



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

In 1747, Ahmad Shah Durrani unified the Pashtun tribes founding the nation of Afghanistan. From 1747 to 1919 control of Afghanistan shifted between the United Kingdom and Russia. In 1919 Afghanistan declared its independence from the United Kingdom. After a failed attempt at instating a democratic government, the 1978 communist coup led to a communist government in Afghanistan. In 1979 Russia invaded Afghanistan to support the Afghan communist regime, leading to a long destabilizing 10 year war. Years of civil war led to the Taliban (terrorist organization) taking power in 1996 which they held until the United States Invasion of Afghanistan following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States. The Bonn conference in 2001 created a process for the adoption of a new constitution, a presidential election in 2004, and National Assembly elections in 2005 in Afghanistan. Even though there has been progress in building a stable democracy in Afghanistan, it continues to be plagued by problems. The Taliban remains in Afghanistan today.

Physical Geography

Official name: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Region: Middle East

Size in Square Kilometers: 652,230 sq km

Bordering Countries: Iran, Pakistan Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China

Physical Features: mostly rugged mountains; plains in north and southwest

Climate: arid to semiarid; cold winters and hot summers

Cultural Geography

Population: 32,564,342 (July 2015 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, other (includes smaller numbers of Baloch, Turkmen, Nuristani, Pamiri, Arab, Gujar, Brahui, Qizilbash, Aimaq, Pashai, and Kyrgyz)

Official Language: Afghan Persian or Dari (official) 50%, Pashto (official) 35%,

Other Languages Spoken: Turkic languages (primarily Uzbek and Turkmen) 11%, 30 minor languages (primarily Balochi and Pashai) 4%

Capital: Kabul

Other Major Cities: Kandahar, Mazar-e Sharif

Average Quality of Life: Below Average

Political Geography

Founded? Originally 1747 but again in 19 August 1919 (from UK control over Afghan foreign affairs)

Type of Government: Presidential Islamic Republic

Country's Leaders?

President: Shraf Ghani Ahmadzai

Business: Abdul Rahim Safi

Business: Abdul Rahman Alokozay

Actor/Actress: Fahim Fazli

Country's Military: 195,000 (2014) 28.09% of GDP is spent on military (2016)

Allies: Turkey, United States, Japan, Germany, Spain, South Korea, Italy, India, China, Canada, Russia, Iran, Others.

Enemies: Terrorist Groups

Note: Afghanistan has a mainly neutral foreign policy

Economic Geography

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)? \$62.32 billion (2015 est.)

Natural Resources: natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron ore, salt, precious and semiprecious stones, arable land

Currency? Afghan afghani

Major Exports and Imports:

Exports: opium, fruits and nuts, handwoven carpets, wool, cotton, hides and pelts, precious and semi-precious gems

Imports: machinery and other capital goods, food, textiles, petroleum products

Biggest trading partners:

Exports: India 42.2%, Pakistan 28.9%, Tajikistan 7.6% (2015)

Imports: Pakistan 38.6%, India 8.9%, US 8.3%, Turkmenistan 6.2%, China 6%, Kazakhstan 5.9%, Azerbaijan 4.9% (2015)