

Consensus eludes OIC over new secy. general

By Ranjan Roy
KUALA LUMPUR: Muslims
countries appeared deadlocked on
Thursday over the issue of elect-
ing a new secretary general for the
Organisation of the Islamic Confer-
ence (OIC), delegates and
diplomats said.

The four-year term of the pre-
sent secretary general, Azeddine
Laraki, expires in December and a
new incumbent must be chosen at
the current Kuala Lumpur meet-
ing of the OIC foreign ministers,
which ends on Friday. Although
the organisation's rules allow a se-
cret ballot, members were hoping
to select a successor for Laraki by
consensus, said Malaysia's foreign
minister Syed Hamid Albar, chair-
man of the four-day conference
that began on Tuesday.

Contending for the post are
Bangladesh, Turkey and Morocco.
Some delegates argue that the
next secretary general of the 56-
nation group should be someone
from Asia because Morocco's
Laraki has held the post for four
years. But many Arab countries,
which form a significant bloc in
the OIC, favour Morocco.

"There is a good chance that we
will arrive at a decision by the end
of the conference," Syed Hamid
said. He said he had spent the entire
morning talking to representatives
of Arab, Asian and African nations
to try and forge a consensus.

"I have been given the task to fi-
nalise it," he said. "Based on my
discussions, I think we will have a
result." Mr Laraki, 70, a former
prime minister of Morocco, did
not comment on the dispute but
told reporters that even if Moroc-

co was chosen to hold the secre-
tary general's office for another
four-year term, his country could
pick someone else to fill it.

However, he said, there was no
rule in the OIC saying that the se-
cretary general's office should shift
from the Arab bloc to the Asian
bloc. The OIC also has a formal
African bloc. Mr Laraki said each
group was entitled to two consecu-
tive terms as secretary general. "I
believe it is too premature," he
said when asked about his coun-
try's chances of retaining the of-
fice.

The issue was to be discussed by
the OIC general body later in the
afternoon and a decision was ex-
pected on late Thursday. Syed
Hamid said the conference had
also discussed resolutions on Iraq
and the Philippines and sought
ways of deepening co-operation
between members so that the
OIC could play "an effective role
in the new millennium." "We
must also study the worst effects
of globalisation so that it would
not jeopardise or marginalise the
Islamic countries," he said. (AP)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

30 JUN 2000

India to watch OIC meet keenly

Apratim Mukarji
New Delhi, March 5

INDIA WILL watch with considerable interest the deliberations of an extraordinary meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) scheduled to be held next month in Ankara.

The Vajpayee Government, widely perceived by Muslim countries to be subscribing to Hindu fundamentalism, has nevertheless begun to push India's "rich Islamic heritage" among OIC member-countries. It has long been New Delhi's grievance that despite having the second largest Muslim population in the world, it has been kept out of the OIC.

It has now begun to sense prospects of the role of an interested outsider.

Thirty years since the birth of the OIC, major member-countries are apparently unhappy that the slipshod manner of running the organisation has facilitated manipulations by some member-countries to serve their interests while the collective interests of the Islamic countries remain largely unattended.

The meeting is being held in the backdrop of this widespread dissatisfaction over the working of the group. A feeling has gained ground

that the group has failed to gain credibility despite having a membership of 55 countries many of which enjoy considerable clout in the international community.

During its intensive interaction with the visiting Saudi Arabian Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Nizar Obaid Madani on

Major OIC member-countries are apparently unhappy that the slipshod manner of running the organisation has facilitated manipulations by some member-countries to serve their interests.

Monday, India conveyed its "deep" concerns over the "one-sided and hostile" OIC resolution on the Kashmir issue.

The resolution said that the resolution was an anomaly as it did not reflect the close relations this country enjoyed with many OIC member-countries.

"We cannot but note," a senior External Affairs Ministry official

said, "that an important multilateral organisation like the OIC should be held hostage by one country (Pakistan)."

Traditionally a loosely-run organisation, resolutions that the OIC adopts are drafted and piloted through the initiative of the particular member-country interested (as Pakistan is in getting its anti-India resolution adopted) with other member-countries scarcely bothered, apart from adding their consent. All OIC resolutions are adopted unanimously without going through debates.

Attracted by the widespread dissatisfaction of OIC member-countries over the running of the organisation, India is waiting patiently to see how the Ankara meeting shapes up before venturing into any tangible posture.

It has, however, conveyed to Saudi Arabia that there are a number of resolutions that the OIC adopts on various issues where this country can contribute substantially drawing upon its rich Islamic heritage.

Both victims of terrorism, India and Saudi Arabia found considerable commonality in their approaches to the problem. Dr Madani's statement that "terrorism has no religion, nationality or race" found instant Indian appreciation.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
- 6 MAR 2000

New Delhi cool to OIC's Kashmir rhetoric

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By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, JULY 3. Unfazed by the rhetoric on Kashmir from the conclave of Islamic nations last week in Malaysia, India is closely monitoring the new struggle for relevance and modernity within the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

India has long stopped issuing knee-jerk reactions to the resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir passed at the behest of Pakistan by the various OIC meetings.

At the 27th meeting of its Foreign Ministers in Kuala Lumpur, the OIC endorsed "self-determination" for the people of Kashmir, referred to "the United Nations resolutions" and called for international "mediation" — all scripted by Pakistan.

However, the real story of the deliberations, analysts here say, is not about Jammu and Kashmir but the new realisation within the OIC of growing international irrelevance.

That the world has never taken the OIC seriously is only part of the problem. The members themselves do not attach much political weight to the organisation and its resolutions.

Even as they endorse without question formulations on subjects brought up by individual states, the OIC members have often voted differently on the same subjects on other international fora.

The OIC has found it impossible to do anything about war and conflict among Islamic nations, let alone forcing non-Islamic countries to respond to its many demands.

Hinting that the emperor had no clothes, the Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohammed, warned that the Islamic nations and the OIC would be marginalised if they did not address the new challenges of globalisation.

Malaysia is among a group of moderate and modernising nations challenging the ideological rigidity and intellectual sterility of the OIC.

These nations are urging the Muslim nations to focus on economic and technological development and adapt to the winds of political pluralism. They are also calling for institutional reform within the OIC to make it more competent and relevant.

It will be a while before the tension between states like Pakistan bent on promoting jihad and religious extremism and others like Malaysia and Turkey calling for an open and liberal approach to the world is resolved.

Meanwhile the OIC will remain trapped in its own political contradictions. On the one hand, the OIC communique talks about "self-determination" for the Kashmiris. It emphasises the "need to help Muslim communities and minorities in non-member states to preserve their religious and cultural identity".

On the other, the OIC denounces "allegations by certain circles of the treatment of minorities as well as the use of measures concerning them as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of the member-states".

The OIC finds it hard to adopt a single yardstick on the question of minorities; it is a big political leap, however, for the OIC to even begin to acknowledge the problem of minorities within. There are not many members of the OIC without internal difficulties on minorities — either Muslim or non-Muslim.

For India, too, the time has come to stop looking at the OIC through the prism of Pakistan and Kashmir, and support progressive tendencies within the Islamic world through an empathetic engagement.

THE HINDU

Iran to view favourably India's entry into OIC

21/7
By C. Raja Mohan 10-13

NEW DELHI, JULY 20. Teheran would favourably view any move by New Delhi to join the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), according to a senior Iranian official.

Responding to questions at a press conference here on the possible entry of India into the OIC, the visiting Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, Mr. Mohsen Aminzadeh, said the OIC "must pay attention" to the fact that India has a "substantial population" following the Islamic faith. He pointed out that there will have to be a consensus among the OIC members on admitting India.

Pakistan is likely to object to India's attempt to join the OIC. Islamabad had effectively blocked New Delhi's moves to become a part of the organisation when it was founded in the late 1960s.

The Iranian official said there has been no formal application by India to become either an observer or a member of the OIC.

The recent Indian diplomatic efforts to build new economic and political bridges to the Islamic world has given rise to speculation about India's possible interest in joining the OIC.

The Indian absence at the OIC has given a free diplomatic run to Pakistan in promoting anti-India resolutions within the Organisation, particularly on the Kashmir issue.

There are calls within the Is-

lamic world for reforming the OIC to make it respond more effectively to the challenges of social advancement and globalisation.

Even if the modernisers within the OIC prevail and give it a new direction, analysts here say the likelihood of India joining the organisation remains rather remote.

Pak. will use nuclear weapons 'if attacked'

BERLIN, JULY 20. Pakistan would consider using nuclear weapons first if attacked by conventional forces, its Deputy Foreign Minister said today.

"There is no way Pakistan can hold out any assurance that it will not use any nuclear weapons if its existence is threatened," Mr. Inam ul Haque, the highest-ranking Pakistani official to visit Germany since nuclear tests in 1998, said.

"There is no such assurance on the part of India either," he said during a briefing for journalists. — Reuters, PTI

Tea garden manager shot

GUWAHATI, JULY 20. ULFA militants today shot dead a tea garden manager in Upper Assam's Tinsukia district. Two ultras shot the manager of the Sankar tea estate R. Chaturvedi in his office chamber, police said. Police are carrying out search operations to nab the culprits. — PTI

THE HINDU

Setting an agenda

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OIC

AS INTERNATIONAL groups go, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) is a large but exclusivist club in a positive sense or in a negative connotation nothing more than a sectarian forum even if not a communal one per se. Given that, the latest periodical session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in Kuala Lumpur should not have been a major international event of direct consequence to the coalescing new global order. Yet, the Prime Minister of the hosts Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, sought to invest the ICFM with unusual importance in the overall context of the ongoing globalisation and the need for Muslim-majority States to trim their sails to this vigorous new tempest.

As a 'guru' of the campaign for globalisation with a social conscience, Dr. Mahathir used his inaugural address on June 27 to sound a wake-up call for Muslims across the world. He warned the countries with Islamic politics and majorities about the danger of their total marginalisation in any new international system if they were to lag in coping with the fast-changing dynamics of the information-era economy. Muslims, in his view, cannot afford to miss the cyber age after having failed to capitalise on the indus-

The recent meeting of the OIC Foreign Ministers saw Malaysia's Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, sound a wake up call to Muslim states to meet the challenges of the cyber age, writes P. S. SURYANARAYANA.

trial revolution. Malaysia, with its recent experiment of bucking the unbridled globalisation trend in national self-interest, wanted to take the other Muslim-majority nations into confidence. Dr. Mahathir, basking in the sunshine of his image at home as a successful modern-day King Canute in controlling the future wave of globalisation, said his country would be willing to share its secrets with the others for the good of the *Ummah*.

While Dr. Mahathir set the stage for his pet theme at the macro-level, Malaysia turned the political focus of the conference on an urgent issue in South East Asia — the problems of the Muslim Mindano region of the Philippines. Manila had in the past sought the OIC's intervention in arriving at a peace deal with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a Muslim separatist outfit in southern Philippines. The latest hostage-taking by the 'Abu Sayyaf' faction of the overall Moro

separatist network gave Malaysia an opportunity to turn the spotlight on the larger question of Moro nationalist rights as an Islamic entity in a non-Muslim state.

The hostages still being held as the ICFM session wore on included Malaysians, and it was in essence a case of a self-proclaimed Muslim group resorting to what was conceded to be a "criminal" act of "terrorism". But the OIC, through the skillful intervention by Malaysia, turned the heat instead on the Filipino Government over the basic question of the perceived plight of a Muslim minority in a non-Islamic state. The simple reasoning was that it was the sovereign business of the state concerned and not the moral responsibility of the OIC to address questions of an essentially criminal nature such as abduction. The political issue of the rights of Muslim minorities would, in contrast, be the OIC's mandate, it was said.

A novel feature of the latest

ICFM was that the representative of a non-Muslim State like the Philippines was on hand to present his country's case against the allegations of a raw deal for a minority Islamic community within the borders of a sovereign nation.

Manila's own discretionary move of allowing the OIC a say over the Moro issue — an act that led to the signing of a peace deal in the mid-1990s — was an aspect of the political cross-currents in South East Asia at the time, and the Philippines is still interested in keeping the OIC on the scene. Indonesia heads the OIC's panel on the Moro issue.

An obvious question within the ICFM context was whether Pakistan could somehow bring India into contact with the OIC in a somewhat similar fashion over Kashmir. Islamabad had in 1994 succeeded in convincing the OIC of the need for an internal contact group on Jammu and Kashmir. This panel met in Kuala Lumpur, too. But the odds against the OIC being able to interact with India as a pressure group on Kashmir were stupendous. While India had never allowed the OIC any leverage or even a locus over Kashmir, the notion of an ICFM-New Delhi dialogue on this issue was a non-starter. Secondly, as just an argument, India's status as the home to a big Muslim minority would give New Delhi a weightage on the OIC front which the organisation was determined to deny when it had, at the time of its founding, set its face against allowing India any toehold in this forum.

The ICFM's final communique, long on platitudes and short on specifics, linked the Kashmir question to the "threat" of a nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan. While this was not strange at all, the OIC, which could not bring itself to condemning Pakistan for acquiring nuclear weapons, glossed over India's status as a neo-nuclear power. While Iran took the lead in calling for global nuclear disarmament as the best insurance of security for all Islamic States, its Foreign Minister, Dr. Kamal Kharazi, as also the OIC itself, came down heavily on Israel's "secret" atomic arms programme that was seen to have translated its so-called Samson's Option into a reality. Behind these niceties, there was understandably no portrayal of the Pakistani nuclear weapon as the Islamic bomb.

On the economic front, the OIC's tentative move towards the eventual creation of an Islamic Common Market remained vague except for a note of caution against the Western-style globalisation as a determinant.

THE HINDU

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Morocco man chosen OIC chief

By P. S. Suryanarayana

KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 1. The Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), which concluded its annual session here last night, chose a new Secretary-General for the umbrella Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in quite an amicable manner after grappling with a "legal impasse" in that regard.

Dr. Abdelouhed Belkziz of Morocco will succeed his compatriot, Dr. Azeddine Laraki, at the end of the latter's term within the next few months. The question that posed a "legal" problem was whether an incumbent Secretary-General in his personal role or the country of his origin would be entitled to a second consecutive term. In the end, it was decided that the country concerned could be granted this courtesy in the same manner as a person holding the post might be. The puzzle was caused by Morocco's nomination of a person

other than the one, Dr. Laraki, holding the post for the second successive term.

The decision followed consultations among the Foreign Ministers. The reasoning for it was not officially spelt out, but indications were that it was considered appropriate that the Arab group keep the post. While this would, in one sense, give a chance to another regional sub-group within the OIC in the normal course, it was not clear whether the new Secretary General-designate would still be eligible to seek re-election at the appropriate time.

Kashmir dispute

The ICFM's final communique noted, inter alia, that the Ministers adopted the recommendations of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir that met on the margins of the main conference. Shorn of the by-now familiar language used by the Contact Group, it reaffirmed "the commitment of the OIC to

promote a just and peaceful solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the (relevant) United Nations' resolutions." The Contact Group heard presentations by the "Prime Minister" of "Azad Kashmir" (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in Indian parlance), 'Barrister' Sultan Mahmood, and two nominees of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC). Identified as Mr. Yousaf Naseem and Mr. Altaf Qadri, the two came here from the Pakistani side of the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. These three were not listed as members of the Pakistani delegation to the ICFM.

Pakistan, in an effort to keep the Kashmir issue "live," urged the OIC to note that the dispute would need to be resolved through a dialogue between Islamabad and New Delhi as suggested in a U.N. Security Council resolution that followed the nuclear tests by both these countries in 1998.

OIC trumpets self-determination

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, June 29

THE ORGANISATION of Islamic Countries (OIC) Contact Group on Kashmir has opposed the resolution on autonomy passed by the Jammu and Kashmir Government. At its meeting yesterday in Kuala Lumpur, it said autonomy "could not be a substitute to the right of self-determination".

The Contact Group said India must fulfil its commitment of holding a plebiscite in the "occupied territory" in accordance with the United Nations resolution. The meeting of the Group took place on the sidelines of the OIC ministerial conference.

An External Affairs Ministry official, however, said statements were "nothing new".

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

30 JUN 2000

A diatribe as usual

By K. K. Katyal

India would be walking into the Pakistani trap if it were to allow its chagrin over the OIC resolution to affect traditional ties with the Arab and other Muslim nations.

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IT WILL be perfectly in order for India to dismiss the latest resolutions of the Organisation of Islamic Conference on Jammu and Kashmir with the contempt they richly deserve. There is not an iota of evidence of this grouping of 56 countries applying its mind, while adopting blatantly partisan documents of dubious, even illegitimate origin. Year after year, the functionaries of the OIC secretariat, based in Jeddah, allowed themselves to be used by Pakistan officials — of course, with the benign patronage of the Secretary-General, Mr. Hamid-ul Gabid of Saudi Arabia. The resolutions, based on the material processed there, could not and did not have even a semblance of balance.

That the carefully-chosen Pakistanis should have made use of the OIC secretariat is not surprising. What is strange is that the heads of the member-states — or their foreign ministers at their separate conclaves — put their stamp of approval on the drafts without sparing a thought for the veracity of the contents or their implications. The very partisanship of this exercise turned out to be its undoing. New Delhi's job became easy — it need not strain itself in deciding to consign the resolutions to the gutter, as it were.

The text of the resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir, adopted at last week's summit at Doha, Qatar, was not materially different from those adopted in the past. The same anti-India poison dripped this time as well. However, Pakistan could not have its way in widening the scope of indictment of India. The main issue before the summit was the West Asia crisis and the main concern of the summitters was to re-affirm solidarity with and support to the Palestinians. Because of the acuteness of the confrontation between Palestine and Israel, the summit concentrated on it. Pakistan sought to establish a linkage between this issue and Kashmir — conjuring up an India-Israel axis and citing what was described as equivocation of New Delhi's stand on the Palestine cause. It tried to cash in on the sentiments in the Muslim world generated mostly by mish-

interpreting the meaning of India's recent contacts with Israel. That did not work.

Kashmir was not mentioned in the opening remarks of the outgoing chairman, Iranian President, nor did it figure in the address of the incoming chairman, Amir of Morocco, though his Foreign Minister, at a press conference later, touched upon it — while replying to a question. He made a case for a solution through bilateral talks between India and Pakistan. The OIC Secretary-General, however, dealt with it — expectedly — in his report to the conference.

Barring a few exceptions, the OIC member-countries take a reasonable line in their bilateral discussions with India, favouring a peaceful solution through negotiations. The mischievous sentiments of the type contained in the OIC resolutions are conspicuous by their absence in these contacts. After every summit, the Delhi-based diplomats of the OIC countries stress the *pro forma* nature of the Kashmir-related resolution, playing down its significance, obviously to ensure that it does not cast a shadow on their relations with India.

But why does not a collective exercise represent the sum total of the national positions of the member-countries? Is it a case of lack of courage? Whatever the reason, it is odd that collectively they allow themselves to be hustled into hurting the sensitivities of the Government and the people of India though, in their individual capacity, they swear they had no such intention. It needs to be realised by the OIC members that their tendency, because of religious ties, to avoid a dispassionate examination of the rights and wrongs of a case would not serve them or their national interests and is, certainly, not in conformity with the tenets of Islam. That is carrying pan-Islamism to ridiculous limits. In their blind inditement of New

to Tel Aviv nearly pushed India into the Pakistani trap. Mr. Advani spoke — even though in response to a leading question from the media — of cooperation between India and Israel in all matters, including the nuclear field. His denial, though prompt, could not prevent the damage. Mr. Singh ascribed New Delhi's reluctance in the past to establish full-fledged relations with Israel to the keenness of the Congress, then ruling party, to maintain its Muslim vote bank. There could not have been a more inappropriate statement by the country's External Affairs Minister in a foreign country.

To say this is not to plead against candour in analysing past events but to point to the potential of such remarks for damaging the national interest. This is certainly not a suggestion against forthrightness in the country's cause — for instance, Mr. Singh could be brutally frank with Saudi Arabia during his coming trip there for its role in matters related to the India-Pakistan problem.

Had the OIC been even-handed in its approach to the India-Pakistan problem and made a case for, say, resumption of dialogue, New Delhi could have been blamed for ignoring its resolution. But not when it contains lies and slander, of which some samples are: (1) Deep concern over the repeated violation of the Line of Control by India and its massive military build-up, welcome to the restraint exercised by Pakistan in the face of Indian provocations, (2) Call upon the international community, including the U.N., to pay urgent attention to the escalating situation in J & K and to mediate for restraint and peace, (3) Call upon member-countries to take all necessary steps to persuade India to cease forthwith the gross and systematic human rights violations of the Kashmiri people, and (4) Affirmation that any political process/election held under foreign occupation cannot be a substitute for the right of self-determination by the Kashmiri people as provided for in Security Council resolutions. Could there be a better place for this document than the gutter?

power politics.

India would be walking into the Pakistani trap if it were to allow its chagrin over the OIC resolution to affect traditional ties with the Arab and other Muslim nations. Or to let the balance between its relations with the Arabs, on the one hand, and Israel, on the other, be disturbed. To do that would mean establishing a linkage between the Kashmir issue and the West Asia crisis, precisely what Pakistan had been working for. True, New Delhi's ties with Israel have strengthened of late, but the Arab nations too gave up their boycott and established working relations with Tel Aviv.

However, the thoughtless utterances of two Indian Ministers, Mr. L. K. Advani and Mr. Jaswant Singh, during their visits

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Kashmir item No 1 on OIC summit agenda



Salahuddin: India baiter

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 9 NOVEMBER

THE MEETING between the Hurriyat leaders and the Pakistan High Commission officials here on Wednesday is being observed keenly by the government. The meeting comes in the wake of rumblings of discontent, expressed by a few Hurriyat leaders who has interpreted it as being anti-Pakistan in character. Pakistan's belt-tightening exercise, via the dialogue on Wednesday, was aimed at retaining the support of the premier political group in Kashmir.

Therefore, Pakistan needs to step on the gas with its tirades against India. The next ready-made forum will be the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) summit, scheduled to be held in Doha over the weekend.

The priority agenda may be Palestine, but for Pervez Musharraf leading a large delegation, Kashmir will be item number one. The preferred mouth-piece this time is the chief of the Hizbul Mujahideen, based in Islamabad, Syed Salahuddin, who on Thursday declared: "the historic OIC meeting is under way. I bring to their attention the Kashmir issue which is a nuclear flash-point."

The Hurriyat leader and head of Anjuman-i-Ittihad-ul-Muslimeen party, Maulana Abbas Ansari, will represent the Hurriyat at the OIC summit, where the contact group on Kashmir is expected to meet on the sidelines, as at every other OIC summit.

OIC this time, however, will see one prominent dissenting member — Libya — whose President, Col Muammar Gaddafi, has boycotted the summit calling it "just ink on paper," a waste of time.

The Economic Times

10 NOV 2000

OIC toothless tiger: Arab media

Dubai, November 19

HF 13
THE ORGANISATION of Islamic Conference (OIC) is a toothless tiger whose meetings produce "empty threats" and resolutions are just ink on paper. Arab media said today three days after an OIC summit ended in Doha.

"Doha summit resolutions have lost their relevance as they are just ink on paper. OIC is a toothless tiger," the official UAE news agency WAM said.

"Internal differences and petty bickering over narrow interests had turned OIC into a toothless tiger," said the Sharjah-based Al Khaleej Arabic daily.

"Unfortunately, Doha summit has followed the Cairo summit in

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failing to take at least semi-critical resolutions on the Arab conflict with the Zionist enemy," the daily said. "Most resolutions of the summit will just remain as ink on paper," the daily said in the context of resolutions passed at the summit on the Palestine issue.

Another local paper said the OIC summit had concluded on a predictable note with no practical measures to help Palestinians but letting them down. "Preferring rhetoric to action, the meeting has produced empty threats and hollow words," Dubai-based Gulf News said. "Internal differences and narrow vested interests have reduced the 56-member organisation to a toothless tiger which can only come out with a whimper

even when it wants to roar," the paper said.

Observers point out that India need not worry about the resolutions passed on Kashmir. "By reacting and according importance to the resolutions, India will only give some aura of respectability to Pakistan's designs," they said.

Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina had described as "non-binding" Islamabad-sponsored resolution on Jammu and Kashmir and said Dhaka wanted the Kashmir issue to be resolved bilaterally between India and Pakistan. Reiterating Dhaka's stand that Kashmir issue should be resolved bilaterally, Hasina told a news conference in Dhaka after her return from the OIC summit on Thursday. (PTI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 NOV 2000

Salahuddin for OIC sanctions

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 9. The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen chief, Syed Salahuddin, has urged the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) summit, beginning in Qatar on November 12, to impose "economic sanctions" against India and sever diplomatic relations with it in protest against its alleged atrocities against the people of Kashmir who are engaged in the "struggle for their right to self-determination".

At a news conference here, the Hizb chief released a letter written by him to the Chairperson of the OIC to "rise" in support of the Kashmiris and go beyond the ritualistic resolutions on the plea that the past resolutions have had no impact.

Mr. Salahuddin ruled out the

possibility of another ceasefire by his organisation and maintained that it was for India to respond to the ground situation. He accused India of wasting a "golden opportunity" provided by his organisation through the July 24 ceasefire and said the ball was now in India's court.

Mr. Salahuddin urged the OIC to take notice of the "growing Indo-Israel nexus" and initiate concrete action to compel India to resolve the Kashmir conflict. He asked the OIC chief to organise relief for those affected in the Kashmir conflict and galvanise all the Islamic countries to take a united stand on the issue.

The Hizb has taken the initiative to directly address the OIC even as Pakistan is making a determined effort to raise the Kashmir issue at the summit meeting.

The Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who will attend the summit, is expected to focus on Kashmir besides highlighting the Afghanistan issue.

In his letter, Mr. Salahuddin said that time has for come for Muslim world to understand the "Indian designs" in South Asia and West Asia in the "context of its expansionist posture and growing Indo-Israel axis".

Yaseen Malik held

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR NOV. 9. The JKLF chairperson and senior All-Party Hurriyat Conference leader, Mohammad Yaseen Malik, was arrested by police in Jammu today soon after his arrival from New Delhi. He was scheduled to address a rally in Shaheed Chowk,

but was not allowed to do so.

Mr. Malik's arrest was prompted by the Shiv Sena's reaction to his proposed rally. The Sena had taken out a procession on Wednesday and raised slogans today against the JKLF chief. Sena posters attacking the JKLF also surfaced today.

At the airport, around 30 Shiv Sena activists tried to attack Mr. Malik, but police swung into action and foiled their attempts. Reports said tension gripped the Shaheed Chowk area. Police and paramilitary forces were deployed in strength to prevent trouble in the Muslim-dominated locality.

Mr. Malik, who along with other Hurriyat leaders was camping in Delhi, was taken into police custody soon after he landed at the airport.

THE HINDU

10 NOV 2000

OIC fails to evolve common policy on West Asia

By Kesava Menon

MANAMA (BAHRAIN) NOV. 15. It could have been presumed that the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the apex institution of the Muslim world, would do something about the most glaring immediate situation before it — the ongoing struggle in the Palestinian territories. Delegates attending the three-day OIC summit which concluded in Doha (Qatar) yesterday, devoted most of their time to discussions on this issue but they failed to agree on a single implementable measure that could have benefited the Palestinian cause. At the same time, the OIC surrendered to the inevitable, rather than try to seize any kind of an initiative on the issue of Iraq.

At this particular point in geopolitics, the OIC members could have coupled their moves on Iraq in such a manner that it might have had some bearing on the Palestinian issue. They did shift their weight to the side of the international forces that are now lining up against the continuance of the U.S.-dominated policy on Iraq.

The OIC could have used this move away from the anti-Iraq coalition to pressure the U.S. to be more impartial in its mediation of the Palestine-Israel conflict. But the possibility of using their leverage in such manner was not explored. Frustration with the growing ineffectiveness of the OIC was perhaps evident in the fact that some of the politically important delegations, including that of Saudi Arabia and Syria, left well before the end of the conference. Another very important leader, Egypt's President, Mr. Hosni Mubarak, stayed away from the summit altogether saying that parliamentary elections in his country (which his party is winning) were more important.

Some of the hardline delegations had wanted the OIC to call on its members that had diplomatic relations with Israel to sever ties. This was a hopelessly impractical suggestion since there is absolutely no way that Egypt, Jordan and Turkey — the three states that have full-fledged diplomatic relations — would take a step that is bound to invite U.S. displeasure.

The Arab summit that was convened two weeks ago has called for freezing of relations with Israel and this was far more effective. Countries that had opened trade offices in Israel, as the first step towards the establishment of full-fledged relations, closed them down. All that the OIC could do was to "invite" those who had or were working for relations with Israel to break them off.

The OIC called for the sever-

ance of relations with any state that transfers its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem or recognises the latter as the capital of Israel. This is a bizarre suggestion. It is tantamount to a threat to break ties with the sole super-power since the U.S. is the country that is most eager to transfer its embassy to Jerusalem. The insertion of this call in the final communique might have been meant to impress on the U.S. and others the value that the Muslim world places on the holy sites in Jerusalem. But a threat that is so empty is more likely to irritate than impress.

Similarly, the OIC pressed two of the Palestinians' current demands that are the least likely to be given serious consideration. They wanted the U.N. Security Council to set up an international commission of enquiry to "investigate the massacres perpetrated by Israel" and to constitute an international criminal tribunal to "indict Israeli war criminals".

The U.S. has already got Israel and the Palestinians to agree to the constitution of a body to probe the causes of the current unrest. There is absolutely no chance that the U.S. will countenance the setting up of an international commission, with its inherent suggestion of a punitive mandate, let alone a war crimes tribunal. The one practical measure that is being urged by the Palestinians, and which the U.N. Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has suggested can be considered in diluted form — the setting up of an international force as buffer between Israeli security forces and Palestinian civilians — finds no mention in the final communique.

With regard to Iraq, the OIC endorsed the campaign being waged by many countries to defy the U.S.-initiated embargo on flights into Iraq. They also dropped the references, usual in all summits post 1990, to "Iraqi aggression against Kuwait", from the final communique. But apart from the failure to link such a disassociation from U.S. policy with the organisations feelings on the Palestinian issue, the paragraphs relating to Iraq showed up the organisations endemic confusion once again. In demanding that "illegitimate actions taken against Iraq outside the framework of the relevant Security Council resolutions be brought to an end", the OIC was stating its objections to the "no fly zones" that the U.S. has unilaterally imposed.

But how meaningful is this statement of protest when Saudi Arabia and Kuwait provide the U.S. with the air bases which they use to enforce the zones.

THE HINDU

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OIC lashes out at Israel

DOHA (QATAR), NOV. 12. Palestinians are more determined than ever to resist Israel in the "noble cause" of holy war, Mr. Yasser Arafat said on Sunday at the opening of a summit of the world's Islamic nations, whose leaders widely praised an uprising in the Palestinian areas and condemned Israel as disinterested in peace.

The Iranian President, Mr. Mohammad Khatami, opened the summit with a tribute to Palestinians' "passionate blood" and a special prayer for Palestinians killed in violence that erupted on Sept. 28. However, neither he nor Mr. Arafat called for a Muslim boycott of Israel or for nations to sever ties with the Jewish state — two demands of many Arab citizens.

"The Palestinian people are determined more than ever to continue their *jihad* (holy war) and the resistance of the occupation," Mr. Arafat said. "Our people,

when they undertake this battle, realise the size of the sacrifices — in body and money — and they present it as a sacrifice for this noble cause." The three-day summit will devote a large chunk of time to the latest Palestinian-Israeli violence, which has killed around 200 people, most of them Palestinian. Mr. Khatami began his address by asking the participants to stand and recite a special verse for the dead from the Quran to honour Palestinians killed in the latest violence.

Mr. Khatami's speech marked the end of Iran's three-year chairmanship of the 56-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference. He handed over leadership of the pan-Islamic body to Qatar with a call to the participants to unite. Twenty-four heads of state are attending the summit in addition to Prime Ministers and other officials.

Foreign Ministers who pre-

pared for the gathering have issued a draft of the final declaration, extending unqualified support for the Palestinian leadership and the uprising and lashing out at Israel.

They also said they supported the Palestinians' stand on Jerusalem, a city holy to Muslims, Jews and Christians, and home to the third-holiest shrine in Islam. Palestinians want traditionally Arab east Jerusalem as capital of a future state. Israel insists on an undivided Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty, though earlier this year it indicated it may be willing to cede limited authority to the Palestinians over a few neighbourhoods.

Leaders in their opening speeches said the blame for the recent bloodshed rested squarely on Israel. The Sudanese President, Mr. Omar el-Bashir, called for "holy war in all its forms" against Israel, support for the Pal-

estinian uprising and an end to any sort of normalisation of relations with Israel. Qatar's Emir, Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, said peace cannot materialise during occupation or while there are "provocative acts, threats and desecration of our sacred places."

The U.N. Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, avoided directly assigning blame for the violence, but said in an address to the summit that "the past eight weeks have made abundantly clear to all sides that the cause of peace can only be damaged by excessive use of force, indiscriminate violence or terror." Arab nations, many of whom fought with the United States against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War, slowly have taken steps toward reintegrating Iraq into the Arab fold. Sheik Hamad of Qatar said it was time for a political settlement to "end the harsh suffering" of the Iraqi people living under U.N. sanctions.

THE HINDU

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OIC summit backs Palestine cause

REUTERS
DOHA, NOV 12

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IRANIAN President Mohammad Khatami on Sunday opened an Islamic summit with a call for full support of a Palestinian uprising against Israel, which he described as a "terrorist racist Zionist regime".

Leaders of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims began their ninth summit in Qatar with verses from the Koran and a minute of silence in memory of nearly 200 Palestinians killed in seven weeks of clashes with Israeli troops.

"We take pride in the heroic resistance of the children of the Muslim and Arab Ummah (nation) against suppression and bullying by the terrorist racist regime," said Khatami, the outgoing chairman of the 56-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Khatami also told the summit that Islamic countries had so far failed to meet the aspirations of the Palestinians.

"Astonishingly, while the nation of Palestine, especially its youth and children, has emerged triumphant...Islamic countries have yet to meet the expectations of the Islamic nation," Khatami said.

The Iranian leader's speech did not repeat his call on the summit on Saturday for severing ties with Israel. He also did not mention by name the United States, regularly denounced by Tehran as "leader of world arrogance".

But Iranian delegates said Khatami appeared satisfied with a compromise draft resolution that is expected to demand the breaking of links with Israel for killings of Palestinians seen as amounting to war crimes.

Delegates said moderates led by Egypt and



Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani receives Pakistan military ruler General Pervez Musharraf at Doha Airport on Saturday—AP/PTI

Turkey had prevailed in drafting the summit's resolution, toning down criticism of Washington and approving compromise wording that kept up the anti-Israel rhetoric but left members free to decide their future ties.

The draft resolution to be approved by the Organisation of Islamic Countries, the Muslim world's biggest group, said, "The leaders invite member states, which had established relations with Israel or were taking steps towards ties with Israel within the framework of the peace process, to cut these ties...and stop all forms of normalisation until it complies accurately and honestly with United Nations resolutions deal-

ing with Palestine and holy Jerusalem.

"The leaders...also urge the US administration to revise its biased stance which obstructs the Security Council from shouldering its responsibilities, representing a dangerous violation of the UN Charter," it said.

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani said in his speech to the summit that there could be no peace in the Middle East without a full Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands.

"We must tell the whole world that there is no solution to the struggle except through an Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab land in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. Israel must choose between the possibility of living in peace in the region or the continuation of this struggle for decades," Sheikh Hamad said.

Organisation of Islamic Countries leaders also supported Palestinian and Arab calls for the formation of a UN peacekeeping force to protect Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

At least 205 people, most of them Palestinians, have been killed in the current wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

The draft also reaffirmed OIC support for an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, rejecting a US Senate vote last month that recognised Israeli claims to the city as a "flagrant challenge to the feelings of the world's Muslims and Christians."

It said OIC leaders "affirm their determination to cut ties with any country that moves its embassy to Jerusalem or recognises it as the capital of Israel".

INDIAN EXPRESS

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OIC meet asks U.N. to stop clashes

DOHA (QATAR), NOV. 14. A delegation of Muslim Foreign Ministers should press the U.N. Security Council to take immediate steps to halt Israel's "aggression" against the Palestinians, Qatar's Emir Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani said on Monday. *HO-17*

At the closing ceremony of the ninth summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, Sheik Hamad said such a delegation should push the Security Council to "provide the necessary international protection for the Palestinian people." The Emir's impromptu remarks were widely applauded. The clashes in the Palestinian territories, where more than 200 people have died in six weeks, constituted an "Islamic crisis," Qatar's Foreign Minister told a press conference after the summit. *15/11*

"That such a small country (Israel) is shedding our blood and the blood of the Palestinian people and no one deters it ... We should be ashamed of ourselves, brothers," the Foreign Minister, Sheik Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabor Al Thani said. Asked why oil-rich Arab States did not use cutbacks in oil production to help the Palestinians, the Foreign Minister said those countries were expected to dole out money to other Muslim and Arab nations in need. "Let's benefit so we can go on paying. Let's be prac-

tical here," he said. The United States bore some responsibility for the violence in the West Bank and Gaza "because it is the responsible partner in the peace process," the Foreign Minister said. Calling for Washington to use its influence, he said: "There should be pressure on the stronger side, which is Israel, and not on the weaker side (Palestine)." The conference closed with participants inviting member-States to break ties with Israel — a weaker call than the Syrians had sought. The Syrian President, Mr. Bashar Assad left the summit earlier than planned, apparently in protest.

In an unprecedented move, the national delegations yielded to an Iraqi request that they stop from referring to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 as an "aggression." A resolution on Iraq substituted the long-used phrase "effects of Iraq's aggression against Kuwait" with "the situation between Iraq and Kuwait." An Iraqi official had said his country was incensed about the original wording and had requested that it be changed.

Despite the conciliatory move and efforts by several Gulf countries, a much-hoped for reconciliation between Kuwait and Iraq failed to materialise at the summit, which began on Sunday. — AP

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

15 NOV 2000

OIC summit resolves to send fact-finding team to Kashmir

DOHA: The ninth summit of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has asked U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan to appoint a special representative for looking after the Jammu and Kashmir problem.

The OIC also urged India and Pakistan to immediately resume dialogue with a view to resolving all the disputes, including Kashmir, peacefully and amicably.

In its Doha declaration adopted by the leaders of 56 Islamic countries after intense deliberations on the Palestine statehood issue and other problems confronted by the Muslim world, the summit also approved on Monday night the proposal for sending a fact-finding mission to J&K for assessing the political and security situation there.

This is for the second time that the OIC decided to despatch the fact-finding team to J&K. A similar proposal made earlier was struck down by the Indian government.

The OIC conference, which was attended by Palestine President Yasser Arafat, Mr Kofi Annan, Pakistan chief executive Pervez Musharraf and other leaders, urged the member states to pressurise India to end human rights violations in the state of J&K. The OIC contact group on J&K also met on the sidelines of the summit to discuss the Kashmir problem.

Two senior Hurriyat leaders Moulvi Omer Farooq and Maulana Abbas Ansari also attended the summit. Moulvi Omer Farooq

spoke at the summit before it concluded shortly after midnight on Monday. In his speech, he said the people of the state want peace and immediate resumption of tripartite talks to end the Kashmir dispute.

On the Afghanistan conflict, the OIC declaration, stating that the problem cannot be resolved through military means, called on the warring parties, the Taliban and the Ahmad Shah Masood-led northern alliance, to stop hostilities and cooperate for setting up broad-

among the other member states over the resolution on Iraq-Kuwait dispute. Kuwait deputy premier Sheikh Sabah AL Ahmed even threatened to boycott if the resolution on implementation of various U.N. resolutions, including return of prisoners of war, were diluted.

The declaration asked Iraq to fully comply with the U.N. resolutions. But it supported resumption of flights to Iraq. It extended full support to the security and integrity of Kuwait. It entrusted Qatar, the chairman of Islamic conference, with the job of mediating between Kuwait and Iraq to help end the differences between the two neighbouring countries.

The declaration endorsed the candidature of Pakistan and Syria for the non-permanent seats of the U.N. security council for the year 2003 and 2002 respectively.

In its separate declaration on the Israeli-Palestinian violence, the OIC rejected the demand for declaring jihad against Israel. But it made an impassioned appeal to the Muslim nations to sever all types of relations with Israel in view of its continued aggression against innocent Palestinians.

It fully backed the demand of an independent Palestine state with Jerusalem as its capital and warned the U.S. and other countries not to shift their diplomatic missions from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The OIC threatened to snap ties with any country which takes such a decision. (UNI)

OIC OUTCOME

- Kashmiris want resumption of talks, Hurriyat leader informs summit
- OIC endorses Pakistan's candidature for non-permanent Security Council seat
- Summit rejects demand for declaring 'jihad' against Israel

based multi-ethnic government there. In an apparent reference to Pakistan, the summit called on all the states to immediately stop supply of arms and ammunition.

The summit urged all member states to extend assistance to the Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran in returning to their homeland.

The OIC decided to set up an Islamic contact group entrusted with the task of looking into cases of violation of human rights of the Muslim minority in Myanmar.

There was virtually a deadlock

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