THE NEAR EAST AND AFRICA

AFGHANISTAN

RECOGNITION BY THE UNITED STATES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
MOHAMMED ZAHIR SHAH, KING OF AFGHANISTAN

890H.001 Zahir/4: Telegram

The Chargé in France (Marriner) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, June 30, 1934—noon.
[Received June 30—8:30 a.m.]

498. Shah Wali, Minister of Afghanistan to France, has sent here,
under cover of letter to Ambassador not yet acknowledged, letter
addressed to and for transmission to President Roosevelt from King
Mohammed Zahir announcing death of his father and his accession
to the throne “after election by our whole people”. Same letter
expressed desire of Afghan Government to strengthen political and
economic relations with the United States. What action do you
desire concerning the letter?

MARRINER

890H.001 Zahir/5: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in France (Marriner)

WASHINGTON, July 2, 1934—5 p.m.

263. Your 493, June 30, noon. You should forward letter for the
consideration of the President and so inform the Afghan Minister.

HULL

890H.001 Zahir/7

The Afghan Minister in France (Shah Wali) to the American
Ambassador in France (Straus) ¹

[Translation]

PARIS, June 28, 1934.

MR. AMBASSADOR: By order of my Government, I have the honor to
transmit to you herewith an autograph letter of His Majesty Mo-
hammed Zahir Shah, King of Afghanistan, addressed to His Ex-

¹ Transmitted to the Department by the Chargé in France in his despatch
No. 1019, July 8; received July 12.
callency Mr. Franklin Roosevelt, President of the Republic of the United States of America, informing him of the death of his August Father as well as of his accession to the Afghan throne.

I would be infinitely obliged if you would be kind enough to forward the letter in question to its high destination.

Please accept [etc.]

Shah Wali

[Enclosure—Translation]

Mohammed Zahir Shah, King of Afghanistan, to President Roosevelt

6th of Sawr 1313,
Corresponding to the 24th April, 1934.

My Dear and Most Honoured Friend: In view of the friendship and goodwill, which, since the extraordinary embassy of Afghanistan of 1921, are established between the two great States of Afghanistan and the United States of America, we were desirous to bring to your high notice, by this friendly letter, the sudden death of our father-martyr His Majesty Mohammed Nadir Shah, the King of Afghanistan and to announce to Your Excellency, our dearest Friend, our accession to the Throne of Afghanistan, which has taken place after election by our whole dear nation.

At this occasion, we are pleased to notify the desire of the Afghan Government to strengthen the political and economic relations, which he had and has still now with the High Government of the United States. Having towards Your Excellency personally feelings of sincerest friendship, we wish to you as well as to your noble nation all prosperity on the path of welfare.

We renew our best feelings.

Mohammed Zahir

The Acting Secretary of State to President Roosevelt

Washington, August 21, 1934.

My Dear Mr. President: On July 12, 1934, the Department received through the Embassy at Paris a formal communication from His Majesty Mohammed Zahir Shah, King of Afghanistan, notifying you of the death of his father, Mohammed Nadir Shah, and of his own accession to the throne. This communication, dated April 24, 1934, had been sent to the Afghan Minister in Paris, who handed it to the

* See Foreign Relations, 1921, vol. 1, pp. 258 ff.
American Ambassador with an English translation and with the request that it be forwarded to its high destination.

Although this Government has never entered into direct diplomatic relations with Afghanistan, President Harding in 1921 received an official mission from that country by which it was generally accepted that recognition had been accorded to the régime of King Amanullah, who was then in power. You will recall, however, that King Amanullah was overthrown in 1929, and although his successor, Mohammed Nadir Shah, would no doubt have been glad to establish relations with the United States, no formal steps were ever taken toward that end.

Our failure to recognize the Government of Nadir Shah was due largely to the fact that this Government was never formally notified of the abdication of Amanullah and the accession of Nadir Shah; moreover, we have been naturally conservative on the subject of establishing relations with Afghanistan owing to the primitive condition of the country, the lack of capitulatory or other guarantees for the safety of foreigners, and the absence of any important American interests.

The régime of Nadir Shah brought peace and a fair measure of progress to Afghanistan over a period of four years. Following Nadir Shah’s death in November, 1933, his young son, Mohammed Zahir, ascended the throne with the full support of his people. Zahir Shah’s reign is said to be under the able tutelage of two uncles, one the Prime Minister and the other the Minister of War, between whom a complete accord is reported to prevail and who are anxious to have their country progress along sound, practical lines. From many sources I am informed that the establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States is earnestly desired by Government officials in Afghanistan, who feel that recognition by this country would be of inestimable moral assistance in their endeavors properly to bring Afghanistan into the family of nations.

Since the Government of Afghanistan is recognized by all of the Great Powers and since the present régime appears to be a stable one, I can see no reason why we should withhold recognition of that country. I am therefore enclosing, together with a copy of the translation of King Zahir Shah’s letter to you, an acknowledgment which has been drafted for your approval and which would constitute formal recognition of his régime. If this reply meets with your approval, I shall be glad to transmit it through appropriate sources to His Majesty Zahir Shah.

Faithfully yours,

William Phillips

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* Supra.
* See p. 750.
No. 549  
WASHINGTON, August 28, 1934.

SIR: With reference to the Embassy's despatch No. 1019 of July 3, 1934, enclosing a letter addressed to the President by Mohammed Zahir, King of Afghanistan, which had been forwarded to the Embassy by the Afghan Minister in Paris, I enclose the President's reply which you should transmit to the Afghan Minister with the request that he forward it to its high destination.

From the enclosed copy of the President's letter you will observe that the United States has extended recognition to the Government of King Mohammed Zahir as of August 21, 1934.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM PHILLIPS

[Enclosure]

President Roosevelt to Mohammed Zahir Shah, King of Afghanistan

GREAT AND GOOD FRIEND: I have received your letter of the 24th day of April last, in which Your Majesty announced your accession to the throne of Afghanistan following upon the death of your father, His Majesty Mohammed Nadir Shah.

I cordially reciprocate the sentiments which you express and, in extending recognition to Your Majesty's Government, take this opportunity of assuring you of my hope that friendly relations will always exist between the United States and Afghanistan. I send Your Majesty my best wishes for your personal welfare and for the prosperity of the people over whom you have been called to rule.

Your Good Friend,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

By the President:

WILLIAM PHILLIPS,

Acting Secretary of State.

WASHINGTON, August 21, 1934.

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6 See footnote 1, p. 747.