

An Insight to Afghanistan

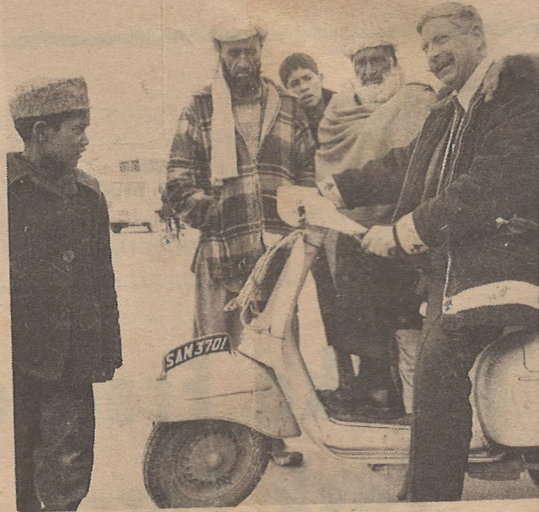
By Linda Redman

Two University of Alaska (Fairbanks) professors who have previously lived in Afghanistan, spoke last week before the Fairbanks Press Club giving their perspective of the Afghanistan situation and its future implications.

Hafiz Sahar, a native of Afghanistan, was formerly a daily newspaper editor of Islah, and Jimmy Bedford, of the journalism department at the U of A, has visited the country several times and in 1964 also worked for the English language daily, Kabul Times.

Sahar characterized the Afghan fighters as a people with unmatched determination, stubbornness, and an unyielding spirit. "Russian people are quite firm," he said, "but Afghan people are also quite firm." He called them an "unconquerable, "unruleable," "very independent" type of people, powered by a strong sense of nationalism and religious fervor. "They are a people under the determination of nobody."

Referring to the Afghan fighters not as "rebels," but rather as "freedom fighters," he said that "Afghans will fight forever if they have the arms." The men spoke of how ancient their weapons are in comparison to those of the Russians, and later in response to a question as to what the United States could do to help, Sahar answered



Jimmy Bedford stops in Kabul en route from S via Vespa motor scooter - 1970-71.

that "if the United States gives them sophisticated weapons, they will fight to the wall, and they will defeat the Russians." He added, "They will defeat them definitely if they have those things, but now they have almost nothing." Both men argued that the U.S. could help indirectly by sending them arms through neighboring Pakistan.

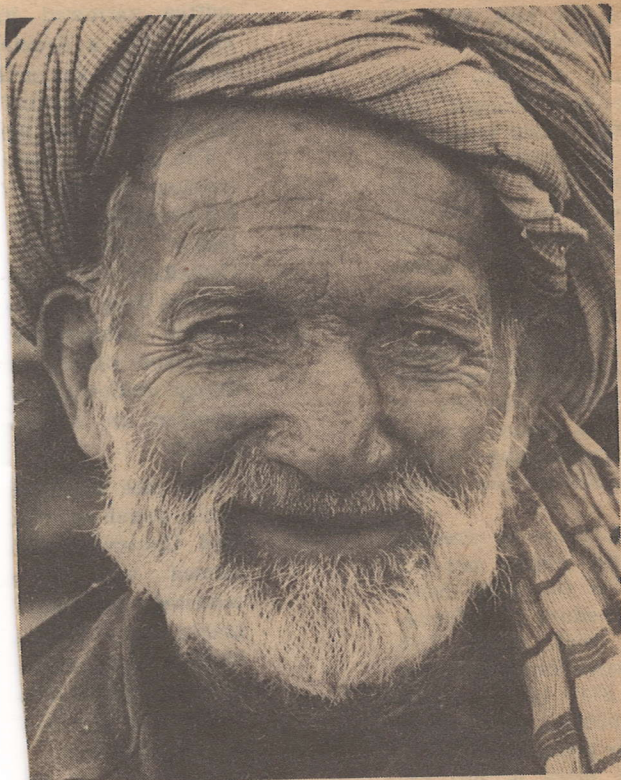
Afghanistan has always lived under the threat of Soviet domination, and the last four administrations, the speakers said, have been puppet governments or governments "put in with encouragement of the

Russian government. Bedford said to the instable governments, threw out the republic, quite get it playing with he said, "if of Humpty you cannot u He told of turns of ad the country tablished speaking of ture added, ment, and I to have chaos



Hafiz Sahar

-Colleen Redman Photo



Afghan warrior



Typical faces of Afghanistan's multi-racial society.

Photos by

Jimmy B



Downtown