



SEATTLE
REP

BY SYLVIA KHOURY

DIRECTED BY
VALERIE CURTIS-NEWTON

Play Guide

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A NOTE FROM YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

In February of this year, I noticed a huge influx of students in my school. I didn't take much notice of it until my teachers began fretting about having rooms full of forty students that were only meant for thirty. I couldn't help but think to myself, "maybe it would be better if we didn't have so many new kids coming into our district."

When I read *Selling Kabul*, I realized what an ignorant thought that was. I didn't understand that these kids were coming from Afghanistan to find safety from their previous environment. I'd never had to worry about anything so serious. I've seen the Middle East portrayed in movies – war-torn and bleak, with that weird sepia tone filter Hollywood keeps recycling for no reason. However, I had never stopped to think about the real, everyday people being affected by this war; people with hopes, dreams, and so much more life to live. *Selling Kabul* provides insight into the lives of a family suffering at the hands of the Taliban. The impacts of the war in Afghanistan have reverberated around the U.S., but it's often hard to see how it directly impacts our communities until we start looking for it.

When comparing the themes of this play and the experiences of some of my friends who migrated from Afghanistan to the U.S., I found alarming similarities. There are people in my school community whose parents were translators and are now stuck in Afghanistan. Just like in the play, these people have been separated from their families due to conservative laws, unfair restrictions, and violence. I cannot begin to imagine the stress that these students must feel. They are expected to reach impossible American academic and social standards whilst experiencing immigration stressors that no child should.

Selling Kabul allowed me to understand the lasting impacts of the war in Afghanistan in ways I hadn't before, and I hope it does the same for you. In this Play Guide, learn about Afghan history, explore Afghan recipes and art, complete activities, and more.

Malia Silva
Youth Intern



MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT



Sylvia Khoury is a New York-born writer of French and Lebanese descent. Her plays include *Selling Kabul* (Playwrights Horizons, Williamstown Theater Festival), *Power Strip* (LCT3), and *Against the Hillside* (Ensemble Studio Theater). She is currently under commission from Lincoln Center, Williamstown Theater Festival, and Seattle Rep. Awards include the L. Arnold Weissberger Award and Jay Harris Commission and a Citation of Excellence from the Laurents/Hatcher Awards. She is a member of EST/Youngblood and a previous member of the 2018-2019 Rita Goldberg Playwrights' Workshop at The Lark and the 2016-2018 WP Lab. Her plays have been developed at Playwrights Horizons, Williamstown Theater Festival, Eugene O'Neill Playwrights' Conference, Roundabout Theater Underground, Lark Playwrights' Week, EST/Youngblood, and WP Theater. She holds a B.A. from Columbia University, an M.F.A. from the New School for Drama, and an M.D. from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

PLAYWRIGHT'S PERSPECTIVE: SELLING KABUL

September 15, 2020

By Sylvia Khoury

Every time I sit down to work on this play, I cannot rid myself of the recently-colored, very mustachioed image of my blue-eyed Algerian great-grandfather. Although I'm certain he never set foot in Afghanistan, I find him psychically linked to the character of Taroon in my play, the Afghan interpreter promised a visa in exchange for collaborating with the American military at great personal risk.

My aforementioned maternal great-grandfather, Samuel Amsellem, was born in Tlemcen, Algeria in 1894. This made him French — but only barely. In 1870, the Jews of Algeria had been granted French citizenship through the controversial Crémieux Decree (widely considered to have been a means of dividing, and therefore controlling, French Algeria's colonized Jewish and Muslim populations). Samuel was Jewish and therefore French, and so was sent to fight for France in Germany during the First World War. He sustained a severe leg wound and inhalational gas injuries, and died at 34, likely from respiratory complications.

Thirty years after Samuel had fought and died on behalf of France, his daughter (my grandmother) Marie-Liliane was pulled out of high school (along with every other school-aged Jewish child) per order of what was now Vichy France. The Crémieux Decree was reversed, and her citizenship revoked. France, the country her father had died for, had cast her out.

Now, I won't pretend that this story has a tragic ending. It doesn't. The Second World War ended before Algerian Jews could meet the same terrible fates as their European counterparts. The Crémieux Decree was reinstated in 1943 and remained in place until the Algerian War for Independence. But I often think of those three years of limbo. Three years without citizenship, without any way of imagining the future, in which one thought must have played and replayed in my grandmother's mind: we were only French when convenient.

In times of war, of military campaigns, of unrest — the amorphous state must suddenly become flesh and blood. The arms, legs, and minds of individuals cease to be their own and instead are pieced together to give the state a bodily form. It requires hands to hold weapons, lungs to breathe gas, and mouths to translate. And in those moments of peril and patriotism, every part unquestioningly belongs to the state.

"This is not a new story of betrayal. Every family has one, if you look far enough."

This is not a new story of betrayal. Every family has one, if you look far enough. I had to go three generations back to locate mine. As for Taroon — and other individuals like him — their story is now, and we are failing them.

"Three years without citizenship, without any way of imagining the future, in which one thought must have played and replayed in my grandmother's mind: we were only French when convenient."

But the moment the campaign is ended, the need fulfilled, the body disbanded — what then? When World War I ended, Samuel's body became his own, not France's. His lungs deteriorated, and this was not France's concern. In fact, his daughter was easily dismissed by the state he had given his flesh for. When we no longer needed men like Taroon, their bodies, too, became their own again, and their lives and those of their families, not our concern.

HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN

By Humaira Ghilzai, Afghanistan Cultural Advisor

King Amanullah Khan and Queen Soraya's attempt to implement educational, gender, and infrastructure reforms (modeled after Western ideals) received backlash from religious institutions and the general public. He abdicated in wake of popular uprising and handed his kingdom to his cousin Inayatullah Khan, who ruled for three days before Habibullah Kalakani took over the kingdom (January 1929-October 1929).

1919-1929



Muhammad Nadir Shah returned from exile, overthrew **Kalakani's** government, and abolished all of Amanullah Khan's reforms before his assassination in 1933.

1929-1933



Muhammad Zahir Shah, the last king of Afghanistan, inherited the kingdom at the age of 19 after his father's assassination. He ruled peacefully for 40 years.

1933-1973



President Daud Khan overthrew King Zahir Shah, his cousin, in a military coup and declared the country the Republic of Afghanistan in hopes of modernization.

In a bloody coup d'état known as the **Saur Revolution**, the **People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan** massacred **Daud Khan** and his family at the presidential palace. The new government implemented a series of socialist reforms backed by the USSR.

1973-1978



Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan to support the puppet government. Guerrilla fighters, the **Mujahideen**, fought against the Soviet occupation with support from the US., Saudi Arabia and other Western allies until the Russian army was defeated in 1989; after the Geneva Accords was signed, the Soviet troops withdrew.

1979-1989





1992-1996

Burhanuddin Rabbani was nominated as interim president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. Despite a common leader, the **Mujahideen** splintered into factions with competing ideals resulting in civil war.



1996-2001

The Taliban, led by **Mullah Omar**, took advantage of an Afghanistan fatigued by war by promising peace. After gaining control of the country, the Taliban brutally enforced their interpretation of Sharia Law and renamed the country the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.



2001

The United States invaded Afghanistan after the attacks on September 11 to remove the Taliban from power and take down **Osama bin Laden** and **al-Qaeda**, the organization behind the attacks.



2002-2014

Hamid Karzai, backed by the United States became the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The US continued deploying troops to Afghanistan with ever changing military policy and goals.



2015-2021

President **Ashraf Ghani**, hoped to quell corruption and move the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to stability. Progress was slow and bloody due to issues arising from the US's peace negotiation directly with the Taliban.



2021

After US and NATO troop withdrawal, on August 15, 2021, the **Ashraf Ghani** government collapsed and in a soft-coupe the **Taliban forces** took over the country.

AFGHAN LIFE, ART, AND CULTURE:

Afghanistan has a wealth of customs and traditions. Because the country is geographically positioned between 4 major cultural areas- the Middle East, Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and the Far East- it has long been considered a multicultural hub. Use the following to explore pieces of Afghan culture through food, dance, art, and cultural institutions.

FOOD:

In the play, Leyla and Afiya speak of a popular dish, sweet rice. Use this recipe for Albaloo Polow to try it yourself!

Recipe for Sweet Rice, Albaloo Polow:

mypersiankitchen.com/albaloo-polow-persian-rice-with-sour-cherries/



Kabuli or Qabili Palau - National Dish



Attan - National Dance

DANCE:

The tradition of Afghan dance began to form in the Middle Ages and told stories of everything from everyday tasks to significant life events, and even natural phenomena. After joining the USSR in the 1920s some traditions were lost, but a resurgence of popularity occurred a few decades later. From this came the 1978 Zebo ensemble.

- Zebo-Amin Zade, famous actor, dancer, and choreographer
- All female
- Performed Tajik, Russian, Uzbek, Iranian, and Afghan traditional dances
- Performed internationally

Types of dances include the Mahsud Dance - Now performed with rifles, it used to be danced before war, but now is a cultural dance. youtu.be/uvwwLPf76dg



THEATER:

- Kabul Theatre, was established in 1973, and re-opened in 2002. It has hosted a National Afghan Theatre Festival with the university in Kabul.
- The Mediothek Girls Theatre of Kunuz was founded by 15-year old playwright Naseeba Holgar.
- White Star Theatre Company was Kabul's first professional all-women theatre company, and Kabul's Exile Theatre toured internationally, both of which were partially established by Bond Street Theatre.
- Herat's Simorgh Film and Theatre staged a play in a women's prison.
- Aftaab Theatre, founded by Ariane Mnouchkine, staged Western classics and original shows, and performed internationally.
- There was a puppet theatre founded by a group of students from Kabul University in 2009 called Parwaz Puppet Theatre.
- The Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization used Playback Theatre to examine human rights violations.
- USAID's Traveling Agricultural Theatre uses live drama to teach advanced farming practices and entertain farmers in remote areas.

Source: https://www.bondst.org/uploads/1/4/5/7/14571600/american_theatre_afghanistan_february_2016.pdf



Bond Street Theater

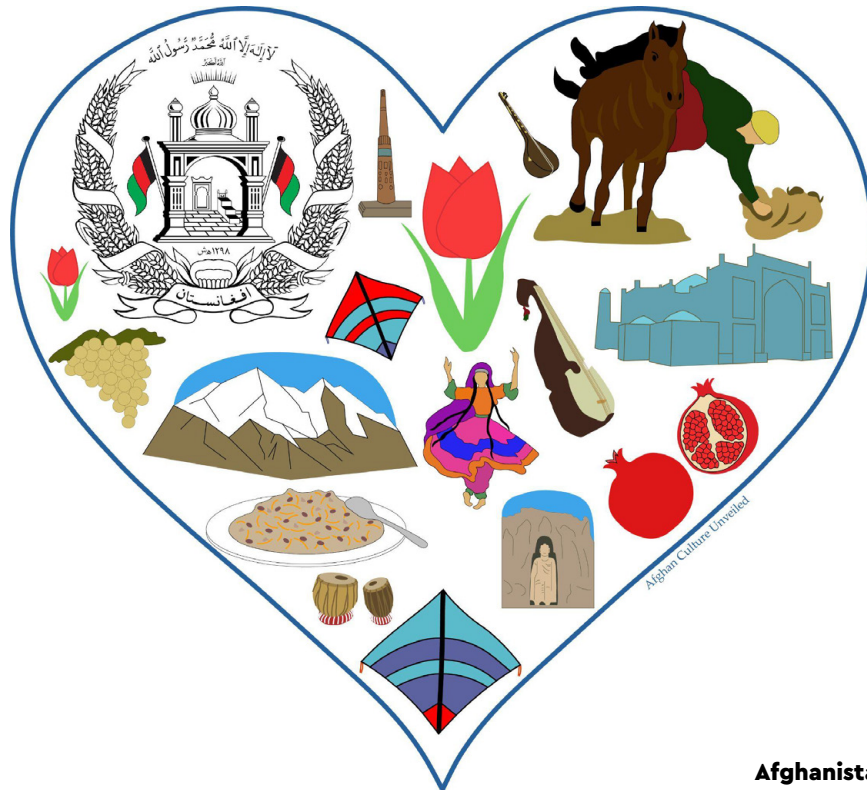


Bond Street Theater



The Aftaab actors dressed for their first play, Romeo and Juliet

AFGHANISTAN HEART SYMBOL



Afghanistan Heart Symbol created by Humaira Ghilzai and Emily Rupright.

Afghanistan's Culture, Food and Symbols Encased in a Heart

October 22, 2020
by Humaira Ghilzai

A few months ago when doing a search for cultural symbols, I discovered a series of colorful artistic heart symbols representing Indian, German, Russian, and many other countries cultural heritage. I thought to myself that I could make one for Afghanistan since most often than not, Afghanistan is associated with war and destruction rather than it's rich cultural heritage. Of course, my first quandary was about how to best capture the diversity of Afghanistan with 14 ethnic groups spread across 34 provinces with varying cultural practices in such limited space.

To begin with, I made a list of items, places, and symbols that I associated with Afghanistan and then used that as a jumping-off point to solicit input from the Afghan community on Facebook on what they associate with Afghanistan. The list of suggestions was long and colorful. It included Istalif pottery, Minaret-e-Ghazni, Bagh-e-Babur, Mawlawna Rumi and many other notable people and symbols which did not make it in the final heart. What I did was choose symbols/items that were suggested numerous times in

my crowd-sourced list which I juxtaposed against Afghanistan's National Symbols List, to make sure that each item in the heart has a cultural significance to a large number of people.

Considering there is a long running dispute over cultural misrepresentation and heritage thievery among the different ethnicities in Afghanistan, this is when I raise a white flag to say that this is not meant to be a complete or official representation of Afghanistan but a glimpse into the country and its culture as I identified with my limited outreach.

We used dark blue the color of Lapiz Lazuli, a semi-precious stone mainly found in Afghanistan, as the outline which encases the following symbols of this 'Afghanistan Heart Symbol'.

- The **National Emblem of Afghanistan**
- Minaret-e-Jam is a **UNESCO World Heritage site, located in Western Afghanistan, in the province of Ghor.**
- Red tulip is **the national flower of Afghanistan and the symbol of Nowroz**, the Afghan New Year.
- Dambura is a **lute played mainly in Tajik and Uzbek folk music.**

- Buzkashi is the **national sport of Afghanistan**
- Afghan **green grapes are famous in Central Asia and are a major export**, both fresh and dried as green raisins, to neighboring countries.
- Hindukush Mountains, **an 800-kilometer mountain range that runs through Afghanistan** and has been written about in folktales and modern novels.
- Afghan woman in traditional clothes doing the **Afghan national dance—attan**. Traditionally attan was performed by men but now both men and women perform this communal dance at end of a wedding, engagement or and Nowroz celebrations.
- Rubab is a lute-like instrument played by trained masters and their students in classic Afghan music. **It's the national instrument of Afghanistan.**
- Shrine of Hazrat-e-Ali, is **one of Afghanistan's most beautiful and most revered mosque, located in Mazar-i-Sharif, in the northern province of Balkh.**
- Qabili Palau is the **national dish of Afghanistan and if you want to make it, I have a fabulous recipe for it.**
- Buddhas of Bamiyan were **two, 6th-century statues carved into the side of a cliff in Bamiyan valley**. The historically significant monuments were defaced by the Taliban in 2001 and now they stand as a stark reminder of the cultural and human destruction that could return if the Taliban gain power in Afghanistan.
- Pomegranate is the national fruit of Afghanistan and if you want to learn **how to deseed one in 30-seconds, watch my Afghan hack video.**
- Tabla is a pair of hand drums, from the Indian Subcontinent, used as a percussion instrument in most Afghan folk and classical music. **Salar Nader is a talented and sought after Afghan percussionist who lives in California.**
- Kite flying is the **national pastime for Afghan men and boys** but I have to admit, when I was a little girl in Kabul, I dabbled in kite flying with my brothers. I was thrilled when my friend **Khaled Hosseini's book *The Kite Runner*** made Afghanistan's kite flying scene world famous.

The creation of the heart was a collaboration with Emily Rupright, an architecture student at Washington University in St. Louis. Emily was a thoughtful, patient, and a great collaborator.



Try It Yourself

- I. Spend five minutes brainstorming a list of items, places, and symbols that you associate with who you are and your heritage. These could be related to a location, religion, familial ancestry, or even spaces or activities where you feel most at home.
- II. After creating your list, use your words to develop significant symbols. For example, for "Seattle" I might put the Space Needle, or for "Friendship" I might have people holding hands. Consider making these symbols uniquely meaningful to you, your family, or your cultural background. These symbols might reflect important places, foods, traditions, or people in your life. There is no "correct" symbol for any item on your list. If you feel so inclined, you can also incorporate national symbols like Humaira, or limit it to the meaningful things that you've produced. Remember, your piece is not designed to be a complete or official representation of you or your culture, but rather a glimpse into who you are.
- III. Once you have your symbols decided, make a heart, and place those symbols inside. This can be a collage, a painting, or even creative usages of symbolic words. Feel free to be creative with it. Consider using the outline of the heart to expand your symbolism. For example, Humaira used dark blue the color of Lapiz Lazuli, a semi-precious stone found in Afghanistan to encase the symbols of her "Afghanistan Heart Symbol."

THE JOURNEY OF AN AFGHAN FARMER TO A DEPUTY COUNTRY STRATEGIC ADVISOR AT THE U.S. EMBASSY

**By Humaira Ghilzai,
Afghanistan Cultural Advisor**

I first met Hassan Etemadi in 2011 at the Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Ghazni Province of Afghanistan. Hassan moved among the American soldiers and diplomats with ease and confidence. I could tell he was highly respected by Afghans and Americans alike.

Just like Taroon, the main character of our play, *Selling Kabul*, Hassan fell into his job as a translator in an unexpected way.

Q: How does a 21-year-old farmer in a remote village get discovered by the U.S. military?

A: It was a very hot summer day and I had just finished harvesting our land in my village a four-hour drive through the mountains to Ghazni city center. A loudspeaker in the village announced that Americans were here to talk to elders about building a dam. I had never seen an American before, so I joined the crowd surrounding the humvees. I knew a few words of English which I wanted to practice so I started talking with one of the military engineers. I'm sure he didn't understand me, but I made a good impression because he asked me if I wanted to work at the FOB in Ghazni.

I consulted my mother and father about taking this job. They said no. My mother worried I wouldn't be allowed to pray and that they would feed me pork. But a wise uncle said to go try it and if I don't like it, I can come back. This was 2006.

I enjoyed working as a custodian in the dining facility. When I got my first paycheck for \$300, my father was happy, but my mother was still unsure. After six months my supervisor asked me if I wanted to be a translator. I took the job despite knowing that the last translator was recently killed.

Q: What did your new job entail?

A: I worked as a translator for the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) which was part of the military apparatus.

We focused on winning the hearts and minds of

the Afghan people. We built schools, roads, and clinics, and provided humanitarian assistance to villages such as free medical assistance. Sometimes we faced crossfire, but in general, it was a public diplomacy role.

Q: How were you treated by the Americans and Afghans in this job?

A: I did not have a problem with the Americans. I produced what they wanted. On the Afghan side, it was challenging. People called me a spy and a traitor. Over time I won the people's trust by working with integrity.

My good reputation led to another promotion. I became the cultural and political advisor for the U.S. State Department representative in the FOB. This was an exciting job.

Q: When did you start your Special Immigration Visa (SIV) application?

A: I applied at the end of 2010, and after many setbacks, it was approved in 2013 at which point I was working in the American Embassy in Kabul as a Deputy Strategic Advisor. Once I was granted an SIV, I had to leave Afghanistan within three months.

Q: It seems you had a good life and many opportunities. Why did you leave Afghanistan in 2013?

A: The security situation in Ghazni Province was deteriorating. My uncle and two friends were killed by the Taliban. Additionally, for seven years I had lied about what I did. Everyone in my village, including my in-laws, thought I worked for a telecom company in Kabul. I was tired of living a double life. Newly married, I wanted my children to have a normal childhood.

Q: What were your biggest obstacles in adjusting to life in the U.S.?

A: I didn't have a problem, but my wife had culture shock. She was pregnant with our first child, and we didn't have



healthcare or a community to help us. We felt isolated in Philadelphia, so we moved to Northern California where there is a large Afghan community. Finding a job was very hard. No one would hire me once they saw that all my work experience was in Afghanistan.

Q: When the Afghan government collapsed on August 15, 2021, what were your feelings?

A: It was heartbreaking to see how the American government turned its back on Afghans. I was also very disappointed because American soldiers were disrespected after years of sacrifice for nothing. What happened in Afghanistan is a policy failure and the biggest damage was done to the younger generation who see their future as a dark tunnel

Author's note: Hassan, 36-years-old, lives in Fremont, California with his wife and three beautiful children. Aside from his professional job as a paralegal, he is the chair of the Ghazni-Hayward Sister Committee which provides humanitarian assistance for Afghan families.

Photo taken in Ghazni, Afghanistan in 2011. Left to right: Hassan Etemadi, Senior Political Assistant for US Embassy in Kabul, at FOB Ghazni; Stetson Sanders, Senior Civilian Representative, PRT Ghazni; and Humaira Ghilzai, Founder of Hayward-Ghazni Sister City Relationship.

THE WOMAN WHO ESCAPED FROM THE TALIBAN

August 30, 2021

By Humaira Ghilzai,
Afghanistan Cultural Advisor

I met the woman who became the director of our schools, let's call her Zan, in 2006. She escaped from the Taliban just four days ago. I can't share her identity because her husband and 6 children are still in Afghanistan. We need your help to get Zan's family out of Afghanistan, too.

My family left Afghanistan in 1979, after the Russian invasion, but Zan's family couldn't.

Instead, Zan finished high school and attended Kabul University during the Russian occupation. While at college, she married a wonderful man, an accomplished doctor, and started a family. After college, Zan became a sought-after teacher.

Sadly war was ever-present. The Russians were driven from Afghanistan but the country descended into five years of civil war. While her mother-in-law helped with her growing family, Zan, despite bouts of anxiety and depression, joined a teacher's collective and began advocating for girls' education.

In 1996, a year after the Taliban overran Kabul for the first time, Zan's family retreated to a remote province, let's call it Khakistan, to escape the brutality that the Taliban unleashed on city folk. While her husband was expected to tend to the sick and wounded of the Taliban, Zan was not allowed to teach, read, write or leave her home without her husband.

Or so the Taliban thought. Instead, Zan rallied some other educated mothers and started an underground school for their daughters. Within a few months, they had several hundred students attending secret classes in their homes.

Unexpectedly, the US ousted the Taliban after 9/11 and promised a better, more empowered life to Afghan women. Zan went back to work first as a teacher, then as the principal of her school and finally as head of education for the entire province. An outspoken advocate for women's rights, Zan was chosen to represent her city at the Loya Jirga that brought people from across Afghanistan together to create a new constitutional framework.

In 2006 we met and connected deeply. As mothers, as advocates. We made a pact to help the girls, boys, and women of Khakistan. With the help of a non-profit I co-founded, Afghan Friends Network, Zan established schools in her province. Over the last fourteen years, we educated 4300 girls, 350 mothers became literate and 1000 boys learned English.

Ever since I've known Zan she has received "night letters", intimidating calls and threats from the Taliban. On numerous occasions I've encouraged her to leave Afghanistan but she always said, "I can't leave our students, they need me."

I was terrified when the Taliban took over one Afghan province after the other, and then the whole country. I have cousins in Afghanistan, but I was more concerned for Zan because she visibly put herself out there to lift up girls and women -- promoting everything the American government and troops had promised the Afghan women since 2001: democracy, women's rights and a better future. She was a believer and a doer and now, she is in the line of fire.

Zan never worked directly for the US military or US government funded projects. She didn't benefit financially from the US occupation. She is not on an evacuation list, if such a thing exists. But, she encouraged girls to go to school, assured women that they would be safe if they voted and participated openly in their society. How do we protect people like her? Are they collateral damage, the incalculable cost of war that no one measures or cites in a report?

Last week the Taliban raided Zan's house in Khakistan, (thankfully she and her family were in Kabul) and found a gun and gun license issued by the US army to her after the first "night letters" arrived from the Taliban. The license had her name and picture. With the Taliban possessing this newfound evidence, Zan and her husband made the bold and very difficult decision to get Zan out of Afghanistan.



This photo of me with Zan was taken in 2010. She made fun of me because I couldn't keep my headscarf on my head.

With a temporary visa to Turkey in hand, under the cover of a burka, Zan travelled from Kabul to Jalalabad (with two distant relatives) where they obtained a visa for Pakistan. Then traveled overland, passing by thousands of Afghan refugees in cars and on foot, to Islamabad, Pakistan. They bought airplane tickets and flew to Istanbul.

This may seem like a happy ending but Zan left her six children (four girls & two boys) and her husband behind. Her fourteen-year-old son cried, wondering when he would see his mother again. Zan is safe, however, she doesn't know how she will reunite with her family.

It cost \$8,000 to get Zan out of Afghanistan and to Turkey. How will her husband find the money to get the rest of the family out of Afghanistan? In Afghan terms, Zan's family is middle class but their home and land are worth almost nothing now. Their savings converted to dollars doesn't go a long way.

Support Zan and her family by supporting Afghan Friends Network: afghanfriendsnetwork.squarespace.com

SELLING KABUL CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

By Shalonia Wonch

Instructional Time 45 minutes – 1 Hour*

Materials Needed

3 – 5 Group Project Baggies
(See attachment 1)

Paper Copies or Digital Access
to attachment 2

Lesson Objectives

(Students will be able to = **SWBAT**)

SWBAT: Use their bodies voice and imaginations to begin to unpack the emotional and internal processes about a particular moment & community in history.

SWBAT: Explain & begin to process the emotional and internal processes of addressing problems over place and time using interdisciplinary lenses (social emotional, theatrical, & historic)

SWBAT: work cooperatively to complete a task

Assessment Criteria

(Students will demonstrate this by = **SWDTB**)

SWDTB: participating in creating the pitch, as well as, expressing verbally and none verbally throughout post activity discussion (part 2).

SWDTB: By creating a visual display & pitch to then discover only one element is apart of the grading criteria.

SWBAT: create a pitch & visual display (house).

Washington State Learning Standards

The following curriculum touches, and supports these learning standards in Washington State

Lesson Objectives

(Students will be able to = **SWBAT**)

SOCIAL STUDIES 9 – 12

SSS3.9–12.1 Evaluate one's own viewpoint and the viewpoints of others in the context of a discussion.

SSS1.9–12.5 Explain the challenge and opportunities of addressing problems over place and time using disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses.

HISTORY 9 – 12

H1.9–10.2 Assess how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

THEATRE 9 – 12

2 Creating – b. Cooperate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a drama/theatre work.

8 Responding – b. Apply concepts from a drama/theatre work for personal realization about cultural perspectives and understanding.

Overview

This curriculum utilizes creativity and process drama by creating a parallel of some of the leading events prior to and in the beginning of the War in Afghanistan with the United States. Drawing upon the strong communities with varying needs, traditions, and cultural lenses within the region, united under a revolving number of leaders with varying leadership stiles, and how outside influences aided certain community groups. This curriculum asks the students to process some of the potential emotional & physiological elements that were at play in Afghanistan and then reflect on what might have been catalysts or factors in order to better understand the events, implications, & patterns within history.

Part 1

- Divide your students into groups of 4 – 8 students (**Works best with 3 – 5 groups in total**)
- Explain to the students that each of these groups represent a different city, within the country of this classroom.
- Give the students 5 minutes to come up with a community/ city name & one thing their city/community is known for. (ex: fishing, major universities and schools, best chili cheese fries, etc.)
- Regroup with the students and let the student know that while they were establishing their communities, you (the teacher) who was previously in control of this classroom have been overthrown by a neighboring community (maybe your next-door classroom?) but they are not having much luck at deciding how or who within their community should rule so there is now an opening for each of their (the students) communities to take control.
 - Explain that for them to take control they must each create a 2 – 3m pitch as to why their community should be the next leadership for this classroom.
- Each community group has 15 to create their Pitches.
 - Pitches can take any form that the students want, song, dance, rap, declaration letters, recorded on a phone and played back, etc.
 - Each pitch should include:
 - ◇ Why their community should be the leaders
 - ◇ What their community would do as leaders
 - ◇ A visual aid using only the resources that are being supplied by outside interests. [See attachment 1]
- After 15 minutes bring your students back together for the pitch ceremony where the next leader of the classroom will be determined.
- Have each community group share their pitches.
- After each group has gone, you (the teacher) let them know that the only element that mattered in these pitches is whatever group had the strongest visual display. The rest of the information & persuasion, while admirable does not end up providing sold enough ground for leadership today.
- You can end this portion of the project with a celebration of the community with the best looking & sturdy visual aid (popsicle house).
 - Celebration can be a cheer/clapping (or booing)
 - Can be a single clap on three
 - Can be a formal gift giving of the housing structures to the ruling community.

Transition:

- Ask your students if they are happy with their new leadership?
 - Why are you happy?
 - Was it a fair way to determine the next leader? (Can nudge with: Was it fair that you all didn't have the same supplies for the one element of the project that determined who gets to be in charge?)

Sources:

britannica.com/event/Afghanistan-War

washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/who-responsible-taliban

brookings.edu/testimonies/comparing-al-qaeda-and-isis-different-goals-different-targets/

NPR Code Switch: [The Making and Remaking of Afghanistan](#)

Afghanistan: Culture and Political History by Thomas J. Barfield

SELLING KABUL CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Part 2:

- Pass out, document camera, or display the map (See attachment 2)
- Ask the students to examine the map and share with a partner next to them things that they physically see on the map. What is the information on the page?
- Once the students have looked at the map and shared with the person or people next to them have everyone come back together & share as a whole class what information we think that this map is trying to tell us?
 - Questions to prompt discussion
 - ◇ What country are we looking at?
 - ◇ What are the images & subtext writing telling us?
- Start to shift the conversation back towards the first part of the activity.
 - Questions to prompt discussion
 - What similarities do you see about the information this map is sharing with us and what we just did in class? What differences?

- Do you think that the people experiencing this type of change, and external influence might have felt similarly to how we felt during part 1 of this activity? How did they feel differently? What other factors are in play for them?
 - ◇ This is a great time to talk about stakes, and how although we did a parallel activity that gave us some insight into the emotions & internal processes, the leader of our classroom and a person, people, or community taking over an entire country & imposing different leadership tactics can change the intensity & power/impact of those emotions & internal processes.

Conclusion:

- Have each student share a one-word response that summarizes how they feel at the conclusion of this activity and/or what they learned.

ATTACHMENT 1

Goal:

It is important to keep in mind that the point of this activity is that each group has different supplies.

Steps:

- Label each baggie with a different beneficiaries who supplied the community with the resources to build their visual aid.
 - Suggestions: Principal, neighboring classroom, rival school, janitorial staff, TA, etc.
- This activity works best with at least 3 groups, but I have left baggie suggestions for up to 5 groups of students. Try to keep groups around 4 – 8 students.
- The students are attempting to make this style of postictal stick houses.

Group 1's Baggie	Group 2's Baggie	Group 3's Baggie	Group 4's Baggie	Group 5's Baggie
Hot Glue Gun	Elmer's Liquid Glue	Paper Clips	Painters Tape	String
Scissors	Ruler	Scissors	62 Popsicle Sticks	Hole Punch
62 Popsicle Sticks	31 Popsicle Sticks	26 Popsicle Sticks	Washi Tape or other Decoration	Ruler
Ruler				50 Popsicle Sticks
Washi Tape or other Decoration				

ATTACHMENT 2 - PART 1



1 - 1956 Soviet Union sent \$25 Million in aid to Northern Afghanistan

2 - 1979 - 1989 - getting funding for weapons, and aid by Pakistan/Saudi Arabia/USA to defeat Soviet invasion

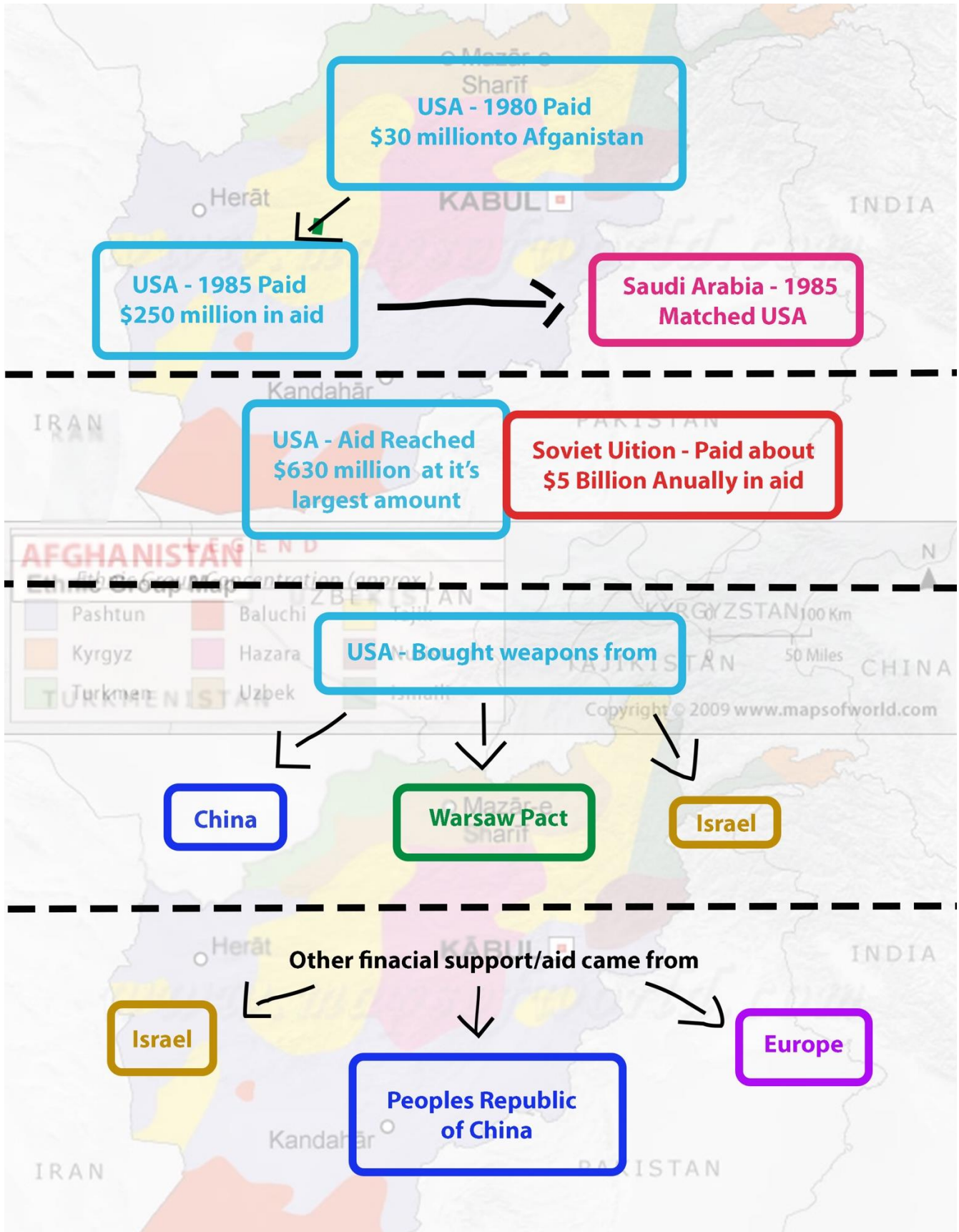
Post Soviet Invasion there were 4 main factions: Al-Qaeda, Taliban (slightly, later, taking Kabul in 1996, Northern Alliance, & Anti-Taliban Pushtuns.

3 - Post Al-Qaada's assassination of Ahmad Shah (leader of Northern Alliance) members of both the Tajik and Uzbek communities took control. This continued USA funding for military aid and resources.

4 - As Pakistan tried to secure their boarder, Soviets airlifted harvest from Kabul in their "Save Afgahan Harvest" campaign. This map shows the current boarder but at this time Pakistan was pushing up against Kabul "reclaiming" their land.

5 - By the 1970's Kabul had funding from the USA, Soviets, and Pakistani (which was funded by Saudi Arabia).

ATTACHMENT 2 - PART 2



UPLIFT AFGHAN COMMUNITIES

In the fall, following the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, artists from Seattle Rep and all over the world joined together to use art and public discussion to spotlight advocates and bring recognition to resources that could support the humanitarian crisis. These resources and discussions remain relevant today, as the change in regime heavily impacts the Afghan people, especially women and girls in complex and often tragic ways. Learn about the triumph, resilience, and artistic beauty of Afghan culture, and consider ways to uplift Afghan communities locally and globally.

- Podcast Episode with Yousof Sultani: howlround.com/afghan-art-and-advocacy
- Afghan Art & Activism: seattlerep.org/audience-programs/upcoming-events/afghan-art-and-activism/
- Afghan resources: seattlerep.org/about-us/inside-seattle-rep/current-events-resources/



American Troops leaving Afghanistan



Internally displaced children in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan



The Taliban's decision to go back on a pledge to let girls above grade 6 return to education led to street protests

GLOSSARY

chadri (page 4, 13)

a shroud which covers the body from head to foot, usually worn by females in Islamic countries.

pilfered (page 10)

steal (typically things of relatively little value).

Helmand (page 16)

one of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan, in the south of the country, also home to a series of military operations conducted by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) forces against Taliban insurgents and other local groups in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan.

Kabul (page 16)

Kabul is the capital and largest city of Afghanistan, located in the eastern section of the country.

visa (page 23)

an endorsement on a passport indicating that the holder is allowed to enter, leave, or stay for a specified period of time in a country.

Taliban (page 29)

ultraconservative political and religious faction that emerged in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s following the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the collapse of Afghanistan's communist regime, and the subsequent breakdown in civil order. It combined a strict religious ideology with a conservative Pashtun social code to create a brutally repressive regime. Its policies included the near-total exclusion of women from public life (including employment and education), the

systematic destruction of non-Islamic artistic relics (as occurred in the town of Bamiyan), and the implementation of harsh criminal punishments.

Herat (page 41)

Herāt is an oasis city and the third-largest city of Afghanistan.

rice with cherries / sweet rice (page 46, 47)

otherwise known as Albaloo Polow, it is an Iranian side dish of rice and sour cherries, served with chicken, koobideh, or other types of kebab. A recipe can be found here: mypersiankitchen.com/albaloo-polow-persian-rice-with-sour-cherries

court jester (page 51)

a member of the household of a noble person or a monarch employed to entertain guests.

Bruce Willis (page 55)

an American actor best known for playing wisecracking or hard-edged characters, often in action films.

Nescafe (page 62)

a brand of coffee made by Nestlé that comes in many different forms.

plumfield (page 66)

a field of plums, or where plums are grown

Rochester (page 79)

a city on Lake Ontario, in New York State.

precocious (page 81)

having developed certain abilities or proclivities at an earlier age than usual.

Afghanistan (page 90)

officially the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is a landlocked country located at the crossroads of Central and South Asia, and home to a conflict that took place from 2001 to 2021, due to the 9/11 hijacking of commercial airlines, and attack on the World Trade Center, as well as 3 other locations in the United States.

Afghans (page 95)

are nationals or citizens of Afghanistan, or people with ancestry from there.

IED (page 97)

also known as an improvised explosive device, an IED is a bomb constructed and deployed in ways other than in conventional military action. IEDs are commonly used as roadside bombs, or homemade bombs.

burqa (page 113)

also known as a chadaree in Afghanistan or a paranja in Central Asia, a burqa is an enveloping outer garment which covers the body and the face that is worn by women in some Islamic and Jewish traditions.

interpret (page 116)

translate orally or into sign language the words of a person speaking a different language. In this play, Taroon served as a translator/interpreter for the US Army, which is why he is being hunted down by Taliban forces.