

Afghanistan: People, Land and Its Geo-Strategic Relevance

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Abstract:

Afghanistan, a completely landlocked country, is located in the heart of South Central Asia. Afghanistan's physical geography has had a profound impact on the country's history and culture. The complex set of mountains that lie at the heart of the country is one of the most obvious features. The local tribes or ethnic divisions are the outstanding social feature of life in Afghanistan. The important geo-strategic location of Afghanistan plays an important role in the region which connects South and Central Asia and Middle East. Because of this strategic location, Afghanistan has been targeted by various invaders. It has also been a source in which the local powers invaded the neighboring states to establish their own empires. Besides, the strategic location of Afghanistan was the central point responsible for the intense rivalry between Britain and Russia during the nineteenth century. It was on August 19, 1919 that Afghanistan regained its independence from Britain following the third Anglo-Afghan war. Since the late 1970, the land of Afghanistan has been under turbulence due to civil war among various Afghan war-lords. This was further intensified by foreign occupation, first by USSR in 1979 and then by the US in 2001 in order to topple the government of the Taliban.

Key words: Afghanistan, Ethnic groups, Geo-Strategic location, Cold War, Taliban.