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**Ahmed Khan Durrani - The Father of
Afghanistan**

Lead: In the history of Afghanistan few names exceed the importance of Ahmed Khan.

Intro.: "A Moment in Time" with Dan Roberts.

Content: Throughout its history as a nation Afghanistan has had to jealously guard its position and independence. It is a desert land, dry and mountainous with a certain desolate beauty, whose attraction to its neighbors has less to do with this natural resource than its strategic

position across the path of conquest from the central plains of Asia into the rich Indian sub-continent. The Afghan people are an alliance of tribal groups the majority of which derive their ethnic heritage from a racial group known as Pushtoos and speak an Indo-European language that is related to but does not come from Persian.

In 1747 the area known today as Afghanistan was a part of an empire hammered together by Nadir Shah, the son of a shepherd from northern Iran, whose military genius in the service of the Persian ruler soon obscured his humble social origins and early career as a bandit. Nadir Shah, impressed with their fighting ability

and loyalty, used, as his personal guard, Afghan cavalymen. When a palace plot ended in his murder, the Afghans galloped for home and in a meeting of tribal chiefs declared their independence of Persia and selected as the first king of the Afghan's, Ahmed Khan. He had been chief of Nadir Shah's royal guard and was twenty-three years old. Aside from his ability and military leadership he was probably chosen because his tribe, the Saddozai, while well-respected was among the smallest in the Afghan coalition. This plus his youth meant that the other chiefs would not have to surrender much of their power to the new king. Ahmed Shah proved them wrong.

Recognizing that the history of his people tended toward tribal conflict, he realized that a centralized government was impossible. Therefore, he appointed to the royal council, the leaders of the other tribes and embarked on a series of military campaigns that focused the energy of his contentious people on conquest rather than internal squabbles.

He repeatedly led raids into India, bringing home great quantities of loot, expanded the borders of those areas directly ruled by the Afghans, establish his capital at Kandahar, and died in 1772 having given birth and form to a great nation. In recognition of his life he is known not only by the

Afghans as Ahmed the Great, but as Baba, "father."

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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