

Brief Political History of Afghanistan

Read the following text, then answer the questions below.

- ❖ In 1747, Ahmad Shah Durrani founded Afghanistan by unifying the Pashtun tribes.
- ❖ Afghanistan operated as a buffer between the British Empire and the Russian Empire until, in 1919, it won independence from notional British control.
- ❖ A short fling with democracy ended in 1973 with a coup and in 1978 with a Communist counter-coup.
- ❖ In 1979, the Soviet Union invaded to support the weak Afghan Communist regime, sparking a lengthy and destructive war.
- ❖ In 1989 (shortly before the Soviet Union itself crumbled), the USSR withdrew from Afghanistan under relentless pressure by anti-Communist mujahedin rebels being supported by international forces, including the United States.
- ❖ Kabul (the capital city) finally fell to the Taliban in the fall of 1996 after a series of subsequent civil wars. The Taliban is an Islamic fundamentalist, Pakistani-sponsored movement. It emerged in 1994 to end Afghanistan's civil war and anarchy.
- ❖ The attacks which occurred on the United States on September 11, 2001, were linked to Osama bin Laden, a Taliban leader who had been supported by the United States during the Afghan civil war. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., an American, Allied, and anti-Taliban Northern Alliance military action brought down the Taliban for sheltering Osama bin Laden.
- ❖ In 2001, the United Nations-sponsored Bonn Conference set up a process for Afghanistan's political reconstruction. This process included the adoption of a new constitution, a presidential election in 2004, and National Assembly elections in 2005.
- ❖ Hamid Karzai became the first democratically elected president of Afghanistan in December of 2004. The National Assembly was inaugurated the following December (2005).
- ❖ Hamid Karzai was re-elected in August of 2009 for a second term. Gains have been made toward building a stable central government. However, a resurgent Taliban and continuing instability in the countryside - particularly in the south and in the east - remain serious challenges for the new Afghan Government.
- ❖ Osama bin Laden was killed by Seal Team Six (of the U.S. Navy Seals) on May 2, 2011, in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

1. When did Afghanistan gain independence from Great Britain?
 - a. 1747
 - b. 1919
 - c. 1979
 - d. 1989
2. What country invaded Afghanistan in 1979?
 - a. Great Britain
 - b. Iraq
 - c. Soviet Union
 - d. United States
3. What organization arose in Afghanistan in 1994?
 - a. Al-Qaeda
 - b. Communist Party
 - c. Hamas
 - d. Taliban
4. Who became Afghanistan's first democratically elected president, following the defeat of the Taliban?
 - a. Ayatollah Khomeini
 - b. Hamid Karzai
 - c. Osama bin Laden
 - d. Saddam Hussein