

SEEKING AN IDENTITY: KABUL'S ENDURING STRUGGLE WITH MODERNIZATION
(1960-1979)

by

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ABSTRACT

QAISARA DURANI. SEEKING AN IDENTITY: KABUL'S ENDURING STRUGGLE WITH MODERNIZATION (1960-1979)

(Under the direction of Dr. Sabol)

By examining the *Kabul Times* newspaper, one can understand what modernization meant to the Kabuli elite. As the Afghan leadership and government changed frequently in this period, the *Kabul Times* publication displayed its pro-government bias, no matter which government. Afghan leaders failed to transition Afghanistan into a modern society. This failure on the part of the leaders had repercussions that are visible today. Afghans tolerate the false narrative of rejecting modernization, but this thesis displays that most Afghans accepted modernization efforts, it was the leaders who failed to implicate true changes due to their own political ambitions.

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Preface:

The reason I have chosen to do my research on Afghanistan is due to my strong connection with the country. My family possesses many stories that include the rich history of Afghanistan. One of those stories are about Bacha Saqao, the first non-ethnic Pashtun ruler of Afghanistan in 1929. My great grandfather was Painsa Mohammad Durrani, a county governor of Kabul under Amanullah Khan's government. Kabul had multiple districts and the North Eastern section was where my great-grandfather governed. The government arrested Bache Saqao because he was a known bandit prior to his short rule over Kabul. The jail cell that housed Bache Saqao fell under Painsa Mohammad's authority. According to my great-grandfather, in 1929, when he no longer worked for the government, he came face to face with Bacha Saqao, who had just become king. Painsa trembled when he saw the new king step out of the wagon and approached him as he thought he would surely die at the hands of the Tajik king. Instead, the new ruler approached Painsa and said, "Salam, marday khuda" which translates to "hello, man of god." Painsa said he simply replied with "Salam." Bacha Saqao greeted him with a hug and offered my great grandfather a ride as he saw Painsa was on his way somewhere. Painsa stated that although he had a long distance to travel, he refused the ride and told the new king that he was not going far at all. The king insisted that he let him take Painsa wherever he needed to go and Painsa once more insisted, it would not be worth the trouble. My great-grandfather claimed he worried he would not make it to his destination alive. In the end, it was merely paranoia on Painsa's part because he was never cruel to Bacha Saqao while he was a prisoner in government custody. Bacha Saqao, although from a different tribe had no reason to hold a grudge. They ended up going their separate ways and Painsa left unharmed.

My family has passed this story down orally for generations. I included it in this study for two reasons. The first reason to tell this story is to finally document it on paper and give it some historical presence and the second, is to show that Kabul appeared open to changes in structure of leadership at least five decades prior to the 1970s. Bache Saqao was ruler of Afghanistan temporarily as he had a strong hold in capital, but most of the country did not accept his rule. The Tajik ruler's reign over the capital for nine months proved that those in Kabul were open to change. Fast forward to the 1960s, a time of rapid development brought to the capital with the help of foreign assistance. By the 1970s, major changes came to Kabul and different leaders emerged in the modernization period.

The main reason I have chosen to write about this period comes from the extensive stories I heard from my parents about this era. My father was a mujahideen who took up arms against the Soviet invaders and spent five years in the infamous Pul-i-Charkhi prison. My mother dropped out of college because the Soviets changed the education requirements and she refused to learn Russian, a requirement to continue higher education after the invasion. Both sides of my family have lost members as result of the Soviet-Afghan war. My parents came to the United States as political refugees and I was born in California due to what occurred in Afghanistan at the end of the modernization period. This story is very personal, but it is also very important to understand why Afghanistan failed to modernize and why that subsequently led to the war-torn state it is today.

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Introduction

On 29 February 2020, the Taliban agreed to a peace deal with the United States to end the longest war in American history.¹ While it might be America's longest war, Afghanistan's war is now more than five decades old, with a possible end in sight. The conflict in Afghanistan started earlier in 1979 when the Soviet Union invaded the small, landlocked country on its southern border. The agreement with the United States will recognize the Taliban as a legitimate force in the country. The Taliban signed this deal a century after Afghanistan gained independence from British influence with the 1919 Anglo-Afghan treaty and thirty years after the Soviets departed.² The several decades of conflict displayed the magnitude of sheer will the Afghan people possess to determine their own fate. In Kabul during the 1960s and 1970s, the term Taliban and mujahideen meant nothing, so this study focuses on various events that created them, specifically Afghanistan's communist parties and the relationship with the Soviet Union. The long historical and political process that led Afghanistan to where it is today, began within the modernization effort. The story of the mujahideen, and later the Taliban, all started in Kabul, because the group that rules over the capital, historically ruled over Afghanistan. Control over Kabul remains the aim of all who want to govern the country.

After reading an article about the Taliban's territorial gains throughout Afghanistan, questions about why extremist elements exist began to circulate. This thesis seeks to analyze the fissures that led to the fracturing of a society once on the precipice of modernization. An analysis of the changes in leadership that caused internal turmoil will be central to this thesis, specifically,

¹ Mujib Mashal, "Taliban and U.S. Strike Deal to Withdraw American Troops from Afghanistan." *New York Times*, February 29, 2020.

² "Treaty Between British and Afghan Governments' signed at Kabul, Nov. 22, 1921. *Treaty Series No. 19*. London: Published by his Majesty's Stationary Office.
<http://foto.archivalware.co.uk/data/Library2/pdf/1922-TS0019.pdf>

why these political shifts effected Kabul according to print media. The most important question that this research seeks to answer is what modernization meant as promoted in the *Kabul Times*. Other essential questions are what was the aim of the urban educated Afghans in trying to modernize by western standards? Was the newspaper a mouthpiece for the people or the leadership in Kabul? Did the modernization effort fail because the Afghan people rejected it or because political leaders sought power more than development? Is modernization a concept suited to analyze development in Afghanistan? The questions asked in this study can help understand why Kabul failed to modernize during this pivotal time in history.

This thesis argues first, that Afghanistan did indeed have a modernization period. The second point argues why Afghan people did not reject or resist modernization, but that the leadership in Afghanistan created instability with constant coups that ultimately derailed modernization efforts. Modernization was an idea that Afghan leaders used to unite their social bases and grant them an identity. The 1964 Constitution allowed political parties to form and each party used print media to report events, both local and global, but with an ideological focus. Extensive research about government publications (*Kabul Times*) highlights the ideological differences shared between political parties in Afghanistan. As leadership changed, different governments formed with different ideas of modernization. The *Kabul Times* promoted every regime in this period and under each administration it covered the development in five fields that captured its ideal construct of modernity as it relates to a country. The five fields covered by the *Kabul Times* to promote modernization are education, agriculture, international relations, women's rights, and infrastructure.

The factors promoted as the modernization effort were not bound by any ideology nor specific to one party. The *Kabul Times* promoted the efforts along these five factors similarly for

each leader in this period. The government under King Zahir and President Daoud established legitimacy based off Afghanistan's tribal hierarchy and royalism. Communist parties argued against the monarchy as corrupt who favored few within the country's extensive ethnic make-up. Communist leaders swayed a big portion of the population who held lower status in the tribal hierarchy. Those who considered themselves as elite within Afghanistan were the few educated within the country who had means to bring about meaningful change. The newspaper promoted what the government wanted, and, even as the governments changed, the *Kabul Times* remained a propaganda tool for whoever controlled the government.

To understand why modernization efforts resulted in an Afghan civil war, that prompted Soviet intervention, it is critical to understand the historical processes. This thesis will first examine and analyze modernization in practice as reported by the *Kabul Times*, followed by an examination of 1960s period of prosperity when modernization and westernization were synonymous. Next, the 1970s will highlight continuous prosperity until political differences led to the 1973 coup and why views on modernization shifted towards a pro-Soviet agenda. The modernization effort lost steam as political rifts took over and tensions within Afghanistan began to rise. Therefore, this research will address development during the emergence of communism in Afghanistan to understand how the country arrived at its current state of turmoil.

Methodology

Kabul was a developing metropolitan that experienced political, economic, and social changes, but this change came along too quickly according to most scholars. Afghan traditional conventions were not the reason Afghanistan failed to incur development in the 1960s and 1970s. To understand this historical change, it is critical to read what the Kabulis published and consumed through their government's press. This study gives Kabuli's agency and helps

understand what they sought to accomplish. The first issue of *Kabul Times* published on 27 February 1962, and with it, the government ushered in a new era of media that mirrored the format of western newspapers.³ The *Kabul Times* allows this study to conceptualize growth as promoted by the elite in Kabul.

Many articles within the *Kabul Times* support the idea of a modernization period because they contain evidence that Kabul maintained the government's effort to develop for at least two decades. The type of reporting done displays what modernization meant to those in power. The newspaper highlighted education, agriculture, international relations, women's rights, and infrastructure. The primary source for this study is the *Kabul Times*, a newspaper nominally independent that gave Kabulis some agency, but also principally funded by the government. By examining what the newspaper printed daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly one can begin to understand what the elite in Kabul hoped to achieve in this transitional period. The elite, and those who held power in Kabul, are interchangeable in this study.

The government in Kabul printed and funded these articles through its publications and informed the masses what it deemed important. To analyze the newspaper as a primary source allows insight into what the governments thought and wanted to display as its public image. Foreign intervention played a significant role in the outcome of the modernization period, but it is important to understand the government in Kabul repeatedly invited foreign aid to help develop the country. The newspaper's editors wanted to improve the country's image on the global stage and it analyzed the contributions of foreign governments through Kabul's own publishing, through these ways, one can understand how foreign influence shaped events in the capital. This approach also allows this study to comprehend Kabul's growing dependency on

³ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Kabul Times." *Kabul Times*, Feb. 27, 1962.

foreign aid for its development. Using a form of print media that came from elite Kabulis grants a new perspective into this period that most scholars overlook. The other primary and secondary sources used in this study will provide further context about the various individuals, events, and themes evident during the modernization era.

Historiography

Vartan Gregorian and Thomas Barfield, two of the most prominent scholars on Afghanistan, have constructed the seminal narrative about Afghanistan's historical evolution. According to Gregorian and Barfield, Afghanistan was a backward, isolated, tribal warring, religious fanatic breeding ground that consistently failed to adapt to a modern structured society. Both Gregorian and Barfield attended to the politics within the country and the consequences that resulted from the policies that helped form the modern nation state. Gregorian's 1969 book, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics and Reform and Modernization* focused on Afghanistan's economic and political development.⁴ Scholars recognize Gregorian's contributions to scholarship about Afghanistan. Louis Dupree, an acknowledged expert in this field of research called Gregorian's book "the best of its kind on Afghanistan."⁵ Barfield's 2012 book, *Afghanistan: A Political and Cultural History*, indicated that Afghanistan consists of (and remains until this day) clusters of regions and not an actual nation state. He also argued that many previous empires attempted to implement change from the capital failed as change did not occur outside the center.⁶ This thesis will examine the government's top-down approach to force change from the capital into the countryside, and why it failed due to changes in leadership

⁴ Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969).

⁵ Dupree, Louis, 1972. The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization. By Vartan Gregorian, (Stanford University Press, 1969.) 586. *American Political Science Review* 66 (2): 645-646

⁶ Thomas J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: a Cultural and Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

rather than innate backwardness on part of the Afghans. The master narrative centers around the idea that Afghans inherently rejected modernity based on tribal and religious grounds.

Scholars who studied Afghanistan tend to fall into a couple of categories: those who reiterate the master narratives or narrowly focus on a singular process of change in development, such as building a dam or opening clinics in the countryside. Barfield and Gregorian tended to focus on politics, the Great Game, and the colonial mark left on the Afghan nation state, or they focus on religion within the context of Afghan politics.⁷ Most scholarly analyses tend to draw on western sources and generally leave a void when it comes to Afghans speaking for themselves. Scholars who diverge from the master narrative include B.D Hopkins, who interprets the Great Game as a sham and refers to the Russian threat of the British Empire as a “phantom” threat. Hopkins argues that the British used the perceived threat of Russia to contain Ranjit Singh and the Sikhs in northern India.⁸ Shah Mahmoud Hanifi argues in a similar manner as he looked deeper into archival material to create a new narrative based off the old one. Hanifi argues that British succeeded in their colonial effort in Afghanistan. Although the physical occupation failed, the British subjugated Afghanistan as a “fiscal colony” by integrating Afghanistan’s economy into imperial markets.⁹

Nick Cullather went even further from the master narrative as he surveyed a specific aspect of modernization and discussed the completion of dams in Afghanistan. Cullather argues why the modernization effort failed and why it was not because Afghans were backwards, but

⁷ The Great Game was a term coined to describe the British and Russian empires attempts of spreading their influence through Central Asia. For clarification on the Great Game see Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: the Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York, NY: Kodansha International, 2010).

⁸ B. D. Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan (Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series)* (Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2008).

⁹ Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, *Connecting Histories in Afghanistan: Market Relations and State Formation on a Colonial Frontier* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

because these types of markers of modernization (i.e., dams, etc.) never really benefitted the people as much as they should have.¹⁰ Similarly, this thesis narrows the examination of Kabul's modernization efforts to focus upon key issues evident in the media portrayal of key efforts and events. James M. Caron argues that the whole idea of historical scholarship on Pashtuns in the pre-1978 Afghanistan linked closely to the modernization theory that stems from imperial efforts of controlling the Pashtun Tribe is wrong. Caron points out that the scholarship tends to avoid the lives of non-elite Pashtuns who lived in rural areas.¹¹ Sana Haroon's *Frontiers of Faith* focused solely on the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA). She examines how British-India used this area for defense purposes and trade. Haroon also analyzed the distinction amongst the social hierarchy in connection with the mullahs and their overprotective stance to maintain such autonomy. Afghanistan's scholarship does not lack from its number of works; rather, as these works collectively suggest, the historiography of Afghanistan has often failed to focus on *Afghans* as the subjects who would help us understand key events.

The rich historiography of Afghanistan offers a variety of perspectives, but the most popular works tend to center around the master narrative. Historians mostly overlook the 1960s and 1970s as the modernization period and refer to earlier decades when discussing efforts to modernize. Only the publications within Afghanistan consistently promoted development in Kabul and scholars mostly, if not all, overlooked Afghan publications on modernity. It is also important for the reader of this thesis to acknowledge whether the historians cited throughout this study willingly or unknowingly apply Zachary Lockman's modernization theory to their

¹⁰ Nick Cullather, "Damming Afghanistan: Modernization in a Buffer State," *The Journal of American History*, 2002, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3092171>.

¹¹ James Caron, "Afghanistan Historiography and Pashtun Islam: Modernization Theory's Afterimage," *History Compass*, March 20, 2007, https://www.academia.edu/819000/Afghanistan_Historiography_and_Pashtun_Islam_Modernization_Theory_s_Afterimage.

respective interpretations. Lockman argues that the modernization theory comes from the western perspective. Louis Dupree, although sympathetic to Afghans, viewed them through this modernization theory prism that Lockman explained in his book, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*.¹² Dupree's views are evident as he hails works from Gregorian who promote the master narrative about Afghanistan. Other sources in this study come from Russian or Soviet scholars and that brings a certain balance to this study.

This thesis seeks to establish how the period from 1960 to 1979, in fact, exhibited the most organic development and modernization, which the *Kabul Times* chronicled consistently in its articles and editorials. This study argues that the two decades of interest mark the most significant time for modernization throughout all of Afghanistan's history. The period dubbed the "modernization period" in this thesis differs from today's efforts to modernize Afghanistan because the country did not accept foreign forces occupying the capital, which is presently the situation at the time of writing this thesis. In fact, this thesis concludes when insurgencies began to take place and insurgencies have been consistent with the United States current modernization efforts. The progress from 1960-1979 came from two separate governments, but each institution and their leaders remained within the social hierarchy of royalism, tribalism, and ideology that emerged out of Afghanistan's origination. There was no kind of alien infringement on Afghans during the modernization period, not until communists took over.

General Background Information

Kabul (pronounced Cobble) lies, between two mountainous ranges, and the city of Kabul predates the existence of the country Afghanistan. Nobody knows when or who built the city: all that scholars know about the capital of Afghanistan consists of legendary tales and centuries old

¹² Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: the History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 140.

histories from India, China, and Persia over the ages. Some historians claim the city “is at least 4,000 years old.”¹³ Many minority ethnic groups inhabited Afghanistan: Aimaq, Baluch, Brahui, Gujar, Hazara, Hindu (Indian), Jewish, Kirghiz, Moghul, Nuristani, Tajiks, Turkman, and Uzbeks.¹⁴ The geographic location of the country allowed for a such diversity. Europeans used Kabul as a stop along the trade route to China. The centrality of Kabul made it vital to regional powers since as far back as history records. The history of Kabul as a city is extensive, but this research will analyze its political and influential significance as it relates to its position as Afghanistan’s capital and as the urban center from which all modernization efforts emanated. Kabul was, and remains, the central point for the country’s economic, social, and political power and its inhabitants regards themselves as Afghanistan’s elite.

Behind the name of Kabul exists many legends concerning its origins, some believe it is a combination of Noah’s two sons, Cakool and Habool. Others tell tales of the name deriving from a combination of Cain and Abel, whereas some believe a great king came and asked for straw (*kah*) from the surrounding villages and had a bridge (*pul*) built from it and because this king liked the valley so much, he built a city around it.¹⁵ The story of Kabul over the ages includes the Aryans, Achaemenids, Alexander of Macedonia, Seleucids, Mauryas, Bactrians, Indo-Greeks, Kushans, Sassanians, Hephthalites, Arabs, Saffarids, Ghaznavids, Mongols, Timurids, and finally Ahmad Shah Durrani who ushered in the Durrani Empire with the founding of Afghanistan in 1747. For all of King Ahmad Shah’s reign since the country formed, Kandahar acted as the capital of Afghanistan. Before Ahmad Shah’s death in 1773, he chose his second

¹³ Henry Gilfond, *Afghanistan* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1980), 1.

¹⁴ M. Jamil Hanifi, *Historical and Cultural Dictionary of Afghanistan* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1976), 36-37.

¹⁵ My parents both grew up in Kabul and are familiar with the legend of the king.

son, Timur Shah, as his successor which rankled the feelings of some family and clan members. Likely, those elder clansmen and family members disapproved because family customs deemed the heir to be the first born. Nonetheless, Timur Shah decided to move the capital to Kabul, where he felt he could reign without the fear of having power usurped. Kabul remains the capital of Afghanistan, and this situation is also the cause for contemporary tribal feuds as Kandahar is home to Durrani Pashtuns. Kabul, being a metropolitan city that host many tribes and ethnicities opened the possibility for other Pashtun clans and non-Pashtuns to challenge the status quo.¹⁶

Modernization Effort

A clear definition of modernization is necessary to understand the process in Kabul during that period as modernization is a term with many definitions and interpretations. Many have criticized the term modernization as some understand it as a more contemporary replacement for the word civilized. Zachary Lockman points out how many scholars understand modernization as a “universal process initiated by the West”¹⁷ and this study highlights the monarchy’s similar take on the term. Modernization, by definition, explains the process or state to adapt to relevancy, “a unilinear process in the sense that each contemporary society could be located somewhere along the fixed trajectory of historical development that led from tradition to authentic modernity.”¹⁸ Lockman’s definition demonstrates why modernization is an ideology rather than a real-life phenomenon. All the sources in this study demonstrate, there is no ‘unilinear process’ by which we can simply rank every country. This study will analyze modernization through the lens of political and economic progress that helped transform the capital as described in the *Kabul Times*. Marshall Berman “[defines] modernity as broken into

¹⁶ Nancy Dupree, *A Historical Guide to Kabul* (Education Press: Kabul, 1965), 40.

¹⁷ Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 138.

¹⁸ Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 135.

two different compartments, hermitically sealed off from one another: ‘modernization’ in economics and politics, ‘modernism’ in art, culture, and sensibility.”¹⁹ To the few educated in Kabul, modernization meant the development of markets, industrialization, state-building, and urbanization to advance the country’s global, political, and economic position.

Max Weber distinguished societies as either traditional or modern. Weber described traditional societies as “largely rural and agricultural” where “social change and economic growth were slow and gradual” and that “relationships among people were based largely on such things as kinship” as well as religion. By this definition, Afghanistan perfectly fit the description of a traditional society prior to the modernization period of 1960 to 1979. Weber defined modern societies as “largely urban and industrial; rapid social change and economic growth were the norm rather than the exception.” In modern societies, an individual had more opportunities based on the individual’s skills set rather than title or family connection. The social scientist who studied Asia during the modernization period used the term modernization to “to denote the process of transition from a traditional society to a modern society.”²⁰ Afghanistan tried to forge this transition while maintaining their identity. This presented new dilemmas as Afghan identity came from traditional practices such as tribalism and religion that came under threat from foreign influences.

Kabul’s elite always sought such a transition, but the Cold War race accelerated foreign interference into Afghanistan and therefore, multiple faucets of aid became readily available to the elite Kabulis who sought to modernize the nation. The Cold War also influenced the

¹⁹ Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 88.

²⁰ Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: the History and Politics of Orientalism*, 135.

historiography of Afghanistan.²¹ This study does not claim this political period was the first-time modernization seeped into the capital; rather it examines how differing ideas of what modernization meant affected the outcome of modernization efforts. This thesis does claim that the years of 1960 to 1979 to be a consistent modernization period for Afghanistan. To those in Kabul, implementing changes that reflected American/European values meant modernization. According to Britannica, westernization means “the adoption of practices and culture of Western Europe by societies and countries in other parts of the world, whether through compulsion or influence.”²² Often the elites in the capital placed blame on the rural communities’ innate backwardness and lack of education, but this is not an accurate generalization. Andre Gunder Frank explained how the lack of modernization does not solely depend on internal conditions and begins “by refuting the main precepts of modernizationists: their emphasis on endogenous factors as the main cause for...underdevelopment.”²³ Due to Kabul’s standing on the world stage and need to grow at the time, the world powers who sought to reinforce their own positions dictated the levels of development in Afghanistan.

Foreign Influence

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States typically ignored smaller countries’ wishes, needs, and interests as they attempted to expand their political, economic, and cultural influence – and this, meant denying Afghanistan’s unfettered self-determination as well. During this modernization period, the Soviets gained more influence in the capital at the expense of American influence. The USSR sought to restructure Afghan society because it too viewed

²¹ W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth and the Problems of Peaceful Co-Existence* (Cambridge, MA: Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1959).

²² The Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Westernization.” Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Westernization> (accessed November 27, 2020).

²³ Andre Gunder Frank, *The Development of Underdevelopment*. (Monthly Review Press, 2009), 111.

Afghanistan's internal conditions as the cause for underdevelopment. However, a Communist imposed model of modernization was inconsistent with Afghan values because it forced a "[unification of] people across the bounds of ethnicity and nationality, of sex and class and race."²⁴ A forced model of change upon the people in a country that divided itself based on ethnic, class, and gender lines dominated by the Pashtun majority never succeeded. A popular sentiment among various tribes in Afghanistan consisted of the perception that Durrani rule helped moved the country forward. The implementation of westernization was slow by the monarchy, whereas communism was a sudden and radical change. Changes in Afghanistan occurred historically for practical reasons. The typical threat of fratricide turned out to be the impetus for the pragmatic shift of the capital from the traditional homeland of the Durrani-Pashtuns, Kandahar, to the diverse metropolitan city of Kabul. To understand why the effort to modernize failed by 1979, it is important to trace the first steps of modernization in the twentieth century.

The modernizing notion of development came into the discussion for Afghanistan with King Amanullah Khan, who visited Europe in the 1920s. Amanullah's plan never came to fruition, instead an uprising caused the King to flee to Europe, ironically. Political leadership changed frequently in a relatively short period. After Amanullah fled in 1929, his brother, Inayatullah Khan became king for a couple of days in January until he abdicated the throne to Habibullah Kalakani, better known as Bache-i-Saqao ("Water-bearer").²⁵ Habibullah was Tajik, which aggravated tensions among many Pashtuns. Nadir Khan assembled a Pashtun coalition against Habibullah, which ousted the Tajik ruler in October 1929 and executed him nine months after he came to power. The new ruler Nadir Khan extended the violence against different tribal

²⁴ Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, 6.

²⁵ Vitaly Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), 219.

factions, including the Hazara, with many assassinated and executed by the Pashtuns in this civil conflict. This inter-tribal violence illustrates the deep tribal animosities that existed, and continue today, but the aggravations stemmed in economic policies.²⁶

After the passing of King Nadir Khan in 1933, his son, Zahir Shah became Afghanistan's last king and ruled from 1933 until 1973. Zahir Shah received an education in Europe and developed ideas to modernize Afghanistan with hopes to expand the number of schools and educational programs that would mimic western nations. The last king intended to build more hospitals, factories, and schools outside of Kabul, but focused primarily on westernizing education. In 1964, to modernize the country and usher it into a new era the last king produced a constitution. This constitution became the staple of modernity for Kabulis. Daoud Khan, cousin and brother-in-law of Zahir Shah, eventually ousted him from leadership, ending the monarchy of Afghanistan in 1973. Thereafter, he reigned as the first president until the Khalq, one of the two communist parties, killed him. Nur Mohammed Taraki, leader of the Khalq faction led the coup that killed Daoud and his entire family in the royal palace in Kabul in an event that some refer to as the Saur Revolution. This violent event is indicative of the notion that the communist played a major role as to why the modernization effort failed, even if that ran counterproductive to their intent, because they killed the first self-proclaimed democratic president (never elected) that created a power vacuum and power struggle once more. That struggle for power plays out in present day Afghanistan as the country is still war-torn.

Those in Kabul did not oppose modernization throughout the 1960s and 1970s, but secular ideologies that accompanied Soviet-styled spreading of Communism ignored Afghan realities of religious and tribal factions. The communist vision of modernization ignored many of

²⁶ Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 228.

the religious and tribal identities shared by all Afghans. The western version of modernization overwhelmingly benefitted the (already) wealthy elite Kabulites to the exclusion of the poor. Both, in their own way, failed to offer much to a “normal” Afghan. Until now, scholars paid little attention to the historical significance of the transitional period of modernization in Kabul that slowly brewed conflict between the communist parties and Afghan traditionalists prior to the Soviet invasion. Hopefully, this will improve scholars’ approaches when studying Afghan history and understanding of how attempts at foreign relations with Kabul failed. Kabul was never dominated by a single religious hierarchy, terrorism, or such long lasting horrendous tribal feuds. Not until after the Soviet Invasion did these factors become attributed to the Afghan people. Tribal feuds always existed, but never as prevalent, consistent, or bloody after the Soviet invasion. Modern warfare and weaponry contribute to the rise in tribal-related violence, but that does not explain motives. Class conflicts drawn along ethnic lines caused a division in political alignments that further exacerbated tensions between tribes in Afghanistan. The *Kabul Times* promoted what the Pashtun elite viewed as important, this made other tribes feel ostracized, so some turned away from the government publications and established their own newspapers such as *Khalq* and *Parcham*. These papers would later become the name of the communist parties and those parties became a huge factor in the civil unrest.

“Chap. 1 - Modernization in Kabul: The Beginning of the End”

If you examine the beautiful name [Kabul]
You discover water [pure] as the pearl at the heart of a rose.²⁷

To understand the modernization effort in Kabul, it is important to examine the earliest attempts to develop western style advancements in Afghanistan. King Amanullah Khan reigned from 1919 to 1929 and he wanted to provide industrialization, education, and urbanization in Kabul. A visit to Europe in 1928 inspired Amanullah to modernize Afghanistan along western examples. Afghanistan’s problems, however, came from different tribal and ethnic leaders who considered co-education as a weakening of Islam. Amanullah proposed the first ever constitution for Afghanistan that the *Loya Jirgah*²⁸ unanimously rejected in 1923. A *Loya Jirgah* is a tribal parliament where elders of different tribes from all regions within Afghanistan meet and discuss pressing issues as a collective council and the term translates from Pashto to big assembly. Generally, the Pashtuns rejected Amanullah’s radical ideas that many believed infringed upon religious character. A picture of Amanullah’s wife, Soraya Tarzi, circulated in Afghanistan that showed her in a shameless sleeveless blouse that further tarnished the king’s reputation.

Since 1929, Pashtuns, generally the Durrani-clan, controlled the government, but various Pashtun tribal factions fought amongst themselves for power and control. One Pashtun tribe, the Shinwari, feuded with the Durrani, who frequently dispatched troops to Shinwari strongholds in the eastern part of the country. Amanullah’s government considered Shinwari to be little more than illiterate bandits. This infighting led to the first non-Pashtun king, Bache-i-Saqao, to rebel

²⁷ Tarzi, *Dar lafz-e nam e khub-e way ar awari nazar, yabi miyan-e gol tu yaki ab chun gawhar*, a poem dated to 1905-06/1323 as cited by May Schinasi. *Kabul: a History 1773-1948* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1.

²⁸ For more about this tradition see Salim Ahmad, *Loya Jirga the Afghan Grand Assembly* (Lahore, Pakistan: Sang-e Meel Publications, 2006).

and overthrow Amanullah. It was the first time since 1747 that a Pashtun did not rule the country.²⁹ In fact, historians noted that Bache-i-Saqao's seizure of power resulted in a violent civil war, but that Kabul was their only bastion of power. By the end of 1929, Nadir Shah overtook Bache-i-Saqao and forcefully, and violently, restored a degree of stability. After power changed hands from father to son, King Zahir Shah, resumed Amanullah's modernization program.

In 1948, "the great trends of modern urban planning" led to the renovation of the architectural past in the capital.³⁰ Prior to the modernization period, Afghanistan practically had no modern economic infrastructure.³¹ Modernization became a reality that Kabulis began to experience. By the 1960s, approximately 750,000 people lived in Kabul and most of the population eagerly embraced modernization.³² With more employment opportunities in the capital, migration to Kabul increased from all over Afghanistan. Foreign investments flowed into the country that sparked a plethora of new development throughout the capital. Kabulis faced two difficult choices for Afghanistan: was it more important to retain ancient and traditional customs or engage the world with a modern outlook.

The stories published in the years from 1962 to 1979 indicated that Kabul endured a period of modernization and development. The *Kabul Times* gave annual recaps in December that highlight the capital's progress over the course of each year. The statistics and growth

²⁹ Nabi Misdaq, *Afghanistan Political Frailty and External Interference* (Routledge, 2008), 228.

³⁰ May Schinasi, *Kabul: a History 1773-1948* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 5.

³¹ Sayed Khalil, *The Kabul Times Annual, 1970* (Kabul: Culture Ministry of the Royal Government of Afghanistan, 1967), 128.

³² Nancy Hatch Dupree, *An Historical Guide to Afghanistan*. (Afghan Air Authority, 1977), 79.

discussed within the *Kabul Times* demonstrates how the government desired readers of the newspaper to perceive modernization.

This thesis stresses that Kabul accelerated at its own pace with constant development in the 1960s; the newspaper printed in English to garner international attention, specifically the Cold War powers of the West such as the United States, Britain, France, and Germany. The elite's desire in Kabul was to establish an identity for Afghans and used the newspaper as a propaganda piece. The *Kabul Times* advertised the Afghans to the world as an established progressive and modern people with the hope this image would attribute to more international aid.

Growth in Kabul: Kabul Times (1960s)

Shafie Rahel edited the *Kabul Times* from 1962 until the 1973, when the coup toppled the government and changes in all government positions took place. Rahel received his Bachelor and Master degrees in Political Science from the University of Bombay. He adhered to Islamic tenants and did not drink alcohol or eat pork. According to the archival sources in London, Rahel spoke fluent English and grew increasingly concerned about a possible Russian invasion into Afghanistan due to expanding communist efforts in Kabul. Rahel and his wife, who was a teacher, visited London in 1962 and 1965. The British intelligence assessed Shafie Rahel to be about thirty years old at the time of his second visit. In a summary report, the British Embassy stated the agencies that "Rahel is interested in the Observer Foreign News Service and the Gemini News Service."³³ Rahel found these agencies to be the "best available sources for information on international affairs" and requested that the British finance the subscriptions for

³³ Information: AFGHANISTAN: Kabul Times; British News Agency' Confidential report to Foreign Office of London 24 September 1968, FCO 95/187, The National Archive (TNA) UK.

the *Kabul Times*, he argued that all foreign subscriptions received finance from their host countries, meaning the British should pay for Kabul's subscriptions to the British newspapers. This suggests that the editor's main interest was in a British or western perspective. The government-owned *Kabul Times* received information from the British and that helped form a lot of the content presented to the Kabulis. This also suggested why the format of the newspaper mirrored western style papers and promoted developments along western standards.³⁴

Education

In 1962, educational advancements moved slowly. A small congratulatory article written about Kabulis who recently graduated from a short two-month course in watch repair displayed the paper's aim to highlighting development. The government implemented this course for watch repairs as the imports for watches had a recent influx into the country that caused a spike in demand of repairing services in the capital.³⁵ This also meant that Kabuli's use of hours and minutes to mark time in a particular way oriented their days differently than say toward the five calls to prayer. Another article covered students who graduated and received diplomas from x-ray courses. The x-ray courses helped to expand public health services, the Deputy Minister, Dr. Abdur Rahim congratulated the students in person. In the same issue a headline read 'More Students in Schools: Better Facilities for Higher Training' which shows the emphasis on educational programs in Kabul.³⁶ As the year progressed, courses became available as the

³⁴ 'Information: AFGHANISTAN: Kabul Times; British News Agency' Confidential report to Foreign Office of London 24 September 1968, FCO 95/187, The National Archive (TNA) UK.

³⁵ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "COURSE IN WATCH REPAIRING: Certificates Presented." *Kabul Times*, Oct. 9, 1962.

³⁶ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Diplomas Given to X-Ray Course Graduates." *Kabul Times*, Oct. 11, 1962.

printing course launched in Kabul.³⁷ The articles in the first year of publishing read as if things just started up and they had.

In 1963, the Minister of Education, Dr. Ali Ahmad Popal, briefed officials within the government about its need to accelerate the process to print more textbooks. According to Minister Popal, the desire for more books came from the rise in the number of students in schools and colleges.³⁸ A contract signed at the Ministry of Education building in Kabul funded the construction of the Polytechnic Institute at Kabul University. King Zahir's government understood the importance of a literate population and that was why the *Kabul Times* consistently reported about Afghanistan's educational needs and progress.³⁹ The decision to expand the largest university in the country was a clear step in that direction.⁴⁰

In 1964, the demand for police training increased as the need for higher training had risen since the previous year. The government positioned itself to enroll at least 450 police cadets annually to train at the police academy in Kabul. The academy's chief explained that police training consisted of long term and short-term programs. Those who finished the long-term program received degrees, whereas those who completed the short-term program received a vocational certificate.⁴¹ The *Kabul Times* stressed police education in many articles, something it seemed certain its reader wanted to learn.

In 1965, the Minister of Education discussed plans to expand education. These suggestions from the minister intended to be possible solutions for the shortage of teachers as

³⁷ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "PRINTING COURSE LAUNCHED." *Kabul Times*, Oct. 14, 1962.

³⁸ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Popal Explains Plan To Speed-Up Print Of Text-Books." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 12, 1963

³⁹ Nancy Dupree, *A Historical Guide to Kabul*, 93.

⁴⁰ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Contract Signed To Build Institute For Polytechnic." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 18, 1963

⁴¹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Police Academy Raises Standards, Now Training 450." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 12, 1964.

well as individual problems that student faced. According to an official, the minister intended to expand education and to build facilities as far as possible regardless of the cost involved.⁴²

Constant reports about education in the paper signify the importance of the field to the government. The elite in Kabul knew that reporting about education allowed them to promote the capital as modernizing. Another form of media to reach the masses came through radio. Radio Afghanistan planned to incorporate an educational program while entertaining listeners. The goal of the radio station to educate the Afghan nation began since it first aired in 1940. The radio station broadcasted for over seventeen hours each day and undertook many steps to enlighten the people.⁴³ The half hour programs on Radio Afghanistan came in Urdu, Farsi, English, and Russian that informed its audience on local and global news as well as commentary on sports, music, comedy, drama, and arts, but the radio always started the broadcast with a Quran recital.⁴⁴ The paper and the radio helped reach wider audiences while promoting as modern and responsive to the country's citizens and their needs.

In 1966, according the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization the relationship between the employment rate and the literacy rate held significant interest in developing countries. Afghanistan's education minister believed that the distinction between literacy and education needed clarification. The article "organizing a literacy campaign" referred to illiteracy as a "social disease" that needed eradication through a national campaign. The objectives of the campaign to rid illiteracy from Afghanistan began from big cities as public transportation granted these areas easier access to build educational programs.⁴⁵ The Prime

⁴² Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Minister Suggests Plans for Expansion of Education." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 8, 1965.

⁴³ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 532.

⁴⁴ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Radio Aims at Educational Entertainment." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 26, 1965.

⁴⁵ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "ORGANISING A LITERACY CAMPAIGN." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 7, 1966.

Minister Mohammed Maiwandwal made a speech to the Kabul Youth Club about the importance of keeping the country's independence. In his speech, the PM stressed the bravery of those who defended the country and upheld its integrity. Education topped the priority list for the club, but teaching how to be good citizens to best serve their nation proved essential to carrying out the new social reforms for the country.⁴⁶ The idea to maintain Afghanistan's sovereignty ingrained itself into the fabric of society through the newspaper also.

In 1967, Kabul created The Educational Reform Commission to study problems to educate, train, as well as raise standards within schools and universities. One of the most neglected aspects of education in Afghanistan centered on the lack of parent-teacher cooperation, but the government hoped to teach the parents in some respect too with a Parent-School day. According to the paper, this emulated the parent-teacher conferences that occur in the United States.⁴⁷ *Kabul Times* promoted the idea, but did not emphasize the similarity. Foreign methods of education came to the capital.⁴⁸

In December in 1968, not a single article appeared about education. The closest thing written about education was a short piece about Aziza Aziz, the editor of a literacy magazine. The newspaper reported on education throughout the year, just not the last month. In October, for example, an article about Soviet scholars who discussed Afghan literature exhibited the consistent rhetoric about education throughout most of that year.⁴⁹ In 1969, the trend stayed the same with education not heavily emphasized even though the paper used a section titled 'all about students' that year. On Christmas day, a small piece found in the 'Home news in brief'

⁴⁶ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Kabul Youth Club Opened to Encourage Responsible Activity in Nation's Young." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 18, 1966.

⁴⁷ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Educational Reform." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 27, 1967.

⁴⁸ Mary Bradley Watkins, *Afghanistan, Land in Transition* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1963), 122.

⁴⁹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Soviet scholars discuss Afghan national liteature [sic]." *Kabul Times*, Oct. 13, 1968.

section about the Ambassador of Yugoslavia who visited to Kabul University, where he and his Afghan counterpart discussed cultural and educational exchanges.⁵⁰ The attention of the elite in Kabul changed views about education as the decade ended.⁵¹

Education rapidly expanded throughout the 1960s in Kabul.⁵² The government ensured to highlight anything related to education, although scattered, the reports with the *Kabul Times* remained persistent. The elite wanted to create a population that could sustain a bureaucracy: police officers, educators, doctors, officials, as well as promote aspects of education that would change the way Kabulis lived such as watch repair and their notion of time. The newspaper reported on any story it could to promote educational advancements, the perception of modernization by the elite meant developing this field primarily. The United States and the Soviets encouraged education for the masses through their aid programs.⁵³

Agriculture

On 1 December 1963, a small piece with the headline in bold letters read “AGRICULTURE IN FOREFRONT OF AFGHANISTAN CONCERN,” which showed the early attempts to modernize the country through agricultural development. Agriculture remained vital to the economy as it contributed to a large portion of trade for the country, Kabul understood that for it to continue to modernize that it needed to increase its exports and the adoption of industrial scale agriculture.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Home news in briefs.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 25, 1969.

⁵¹ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 516.

⁵² M. Jamil Hanifi, *Historical and Cultural Dictionary of Afghanistan* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1976), 3.

⁵³ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 640.

⁵⁴ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 641.

In 1964, construction on a woolen mill estimated to be ninety-five percent complete and ready by early 1965. The mill was located on 26 acres of land in an industrial zone and government officials estimated that it could produce annually “392 meters of woolen textiles, 350,000 meters of woolen serge, approximately 15,000 meters of Cashmere, 20,000-30,000 woolen blankets”⁵⁵ This one mill also created several jobs and made Kabul more industrious. A Soviet firm signed a contract with the Ministry of Mines around April to survey the regions for the plants.⁵⁶ With the final surveys completed, the government planned to build a chemical fertilizer plant and a natural-gas power plant in 1965. Officials estimated that these plants produced 50,000-55,000 tons of chemical fertilizer annually. Completing these projects in 1965 meant that Kabul paid more attention to agriculture in the countryside.⁵⁷

An article in the *Kabul Times* stated that the amount of cultivated land in 1924 Kabul constituted less than one million acres, whereas in 1966 the total amount of land cultivated was roughly eight million acres.⁵⁸ Prime Minister Malwandwal’s plan of progressive democracy meant that the government paid careful attention to agriculture as the capital grew. After the government conducted tests on water pumps, which produced satisfactory results, it sold 143 pumps to farmers, on favorable terms, to expand irrigation on barren and unproductive land. The government stated that the farmers needed to understand the principles of water economy and held people more accountable for better irrigation as farmers wasted considerable amount of water annually.⁵⁹ The economic development plan was an important policy as Kabul’s

⁵⁵ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “95P.C Construction Work on Woolen Mill Completed.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 9, 1964.

⁵⁶ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Plant Surveys Near Completion.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 19, 1964.

⁵⁷ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 638.

⁵⁸ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Afghanistan’s Econ Development.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 20, 1966.

⁵⁹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Water Pumps, Tractors to Serve Farmers.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 6, 1966.

population kept growing, unfortunately, for the government output did not match the population growth, and that drove the development policy.

In 1968 and 1969, articles about a possible increase in dairy production came at a time that most people in Afghanistan went without fresh milk, especially during winters.⁶⁰ Afghanistan's dairy production resulted in disarray and that caused the country's milk, yogurt, butter, and other dairy products to remain scarce. The problem of prioritizing the use of land remained a typical topic as "recent years of Kabul growth one- and two-story buildings erected on first class agricultural land." Those in government dealt with heavy decisions, they wanted to build and modernize, but at the cost of tearing down essential land.⁶¹ A groundbreaking business venture came from Afghan and American businessmen who split the initial cost 50/50. The company purchased four refrigerated trucks at \$20,000 each along with twenty refrigerated shops, fifteen of them set in Kabul. A new beverage company cost the government 38 million Afghani and intended to produce milk for the consumptions of residents in Kabul, as well as Kandahar, and Jalalabad. The Afghan Beverages and Fruit Company was the first of its kind for Afghanistan.⁶²

Clearly, throughout the decade the *Kabul Times* highlighted Agricultural development as vital to the economic prosperity and growth. To modernize agriculture in Kabul remained a difficult task for the government in the 1960s. Most of the improvements made came from foreign aid or investment. Nonetheless, those in government sought to develop agriculture and reported on the advancements consistently. The *Kabul Times* wanted its readers to understand

⁶⁰ Hanifi, *Historical and Cultural Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 3.

⁶¹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Building up vs building down." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 11, 1968.

⁶² Edited by Shafie Rahel, "COKE, MILK, POMEGRANATE, JUICE PLANT ESTABLISHED." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 25, 1969.

how much progress occurred. While the *Kabul Times* used modern western nations such as Britain and the United States as models of agricultural development, ironically, most of the funding came from the Soviets.

International Relations: trade and diplomacy

In December 1963, the *Kabul Times* covered a discussion about Afghanistan's new constitution, which Washington approved. The aid given from the United States came attached with certain stipulations; as part of an American aid package Afghanistan received 100,000 tons of wheat that helped the country to stabilize food-grain prices and meet Kabul's nutritional needs.⁶³ At the same time, the Afghan government received commendation for its strides toward democracy and as the demand for more auto parts in Kabul rose, the USAID awarded Afghanistan another contract with a value of two million dollars.⁶⁴

Kabul wanted to connect with the global trade markets to strengthen relations with other major cities and sought to become a layover destination for flights from Moscow to Karachi. Soviet airline Aeroflot agreed to employ Afghan airports for flights. The newspaper used the term "modern" a lot in this period, this further reveals the *Kabul Times* as an important source to examine modernization. The Aeroflot talks with the Soviets ended after both parties signed business contracts. The *Kabul Times* also reported that China and Afghanistan established an agreement with the common desire to extend air services to one another also.⁶⁵

⁶³ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Afghanistan To Get Large Wheat Grant from United States." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 2, 1963.

⁶⁴ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Contract Signed for Import of Auto and Truck Spare Parts." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 4, 1963.

⁶⁵ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Aeroflat To Employ Afghan Airports for Flights to Karachi." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 9, 1963.

An official from the Wool Export Co. made a statement regarding an increase of export almost doubling since 1963.⁶⁶ The Wool Export Co. had exported 1,800 tons of wool to the Soviet Union and 40 tons of fleece to the United States in 1964. The government essentially promoted how both Cold War powers competed to provide aid to Afghanistan. The *Kabul Times* wrote about the United States approval as if they sought it. A *Loya Jirga* approved the 1964 constitution for the country of Afghanistan, this democratic constitution received praise from many in Washington as they saw it as a step in the right direction for Afghan's future. The United States aid director stated that due to this new constitution already in practice by the government of Zahir Shah, the collection of taxes and utility bills became more effective, and why this new attitude meant harsher approaches to smuggling.⁶⁷

In 1965, the IMF assistant chief to the Middle East, simply described as "A. Ray" in the *Kabul Times*, went to Kabul for ten days to study the country's finances and monetary standing. After observing the economic situation, Ray concluded that Afghanistan's effort to implement the provisions of the agreement stabilized its financial position. This led to an agreement between the IMF and the government in Kabul to sign for \$6.7 million that distributed in four installments.⁶⁸ The government continued its effort to attract potential aid even from opposing governments, pitting capitalism against communism. The Public Ministry of Works in Kabul signed an agreement with the USSR that covered the maintenance of the western Highway. The Soviets agreed to pay for the equipment, fuel, and the salaries of the engineers involved while the Kabulis provided the labor. The expenditure incurred during the estimated three years for over

⁶⁶ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Company Exports 1,800 Tons of Wool to Soviet Union." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 10, 1964.

⁶⁷ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "U.S. AID Director Praises Reforms in Afghanistan." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 13, 1964.

⁶⁸ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "IMF Finds Afghanistan Financial Position Improved." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 12, 1965.

\$1.5 million in cost.⁶⁹ Soviet influence grew as Kabul's debt increased. While Kabul's debt grew, the elite in Kabul continued to seek financial assistance from the West.⁷⁰

Kabul remained in contact with many countries throughout 1966 and the paper promoted such relations. West Germany's government agreed to give Afghanistan a loan for 6.4 million Deutsche Marks. The third installment of the project provided drinkable water to the capital and fulfilled the German's loan in the agreement.⁷¹ Afghanistan sought multiple investments and ideology was not a consideration. Kabul embraced loans from Sweden, the United States, Germany, and the Soviet Union, all designed to advance the country's modernization agenda. The Afghan government and the USSR signed a new protocol for the exchange of commodities and fixed their prices that year.⁷² 1966 was the same year that the United States agreed to send Afghanistan twenty-thousand tons of wheat as were the terms for an agreement signed previously in Kabul.⁷³ A Swedish envoy met with the Ministry of Mines and Industries in 1966 to discuss an investment to build a match factory, shoe factory, and tannery within Kabul.⁷⁴ The government in Kabul furthered its modernization agenda with its active effort to improve international relationships.

By 1967, Kabul expanded its efforts to develop better representation at the United Nations, as it hoped to expand its global relationships, as part of modernization, participation in international organizations, such as the United Nations, strengthened roles among other under-

⁶⁹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Afghanistan, USSR Sign Highway Maintenance Accord." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 29, 1965.

⁷⁰ George Grassmuck, Ludwig W. Adamec, and Frances H. Irwin. *Afghanistan: Some New Approaches*. (Ann Arbor: Center for Near Eastern and North African Studies, University of Michigan, 1969), 330.

⁷¹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "FRG Gives 6,400,000 Dm. Loan for Kabul Water Supply Plan." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 29, 1966.

⁷² Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Afghanistan, USSR Sign New Protocol." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 15, 1966.

⁷³ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Afghanistan, US Sign Agreement on Wheat Delivery." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 24, 1966.

⁷⁴ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "SWEDEN MAY INVEST IN KABUL, HERAT PROJECTS." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 17, 1966.

developed countries. Developing countries such as Afghanistan wished to send as many of its citizens abroad to acquire education and experience among developed countries that Kabul hoped to emulate. Those in the Afghan government were not the only ones raising concerns of under-representation, all the developing countries were asking for the secretariat positions available to fill with their nationals as to meet the quota allotted to each country and avoid the possibility of being under-represented.⁷⁵

On par to extending relations, sixteen Afghan building specialists went to the capital of the USSR to train in a concrete elements' factory. A Soviet factory official stated that their "Afghan friends" spent six months to learn the production of various iron-concrete structures as well as pre-fabricated concrete blocks. According to the accounts of the Afghan building specialists that went abroad, the time spent in Moscow allowed them to work in a plant that built houses back in Kabul.⁷⁶ The Soviets were keen to assist Afghanistan's development and to encourage broader support in Kabul. Another Afghan-Soviet trade agreement ushered in a new chapter between the two neighboring countries. This agreement differed because it allowed Afghanistan to export industrial goods for the first time. This signified a continuous growth of trade between Afghans and Soviets.⁷⁷ The West and East knew that the government in Kabul did not possess the means to outline the trajectory of its political future, as a result, foreign aid maintained steady throughout the decade.

A Loya Jirgah committee held a meeting in 1968 to discuss and approve a loan from the U.K. for 200,000 English Pounds. The loan from the British helped the Kabulis purchase "heavy

⁷⁵ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Equitable Representation." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 3, 1967.

⁷⁶ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "16 Afghan Building Specialists Study In Soviet Concrete Elements Plant." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 19, 1967.

⁷⁷ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Afghan-Soviet Trade." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 26, 1968.

duty” trucks and strengthen diplomatic ties between the governments.⁷⁸ Each deal signed meant quicker relief for Afghans to see them achieve modernization. Afghanistan received membership into the International Congress of Geographers in another attempt to retain global recognition.⁷⁹ The leadership in Kabul sought whatever means to change the perception of Afghanistan by participating in international affairs. Further West, fashion designers in Canada wanted to popularize Afghan sheep skin, even though a business connection between the two countries did not exist.⁸⁰

Afghanistan maintained good relations with all its neighbors apart from minor incidents along its border with Pakistan over the Pashtunistan issue⁸¹. In December 1969, Iran, Poland, China, and Russia all held discussions with the Afghan government about a range of issues.⁸² Foreign observers recognized Kabul’s efforts to modernize, which the *Kabul Times* noted that the UK praised the country for its “social, political, and economic progress.”⁸³ That year marked the second time a U.S Vice-President visited the country. United States Vice-President Spiro Agnew briefly stopped in Kabul for 20 hours as part of a tour of many Asian countries.⁸⁴

The United States and the Soviets both continued their race to gain influence over Kabul and towards the end of the decade, it became clear the Soviets won this Cold War race. Although the supportive relationship of the USSR and Kabul date back to the 1950s, in the 1960s the Soviets really began to capture influence through communist political parties and foreign aid.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “House discusses UK loan for trucks, student grievances.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 1, 1968.

⁷⁹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Afghanistan to join worldwide geographers’ group.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 16, 1968.

⁸⁰ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Great market potential in Canada.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 17, 1968.

⁸¹ See Sana Haroon, *Frontier of the Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland* (London: C. Hurst, 2007), 177.

⁸² Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Home Briefs.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 18, 1969.

⁸³ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “UK Press Praises Progress Decade in Afghanistan.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 22, 1969.

⁸⁴ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “U.S. Vice-President Agnew to arrive here January 6.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 24, 1969.

⁸⁵ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Afghan-Soviet Trade develops rapidly since 1950.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 30, 1969.

The USSR provided ample support to the Afghan people in its effort to modernize education, infrastructure, women's rights, and agriculture for Afghanistan. Assurances from the Soviets secured deals into the 1970s and the communist based parties in the Kabul began to grow in popularity.

Women's Rights: recognition and progress

Both the United States and the Soviets in the early half of the 1960s pushed for a social revolution that wanted women placed in the forefront of Kabul's society. The United States encouraged this effort and sent over six thousand pairs of shoes from girls in the United States through the CARE mission to Afghan school girls.⁸⁶ Afghan women gained international recognition from aid efforts that highlighted the importance to provide them with proper resources. The *Kabul Times* rarely commented upon women's issues in the 1960s

No specific section in the 1964 constitution referenced women specifically, but a section did state that all citizens were equal without any regards to sex, language, or religion.⁸⁷ In 1964, the Loya Jirga approved the creation of a Supreme Court, modeled on the American system, which it designed to ensure the safety and protection of all its citizens.⁸⁸ Whether the Constitution was responsible for the push to elevate the status of women or not, it created a legal path to legitimacy that granted women more agency.

By 1965, the newspaper increased its attention to women's issues, a section titled 'all about woman' began to appear regularly in the *Kabul Times*. The Health Minister, Kobra

⁸⁶ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "U.S. GIRLS PRESENT SHOES TO AFGHAN SCHOOL GIRLS." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 4, 1963

⁸⁷ Robert D. Crews, *Afghan Modern: the History of a Global Nation* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015), 190.

⁸⁸ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Human Rights Declaration In Afghanistan." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 10, 1967.

Noorzai, made history as the first woman to hold a cabinet position in Afghanistan.⁸⁹ This article also discussed how women held some prominent positions with the Ariana Airlines. The *Kabul Times* stated that there were twenty-three women who worked for the airline as officers.⁹⁰ The newspaper continued to provide recognition of women's societal contributions throughout the era. Women held bank jobs at the head offices and branch offices as well as other departments. When a reporter asked an official at the bank if they believed that the environment changed since they hired women and the bank official stated that women did not "find jobs in the executive position and they still worked under men" so in the official's opinion "not much had changed."⁹¹

A later article in the 'All About Women' section discussed head coverings and the constant transformation of society. The article briefly covered some background about "chadary" or face coverings. The author of this op-ed did not know when the face covering first appeared within the country, but imagined it arrived with Islam centuries before. When the chadary arrived in Afghanistan they were all black and made of course linen. The author believed the fashion arose out of Kabul because "chadary Kabuli" was the name of that style. The article ended with the author's rant of why the chadary rapidly disappeared from the capital in 1966 and talked about face coverings as a fashion of the past.⁹²

In December 1967, the boy and girl students grew anxious as exams loomed. The newspaper reported that of the dozen subjects offered in schools, girls in Kabul worried about mathematics the most. Three thousand girls huddled around waiting for their English, Urdu, and

⁸⁹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Maiwanwal Announces Five Cabinet Ministers; 1st Woman Named to Minister Post." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 1, 1965.

⁹⁰ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Women Hold Key Jobs in Ariana AirAuthority." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 1, 1965.

⁹¹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Kabul Banks Employ More Women Than Any Other Institution in Afghanistan." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 13, 1965.

⁹² Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Face of Chadary Changes from Black Linen to Colourful Silk." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 20, 1965.

Algebra exams at Rabia Balkhi, Kabul's biggest school for girls. In the beginning of this article, it stated that "boyfriends and girlfriends" were "temporarily forgotten"⁹³ and this passage signified how Kabulis welcomed changes to their society. The social structure of Afghanistan is now known to take such conservative measures against women's liberties, but that was not a constant in Kabul's history. The *Kabul Times* exposed its readers to the idea of women empowerment in the 1960s. Those in Kabul grew concerned about Human Rights as they looked to stay on par with the developed world. Although Afghanistan remained behind most of the developed world, the country showed drastic improvements.

The United States and the Soviets both wanted Afghan women to unveil to prove the country was ready to accept all aspects of development.⁹⁴ The first major step for Afghan society to encourage women meant to abolish the chadary as promoted by the newspaper. The government campaigned against illiteracy, because higher education granted women the opportunity to make equal wages to their male counterparts. Afghan women served in cabinet and parliamentary positions, which the newspaper used to illustrate modern advances. Developed countries already dealt with the issue of women's rights and therefore for Afghanistan to develop into a modern country, Afghan women needed to define their own agency. This article concluded that throughout Afghan history "half of the intellectual and moral power" wasted away due to a lack of recognition.⁹⁵ That changed by 1965, as almost half a million women held jobs throughout Afghanistan.⁹⁶

⁹³ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "GIRLS CAN'T WAIT FOR SCHOOL'S END." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 4, 1967.

⁹⁴ Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation*, 228.

⁹⁵ Dr. Mahboob Seraj, "HUMAN RIGHTS AND AFGHAN WOMEN." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 11, 1967.

⁹⁶ Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation*, 190.

In 1968, The Afghan Volunteer Women's Association held a fund raiser to help with disabled Kabulis social welfare. The fund raiser was a fashion show held in the capital and gave all proceeds to "crippled people." This was not the first time this women's association raised money for such causes, in the past, they raised money to help widows with children and finance literacy programs. This group gave women in Kabul a sense of social consciousness and, by doing so, it proved that women could successfully organize "volunteer social welfare activity." Women in Kabul were not afraid to express themselves and the *Kabul Times* provided them a platform.⁹⁷

A major issue with the advancement of women's rights in Kabul derived from the challenges to traditional roles and how the mullahs interpreted those challenges as un-Islamic. In 1969, the section titled 'All About Women' published an article about sexual education by foreign instructors from Europe. The instructors wanted to educate Kabuli women so that women of underdeveloped nations could remain safe and informed.⁹⁸ The *Kabul Times* promoted such controversial topics because the newspaper interpreted women's rights as the West described it.

The 1960s ushered women's rights into a modern space, a girl from any village could attend Kabul University or even study abroad and earn their own wage if her male family members allowed it. Afghan women in the capital began to unveil themselves as the world began to pay attention to their plight. With their refusal to the chadary fashion, Kabuli women took control of their own agency. The newspaper granted Kabuli women agency and allowed them to discuss their struggles and opinions.

⁹⁷ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Women Volunteers." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 2, 1968.

⁹⁸ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Should Outsiders Help in Sex Education?" *Kabul Times*, Dec. 29, 1969.

Infrastructure

The government in Kabul promoted the need to improve roads, hotels, airports, and general infrastructure through the newspaper. Each project required capital and although the government funded some projects itself, many of the contracts went to foreign investments. Gradual debt loosened Kabul's susceptibility to foreign influence that would later effect Afghanistan's politics. The *Kabul Times* reported on infrastructure projects frequently and in 1962, an article covered new apartments built in Kabul with four rooms in each unit. Each unit cost 60,000 Afghanis, equivalent to \$10,000 according to Afghanistan's Bank Exchange Rate.⁹⁹ Due to the lack of infrastructure there were not any means to collect mortgages at the time, so for the one-time payment of 60,000 Afghanis a person owned the 4-bedroom unit. As the capital began to modernize, the infrastructure visibly improved.

The capital developed in a variety of areas, civil aviation remained in Kabul's scope as it created new airfields and Met Stations.¹⁰⁰ An important aspect to modernize infrastructure came from the range of advancements as it also extended into the postal services; there was a need to speed up the telegraphic messages.¹⁰¹ Quicker messages meant that the city of Kabul expanded as the need for efficiency came from the demand of a growing society. Additional expansions to civil aviation included training programs and extra hangers to hold more aircrafts as discussed in the *Kabul Times*.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Free Exchange Rates at Da Afghanistan Bank." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 2, 1963.

¹⁰⁰ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "New Airfields and Met Stations: Rapid Progress of Civil Aviation." *Kabul Times*, Oct. 13, 1962.

¹⁰¹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Effort to Speed up Postal & Telegraphic Messages." *Kabul Times*, Oct. 18, 1962.

¹⁰² Edited by Shafie Rahel, "EXPANSION OF CIVIL AVIATION FACILITIES." *Kabul Times*, Oct. 29, 1962.

In 1963, a government correspondent claimed Kabul moved “forward and from the new looks the capital of Afghanistan is a modern city.”¹⁰³ A technical revolution progressed in Afghanistan and it showed by the building of new “roads, hotels and airports and the pushing aside of tribal customs and feudal laws.”¹⁰⁴ This progressive push by the government hoped to attract more tourism into the country. The Ministry of Planning, officials of Da Afghanistan Bank, Ariana Afghan Airlines, the Deputy Minister of Finance, and the President of Tourist Bureau attended a conference to discuss plans for the “construction of a large modern hotel” to support the influx of tourist.¹⁰⁵ The expenses for the hotel came from the United States. The new hotel funded by the United States made Kabul look like a modern capital by western standards. In one of the bigger efforts of modernization for that year, the Afghan firm “Afghan Construction Unit” signed a major deal to help construct eleven new schools in various parts of Kabul. This same firm helped develop Afghanistan when it erected buildings for the School of Commerce, the School of Fine Arts, and purchased a carpentry shop that ultimately employed “five hundred Afghan and twenty-four foreign workers.”¹⁰⁶

In 1964, Prime Minister Dr. Mohammed Yousef unveiled three new projects in Kabul, two new bridges, and a new park. The area of the new park was located where Afghanistan signed the treaty for independence. The city decided that a park to serve as memorial was easier to maintain the site.¹⁰⁷ Multiple officials and Afghan citizens also attended the ceremony for the bridges. In related news that year, the Soviets hired architects to compile a twenty-year plan to

¹⁰³ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “KABUL: ANTIQUITY VANISHES INTO MODERNITY.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 1, 1963.

¹⁰⁴ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Technical Progress Aids Afghanistan’s Plan To Attract More Tourist.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 4, 1963

¹⁰⁵ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Meeting Considers Hotel Proposal Of American Firm.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 19, 1963

¹⁰⁶ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Afghan Construction Unit To Build Eleven Schools.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 30, 1963.

¹⁰⁷ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Premier Opens Zarnigar Park, Two New Bridges in Kabul.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 8, 1964.

develop Kabul. Soviet architects claimed that the idea to reconstruct Kabul was a Soviet plan, not one hatched by the Kabul government. The Kabulis were not involved in these plans initially and the article even stated that “the people of Kabul will be able to get a sufficiently clear notion of what the projects worked out by Soviet architects will be like when put into effect.”¹⁰⁸ The Soviets made plans for Kabul that even Kabulis were not privy to. The Kabuli elite engaged on many fronts to push for modernization, but did not plan for the consequences.

In 1965, the government continued the expansion of infrastructure in Kabul. Six different four-story apartment buildings were near completion which when finished housed 208 families. The prices of the apartments ranged from the smallest units costing 150,000 Afghanis and the largest units costing 350,000 Afghanis. The project contained separate sewerage systems and two deep wells on the western side of the construction site to deliver drinking water to the apartments.¹⁰⁹ This apartment complex offered modern amenities to the residents of Kabul. The blueprint for modernization plan of Kabul included new sources of energy.¹¹⁰

An additional 44,000 kw of power pumped into the Kabul city grid in 1966. Kabul began to implement a new method of power distribution with an underground wired system as opposed to overhead lines that could possess faulty transmissions. Officials stated that the underground wiring made radio reception better and “perhaps the only source of regular entertainment in Afghanistan.”¹¹¹ According to the Ministry of Public Health, hospitals opened rapidly across Afghanistan between 1965 and 1966. This trend of health development changed from centralized medical facilities in Kabul to new hospitals in provinces across Afghanistan. The ministry

¹⁰⁸ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Soviet Architects Complete Twenty-Year Plan to Reconstruct, Develop Kabul.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 29, 1964.

¹⁰⁹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Six Apartment Buildings Near Completion.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 15, 1965.

¹¹⁰ Watkins, *Afghanistan, Land in Transition*, 25.

¹¹¹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Goodbye to Candles in Kabul.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 3, 1966.

wanted to move forward with plans to construct more child care centers and develop a plan for systematic plans for birth control through the country.¹¹²

In 1966, the Second Development Plan envisioned more than one-hundred projects, including a saw mill, furniture and smelting factories, maternity houses, and expanded housing. The project expenditures in the Second Development Plan totaled “5110 million Afghanis” or \$850 million. Almost 23 percent of this cost contributed to agriculture, irrigation, as well as regional planning. A lot of the construction and phases extended into the Third Development Plan.¹¹³ Kabul became a modernized, colorful, cosmopolitan capital through King Zahir’s development efforts. Just like most capitals, Kabul had many new impressive buildings.¹¹⁴

In 1967, the Kabul Metalworks Factory was one of the most well-equipped plants in the capital. An official from the government said that there were high hopes that within a few years this metalworks factory would develop and expand into a “modern enterprise.” The initial 2 million Afghani contributed as capital investment came from an Iranian national. Kabul Metalworks produced a variety of iron and aluminum frames, tables, tops, beds, desks, windows, doors, chairs, and hangers. The factory’s management was aware of fierce competition in exports, so Kabul Metalworks wanted to focus on supplying the local markets instead.¹¹⁵ The investment opportunities out of Kabul allowed for foreign investors to capitalize, not just foreign governments.

Few foreigners wandered into Kabul without reason, those who did visit, did so with a purpose. Tourism brings in large amounts of revenue for underdeveloped countries, but the

¹¹² Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Expanding Public Health Facilities.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 12, 1966.

¹¹³ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Development Expenditures Total Af. 5110 M. In 1345.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 31, 1966.

¹¹⁴ Watkins, *Afghanistan, Land in Transition*, 24.

¹¹⁵ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Kabul Metalworks Factory Expand.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 5, 1967.

Tourist Bureau in Afghanistan cut publicity abroad in 1968. The reason the Afghan government did not advertise tourist destinations abroad was because Kabul could not accommodate such an influx of tourist. Kabul had twenty-five hotels at the time and they were not all “first class” and the amount of tourist activities were close to none, so this was why the government did not invite tourism through such publicity. Robert McNamara, the president of the World Bank visited Kabul in 1968 and felt shocked by the potential of what could be a sound tourist destination.¹¹⁶ Money poured into Kabul from many donors around the globe and not all the aid came from foreign governments.

In 1969, an article covered Kabul’s possible origin and according to some historians “the original site of Kabul was Shewaki”¹¹⁷ This article read as a history piece, but the paper gave its readers a reminder that Kabul constantly changed throughout the city’s history. Another article covered a government funded rehabilitation center in Kabul for the physically handicapped and at the time, such a facility did not exist.¹¹⁸ The newspaper promoted the modernization effort in different ways and changes to infrastructure in Kabul meant development to the readers.

The government advertised Afghanistan’s gradual development of infrastructure in the *Kabul Times*. New roads and buildings granted Kabulis a better quality of life.¹¹⁹ Outside of Kabul, most of Afghanistan used dirt roads to get around. The infrastructure required to help operate the capital dramatically improved during the 1960s. Majority of the funds that assisted the Afghan government upgrade its infrastructure came from abroad and the Soviet Union provided the most aid.

¹¹⁶ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Developing tourist resorts.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 9, 1968.

¹¹⁷ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “A Nostalgic Look at Old Kabul.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 20, 1969.

¹¹⁸ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “ASRPH plans rehabilitation center for Kabul.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 21, 1969.

¹¹⁹ Watkins, *Afghanistan, Land in Transition*, 23.

1960s Growth: Summarized

This decade presented Kabulis with the opportunity to express themselves on a national level through a new form of media to the rest of Afghanistan. This was cause to bring feuds to the forefront and out in the open. Many different newspapers and magazines began to emerge, while political debates in parliament broadcasted live on the radio. Those in the capital received information from all sides; Islamist, communist, leftist, and other parties were now openly airing their grievances about one another. All these groups “had equal opportunities to develop ideologically in the ‘decade of democracy’.”¹²⁰ The change in the 1960s was easy to notice as the quality of the content in the *Kabul Times* increased as the years went on; the English within each issue even became more fluent with less grammatical and punctual errors.

The *Kabul Times* was an active supporter of the government’s efforts to modernize the country and, therefore, it ignored stories that highlighted crime and corruption, which created a false narrative. The government used the newspaper for propaganda, which was why it printed in English, because it also presented a modern voice to foreign audiences. Kabul became more progressive and the government did support the direction of democracy. According to the newspaper, the modernization effort by the government made strides in five different fields that all encompassed the development of Kabul into a modern city. The *Kabul Times* actively informed its readers of where and when it received aid to fund these developments. The newspaper knew that its readers enjoyed the “horse race” between the United States and the Soviets on development issues

¹²⁰ Misdaq, *Afghanistan: Political Frailty and External Interference*, 229.

Geopolitics: World Affairs During the Early Modernization Period

The climate of global affairs in the 1960s was some of the tensest in contemporary history. Volatile neighbors such as Iran to the west and Pakistan to its south surrounded Afghanistan. Along the northern Afghan border was the Soviet Union in what would be today's Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Assessing what was happening in the world, clarifies why those in Kabul made the decisions they made. Small skirmishes along the southern border in the disputed Pashtunistan region with Pakistan occurred throughout the decade. King Zahir fired Daoud Khan from the prime minister position because of Daoud's support for an independent Pashtunistan.¹²¹ These international relations shaped Kabul's policy and government in some instances.

The Soviets were in a Cold War race with the United States, each of these powers hoped to spread their influence through proxies around the world. The Soviet Union outmaneuvered the United States by allocating more resources and money in the form of aid to further Kabul's modernization effort. Towards the end of the decade, the *Kabul Times* reported about more Afghan- Soviet pacts. Daoud requested aid from the west, but accepted Soviet financial assistance when the United States did not accept the responsibility. By 1969, at least 60 percent of Afghanistan's foreign assistance came from USSR. The United States was the third biggest contributor to Afghanistan's tourism, whereas the Soviets only contributed less than 1 percent.¹²² These statistics forged from global affairs, the United States did not want to upset the regional balance with disputes over Kashmir and the Pashtunistan issue, and this reflected the aid given to Afghanistan.

¹²¹ Grassmuck, *Afghanistan: Some New Approaches*, 193.

¹²² Nancy Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 656.

Kabul received aid from all major economic powers of that time and the world supported the modernization effort. China supported Afghanistan's development, but the communist regime in Beijing did not seem to prioritize the matter even though China's financial aid ranked fourth in 1968-69.¹²³ Kabul's relationship with Greece was on positive terms as discussed in the *Kabul Times* "Afghanistan's cordial relations with Greece emanating from ancient cultural and historical ties were progressing satisfactorily."¹²⁴ India had a good trade standing with the Afghan government. The United States were knee deep in the jungles of Saigon as the Vietnam War raged on throughout the decade. Even if the United States showed little interest in Afghan affairs, West Germany, France, and Japan devoted considerable resources, possibly to counteract Soviet efforts.

End of the Decade: 1960s

Many changes occurred in the 1960s that changed the trajectory of Kabuli's lives forever. Developments were a constant endeavor for the Royal Government of Afghanistan under King Zahir, which the *Kabul Times* emphasized. The one significant factor was that Kabul relied on the aid of many foreign governments. The financial aid that helped Kabul realize its dream to modernize mostly came from the USSR and the United States. Both world powers tried to impose a certain amount of influence onto Kabul as women unveiled and religious education shifted towards a secular western standard. These developments began to affect those in Kabul, locals no longer depended on the limited wisdom of an imam for world news.

With more access to global markets and media, Kabulis received information from multiple facets. The *Kabul Times* covered world news and came in multiple language. Those in

¹²³ Nancy Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 641.

¹²⁴ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "AFGHAN-GREEK FRIENDSHIP TIES." *Kabul Times*, October 1, 1962.

the capital experienced exposure to a world far different from the one they knew and the government in Kabul continued to advance modernization efforts. Five main factors were vital to the development of Kabul according to the newspaper. The *Kabul Times* covered: education, agriculture, trade, women, and infrastructure extensively. In the 1960s, a section specifically for women appeared in the papers and this showed how women were at the forefront of this modernization effort, an idea that both the United States and USSR imported into Kabul. All these factors mentioned above are what the *Kabul Times* reported. The five main subjects outlined by the newspaper defined the modernization efforts in the capital.

It is important to understand this period of modernization as those in Kabul experienced it to comprehend how they politically aligned themselves. King Zahir pushed for modernization and this trickled down to the people of Afghanistan under his governance. King Zahir mainstreamed Kabul's effort to modernize within the scope of the five factors listed in the newspaper and even though Daoud did not agree with the king on everything, their visions for the country were similar. Nur Taraki, Hafizullah Amin, and Babrak Karmal espoused socialist ideas that they got from outside the country. Taraki was in India where he met Abdul Ghaftar Khan, a man revered even today as the most preeminent voice of independence from the British Empire.¹²⁵ Karmal and Taraki were active in their own newspapers even though their publications were not as popular, but by the end of the 1960s, the younger population began to politically align themselves. Amin used his experience as a teacher to spread communism throughout Afghanistan in its formative years. The *Kabul Times* did not once mention the creation of the communist parties or their split.

¹²⁵ Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), 15.

The *Kabul Times* was a government mouthpiece that ignored opposition during the years of the monarchy. The newspaper never published any articles that suggested a segment of Afghans rejected or resisted efforts to modernize. Other primary sources and secondary sources likewise do not mention any major conflict or signs of opposition along the lines of the upheaval encountered after 1973. The only opposition to the government under Zahir Shah's rule came from the PDPA in their publications and those spread among the very few communists' circles who were literate that constituted a very small percentage of the population.¹²⁶

The communist parties (Khalq and Parcham) named after the newspapers formed by Taraki and Karmal were technically illegal. The 1964 Constitution allowed for the formation of political parties, but under the guise of Islam. Communism at its core was based on materialism and that contradicted Islam. This was driving a rift between political parties as both the government in Kabul emerged on the global stage and the communist parties within the country. Aside from Taraki's and Karmal's sympathetic views towards communist ideas in their publications, the Soviets gained favor by their consistent development efforts in the capital and around Afghanistan. The communist parties became more prevalent in the following decade. Modernization efforts peaked in the 1970s until the end of the decade when all the efforts come undone and a blanket of destruction fell over the entire country.

¹²⁶ "Afghanistan: Literacy rate among the population above 15 year and older," UNESCO, February 16, 2021, <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/af?theme=education-and-literacy#slideoutmenu>.

“Chap. 2 – Turmoil in Kabul: A Split in Vision”

“The Pashtun tribes are always engaged in private or public war. Everyone is a warrior, a politician and a theologian. Every large house is a real feudal fortress... Every family cultivates its vendetta; every clan, its feud... Nothing is ever forgotten and very few debts are left unpaid.”¹²⁷

At the turn of the decade, Kabul was on the correct path to modernization. Afghanistan avoided any major conflicts while Kabul received foreign aid from multiple countries.¹²⁸ The capital maintained its course to modernize Afghanistan into a developed nation with a unified vision of what modernity meant. There was sufficient proof that the modernization effort progressed through all the developments that the *Kabul Times* consistently promoted. This chapter will examine the continued modernization efforts, as highlighted in the *Kabul Times*, up to the 1973 coup, which altered the country’s social, political, and economic trajectory. Communist party members became more vocal this decade and this upset the rural segments of the population. In addition, this chapter will examine the 1973 coup until the 1978 Saur Revolution.¹²⁹ These events are critical to understand Afghanistan’s internal political fallout that accompanied modernization until the 1979 Soviet invasion. The year 1973 was pivotal for Afghanistan as it marked the end of the monarchy and ushered in a new era of political violence.

The changes in leadership brought Kabul a new set of problems as politics began to shape Afghan identities. The policies formed by the leaders of Afghanistan became the distinction between different party members. Afghans aligned themselves with the parties that suited them. The divisions among the Afghan population came from the political leaders who manipulated

¹²⁷ Winston Churchill, *The Story of the Malakand Field Force: an Episode of Frontier War. With Maps, Plans, Etc.* (London: Longmans, Green, 1901), 134-135.

¹²⁸ Cyril Edwin Black et al., *The Modernization of Inner Asia* (London: Routledge, 2015), 222.

¹²⁹ Saur translates into April in Farsi.

their supporters to gain power. All the political leaders promoted modernization, but each party held different interpretations of what that meant. Until the 1970s, modernization meant westernization, but that changed after the 1973 coup. King Zahir Shah's ideas of modernization came from western examples, such as United States and U.K., King Zahir maintained his vision for modernity and continued to develop the country along the five fields discussed in the previous chapter before Daoud overthrew the monarchy. President Daoud Khan leaned more towards a Soviet model of modernization as opposed to a democratic model like his predecessor. That meant in the 1970s that Kabulis experienced modernization through multiple interpretations of different ideologies such as capitalism and communism. Daoud's display of nationalism glorified an ethnic and tribal hierarchy.

Daoud and the PDPA before the 1973 coup

To understand why Daoud Khan gained enough popularity to sustain a legitimate government after he overthrew the monarchy, it is important to examine his activities prior to the 1960s and during the early modernization phase. In 1953, Daoud became the prime minister of Afghanistan after the country experienced some economic instabilities. He formed the king's cabinet with new people who were able to strengthen the economy. Daoud understood the need for productive forces to maintain a stable economy. One of the first policies implemented was the creation of a bank credit system.¹³⁰ This boosted the agricultural production in a country where most people made a living in agriculture. Daoud wanted the state to control economic development in Afghanistan. Many of Daoud's policies were politically controversial.

¹³⁰ Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 251.

The charismatic character that popularized Daoud got him kicked out of government. Daoud promised Pashtuns on both sides of the Afghanistan and Pakistan border their independence. Tensions with Pakistan grew when Daoud terminated the 1921 Anglo-Afghan treaty.¹³¹ The rift between Afghanistan and Pakistan lasted until the mid-1970s. Daoud expanded state control as prime minister, but he also wanted evolve Islam with modernization.¹³² Khalq and Parcham both later supported an independent Pashtunistan because the policy aligned with the PDPA agenda.¹³³ This policy gained Daoud supporters within the communist party as he appeared open to change and anti-Pakistan. Daoud had to resign in 1963, because of his staunch views about the Pashtunistan issue.¹³⁴ The *Kabul Times* did not mention Daoud after he resigned; Daoud seemingly became invisible in both the Afghan press and scholarly sources. He was a forgotten man. Scholars however, do focus considerable attention on the formation of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in 1965.

It is important to understand why communism became popular and why the communist party split into two faction. The small working class of Afghanistan did not understand socialism it was the portion of the bourgeoisie that leaned left that understood it.¹³⁵ Circles of Marxist and socialist came together to form the PDPA. The 1964 Constitution granted people the right to form political parties, but a provision under article 32 of the constitution stated the political parties could not promote ideologies that did not adhere to the constitution.¹³⁶ The first PDPA meeting held illegally consisted of Nur Taraki as General Secretary, Babrak Karmal, and five

¹³¹ This treaty established the border between British India and Afghanistan.

¹³² Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 259.

¹³³ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 46.

¹³⁴ Crews, *Afghan Modern: the History of a Global Nation*, 190.

¹³⁵ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 6.

¹³⁶ Government of Afghanistan, "Constitution of Afghanistan = Assasi Qanun (1964)" (2005). Digitized Afghanistan Materials in English from the Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection. 15.

others. About a year after the PDPA formed, it began to print its own newspaper, *Khalq* “The People.”

The PDPA consisted of teachers, students, intellectuals, officers, and some officials.¹³⁷ One of the first tasks for the communist party was to expand its network of members, but it only wanted the literate class of Afghans. Some of these educated Afghans trained at Columbia University.¹³⁸ The party wanted some of the best minds in Afghanistan to promote a radical agenda. Differences among founding members regarding the methods of promotion led to the first split of the PDPA.¹³⁹ Nur Taraki and Hafizullah Amin led the Khalq faction. Babrak Karmal was at the head of the Parcham “The Banner.” The Khalq were dominantly Pashtun and recruited chiefly lower-class Pashtuns. The Parcham sought out wealthy intellectuals from Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, and other backgrounds.¹⁴⁰ This revived and elevated the ancient ethnic and tribal tensions that were almost non-existent for several decades before the modernization period. Political leaders orchestrated the divisive sentiments that began to emerge within Kabul and spread throughout Afghanistan. The motivation for the political elite in Afghanistan came from ambition, power, greed, and often a combination of all three things. Each leader in Afghanistan promoted modernization, but the implementation and objectives often differed.

Different interpretations of what modernization meant simply became another part of the disputes between different segments of the population. Afghans did not resist modernization, most of them welcomed the efficiency it brought to their society and this was evident with the numerous *Kabul Times* articles cited throughout this thesis. The problem was the fact that

¹³⁷ Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 282.

¹³⁸ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 26.

¹³⁹ Black et al., *The Modernization of Inner Asia*, 345.

¹⁴⁰ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 29.

Daoud, Taraki, Amin, and Karmal used their supporters to fulfill their own individual ambitions. Daoud Khan was a popular figure within Afghanistan ever since he entered politics. The *Kabul Times* wrote many articles about him until his resignation and then the publication printed nothing about him. There was also no mention of Taraki, Karmal, or the formation of the communist party. Until 1973, the *Kabul Times* only promoted modernization as pursued by the monarch's agenda.

Continuous Growth in the Kabul Times

Between 1970 and 1973, Kabul successfully modernized in ways that mirrored western standards, at least according to the newspaper. Despite this progress, modernization created political friction and turmoil that caused to derail the government's efforts to change by factional disputes. What caused this turmoil came from external factors that seeped into the capital through support from foreign entities and their interest in Kabul. The Soviets clearly had influence over the capital and that was evident through the numerous articles that highlighted Afghan-Soviet relations.

Afghan media did not seem to highlight education in 1970. The stories that the government did publish continued to endorse the commitment from the capital to modernize its education system to equal a western standard. The *Kabul Times* reported about Soviet delegations that came to Kabul or students who left Kabul for higher learning.¹⁴¹ These types of articles are a perfect example of how globalization re-entered Kabul in the 1970s.¹⁴² The government's entire basis to modernize education solely depended on other nations to cooperate and invest, whether it was time, money, or, in most cases, both. The greater number of youths in

¹⁴¹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "15 students visit FRG for higher studies." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 3, 1970.

¹⁴² Edited by Shafie Rahel, "USSR educational mission visits Afghanistan." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 3, 1970.

Afghanistan attended school outside the cities. The developments in the capital did not mean that all of Afghanistan progressed. In 1971, a section for readers who had complaints about inadequacies became available. This new section allowed students to comment about the state of despair outside of Kabul. Schools outside the capital complained about the lack of additional space to accommodate the increase of students and claimed that they could not secure funds for even minor repairs. Another complaint was about how the people in rural areas were generally poor and that the Education Ministry should devote some resources to a food program for the students.¹⁴³ In 1972, students from Kabul went to Miami, Florida to complete their pilot training in the month of Ramadan.¹⁴⁴ This article highlighted globalization as the West accepted Afghans to participate and train while the Kabulis exported their religious practices abroad. The *Kabul Times* often promoted students who received education abroad, especially in the United States.¹⁴⁵ Once more, the newspaper promoted excellence through western connectivity.

Developments in agriculture continued in 1970 as the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation began to study about animal and plant diseases. Surveyors inspected ten acres in Kabul on behalf of the government to learn about possible harmful insects.¹⁴⁶ The preservation of pasture lands became a contested topic as conflict between farmers and owners of pasture lands were more frequent. The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation wanted to implement a new pasture project to help quell disputes, but admittedly needed help to do so. The newspaper reported about problems in development more frequently than it had in the past. With more reports about the problems of development, the *Kabul Times* gave its reader a clearer picture of

¹⁴³ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "MORE CARE FOR PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 1, 1971.

¹⁴⁴ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Bright future predicted for young Afghans." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 7, 1972.

¹⁴⁵ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Afghan student at Nasa." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 10, 1972.

¹⁴⁶ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Papers comment on eradicating crop, animal pests, price changes during Eid holidays, weekends." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 7, 1970.

the progress. In 1971, an estimated 50 percent of farmers owned most of the cultivated land in Afghanistan. The data from a survey indicated the land was in fact underutilized. The same data showed that the average farmer in the sample owned a tractor and did not possess the proper resources. The article stated that “A large household headed by middle-aged, illiterate, and uneducated (but not unintelligent) men” had little access to mass media or urban life.¹⁴⁷ In 1972, the Agricultural Extension Department distributed 3,500 tons of improved seed wheat to the farmers that year.¹⁴⁸ The private press and government press both expressed the need for private companies in the field of agriculture, but no action on the part of the government occurred to make this a reality. Agriculture remained the traditional form of earning a livelihood by individuals and the government was in no rush to disrupt the local economic situation as the ramifications would be massive protest or revolt.¹⁴⁹ Those who held power in the capital endlessly promoted why they hoped to modernize Afghanistan, but the *Kabul Times* reader could learn more about Germany or the Soviet Union than rural Afghanistan.

Globalization was also a key factor for Afghanistan and this occurred through trade and diplomacy with many countries around the world, especially its northern neighbor. In 1970, a Soviet trade delegation met with its Afghan counterparts to discuss improved and increased trade protocols.¹⁵⁰ It was clear that at the turn of the decade the Soviets stepped up their efforts to provide aid to Kabul. Afghanistan and the USSR signed many agreements about future protocols. One agreement stated that Kabul would purchase 10,000 tons of sugar from the USSR for about one million dollars.¹⁵¹ The Afghan-Soviet ties grew stronger in 1971 when there was a

¹⁴⁷ Raz Mohammad Mahlonwal, “50% FARMERS OWN MAJORITY OF LAND.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 9, 1971.

¹⁴⁸ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Ag. Extension distributes 3,5000 tons improved seeds.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 2, 1972.

¹⁴⁹ Nokata Cheen, “Afghanistan needs private agricultural companies.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 12, 1972.

¹⁵⁰ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Afghan, Soviet trade missions begin talks here.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 6, 1970.

¹⁵¹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Afghanistan to purchase 10,000 tons of sugar from USSR.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 7, 1970.

reception for the two countries at an event called “friendship society.”¹⁵² Afghan and Soviet officials often met at the Baghe Bala restaurant to discuss the expansion of cordial ties between Afghanistan and the USSR.¹⁵³ There were a lot of articles that detailed the connection between both countries and most of them highlighted Afghanistan’s dependency on the USSR. A specific article stated Afghanistan decided to increase its tea import from both China and the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁴ Although the Soviets increased their aid, the United States still provided help to Kabul. For example, in 1972 the United States provided Kabul roughly 20,000 tons of wheat, 360 tons of edible oil, \$14,000 worth of medicines that designated to rush relief to areas affected by drought. This amount exceeded the annual amount of aid given to Afghanistan by the United States. A source close to the operation said that the United States took on the cost of transportation for supplies up to Karachi and possibly up to the point of distribution to the affected areas themselves.¹⁵⁵ This move by the United States was to promote humanitarian efforts as the aid provided to Afghanistan went beyond the usual cap. The Soviets financed advancements in all fields of modernization. Soviet aid expanded Afghan civil aviation and the newspaper covered all the improvements made to the airlines.¹⁵⁶ An important objective of modernization was the liberation of women in Afghanistan.

By 1970, women in Kabul had more mobility as more stories began to report about specific women who traveled abroad alone.¹⁵⁷ This aspect of modernization granted Afghan women more agency and opened a new world of experiences to them. Afghan nurses often went

¹⁵² The article did not detail what the “friendship society” was, but it must have been purely symbolic.

¹⁵³ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Reception given for Soviet-Afghan friendship society.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 2, 1971.

¹⁵⁴ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Afghanistan steps up tea imports from Russia, China.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 9, 1971.

¹⁵⁵ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “U.S contributes additional aid supplies for “Help”.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 5, 1972.

¹⁵⁶ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “AAA president visits Soviet Union.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 9, 1972.

¹⁵⁷ Edited by Shafie Rahel, “Girls scout leader relates experience of American visit.” *Kabul Times*, Dec. 7, 1970.

to India to train.¹⁵⁸ The women of Kabul did not just benefit from the modernization period; they were active contributors to the effort themselves as highlighted by the countless articles in the *Kabul Times*.¹⁵⁹ In 1971, an article highlighted why women's main responsibility was to bear children according to Afghan mores. Afghan women with no children were "considered to be like a tree without any fruit."¹⁶⁰ This article gives great insight into the mindset of the average Afghan of the time. Women made huge social strides, but the patriarchal mentality of mostly uneducated men held women back. A man could take another wife if his first wife only gave birth to daughters. The reason behind this was economic, fathers raised their daughters to be married off, whereas, boys could lend a hand around the farm and contribute. Articles about women expanded their agency, so when the newspaper printed about the oldest women's hospital in 1971, it helped their cause as it promoted why women's contributions mattered.¹⁶¹ Women tried to educate themselves at every presentable opportunity and they utilized their education to contribute to the advancement of Afghanistan. In 1972, the *Kabul Times* focused on an article in *Mermon* magazine¹⁶² by a staff writer that underlined the fact that women in Afghanistan took care of the house, but were also farmers and expert handicrafts in villages. Women pushed to educate and exercise their freedoms ever since the rule of Amanullah Khan, but the article stated that the reform program for women began successfully with the 1964 Afghan Constitution. This article claimed the royal family wanted women to have the right to vote, abandon the chadary, and to hold administrative positions.¹⁶³ The government under King Zahir wanted people to

¹⁵⁸ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Nursing is rewarding occupation, says Miss Assia Rasekh." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 14, 1970.

¹⁵⁹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Home Briefs." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 22, 1970.

¹⁶⁰ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "When a women gives birth to a girl." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 4, 1971.

¹⁶¹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Women's Hospital expands services." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 13, 1971.

¹⁶² No further information was disclosed about the referenced *Mermon* magazine. Mermon can mean Madam or Mom in Farsi.

¹⁶³ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Mermon reviews Afghan women's social roles." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 18, 1972.

know that they were the ones who enacted such progressive measures into the country that liberated women.

Infrastructure continued to expand in 1970 as the government discovered natural gas deposits in northern Afghanistan. The telecommunication training center also expanded with the help from the United Nations Development Program.¹⁶⁴ The *Kabul Times* proved once more how Kabul's modernization efforts were only possible through foreign aid. The United Nations prepared a master-plan for Kabul's sewage, waste disposal, and water supply. The plan proposed by the United Nations intended to help Kabul for over a 30-year period, along with finance for the projects, the United Nations provided an expert to assist while the plan rolled out. The plan was to provide the Kabul area with hygienic drinking water in 1971.¹⁶⁵ The government under King Zahir also understood the importance of a well-structured bus service.¹⁶⁶ A stable infrastructure meant steady development. In 1972, the newspaper continued its reports about the infrastructure as the government installed two water pump stations along the Kokcha River. Both stations managed to cover over 300 acres of land.¹⁶⁷ The *Kabul Times* highlighted the progression of infrastructure developments before and after the coup the same.

Afghanistan after the 1973 coup

Daoud Khan staged a bloodless coup in July 1973 that ousted his cousin and former king, Zahir Shah. There were rumors the royal cousins staged the coup, but that was hearsay.¹⁶⁸ Edgar

¹⁶⁴ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Telecommunication Training Centre expands." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 10, 1970.

¹⁶⁵ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Master plan for waste disposal submitted by U.N. for Kabul area." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 2, 1971.

¹⁶⁶ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Ways to improve city bus service." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 7, 1971.

¹⁶⁷ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Two water pumping stations installed on Kokcha River." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 2, 1972.

¹⁶⁸ Although unproven, the geopolitical history of the region supports the notion of a staged coup. Many countries in the Middle East had regime changes and this 1973 coup ensured that power stayed within the

O' Ballance claimed eight people died because of the coup and that may dispel the notion of a staged coup.¹⁶⁹ King Zahir was in Italy when the coup occurred and he renounced his throne a month later. The Central Committee, made up mostly of officers who partook in the coup, became the supreme body of state power.¹⁷⁰ Daoud Khan was the founder, president, and prime minister when he declared an end to the monarchy in Afghanistan and proclaimed a republic. Daoud had the support of the younger population, the army, and officers to bring about the Republic of Afghanistan.¹⁷¹ The only problem with the first president in the Republic of Afghanistan was that he came to power without any democratic due process.

President Daoud never held an election to secure his position, he simply became the highest authority in the country. The *Kabul Times* never outlined a clear vision for Afghanistan that differed from the previous regime. President Daoud utilized foreign aid the same as King Zahir, but the way Daoud abruptly replaced the king and installed a republic caused confusion for many Afghans who respected the institution of the monarchy. Opportunist now held a blueprint to overthrow the government if they could justify the action. Daoud promoted the monarchy under King Zahir and his presidency resembled a monarch's reign. Some of the newly appointed ministers within Daoud's cabinet were communist and this was cause for alarm among Islamist.¹⁷² Most of Daoud's supporters received training in the USSR and according to Louis

royal family. King Zahir supposedly received a pension while exiled, most kings in exile never receive such hospitality from the usurper.

¹⁶⁹ Edgar O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 79.

¹⁷⁰ Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 294.

¹⁷¹ Louis Dupree, "Afghanistan under the Khalq," *Problems of Communism* 28, no. 4 (July-August 1979): 38.

¹⁷² Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 295.

Dupree, “they were more nationalist than communist in outlook.”¹⁷³ This this was the pretext for political violence that plunged Afghanistan into disorder.

Violence began to seep into local life through political turmoil. The resistance to communism within Afghanistan already started in small pockets in the early 1970s. Religious forces protested the spread of communism and its ideas, such as women within the government. In Jalalabad, elders of the Shinwari tribe, traders, and other locals, demonstrated their opposition to Soviet-Afghan relations when 5000 protesters turned violent and destroyed the Spinghar Hotel. This caused the government to call troops to Jalalabad to suppress the protesters after they destroyed the largest hotel in the city.¹⁷⁴ The anger of those who opposed the left-leaning government was completely absent in the *Kabul Times*. The government’s publications were not only propaganda to foreign readers, but also to those within Afghanistan. The newspaper published reports that made government leadership look good, but it did not report about opposition to the new regime.

Opposition grew and that resulted in the assassination of the Minister of Planning, Dr. Avi Ahmad Khorum. Those who opposed the communist government assassinated Dr. Khorum outside his office. This was a targeted hit on the Minister of Planning because he identified with the Parcham faction of the communist party.¹⁷⁵ The communists influence was chiefly in Kabul, rural Afghans only understood tradition and religion as most of the country remained illiterate in the 1970s.¹⁷⁶ This meant that a new regime sympathetic to communism, threatened Afghan mores and Islam, due to communist’s secular ideology. This became the basis of resistance to

¹⁷³ Dupree, "Afghanistan under the Khalq," 39.

¹⁷⁴ Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 291.

¹⁷⁵ Agent France Press, “World News Brief.” *The New York Times*, November 17, 1977.

¹⁷⁶ “Afghanistan: Literacy rate among the population above 15 year and older,” UNESCO, February 16, 2021, <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/af?theme=education-and-literacy#slideoutmenu>.

communism in Afghanistan and the main thread of resistance following the Soviet Union's invasion in 1979.¹⁷⁷

The Muslim clergy led anti-communist demonstrations in response to the high number of anti-government protests organized by the PDPA. From the years 1968 through 1972, the PDPA held over a thousand protest attended by intellectuals in support of factory workers.¹⁷⁸ This naturally stirred up resentment and fear from the religious forces, such as Islamists, due to the number of youths who were susceptible to communist ideology. The government under Daoud tried to suppress all oppositions, whether Islamic or communist as it incorporated aggressive measures to enact policies. Communists within Afghanistan were only more emboldened as the government in Kabul allowed women to unveil because it meant their influence made a difference. This caused the Islamist to resent both, the communist and Daoud's government. With the government leading its modernization effort to resemble countries, such as the United States and the USSR, Islamist reacted due to their perception of waning authority.

After 1973, many changes occurred within Afghanistan and with these changes came challenges. The elite within Kabul understood why they wanted to modernize Afghanistan and they promoted it as such in the *Kabul Times*. The communists for the first time felt like they had some agency in a country based off tribal hierarchy. The religious groups felt as though Afghanistan was turning towards a godless direction. The Soviets began to pay more attention to the political situation in Afghanistan as the Parcham party possessed influence in Daoud's

¹⁷⁷ Henry Gilfond, *Afghanistan* (New York: F. Watts, 1980), 27.

¹⁷⁸ Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 290.

regime.¹⁷⁹ Daoud tried to mold a national identity in a country fractured by different factions, but he ultimately created more division.

There are no articles available in the database within the collection of the University of Nebraska for the *Kabul Times* on 17 July 1973, the day the coup occurred. The government under Daoud may have censored the paper as his cronies took over each aspect of the government, the publications included. Shafie Rahel was no longer editor of the *Kabul Times*. Immediately after the coup, the first article on 21 July 1973, printed a headline that emphasized India, Czechoslovakia, FRG, Mongolia, and the GDR's recognition towards the Republic of Afghanistan.¹⁸⁰ The self-anointed president changed the flag, national song, and banknote. Daoud wanted to change the image of the country to authenticate the transition into a republic.

The newspaper validated Daoud's government with articles that covered recognition from other countries. Why was the *Kabul Times* so quick to justify this usurpation of power? The newspaper was solely a proponent of the government in Kabul. On the 22 July 1973, the headline of the front page read "Iran, Bulgaria, Austria, Bangladesh, Turkey, UK, & Pak. Recognize the Republic of Afghanistan."¹⁸¹ This article detailed more countries that extended official recognition to Daoud's government. In a smaller piece right under the major headline, there was a report that detailed why the United States government wished to continue its relationship with the Republic of Afghanistan.¹⁸² This *Kabul Times* successfully promoted the world's acceptance of Daoud as a legitimate president.

¹⁷⁹ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 79.

¹⁸⁰ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "India, Czechoslovakia, FRG, Mongolia, and the GDR all recognize the Republic of Afghanistan." *Kabul Times*, July 21, 1973.

¹⁸¹ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Iran, Bulgaria, Austria, Bangladesh, Turkey, UK & Pak. recognize the Republic of Afghanistan." *Kabul Times*, July 22, 1973.

¹⁸² Edited by Shafie Rahel, "U.S. seeks to continue ties with Republic of Afghanistan." *Kabul Times*, July 21, 1973.

The way the *Kabul Times* reported about the change in leadership, Daoud's government sought the political recognition to help substantiate its legitimacy. The *Kabul Times* wanted their readers to know the claims of Daoud's legitimacy substantiated. On 25 July 1973, a week after the coup, the *Kabul Times* interviewed President Daoud. According to the newspaper, President Daoud said "Whenever a nation verges on disaster and corruption in governmental institutions reach its highest, and hope for reform is totally lost, then it befalls every patriot to the rescue of his country."¹⁸³ Daoud justified his actions and claimed that the previous government's corruption required immediate intervention to save the country or it would "be totally lost." This course of action by Daoud set a new precedent, one that allowed those who disagreed with the government to replace it. The new government sought to promote a corrupt-free administration, but failed to express why it was different than the monarchy.

The newspaper continued to report about why the country accepted its new president. The *Kabul Times* highlighted the fact that Pashtun tribes accepted the Republic of Afghanistan and many different regions all welcomed the change.¹⁸⁴ The newspaper printed many reports to normalize this sentiment to the world. One article discussed why the economy needed cooperation from all Afghans to help reconstruct their country. The article discussed why the previous government allowed the national currency to become inflated and that all the resources and labor required were ready to continue development.¹⁸⁵ President Daoud annulled the 1964 constitution as a symbolic gesture to make way for his own set of laws. He mandated all soldiers, civil servants, and judges to swear an oath of loyalty to the Republic of Afghanistan in three new

¹⁸³ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Reasons for coup in Afghanistan explained by President, PM Daoud in press conference." *Kabul Times*, July 21, 1973.

¹⁸⁴ Edited by Shafie Rahel, "Pashtoon elders congratulate Republic of Afghanistan." *Kabul Times*, July 23, 1973.

¹⁸⁵ By Chaprihari. "Cooperation required in reconstructing nat'l economy." *Kabul Times*, July 25, 1973.

decrees which he issued on government work.¹⁸⁶ He essentially ruled as a monarch as he mandated obedience and loyalty. The way the *Kabul Times* reported under Daoud's leadership did in fact differ from that when the publication was under King Zahir.

The *Kabul Times* extensively reported about the regime change until the end of the summer in 1973. Regular reports resumed on topics such as international news and factors to improve the economic and social conditions in Afghanistan. The new government began to acknowledge problems within Afghanistan that compelled the *Kabul Times* to report on internal problems. Under Zahir Shah, the government gave minimal reports on problematic developments. The government under King Zahir seemingly assumed bad publicity could jeopardize international aid, the country's image, or both. Daoud did claim Zahir Shah was corrupt and the lack of press on internal issues did cover up Afghan realities. Under Daoud, the *Kabul Times* highlighted the troubles within the country. One article, for example, covered a police seizure of 800lbs of hashish.¹⁸⁷ This approach by government publications justified the 1973 coup as the previous regime never published about drug seizures or internal problems. Modernization efforts continued under the new president, but the promotion developments varied.

The *Kabul Times* still promoted education as one article stated that 108 literacy courses had opened since 17 July 1973, which was the date that Daoud overthrew the monarchy.¹⁸⁸ The article let its readers know that the new government was competent and able to continue its goals of modernization through educational growth. The Soviets pushed to educate the women's

¹⁸⁶ Edited by Noor Mohammed Rahimi, "President issues three decrees on govt. work." *Kabul Times*, July 21, 1973.

¹⁸⁷ Edited by Noor Mohammed Rahimi, "800 pounds hash seized in Kabul." *Kabul Times*, July 30, 1973.

¹⁸⁸ Edited by Noor Mohammed Rahimi, "108 literacy courses opened since July 17." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 8, 1973.

population in Central Asia and President Daoud made it a point to emphasize his dedication to women's rights. This aspect of education became a controversial topic that caused much debate across all of Afghanistan and still does today. Education continued to expand under President Daoud, but modernization took on another definition as the new president depended more heavily on the Soviets to fund the effort.

The emphasis on education from Daoud's government differed from King Zahir. The communist party stressed women's education as a requirement for Kabul to develop into a modern society. It was a communist belief that an "educated woman would actively and successfully compete with a man in every field." This approach disregarded Afghan traditional views of women. Afghan men held a fear of women's "potential contacts with other men."¹⁸⁹ Under Daoud, the discussion of women's rights increased as more articles covered Afghan women than previously. The newspaper promoted the emancipation of women in Afghanistan.¹⁹⁰ Women prevailed in the forefront of those years, but women had not reached full freedom. The publication promoted the idea that women could join in social activities for the first time. This statement by the *Kabul Times* was not true as it reported about women who had participated in social activities previously. The *Kabul Times* printed claims to bolster President Daoud's image even though it contradicted itself. These claims demonstrate why the *Kabul Times* was in fact a propaganda tool for those who held power in Kabul. Another realm of development that concerned the government was agriculture and economic progress.

President Daoud wanted agriculture to continue to improve under his new regime. The Soviets paid for a huge portion of the developments in agriculture as the *Kabul Times* reported.

¹⁸⁹ Gregory J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 98.

¹⁹⁰ Edited by Noor Mohammed Rahimi, "Emancipating of women in our country" *Kabul Times*, Dec. 31, 1973.

Many deals between Afghanistan and the USSR occurred after Daoud usurped power.¹⁹¹ The General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Leonid Brezhnev, sent President Daoud a telegram that expressed his best wishes for the success, prosperity, and progress of the people and government within the Republic of Afghanistan.¹⁹² This had a few implications: the first was that the Soviet Union diplomatically recognized the new regime and, second, that it wished to continue to support Daoud's government. The United States also accepted this peaceful transition of power in Kabul. The American ambassador of Kabul, on behalf of President Nixon, presented President Daoud with a sample of a moon rock. The newspaper stated that Nixon's gift was a sign of friendship between the American and Afghan people.¹⁹³ Both Cold War powers accepted the transition in Kabul. Afghanistan continued to benefit from both, the United States and the USSR, for many years after the change from monarchy to a republic. The Soviets took more responsibility than the United States and became the main benefactor as it funded most of the projects after the transition.

While relations with the United States and the Soviet Union seemed to normalize following the 1973 coup, Afghanistan's relationship with its neighbors appeared to deteriorate. Pakistan, for example, seriously feared Daoud's staunch conceptual views and rhetoric about Pashtunistan, a debate Pakistan rejected. Daoud lost his position as Prime Minister due to his staunch views about Pashtunistan.¹⁹⁴ This could have motivated Daoud to topple the monarchy, after he secured power, he revitalized the Pashtunistan debate. Between the years of 1973 and

¹⁹¹ Edited by Noor Mohammed Rahimi, "Soviet planning delegation here for discussions." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 1, 1973.

¹⁹² Edited by Noor Mohammed Rahimi, "Brezhnev sends best wishes to President Daoud." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 1, 1973.

¹⁹³ Edited by Noor Mohammed Rahimi, "Nixon presents moon rock sample to President Mohammad Daoud." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 16, 1973.

¹⁹⁴ Grassmuck, *Afghanistan: Some New Approaches*, 193.

1977, both countries accused each other of insurrections and granting asylum to the other's dissident population.

In 1974, Pakistan accused Kabul of assisting a rebellion in the Baluchistan province. Tensions remained high between the neighboring countries, but their relationship restored when Pakistan released Abdul Gaffar Khan, a notable supporter for the Pashtunistan movement.¹⁹⁵ The rhetoric about Pashtunistan paled after 1975, Daoud did not even attend a holiday celebration about Pashtunistan. This upset the communist parties further as they both supported the independence of Pashtunistan. The Parcham wanted Afghanistan to absorb Pashtunistan, whereas, the Khalq wanted an independent state within Pakistan.¹⁹⁶ Political policies brewed hostilities among Daoud's and communist's supporters. Amidst the heightened tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Daoud's government continued its modernization program.

Daoud continued to emphasize infrastructure developments, for example, the government built two new tourist hotels in Kabul and Bamian. The Vice President of Afghan Tourist Organization stated that the purpose of the hotels was to help boost tourism.¹⁹⁷ Infrastructure and international relations intertwined with this development. Globalization had seeped into the foundations of Afghanistan's dream to modernize no matter what government ruled over the capital; loans and assistance from other countries became the blue print to develop for whoever ruled in Kabul. The *Kabul Times* continued to promote Daoud's modernization program as highlighted by the five development fields.

¹⁹⁵ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 81.

¹⁹⁶ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 46.

¹⁹⁷ Edited by Noor Mohammed Rahimi, "Two new Hotels to be built in Kabul, Bamian." *Kabul Times*, Dec. 11, 1973.

The *Kabul Times* did not report about any negative impact that may have stemmed from the coup in 1973. The same countries that extended recognition to the newly founded Democratic Republic of Afghanistan preserved their business relations according to the newspaper. The new government continued to publish reports on developments and the aid Afghanistan received. The reports about trade between Afghans and the Soviets noticeably increased in the *Kabul Times* after 1973. The Soviets did stay in contact with the communist parties in Afghanistan and possibly directed them.

When Daoud came into power, he also established a national parliament. A modest branch of the communist PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) controlled this parliament.¹⁹⁸ After 1973, the communist party within Afghanistan joined the government in Kabul. Daoud previously asked for Soviet assistance when he was just prime minister. As president and prime minister, the Parcham faction dominated the parliament and the Soviets secured the type of influence in Kabul they hoped to achieve. President Daoud even sent 160 members of Parcham to various provinces as administrators. The rural population rejected the young arrivals from Kabul. Most of these appointed administrators turned to corruption because of frustrated efforts to reform Afghanistan's countryside. By 1975, Daoud began to reduce the power of the Parcham within his administration.¹⁹⁹ Many Afghans from different political factions opposed Daoud at this point. The president turned to harsher methods to suppress opposition. Daoud only understood leadership as imposed by the monarchy and for him to advance Afghanistan, he thought he must control absolutely. This changed the modernization effort as the leader had different priorities.

¹⁹⁸ Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: A History of Religious Mobilization in the Pakistan Tribal Areas c. 1890-1950*, 186.

¹⁹⁹ Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 302.

The concept of modernization did not change, but the idea of how to implement it specifically to Afghanistan did. President Daoud focused more on military power and societal efficiency, unlike his predecessor. Modernity meant something different to Daoud than it did to Zahir Shah. After 1973, the president created “a new officer corps, which became by far the most modernized sector of the society.”²⁰⁰ The officers for this new army trained in the Soviet Union and the army received Soviet equipment.²⁰¹ This move emboldened the communists within Kabul as the Soviets showed strong support for them and wanted to spread communism further into Asia. The *Kabul Times* unintentionally promoted President Daoud as sympathetic to communism.²⁰²

Reports about Soviet related articles published more frequently and not all of them related to trade. Many articles covered random facts about Soviets, such as a story about student enrollment at Soviet schools.²⁰³ Another article discussed the 1975 economic plans of the Soviet Union.²⁰⁴ These articles clearly promoted communist interests and Daoud’s government was leaning towards the Soviets as the USSR funded many projects within Afghanistan by the mid-1970s. Soviet mentions increased in the five years under Daoud. Every publication frequently mentioned the Soviet Union or the USSR at least once. This *Kabul Times* also reported consistently about the United States, but the quantity of articles written about the Soviets suggested that the elite in Kabul pivoted to cater to the communist population within Afghanistan or appease a chief benefactor.

²⁰⁰ Rubin, Barnett R. "Lineages of the State in Afghanistan." *Asian Survey*. (1988), 1204.

²⁰¹ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 80.

²⁰² Edited by Noor Mohammed Rahimi, “Brezhev cites Afghan-Soviet good neighborly ties.” *Kabul Times*, September 29, 1973.

²⁰³ Edited by Noor Mohammed Rahimi, “A MILLION ENROLLMENT AT SOVIET HIGHER SCHOOLS.” *Kabul Times*, October 2, 1974.

²⁰⁴ Edited by Noor Mohammed Rahimi, “Soviet national economy for 1975.” *Kabul Times*, October 22, 1974.

From 1973 until 1978, dissidence grew in the capital, as did the communist influence. Ironically, Daoud cracked down on political dissent harsher than his predecessor did. In his newly found one-party system, only members of his party obtained the best positions. In September 1973, Daoud discovered a plot against him. Islamists formed a resistance movement against Daoud due to his communist-like policies.²⁰⁵ President Daoud made constant gestures to retain favor among the communist parties. The new regime upset the balance in Afghanistan's societal structure. Leadership in Afghanistan went unchallenged for four decades under Zahir Shah's rule, but Daoud created a path to obtain power by usurpation through sheer force. The communists, who backed the new president, also, grew and became a credible force after the 1973 coup.

The Soviets wanted the communists within Afghanistan to back Daoud and his administration as it was a little more lenient towards communism. The Soviets asked for both Khalq and Parcham to extend their full support to Daoud, but Nur Taraki, leader of the Khalq, refused to do so. Babrak Karmal, leader of the Parcham, did extend his support to Daoud and this caused a bigger rift between communists in Afghanistan.²⁰⁶ The new president did not remain sympathetic to the communists. In 1975, Daoud pushed his country closer to Iran and Middle Eastern states and that did not sit well with those in Moscow.²⁰⁷ The Soviets did not want to jeopardize the influence they possessed in Kabul and Daoud began to expel most of the communists from his administration towards the end of the 1970s.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 97.

²⁰⁶ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 79.

²⁰⁷ Black et al., *The Modernization of Inner Asia*, 346.

²⁰⁸ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 47.

It is still unclear what influence the Soviets fully possessed in Afghanistan, but former CIA agent Anthony Arnold alludes that Nur Taraki was a Soviet Agent. His rise within the PDPA makes little sense. Before Taraki engaged with politics, he was a writer. Taraki was not a good writer and he could not have earned much money from writing. Prior to the formation of the PDPA, how did Taraki fund any expenditures? In fact, there was about three years in his timeline that are unaccounted for and Arnold suggested Taraki spent that time in the USSR.²⁰⁹ It was impossible to say to what extent the Soviets had contact with the communist parties in Afghanistan, but there is little doubt that they did communicate.²¹⁰ The Khalq did not possess influence over Daoud's government as much as the Parcham.

Members of the Khalq blamed the Parcham for Daoud's administrative mistakes and called them the "royal communist party."²¹¹ Daoud also removed Parcham members from his cabinet due to a failed coup attempt. The conspirer against Daoud was assassinated, presumably at Karmal's request.²¹² Aware of the threat from the communists within his own cabinet, Daoud removed Parcham elements from his administration. The members of Parcham that remained in his cabinet stopped recruitment efforts into the communist party concerned not to jeopardize the positions they held. The Khalq pursued an active recruitment campaign among the armed forces that led the Khalq to outnumber Parcham three to one in total membership, the total number of the PDPA members was an estimated 18,000.²¹³ The number of members varies from different scholarly sources, but no source indicates a number higher than 20,000 by the late 1970s. The

²⁰⁹ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 15.

²¹⁰ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 79.

²¹¹ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 46.

²¹² Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 45.

²¹³ Antonio Giustozzi, *War, Politics and Society in Afghanistan: 1978-1992* (London: Hurst, 2000), 4.

Khalq kept up recruitment and waited for the opportunity as the Soviets did not favor Daoud's policies.

In 1977, President Daoud introduced a new constitution. A partly-appointed Loya Jirgah approved this constitution. The only legal political party allowed to function under the new constitution was the National Revolutionary Party. As president, Daoud put a monopoly on politics. This led to the resignation of six ministers who withdrew their resignations on request from the president. Many Afghans hoped Daoud would appoint new people to his cabinet after he instated a new constitution, but he reverted to the behavior of a monarch.²¹⁴ President Daoud appointed family and friends into office. Members of the deposed royal family once again attained authority. The dissent within Daoud's administration became evident.²¹⁵

Members of the PDPA grew tired of Daoud's reign that mirrored a monarch and wanted to topple his government after the president arrested high ranking communists. Nur Mohammed Taraki was among those arrested, but was able to escape and fled the country. Taraki planned to seize power by force after 1973 as he realized the "classical way in which the productive forces undergo different stages to build a society base on scientific socialism would take a long time."²¹⁶ President Daoud had many who opposed his leadership. Islamists were also anti-Daoud as he catered to communist with some of his policies. President Daoud was never anti-Soviet as he only wanted to consolidate his own position. He also wanted to outwit the communists who helped with his usurpation so Afghanistan could retain independent of external influence.²¹⁷ This was why Daoud created a one-party system. Tensions continued to grow in and around the

²¹⁴ Dupree, "Afghanistan under the Khalq," 38.

²¹⁵ Dupree, "Afghanistan under the Khalq," 39.

²¹⁶ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 47.

²¹⁷ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 46.

capital and this began the derailment of the modernization effort. Many Afghans grew more concerned with identity politics than actual societal advancements.²¹⁸

The Parcham had members at the administrative level, but the Khalq were the ones with more arms. Both factions had to reconcile to secure radical change in Afghanistan. The Khalq and Parcham found unity once more in their opposition to Daoud's reign that mirrored a monarchy. At the request of the Soviets, the PDPA reconciled their differences with the intent to unseat Daoud from power.²¹⁹ Hafizullah Amin, Taraki's right hand wanted to oust Daoud also. In 1976, Taraki informed Amin to wait for the Khalq party to grow in membership before it could overthrow Daoud. Anthony Arnold suggested that it was the "far-sightedness"²²⁰ of the Soviets to wait for a Saur Revolution like moment.

Mir Akbar Khyber was the editor of the Parcham paper when it first published and a political leader within communist circles. On 17 April 1978, unknown assailants assassinated Khyber. The government condemned the violence and blamed Islamists, but Taraki blamed Daoud's administration for the act. This moment marked when bloodshed accelerated around Afghanistan. Louis Dupree alludes to this sole act of violence as the pretext of the Saur Revolution. Demonstrations erupted at Khyber's funeral with an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 protesters. The opportunity that the communists waited for finally presented itself. The tide of politics shifted and the wrath of communists fell upon most of Afghanistan.²²¹

²¹⁸ Gregory Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010), 29.

²¹⁹ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 52.

²²⁰ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 46.

²²¹ Dupree, "Afghanistan under the Khalq," 34-50.

Saur Revolution

According to historian Sana Haroon, the year of 1978-1979 tied in with the millennium year on the Solar Hijri calendar, 1399.²²² This marked the end of the modernization period as the new millennium for Afghans did bring change, but in the worst way possible. Officers in the Afghan national army viewed President Daoud as inadequate. The Soviet trained personnel argued that Daoud did not meet the criteria of a strong leader.²²³ After Khyber's assassination, tensions increased all around the capital. On 27 April 1978, gunfire and smoke erupted in Kabul as the communists attacked the national palace where President Daoud resided with his family. Radio Kabul reported that a coup by the Khalq was underway.²²⁴ President Daoud and many of his family members died, but not before he picked up a pistol and fought as best as he could. The number of dead and imprisoned was well over 4,000 in the aftermath of the coup.²²⁵ Nur Muhammad Taraki led the Saur Revolution that overthrew the Afghan government once more, this time the country changed from the Republic of Afghanistan to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

The fact that Taraki and Amin both contemplated the overthrow of Daoud before the Saur Revolution presented two major points.²²⁶ First, individual leaders in Afghanistan decided the fate of their supporters. The second point was that many Afghans suffered from the plans orchestrated by the few leaders who led them off course from modernization. This highlights another facet into why modernity did not fail because the Afghan people rejected modernity.

²²² Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: A History of Religious Mobilisation in the Pakistan Tribal Areas c. 1890-1950*, 188.

²²³ Black et al., *The Modernization of Inner Asia*, 297.

²²⁴ Thompson, Larry Clinton. "[The 1978 Revolution in Afghanistan](#)". *American Diplomacy*. AFSA. Retrieved 5 Sep 2020.

²²⁵ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 82.

²²⁶ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 46.

Afghan leadership brought forth the disarray that ended the modernization effort. Taraki began his reign with the assassination of the first Afghan president. For many Afghans, resistance towards communism transformed from protests into violent rebellions.

In the eastern tribal areas along the Pakistani border, deep resentment grew with the new government as it dictated laws on land reform and women's protection.²²⁷ Islamists already held contempt for Daoud and with Taraki in power, the resistance knew they had to fight to rid Afghanistan of the godless ideology that occupied its highest office. Those who opposed the communist rule were the mujahedeen. By the time Daoud died, the country was in a state of despair. Afghanistan possessed leaders in each transition of power, but the legitimacy of each new leader waned in comparison to their predecessor.

The government's publications never discussed the political dissidence that plagued the country. The leadership in Kabul made sure not to include why political instability "increased as the economic situation deteriorated."²²⁸ Constant changes in leadership provided rural Afghans with threats of infringement on traditional norms. In the 1970s, the estimated number of nomads was around two million.²²⁹ A vast majority of these people did not have access to print media or radio. The nomads were mostly Pashtun and operated on traditional basis. The communist government curbed nomadic activity as it exercised state control.²³⁰ This made more Afghans resist any type of infringement by alien actors.

Many Afghans, especially in the urban areas were susceptible to change through modernization. Forced change has never settled well with Afghans and for the communist to

²²⁷ Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: A History of Religious Mobilisation in the Pakistan Tribal Areas c. 1890-1950*, 188.

²²⁸ Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 291.

²²⁹ Black et al., *The Modernization of Inner Asia*, 9.

²³⁰ Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 29.

suddenly take power confused a lot of the population. Most Afghans outside of the urban centers (mainly Kabul) did not engage with political affairs. A nomad named simply Iqbal said that “It will be the same, I am sure, with my sons and their sons too... things have always been this way with us, and I cannot see why they should change.”²³¹ Iqbal was referencing his nomadic lifestyle and had no formal education to enlighten his perspective. To him and many like him, they did not grasp the concept of modernity as those few who were literate in the country, but they also did not oppose modernization efforts as they certainly engaged with aspects of modernity through trade on their travels. The nomadic population was mostly dormant through Daoud’s reign, but they began to engage in violence after Taraki’s government reforms threatened the nomadic lifestyle.

The leadership in Kabul failed the Afghan people; they allowed their ambitions to come before the prosperity of their country. The modernization effort was not the cause of violence as developments continued virtually unopposed until 1973. It was after the 1973 coup that people in Afghanistan began to take arms against one another. Once Daoud seized power and ended the monarchy, Afghanistan failed to properly transition into a true republic. The politics of the country was in its infancy and disagreements turned into quarrels. Political party affiliations that were parallel along tribal and ethnic lines further exacerbated these disputes. Soviet interference in Afghan politics worsened the situation in Kabul and this occurred when the United States began withdraw most of its aid.²³² The PDPA had to deal with internal and external pressures as it seized control of the capital. A civil war started between Afghan guerrilla fighters and communists around Afghanistan while the Khalq and Parcham split for a second time.

²³¹ William Borders, “Afghan Nomads Resisting Modernization.” *The New York Times*, November 27, 1977.

²³² Feifer, *The Great Gamble: the Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 57.

“Chap. 3 – *Khalq vs. Parcham: Failure of Leadership*”

“Humanity acts as if it does not understand what Communism is, as if it does not want to understand, is not capable of understanding.”²³³

After the Saur Revolution, Afghanistan was in a state of confusion. For the second time in its history, a non-Durrani Pashtun held control over the capital. The degradation of the state amplified as political violence led to yet another institutional transition. The Republic of Afghanistan lasted a short five years as Nur Taraki proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in its place. The communist usurpation destabilized Afghanistan. As power shifted between leaders, the country fell further into chaos. Taraki’s reign lasted a year and Hafizullah Amin only ruled for three months before Babrak Karmal performed the fourth and final coup of the decade. A total of five different leaders and regimes reigned in the 1970s, but it was the last two years of the decade that ultimately shifted the course of Afghan history. This chapter will examine the years between the Saur Revolution and the Soviet invasion. The Afghans did not reject modernity, but the violence that stemmed from political differences in Kabul spread throughout Afghanistan. The few leaders driven by the lure of power ultimately ruined any chance of a peaceful transition into modernity.²³⁴

The communist party assassinated President Daoud and his family then arrested many of his supporters. Many Afghans were confused after their first president died at the hands of a communist. The disputes and division among Afghans worsened as a third regime held control of government within a seven-year span. This time the division was not just between the Islamist

²³³ Solženitsyn Aleksandr I. and Alexis Klimoff, *Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Warning to the West* (New York City, NY: Hill and Wang, 1977).

²³⁴ Feifer, *The Great Gamble: the Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 29.

and communist, but all those who were anti-Daoud also turned their attention to Taraki. The communist parties unified once more at the Soviets request, but unity between both communist factions did not last. The Khalq party held power in Kabul as Taraki proclaimed himself de-facto leader of Afghanistan. The PDPA would split once more as conflict between communists only grew after the Saur Revolution.

The Saur Revolution took place in mid-April, Saur simply means April translated from Farsi in the Solar Hijri (Islamic) calendar. The *Kabul Times* issues from 1 January to 30 April 1978, are not available. The first issue on 4 May 1978, introduced a different font and look for the newspaper. The main headline on the first issue available since the overthrow of President Daoud read “Remnants of monarchy wiped.”²³⁵ The article discussed why Taraki became chairman of the revolutionary council and served as prime minister. Babrak Karmal was vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Council while Hafizullah Amin was minister of foreign affairs. The newspaper justified the removal of the previous government, because the last remnants of the Afghan monarchy were still in power under Daoud. The *Kabul Times* once again promoted the agenda of a new government in Kabul.²³⁶ Articles about why Pashtun and Baluch Tribes welcomed the new government appeared shortly after publications resumed. Many articles highlighted the number of countries that extended recognition to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.²³⁷ The approach of the *Kabul Times* to promote the new regime was identical to the newspaper in 1973, when the monarchy ended. The *Kabul Times* was a government mouthpiece and the leaders in Kabul allowed for the newspaper to justify the transition of power with

²³⁵ Edited by Mohammed Kazem Ahang, “Remnants of monarchy wiped.” *Kabul Times*, May 4, 1978.

²³⁶ Edited by Mohammed Kazem Ahang, “Pashtun, Baluch Peoples Congratulate New Order.” *Kabul Times*, May 4, 1978.

²³⁷ Edited by Mohammed Kazem Ahang, “More friendly nations recognize new order.” *Kabul Times*, May 7, 1978.

acknowledgements from other countries. Taraki, nor the *Kabul Times* ever mentioned what the vision of a modernized Afghanistan would look like under his rule. This was the precedent set by Daoud as mentioned earlier; someone could make a claim for power and use the removal of a corrupt government as justification without an explanation of plans or an outline for the future.

Along with the excuse of removing corruption, the Saur Revolution revisited the alleged ancient rituals of settling scores among Afghans.²³⁸ Taraki got his revenge on Daoud by killing him and his family when he replaced him for power. When Daoud was prime minister, he wanted to see Taraki hanged because he wrote against the Afghan monarchy. Taraki was in Washington D.C. in the 1960s, because the government banished him for stealing from his employer and Taraki never forget that Daoud wanted to execute him.²³⁹ In what scholar's attribute to Afghan tradition, Taraki extracted revenge and his feud ended with a score settled, but that simply led to new feuds. Many historians describe Afghans as backwards people fueled by feuds, but the reality was that amid the modernization effort, the leaders exacerbated these qualities into mainstream. King Zahir displayed tribalism and royalism in his administration while President Daoud promoted nationalism to the point of ignorance and President Taraki revived feuds on a national level. As mentioned above, rural Afghans in Pashtun mountainous regions were not the only ones who deemed a response necessary to the usurpation by a communist.²⁴⁰ Mullahs across Afghanistan began to speak out against communism and different villages and towns had leaders who held different allegiances for various reasons. Loyalties varied and depended on religion, region, tribe, class, and party affiliation. These things did not

²³⁸ Winston Churchill, *The Story of the Malakand Field Force: An Episode of Frontier War. With Maps, Plans, Etc* (London: Longmans, Green, 1901), 134-135.

²³⁹ Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, 15-17.

²⁴⁰ Borders, "Afghan Nomads Resisting Modernization."

hinder modernization throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. Once disputes among political leaders transformed into violence, the average Afghan engaged in comparable rhetoric. Afghanistan's communists were vulnerable to petty feuding and Taraki's government ultimately derailed modernization, not the Afghan people.

Nur Taraki's Rule

Nur Taraki became president and appointed new commanders for the armed forces and new governors around Afghanistan. He also confiscated all the royal family's lands and possessions in a move to weaken possible support for the previous regime. No longer did Afghanistan's leader turn to village chiefs or need approval from a Loya Jirga about internal matters, instead, Taraki regulated state decrees with the Revolutionary Council.²⁴¹ Soviet and communist publications falsely promoted the acceptance of Afghanistan's transition into a communist state. A Soviet book, published in 1985, claimed "No one in the country, either among the civilian population, in the police or the army, came to the defense of the authoritarian Daoud regime."²⁴² This was false as the *mujahideen*²⁴³ formed because Taraki was a communist leader. Although they were not pro-Daoud, he was a Durrani-Pashtun and Islamist preferred him over Taraki. The same Soviet publication contradicted itself when it wrote that by the end of 1979 "armed counter-revolutionary detachments operated in 18 of Afghanistan's 26 providences."²⁴⁴ Rural Afghans did not accept a communist ruler or the changes that communists tried to force on the

²⁴¹ Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 310.

²⁴² Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 308.

²⁴³ Afghan men who fought against the communists and Soviets on religious basis; my father was a mujahideen. See Taliban by Ahmad Rashid

²⁴⁴ Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 317.

entirety of the population. It was under Taraki that Afghanistan's civil war began as rural Afghans rejected communism and its ideology.²⁴⁵

The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan rolled out major reform programs in 1978. The goal of these policies was to eliminate economic hardships, develop Afghan industries, modernize agriculture, and many radical land reforms that benefitted the working class. In the first few months after Taraki seized power, the Ministry of Education employed 5,000 teachers. He appointed Karmal as his vice-president and abolished Daoud's constitution. Taraki oversaw the formation of labor unions along with women and youth organizations. He also raised the wages of low paid workers while he lowered the prices of consumer goods.²⁴⁶ The *Kabul Times* promoted these changes as a step in the right direction for Afghanistan. These progressive measures failed to capture the reality of life for everyday Afghans. The dissidence among many segments of the populations only grew under Taraki.

The PDPA had somewhere between 5000 to 20,000 members in 1978.²⁴⁷ The communists bolstered those numbers while American historian Edgar O' Ballance alleged that those numbers were much lesser.²⁴⁸ Whatever the Communist Party numbers were is hard to say, but they were not immune to disunity. Hafizullah Amin formed his own group within the Khalq faction and gave his supporters key positions in Taraki's cabinet. Amin secured his own position within Taraki's cabinet the Khalq and Parcham factions fell out publicly. The Khalq won the immediate battle of communists as Taraki purged all Parchamis from their cabinet positions. Khalq arrested and executed many Parcham supporters, whereas many, such as Karmal, fled to the USSR to

²⁴⁵ Taylor, Stephen. "Pathan guerrillas suffer decisive defeat by pro-Soviet Afghan forces." *Times*, November 13, 1979, 8.

²⁴⁶ Baskakov, *A History of Afghanistan*, 311.

²⁴⁷ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 83.

²⁴⁸ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 83.

escape Khalq's wrath. The Soviets, which watched events in Afghanistan with increased concern, bolstered its military presence along the Afghan border.²⁴⁹

Terrorists kidnapped an American ambassador named Adolph Dubs in Kabul. Afghan security forces raided the hotel where the American hostage was and Adolph died by gunfire after the kidnappers and the security forces clashed.²⁵⁰ This caused the United States to withdraw Peace Corps workers and reduce aid to Afghanistan. The CIA alleged this crime as a KGB plot, but the Soviets denied this accusation. The CIA supposedly ramped up its activity and presence in Afghanistan after this incident. Taraki admitted that over 1900 foreign advisers were in Afghanistan in 1978, and 1,100 of them were Soviet.²⁵¹ This number may have been a lot less as Taraki wanted to strengthen his image.

In March 1979, the National Islamic Liberation Front in Pakistan declared a jihad against the Kabul government. The very same day as this declaration, a resistance to the communists started in Herat. This uprising lasted ten days and required both Afghan forces and Soviet troops (at the request of the government) to quell. Around 5,000 people died as a result, and this was the first time Soviet troops helped with internal instabilities.²⁵² Iran was dealing with its own Islamic Revolution and closed its borders to Afghanistan to stop the influx of Afghan refugees. Taraki accused the Iranians of sending assistance to the insurgents in Herat and expelled the Iranian Consul General.²⁵³ This ruined the Afghan government's relationships with both Iran and Pakistan. Things grew worse internally as Afghan revolts became more frequent.

²⁴⁹ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 84.

²⁵⁰ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 83.

²⁵¹ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 84.

²⁵² O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 85.

²⁵³ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 85.

Another mutiny arose in Ghazni, Afghanistan where Soviet troops assisted Afghan forces once again in September 1979.²⁵⁴ At this point, dissent among Afghans within the armed forces grew as PDPA members and leaders continued to squabble amongst themselves. Many Afghans viewed the reforms by Taraki as un-Islamic and this led to further division among the population already split between religious and political issues. The Soviets paid close attention to the situation in Kabul as insurrections persisted. The Afghan armed forces clashed with Islamist guerrillas in the countryside.²⁵⁵ Taraki was at the end of his reign as he faced opposition from the mujahideen, Parcham members, and Amin.

Hafizullah Amin's Short Reign

In mid-September 1979, Amin overthrew Taraki in a coup.²⁵⁶ Radio Kabul broadcasted that Amin asked Taraki to step down due to bad health, but later reports confirmed Taraki was under house arrest. On 9 October 1979, Radio Kabul reported that President Taraki died from his illness.²⁵⁷ Some sources suggest that Amin had Taraki assassinated by assailants who smothered him with his pillow in the Pul-i-Charkhi prison, where he was held after Amin's coup.²⁵⁸ The *Kabul Times* promoted the transition from Taraki to Amin in deceptive manner. The newspaper suggested that Taraki requested Amin to take over the presidency on health grounds.²⁵⁹ After the transfer of power, the publication ran articles that extensively covered Amin and nothing about Taraki. The newspaper took a similar approach to promote the acceptance of the new

²⁵⁴ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 85.

²⁵⁵ Taylor, "Pathan guerrillas suffer decisive defeat by pro-Soviet Afghan forces.", 8.

²⁵⁶ Taylor, "Pathan guerrillas suffer decisive defeat by pro-Soviet Afghan forces.", 8.

²⁵⁷ Adamec, Ludwig. *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, Scarecrow Press, 2011, 32.

²⁵⁸ Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 48.

²⁵⁹ Edited by Mohammed Kazem Ahang, "H, Amin elected RC President, First Minister." *Kabul Times*, September 16, 1979.

president.²⁶⁰ The main difference of the *Kabul Times* promotion of the new administration was the lack of international acceptance that was present for the previous two presidents. The only thing consistent about the newspapers' promotion of the new regime was the lack of an interpretation of what modernization meant under Amin. Kabul was in a freefall as absolute chaos ensued around the capital. Over 1500 Soviet troops and advisers were in Kabul by the time Amin came to power.²⁶¹ Amin was known for his harsh tactics against his opposition and this caused further resistance. Soviet publications and Babrak Karmal suggested that Amin was some sort of CIA or western agent.²⁶²

As president, Amin reigned with impunity for the short span he maintained control over Kabul. Not only did he kill Taraki and usurp power from a fellow party member, he purged the government of Parcham communist shortly after the PDPA toppled Daoud.²⁶³ He was one of the main causes for friction among communist factions. Khalq sources claimed to have killed 250 Parcham members since Khalq came to power, but the Parcham claimed that the Khalq killed and imprisoned over 2,000 people. Soviet sources claimed that Amin killed 600 PDPA members after he took power from Taraki.²⁶⁴ The fight for Kabul grew, not just the internal conflicts within the communist parties, but also between Islamist and communist.

The guerrilla rebellions that attacked from the mountains outside the capital persisted. Amin made small gains against the mujahedeen after six weeks in power. The mujahedeen (Islamic Warriors) were at war with the communist regime since Taraki took power, but it was during

²⁶⁰ Edited by Mohammed Kazem Ahang, "H. Amin addresses Pakhtia province leaders." *Kabul Times*, September 24, 1979.

²⁶¹ Giustozzi, *War, Politics and Society in Afghanistan: 1978-1992*, 4.

²⁶² Martin McCauley, *Afghanistan and Central Asia: A Modern History* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 16.

²⁶³ Giustozzi, *War, Politics and Society in Afghanistan: 1978-1992*, 3.

²⁶⁴ Giustozzi, *War, Politics and Society in Afghanistan: 1978-1992*, 3.

Amin's reign that Soviets thought they would lose all political influence in Afghanistan.²⁶⁵

Amin's ambition to obtain power ultimately led to the Soviet invasion and there are multiple reasons why. The first reason the Soviets decided to intervene was because Amin's reign caused more friction between communists themselves. The second reason the Soviets invaded was because Amin was losing the war to the mujahideen and that meant the communist would lose control of Kabul and Afghanistan.²⁶⁶

Historian Antonio Giustozzi claims that the Soviets did not invade because of the mujahideen rebellion, but rather because they wanted to stop the internal dispute within the PDPA.²⁶⁷ This played a part in the Soviets' decision to invade, but periodicals show why the rebellion was a bigger factor in their decision. The Soviets feared an Islamic revolution in Afghanistan that could spread across its southern border of the Soviet bloc.²⁶⁸ The mujahideen made huge gains against Taraki and Amin after the Saur Revolution. The fear of Islamic revolutions was so high that even the United States issued travel warnings because of it.²⁶⁹ Giustozzi points out that most scholars agree that the "limited degree of modernization"²⁷⁰ regarding social structure caused the conflicts. He attributes this lack of structure to the Afghan population rather than the leadership. This is an outdated and mistaken narrative. This thesis highlights that over a decade of modernization occurred in the capital and Kabulis accepted it with little opposition and often with enthusiasm. The rest of Afghanistan developed slower, but still no rebellions formed as a result. Scholars about this topic fail to address to what extent communists derailed previous

²⁶⁵ Stephen Taylor, "Rebels control 21 Afghan provinces." *The Times*, 14 Nov. 1979, p.7.

²⁶⁶ Taylor, "Rebels control 21 Afghan provinces.", 7.

²⁶⁷ Giustozzi, *War, Politics and Society in Afghanistan: 1978-1992*, 4.

²⁶⁸ Stephen Taylor, "Afghan rebels waiting for their own Ayatollah." *The Times*, November 20, 1979, p.9.

²⁶⁹ Patrick Brogan, "Americans warned off Islamic countries." *The Times*, November 28, 1979, 1.

²⁷⁰ Giustozzi, *War, Politics and Society in Afghanistan: 1978-1992*, 4.

government modernization efforts. The government rule under the PDPA triggered violent resistance and frustration that built up over time.

It was not just communist ideology that most Afghans seemingly rejected, but the individual leaders that failed to properly introduce reforms.²⁷¹ The transition of a monarchy to a republic was a sham as Daoud reigned more as a dictator than the last king. Daoud's assassination by an opportunist who long sought power highlighted the fact that individual greed ruined Afghanistan's progress toward modernization. Taraki and Amin's purge of Parcham members and then their subsequent rift, aligns perfectly with the timeline of disruption in modernization efforts. The situation got so bad in Kabul that the Soviets decided to take matter into their own hands to prevent a mutiny within its own borders.²⁷²

Soviet documents placed blame on Taraki and Amin for the failures the communists suffered in Afghanistan.²⁷³ The capital was in turmoil as many opposing sides began to clash and "assassination squads began to appear"²⁷⁴ in Kabul. The Khalq leadership proved to be ineffective as it failed to improve literacy or emancipate Afghan women.²⁷⁵ The Soviets held more sway with the Parcham faction of the communist party. Babrak Karmal was in the USSR as a civil war unfolded in Kabul. The Soviets knew that they could control Karmal and decided to replace Amin forcefully to install Karmal as a puppet.²⁷⁶

²⁷¹ Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 29.

²⁷² Soviets held concerns about Muslims in the USSR with the spread of Islamic revolution from Iran seeping across the border into Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. see Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 43.

²⁷³ Giustozzi, *War, Politics and Society in Afghanistan: 1978-1992*, 5.

²⁷⁴ Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: a New History* (London: Routledge, 2015), 145.

²⁷⁵ Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation*, 232.

²⁷⁶ McCauley, *Afghanistan and Central Asia: A Modern History*, 17.

Despite Soviet worries, Amin remained loyal to the USSR. He repeatedly requested Soviet intervention to help with the unrest that plagued Kabul. The Soviets worried that Amin could turn to the United States for assistance, so they decided to poison Amin, his nephew, and his general staff.²⁷⁷ It was the Soviets who advised Amin to move into the Taj-Bek palace outside of Kabul and it was here that a KGB cook poisoned Amin. President Amin survived the initial poison in his soup, but the Soviet troops deployed to Kabul had one objective and they succeeded. A Soviet officer shot Amin in a hallway and then threw a grenade at him that killed Amin's son also.²⁷⁸ Explosions occurred throughout Kabul on 27 December 1979, as Soviet forces moved to take control of strategic points around the capital. Soviets deployed over 750 tanks and 2,100 military vehicles across Afghanistan to subdue resistance after Amin died.²⁷⁹

Soviet Invasion

Babrak Karmal became president of Afghanistan after the assassination of Amin. The *Kabul Times* once again promoted a new regime, but this regime was under Soviet Occupation. The publication changed its name from the *Kabul Times* to the *Kabul New Times*. On 1 January, the newspapers headline read "Sanguinary Amin band ousted."²⁸⁰ The same publication that promoted Amin as president turned on him and referred to him as a murderer as soon as Kabul established a new ruler. The newspaper *Kabul Times* was a tool for whoever ruled in the capital, and once again proved it was government owned propaganda. The newspaper was consistent in promoting the developments around Afghanistan and did so in accordance with whoever ruled. The publications shut down in 1983 after operating for two decades and representing five

²⁷⁷ Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 57.

²⁷⁸ Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 78.

²⁷⁹ Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 80.

²⁸⁰ Edited by Aazam Rahnaward, "Sanguinary Amin band ousted." *Kabul New Times*, January 1, 1980.

different leaders; the *Kabul Times* resumed publication in 2002.²⁸¹ Whether Karmal expressed his vision for a modernized Afghanistan was irrelevant as modernization efforts derailed completely after the Soviet invasion.

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan on Christmas day in 1979 and the five main components of development as described in the *Kabul Times* no longer expanded. Two days after they invaded Afghanistan, the Soviets attacked the president's palace. The Soviet-Afghan war began and as George Crile described it "the Afghan people would suffer the kind of brutality that would later horrify the world."²⁸² Women's rights rapidly vanished under the pretext of safety and pride while diplomacy no longer operated the same.²⁸³ The Soviet's military presence in the country met a harsh resistance that reversed over two decades of progress. The infrastructure was under constant attack in the 1980s and education did not advance after the invasion.²⁸⁴ Although education continued, it was no longer on the same trajectory of growth as presented in the *Kabul Times* while under non-communist rule. Modernization meant different things under different leaders throughout this period. For this reason, it is more important to look at the major shifts in leadership to help better understand why modernization failed at the end of the 1970s.

Babrak Karmal made his way into Afghanistan through Tajikistan on a tank.²⁸⁵ After the Soviet Invasion began, violence became a part of Afghanistan's daily routine. Resistance spread throughout most of the country. Kabul fell under Soviet rule and Karmal exercised control over

²⁸¹ Edited by Noori Abdul Razaq, "DRA's proposals are in line with NAM norms." *Kabul New Times*, June 30, 1983.

²⁸² George Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War*. (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2004), 18.

²⁸³ Nunan, Timothy. "Humanitarian Invasion: Global Development in Cold War Afghanistan." *Global and International History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

²⁸⁴ My mother dropped out of college because the Soviets made learning Russian a requirement and she refused to learn the occupier's language.

²⁸⁵ Feifer, *The Great Gamble: the Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 81.

the capital.²⁸⁶ The constant battles fought throughout the entirety of the country ultimately ended the modernization effort. No longer did education expand, the destruction of infrastructure and agriculture by Soviet bombs meant no more development in either field. Afghan women lost nearly all rights under the pretense of safety from godless foreign invaders, then afterwards they lost further rights under extremist interpretations of the Quran. Some of the transformations that the Soviets hoped to impose through their agents ran inconsistent with traditional Afghan values which led to resistance and the creation of the mujahideen.²⁸⁷ It was not just about morals or values, but also about who would dictate what those values were.

The formation of the mujahideen that came at the end of the modernization period evolved into today's Taliban. The *Kabul Times* ran its last article in 1983, as the new government disbanded the newspaper, but new publications began to print throughout the war. The modernization efforts of the 1960s and 1970s did not appear in the new publications and some newspapers even promoted martyrdom.²⁸⁸ Political violence was a way to ensure freedom from occupation and that became a top priority for many Afghans after the modernization period failed to come to fruition.

The *Kabul Times* continued to report about growth in the five fields of development that this study articulated as the modernization effort all the way to the year of 1983.²⁸⁹ The modernization period occurred from 1960 until 1979. The leadership changed three times in 1979 and true development ended. The people in Afghanistan once again had to deal with a foreign force that occupied their capital. The mujahideen relied on international support to help

²⁸⁶ Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 192.

²⁸⁷ Gilfond, *Afghanistan*, 27.

²⁸⁸ David B. Edwards, *Caravan of Martyrs: Sacrifice and Suicide Bombing in Afghanistan* (University of California Press, 2019), 19.

²⁸⁹ Edited by Mahmood. "Women struggle for peace and against war." *Kabul New Times*, June 23, 1983.

fund and arm the resistance. The aid directed to the Afghan people from the United States came in the form of weapons, not books.²⁹⁰ The seizure of Kabul reshaped the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan into an alliance and the world watched the Soviet occupation unfold. Muslims from all over came to fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Although Afghanistan maintained international relationships, the dynamics of those relations changed.

After 1979, like-minded Afghans banded together in guerilla warfare to banish the foreign invaders who intended to reshape Afghan society by force.²⁹¹ The death toll increased throughout the whole country and the destruction that followed reversed any developments incurred throughout the previous two decades. An estimated seventeen million people lived in Afghanistan at the time of the Soviet invasion and 90 percent of the population remained illiterate.²⁹² The failure of the literacy program in Afghanistan kept the population at the mercy of the elite. The country grew dependent on domestic militant forces who created an insurgency to ensure Afghanistan's independence. The mujahideen eventually won the war and the Soviets left Afghanistan in 1989, after a decade-long war that led to a Soviet retreat. The mujahideen and different war lords turned against each other after the Soviet withdrawal and another civil war took over Afghanistan until 1994 when the Taliban came to power. Afghanistan was on the precipice of modernity in the 1960s and 1970s, but today the question of a modernized Afghanistan remains.

²⁹⁰ Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation*, 257.

²⁹¹ "Guerrillas kill Russians in Kabul bazaar." *The Times*, December 19, 1979, 7. *The Times Digital Archive* (accessed March 31, 2021).

<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS118982035/TTDA?u=char69915&sid=TTDA&xid=4db4902f>.

²⁹² Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 5.

“Conclusion”

“No one fucks with the Afghans and gets away with it”²⁹³

The chaos and violence that plagues Afghanistan today stems back to the modernization efforts of the 1960s and 1970s. A persistent chaos emerged from the corruption that ousted King Zahir, the political dissent that led to the assassination of President Daoud, and the communist’s takeover. Modernization was a concept that Afghan leaders used to unify a vision and identity for their political bases. Each leader represented specific populations under the banner of different factions and each leader promised their own vision of modernization while their political ambitions truly took precedence over national interest. Each leader hid behind the vague and broad term of modernization without ever outlining a clear definition or vision for the term. These different factions engaged in political disputes that turned violent because Afghan leaders failed to guide Afghans in a true democratic manner.²⁹⁴

James Caron suggested that modernization was the wrong concept to analyze developments in Afghanistan because it cannot occur in a productive manner.²⁹⁵ This thesis examined the failure of such developments as a problem of the Afghan leadership. This means that modernization as a metric can be productive when the failure of leadership comes under scrutiny as opposed to the whole Afghan populace. This study covered the different leaders that ruled over Afghanistan throughout the modernization period. The number one factor that led to violence stemmed from the hostile directives of the Afghan leaders who sought to obtain power.

²⁹³ Crile, *Charlie Wilson’s War*, 58.

²⁹⁴ Burchard Brentjes and Helga Brentjes, *Taliban: a Shadow over Afghanistan* (Varanasi: Rishi Publication, 2000), x.

²⁹⁵ Caron “Afghanistan Historiography and Pashtun Islam: Modernization Theory Afterimage.”

The summary of the leaderships highlight why Afghanistan failed to modernize and removes blame from the Afghan people and places it squarely on a select few.

Zahir Shah was the king of Afghanistan for over four decades.²⁹⁶ Under his rule, print media began to appear in Kabul. Although propaganda became nationalized, Afghanistan experienced a progressive period with minimal resistance. King Zahir's reign concluded with the end of the monarchy, but also as the last peaceful period in Afghanistan to date.²⁹⁷ The last king did not generate anything extravagant, rather, he started the slow and cohesive transformation of Afghanistan into a modern country with the 1964 Constitution. The slow pace of economic development led to criticisms of the monarchy.

Daoud ousted his cousin, King Zahir, because Afghanistan was in a state of impossibility, the government promoted modernization while the economic situation degenerated.²⁹⁸ President Daoud ushered in a republic and changed the course of the country historically, but he ruled more harshly than the previous king ever did.²⁹⁹ This caused problems as the political infancy of Afghanistan did not allow for the country to develop a more democratic institution in which different factions could settle political disputes. Instead, the Soviets pushed the Khalq and the Parcham to unite and support the new president. Nur Taraki, leader of the Khalq faction refused to support Daoud. Babrak Karmal, leader of the Parcham faction, did lend his support to Daoud and this caused a deeper rift between the PDPA.³⁰⁰ Fissures within Afghan society grew from the offset of the 1973 coup.

²⁹⁶ Dupree, *A Historical Guide to Kabul*, 71.

²⁹⁷ Gilfond, *Afghanistan*, 55.

²⁹⁸ Dupree, *A Historical Guide to Kabul*, 40.

²⁹⁹ Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: A History of Religious Mobilisation in the Pakistan Tribal Areas c. 1890-1950*, 188.

³⁰⁰ O'Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battle in a Hostile Land 1839 to the Present*, 79.

Islamists began to grow wary of the influence and power that PDPA members gained within Daoud's government and this led to many demonstrations from all sides of the political spectrum in the 1970s. The communists recruited more members as the ideology of communism gained traction within Afghanistan. Resistance to the government in Kabul became evident with all the protest that took place after the 1973 coup. Parcham held some influence in Daoud's government until a chain of events led to the removal of most communists' elements from his administration. This move by Daoud aimed to curb the PDPA influence over Afghanistan. Daoud faced opposition from Islamists and communists alike as his rule began to mirror a monarch.

When Daoud kicked out many Parcham members from his cabinet, Khalq leaders wanted to overthrow the first president. After initial assessments led Taraki to wait on his plan to overthrow Daoud, PDPA recruitment tactics increased. The country became more efficient and effective under Daoud, but the developments were too fast for Islamists and too slow by communist standards. After multiple assassinations of high ranked communist members, revolts persisted and in 1978, another coup took place. The Saur Revolution led to the assassination of the first president and the replacement of government in Afghanistan once more.

Nur Taraki came to power and proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.³⁰¹ The communist rule over Kabul created rebellion across Afghanistan. The mujahideen formed as a force of resistance to any communist rule. The debate about ideology began to form the basis of political differences. Islamists warned that the country headed towards a godless direction and that communists waged war on Islam. The resistance to the PDPA grew as internal turmoil

³⁰¹ Gilfond, *Afghanistan*, 55.

between the Khalq and Parcham turned into violence. Aside from the two communist parties that fought against each other, plots within the Khalq faction led to another coup.

Hafizullah Amin plotted to overthrow Taraki shortly after the latter came power, despite both belonging to the same political party.³⁰² The internal conflicts caused more confusion in Afghanistan and trust eroded between communists. The influx of internal quarrels that came from the PDPA leaders signified the failure of leadership. Afghans from this period had very limited options and the choices they did have, were not best. Afghan people either accepted the subjugation under communist rule or they chose to rebel in the name of god. The overthrow of Taraki did nothing, but prove that individual leaders were to blame for the destruction that fell upon Afghanistan. This coup by Amin also granted the Soviets an excuse to intervene.³⁰³

Afghans never had the chance to get up and go to the voting poll. They were not able to choose whether the monarchy ended. The forced transition of a monarchy into a republic was not a decision made by the majority, but by the few elite Afghans. When the country switched from the Republic of Afghanistan into the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, most Afghan people rose and demanded change. This was when demonstrations turned violent and a civil war began throughout Afghanistan. Clashes occurred routinely and the people of Afghanistan witnessed oppression from their own government.

After the assassination of Amin, Babrak Karmal came to power and the Soviets escorted him into Kabul. The presence of Russians in the capital of Afghanistan disturbed many across the country. A full-blown occupation and insurgency took place from 1979 until 1989.³⁰⁴ The destruction of Afghanistan from the start of the war ended any modernization efforts incurred

³⁰² Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan*, 42.

³⁰³ Crews, *Afghan Modern: the History of a Global Nation*, 245.

³⁰⁴ Brentjes, *Taliban: A Shadow over Afghanistan*, 102.

over the modernization period. Major modernization efforts would not occur in Afghanistan until after the United States invaded in 2001 and then began the American occupation. Although Afghanistan witnessed a couple of years of relative peace under President Karzai, as of now the country is in a worse situation than it has ever been. The near future of the country looks bleak, as another civil war is likely to happen once the United States withdraws. The Taliban will most likely come to power as they already control most of the country even with the United States and NATO troops present.

All the problems that the Afghan people face today stem back to the modernization effort of the 1960s and 1970s. The present state of Afghanistan is a direct result of bad leadership from sixty years ago. If the communists never took hold of power would the Soviets have felt emboldened enough to invade? If Daoud did not rush progressive measures and flip flop on his Soviet benefactor would the Saur Revolution have gained enough traction to happen? If Zahir Shah were a just king, would accusations of corruption have held merit? It is much easier to assess situations that have already passed, but to overlook important factors such as the leaders who ended the modernization period is a disservice to the people of Afghanistan.

This thesis used primary evidence to show how the *Kabul Times* interpreted modernization and why Afghans seemingly accepted modernization for over a decade. No major primary or secondary sources reported about opposition to the monarchy's modernization efforts. According to the five factors of development in the *Kabul Times*, from 1960 through 1979 was in fact a modernization period. The leadership throughout this period changed consistently and that was a major cause for civil unrest. Print media gave the elites an outlet, but modernization as promoted in the *Kabul Times* remained the same. Over the course of this study, it becomes clear that the five fields of development promoted by the newspaper encompassed what modernity

meant to those who held power in Kabul. These developments occurred over a two-decade period with consistent foreign aid and continued even after multiple coups. It was not until the changes in leadership that Afghan people began to engage in political quarrels. None of the leaders expressed their vision of what a modernized Afghanistan would look like. Each leader simply justified their usurpation of power and used the *Kabul Times* to do so. As the leaders overthrew one another more frequently so did the violence around Kabul increase. The foreign aid came from multiple countries that each had different ideas of what a modernized Afghanistan meant and this intensified the political rhetoric in Kabul. The royal family leaned more towards a democratic Afghanistan.³⁰⁵ They wanted a country that mirrored the United States and U.K.³⁰⁶ The Soviet aid expanded the influence of communism and PDPA members aligned themselves with this ideology. The people of Afghanistan have continued to suffer from the aftermath of clashes that started by a select few who had different interpretations of what modernization meant for Afghanistan, even though the leaders never really explained their interpretations.

Many scholars, news commentators, and general spectators of Afghanistan tend to blame the whole population for the problems they face.³⁰⁷ Some blame Islam and others blame the tribal mentality as the culprits for the violence that continues to plague the country. Some even blame Afghans for being a backwards people. The reality is most Afghans were open to change and this study aims to highlight why the people of Afghanistan did not reject modernization, rather, the leaders of the modernization period failed to successfully implement their visions. Each leader promised to improve the situations for Afghans, but with each coup came more

³⁰⁵ Grassmuck, *Afghanistan: Some New Approaches*, 173.

³⁰⁶ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 626.

³⁰⁷ Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan*, 1.

problems and that led to the Soviet invasion that devastated the country into the perpetual warzone that exist today. The future of a modernized Afghanistan remains bleak, one can only hope the Afghans find peace for long enough to implement a new plan to develop the country in a manner that does not further aggravate tensions.

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