

## Nation Building Process in Afghanistan

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### Abstract

In recent times, a number of countries faced major cracks and divisions (religious, ethnical and geographical) with less than a decade war/instability but with regards to over four decades of wars and instabilities, the united and indivisible Afghanistan face researchers and social scientists with valid questions that what is the reason behind this unity and where to seek the roots of Afghan national unity, despite some minor problems and ethnic cracks cannot be ignored?. Most of the available studies on nation building process or Afghan nationalism have covered the nation building efforts from early 20<sup>th</sup> century and very limited works are available (mostly local narratives) had touched upon the nation building efforts prior to the 20<sup>th</sup>. This study goes beyond and examine major struggles aimed nation building along with the modernization of state in Afghanistan starting from late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Reforms predominantly the language (Afghani/Pashtu) and role of shared medium of communication will be deliberated. In addition, we will talk how the formation of strong centralized government empowered the state to initiate social harmony though the demographic and geographic oriented (north-south) resettlement programs in 1880s and how does it contributed to the nation building process.

**Keywords:** Afghan nation, Afghani/Pashtu language, social harmony, national unity, Shamsul Nahar, Siraj Al Akhbar.

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## INTRODUCTION

Followed by the emergence of modern states, in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe confronted with a trend of Romantic Nationalism, in South Asia, however the factors might differ due to the origins of Indian nationalism in liberation movements within colonial landscape. Nation building efforts in Afghanistan that constructed the foundations for Afghan nationalism within second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century rooted in the essentials of the emergence of modern states and the impacts of the Anglo-Afghan wars. Nation building efforts in Afghanistan initiated with language reforms followed by social harmony (north-south resettlement) programs laterally with major social and political reforms aimed modernization in second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Afghanistan is a combined name of two terms (Afghan) and (Stan) meaning the land of Afghans. The term Afghanistan used in (Tarikhnama Herat) repeatedly in 14<sup>th</sup> century by Saifi Heravi. Other texts from 16<sup>th</sup> century (Babur Nama) by Zahiruddin Mohammad the Moghul Emperor in India described the territory of Afghanistan starting from south of Kabul city to Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan [1].

Afghan nationalists and some historians, sometime go further deep and seek the origins of nation buildings in the struggles of Mirewise Khan Hotak (Mirwise Nika). In first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Mirwise Khan Hotak gathered and organized Afghan khans and tribal elders against Safavid Empire followed by a Loya Jirga, the traditional grand congregation of Afghan representatives in 1747, elected Ahmad Khan Durrani as the leader of movement for the independence of Afghanistan with the full support of Jirga, not only established a modern state (that time) of Afghanistan but widened the territory of Afghanistan to the west by capturing Khorasan and in the south by occupying Kashmir, Panjab and Dehli/ New Delhi, the current capital of India. Ahmad Shah Abdali also known as Ahmad Shah Baba ruled the Afghanistan Empire for many years [1].

Per the article #5 of the Afghan constitution, the term Afghan is applied for every single citizen of Afghanistan. Notably, the first constitution of Afghanistan (Nizamnama Assasi) in 1923 defined the term Afghan in a broad-based implication as everyone who resides in Afghanistan from any ethnic or religious

group, engaged in any type of work, production or service, are called Afghan.

Till the 18th century, the term Afghan was used for Pashtuns (the major ethnic group of Afghanistan) but this term (Afghan) was generalized and used for all the inhabitants of the country irrespective of the ethnical and religious classification later on [2]. Meanwhile, Pashtuns, always in the course of centuries used Pashtun identity for themselves and it took pretty long time for Pashtuns as the majority of Afghanistan to adopt the term Afghan as identity [3]. Thus, it can be easily argued that the adoption of the term Afghan was a significant fragment of the nation building efforts in Afghanistan.

In second half of the 19th century, multiple invasions and continuous threats from the British India side unified the people of Afghanistan at one hand and on the other, Amir Sher Ali Khan, constructed foundations for Afghan Nationalism through modernizing the state and applying a comprehensive martial, administrative and social reform program.

As part of the reforms, Farsi/Persian language was replaced by Pashtu/Afghani language and was announced the only official language of Afghanistan. Military and tax collection was part of the program while education was core to the reforms, thus, modern schools were established and Pashtu language was mandatorily thought in those modern schools. The reformation program was clogged by Amir Abdul Rahman Khan and Persian/Dari language was replaced back as the official language of the royal court and state, yet, resumed the military reforms widely.

King Abdul Rahman Khan suppressed the rebellions mercilessly and centralized the government for first time. His exile, cruelty and executions policy aimed high level stability and maintaining power, directed particular targets almost in every ethnic group. Abdul Rahman Khan exiled thousands of families forcefully from west, south and center to northern areas following a number of insurgencies in the south by his own ethnicity (Pashtuns) [1].

Amir Abdul Rahman Khan was the first king of Afghanistan who initiated and implemented the exile and reluctant resettlement program in Afghanistan. This way, he not only stabilized the south through reducing the role of Khans/ tribal elders but stabilized the north though balancing the ethnic groupings in the area. In addition, King Abdul Rahman Khan strengthened the northern borders in contradiction of Russian threats through his exile/resettlement programs, he mentioned his aim clearly in his book (Taj Altawarikh) that he could not leave northern borders in fragile condition following the Russia seized Panjdeh province of Afghanistan [4].

Although, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan's nation building efforts concluded a united and strong nation in Afghanistan, achieved social, security and economic goals through forceful resettlement program, yet, he gave up half of his nation and territory to British India by signing the Durand Agreement intended for setting southern and eastern frontiers with British-India in 1893.

## METHODOLOGY

Secondary Analysis methodology is used in this study. The secondary analysis is a methodology where the use of publicly accessible information is known as secondary analysis, and is most common in situations in which collecting new data is impractical or unnecessary.

History texts, academic researches, studies and conferences reports in three languages, mainly Afghani/Pashtu, Persian/Dari and English languages used as sources to make sure the study reflects balanced multilateral standpoints.

In this study, unlike the most of available works and researches, it has been tried to use reliable local narratives as source the most, in order to introduce nation building exertions from local (Afghan) perspective, rather than the international researchers' angle.

## NATION BUILDING EFFORTS

There is not much to say about nation building efforts in first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to the civil wars and tribal influence in different part of the country, but the second half witnessed basic but evident achievements in nation building struggles in Afghanistan as a need of the state to minimize the distance of the people with government in order to defend the country from Russian threats in north and from the British (British-India) invasions in south. Moreover, historians agree with an argument that traditionally all ethnic groups got united in a national defensive framework against foreign invasions despite keeping ethno-linguistic cracks in some cases.

There are at least two key explanations that the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century is central to any discourse related to nation building in Afghanistan.

First, the nation building exertions are linked with reforms aimed modernization in Afghanistan. Nation building efforts and nationality seemed essential to transform traditional and conservative societies to the expected modern ones; Secondly, the role of Second Anglo-Afghan war and unity of the most of ethnic groups played significant role in shaping the nation.

In light of these arguments, it can be straightforwardly claimed that in late second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century more particular from 1868 when Amir Sher

Ali Khan took the power with considerable role of Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani in his proposed reforms till 1901 the last day of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan's reign, nation building exertions amplified that fabricated the practicalities for the Afghan nation and unity of Afghans through reforms, modernizations, law enforcement and stability efforts.

### Language Reforms: Afghani/Pashtu Language

Language is considered as social treasure and vital in nation building process which functions as not only identity but a source of a public's culture. Traditionally Arabic and then the Persian/Dari was the language of courts in Afghanistan despite the rulers and kings were Pashtuns (the major ethnic group) due to the culture and language influence of western neighbor (Persia) which can be rooted in recruiting the professional Persian clerks (Mirzas) in courts by the Afghan rulers. The situation slightly changed in second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Amir Sher Ali Khan initiated modernization of the state.

The civilian and military reforms by Amir Shir Ali Khan, recommended/proposed by famous philosopher (Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani) predominantly in his second round of kingdom (1868 – 1879) assembled the fundamentals for Afghan nationalism in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, Amir Sher Ali Khan is also known as the father of reforms in Afghanistan.

As part of the reforms, within administrative modification agenda, Dari/Persian was replaced by Pashtu/Afghani language, Pashtu language was announced the only official language of Afghanistan. Modern schools were established mainly in Kabul city and Pashtu was mandatorily thought in those schools for the first time ever.

Shamsul Nahar, first ever magazine published the military ranks lately translated into Pashtu language meant public awareness. Moreover, number of guidelines for military and civilian affairs including, (Talimatnama Askari/the Military Guidelines) were translated into Pashtu and published in the stated magazine. Amir Sher Ali Khan believed that Pashtu is the language of Afghan nation and Persian the official language of court belonged to western neighbor (Persia). Unlike previous kings of Afghanistan, Amir with his reforms of modernizing the state, gave a sense of true nation to Afghans with a distinct language, culture and society, consequently, for the first time the government used the language of its nation Pashtu/Afghani officially [5].

Unfortunately these reforms were stopped by Amir Abdul Rahman Khan (1880 – 1901) [1]. Persian

<sup>1</sup>Abdur Rahman Khan was Emir of Afghanistan from 1880 to 1901. He was the third son of Mohammad Afzal Khan, and grandson of Dost Mohammad Khan. According to Lord Curzon, who visited Abdur Rahman in Kabul and who later reproduced the fireman in a

was replaced as official language however, king's communication and official letters with eastern and southern leaders of Afghanistan was exchanged in Pashtu language. A specific office was created to manage the official communication of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan in Pashtu language. This office was managed by *Mullah Mohammad Khan Afghani Nawees*. Notably, reforms of Amir Sher Ali Khan in military aspects including the language reforms within military frameworks remained applicable [5].



Fig-1: LOGO Siraj al-Akhbar Afghania

On 8 October 1911, Siraj al-Akhbar Afghania (the torch of Afghan News) a modern newspaper of Afghanistan, published and this paper created magnificent opportunity for Habibya College students to share their viewpoints with public and functioned as forum for the elites to discuss national identity and modernization. Mahmud Tarzi served as Editor in Chief of the stated newspaper (Siraj al-Akhbar Afghania) [6].

In an issue of Siraj al-Akhbar Afghania (1916 - the fifth publication year), second page under the (Ethics - اخلاقيات) column in first paragraph of an article about the language and its importance, the writer/Mahmud Tarzi mentions Afghani as the national language of Afghanistan, the Persian, however, is the official language of the state which is a legacy of the pre-independence Iranian regimes, he said.

book of travel memoirs, the original document was huge—five feet by four and a half feet—and printed on canvas.



**Fig-2: Scan Copy of a Paragraph - Ethics**

Conventionally, Persian/Dari was the official language of Darbars (Royal courts). During the reign of Amir Habibullah Khan, Afghan nation is marked with particular culture and language. Print-capitalism as a mass-commodity has the potential to layout the foundations for national consciousness in four ways: First, by creating unified fields of communication. Second, it presents a 'fixity to language'. Third, it renders an ability to transform images of antiquity, centralized into the essence of the nation, and finally, it creates 'languages-of-power' [7].

As part of the nation building efforts, the Afghan state was advised by Mahmud Tarzi intended to:

- Keep the culture and language of the Afghan nation safe from foreign influence; and
- To take necessary measures for the restructuring and upgrading of the Afghani language [ 2 ]. Consequently, Afghani national language was integrated into education curriculum.

Tarzi argued "These studies ought to be accompanied by a concerted effort to raise the status of Pashtu, which he and his associates regarded as the Afghan language, in contrast, Persian, and the official language. Pashtu or Afghani was the manifestation of the national genius and the ancestor of all languages, a true national language. As such, it must be studied and taught to all the ethnic groups in Afghanistan" it therefore, can be argued that this was the main driver of the Afghan nationalism [6, 8].

Mahmud Tarzi sought a solution for building a united and strong nation in Afghanistan to have one single national language and maintaining national cultural values. Tarzi's approach towards nation building was clearly not ethnic oriented, rather national in a country where ethnic diversity is a reality. Talking about Afghans, Afghan nation and Afghan national

language, his explanation of the term (Afghan) wasn't reflecting the Pashtun (The largest ethnic group of Afghanistan/majority) as Gregorian believe, the term "Afghan" was defined "on a geographic and religious, rather than merely ethnic, basis," is made obvious in the first volume of Seraj al-Akhbar where he writes:

"In this century (20<sup>th</sup>), news functions as a language for nations and its inhabitants."

While the second paragraph of the stated volume, he states:

"At this time, in this century, other than the savage, primitive states and tribes, where there is any existing nation under state governance, there will be strong evidence for national knowledge of writing and reading" [6].

For sure, Tarzi's approach towards nation building was not ethnic oriented approach in a country where ethnic diversity is a reality however, simple majority existed if not absolute majority from the ethnicity point of view. His approach was mainly value oriented attitude and he with regards to the importance of language in nation building efforts in principle.

There is not much to challenge stated argument of Gregorian regarding the geographical and religious roots of the term (Afghan) definition during the reign of Amir Habibullah Khan but this case is getting different shape with Amir Amanullah Khan taking over with a large set of social, political, administrative/bureaucratic and cultural reforms in addition to the freedom of religion. Per the definition of Afghan in first ever constitution of Afghanistan, the term Afghan is applied for all those with Afghania citizenship.

#### **Stability Efforts, Rule of Law and Centralization**

Security, stability and creation of strong central government was the first priority of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan. He could not continue with the fragile security since the two strong neighbors, Russia and British-India could anytime use and support one ethnic group against other or the state to destabilize the country, the Amir thus, decided to change and improve the social structure to get rid of possible uprisings against the state and achieve cross-cutting goals by implementing the resettlement programs.

Abdul Rahman Khan, also known as the Iron Amir for his strong positions in government affairs and dictatorship, continued the military reforms of Amir Sher Ali Khan and his central government relied for the first time on a modern, equipped and well-disciplined military. The Iron Amir's government was a military despotism resting upon a well-appointed army administered through officials absolutely subservient to an inflexible will and controlled by a widespread system of espionage [9].

<sup>2</sup> Afghani language = Pashtu language

"My spirit will remain in Afghanistan, even though my soul will go to Allah.

My last words to you, my son and successor, are: Never trust the Russians"

The first and most important advice that I can give to my successors and people to make Afghanistan into a great kingdom is to impress upon their minds the value of unity; unity, and unity alone, can make it into a great power."

Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, 1880-1901 [4].

With thanks to its powerful army, the Iron Amir took over all the regional governments and emerged a centralized modern state in Kabul. Amir Abdul Rahman Khan mentioned in his book (Taj Altawarikh/The Crown of Histories) repeatedly that he was the one who created centralized modern state in Afghanistan through shaping traditionally administered regional governments into a centralized powerful government in Kabul.

The Iron Amir successfully consolidated his kingship with stability in short term but in long, the Afghanistan as a modern state through absolute dictatorship with no compromise over the opposition, establishing effective reform mechanism and nation building efforts. In general three main reasons behind his success are noticeable:

No political compromise with local leaders and zero tolerance towards any type of opposition was Amir Abdul Rahman Khan's strategy. He conquered a number of remarkable insurgences against him followed up his conquests with cruelly tortures, executions, collective exiles and even mascaras.

When Hazara ethnicity engaged with armed insurgency against Amir in late 1880s led by Sher Ali Khan, thousands were killed, sold in Kabul and Kandahar Markets as slaves and a huge number of Hazaras migrated to Baluchistan and other cross border areas under the control of British India. Hazara rebellion started at 1890 and ended on 1891. From 1881 – 1891 for a decade, Amir was engaged with rebellions motivated by British India by different groups and ethnicities including his relatives [10].

Meanwhile, when Amir's cousin and governor of Balkh Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan rebelled against him in the north, was cruelly defeated with harsh violence. Amir Abdul Rahman Khan was famous for constructing the towers from the beheaded human heads in the war followed by harsh tortures and executions. Amir in his book Taj Altawarikh, mentioned repeatedly to these towers aimed to give lesson to others not to commit such mistake and to know that the state is serious in bringing stability and rule of law in the country [4].

Abdul Rahman Khan had tough nature himself as he was involved in civil war in 1860s when he was probably nineteen followed by his exile from Afghanistan. Abdul Rahman Khan emerged as the most formidable opponent of his reigning uncle Amir Sher Ali Khan and the one of the consequences of the civil war was the shaping of political personality of Abdul Rahman Khan [5].

Crafting a new system of local governance by giving a new and modern shape to the traditional tribal administrations mostly with patrimonial type of military services and taxing. Local governors backstopped by strong military, were not fully independent in taking decision but powerful enough to apply the orders of Kabul, maintain stability, enforce laws and collect taxes.

Likewise, despite all the authority and support, Abdul Rahman, however, kept a close eye on these governors, however, by creating an effective intelligence system. During his reign, tribal organization began to erode as provincial government officials allowed land to change hands outside the traditional clan and tribal limits.

Bringing dissimilar ethnic groups together in a national framework as nation through centralizing the state affairs, maintaining stability and enforcing the law equally in all part of his kingdom.

Some would question the acquiescence of a numerous ethnic groups to uphold Amir's case as he was a hard-hearted merciless ruler, and would bring the Amir's attitude towards Hazaras particularly. In this account, as stated above, firstly, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan was engaged in conquering rebellions for a decade the minimum by various including a remarkable one by his own ethnic group (Pashtuns) in south and one by a leader by his own clan (Sardar Mohammad Ishaq Khan) in northern Balkh province were suppressed harshly.

Secondly, Tajik ethnic group from Kohistan were the first among all, indorsed and supported Amir Abdul Rahman Khan. The Amir was suspicious of Qizilbashs and the Hazaras for their pro-British attitude during the second Anglo-Afghan War, in spite of the fact that the Hazaras were a help to him in the occupation of Herat a major western city [5].

Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, regardless of the strategies he applied, successfully achieved his mandate of modernizing the Afghan state and centralizing the power.

Unlike, Amir Sher Ali Khan who initiated reforms marking a developed state with national unity and social asset, Abdul Rahman Khan aimed to build up his power and maintain rule but his modernization of

the state and centralization policy achieved the unity of different Afghan ethnic groups and prevented the civil wars and ethnic conflicts at least for almost a century.

Even though the arguments that Iron Amir's nation building exertions resulted stronger nation, he divided his nation in two through 1893 agreement (Durand Line) with British Empire for setting eastern and southern territorial boundaries. The significances of the stated arrangement are still observable and has shaded not only the social life of Afghans but had shaped the inter-state relations in the region predominantly between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### **North-South Resettlements, the Social Harmony**

Similar to the history of other nations, internal conflicts, instabilities and civil wars had a significant share in the history of Afghanistan rooted in the cracks in social structure of the country along with other key factors. north-south resettlements played obvious role in the stabilization of the country and prevention of the possible armed insurgencies against the governments from one side and on the other, such resettlements played substantial role in the nation building process which social scientists call it the nationalization process while historians, the Afghanization process.

Amir Abdul Rahman Khan was the first Afghan ruler who initiated the resettlement programs aimed stable security by preventing civil wars and ethnic rebellions along with socio-economic developments. Amir well understood the social grouping of communally dissimilar ethnic groups in north, south, east and west of Afghanistan and how such social structure played key role in destabilizations and civil wars in the country. Remarkably, Amir himself profited the stated dissimilar ethnic structure in rebellions aimed getting power, so he well understood the level of vulnerability of such structure in possible destabilization that can challenge this rule.

Following a number of insurgencies in south particularly in Kandahar, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan felt continuous threats from his own ethnicity (Pashtun/Pashtun) towards his rule, thus, decided to break the stronghold of Pashtun tribes in south and east, forcibly moved and or exiled them to Turkistan, the north, where predominantly Turk descents (Uzbeks and Turkmens) lived in. This way Amir, weakened the rule of Pashtun leaders with non-Pashtun populations in north/Turkistan and minimized the chances of rebellions both in south and north.

Unlike a number of Iranian and some western historians claimed that the exile of Pashtuns from south to the north and northwest Afghanistan (Turkistan) is considered the Pashtunization of northern Afghanistan but there is no doubt that Amir's torture, executions and exile policy aimed stability a long with reducing the potential risks of rebellions.

There are still valid discussions by historians and nationalists that the signing of Durand Line Agreement with British India in 1893 was part of Amir Abdul Rahman policy to divide Pashtuns into two in order to weaken their role in possible insurgent movements by his own ethnicity (Pashtuns).

The Pashtunization claims rejected since, Amir's actual policy toward the various ethnic groups that collectively made the Afghan nation varied considerably in accordance with circumstances. Until the late 80s, Amir's relation with Duranis (Amir's own branch of Pashtuns) were bad. Most of the important Durrani elders did not take part in his accession and refused to accept posts with his government or to enlist their men in the army [5].

Over all, the resettlements took place in three phases, the first phase originated by Amir Abdul Rahman Khan in late 19<sup>th</sup> century; second phase implemented precisely in third decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of Amir Amanullah Khan subsequently obtaining the Independence of Afghanistan which remained uncompleted due to the insurgency movements in 1928 followed by regime change and devastation of the entire state system for months and the third phase began during the reign of Ghazi Nader Khan though a well-organized program and comprehensive state support. This phase started in 4<sup>th</sup> decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century and continued for many years and did not change despite Ghazi Mohammad Nader Khan was assassinated during a ceremony in Kabul.

### **First phase of resettlements**

In late 19<sup>th</sup> century, for the first time, in 1882 Amir Abdul Rahman Khan started first ever major resettlement program and decided to settle nomads in Turkistan (northwestern Afghanistan) to improve the social life of nomads (Kochis) as the they were suffering from the unstable life due to the summer and winter movements and were very vulnerable to the natural disasters from one and on the other, the nomads (Kochis) were engaged with local inhabitants in continued conflicts. In addition, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan decided to resettle the sedentary inhabitants from the solidly populated districts, in the depopulated northwestern areas as part of the social and economic reforms as well as stability initiatives.

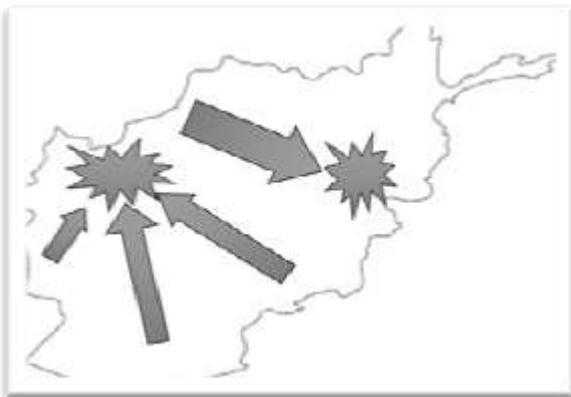
Afghan historians believe that initiation of these resettlements were very tough in a sense that they were not volunteer rather forceful by Amir's order and in addition, this was the first experience and solid business of the state which faced the new immigrants with life threatening problems.

This resettlement program can be designated as the (the colonization of northwestern Afghanistan) and the purposes of colonization can be listed

essentially defensive, but increase in government revenue, prosperity of the land, the decrease of pressure among the inhabitants of the densely populated areas and finally the weakening of tribal power were also goals [5].

In the meantime, Jamshidi tribe (a minor ethnic group) who helped Amir Abdul Rahman Khan in occupying Heart (western city) were re-settled in Badghis area in 1883 as reward to allocate farming lands for the tribe in exchange for their support. Following Russian occupation of Panjdeh province, Amir could not compromise the security of northern border and thus decided to widen the settlement program by a number of Nomads from Pushti-Rud and Obek areas of Farah province were to settle in BalaMurghab district of Badghis to guard border with Russia. This resettlement of nomads/Kochies in 1886 which took years to prepare and launch the program from the first round. Amir's direct quote is a very clear justification for the purpose of resettlement program:

"Kafirs are coming and this country can get out of our hands [3]" verifying Amir Abdul Rahman Khan's deep concerns over the defense of northern Afghanistan especially Turkistan region after Russians annexed Panjdeh province. The term Kafirs (infidels) he used for Russians and decided to invest in resettlement programs intensively as one of the state priorities with cross-cutting goals. Turkistan region was less populated and required sates attention to demographically improve and prepare for any external armed intervention. Consequently, an army of thousands of resettled young men were created in Turkistan not only aimed to stabilize the region but to guard frontiers from foreign threats [5].



**Fig-3: 1st Phase of Resettlement**

In a third attempt in 1890, eight thousand 8,000 families from Kandahar and Zamindawar of Helmand settled voluntarily in Badghis province followed by a number of families from Logar, Salang

and Shaikh Ali Hazara ethnic group and three thousand 3,000 families from, Kabul mostly settled in Maimana city on the state lands, currently the capital of Faryab Province who were supposed to keep one third of the agricultural products for them self and the rest (two-third) to the state. In reverse, thousands of Uzbeks (reportedly over twelve thousand 12,000) from Turkistan were resettled in Kabul and Jalalabad areas [5].

### The second phase of resettlements

Second phase of resettlement was titled as the organization of population in the official documents of Afghan state, started by Amir Amanullah Khan in 1920s aimed social harmony as well as economic development. Resettlements in this phase took place from east and southeast to the north and north east of the country.

The re-settlement program was absolutely volunteer with somehow better arrangements and more facilities for resettlers. Some points that can differentiated the second resettlement with the first phase are as following:

- From geographical viewpoint first phase mainly concerted on north western part (Turkistan) however the second phase targeted mainly northern areas called (Qataghan);
- The first phase was mostly security and stability oriented forcible resettlements of the state to regroup the residents of the target area and balance the ethnical dynamics while the second phase mainly focused on economic objectives with a principle of voluntariness;
- Pre-resettlement arrangements in the first phase were either zero or very limited yet the second phase had allot to encourage resettlement volunteers;
- Post-resettlements measures were intense during the first phase where the resettlers were exempted of any taxes for 3 years, afterward they had to deliver two third of the agricultural production to the state for instance, the immigrants in Maimana of Faryab paid two third to the state however the second phase provided 6 years of tax exemption from one hand, on the other, the resettlers supported in the term providing agricultural requirements including seeds;
- There is nothing to show in history texts if any legal framework or a comprehensive regulatory mechanism existed for the first phase of resettlement which took place in late 19<sup>th</sup> century nevertheless a wide-ranging regulation (Nizamnama Naqilen/Regulation of Resettlements) developed in 1923 for second phase which clarified the rights and responsibilities of both the local governments and resettles [11].

<sup>3</sup>The Afghani/Pashtu version of Amir's quote (کافرن (راځی او دا هیواد مو له لاسه وځی).



**Fig-4: 2nd Phase of Resettlement**

### Third Phase of Resettlements

This phase of resettlements took place along with a set of reforms aimed modernization, development and stability in the country as per the commitment of Ghazi Mohammad Nader Khan in his inaugural speech right after taking the power as well as the needs for reforms following over 8 months of anarchy and disorders in the country. In 1928 when Habibullah Kalakani (known as Bachi Saqaw) led an armed uprising against Amir Amanullah Khan for his modernization efforts.

To avoid blood shading, King Amanullah Khan left Kabul for Kandahar and Bachi Saqaw procured the power in Kabul. He was defeated and killed by Mohammad Nader Khan, the Ex-Supreme Commander of Amanullah Khans' armed forces after few months ruling in Kabul. Mohammad Nader Khan has been nicknamed Ghazi (Ghazi Mohammad Nader Khan) for defeating British forces in third Anglo-Afghan war.

King Ghazi Mohammad Nader Khan assigned Mohammad Hashim Khan the Prime Minister, Mohammad Gul Momand the Minister of Interior Affairs and Abdul Rahman Ludin the Kabul Mayor to work on comprehensive reform program for the entire country which took 30 months and continued till 1932. This round of reforms is central to the discourse of nation building efforts in particular in 20<sup>th</sup> century [12].

Mohammad Gul Momand in the capacity of Minister of Interior Affairs put the Public Administration restructure in high priority within a comprehensive reform program, among the 1) Administrative Reforms; 2) Population reorganizations and resettlements; 3) Economic Improvements; and 4) Social and Cultural Reforms for modernizing the society.

Resettlement program was called the (Re-organization of Population) in the legal and official documents as well as local history narratives, played

significant role nation building efforts with an obvious chapter in Afghan nationalism in 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As previously mentioned, modernization of the Afghan army and related military institutions were restructured and modernized time to time in different ages and periods more particularly initiated during the reign of Amir Sher Ali Khan and Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, yet the civilian administrations were less touched since the establishment of modern Afghan state by Ahmad Shah Baba in 1747 remained less or more traditional and patrimonial type of civilian administrations.

Historians believe that Ahmad Shah Baba was busy in expanding the skirts of his empire, he was engaged in colonizing the western regions of Afghanistan (currently the eastern regions of Iran), central Asian regions in the north and south Asian regions. Hence, gave priority to the military affairs and paid less attention to the civilian aspects of the government. During the rule of Ahmad Shah Baba, the Afghanistan Empire had 15 local governments and 9 states [12].

The administrative reforms was not just intended to maintain stability and improve the delivery of government services in different stages under the strong central government but to overlay the way for resettlements and repopulation program. In 30s , Afghanistan Royal State initiated the third resettlement program aimed to organize the population in the country with intensive focus from the eastern soundly populous areas to the depopulated areas in north with main attention on the uncultivated and desserts of north and northeastern regions with regards to social, cultural, economic, commercial, security and political dimensions of resettlements.

This program was initiated and led by Afghan nationalist General Mohammad Gul Khan Momand, the Minister of Interior of ARS - Afghanistan Royal State. Remarkably, Gen. Mohammad Gul Khan Momand [4] obtained higher education in Turkey as well as

<sup>4</sup>Mohammad Gul Khan Momand (Pashtu: محمد گل خان مومند) (born January 17, 1885 – died August 18, 1964), also spelled as Mohmand, was both a literary figure and a well-known politician in Afghanistan. He was also known as Wazir Mohammad Gul Khan Momand or Momand Baba. Mohammad Gul Khan was an Army Officer during Afghanistan's Independence war in 1919. He served numerous Government and Leadership positions including Home Minister of Afghanistan. Wazir Mohammad Gul Khan Momand was born in the Andrabayo Street of Kabul city. His father was Khurshid Khan, his grandfather is Momen Khan who served in Afghan Army during King Abdur Rahman Khan, and his great grandfather was Abdul Kareem served in the Afghan Army during the reign of King

Mahmud Tarzi, another famous nationalist figure of Afghanistan.

Momand being the governor of (Mashreqi) province during the reign of Amanullah Khan, observed that some eastern regions of Afghanistan are harshly populated where some northern region were depopulated and hit by poverty. Plenty of lands in the north of Hindu Kush famous mountains, more specifically in Qataghan province (Baghlan and Kunduz) were wild, unfertile and unplanted, Momand transported families in great number from Eastern Afghanistan (Nanagarhar and Kunar provinces) and settled in Qataghan region. A proverb was famous (If you want to die, go to Kunduz/Qataghan) but this province was transformed from a deadly zone to agriculturally one of the most productive provinces of the country [5].

Resettlement was experienced in different part of the world, from Moscow and Petersburg to Siberia in Russia, from Bombay/ Mumbai to other parts of India and resettlements in Australia and Canada are good examples of resettlements that caused socio-economic developments in those countries. In addition to the repopulation and economic objectives, this resettlement aimed to strengthen the national unity of Afghanistan through ethnic fabrication, and resettling Pashtuns in the north to guard the borders due to the below reasons:

Amir Abdul Rahman Khan resettled Jamshidis, Aimaq and Hazara ethnicities in North West, but were unable to fight Ali Khanov forces and left the Afghan border battalion alone without supporting them and escaped. Thus, Soviet forces occupied Panjdeh province [6]; and King (Ghazi Nader Khan) was pretty much sure after he fought the British Indian forces in three Anglo-Afghan wars that his resettlement program is the right strategy for maintaining the stability and guarding the borders [12].

### Critiques to the Social Harmony Program

As mentioned above, a number of Iranian and some western historians considered the resettlements programs of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan the Pashtunization of northern Afghanistan but this is not a valid argument since:

A considerable number of Pashtuns (The major ethnic group) families in the south and west

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Dost Mohammad Khan. He belongs to Mohmand Pashtun tribes and traces his ancestry to Nangarhar Province. Mohammad Gul Khan attended Habibia High School, and later went on to Turkey for higher education. After completing his primary and secondary studies, Mohammad Gul Khan entered the military school in 1909. Apart from Pashtu and Dari, Mohammad Gul Khan spoke the Turkish and Russian languages.

either fled the Amir's torture, executions aimed stability with reducing the risks of rebellions or have forcefully transported and settled in north with focus on southwest, the Turkistan.

Meanwhile, following a number of insurgencies in south particularly in Kandahar, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan felt continuous threats from his own ethnicity (Pashtun/Pashton) challenging his rule, thus, decided to break the stronghold of Pashtun tribes in south and east forcibly moved and or exiled them to Turkistan, the north, where predominantly Turk descents (Uzbeks and Turkmens) lived. Amir, displaced Pashtuns and exiled from their homelands to an area where they were not even familiar with it geographically and culturally. This way he weakened the rule of Pashtun leaders back in original city and with non-Pashtun populations in north/Turkistan that consequently minimized the chances of rebellions in south and minimized the chances of possible uprisings in Turkistan through decreased role of indigenous leaders by restructuring the ethnic grouping.

The mandate of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan was absolute stability (security and political) so that nobody could possibly challenge his rule. Afghan nationalists as well as historians argue that the sign of Durand Agreement with British India in 1893 was part of his policy to divide Pashtuns into two parts between Afghanistan and Pakistan in order to weaken their role in possible insurgent movements by his own ethnicity (Pashtuns) as the major ethnic group and main actor in Afghan politics and stability. With regards to the importance of Durand Line Agreement, we will discuss it in a separate chapter with its impacts on Afghan nation and how this agreement shaded nationalistic efforts both in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As mentioned the in stated argument, Amir's actual policy toward various ethnic groups that collectively made the Afghan nation varied considerably in accordance with circumstances. Until the late 80s, Amir's relation with Durrani (Amir's own branch/tribe of Pashtun ethnic group) were bad. Most of the important Durrani elders did not take part in his accession and refused to accept posts with his government or to enlist their men in the army.

Resettlement program was not one way resettlement despite it did not cover just the Pashtuns but huge number of Shaikh Ali Hazaras and Tajik ethnic group from Salang and residents of Kabul and Logar were part of resettles in Turkistan however, in reverse, per Kakar argument, thousands families of Uzbek ethnicity were resettled in Kabul the capital and Jalal Abad the eastern city [5].

The resettlement program achieved cross-cutting goals:

- Social, as mentioned above, through reducing the role of community/tribal

elders in South by exiling a considerable number to Turkistan and balancing the role of key actors in possible instability by creating a multi-ethnic structure in the north;

- Security, with regards to the warfare nature of Pashtuns, through using the southern resettlers as guardians of the frontiers to secure borders from Russian invasions and integrating the newly resettled young men into the Afghan army. The fear was increased after Russia invaded Panjdeh province of Afghanistan. Worth mentioning that Russia did not invade and seize any land in the north after this resettlement;
- Economic, through increasing the level of agricultural production in the country by making the deserts, ready for agricultural cultivation and productions through irrigation systems as Amir was repeatedly telling the residents in Kabul that the current level of agricultural production is not enough for the population and they have to immigrate to the wider lands in the north. In addition, increased government incomes through applying land taxes and agricultural production taxes. For instance, the agricultural tax for Maimana resettlers (mostly Qazalbash ethnic group) had to pay one third 1/3 of the agricultural products to the state [5].

By accomplishing the resettlement program, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan constructed basics for first ever stable security after almost one century civil wars, centralized government and ensured rule of law by a strong central government where local governors were considered as representatives of Amir at local level and were strongly backstopped by equipped and well-disciplined regular army. This situation helped Amir to rule the country till his last day of life and left a stable Afghanistan as legacy to his son Amir Habibullah Khan to rule for decades without a fear of uprisings and to enjoy luxurious life together with family members.

## CONCLUSION

With the history of at least 1700 years, the term Afghan characterizes the national identity of the people of Afghanistan regardless of the ethnic race and language categorization. Some would argue that the Afghan terms is synonymous with the ethnonym "Pakhtun/Pashtun/ Pakhton/Pashtun" as stated in history texts as early as the 3rd century, the term Afghan referred to residents of around the Sulaiman Mountains. In contemporary eras, the term Afghan is not infrequently used as an ethnic term for the Pashtuns, but is rather used as the national demonym for all citizens of Afghanistan from any ethnic group, Pashtuns, Tajiks,

Hazaras, Uzbeks, Aimaqs, Turkmens, Balochs, Nuristanis, Pashayis, Pamiris, Arabs, and others.

In second half of 19th century, Amir Sher Ali Khan's nation building efforts focused on modernization along with language reform, aimed assembling of different ethnic groups aimed one nation. He labeled Pashtu/Afghani language as national language of Afghanistan. Amir Sher Ali Khans' characterization of different language with Persian language which was the official language of court traditionally was a major step for the initiation of efforts aimed nation building.

The language and cultural reforms upgraded into a new stage in early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the role of Mohmood Tarzi who tried to integrate Pashtu language into the education system to halt foreign influence particularly the Persian.

In late 19th century, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan's stability efforts were more stability oriented approach enclosed harsh tortures, executions and exile are still significant for nationalists since, in long-term, concluded a united and strong nation in Afghanistan, achieved social, security and economic goals through forceful resettlement program, although, he gave up half of his nation and territory to British India by signing the Durand Agreement intended for setting southern and eastern frontiers with India in 1893 which splited the Afghan nation in two.

With regards to the outstanding results, north-south resettlements were followed by a number of regimes in 20<sup>th</sup> century as major state programs named population re-organization but ultimately aimed crafting nation though social harmony along with economic development and stability. Thus, I strongly argue that this is one of the main explanations behind undivided Afghanistan despite a number of foreign aggressions and civil wars for almost half a century.

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