

Lawrence A. Keeno

ICS 224 Intro Global Engagement

Professor Reitz

Adopt-a-country

To be included are:

1. Country Profile – History, religious and cultural make-up, economic factors.
2. Current Events – What is happening in that country at this time.
3. Prayer needs – at least 5 relevant and current needs to pray for this country.

Afghanistan

According to BBC News Organization, Afghanistan is officially the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, It is a mountainous, landlocked country in South-Central Asia at an important geopolitical location, it connects the Middle East with Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. It is bordered, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, and by Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan. Its' shortest border in the Wakhan Corridor panhandle with Xinjiang, an autonomous region of China. Afghanistan has a surface area of 652,000 square kilometers, the country is somewhat larger than the Iberian Peninsula, or slightly smaller than U.S. state of Texas. Afghanistan has a population of 26.5 million people (in 2015), capital and largest city is Kabul; official languages are Afghan Persian or Dari (50%), and Pashto (35%). The highest point in the country is Mount Noshaq 7,485 meters, in the Hindu Kush mountain range. Afghanistan's recent history is characterized by war and civil unrest. The Soviet Union invaded in 1979 and was forced to withdraw 10 years later by anti-Communist mujahidin forces supplied and trained by the US, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and others. Fighting subsequently continued among the various mujahidin factions, giving rise to a state of war lords that eventually spawned the Taliban.

Backed by foreign sponsors, the Taliban developed as a political force and eventually seized power. The Taliban were able to capture most of the country, aside from Northern Alliance strongholds primarily in the northeast, until US and allied military action in support of the opposition following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks forced the group's downfall. In late 2001, major leaders from the Afghan opposition groups met in Bonn, Germany, and agreed on a plan for the formulation of a new government structure that resulted in the inauguration of Hamid KARZAI as Chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority (AIA) on 22 December 2001. The AIA held a nationwide Grand Assembly in June 2002, and KARZAI was elected President by secret ballot of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan (TISA). The Transitional Authority has an 18-month mandate to hold a nationwide Loya Jirga to adopt a constitution and a 24-month mandate to hold nationwide elections. In December 2002, the TISA marked the one-year anniversary of the fall of the Taliban.

In addition to occasionally violent political jockeying and ongoing military action to root out remaining terrorists and Taliban elements, the country suffers from enormous poverty, a crumbling infrastructure, and widespread land mines, 26,556,000 (2015).

More than 3.5 million Afghans live outside the country, mainly in Pakistan and Iran, although over two and a half million have returned since the removal of the Taliban. Annual population growth rate (2004 est.): 4.92%. This rate does not take into consideration the recent war and its continuing impact.

Main ethnic groups: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Aimaq, Baluch, Nuristani, Kizilbash.

Religions: Sunni Muslim 80%, Shi'a Muslim 19%, other 1%.

Demographics:

Languages: Dari (Afghan Persian), Pashto.

Literacy: 30-35%; (male 51%, female 21%)

Natural resources: Natural gas, oil, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron, salt, precious and semiprecious stones.

Agriculture products: Opium, wheat, corn, barley, rice, cotton, fruit, nuts, karakul pelts, wool, and mutton.

Industries: Small-scale production of textiles, soap, furniture, shoes, fertilizer, cement; handwoven carpets; natural gas, coal, copper.

Exports - commodities: opium, fruits and nuts, handwoven carpets, wool, cotton, hides and pelts, precious and semi-precious gems.

Exports - partners: India 42.3%, Pakistan 29%, Tajikistan 7.6% (2015)

Imports - commodities: machinery and other capital goods, food, textiles, petroleum products

Imports - partners: Pakistan 38.6%, India 8.9%, US

8.3%, Turkmenistan 6.2%, China 6%, Kazakhstan 5.9%, Azerbaijan 4.9% (2015)

Afghanistan's economy is recovering from decades of conflict. The economy has improved significantly since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 largely because of the infusion of international assistance, the recovery of the agricultural sector, and service sector growth.

Despite the progress of the past few years, Afghanistan is extremely poor and highly dependent on foreign aid. Much of the population continues to suffer from shortages of housing, clean water, electricity, medical care, and jobs. Criminality, insecurity, a weak governance, the lack of infrastructure, and the Afghan Government's difficulty in extending rule of law to all parts of the

country. The Opium cultivation is estimated to be at an all-time high in Afghanistan, despite the US spending \$7.5billion to combat it.

Five prayers needed as follows as described by the OCHA, United Nations Office For the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs;

Prayer for human security which will enable basic services and to move from A to B. Both sides are trying to win hearts and minds, and you hear it said that 80 percent of Afghans are on the fence: the truth is that 80 percent of people are in the ditch, and are trying to resist both sides pulling and pushing.

Prayer for more and more malnourished children. They could be treated at the local health center or helped at home through a little education provided to the mothers. But they come in a very malnourished state, weeks too late.

Prayer for humanitarian access which feeds into the problem of services. When people are displaced the situation requires assessment, either aid or protection. Such as an intervention with the parties to the conflict so that people can go back home.

Prayer for the intense and widespread conflict with very significant direct and even more so indirect humanitarian consequences. The role and work of humanitarian actors, particularly those that have stuck to fundamental principles, needs to be respected; all parties to the conflict must be reminded of their obligation under international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Prayer to give young people a job and a salary - something they can be proud of.

Prayer for the need to bring pressure on the government to change their system, to reduce bureaucracy, to reduce corruption, to select good ministers and the ministers should be responsible to the people."

My Prayers will be given the people of this land for the very important needs as described above. I will intercede on their behalf that God may find it in his heart to show mercy where mercy is required, to show grace where grace is required, to show hope in a seemingly hopeless situation. I will continue to pray that our leaders will be able to find peace in the midst of war and reach out to any length necessary to help Afghanistan's inhabitants that have been graced with the same basic human rights as I enjoy.