able to form a non-traditional coalition to counter the government. **(P1.2, P2 & P2.1)**

Amanullah Khan, with his progressive modernization efforts, created conditions in which many Afghans found themselves facing modernity, while increasingly, their government was encroaching on their traditional way of life. Hot button issues, such as women's rights, education, and civil reforms fell contrary to the belief systems of the rural population and were forced upon them at an extremely high pace. Amanullah also never truly embraced the notion of the legitimacy of the ruler being forged from Islam and placed himself in positions opposite that of the Afghan *ulema* and traditionalist classes. **(P2.1)** Amanullah's reforms could have succeeded if he had more patience and conducted them in a more gradual pace, which would have been more acceptable to the Afghans as a whole. By adopting Mustafa Kemal's vision of how a state should look, Amanullah sealed his own fate, for Afghanistan was not nearly as cohesive a national entity as Turkey was at the end of World War I, ready to embrace modernity on such a grand scale. **(P1, P1.1, P1.2, P2 & P2.1)**

Nadir Shah neither acted decisively or in a fashion that was adequate to keep pace with the reforms and changes in government he tried to implement. By producing a new constitution, but not allowing for a legal form of a political outlet for the Afghans, he helped create underground networks based on political ideologies hostile to his government. **(P2)** If true democratic change was intended by Nadir Shah, there had to be more participation by the common Afghan, rather than having a system where old power brokers, now repackaged, continued dominating the government at all levels. **(P2.1)** In addition, the lack of a strong military that would be loyal to the government and was able to overcome ethnic barriers from within hampered any chance Nadir Shah had at success. **(P1.1)** Afghans loved their king, but Afghan history also that Afghans had a love of strong and heroic leaders, which Nadir Shah was never able to become.

Muhammad Daoud tried to use new concepts, Western concepts, in order to change Afghanistan into what he believed would be a modern and viable state in the international political community. However, his reliance on specific factions within society to help him take power and his courting of a single external superpower for economic and military relief left him, in much the same way as Habibullah, dealing with an increasing reputation as an international weak leader. **(P2 & P2.1)** To counter the growing dissent, Daoud was able to create a strong military and security apparatus, turning Afghanistan into an autocratic state which conducted extremely repressive policies to control the population. In addition, his progressive reform policies, with a leftist hue, countered traditional Afghan notions of landownership as well as relationship with the center. **(P2.1)** Forcing strong change from the center, as Amanullah had tried at one time, only ended with disaster for Daoud who was overthrown by even more extreme leftist leaning Afghans, leading to the almost two decades of civil war and strife.

Hamid Karzai, the current president and ethnic Pashtun, is under tremendous pressure while attempting to rule over a government and nation that seems extremely fragile due to ethnic and historical differences. **(P1.2 & P2.1)** Afghanistan's current challenges are great, from the social, economic, and political standpoint. Karzai will have to implement modern reforms and try to rebuild the Afghan state without coming into conflict with traditional ideas and power structures, a feat that has proved to be extremely difficult over the last one hundred years. **(P2 & P2.1)** The legitimacy of the

Afghan government will continue to come into question as long as it is seen as being propped up by the coalition of foreign powers and as more issues arise in the political process, be it alleged election fraud or legislative quarrel. The prospects for a cohesive and successful Afghan state being governed through recognizable democratic institutions and systems of government, at this point, seem bleak. President Karzai, for the foreseeable future, will continue to face the almost insurmountable task of bringing democracy to an ever more fragmented Afghanistan and continues to face threats, not only to his government, but also to his life.

V. CONCLUSION

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is designed to examine the effects a failed or successful Afghan experiment in state formation and democracy would have on Southwest Asia and the United States. It is extremely important to discuss this issue as it has far reaching effects, not only for the region, but also in regards to American foreign policy and the effort of the United States in spreading democratic ideals throughout the region. In short, Afghanistan's neighbors will be at a loss from a failed Afghan attempt in democratic state development due to the potential of continued ethnic infighting and political instability that may spread throughout the region.

In addition, this chapter will present a general conclusion for this thesis, added with possible recommendations for the success of Afghanistan as it attempts to overcome ethnic fragmentation, restrictive tribal structures and religious notions of governing to form a strong and cohesive government based on democratic ideals. The current Afghan endeavor in this regard will have far reaching effects on current theories of state formation and ethnic fragmentation. In the end, a basic proposal will be presented on whether or not Afghanistan, facing today's societal environment, has the proper conditions to accomplish the stated goals and foster the birth of a national identity and a long lasting stable government.

B. THE IMPLICATIONS OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT ON THE UNITED STATES AND THE REGION

1. Introduction

The success or failure of Afghanistan in creating a Western style democratic government, with recognizable and well-defined political institutions, will have a great impact on, not only the United States and its stated policies for the region, but also a great impact on Afghanistan's neighbors. Currently, the region as a whole is facing numerous challenges that threaten to force many actors (on the state, organizational, and individual levels) into conflict with one another over a varying degree of issues. These are issues ranging from weapons proliferation to drug trafficking to the creation of new

transportation corridors that will be able to link new markets forming in Central Asia with the remainder of the global trading community for the first time in history.

A successful Afghan government that is able to embrace democratic ideals and govern legitimately can become a shining example, to not only its neighbors to the north, the Central Asian Republics, but also to states like Iran, Pakistan, and even possibly China and Iraq. A well-formed and functioning democratic Afghan government can help stabilize the region and allow for the development of strong ties between regional actors and power brokers by possibly becoming the “middleman” state. Finally, the success of Afghanistan would help legitimize American foreign policy goals of spreading democratic ideals throughout the region and strengthen the position of the United States, by allowing for greater leverage in the future when dealing with actors in this region.

On the other hand, a failed Afghan state, with the added ingredient of American involvement, can create a dangerous scenario for Afghanistan’s neighbors and the region. As the 1990s have demonstrated, an Afghanistan which falls into chaos and lawlessness creates the conditions that are potentially negative to the region and eventually can generate problems that can directly involve the international community, both on the political and military fronts, and can upset the delicate balance of power between regional actors. A failed Afghan government means an increased chance for the re-birth of institutions and organizations with fundamentalist approaches to religious and political ideas; a threat that is not lost on Afghanistan’s neighbors, especially the fragile Central Asian Republics. Today, Afghanistan is combating an ever growing drug trafficking problem which could grow to new heights without any centralized controlling authority within the state. Finally, a failed Afghan government would mean the end of any chance of opening up trade routes from Central Asia to the Indian Ocean, as was attempted during the chaotic rule of the Taliban in the 1990s.

As a whole, many different regional actors will be directly affected if Afghanistan is not able to succeed in forming a stable and long lasting government. These regional actors include China, Iran, Pakistan, India, Russia, and the United States. Whatever happens in regards to Afghanistan, these actors benefit to win or lose; however, in the end, a strong and lasting Afghan government is the best solution for the concerns of each individual state actor.

2. China

Of all the regional actors in Southwest Asia, China has the least in shared historical commonality with Afghanistan in regards to both politics and ethnicity. China will not benefit from a failed Afghan state or an Afghanistan that might revert back into civil war. Peimani writes that “what has created a stake for the Chinese in Afghanistan has been its potential to become a source of a threat to their stability and national security.”²³⁵ These threats can be defined as a fear that Afghanistan would turn into a hostile territory from which anti-Chinese government groups could launch military and political attacks on the regime and second, political developments in Afghanistan, by themselves, could have a negative effect on China’s own internal stability.²³⁶ An Afghanistan that is not able to establish control within its borders and territory, as was the case during the civil war years and during the rule of the Taliban, can help create the political vacuum in which there is a potential for the creation of safe havens for organizations that can become a direct threat to China and its rule of its western provinces; provinces which have a substantial amount of Muslims living within their boundaries. For years, China has had a strong concern in the export of fundamentalism and political extremism to these areas from outside the state. Simply put, China must ensure that Afghanistan will not become a hostile territory housing anti-Chinese government groups, today and in the future.²³⁷

Like many other regional actors, China is currently progressing towards creating a large economic empire for itself that can globally compete with states like the United States and Japan, while at the same time trying to implement new political reforms that would allow for the economic boom that is occurring domestically. For this reason, “China would wish to avoid Afghanistan becoming a military threat because China requires a long period of time of peace to continue to the process of economic and social transformation.”²³⁸ An Afghanistan that might become a failed state creates a great

²³⁵ Hooman Peimani, *Falling Terrorism and Rising Conflict: The Afghan “Contribution” to Polarization and Confrontation in West and South Asia* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2003), 17.

²³⁶ Ibid, 17.

²³⁷ Ibid, 18.

²³⁸ Ibid, 17.

hurdle that China must pass while trying to gain access to Central Asian oil and gas fields, as well as access to the natural resources of the Middle East.

Finally, if Afghanistan is unable to create the conditions in which the United States is willing to remove all of its military assets, this continued American presence in the region will become viewed as a direct threat to China. China is concerned about Afghanistan turning into a hostile territory where regional and non-regional powers could establish permanent military bases capable of endangering its national security.²³⁹ A prolonged American presence due to an unstable Afghan government or a failed Afghan state becomes worrisome for China as it tries to expand its own influence in the region; especially in Central Asia. China has much to lose if Afghanistan is unable to accomplish its stated goals at the current time. A successful Afghan government would mean stability in the region, a denial of safe havens for China's perceived enemies, and the reduction of the American military presence that is able to threaten China's goals of becoming the dominant military and economic power in the region. For these reasons, the implications of failure in Afghanistan are detrimental to China's internal stability and national security policy.

3. Iran

Unlike China, Iran shares a very strong historical bond with Afghanistan, which was literally a part of its empire until about four hundred years ago. Compounding the bond between both states is the sheer number of Afghan refugees who have sought refuge in Iran during the Soviet occupation and the ensuing civil war during the early part of the 1990s. At one point, over two million Afghans crossed into Iran to escape the fighting back in their provinces. These factors have created strong ethnic, linguistic, and religious ties between both nations.²⁴⁰ In addition, Iran's key interest in Afghanistan is to exert its own influence over the western part of that nation and to protect the *Shia* minority groups that live within the central region of Afghanistan.²⁴¹ According to Peimani, the possibility of "instability, chaos, and criminal activities in Afghanistan could spill over

²³⁹ Hooman Peimani, *Falling Terrorism and Rising Conflict: The Afghan "Contribution" to Polarization and Confrontation in West and South Asia* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2003), 17.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 21.

²⁴¹ Cary Gladstone, ed. *Afghanistan: History, Issues, Bibliography* (Huntington and New York: Novinka Books, 2001), 21.

into Iran which, unsurprisingly has caused the Iranian government to watch their Afghan neighbors closely and has caused concern about the pace of events within Afghanistan with the potential of inducing instability into Iran.”²⁴²

The main concern for the Iranians has been the growing effects of the international drug-trafficking organizations. Even after the fall of the Taliban and the creation of the current Afghan government, the production and export of narcotics remained one of the most critical problems for Afghanistan’s neighbors.²⁴³ For the Afghan people however, the production and sale of narcotics has been a key financial resource for economic prosperity. “Drug-trafficker’s efforts to cross the Iranian border and their constant fighting with Iranian border troops and law enforcement forces has resulted in significant losses in human lives and has caused a heavy financial burden on Iran’s economy.”²⁴⁴

This problem of drug-trafficking not only has negative effects on Iran’s growing issues with drug dependency, but has also paved the way for the establishment of underground criminal organizations and the creation of social problems within Iranian society as a whole. In addition, a weak or failed Afghan government can add to the expansion of “violent crimes associated with drug-trafficking, such as small arms trafficking, armed robbery, and banditry” along the Afghan-Iranian border.²⁴⁵ Iran desperately needs a stable and functioning Afghan government in order to decrease the threat that is posed by the international drug cartels.

In addition, a failed Afghan state would mean a prolonged American military presence within Afghanistan for the foreseeable future. With a large American footprint already on their western border, this reality causes the Iranian government to feel encircled and threatened by its perceived number one enemy, the United States. “One fear for Iran is that Afghanistan will turn into an enemy state and/or become a permanent

²⁴² Hooman Peimani, *Falling Terrorism and Rising Conflict: The Afghan “Contribution” to Polarization and Confrontation in West and South Asia* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2003), 21.

²⁴³ Sultan Akimbekov, “The Conflict in Afghanistan: Conditions, Problems, and Prospects,” in *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* ed. Boris Rumer (Armonk and London, M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 85.

²⁴⁴ Hooman Peimani, *Falling Terrorism and Rising Conflict: The Afghan “Contribution” to Polarization and Confrontation in West and South Asia* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2003), 25.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 25.

base for Iran's enemies.”²⁴⁶ For these reasons, Iran, like China, would wish for Afghanistan to become successful as a nation-state and which in turn would expedite the departure of the United States and Coalitions Forces from the region. In summary, a failed Afghan government and state would mean an explosion in the drug trade, the continuation of the spread of instability into Iran, the increase of American military presence in region and the potential “export” of Afghan instability to the Central Asia, a region of great economic and political importance to the Iranians.²⁴⁷

4. Pakistan

Like Iran, Pakistan shares a long historical and strong ethnic bond with Afghanistan. More than any other state in the region, the stability and success of Afghanistan is extremely crucial to Pakistan and its national security. These tight bonds create the conditions, unlike any other state in the region, where Afghanistan's success has a direct impact on Pakistan on many different social and political levels.²⁴⁸ First and foremost, Pakistan's northern frontier states are inhabited by Pashtuns tribes and clans that share a strong ethnic bond with their Afghan relatives; in some case tribes literally live on both sides of the border of both states and don't recognize either state's legitimate rule over them. If Afghanistan fails as a state or is drawn into open civil war, this could have a far reaching negative effect within Pakistan's borders. As goes the fate of Afghanistan's Pashtuns, so does that of Pakistan's Pashtuns.

Economically, a sound and stable Afghanistan would be very beneficial to Pakistan as it tries to increase its trade with Central Asia and turn itself into a conduit of natural resources, flowing from the region to the remainder of the globe. A strong Afghan government could “enable Pakistan to secure access to the Central Asian Republics with which they have no common border.” ²⁴⁹ Peimani further writes that “any amount of Central Asian trade conducted via the Pakistani route would be a welcoming economic activity for the Pakistanis because it would provide income in

²⁴⁶ Hooman Peimani, *Falling Terrorism and Rising Conflict: The Afghan “Contribution” to Polarization and Confrontation in West and South Asia* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2003), 25.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 27.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 27.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 29.

transit fees and generate long term employment.”²⁵⁰ The failed attempts, under the Taliban rule, to secure passage for a pipeline from Central Asia to Pakistan that would transport valuable natural resources, has not been forgotten by the Pakistanis who wish, more than anything, to have an Afghan government that is able to negotiate such deals and provide security for any future pipeline that might be built.

Unlike China and Iran, however, Pakistan would stand to gain in having a weaker Afghan government in power in the long term because such a government would become more dependent on Pakistan. In addition, a weaker Afghan government would not be seen as a threat to encouraging Pakistani Pashtuns to seek more autonomy or outright secession; however, on the other hand, a situation of civil war or ethnic fighting could give birth to the idea of the creation of a greater Pashtunistan that would also encompass Pakistan’s northern frontier territories. For these reasons, Pakistan gains to win and lose if either Afghanistan is able to forge a strong central or if Afghanistan is only able to create a weak federated government under which no single central entity is able to hold the crucial reins of power. For these reasons, Pakistan will continue to play a delicate balancing game in order to secure the best outcome for its own national security goals.

5. India

India, unlike Pakistan, lacks a common border with Afghanistan, as well as lacks any significant ethnic ties with that nation-state. However, due to Pakistan’s role in Afghanistan and the region, India clearly has a strong interest in the outcome of the political process occurring in Afghanistan today. India wishes for a strong independent Afghanistan that will rely less on Pakistani support and will not allow Pakistan to use Afghanistan as a source of economic and political strength.²⁵¹ A weak or unstable Afghanistan would allow Pakistan to gain greater access to Afghanistan, as it did during the Taliban regime, and possibly open up Central Asia to direct Pakistani influence,

²⁵⁰ Hooman Peimani, *Falling Terrorism and Rising Conflict: The Afghan “Contribution” to Polarization and Confrontation in West and South Asia* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2003), 29.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 31.

which India would like to avoid at all costs. In addition, failure in Afghanistan can create numerous issues for India's close friends, Russia and Iran, who would fair poorly due to a failed Afghan state.²⁵²

India depends on Russia and Iran, both on the economic front as well as the political one, and any issue that might cause instability in these two states would have a direct impact on India, both on the economic and political realm. A successful Afghan government means that both Iran and Russia will be able to use Afghanistan as a part of a transportation corridor for the flow of natural resources and products which would help decrease the instability of the region. A strong and successful Afghan government will mean Pakistan will have less influence in the region and will also open up another regional actor for India to trade with and establish political ties. So far, the current Afghan government has shown its willingness to have close relations with India and this trend, more than likely, would seem to continue if the current government is successful in the near future.

6. Russia

Like India, which does not share a common border with Afghanistan, Russia falls into that same category. However, unlike India, Russia maintains strong ties within the region through the Central Asian Republics which allows Russia direct access to natural resources in the region. For Russia, a failed Afghan state would mean the possible spread of this instability into Central Asia and the possibility that this instability would continue into Russia itself.²⁵³ Facing the daunting challenges in Chechnya and the Caucasus, the Russian government would welcome any indications of stability from Central Asia and try to prevent any situation that would allow the spread of such "chaos" to other parts of the region it sees as vital for its national security. Historically, "as a by product of any prolonged period of instability and lawlessness in Afghanistan, Afghan based international drug-trafficking could also become a major source of concern for Russia, both for its expanding health hazards and also for its contribution to criminal activities."²⁵⁴

²⁵² Hooman Peimani, *Falling Terrorism and Rising Conflict: The Afghan "Contribution" to Polarization and Confrontation in West and South Asia* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2003), 31.

²⁵³ Ibid, 24-35.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 35.

A concern has been the growth of the drug trade in the region. Of the current six routes that are used by the international drug-trafficking cartels to transport narcotics from this region, four pass directly through Central Asia and Russia as it goes onto Europe and the United States.²⁵⁵ Russia needs a strong Afghan government that would be able to stop the production of illegal narcotics and provide security along its borders in order to reduce the amount of drugs that are transiting the region. A weak Afghan government could be detrimental for Russia and its interests in Central Asia.

“Having lost mostly to the American camp just about all its Soviet era’s friends and allies, fear of a gradual process of encirclement by enemy or unreliable states close to its borders had made the Russian government concerned about the direction of political development in Afghanistan.”²⁵⁶ A strong and functioning Afghan government would mean the potential decrease in American military presence in the region and a chance for Russia to gain direct access to the government of Afghanistan. Preventing the expansion of American political and military presence in Afghanistan and especially preventing its long-term stay there have become of “special importance to the Russians.”²⁵⁷

7. United States

Stability and the creation of a lasting democratic government in Afghanistan, for the United States, means the creation of a state that will no longer harbor or stand for terrorism and a friendly ally that will have access to Central Asia and the abundance of natural resources that are present in the region. The United State would like to establish transportation corridors so that they can circumvent the territories of Russia and Iran when trying to bring the natural resources of Central Asia to the world markets.²⁵⁸ When looking at this from a geographic standpoint, “Washington has only two possible corridors to Central Asia that would be independent of America’s real and potential political competitors in the region, that being Russia, Iran and China.”²⁵⁹ This makes stability in Afghanistan very important for the United States. A well established and

²⁵⁵ Hooman Peimani, *Falling Terrorism and Rising Conflict: The Afghan “Contribution” to Polarization and Confrontation in West and South Asia* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2003), 86.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 35.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 35.

²⁵⁸ Sultan Akimbekov, “The Conflict in Afghanistan: Conditions, Problems, and Prospects,” in *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* ed. Boris Rumer (Armonk and London, M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 69.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 79.

functioning Afghan government would be able to guarantee the security of a pipeline, as well as be in power for the foreseeable future, creating the atmosphere of trust that investment firms would be looking for, prior to investing in such large scale endeavors. The lessons learned by Unocal in the mid-1990s has not been forgotten by many in the oil and natural gas business.

The United States also seeks to eliminate any terrorist groups based in and around Afghanistan as it continues to prosecute the Global War on Terror. An Afghan government that is able to control its own territory and stop any attempt to open up the state as a safe haven for fundamentalist organizations could free up American fighting forces to continue the Global War on Terror in areas like Iraq and the Philippines. Afghanistan has the greatest chance of becoming the example of the successful implementation of such a policy.

Close ties with Afghanistan also allows the United States to maintain a foothold in a region it historically has not had direct access to. Afghanistan allows the United States to contain the nuclear powers in the region, mainly India, Pakistan, China, and possibly Iran, in the future.²⁶⁰ In addition, the Global War on Terror and the ability of American forces to be stationed in friendly Afghanistan has allowed the United States to contain Russia in the region and increase its influence over the Central Asian Republics.²⁶¹ A successful Afghan government is imperative for the United States in order to maintain its presence in the region.

A democratic Afghanistan can be an example for the Iranian people, as well as the people of Iraq, who are undergoing the same struggle in facing ethnic and religious differences in hopes of creating a democratic and all encompassing government. A failed Afghan government that slips back into lawlessness would mean the United States would have to increase its presence in the region and double its efforts in trying to stop the creation of new and more dangerous anti-Western and anti-American terrorist organizations. More than any other country involved in the region, the United States needs Afghanistan to succeed in its efforts to form a cohesive and strong central

²⁶⁰ Hooman Peimani, *Falling Terrorism and Rising Conflict: The Afghan "Contribution" to Polarization and Confrontation in West and South Asia* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2003), 38.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 39.

government that would allow for the full participation of the Afghan people in the political process, as well as be able to maintain control over the war-torn state.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The failure of democracy can be brought about by “entrenched civilian or military elites, the absence of conducive social or cultural conditions, and inaptly designed institutions.”²⁶² These key ingredients for failure for attempting democratic development exist today within Afghanistan. As this newly formed government continues the difficult process of democratic growth it is facing the daunting challenge of overcoming ethnic, religious, economic and political differences that have plagued the state for over three decades of civil war and internal conflict. Adding to the scenario of possible failure has been the simple fact that Afghanistan is being governed by members of the old military and political elite, as well as technocrats retuning to partake in government. Most have not passed the legitimacy test in the eyes of ordinary Afghans which has called the entire process into question. By forming a government that has sidelined key ethnic, religious and military leaders (mainly leaders from the anti-Soviet and anti-Taliban struggle) from within Afghan society, the Karzai government has left itself open for direct criticism.

Compounding upon the problems just presented is the sheer fact that the Karzai government has been advocating for the creation of a strong presidential system for Afghanistan vice federated one. A presidential system would mean that the majority of the state’s power would be concentrated within Kabul while sidelining many of the local political structures within Afghan society already discussed. The most important recommendation that this thesis could present is that for success in creating a stable and lasting government initially, Hamid Karzai and the current administration must share power with the periphery of Afghan society. Only after stability and trust has been established, can the move towards creating a stronger central authority with popular support, combined with a national identity, can be achieved. This path would create the most suitable conditions for the development of a democracy and help Afghans forge ahead into the future with brighter perspectives for their state.

²⁶² Donald L. Horowitz, “Democracy in Divided Societies,” in *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 35.

In the historical context however, accomplishing these tasks have been difficult. Afghans, as a people, have had a great disdain for any central authority that has attempted to interject itself within their daily lives. Roy writes that “one’s allegiance belonged to the restricted group and tribal code, not to the community (ethnic) or the state.”²⁶³ As previously discussed, Afghanistan is a nation made up of tribes and clans with strong ties to their individual local ethnic political units that allows little space for the central authority to enter and implement national level laws, rules, and regulations. According to Roy, “western democracy is only meaningful under certain circumstances; these being the identification of civil society with the state and the evolution of a political entity which is something other than a political threat” to the population.²⁶⁴ Today in Afghanistan, due to the actions of the current government, central authority is seen as not only a threat, but also the reason for the prolonged existence of the social and economic problems facing the people and the nation.

Rubin explains that “where the population is fragmented and not integrated into a single national society, the state cannot represent a common interest.”²⁶⁵ This has been true in Afghanistan. The current government has been battling to overcome years of ethnic strain between rival groups while attempting to integrate members of different ethnicities into a central government. This has been done in hopes that these individuals would function strictly as Afghans, promoting national cohesion rather than ethnic fragmentation. However, “despite all centralization and nation building efforts of Afghan rulers (past and present), groups defining themselves as *quams* (ethnic group or tribe) are still the most essential constituents of the socio-political organization of Afghanistan,” writes Rasuly-Paleczek.²⁶⁶ Members of these *quams* bring with them notions of ethnic and tribal loyalty to seats of power, be they at the provincial or national level of government, which counters any effort in creating an all encompassing Afghan state. In

²⁶³ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 13.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 25.

²⁶⁵ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 15.

²⁶⁶ 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*, eds. Willem Van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2001), 161.

order for President Karzai to succeed, his government will need to foster the idea of Afghan nationalism over that of ethnic identity, which has existed in Afghanistan for centuries.

Besides the impending difficulty of uniting ethnic factions under one government, the Karzai administration has seemed to have forgotten the harsh lesson learned by previous Afghan rulers; lessons that revealed that the Afghan population requires piety of its rulers and that a religious establishment is seen as integral within government and within the daily lives of the Afghans.²⁶⁷ Historically, the single most uniting force for the Afghans has been Islam and its power to bring together many different ethnic groups and social networks when facing a common external or internal enemy.²⁶⁸ Roy writes that “in a country like Afghanistan, where the concept of the nation has developed but recently, where state is seen as external to society and where people’s allegiances is directed primarily towards their local community, the only thing which all Afghans have in common is Islam.”²⁶⁹ For the purposes of the current government, religion must be used in order to gain popular support and legitimacy. This concept, however, begs the question, what role does religion have in a pure democratic system that has, thus far, had little use for this concept? A recommendation for the Afghan government would be to use religion to garner greater support and use it as a tool of unity. In time, this unity can develop into a greater sense of belonging to Afghanistan among the different ethnic entities within the state. This sense of belong can further lead to the creation of a central Afghan identity that would, as proposed in this thesis, lead to democratic development and a

Another challenge facing the Afghan government has been the almost total destruction of the Afghan state infrastructure, in the financial sense, which has directly impacted the slow economic development that has occurred thus far. According to Akimbekov, this simply means that “Afghanistan lacks virtually all the conditions needed

²⁶⁷ Eden Naby, “The Changing Role of Islam as a Unifying Force in Afghanistan,” in *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, eds. Ali Banuazizi, and Myron Weiner (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 149.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 124.

²⁶⁹ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 30.

to become a full-fledged state.”²⁷⁰ Not only has Afghanistan paid for the economic problems it is facing, so has its neighbors, Europe and the United States. Economic development is crucial in order to establish the basic framework for nationhood and state formation. Many Afghans have turned to the cultivation of opium as a source of economic relief, which in turn, not only damages Afghanistan’s economy, but also threatens its internal security. More effort must be placed in the development of Afghanistan’s economy, both by the current government and external powers, be they donor states or the United Nations. Economic development would build a sense of accomplishment on the part of the Afghan government and demonstrate to the population its ability to provide the basic services and goods that are required for statehood.

In urban areas, this economic challenge has also had a negative effect on the general population. Three major reasons for this have been, initially: the lack of stability within Afghanistan to create the proper conditions for economic growth, the added fact that the state currently lacks adequate domestic sources of financing for development and reconstruction projects, and Afghanistan lacks adequate numbers of trained workforce, whether skilled or professional.²⁷¹ With these added deficiencies, Peimani further argues that “the resulting evils such as poverty, malnutrition, and extensive unemployment contribute to the prolongation of the status quo, which is prone to instability in various forms, including civil war.”²⁷²

Unfortunately, economic hardship, so far has meant for the Afghan, the return of the *khan* class and warlordism which has created patterns of patronage that binds individual loyalties to local leaders, rather than the central Afghan government. A successful counter to this growing trend has been the commissioning of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) throughout Afghanistan. Where they have been established, PRTs have provided the basic services a local government would, with the addition of security throughout their region of operation. More PRTs are needed and must be manned more and more by Afghans themselves rather than coalition forces. This

²⁷⁰ Sultan Akimbekov, “The Conflict in Afghanistan: Conditions, Problems, and Prospects,” in *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* ed. Boris Rumer (Armonk and London, M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 69.

²⁷¹ Hooman Peimani, *Falling Terrorism and Rising Conflict: The Afghan “Contribution” to Polarization and Confrontation in West and South Asia* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2003), 54-55.

²⁷² Ibid, 56.

would show Afghans the central governments ability to provide for them, not only in security terms, but also on economic terms.

“So long as there is neither an effective government nor a system to balance the interest of various national and political groups, the threat of a new deterioration in Afghanistan will continue to exist.”²⁷³ Akimbekov further writes in regards to the future of Afghanistan’s current government and its efforts of producing a functioning and stable system of governance as a path that “will be long and, unfortunately, holds little promise of rapid success.”²⁷⁴ With the challenges facing Afghanistan and its government, there has to be a strong catalyst that unites all Afghans under one banner, be it economic development or a simple shift within the overall mindset of society that will allow for all ethnic groups to view themselves strictly as Afghans. History has shown that when modernization and Western notions of government are forced upon the Afghans, this process has backfired and resulted in the collapse of governments. Unfortunately for President Karzai and the current Afghan government, time is of the essences. Steps need to be taken today, in order to secure a stable future, for not only this government, but the state as a whole. Afghans and their nation have a great opportunity to create a lasting peace that has so long eluded them, but at the same time, they must be willing to overcome long standing differences. Unless the current government can foster these ideas, unfortunately, the prospects for the development of a lasting and stable democracy, let alone a central government, will continue to be a fantasy for Afghans and Afghanistan.

²⁷³ Sultan Akimbekov, “The Conflict in Afghanistan: Conditions, Problems, and Prospects,” in *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* ed. Boris Rumer (Armonk and London, M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 69.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, 69.

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