Aim: Why was Afghanistan a “Third World Country” by the end of WWII?
Afghanistan’s Ethnic Groups and Tribes
(Purple = Pashtun)
A Crash Course in Afghanistan until 1945

- Safavids vs. Mughals
- Overthrow by the Pashtun tribe
- 1747: Ahmad Shah Durrani becomes first king of Afghanistan
- Durrani conquers and uses wealth from conquest to tame local leaders

The Safavid and Mughal Empires and the lands that would become present-day Afghanistan.
Enter the Europeans: GB vs. Russia

- GB feels India (its colony) is threatened by Russia – both view Afghanistan as a buffer state
- GB has a series of invasions over the 1800s → lots of violence and eventual “protectorate” status of Afghanistan

“Every Afghan brought to death I shall regard as one scoundrel less... anyone found [with arms] should be filled on the spot like vermin” – Lord Lytton, British viceroy of India, 1878
“An Afghanistan, friendly to us...would be infinitely more valuable than a dependent or conquered Afghanistan...[They] must realized our view of [their] poistion as a weak power between two enormously strong ones...”

GB puts a new king, Abdur Rahman, on the throne, bribes him with weapons and money....
Abdur Rahman – “The Iron Emir”

- (He’s pretty awful)
- Uses British money to stay in power, and is brutal to suppress ethnic tensions
- At the same time, he rallies groups AGAINST GB and Russia, saying his brutality is the West’s fault...
- **ISLAM IS THE ANSWER – A **JIHAD (“struggle”) AGAINST **THE WEST – This becomes popular in the rural areas among the poor**
Fast Forward to WWII

• Afghan independence from GB – 1920

• King Amanullah Khan – “Let’s make like the West!”
  – Education
  – Infrastructure
  – Industry
  – Democratic Reforms....
  – ....And taxes. Which everyone hates. So he flees. And there’s chaos. And instability. And the country needs help

• Neutral in WWII, and after 1945 Afghanistan is looking for aid
Afghanistan becomes a Third World Nation

Options: GB (traditional, but broken), US (rich), USSR (rich)…Who will respond? What will they do?
The answer is...complicated

- Soviet Union gives the MOST aid and spends a BOATLOAD OF MONEY on the Afghan military
- United States gives a little bit of aid
- Afghanistan goes from a corrupt monarchy, to a corrupt constitutional monarchy, to a struggling democracy
- Who’s mad?
  - USSR – why?
  - Jihadists – why?
Why did the Soviet Union invade Afghanistan in the 1980s?
Compare and contrast the point of view of President Jimmy Carter (US) and Premier Leonid Brezhnev.

How does each man view the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan? Why?

How do you predict the Afghan people will respond? Why?
Aim: How did life in Afghanistan change with the rise of the Taliban?
Anti-Soviet Struggle lasts 10 years

- Jihad – Struggle Against Those Preventing the Practice of Islam
- Mujahideen – Ragtag, disorganized groups of anti-Soviet fighters heavily influenced by jihad and Islam (funded and armed by the US)
  - Why would the US fund violent Islamist fighters?
- 10 Years of guerilla warfare, and the USSR gives up and leaves ....without a stable government in place
  - Mujahideen act as rural warlords, overseeing different ethnic areas
Enter the Taliban

• “Religious students who seek justice and knowledge” who turned to Islam to look for answers of how to stabilize Afghanistan

• Studied Islam at madrassas (religious schools)
  – “We would sit for a long time to discuss how to change the terrible situation. We had only vague ideas what to do, but we believed we were working with Allah as his students”

• Taliban vs. Mujahideen = Civil War

• Taliban win and establish a sharia, Islamist gov’t
Two Views of the Taliban – Primary Sources

• Consider: Why was Western-style democracy not adopted in Afghanistan? What made the Taliban initially appealing?

• Using the readings, answer the Aim: *How did life in Afghanistan change with the rise of the Taliban?*