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Afghanistan’s Waves of Reforms and Democracy:
Destiny of a Century - Long Process to be tested in the Transformation Decade?

For the last 100 years Afghanistan reformists have tested reforms and social progress at least three times. The first struggle to bring fundamental changes began with the constitutional movement aiming to establish an elected Grand Assembly and fulfilling deep social progresses around the beginning of the 20th century. However the movement failed organizationally and the members were all executed, the cause survived and inspired King Aman’s ten year of reforms between 1919 to 1927.

Afghanistan’s second wave for reforms realized some democratic openings such as elections, registration of political parties, women participation in the social life, and free media during 1964-1973. This decade was known as the “decade of democracy”. Most of the above reformed platforms could not survive local and regional barriers that challenged the modern aspirations for a lasting political stability, nation building, social progress, human rights, and development. The military coup de tat by Muhammad Daud, the founder of Afghanistan’s Republic, ended this golden decade of Afghanistan.

By the intervention of the international community after the 9/11 incidence, the third wave of reform began. International community mandated by UN Security Council statement drew a new road map through Bonn Conference in December 2001.

The first two waves of reform and democracy could not last more than ten years each and were immediately reversed by military coups. But, luckily the destiny of the third test of reform and democracy is yet not destined to fade and there is still hope to last and succeed if international community, Afghanistan neighbours, and people of Afghanistan would stand by this process.

The achievements of this stage of reform were however broad and fundamental, could be summarized in the below categories: