

Information on Afghanistan, related to its early history, and the present condition, as well as environment, Afghanistan culture, Afghanistan tradition, Afghanistan politics Afghanistan people and their ethnic differences, Although it was the scene of great empires and flourishing trade for over two millennia, Afghanistan did not become a truly independent nation until the twentieth century. The areas heterogeneous groups were not bound into a single political entity until the reign of Ahmad Shah Durrani, who in 1747 founded the monarchy that ruled the country until 1973. In the nineteenth century, Afghanistan lay between the expanding might of the Russian and British empires. In 1900, Abdur Rahman Khan (the Iron Amir), looking back on his twenty years of rule and the events of the past century, wondered how his country, which stood like a goat between these lions [Britain and Tsarist Russia] or a grain of wheat between two strong millstones of the grinding mill, [could] stand in the midway of the stones without being ground to dust? Constrained by the competing dictates of powerful British and Russian empires, Abdur Rahman focused instead on consolidating his power within Afghanistan and creating the institutions of a modern nation-state. Islam played a key role in the formation of Afghan history as well. Despite the Mongol invasion of Afghanistan in the early thirteenth century which has been described as resembling more some brute cataclysm of the blind forces of nature than a phenomenon of human history, even a warrior as formidable as Genghis Khan did not uproot Islamic civilization, and within two generations his heirs had become Muslims. An often unacknowledged event that nevertheless played an important role in Afghan history (and in the politics of Afghanistans neighbors and the entire region up to the present) was the rise in the tenth century of a strong Sunni dynasty--the Ghaznavids. Their power prevented the eastward spread of Shiism from Iran, thereby insuring that the majority of the Muslims in Afghanistan and South Asia would be Sunnis

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