

## AFGHANISTAN

**Date of Elections:** August 29-September 11, 1969

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The *Shura*, Afghanistan's bicameral Parliament, consists of a National Assembly and a Senate. The National Assembly is made up of 216 deputies elected every 4 years. The Senate numbers 84 members, one-third of whom are appointed for 5 years by the King, one-third chosen by each provincial assembly from among its members and with a 3-year mandate, and the remaining third elected for 4 years by the electorate.

During the summer of 1969, the 216 deputies and one-third of the Senators, elected in 1965, had reached the end of their mandate.

### **Electoral System**

Every Afghan citizen of either sex and over 20 years of age is entitled to vote.

All literate citizens of either sex may stand for election to Parliament, provided they have held Afghan nationality for at least 10 years and have not been deprived of their civil rights since the entry into force of the 1964 Constitution. Candidates must be over 25 years of age to contest a seat in the National Assembly, and over 30 years of age to be eligible for the Senate. The office of member of Parliament is incompatible with any professional activity, with the exception of farming and the exercise of a liberal profession. The parliamentary mandate is also incompatible with certain governmental offices and certain posts of public order.

Members are elected by simple plurality system in each of the 30 constituencies.

### **General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

The campaign preceding the election of the 216 deputies and one-third of the Senators got under way in the summer of 1969. In 1968, the Parliament had adopted a law allowing the legal formation of political parties, as outlined by the Constitution of 1964.

However, the King did not give his assent to this law and all candidates had, as in 1965, to stand as Independents representing various local interests. The opening of the electoral campaign was marked by protests of the left-wing press which demanded the ratification of the law on political parties and by a certain amount of student protest.

More than half the members of the outgoing Parliament were re-elected, and the new Parliament, like the previous one, is basically conservative; the number of pro-Soviet Communist Deputies has declined from 5 to 3 in the new legislature.

The Government, formed on November 21, 1969, was subsequently approved by Parliament, as required under the Constitution.