

Afghanistan's Future Depends on Pakistan's Democratic Success

The screenshot shows a web page from 'Opinion Maker' with a navigation bar at the top containing links like HOME, ABOUT US, ADVERTISE HERE, CONTACT US, DONATIONS, O. M. CHANNEL, OUR CONTRIBUTORS, and RAJA MUJTABA SHOW. The main header features the 'Opinion Maker' logo and the tagline 'Foresight with insight' next to a fountain pen icon. Below the header is a search bar and a 'subscribe: Posts | Comments' link. The article title is 'Afghanistan's Future Depends on Pakistan' with '0 comments' indicated. It is posted by Harun Yahya on Mar 24, 2014. The main content area has a sub-header 'Afghanistan's Future Depends on Pakistan's Democratic Success' and a map of the region showing Afghanistan, Pakistan (with provinces like Balochistan, Punjab, Sindh, and North West Frontier), and India. The author is identified as 'By Yahya Harun'. The text begins with 'After being ruled as a monarchy until 1973, Afghanistan became a republic (Daoud's Republic of Afghanistan) with the declaration of a constitution by Daoud Khan in 1977. With the help of the Marxist-socialist party of PDPA, People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, Daoud led a bloodless coup to oust King Zahir Shah from power. However, the passage to a republic also brought with it conflict in this ancient land made up of different tribes. Generally speaking, Daoud Khan's secular government was also made up of two rival Marxist factions known as Khalq (The Masses) and Parcham (The Flag). After achieving a coup, Daoud turned against both of these groups and tried to exterminate them from the government. His failure to exterminate all the leaders of these two Marxist parties, would ultimately lead to his own demise, during the coup lead by the Khalq's to remove Daoud from power. Once in power, the Khalq's achieved superiority with Russian backing.'

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After being ruled as a monarchy until 1973, Afghanistan became a republic (Daoud's Republic of Afghanistan) with the declaration of a constitution by Daoud Khan in 1977. With the help of the Marxist-socialist party of PDPA, People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, Daoud led a bloodless coup to oust King Zahir Shah from power. However, the passage to a republic also brought with it conflict in this ancient land made up of different tribes. Generally speaking, Daoud Khan's secular government was also made up of two rival Marxist factions known as Khalq (The Masses) and Parcham (The Flag). After achieving a coup, Daoud turned against both of these groups and tried to exterminate them from the government. His failure to exterminate all the leaders of these two Marxist parties, would ultimately lead to his own demise, during the coup lead by the Khalq's to remove Daoud from power. Once in power, the Khalq's achieved superiority with Russian backing. Following popular protests against military agreements reached with the USSR, the Khalq's already under Soviet influence, took a decision to invite the Soviets into the country. This initiated a conflict that would profoundly affect all the countries in the region but also Afghanistan and the Soviets in particular.

From the outset, The Marxist parties of Khalq and Parcham were bitter rivals, and contrary to the Soviets' expectations, the military, and low-ranking soldiers in particular, who made up 85% of the army, took up arms alongside the people resisting the Red Army. At the international level, the United States became concerned about Soviet ambitions for expansion into the Middle East, and began supporting the resistance. This combined with the difficult terrain in Afghanistan, Pakistan's backing for the Afghan mujahedeen, and the worsening Soviet economy created the conditions for a long and painful war. As a result, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev was forced to announce that Russian troops would very gradually be withdrawn from the country. During the invasion, civil war and turmoil, which lasted for 28 years, 1.5 million people lost their lives and around 6 million had to flee the country as refugees.

After Soviet withdrawal, the country was drawn into a very different form of turmoil. Two major groups under the leadership of Hikmetyar and Rabbani began fighting among themselves, and a period of further horrific blood civil war began. It was in this period that Taliban movement was established.

The New Period, September 11 and the Taliban

Following the attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, the United States sent troops to Afghanistan under the pretext that it had provided assistance for the Taliban and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda organization, whom it regarded as responsible for the attacks. America was not the only country that sent troops there. Soldiers from 30 other countries joined, including troops from Turkey, which enjoys a great historical and religious proximity to the region, were now in the country, on the condition they took no direct part in the fighting. During this process, which started in 2001, some 14,200 troops on both sides and 30,000 civilians lost their lives. Scores of people are still dying every week from bombs and in clashes.

Following the death of Osama bin Laden, however, the Taliban took control over much of the country because of popular sentiment against the NATO intervention and the terrible consequences it gave rise to. Neither the Afghan Army nor NATO forces had any serious control outside the capital, Kabul.

After Karzai, and Pakistan-Taliban Relations

The year 2014 is very important for Afghanistan, because by the end of this year American and NATO forces will gradually be withdrawn from the country. New elections for a new president will also be held. While he has differences of opinion with America on some matters, President Karzai's term, whom the US has supported from the outset, is coming to an end, and he has no chance of being elected again. Many candidates are taking part in the elections, due to be held in April, and this newly elected government will face serious problems. Improving relations with Pakistan will play a particularly critical role in resolving the problem of the Taliban, who are becoming more embedded in the country every day. Pakistan is the country that can play the greatest role in influencing the Taliban to adopt a more moderate and democratic line. Everyone is agreed that peace, calm and security can never

come to the region unless an agreement is reached with the Taliban, who are very strong in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Enter Turkey, a country that is playing host to peace talks between the two neighbors and ensuring diplomatic coordination is attracting attention. As a longstanding friend of both countries, Turkey has striven for the building of peace for many years. Turkey has also contributed to talks in Ankara between the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan in the new period, and is the only country to possess the support of the Taliban, taking a tacit part in the talks. Of course, there are countries with major military and political influence in the region viz a viz America and Russia that also need to be convinced to contribute to this peace process.

Afghan and Turkish officials discussing the replacement of NATO forces who will be leaving the country by 2014 with Turkish troops, have made significant progress. Building relations not just with its immediate neighbors in the region, such as Syria and Iraq, but also with Afghanistan and Pakistan, which are further away with which it has close historical links, is a telltale sign of a more active foreign policy on the part of Turkey. Turkey now has to discharge a historic responsibility by always prioritizing peace and togetherness in relations with countries in the region, inclusive of major powers with interests in the region. That obligation requires Turkey to have good economic relations with these countries.

All these developments are grounds for optimism for Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, countries that were good friends until only a century ago. The friendship and love between Turkish women and the Afghan and Pakistani women who sent their gold bracelets to support Turks during the Gallipoli Campaign is but one example of this. The training and defense services provided by Turkish troops in Afghanistan and Pakistan ever since the time of the Ottoman Empire are the product of this feeling of brotherhood.

In addition, The Republic of Turkey has recently been a source of hope for all the oppressed peoples of the world. Turkey is the most important country for the purpose of building a world in which peace, well-being and security are established. Afghanistan and Pakistan need Turkey, a country thousands of kilometers away, in order to attain peace, and both Afghanistan and Pakistan need it to live in peace with each other as well as their neighbors. Turkey is therefore an important country acting as a conduit, bridging and fostering understanding among them.

Adnan Oktar's article on Opinion Maker:

<http://www.opinion-maker.org/2014/03/afghanistans-future-depends-on-pakistan/>

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/afghanistans-future-depends-on-pakistans-democratic-success>