



## The Passing of Muhammad Zahir Shah, Former King of Afghanistan

### Statement by Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Washington, DC

July 23, 2007

It is with sadness that we have learned of the passing of Mohammed Zahir Shah in Afghanistan. The United States expresses its condolences to his family and loved ones, and to the people of Afghanistan.

Mohammad Zahir Shah personified the history and hopes of many in Afghanistan. Becoming king in 1933, he endeavored to modernize his country during his 40 year reign. During his lifetime he spent long years in exile, refused to compromise with the communist regime, and worked relentlessly for peace when his country was torn apart by civil war.

Mohammad Zahir Shah's decision to step aside as reigning king upon returning to his country in 2002 reflected his understanding of the benefits of a democratic society in meeting the aspirations of the Afghan people for peace and reconstruction. Accepting the title "Father of the Nation," he fostered unity in Afghanistan and played an essential role in the democratic rebirth of his country. He will be greatly missed.

The United States reaffirms to the people of Afghanistan our commitment to a united, democratic, prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan.

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