Iran dominated international attention in the 1980s with its Islamic revolution that toppled Muhammad Reza Shah's regime, and then with its eight-year war of attrition with Iraq in 1980-88, which claimed the lives of an estimated half a million people. The Shah's oppressive administration and Westernization policies alienated conservatives and revolutionary intelligentsia in the early 1960s when he intensified his modernization programmes by appropriating clerical landholdings (religious foundations possessed 1.235 million acres, 12 per cent of all villages and their associated land in Iran),\(^1\) and supporting increased participation of women in private and public enterprises. As a protagonist of the middle class and petty bourgeoisie, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini declared his opposition to the reforms and Westernization, stating that

> It is a capital sin to dispossess people of their property through forcible seizure or decrees . . . Women's interference in social matters . . . will involve women in corruption and it is against the will of God and prohibited by Islam and must be stopped.\(^2\)

The revolutionary left, the liberals and nationalists were disenchanted with the Shah's capitalist-oriented economic and cultural reforms. The struggle for democratic change continued and intensified in the late 1970s. Religion was the only discursive medium which could effectively unite people against the Shah. The revival of the Islamic movement was fundamentally a response to the political domination of Iran by the US and the tyranny of the US-backed political system. The Islamists of petty bourgeois background within the Shah's administration allied with the opposition, which demanded that the Shah leave Iran. With the departure of the Shah, the state apparatus disintegrated when the clerics seized power in February 1979. After seizing power the clerics skilfully exploited popular sentiment and resorted to anti-imperialist rhetoric to strengthen their position and to establish more favourable terms and conditions for Iran within the imperialist framework. To this end the clerics dealt a mortal blow to the liberal wings of Islamists who were calling for a bourgeois democratic rule based on bourgeois expertise, not the Qur'an.
Their leaders, Abol Hasan Bani Sadr, then the elected President of the Republic of Iran, was forced to flee to France and Mahdi Bazargan, head of the National Front, had been executed. Mujahiden-e-khalq, who were espousing politics similar to liberation theology in the West and had been transformed into a right-wing group by aligning with the West, had also been effectively eliminated. The clerics also crushed anti-imperialist and revolutionary organizations as well as the Kurdish resistance.

The failure of the US leadership to establish new arrangements to accommodate the interests of the petty bourgeois elites in Iran compelled the latter to pursue policies and practices hostile to the former. As a result Iran declared that it remains non-aligned in its foreign policy orientation, maintains friendly relations with all countries based on reciprocal respect, and refrains from participation in any politico-military bloc led by the two superpowers, the United States and the former Soviet Union. This was manifested in Iran's popular slogan 'Neither the West nor the East – but Islam.'

According to the Iranian leadership, Islamic unity and brotherhood did not recognize any frontier and nothing could prevent the unity of Muslim peoples. Clerics pointed to the failure of nationalist, Marxist and liberal ideologies and politics and prescribed Islamic ideology as the only means of salvation for humankind. They advocated exporting their brand of revolution throughout the Islamic world and called upon the Muslims to follow Iran's model of revolution. The Iranian leadership improved the country's ties with the Third World and paid cursory attention to national liberation struggles. Growing domestic opposition and continuing war with Iraq exhausted Iran's cornucopia of resources, and forced the leadership to deradicalize Iran's domestic and foreign policy orientation in mid-1984 in order to improve Iran's commerce and trade relations with the outside world, particularly the advanced countries in Western Europe and Japan. During this period Iran's commitment to export Islamic revolution was restricted to neighbouring countries. Although Iran declared that it will continue its war with Iraq until victory is achieved, the tenacity of Iraq and its support by the US forced the clerics to consider a ceasefire agreement in August 1988. Prior to his death in July 1989 Khomeini approved the ceasefire and said that he was ready to 'drink from the poisoned chalice' only to save the Islamic revolution.

Iran in the post-Khomeini period adhered to the declared policies of Islamic revolution, strengthened Iran's relations with the Third World and the former Soviet Union, and began to reassert its role in the politics of the Middle East. The focus of this article is a study of Iran's involvement in the radicalization of Shiite communities in Afghanistan prior to and after the Soviet troop withdrawal from the country, and an examination
of Iran's efforts to assert its influence in Afghanistan's politics after the establishment of the Islamic state in the country in 1992.

Shiites constitute 20 per cent of Afghanistan's 15.1 million population. The most important Shiite groups are the Hazaras, followed by Qizilbash and Farsiwan communities. The Shiites had been the most oppressed communities. With the establishment of Shiism as an official religion in Iran in the sixteenth century the Shiites in Afghanistan looked to Iran as their religious centre. The Sunni-dominated state in Afghanistan maintained a cordial relationship with Iran. The ruling classes in both countries shared a regional outlook, common interests, and signed a basic treaty of friendship in 1921. Afghanistan joined the Northern Tier Sadabad pact with Iran, Turkey and Iraq in 1937. When the question of self-determination for Pushtun and Baluch peoples poisoned Afghanistan-Pakistan relations (the ruling classes in Afghanistan refused to recognize the validity of the Durand Line, which was drawn in 1847 by the British government of India, bisecting the Pushtun and Baluch peoples between Afghanistan and Pakistan), the Shah did not support Afghanistan's politics concerning the rights to self-determination for Pushtun and Baluch peoples in Pakistan because of Iran's membership in the Baghdad pact and later the CENTO pact. The reluctance of the United States to provide arms to Afghanistan because of its differences with Pakistan regarding the question of Pushtunistan compelled the Afghan ruling classes to seek closer relationships with the Soviet Union and its bloc. Since then the Iranian leadership tried to pull Afghanistan away from the Soviet spheres of influence. Although Iran's territorial disputes over Afghanistan's western provinces of Herat, Nimroz and Hilmand was settled in 1872, the issues of water use and damming rights were still unresolved. On 12 March 1973 Iran and Afghanistan signed a treaty which regulated the amount of water to flow from the Hilmand River to Iran. The improvement in Iran-Afghanistan relations also led the Iranian leadership to allow Afghan immigrant labourers to seek employment in Iran.

Iran-Afghanistan relations underwent several metamorphoses when the Afghan monarchy was overthrown and Afghanistan was declared a republic on 17 July 1973. The ruling class in Afghanistan headed by President Muhammad Daoud declared its support of the Pushtun and Baluchi irredentists in Pakistan and imprisoned ex-Prime Minister Muhammad Musa Shafiq, charging him with national treason for concluding an agreement concerning the regulation of the Hilmand Water Treaty with Iran. The Shah of Iran perceived President Daoud's pro-Soviet radical politics as a threat to stability in Iran and tried to convince
the Afghan leader to revise his policy toward Iran. In doing so he resorted to the use of force and initiated a calculated raid on Afghan military posts on the Afghanistan–Iran border, which resulted in the deaths of 70 Afghan soldiers. In the meantime the Shah also ordered the deportation of approximately one million Afghan labourers from Iran. A great number of labourers who returned were unable to find employment in Afghanistan and further aggravated the country's unemployment crisis. The situation threatened the stability of the Kabul regime and compelled President Daoud to send his brother, Muhammad Naim, to Tehran to normalize relations between the two countries. As a result, relations between Tehran and Kabul improved to the extent that in October 1974 the Shah promised to provide Afghanistan with $2 billion in economic aid over a period of ten years, and concluded an agreement to build a railroad connecting the Afghan capital, Kabul to Mashad city which provided Afghanistan with a trade route through Iranian ports. Furthermore, Iran also agreed to the construction of sugar, cement, wood, cotton textile and paper plants in various provinces in Afghanistan, and declared its readiness to participate in the development of water resources and agriculture in the lower Helmand basin, granted $10 million credit to the newly established Export Promotion Bank of Afghanistan and agreed to provide 200 buses and 180 mini-buses. Iran and Afghanistan also negotiated a territorial dispute at the Afghanistan-Iran border in Islam Qala in 1975 but a final agreement had not yet been reached when Afghanistan was declared a democratic republic on 27 April 1978, with subsequent political instability in the region.

When relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan deteriorated again over the question of Pushtunistan, the ruling class in Afghanistan supported the Baluchi irredentists, provided them with arms and ammunition, and granted asylum to Baluchi leaders. Iran played a major role in mediating the conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan. President Daoud thanked the Shah for his efforts in diffusing tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Elaborating on this, President Daoud said 'We are deeply grateful for Iranian economic assistance to Afghanistan, and likewise we are thankful for the interest which Iran takes in eliminating tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan'.

When the pro-Soviet People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) seized power in a military coup and declared Afghanistan a democratic republic on 27 April 1978, the Shah of Iran viewed this development in Afghanistan as a threat not only to Iran but also to South Asia and the Middle East. He supported opposition groups battling the Kabul regime.
After the Shah’s downfall, the new leadership in Iran continued to aid the anti-Kabul opposition forces. On 5 March 1979 there was a major uprising in Herat province. Rebellious masses launched a frontal assault on the office of Herat’s governor, Nazifullah Nahzat, seized ammunition depots and battled government forces until 16 March. To stabilize the situation the Afghan air force based in Shindad bombed the bases of the opposition forces and troop reinforcements were dispatched from Kandahar to the area. During the uprising, Ayatollah Shariat Madari declared that Iran was ready to provide every possible assistance to the Afghan uprising in Herat. The uprising claimed the lives of approximately 24,000 people. The leadership in Kabul blamed Iran, stating that

[They] were not citizens of Afghanistan, but Iranian soldiers in disguise . . . about 4,000 managed to settle in Herat city and its vicinity in the names of Afghan citizens with the help of the Iranian Consulate and organized disorder there.10

The Herat uprising and a statement by Ayatollah Saydi Tabhatabai calling upon Shiites for an insurrection led to an uprising in Kabul on 23 June 1979. The mainly Hazara Shiites of Chindawul ghetto planned an organized protest in condemnation of the bombing of areas in Ghazni province by the Afghan air force. The Shiite armed struggle began with an attack on a police station in Jade-e-Maiwand Street and immolation of government vehicles. The Kabul regime dispatched armoured cars and light tanks to the scene to crush the uprising. It is estimated that 100 died and 300 young men were arrested and sent to Pol-e-Charkhi prison, where they were summarily executed. The Hazaras claim that 10,000 people lost their lives during that incident. The next day government forces began to patrol areas in Kabul inhabited by the Shiite Hazaras and arrested numerous people. In order to prevent similar armed uprisings in other areas inhabited by Shiite Hazaras, the Kabul regime began to arrest their community leaders, intellectuals and clerics. The arrest included 360 people in Bamiyan, 570 in Behsud, 1,200 in Jaghuri, 160 in Nawoor, 700 in Turkman and Shikhali regions, and 150 in Shahristan.11 Kabul accused Iran of instigating the uprising and warned its residents to beware of Iranian saboteurs who might be hiding in Kabul. In May the Kabul regime declared amnesty to all who according to the regime were misled by reactionary propaganda into leaving the country.12 The Shiites remained defiant of the Kabul regime but lacked both organization and strategies to coordinate and sustain their armed struggle. The Shiite movement was divided into three ideological groups: Islamist, Hazara nationalist and Socialist. The first group comprised landowners, clerics, and intellectuals. The second group included intellectual and influential tribal leaders
espousing ethnic equality for Shiite Hazaras. Prominent ideologues of this group were Abdul Raouf Turkmani, editor and publisher of a Persian newspaper, Payam-e-Wijdan (Message of Awareness), Muhammad Ismail Mubaligh, a deputy in the Afghanistan parliament in 1964–73, Haji Nadir Ali Allahdad and a number of other intellectuals. All were executed during the reign of President Noor Muhammad Taraki except Allahdad, who was kidnapped and executed by the pro-Iranian Sazman-e-Al-Nasr (Party for Victory) in the early 1980s.\(^3\) The third group was made up of intelligentsia espousing either pro-Soviet or pro-Beijing ideologies.

Leading Shiite intellectuals of the third group included Abdul Karim Mesaq, member of the pro-Soviet Hizbi Demokratiki Khalqi Afghanistan (Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan or PDPA) and Minister of Finance in 1978–79 and Sultan Ali Keshtmand, member of the Parcham (Banner) faction of the PDPA. He also served as Minister of Planning (1978–79), and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning (1980–89). They were active in political movements in the 1960s and recruited Shiite youths into their respective parties which supported the Kabul regime and the Soviet occupation. Akram Yari was a leading Shiite intellectual who advocated revolutionary armed struggle. He was one of the founding members of the pro-Beijing organization of Sazmani Demokratiki Navin-e-Afghanistan or the Neo-Democratic Organization known as Shula-e-Jawid. After the establishment of the pro-Soviet regime in April 1978, Yari and his associates were arrested and executed.\(^4\) Aziz Tughyan, member of Sazman-e-Azadi Bakhshi Mardum-e-Afghanistan (People’s Liberation Organization), known as SAMA, was shot dead during a battle with security forces in Kabul, Captain Noor Muhammad, a Shiite Ismaili and a member of Akhgar organization, who led the resistance movement in Shibar district, Bamiyan province, was assassinated in the mid-1980s and Rajab Ali, a prominent revolutionary intellectual of Shunbul district of Bamiyan province died in Kabul in the early 1990s. In September 1979 the Shiites convened a grand assembly in Panjaw district of Bamiyan province. The assembly comprised tribal leaders, clerics headed by Sayed Ali Behishti, and intelligentsia. Their goal was to reach a consensus on how the Hazara region should be administered after government forces and state officials were forced to flee the region. The meeting resulted in the creation of Shura-e-Iltifaq-e-Islami (Council of the Islamic Union). Table 1 shows participants in the 1979 assembly.

Although landowners and intelligentsia were dominant in the assembly, they permitted the clerics (most of whom were landlords themselves and on the payroll of the feudals) to issue religious edicts for a popular uprising against the Kabul regime. The Shura ruled over the entire Hazara region by establishing its own administrative apparatus, recruiting conscripts,
collecting taxes, issuing identification cards and passports, and establishing offices in Quetta, Pakistan and Tehran in an attempt to obtain foreign aid. After the Soviet invasion in December 1979 the Soviet-installed government of President Babrak Karmal sent an official letter to the Iranian leadership appealing for normalization of relations between the two countries and expressing Afghanistan’s readiness to support Iran in its anti-imperialist struggle. The Iranian leadership did not heed the call of the Soviet-backed government of President Karmal and remained supportive of the Islamic resistance. Despite its continuous anti-Soviet rhetoric, the Iranian leadership did not allow its aid to the Afghans to go through Afghanistan–Iran territories but channelled it through Pakistan in order not to provoke Soviet hostilities in the course of its war with Iraq. In 1981 conflicts arose within the Shura leadership. The Islamists and clerics began to oppose landowners with nationalist leanings and the intellectuals, many of whom were members of various splinter groups of Shula-e-Jawid. After consolidating their power the Islamists and clerics expelled most landowners and executed many others. This situation forced many landowners and secularly-oriented intellectuals to flee to Pakistan.

The second major uprising by the Shiites in Kabul began in April 1980, and is known as the insurrection of Seh-e-Hoot demonstration (the third day of the Afghan month of Hoot). The uprising originated from in several districts including Qala-e-Shada, Dasht-e-Barchi, and Afshar. The demonstrators marched toward the Soviet embassy and attacked the house of former president Hafizullah Amin (he was killed by Soviet forces in December 1979) and several police stations, seizing arms and
ammunition. The Shura’s influence on the resistance movement declined because the Iranian leadership did not regard Sayed Ali Behishti to be a loyal client implementing Iranian politics and ideology. Behishti was not a supporter of Ayatollah Khomeini, but rather respected the most senior Shiite cleric Ayatollah Abd al-Qasim Khui who died at age 92 in Kufa, Iraq on 8 August 1992. The Iranian leadership shifted its support to the social strata within the Shiite movement in Afghanistan who were more ideologically allied to them. Table 2 shows the Shiite organizations active in the resistance movement during and after the Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Iran permitted an estimated two million Afghan refugees to work at various construction sites and established training centres in Taibad, Gilan, Qum, Sabzwar, Zahidan, Tehran, Zabul, Birjand, Turbat-e-Jam, Sirjan and other cities in Iran, where members of the Afghan Shiite organizations received military training for six months. During the first three months the trainees received 6,000 Rials (Iranian currency) and 20,000 Rials during the remainder of the training period. During the Iran–Iraq War the Iranian government also dispatched a segment of the trainees to the battle front, and promised to pay each of those trainees 30,000 Rials. The trainees complained that the Iranian leadership did not pay in full the salaries they were entitled to receive after returning from the Iran–Iraq front. A facsimile of a letter by the organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Party of Afghanistan to the Guards of the Islamic Revolution of West Ilam, Iran, states that:

We should like to inform you that the members of the organization . . . who have fought against the troops of Saddam Hussein, the infidel, have received their salaries (15,000 Rials per person monthly) although their previous salary per person was estimated at 25,000 Rials . . . most of those brothers have received money only enough for buying cigarettes and pocket expenses. Some of these brothers have spent most of the payments they received from you to support their families, while our organization has paid their travelling expenses. . . . We request our [Iranian] brothers to pay due attention to the matter . . .

Iran’s support of the Afghan Shiites included sending Iranian nationals to Afghanistan not only to participate in the armed struggle against the Soviet occupation forces but also to propagate Khomeini’s politics and ideology. Rasheed Achak of Zahidan province of Iran was detained by the Afghanistan security forces and confessed that after receiving military training the Guardsmen’s Corps of the Iranian regime sent him to fight in Afghanistan.
## TABLE 2
AFGHANISTAN'S SHIITE ORGANIZATIONS, 1979–93

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Head</th>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Main Front Commander</th>
<th>Bases of operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Shura-e-Itifaqi Islami</strong> (Council of Islamic Union)</td>
<td>Sayed Ali Behishti</td>
<td>Afghan nationalism</td>
<td>4,000 staff; 8,000 partisans</td>
<td>Muhammad Hasan, known as Sayed Jaglan of Ghazni province</td>
<td>Bamiyan, Baghlan, and Balkh provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Harakat-e-Islami</strong> (Islamic Movement)</td>
<td>Muhammad Asif Mohsini</td>
<td>Supporting Islamic Republic</td>
<td>200 staff; 15,000 partisans</td>
<td>Muhammad Anwari, Bamiyan province</td>
<td>Faryab, Jowzjan, Balkh and Samangan provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Sazman-e-Mujahidin-e-Mustazafin</strong> (Organization of Warriors of the Oppressed)</td>
<td>Muhammad Asif Mohsini</td>
<td>Secularly-oriented Shiite</td>
<td>1,500 staff; 3,000 partisans</td>
<td>Qari Yakdasta, Herat province</td>
<td>Ghor and Helmand provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Sazman-e-Al-Nasr</strong> (Victory)</td>
<td>Muhammad Hussain Sadiqi</td>
<td>Pro-Khomeini</td>
<td>1,500 staff; 4,000 partisans</td>
<td></td>
<td>Helmand, Ghor, Bamiyan and Faryab provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Sepa-e-Pasdaran</strong> (Revolutionary Guard Corps)</td>
<td>Zahidi</td>
<td>Pro-Khomeini</td>
<td>3,000 staff; 8,000 partisans</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ghor, Helmand, Bamiyan and Herat provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Hizballah</strong> (Party of God)</td>
<td>Shaikh Ali Wusuqi</td>
<td>Pro-Khomeini</td>
<td>1,500 staff; 3,000 partisans</td>
<td>Qari Yakdasta, Herat province</td>
<td>Ghor and Helmand provinces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


An ideological struggle within the Shiite resistance movement concerning their alliance with Iran further split the movement. Muhammad Asif Mohsini, leader of Harakat-e-Islami (Islamic Movement) of Hazaras in Qandahar, broke off his ties with the Iranian leadership and requested the Pakistani authorities to recognize his party and provide him with financial aid. The Pakistan government did not take his demands seriously because of its distrust of new parties, lack of information about political
parties within the Hazarajat region, and fear of antagonizing the Iranian leadership, who treated the Shiites as their constituency, ‘as well as problems faced by Zia ul Haq [then President of Pakistan] from Shia opposition to his Islamization program’. Other Shiite organizations such as Shura-e-Iftiqaq, headed by Sayed Ali Behishti, and supporters of Sazman-e-Mujahiden-e-Mustazafin remained independent and did not transfer their headquarters to Iran.

After the Soviet invasion in December 1979 the Iranian leadership maintained that the Soviet Union must unconditionally withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, and it did not participate in the United Nations-sponsored talk between the Kabul regime and Islamabad on the grounds that the Islamic parties were not included in the talks. With a gradual deradicalization of Iranian politics in the mid-1980s and an improvement in Iran–Soviet relations the Iranian leadership proposed a meeting between Iran, Pakistan and the Soviet Union to discuss a solution to the crisis in Afghanistan. The proposal did not receive serious consideration by either Pakistan or the seven resistance parties based in Peshawar. In the summer of 1987 President Hashemi Rafsanjani visited Moscow and met Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, supporting his decision to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Rafsanjani stated, ‘If you have resolved to pull out of Afghanistan we are prepared to assist you, so that after your departure there will be no US domination in Afghanistan.’

After the Soviet troop withdrawal on 15 February 1989 the Iranian leadership continued supporting its client Shiite organizations in Afghanistan. Soon after the Soviet troop withdrawal the Pakistan-based Islamic parties convened a Shura in order to lay the foundation for an interim government in opposition to the national reconciliation policies of the Soviet-backed government of President Najibullah. The Iranian leadership encouraged the Shiite parties to participate in the Shura. The Shiite parties stipulated that they will participate only if they are given 20 per cent of the seats in the Shura. The Pakistan-based Islamic parties convening the Shura excluded the Shiite parties and formed a government in exile. The Afghan Interim Government (AIG) was recognized by Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Bahrain and Malaysia. In 1992 the United Nations-sponsored negotiation for a political settlement led to the resignation of President Najibullah and the transfer of power to the AIG’s president Sebghatullah Mojaddadi, and his successor Burhanuddin Rabbani of Jamiat-e-Islami. The pro-Iranian Shiite party Wahdat demanded more representation of Hazaras in the government.

Rabbani and his supporters could not eliminate the growing ethnic and communal politics. On 7 June 1992 Hizb-e-Wahdat clashed with the supporters of Ittehad-e-Islami, a coalition supported by Saudi Arabia, resulting in the deaths of 100 people. Members of Ittehad-e-Islami rounded
up pro-Iranian Shiite Hazaras from their homes and places of employment. In retaliation supporters of Hizb-e-Wahdat kidnapped an estimated 200 Pushtuns from their homes. Since the establishment of the Islamic state, ethnic cleansing and power struggles among warlords have claimed the lives of 5,000 people, injured thousands and forced an estimated 750,000 people to flee the capital. To appease the Shiite communities, Rabbani appointed several Shiite Hazaras to cabinet posts. Former Minister of Mines and Industries, Engineer Yaqub Lali, was appointed Minister of Mines and Industries, and former Minister of Planning, Abdul Wahid Sorabi, was appointed Minister of Planning, and Amir Shah Hasanyar was appointed rector of Kabul University.

Prior to his re-election Rabbani convened a grand assembly to choose the next president. On 2 January 1993 Rabbani was chosen for a second term as president. Five parties out of nine boycotted the assembly, accusing Rabbani of vote-fixing and bribing the delegates. Abdul Ali Mazari, head of Hizb-e-Wahdat, forged an alliance with Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, head of Hizb-e-Islami, and fought government troops. Although the Iranian leadership supported the formation of an Islamic state in Kabul and provided 1,425 tons of goods and $100,000 worth of radio and television equipment to Afghanistan, it continues to support its loyal client, Hizb-e-Wahdat.

During the Shah’s era Iran played a major role in regional politics as the de facto policeman of the Middle East and was a key figure in the normalization of relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan concerning the disputed Durand Line between the two countries. Iran helped to decrease Soviet influence in Afghanistan by persuading President Muhammad Daoud to distance Kabul from Moscow. During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (December 1979–February 1989) the Iranian clerics remained ardent supporters of the resistance struggle against the occupation forces, providing financial and military aid to its client Shiite parties. Iran continues to hold a significant regional dominance of Afghan politics since the establishment of an Islamic state in 1992 and intends to keep US influence at bay. Iran is determined to maintain its influence in Afghanistan politics not only through its support of the Shiite movement but also by offering modest economic aid for the reconstruction of Afghanistan in the post-war period.

NOTES


2. William M. Floor, ‘The Reactionary Character of the Ulama: Wishful Thinking or
6. Ibid., p.70.
7. Ibid., p.71.
8. Ibid., p.74.
16. Ibid., p.11.
17. Ibid., pp.48–9.
18. Ibid., p.12.