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HISTORICAL CRISIS



WELCOME LETTER

Hi delegates! My name is Arjun Banerjee and I'm a third year at Cal majoring in History and Statistics. I'm passionate about history and reflection on past militaristic and political strategies for the purpose of informing future decisions on similar matters. I'm also a stand-up comic and frequent the Berkeley/San Francisco circuit. This is my second time head chairing the Historical Crisis committee. I love this format because it allows us to ask "what if?" and explore the possibilities for what our current political landscape would look like if decisions were made differently. Now, I'll allow my vice-chairs to introduce themselves!

Hey delegates! My name is Olivia Lipari and I'm a sophomore double majoring in Political Science and Gender and Women's Studies. This is my second year on Historical Crisis under Arjun and I'm so excited to bring you all this year's iteration. On campus, I'm BMUN's representative on the International Relations Council, an active member in my sorority, Sigma Kappa, and served as a campaign manager for fellow BMUNer Alexander Wilfert, who is now a Senator in our student body senate, the Associated Students of California!

Hi there, my name is Daniel Ginsberg and I'm also excited to be serving on the dais for Historical Crisis for the second year in a row under Arjun and alongside Olivia. I'm a sophomore here at UC Berkeley majoring in Economics and Business

Administration. I'm a huge history buff and love the thrill of creating crises for you all to tackle. I also served as a campaign manager for Alex Wilfert, who's a vice-chair for ICJ, and continue to serve in his office as his policy director, informing his decisions on all votes in the Senate.

And last but not least, me! Hi everyone, my name is Ayush Saxena and I'm stoked to serve as your vice-chair for Historical Crisis this year. This is my first year at Cal and my first time chairing for BMUN. I have a host of experience in Model UN from my time as a delegate on the East Coast circuit and am a proud member of the Jersey Boys of BMUN. I'm planning on majoring in Business Administration or Economics and will be pursuing a minor in Public Policy from the Goldman School of Public Policy here on campus. I'm so excited to meet all of you and chair BMUN for the first ever time!

And that's everyone! If you have any questions on the position paper requirements, committee flow, or anything in between, please feel free to email me, your head chair, at abanerjee@bmun.org. Happy reading!

Arjun Banerjee
Head Chair, Historical Crisis
Berkeley Model United Nations, Sixty-Sixth Session

SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

OVERVIEW OF TOPIC

Afghanistan. For the past 16 years the United States has had soldiers there, and there has been no indication that anything is going to change in the near future.

Afghanistan has been referred to as a hornets' nest, a quagmire, and an impossible situation. In the late 1970's and throughout the 80's, the Soviet Union found itself in a similar situation, and through its resilience and the help of foreign aid, the Afghan resistance fighters were able to outlast the Soviet Empire. In this committee, you will take on the role of these fighters and attempt to navigate the tense relations of the Cold War while trying to shape Afghanistan to your liking.

Geography

Afghanistan is a vast region. In 1980, it had a population of 13.25 million with only 2 million living in the cities (WorldOMeters). At roughly 250,000 square miles, this gives Afghanistan a slightly lower population density than Iowa. But unlike Iowa, Afghanistan is a mountainous place with many hideouts for people seeking to escape more powerful enemies. Afghanistan is also a highly tribal society with local leaders

unified by family ties; these groups have a huge amount of power, while any overarching country-wide government is comparatively weak. As a result of this sparse and fractious country, both politically and geographically, Afghanistan was never successfully conquered while the rest of the world fell to European imperial powers.

Social Importance of Islam

Before we begin with the history of the region, it is important that we discuss Islam. "What is Islam?" is currently a matter of great political importance to the Western world as many states grapple with the influx of refugees and the rise of terrorism. There are two ways to think about Islam - in a theological way and in a sociological way. The theological way deals with the "true" nature of Islam. It attempts to determine what Allah really meant based on the Quran and other sources. This has a definitive nature, but only Allah (if you aren't a believer this version doesn't exist) knows the true nature. Since we cannot know this and getting into heaven or living life according to the Quran, is of little concern to historians, In the topic synopsis (as historians) I will not deal with Islam in the theological sense. We, instead, will be looking at Islam in the sociological sense. The sociological sense deals with Islam in its effects on Muslims and how it shapes Muslim societies and non-Muslims' response to Muslim societies (Rezun). This way does not have a definitive version. The way Islam has affected society has changed throughout history, and what it means today is not

what it always has meant. So for the purposes of the topic synopsis, the answer to “What is Islam?” is whatever the people who believe it say it is. To you, as delegates, “What is Islam?” is a theological question, as many of the delegates are religious scholars, and the answer will be of great importance to the decisions you make in committee.

EARLY HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN

Barakzai Dynasty

For the purposes of this topic synopsis, we will begin with the establishment of the Barakzai dynasty, the last royal dynasty to rule Afghanistan. The Barakzai dynasty took over after the Durrani dynasty fell into chaos following the death of the previous ruler. In 1793, Timur Shah, Shah (King) of the Durrani Empire died and three of his 24 sons vied for power as governors of the three biggest provinces. As Afghanistan fell to infighting, they also faced enemies from the outside. Sikh invaders, from what is now Pakistan, threatened the many tribes of Afghanistan. Dost Mohammed of the Barakzai clan, one of the three most powerful tribes in Afghanistan, hoped to unite the many people of Afghanistan in a “jihad” against the foreign invaders. Further complicating things, both Russia and Britain had interests in Afghanistan. In the 1830’s, Russia was in the process of modernizing and wished to become a player on the global stage. They saw their neighbor, Afghanistan, as a place to gain influence. Britain, on the other hand, was already a dominant player on the world stage and wished to keep Afghanistan as a buffer between their hugely wealthy colonies in Pakistan and India. Dost refused to side with the British, eventually accepting help from the Russians.

The term “jihad” will come up multiple times and means different things to different people. Jihad literally means struggle, but against what or whom is up for debate. The way we’ll use it refers to literally warring against perceived enemies of Islam.

This result was unacceptable to the British. In 1838, they declared that Dost Mohammed was guilty of attacking the Sikh empire and mobilized an army of about 15,000 troops, as well as 40,000 Sikh troops. Moving the army through the region was treacherous. Kandahar, the Brit’s first target, fell quickly with minimal losses for the British. They then moved to Ganzhi in the North. The battle in Ganzhi was also swift, as the Afghan forces were no match for the better organized and better equipped British army. The sole aspect of resistance was about 50 jihadists, who had heeded Dost’s call to arms, and fought with a astonishing ferocity against the invading “infidels”. With the British army fast approaching, Dost did what many Afghan rulers did before and would do after: he fled to the Hindu Kush after local tribal leaders betrayed the British in favor of him. By 1839, the British had conquered Kabul, thinking they had conquered the country. But, because they had left much of the desolate countryside to the tribal leaders, their victory would be short lived.



Figure 1: Map displaying British strategic plan.

British Rule and the First Anglo-Afghan War

The British had attempted to maintain their rule with a model similar to the one they had used in India. They would pay local leaders money in exchange for protecting their interests. In addition, they created a disciplined professional army aided by European officers. A better trained army undercut the power of the chiefs who primarily used their military might to control local regions. The chiefs were further hurt by extreme inflation that cut into their incomes and was pushing many plebeian Afghans into poverty. Widespread opposition to the British rule manifested in 1841,

when the British started limiting money given to the chieftains north of Kabul. To recompense, a raiding party from the Ghilzais tribe looted a caravan carrying goods to Kabul and declared a jihad on the British imperialists (Yapp). The British sent expeditions out into the countryside, but foolishly increased their demands from the chieftains. The opposition spread to Kabul where approximately 300 noblemen raided the city while religious leaders called Muslims in Kabul to arms. Reports that the hated Sikh army was coming to assist the British helped rouse the people of Kabul, and they maintained their position until November 3rd - when the British sent in their forces. Fighting continued in and around Kabul. In late October, lacking any kind of centralization, the rebels recognized an official council made up of high ranking officials of the Barakzai clan. Despite this "government", fighting was still decentralized with little coordination between the chieftains with most of their supplies coming from plundering the countryside. The chieftains were able to hold their own against the British, but received a huge boost on November 25, when Mohammed Akbar, son of Dost Mohammed, returned to Kabul. He and his troops helped set a blockade around Kabul. The blockade quickly brought the British to the negotiating table, and by December 11th, 1841, they were negotiating for peace (Yapp).

The goal of the British was to break rebel unity behind the Barakzai clan and encourage the chiefs to side with someone more sympathetic to their goals, Shah Shujah Durrani. An alliance of rebel chiefs offered a deal, allowing the British to leave

Afghanistan to Shah Shujah, and making a Barakzai a sort of prime minister.

Mohammed Akbar, of the Barakzai, declined. However as time wore on, lesser chiefs began to grow suspicious of Mohammed Akbar and continually demanded more, threatening Akbar's position. Akbar eventually relented and Shah Shujah was made ruler of Kabul. However, the British retreat would go down as one of the biggest disasters in British military history. On January 6th, as thousands of British and their supporters were leaving the city, they were attacked. Although 16,000 people left Kabul, only 150 arrived to their destination in Jalalabad. This massacre created a lot of fear for the war among the general populace of Britain.

After taking Kabul, Akbar wanted to raise an army to take Jalalabad, but the newly formed government had very few sources of income. In the meantime, Shah Shujah secretly communicated with the British and encouraged them to march on Kabul. For months, Shah Shujah stalled, unsure of whether to bet on a British victory or to side with the rebels, which aroused suspicion and increased divisions among the rebels. In March, the Barakzai demanded that he march to Jalalabad, but he refused. Akbar marched his own army to Jalalabad, and without the help of the Shah, suffered an embarrassing defeat. By April, the Barakzai had had enough of his fecklessness and on April 2nd, Shah Shujah was murdered. The immediate effect of Shah Shujah's assassination was the rise of Aminullah, another tribal leader. The Barakzai remained obstinate to any demotion, but Shah Shujah's son, Fath Jang, wanted the Barakzai

expelled from Kabul. Both Aminullah and the Barakzai appealed to their common religion and insisted that their differences could be resolved after a “war against the infidels” was finished (Yapp). This alliance was short lived, ending when a dispute over revenue arose between the two groups. Fighting broke out, and the Barakzai came out on top.

Akbar wanted to consolidate his power, so on June 29, 1842, he and all of the major clans around Kabul made a deal (Yapp). Fath Jang was named Shah, but Akbar had all the real power, as he acted as the Prime Minister. This new government wanted to raise an army to attack the British forces at Jalalabad and at Kandahar, but his taxation power was low and they had few other sources of income. Morale in the area and faith in Akbar was decreasing, so in July of 1842, Akbar opened negotiations with the British. Sensing Afghan weakness, the British chose to attack the city of Kabul, and were able to defeat Akbar’s army with relative ease. The victory, however, was short lived. The Barazai and the Durrani were able to rile up support for their uprising by using their victories elsewhere alongside the possibility of jihad. Though the British held the upper hand, the war lost support at home. A new party had come into power in the British government, and on October 1st, 1842, the British announced they were abandoning Afghanistan. Dost Mohammed was allowed to return to Kabul and to the throne. The machinations of Akbar had left many of their rivals dead or weakened, making him even more secure than he was before the British came (Yapp). The rebels

chiefs talked about the revolt and the resistance using exclusively religious language, but the motivations to rebel were often economic and political. The end result of this so called "holy war" was that the Barakzai, due to cunning manipulation of the other clans and strokes of good luck, gained a huge amount of power and established their own dynasty that would last for 100 years.

The British had retreated, but they were far from defeated. Their concerns about a Russian invasion of Afghanistan remained, and their conflict with the Russians escalated. Russian expansion into Eastern Europe resulted in the Crimean War in 1853, which Russia lost; however, tensions were not subdued. The British were also expanding. Two wars with the help of the Sikh, their allies in the First Anglo-Afghan war, had captured them all of modern day Pakistan, moving their territorial border, right up to Afghanistan. Though Dost Mohammed had been captured by the British and had even assisted the Sikh's in their failed defensive attempts, the British recognized that they needed his help against the Russians and the bandits on the frontier. In 1855, Dost Mohammed signed a treaty, promising to help defend the British against any attack, and in turn the British would recognize Afghanistan as a sovereign state as well as absolve Dost of any past crimes.

Unstable Transition of Power

In 1863, Dost Mohammed died, after he had successfully taken Herat from the Persians. He had named a successor in the treaty with the British, but his successor, his son Gholam Hyder, died. On Dost's deathbed he named a new successor, Sher Ali. However, power would not be peaceably transferred. Mohammed Azim Khan, another son of Dost, was thought by many to be more fit to serve. Further complicating the issue, was the fact that Azim Khan was much more receptive to British efforts while Sher Ali was thought to have been openly hostile (Schomberg). The British, though they had agreed to honor Dost Mohammed's wishes, instead chose to offer a minimal and imperfect recognition of Sher Ali's throne in December of 1863. In January of 1864, Sher Ali faced his first challenge from his half brother Afzul Khan, who rose up in rebellion against him. Sher was able to defeat his brother in June of 1864, and placed him under house arrest. His power, still uncertain, was then challenged by his other half brother Azim Khan. Sher Ali was able to fend him off and force Azim Khan to flee. The threats from the two brothers caused other fractious forces to mobilize, and the country was plunged into civil war. In June of 1865, on a mission to Kandahar, Sher Ali lost his son and confined himself to the city for several months. In February of 1866, Azim Khan's forces combined with those of the son of Afzul took Kabul. In May of that year,

Sher Ali marched on Kabul, but was defeated and forced to retreat back to Kandahar. After Sher Ali's defeat, Afzul Khan was released and triumphantly marched into Kabul where he was declared the new Amir of Afghanistan. Seeing an opportunity to support a leader more sympathetic to their interests, the British quickly sent a letter to Afzul that while they could not break off the engagement with Sher Ali, they would recognize him as ruler if he were able to control more of Afghanistan (Schomberg). In January of 1867, Afzul was able to defeat Sher Ali's attack on Kabul, leading the British to officially recognize Afzul as the true ruler. This kind of recognition hurt Sher Ali, because he no longer expected the British to maintain their treaty to him and could not ask for their assistance. In October, Afzul died and Azim Khan took over as the officially recognized ruler. Over time, morale decreased in Kabul and in the rest of Azim's kingdom, as many people called for the former and legal ruler to return (Schomberg). In September of 1868, Sher Ali retook Kabul, and in December of 1868, Sher Ali vanquished his foes and was made sole ruler of Afghanistan. This brief civil war showcased the influence that large foreign powers had over local politics. Their ability to tip the scales in whatever direction they chose changed the calculus made by the actors in Afghanistan. Knowing that there is the potential for overwhelming force on your side makes some risks more worth it and other risks less worth it.

The Emergence of Islamic Fundamentalism

The continued presence of the British and the Russians helped fuel a turn to Islamic fundamentalism. Throughout India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, small scale attacks were carried out by people who appealed to the common faith of Islam in order to promote unity against the non-Muslim invaders (Loyn). Wahhabism, a fundamentalist faith that relied on texts from the 600's and would eventually be adopted by Osama Bin Laden, gained popularity in these regions after being developed in Arabia. Attacks carried out through most of the 1860's by Muslim fundamentalists continued to frustrate the British as well as the Russians on the borders of Afghanistan. These attacks provided a common enemy for the Russians and the British, allowing them to briefly work together. In 1873, they signed an agreement on the borders of Afghanistan, creating a buffer zone between the two countries.

The Second Anglo-Afghan War

The British had soiled their relationship with Sher Ali, and as their interest in Afghanistan renewed, tensions between the two rose. Complicating the situation was the appointment of Robert Bulwer-Lytton, an ambitious belligerent man who believed that the Indian army could "achieve the annihilation of the Russian Empire in Central Asia" (Klein). However, early in his career, Lytton recognized the importance of an alliance with Afghanistan, and in 1877, requested that they send a British agent to

Kabul. This request was firmly rejected by the Afghans who were still very suspicious of the British. As a result, Lytton concluded that Sher Ali would always be a threat to the British as long as he sat on the throne. The final straw came when in 1878, the Russians sent a diplomatic mission to Kabul, in direct violation of the 1873 agreement. In response, on September 21, 1878, the British sent a mission to Kabul through the Khyber pass. Their request was denied, an action that was used as a justification to declare war on Afghanistan again.

The Second Anglo-Afghan War would follow a familiar pattern. The British would bring a huge force and quickly topple the ruling government. Their victory would be short-lived as local leaders coalesced into an anti-British alliance, largely motivated by shared religion, and they would wage guerilla warfare until the British gave up. But Britain's second try would be slightly different. The first shots were fired in November of 1878, when 45,000 British troops took Kandahar, like in the First Anglo-Afghan war. Sher Ali fled North with the Russians, despite the Russians refusing any support for his government, which doomed his reign. In February of 1879, Sher Ali died, and his son, Yakub Khan, took the throne. Yakub had a tenuous grasp of the throne and lacked support from much of the local tribal leaders. This, combined with the huge British force in Kandahar and much of the country, led to Yakub quickly being brought to the negotiating table.

In May of 1879, Yakub signed the Treaty of Gandamak. In it, Britain gained control over all of the passes from Pakistan into Afghanistan, as well as complete control over Afghanistan's relations with foreign countries. In return, the British would protect the country from other invaders as well as give a sizable sum of money to Yakub. In a sense, the treaty of Gandamak was all the British wanted. They had literal interests in the material wealth of Afghanistan, and this treaty gave them the buffer state they needed.

Afghans, on the other hand, were not as happy. In late 1879, a cholera outbreak hit and killed many of the British troops stationed in Kandahar and Kabul. This gave the Afghans the perfect opportunity. On September 3rd, a large scale organized uprising killed the British general in Kabul. They took the armory and were able to expel all other British forces from the city. The local tribal leaders had formed an alliance and led a huge force towards Kabul, and this momentary show of weakness by the British convinced many of the Afghan tribal leaders that the British could be expelled. They would be wrong. The British met the Afghans outside the city at the village of Charasiab; they took advantage of the higher ground and repelled the army, killing hundreds. Yakub was suspected of deception and was forced to abdicate. While Afghanistan was technically leaderless, many local leaders rose to the forefront in their community. Mushk-i-Alam, a local mullah (someone educated in Islamic theology though not an Imam), started distributing fundamentalist literature advocating for jihad

against the British, referring to himself as a mujahideen. Elsewhere, tribal leaders were once again coalescing. Their leader, Mohammed Jan, had been arrogantly dismissed by the British as drunk and a fool (Loyn). He proved to be much more capable. The British hunkered down in Kabul for much of the winter. In early December, a force of about 100,000 led by Jan attacked Kabul and laid siege to the city. In late December, they made a large concentrated attack on the city, but were repelled by the British forces. Sensing defeat, the Afghan forces were able to quickly retreat into the nearby mountains, leaving the British alive but greatly shaken. From this battle onwards, the Afghans would not pursue direct confrontation like at Charasiab and instead, they would fight at advantageous moments and then retreat.

The attack on Kabul had achieved the desired effect, so by 1880, the British went from seeking control over Afghanistan to seeking favorable terms for an independent Afghanistan. The former tribal leader, Abdur Rahman Khan, became a strong candidate for the new leader in the eyes of the British. Abdur Rahman, an Islamic fundamentalist (or a pragmatic leader who recognized the importance of working with religion) who was communicating with the Mushk-i-Alam, recognized that being seen as a British ally would be a death knell to a populous that hated the British "infidels", but at the same time realized that a deal with the British was necessary for anyone who wanted to rule (Loyn). The political situation in Britain deteriorated as the people grew tired of a costly war. This, combined with an increasingly hostile local

populace, prompted the British to hastily hold a meeting of the major chieftains and name Abdur Rahman the new Amir in July of 1880. Abdur Rahman hesitated to accept the initial British offer, which maintained the conditions laid out in the Treaty of Gandamak, but outside forces were brewing that would force him to accept. For most of the summer, Ayub Khan, a grandson of Dost Mohammed, had taken advantage of the instability to raise an army. At the same time that Abdur Rahman was being named Amir, Ayub Khan marched a huge army to Kandahar, where they were easily able to defeat the British army garrisoned in Kandahar in the Battle of Maiwand. Ayub Khan's victory convinced Abdur Rahman that he could not resist the British demands and fight another war, so in late July of 1880, Abdur Rahman accepted the British offer to be made Amir. In return, the British gained control over their foreign policy as well as the passes. In September, the British destroyed Ayub Khan's army and by 1881, Abdur Rahman had taken complete control over Afghanistan.

Abdur Rahman's Rule

Abdur Rahman, a man who had been raised in war and whose rule had been forged with blood, would continue his legacy of power and became known as the Iron Amir. This name originated from his violent suppression of any perceived threats to his power. He would find that once the common enemy of a foreign invader disappeared, leading Afghanistan was an incredibly difficult task. Many members of the family of

Dost Mohammed still viewed their rule as legitimate, the country was incredibly fractured, and the entire time relations between the Russians and the British continued to pose a problem. Abdur Rahman identified his enemies to be the “middlemen” of power: the Persians, the mullahs, and the local tribal chiefs (Kakar). To undercut their power, Abdur Rahman declared that his rule was the divine will of Allah to insinuate that any challenge to his power was an anti-Islamic act. Abdur adopted a policy of severely punishing the elders for uprising, while sparing the lower classes in order to solidify his connection to the common people, who he viewed as the key to his power. To undercut their power, Abdur Rahman did two main things in his reign: he played the tribal leaders off of each other, brutally suppressing them if necessary, and he greatly expanded the power and bureaucracy of the state (Kakar).

Abdur Rahman’s skill and brutality towards the tribes can best be displayed by his treatment of the Hazaras. He initially was able to reconcile their differences with the powerful Ghilzai clan, thus preventing infighting within. However, when the Herazas rose up in rebellion, Abdur Rahman fought a series of brutal wars where his armies killed approximately 60% of the Heraza population. Abdur Rahman was skilled at avoiding conflict, a necessary trait in the fractious Afghanistan, but he also knew when to bring the hammer down, an even more necessary skill. To further undercut the other avenues of power, Abdur created a large and extensive bureaucratic state. The amount of ministers and secretaries increased to “unprecedented numbers” (Kakar). The power

that they could wield into the day-to-day administration was great. However, Abdur Rahman made sure to keep their power subservient to him. For the most part, high ranking positions were not given to members of the very powerful tribes and instead went to members of the smaller weaker tribes whose sole source of power was the Amir. If a bureaucrat would get too powerful, Abdur Rahman would remove them. Perhaps his greatest assurance was the system in which ministers discovered to be corrupt would be removed, and the bureaucrat that discovered the corruption would be promoted to that position. This meant that most senior officials would only last three years in most positions (Kakar). Abdur Rahman created a more centralized and more powerful government which, unlike many of the previous rulers, he was able to rule until his death in 1901.

The Russian Threat

Following the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan war in 1880, British policy around Afghanistan was heavily influenced by the imminent threat of Russian expansion. In 1884, Russia annexed the city of Merv, a city near the border of Afghanistan. This set off panic in the British empire as they wanted to keep their buffer. In 1885, the Russians pressed with their advance under the lead of a local officer, Ali Khan, and they took the Afghan oasis of Panjdeh. The British did not fight the Russians, and the Afghan garrison was easily defeated. The taking of Afghan territory by the

Russians angered and frightened Abdur Rahman, who had expected the British to come to their aid per their agreement, but he also recognized the threat the Russians posed and the help the British could offer. Still, he was unwilling to give the British everything they wanted in exchange for the protection he had already been promised. The British sent Henry Mortimer Durand to gain a small strip of land that would allow their forces to freely move over the mountains that separated British Pakistan and Afghanistan. The centrality of Abdur Rahman's kingdom proved to be a hinderance in these negotiations. Since he exhibited strong control over the land within his borders, the threat of Russian incursion directly affected him and in turn increased British leverage. The Russian threat was amplified in 1892, when they took a small Afghan town on the northern border. This proved to be enough pressure, so in November of 1893, the British bought a sliver of land, setting the new border at what would be called the Durand Line.



Figure 2: Map displaying the Durand Line.

The British would encounter familiar problems in the newly conquered mountainous strip of land. They were continuously attacked by smaller tribes and groups of people who wished to wage jihad on the British invaders. There is evidence that Abdur Rahman supported the people harassing the British, mainly in his book asking people to put aside their personal commitments to wage jihad. However, his public face was one of support for the British. Throughout the 1890's, the British were repeatedly foiled by fanatical fighters who were willing to die in order to defend the smallest patches of land.

MODERN HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN

The 20th century came with change. In 1901, Abdur Rahman Khan died. His son, Habibullah Khan, took the throne. His rule would be a short lived continuation of the policies of Abdur Rahman. Tired of the British expecting the Afghans to uphold their end of the deal while constantly renegotiating their own commitments, he went to British India. The trip would prove to be a disaster. Rumors of his transgressions on the trip spread, and many people found his conduct to be reprehensible. The first assassination attempt on his life was carried out in 1904, and he was eventually killed in 1919. In his short rule, Habibullah greatly angered the British by taking a German mission to Kabul in the midst of World War 1, despite remaining neutral throughout most of the conflict. After Habibullah was killed, his third son Aminullah Khan took power. The only other successor, Nasrullah, the more conservative son, was thrown in jail. Aminullah's grasp on the throne was weak. He had dreams of modernization, and more importantly many suspected that Aminullah had had a part in the death of his father. To cement his claim to power, Aminullah made a bold move.

The Third Anglo-Afghan War

In May of 1919, Aminullah sent Afghan forces through the Khyber pass to attack British India. Unlike the previous wars, the Third Anglo-Afghan War was instigated by

the Afghans and would only last three months. 1919 presented a prime opportunity for the Afghans to attack the British. World War One had devastated Russia and Britain, the two powers that had controlled Afghan fate for 70 years. Furthermore, a Bolshevik revolution had paralyzed Russia's ability to wage a foreign war, and Bolshevik rhetoric was explicitly anti-imperial. The British, though still unified, had lost millions of men and dollars, so few were willing to fight for this remote territory. The British, in fact, suffered thousands of desertion incidents and widespread morale problems. Despite this, they were quickly able to reverse the gains made by the attacking Afghan Army and started marching on Jalalabad, largely due to their impressive air force. The British general leading this march wanted to press on to Kabul, but his superiors in India quickly put a stop to this invasion, citing the lack of troops, funds, and willpower. By June of 1919, Aminullah was asking for peace and the British were willing to give it to him. The British no longer needed a buffer state between the weak and chaotic Russia, so much of their interest into Afghanistan dried up. The end result was the affirmation of the Durand line, but the Afghans regained control over their foreign affairs. The Third Anglo-Afghan War lasted from May to August of 1919, and ended with both sides basically getting what they wanted. Aminullah capitalized on the West's war fatigue and was able to win his country's complete independence as well as win the respect of his people.

Creating the State of Afghanistan

After securing Afghanistan's independence, Aminullah embarked on a policy of Westernization, similar to that of the Young Turks in the newly formed Turkey. He mandated that officials adopt a Western style of dress. He granted new rights to women, like freedom of marriage, and set 18 as the minimum age of marriage. He made secular education a priority, especially for women and for mullahs. He brought in educated Europeans hoping that they could help industrialize the economy. These drastic changes were too much for many of the conservative members of the tribes, and the mullahs led a small, unsuccessful uprising in 1924. In response, Aminullah reigned back some of his changes, most notably taking a less liberal stance on women's rights.

From 1927 to 1928, Aminullah toured Europe while opposition to his Westernization policies grew. When he came home, Aminullah started an even more radical Westernization practice, including a ban on burqas (Loyn). This was the final straw. An uprising in Jalalabad marched on the capital. Rather than fight, much of the army deserted, and in 1929, Aminullah abdicated the throne. The throne was briefly held by a man from Tajikistan, but after receiving the implicit support of the British, Aminullah's top general, Nadir Shah, was easily able to take the throne in November of 1929. Four years later in 1933, Nadir Shah would be killed by a group of high school

students, leaving the throne to the 19-year-old Mohammed Zahir Shah, whose 40 year reign would be the last monarchy that the Afghanistan would have.

For much of Zahir Shah's reign, Afghanistan would be orderly and peaceful, though struck by terrible poverty. Zahir came to power at the young age of 19, so for the first thirty years, his relatives did most of the government work. They immediately undid all of Aminullah's westernization reforms to please the local elders. For the most part, Zahir Shah's relatives pursued similar policies to that of Abdur Rahman. They continued to focus on the nationalization of the government, and put down rebellions when it was needed. This period was much less turbulent than the Iron Amir's reign, so Zahir was able to use little violence to enforce his rule. His family members also expanded their foreign relations. In the 1930's they joined the League of Nations and got formal recognition from the rising United States. Afghanistan was careful to maintain neutrality during World War II, and came out as a prime target for influence for both the Soviets and the United States. In 1946, the Prime Minister of Afghanistan created free elections and allowed a "relatively free press" (Britannica).

This style of government continued for a mere three years, collapsing in 1953, when conservative support allowed the general Mohammed Daoud Khan, a cousin of Zahir Shah, to seize power in the government. Daoud Khan did institute education reforms and continued to pursue reforms for women's rights, though his reforms were more moderate. Daoud also pulled Afghanistan closer to the Soviet Union as he

increasingly relied on them for support during a crisis with Pakistan. This crisis would be Daoud's momentary downfall, as Pakistan closed its borders to vital trade which caused Daoud to resign in 1963.

In 1964, Zahir Shah truly came to power when he managed to get the government to approve a new constitution that outlined a constitutional monarchy. His true reign would follow a pattern similar to many Afghan rulers' reign. He would come to power, institute some westernizing reforms, motivated by his western education. This would have minimal real world effect, and then he would be ousted by more conservative forces. He tried to institute economic reform to move the country towards industrialization, using aid from the United States and the Soviet Union. This did have some modernization effects in the city of Kabul, but the rest of the country was largely unchanged by Zahir's reforms.

Under the constitutional monarchy, Zahir would be the executive, but funds would be distributed by a bicameral legislature; the upper house members was appointed one third by the king, one third by the chieftains, and one third by popular vote. The first election was held in 1965 and two large factions took hold, which would set the stage for the Soviet invasion: the Marxist party and an Islamic fundamentalist party. These two hosted dramatically opposed ideologies that put great strain on the political process (Britannica). These problems were compounded by a terrible economy that made the population restless. In 1973, frustrated with a lack of progress and

sensing an opportunity, Daoud Khan, with the support of some of the Marxist politicians, executed a bloodless coup while Zahir Shah was in Europe.

New Republic of Afghanistan

Daoud Khan abolished the 1964 constitution and set up the Republic of Afghanistan. This government would only last 5 years. In his short time, he accomplished little. He cracked down on radical Islamist forces. They were driven into Pakistan where they found new support, money and training for their jihadist mission (Loyn). The instability in the region alarmed the Soviet Union, which had provided assistance to Zahir Shah and Daoud Khan when he ousted Zahir Shah. They demanded that the Afghans cut off all contact with outside powers. Daoud declined. In response, the Soviets supported mass communist uprisings against the unpopular Khan, and on April 28th, 1978, Daoud Khan and his family were killed and a communist regime was instituted in Afghanistan.

The new Democratic Republic of Afghanistan quickly went about instituting their revolutionary agenda. They granted full equality to women and cancelled all debt. This complete shake up to the system was violently opposed, and as many as 50,000 people may have died in the resulting chaos (Loyn). In March of 1979, the first leader of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, Nur Mohammed Turaki, was overthrown by Hafizullah Amin. Amin made a military alliance with the the Soviet Union, allowing for

the Soviet Union to send military support if necessary. Despite the protests of Amin, the Soviet Union soon deemed Afghanistan too unstable. On December 24th, 1979, about the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.

CURRENT SITUATION

So this is where committee begins. In a sense, this invasion is nothing new. Afghans had resisted other invasions and they were well equipped to resist this one. They had support from both Pakistan, with other Islamic fundamentalists, and more importantly from America, who would support anyone in opposition to the Soviets. But still, the Soviet Union has the second most powerful army in the world, and resistance will require uniting people with different goals all while maintaining your individual autonomy.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is your theological view of Islam?
2. What kind of strategies should we employ when fighting the Soviets? Is it feasible that we could actually drive them out?
3. Should we accept help from the “infidels” (Americans)?
4. What kind of world would you like to make if you do successfully manage to defeat the Soviets
5. How important is Afghan identity or is creating an Islamic state more important?

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Image Sources

Figure 1: <http://www.afghan-network.net/Maps/>

Figure 2: <http://nation.com.pk/28-Jan-2017/durand-line-saga>