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POLITICAL REGIME: AN OVERVIEW DURING EXISTENCE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN, 1978-1992

Political history of Afghanistan is the history of power struggles, bloody coups, and instability. During the regime Afghanistan experienced huge power struggle, civil war, excessive human right violations, executions and mass killing, rise of the international terrorist group Taliban. Every single political event happened during that time by the direct or indirect support and the involvement of the two giants USSR and USA, where the division or lack of unity among the different nationalities of Afghanistan had played its role as a catalyst. On February 15, 1989, the last soviet troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan after a long lasting civil war. But their exit, however, did not make any change for establishment of peace or unity, as Afghanistan just went from one civil war to another.

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The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan continued from 1978-1992 and covers the duration while the socialist People's Republic party of Afghanistan (PDPA) controlled Afghanistan. The PDPA came to power over a military coup familiar as the Saur Revolution, which overthrown the government of Mohammad Daoud Khan (Barfield 2010; Rashid 2000). Daoud was succeeded by Nur Muhammad Taraki as chief of state and government on 30 April 1978. This revolution brought to power a government commanded by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a novelized, pro-Soviet, left-wing party. Alike other political parties, as well as Islamist organizations, the PDPA had coordinated itself during the time of new liberal government (Dorransoro 2005; Bhatia et al. 2008). It was branched into two blocs: Parcham, an ethnically mixed bloc largely derived from urban elites, and Khalq, a strongly Pashtun bloc enrolling from newly sophisticated men of rural background (Edwards 2002; Schetter 2005). The Soviet Union interfered, direct helped by the Afghan government, in December 1979, and on 27 December Amin was eliminated by Soviet arms forces. Soon after, Karmal became the leader of Afghanistan in his place (Gibbs 2000; Tanner 2002). A new constitution with fundamental principles was adopted by the government in April 1980, and many non-PDPA members were take part into the government as part of the government's new approach of widening its support base (Amin 1984). But Karmal's strategies failed to bring reconciliation to the war-ravaged country, and in 1986 he was replaced by Mohammad Najibullah and a new Afghan constitution was adopted in 1987 and

democratic elections were taken in 1988 but the election were boycotted by the mujahedeen (Barfield 2004; Giustozzi 2000). After the Soviet departure from Afghanistan, the government faced strong resistance from different direction. 1990 proved to be a year of change in Afghan politics: again a new constitution was received, which declared that Afghanistan was an Islamic republic, and the PDPA was demolished into the Watan Party.

Taraki and Amin Regime (1978-1979): Taraki and Amin regime started when in April 1978 a political emergency in Kabul led to a coup that set off the series of armed combat and killing of Daud, his family, and many of his closest helping hands on April 27, 1978. After few days, the revolutionary officers handed over the power to the Revolutionary Council of the PDPA, which announced the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA). The PDPA gave name this coup the "Sawr Revolution," (Sen 1986; Cynkin 1982). Soon after the coup general Secretary of the PDPA, Nur Mohammad Taraki became president of the Revolutionary Council and prime minister, Babrak Karmal and Hafizullah Amin, the other major Khalqi leader, became deputy Prime ministers (Arnold 1983).

During Taraki and Amin regime, according to human rights reports and scholarly studies cited below, outstanding political leaders of previous governments were soon after arrested and some executed. Huge numbers of Soviet advisers reached and engaged into government offices and educational institutions (Maley 2003). Conflict soon broke out again between Parcham and Khalq. In July six leading Parchamis, including Babrak Karmal and his successor Najibullah, were sent abroad as ambassadors. In August a group of Parchami army officers were arrested for planning a coup, and Taraki and Amin purged Parcham from the administration (Arnold 1985).

Khalq introduced with a program of radical social change and mass suppression. It launched quickly formulated reforms in land tenure, rural debt, and marriage and started a literacy program, even as the newly formed political police, AGSA, arrested and killed thousands (Jeri and Barnett 1988). President Taraki raised the voice, announcing that "Those who plot against us in the dark will disappear in the dark" (Anthony 1984). The newly formed government also altered school textbooks, removed Islamic instruction and replaced it with "political science," namely instruction in Soviet-style Marxist-Leninist

lessons (Malhuret 1984). These advancements caused concern in the USSR, which had become increasingly committed to the Sawr Revolution. But the imposition of these measures, specifically those that seemed to against at the Islamic basis of the state's legitimacy, helped spread local revolts and, more frantically, set off mutinies of major army troops (Roy 1986). In Herat, where captains Ismail Khan and Alauddin Khan of the 17th Division played leading roles in the revolt on 24 Hut 1357 (17 March 1979), the government lost control of the city for an entire week, and they regained control only after a massive bombing campaign, reportedly carried out by the Soviet air force from bases in Central Asia (Khan 2004). Because of these consequences, Brezhnev and Taraki signed a charter of "friendship and assistance" in Moscow in December 1978, (Bradsher 1983) but control over events avoided the Soviets. Because of these the Soviet leaders along with Taraki raised their voice to terminate Amin in September 1979, but the plan failed. Amin asked Pakistan to request USA for being help to maintain his independence from Soviet pressure (Maley 2003). But soon after, On December 27, 1979, Amin was "terminated" in an operation carried out by Department 8 of Directorate S of the First Chief Directorate of the KGB and Radio Kabul broadcast a recording of Babrak Karmal announcing the overthrow of Amin and requesting Soviet assistance (Maley 2003).

During these regime thousands of political prisoners were locked up in the largest prison of Asia named Pul-i Charkhi prison (Maley 2003). The Pul-i Charkhi prison became part of the legends of that time, which form part of the Afghan national memory because of its tortures and executions characteristics. The exact number of peoples who disappeared has never been figured out. When Hafizullah Amin took full power after killing and termination of Taraki in September 1979, the Ministry of the Interior affairs declared that it would announce the names of twelve thousand people who had died in Kabul jails since April 1978. But the list was never published, however (Jeri 1988).

Babrak Karmal Regime (1979-1986): After termination of Amin by the Soviet commandos, the USSR established a new government dominated by Parcham, though Khalqis confined important positions in the officer corps and the ministry of the interior affairs. And following Amin's

assassination Karmal ascended to power (Dorransoro 2005). Babrak Karmal was also selected chief of both the party and state until his successive termination from both of those positions in 1986. Soon after taking power, the new DRA government announced an amnesty and threw open the gates of heavily criticized Pul-i Charkhi prison. Between January 8 and 11, 1980, thousands of kins of the disappeared persons besieged the prison looking for their disappeared family members (Feifer 2008; Goodson 2001).

May 4, 1986 by the decision of the 18th Convention of the Central Committee of the PDPA Babrak Karmal was terminated from the Acting Secretary General of the Central Committee of the party "for health reasons", while maintaining them for membership in the Politburo (Kakar 1997). Removal of has been caused by changes in the Soviet Union, where came to power Gorbachev. Babrak Karmal was highly admired by Afghans (Edwards 2002; Ibrahimi 2009). Karmal popularity further heightened against the background of the strategy of Najibullah, raising fears of Soviet leaders, who feared the rebound Karmal in power, so Karmal was appointed to the protection and strictly control his social circle. It was not until the end of the reign of Mikhail Gorbachev.

During karmal regime at the time of civil war and the subsequent Soviet war in Afghanistan, most of the country's infrastructure was smashed. Normal trends of economic activity were disturbed (Sen.1986). The Gross national product (GNP) fell dramatically during Karmal's rule as a result of the conflict; business and transport was rattled with loss of labor and capital. During the regime, all industrial enterprises were government-owned. The only economic activity which developed considerably during Karmal's regime was export and import.

Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985, after coming in power, together with his Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, soon announced to withdraw Soviet army from Afghanistan and find a political solution. They terminated Babrak Karmal and replaced him with the much more adjustable and politically proficient Najibullah (Ahady 1991).

Najibullah Regime and the fall of PDPA (1986-1992): Najibullah after coming in power kept up Karmal's economic strategy. The expanding relation with the Eastern alliance and the USSR continued, and so did mutual trade. He inspired the expansion and development

of private ownership in industry. The constitution of 1990 also gave due consideration to the private sector. Article 20 of the constitution was about the formation of private firms, and Article 25 inspired foreign ventures in the private sector (Rubin 1995; Sen 1986). Politically the regime also introduced new paramilitary units or militias in Kabul and other important areas (Akbar 1988; Barfield 2004). In many areas, it substantially conceded control to these militias, another landmark in the disintegration of the state in Afghanistan. For the first time, it began to cooperate with human rights workers.

The Soviet Union took away its troops from Afghanistan under the UN-arbitrated Geneva Accords, which were signed on April 14, 1988, and whose application schedule ended on February 15, 1989, when the Soviet commander, General Boris Gromov, followed his last squad members over the Friendship Bridge. The Geneva deals also appeared to require a stop of external compensation by Pakistan and the US to armed rebels in Afghanistan. In 1986, after the Reykjavik summit between Reagan and Gorbachev, the US authority had devoted itself to assure an accord that would end backing to the mujahidin, but President Reagan denied cutting off the mujahedeen while the USSR continued to assist the Najibullah government (Kalinovsky 2008; Misdaq 2006)

After the end of the Soviet departure, the regime resists a March 1989 offensive at Jalalabad sponsored by Pakistan and the US concerning the advice of local mujahedeen commanders. Arab based fighters including Usama bin Laden himself from the newly founded al-Qaida organization participated (Misra 2004; Neumann 2009; Rais 1995). Najibullah encountered increased factional pressure and resistance as he started a process of reform modeled on that in Moscow. The governments accepted a new constitution in 1987, bring back the name of Daud's Republic of Afghanistan, and revised it broadly in 1990 (Harpviken 1997; Rais 1999).

Just little more than a year after the end of the Soviet departure, in March 1990, some Khalqi officers guided by Defense Minister Shahnawaz Tanai did a coup with the backing of hardline Pakistani-supported Islamist Gulbuddin Hikmatyar (Emadi 2001; Ewans 2005). The revolution failed, and after immense arrests and some executions by killing, Najibullah rebalanced the administrative systems, giving remaining Khalqis a sufficient share, and gradually

opening the government to non-party technocrats (Saikal 2004).

Immediately after the fall of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, Russia discarded the regime the USSR had supported, and the UN designed a transition plan backed up by the US and, apparently, by Pakistan (Bhatia et al. 2008; Qassem 2009). Under heavy international pressure, Najibullah declared his retirement on national television. He wanted to go to India as a refuge and be replaced by a bureaucratic transitional government. Najibullah's escape was obstructed by his own erstwhile militias, who felt he had deceived them, and he took shelter in the UN office, where he lived until his apprehend, torture, maiming, and assassination by the Taliban in September 1996 (Reuveny & Prakash 1999; Tarzi 1993; Upadhyay 2009).

Summary: Politically Afghanistan had never been stable during PDPA regime; it was mainly because of the lack of national unity and involvement of complex international politics. The history of Afghanistan is also full of the power struggles, bloody coups, and instability. The country has been ruled by almost all types of government during the last century. During Mohammad Daud Khan regime the political situation of Afghanistan was in stable condition. The massive unrest and instability has begun in the history of Afghanistan when Daud Khan was overthrown by leftwing military officers led by Nur Mohammad Taraki by the direct support of USSR. Democratic republic of Afghanistan was also the witness of capture, torture, massive human right violation and execution of political and non-political figures. If we draw a conclusion about the political regime of the democratic republic of Afghanistan, we can realize that it was nothing but a cold war battle filed between the two power giant of that time USSR and USA. Every single political event happened during PDPA regime by the direct or indirect support and the involvement of these two giants, where the division or lack of unity among the different nationalities of Afghanistan had played its role as a catalyst.

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