CHAPTER V

THE ROLE OF SAUDI ARABIA IN INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC FORA.
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Role of Saudi Arabia in International Islamic Fora.

(a) The Islamic Summit Conferences

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(i) The Jeddah Conference (23-26 March 1970)
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This chapter endeavours to analyse the role of Saudi Arabia in international Islamic fora particularly during Faisal reign. King Faisal believed that Saudi Arabia has a unique position in the Arab-Islamic politics. Because Saudi Arabia contains within its borders two of the three holiest places of Islam. The fact that Saudi Arabia is an Arab country enhanced its position in the Muslim world. For Faisal believed that the Arab world is the heart of the Muslim world. Therefore the Arabs have special responsibility to work for Islamic solidarity. Saudi Arabia's great oil revenues also allowed Faisal to assume patronage for Islamic teaching and religious activities all over the world.

The defeat of the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan in the June war 1967 has a sobering effect on the ideologically disunited Arab world. East Jerusalem was occupied by Israel in the war. Subsequently a fire-tragedy occurred in Al-Aqsa mosque in 1969, third sacred place of Muslims. These developments in the region provided an opportunity to Faisal to set the stage for implementing the first stage of his strategy by convening an Islamic Summit Conference.

After the 1967 war, the Arab governments showed remarkably flexibility in sinking their differences and presenting a common front. King Hussain of Jordan made his peace with Egyptian President Nasser on the eve of the war, King Faisal showed his support of the Egyptian leaders both morally and materially and President Bourguiba saw fit to return to the Arab fold. The result of these development was to diminish the division of the Arab world into a "revolutionary" group led by Egypt and Syria on the one hand and a

"conservative" group led by Saudi Arabia and Jordan on the other.\textsuperscript{2} This division has given way to changing circumstances from time to time.

Thus, the shift in the respective positions after June 1967 was not really surprising. As a matter of fact, since the emergence of the Arab-State system, it has been characterised by the recurrence of different patterns of change which tend to take their form from the realities of the prevailing political situation in the Arab World. One of the reasons for the manifestation of these pattern was, and still is, the Arab-Israeli conflict. Whenever, the Arab countries sense an Israeli threat, they tend to group, close their ranks and present a united front.\textsuperscript{3}

As far as Saudi Arabia was concerned, its position after the 1967 war was sound. The emerging pattern in the Arab state system contributed to the political consolidation of its position in the Arab world. Not only had its economic power to be reckoned with, but also its political influence gradually escalated. The first call for Islamic cooperation proved to be more successful because two key developments made the atmosphere more receptive. The first was the defeat of Egypt and Syria in the June 1967 Arab-Israel War. The second development was the military occupation of Al-Aqsa and its subsequent burning.

These development provided an opportunity for Faisal to convene an Islamic Summit Conference on the 26th of August, immediately after the burning of al-Aqsa mosque. A preparatory Committee of representatives of Morocco,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2} Abbas Kelidar, "Shifts and Changes in the Arab World", \textit{World Today} (London), vol. 24, no. 12 (December 1968), p. 503
\item \textsuperscript{3} Kelidar, Abbas, "The Struggle for Arab Unity", \textit{World Today}, 23, no. 7 (July 1967), p. 292
\end{itemize}
Saudi Arabia, Iran, Palestine, Somalia, Malaysia and Niger convened on 8 and 9 September 1969 at Rabat, the Moroccan capital. Thirty six countries were invited, but delegates from twenty five countries attended, with only ten heads of states present. The countries which attended the conference were: Afghanistan, Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, North Yemen and South Yemen.

Iraq insisted that its participation was conditioned on the demand that the Muslim countries which had diplomatic or economic relations with Israel should severe them. Syria followed suit on the ground that it had no diplomatic relations with Morocco. As a result, both Iraq and Syria were the only two Arab countries which did not attend the conference. Egypt was represented by a low-level delegations deputising for Abdel Nasser. In the beginning, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) was not invited to the conference. While Syria and Iraq made prerequisite for their participation, Turkey and Iran opposed the idea of admitting PLO. However, it gained admission, with observer status, on the insistence of President Boumedienne of Algeria, who argued that the Algerian National Liberation Front set a precedent by its admission to the Bandung Conference and to non-aligned conference in Cairo.

5. Ibid, p. 336
THE RABAT SUMMIT (22-30 SEPTEMBER 1969)

Faisal scored a major diplomatic victory when the world's first Islamic Summit meeting was convened in Moroccan capital, Rabat on 29th September 1969. The delegates were immediately confronted by two serious controversies which threatened to wreck the conference, namely, the agreement on the agenda and the admission of India. Saudi Arabia favoured a restricted agenda. Morocco sided with Saudi Arabia and stressed that the agenda was limited to discussions of the burning of al-Aqsa mosque and the future status of Jerusalem. Faisal's motive for restricting the agenda was based on its fears that expanding it include all West Asian problem might jeopardize the conference.

On the other hand, there were some Arab countries which opposed this position. Egypt, Algeria, Libya pressed for the inclusion of the whole question of Israel's occupation of Arab territory as well as the future of the Palestinian refugees. The differences over the agenda were finally resolved as the proponents of restricted agenda conceded that the conference take up the West Asian problem in its entirety. Although this was viewed as a victory for the 'revolutionary' Arab countries, it saved the conference from a definite collapse.6

No sooner had the crisis over the agenda been resolved than another issue bedeviled the conference, namely the admission of India. The six-nation preparatory committee had rejected the request of India to be allowed to attend the conference on the ground that it did not qualify for admission since it was not

a predominantly Muslim country. However, yielding to India's persistent attempts and clever maneuvering, it was decided at the plenary session to invite India to the conference.

President Yehya Khan of Pakistan, who had agreed earlier on King Faisal's request to allow the representatives of the Muslim community in India to participate in the conference, questioned the credentials of the Indian Ambassador, a non-Muslim to represent the Muslim minority in India. The Pakistan President insisted that any Indian delegation attending the conference must be mandated by the Muslim community and not by the Indian government. Thus, President Yehya Khan decided to stay away from the conference as long as the Indian representative sat there. The majority of the participants favoured Pakistan move. Turkey, Iran and Jordan stood firmly by Pakistan with the result that the conference decided to oust India from the concluding session. While the expulsion of India was construed as a victory for Pakistan, it was loss of prestige for India, who had sent an official delegation to the conference. Pakistan exploited and maneuvered the forum for its own purpose.

Thus, held against heavy odds and in the midst of differences, the conference had to be contest with a mild resolution calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Arab lands and the restoration of Jerusalem to the pre-June 1967 status, although it not call upon the participants to resort to diplomatic and economic boycott of Israel.

Moreover, the conference adopted an important resolution calling for the establishment of a permanent secretariat to ensure liaison among the Muslim countries.

The Islamic Summit Conference decided that a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Muslim countries should be held in the month of March 1970 to:

1. Discuss the results of the common action which participating countries have taken at the international level on the subject of the resolution stated in the communique of the Rabat Islamic Summit Conference;

2. Discuss the subject of establishing a permanent secretariat, charged with the responsibilities of making contacts with government represented at the conference and to coordinate their activities.  

The question which must be raised now are: What are the political or other benefits to Faisal? and was the Rabat Summit Conference a success?

It was obvious from the outset that the conference could not achieve much. There was general skepticism about its success of the deep ideological divisions in the Muslim World. In fact, it was apparent that "everything was going to make the conference a failure", because:

First it was convened in haste, lacking agenda and consensus. The call was made on 26th August, 1969 by the Arab League, and in less than a month the conference was convened.

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8. Ibid, p. 9

Second, it was held under the unfavourable circumstances. Out of the June war 1967, Israel emerged victorious with sizeable Arab territories under its occupation. The common front which the Arab had forged against their enemy after the war was shaky, and they had not used oil as a weapon against their enemy's supporters.¹⁰

Third, the call for the conference did not receive a positive response from many Arab countries. The attitudes of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Algeria attest to this.

Fourth, the prevailing divergent approach and growing rift among the Muslim countries prevented them from deciding about effective measure or adopting strongly-worded resolutions censuring the enemy and its supporters. For example, Turkey and Iran, who maintained normal relations with Israel were opposed to severance of diplomatic relations with that state. In a cautiously-worded speech calling for larger Muslim unity, the Shah of Iran avoided any mention of Israel, Palestine, Jerusalem or even the desecration of al-Aqsa, although on several occasions in the past he had demanded unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Arab territories.

Nevertheless, the fact that the conference did convene despite all these unfavourable circumstances was considered to be a great success for Faisal.

Moreover, the deliberations of the conference proved that what unites the Muslim countries in greater that what divides them. The Muslim countries have several occasions in the past affirmed solidarity on matters of common concern.

As sovereign independent states, it is not always possible for them to avoid conflicts and tensions in their mutual relations; but on larger issues affecting the interests of the Muslim World they tend to stand together.

Finally, the decision of the conference to establish a permanent secretariat to coordinate the activities of the participating countries provided permanent institutions through which the Saudis could express their view in Arab and Muslim countries. The most significant of these had been the establishment of a general Islamic secretariat, the "Organisation of the Islamic Conference", an Islamic News Agency", and an "Islamic development Bank, in the years that followed.

The Islamic Summit Conference (1974) Lahore:

The 1969 Islamic Summit in Rabat was followed by the second Islamic Summit in Lahore, Pakistan, on 22nd February, 1974. The successful completion of the second Islamic Summit was a great achievement for Faisal, as it was convened at his behest. The most important factor which contributed to its success was the October War 1973, between the Arabs and Israel. As a result of the war, not only was the balance of power in West Asia was offset but the international situation in general was affected as well new political and economic variables emerged.


12. The Arab World Weekly, (Beirut) (January–June 1964), p. 84

The pattern emerging after the October war was characterised by the prevailing mood of solidarity, understanding and reconciliation. Most importantly, the relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt improved. Syria decided to resume diplomatic relations with Jordan, which were severed in 1971, and Tunisia improved its relations with Jordan.

The mood of solidarity and understanding stretched even beyond the realm of inter-Arab relations. Ten African countries broke off relations with Israel in October 1973. France and Japan, which had previously been neutral toward the Arab cause, were now, after having felt the pinch of the oil embargo, came out openly in their favour.  

As a matter of fact, the effect of the oil embargo imposed as a consequences of the war went far beyond West Asia. Moreover, the embargo had enhanced the bargaining position of the Arab relative to the industrial world, which was evident from the changes in French and Japanese policies towards the Arabs. Separate oil deals by France, Japan and West Germany with Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait further illustrate the point.  

With these favourable circumstances, the Lahore Summit was convened with the initiative of Saudi Arabia and the full support and intensive efforts made by Pakistan. There were two basic aims of the conference: First to express

Muslim solidarity with cause of the Arabs and to demonstrate to the world in
general and to Israel and its supporters in particular that the Muslim world was
behind the Arabs; Second, to discuss economic cooperation among the Muslim
countries.

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan made great efforts in securing the assemblage
of majority of the heads of states. As a result, not only all the 30 invited states
attended but new members also joined the conference, bringing the total number
of participating countries to 38. Among them were 19 Arab states, 12 African
and 7 Asian countries. Iraq, which had boycotted the first summit, attended as
an observer.

Before the summit began its regular meetings, it was confronted with the
problem of Bangladesh. In fact, the conference provided an excellent opportunity
for recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan.\footnote{The Arab World Weekly, (Beirut) (January-June, 1974), p. 81} Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto of
Pakistan pleaded that he had acted in deference to the friendly service of the

The Lahore Summit, unlike its predecessor, succeeded in solving most of
the problems which otherwise would have threatened to wreck the conference.
Furthermore, its smooth running was made possible because of the unanimous
agreement on the carefully prepared agenda which centered on two essential
issues: the West Asia situation after the fourth Arab-Israel war, which had
considerably strengthened the Arab's position and economic cooperation in the light of energy crisis and its effects on the developing countries.

With regard to West Asia, the participants unanimously declared the Arab cause as "the cause of all countries which oppose aggression" and decided to grant full and effective support to the Arab countries so that they may recover by all available means all the occupied territories. The recovery by the Palestinians of their full nations rights was set as the essential and fundamental condition for a solution to the problem and for the establishment of a durable peace based on justice.

As far Jerusalem, the participants decided that they would not accept any agreement, or arrangement which would provide for the continuation of the occupation by Israel of the Holy city or its transfer to a non-Islamic sovereignty or concessions. While calling for "the immediate withdrawal" of Israel from the city, the members rejected "any attempt to internationalise it". 19

A notable departure from the past was the condemnation by the conference of all states that provided Israel with military, economic and human assistance. No such mention of censure was passed at Rabat. Of equal significance in this context was the call to member states to sever relations with Israel in all fields. It should be recalled that a similar call at Rabat was opposed by Turkey and Iran. Another significant achievement was the confirmation by the summit-which included Jordan- of the PLO as the "Sole Legitimate Representative of the Palestinian Nation".

The other important subject discussed in the Lahore Summit was the need for economic cooperation among the Muslim countries. Three draft resolutions were presented to the conference with respect to this subject. The first was submitted by the PLO and revolved around composing a special committee to offer assistance to those who are confronted with difficulties. The second was submitted by Algeria and endorsed by Guinea, Malaysia, Niger, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Bangladesh. The third was submitted by Libyan leader, Qadhafi, which was concerned with the creation of a fund to provide financial assistance to the Muslim countries.

From among these three draft resolutions, the second resolution submitted by Algeria and endorsed by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, and Pakistan etc. was adopted by the conference. This showed the triumph of conservatives led by Faisal in the conference.20 The Algerian resolution was based on President Boumdienne's theory of establishing a framework including the Arab, Islamic and third world-non-aligned countries in a unified front. In his view, the issue of oil was part of the general problem, that is, the struggle for raw materials, which constitutes the essence of the relationship between the advance industrialised countries and the developing countries.21 Therefore, all the efforts of the third world developing countries, the Muslim countries among them, should be concentrated on the United National General Assembly session devoted to the discussion of the issue of raw material. In short, except for laying down a broad

20. Meharanisa Ali, op.cit. p. 44.
21. The Arab World Weekly, no. 9, p. 84.
framework for economic cooperation, the resolution made no mention of any concrete steps towards achieving that goal.

This prompted President Qadhafi to strongly criticise the Algerian resolution labeling it as merely rhetoric. He maintained that although he was not against the UN discussion of the relationship between the third world and the advance countries, his main concern was to come up with specific and positive results. In other words, the conference should designate the countries in need of help and then specify exactly how much they should get. The Libyan President called on the participants to "decide now and give financial aid in figures to the needy countries in Africa, Pakistan and Bangladesh and to the Palestinian Liberation movement. If you can do that, we can say that the conference had accomplished positive results. If we can not provide these figures during this session or during this conference let us come up with the something less. Let us establish a special fund for this purpose". 22

Faced with all these resolutions, the conference decided to adopt the Algerian resolution to which many countries had subscribed. Thus, the conference stressed in its final declaration the need to put a radical end to poverty, sickness and ignorance in the Muslim countries, and the exploitation of the developing countries by the industrialised countries and to develop economic cooperation and solidarity among the Muslim countries.

The conference decided to establish a fund to be called the Islamic solidarity fund to meet the needs and requirements for Islamic unity and Islamic

causes, enhancement of Islamic culture, values and creation of educational institutions, universities contribution would be made by the member states according to their capacity. To alleviate the suffering of the poor countries, certain action have been taken individually and collectively in the post-summit era.\textsuperscript{23} For example, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) decided unanimously on 7 April 1975 to set up a social aid fund to grant soft loans to developing countries and Iran contributed 1 percent of it oil revenues in that year to the fund.\textsuperscript{24} Arab countries such as Libya, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have provided assistance to many developing countries.

The resolutions of the conference that followed Lahore Summit indicated the significance attached to the use of modern economic policy as a lever for Muslim solidarity- an approach labeled 'Economic Pan-Islam by a French diplomat.\textsuperscript{25} That is why Saudi Arabia established the 1974, with about $2,900 million in capital to be provided exclusively by the Saudi government. The purpose of the fund was described as to give loans to the developing countries to assist them in their infra-structure, agriculture and industrial projects. Further, Saudi Arabia subscribed 20 per cent to the capital stock of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), which was established in August 1974. Saudi Arabia also subscribed 20 per cent to the Arab-African Industrial Development Fund, which was established by the Arab League in 1974.\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ragaei al Mallakh, op.cit, p. 372
\item \textsuperscript{24} Mehrunnisa Ali, no.14, p. 39
\item \textsuperscript{26} Middle East & North Africa Year Book, 1995, p.
\end{itemize}
One of the important factors behind the success of the Lahore Summit was the mood of reconciliation which prevailed from the beginning of the conference. The resolution on economic cooperation and setting up the fund for the developing Muslim countries were some concrete results.

One may discern from the above discussion that in these summit conferences, Saudi Arabia played a pivotal role, particularly due to her huge oil-wealth and Faisal's diplomatic accomplishments. As these were convened on the initiatives of Saudi Arabia, hence, Faisal tried to make all these great success.

MEETINGS OF FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES

The 1969 Islamic Summit in Rabat was followed by meetings of Foreign ministers of the Muslim countries, a important platform where Saudis have been playing a vital role. During Faisal's period five such conventions were held in different countries, proceeding of which further illustrates the important role of Saudi Arabia in international fora.

The Jeddah Conference (23-26 March 1970)

According to the decision of Rabat Summit Conference, that the first meeting of the foreign ministers of member countries should be held in March 1970, Foreign Ministers of 22 Muslim countries met on 23 March, 1970, in a

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three-day conference in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The countries which attended were: Afghanistan, Algeria, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Republic (Egypt), and North Yemen. The representative of Cameron, the Arab League, and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) attended as observers. Significantly enough, Iraq, Syria, Mali and Chad did not join the conference.

The conference had on its agenda two items, as decided by the Rabat Summit. These items were: (i) to examine the results of the common action undertaken at the international level by the participating countries, as regards the decisions comprised in the declaration of the Rabat Summit; (ii) to consider the subjects of the creation of a permanent secretariat responsible for contacting governments participating in the conference and coordinating their activities.28

Divergent arguments dominated the conference on the subject of creating a permanent secretariat. Saudi Arabia, who had been calling for Islamic solidarity, sought to establish a permanent secretariat which would serve as a liaison and a major plank of Saudi Arabia demonstrated a good deal of diplomatic skill and exercised its leverage and influence in order to obtain the approval of the conference on the establishment of a secretariat. This move was in line with its strategy and its long-range objective toward laying the foundation for a sound and strong position of Saudis in both internal and external affairs.

However, the adoption of the idea of a permanent secretariat did not come about easily. The conference had to go through a difficult process of hard bargaining and political manovouer. Again, the ideological division in the Arab World was reflected in the discussion of this question. While Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia supported the idea, the 'revolutionary' Arab block opposed it. Sudan opposed the idea and reserved its position on the joint communique. Its delegation put forward two proposals before the conference: first, that no secretariat should be established without first determining its aims and objectives; second, that definite steps should be taken to solve the Palestinian question. Since the communique did not touch on these points, Sudan announced its withdrawal for the conference. In a post-conference statement, the Sudanese Foreign Minister questioned the use of setting up secretariat and international bodies and celebrating the occasion when the houses of the Arab people are being destroyed and they are being hit by napalm every day. 29

With the exception of the Turkey, the non-Arab Muslim countries lent support to the Islamic secretariat. Turkey reserved its position on the question on the plea that it was a secular state. Pakistan one of the closest allies of the conservative Saudi Arabia, strongly and enthusiastically supported the idea and played a crucial role in getting it through. Nawabzada Sher Ali Khan, the then information Minister of Pakistan argued that such a body would serve as a "clearing house for collaboration amongst Muslim countries" and thus was necessary for the "smooth working and proper servicing of all future meeting of

29. Shameem Akhtar, op.cit, p. 180
Heads of governments and other leaders of the Muslim countries. Indonesia opposed the idea at the beginning on the ground that the United Nations and other international organisations maintained such bodies and thus it would simply mean a duplication of effort. However, it finally agreed to the idea with the urging of the other countries. especially Saudi Arabia. Iran, though going along with the idea, did not show any enthusiasm for the secretariat and hardly spoke on the occasion.

After a long debate the conference decided the following:

1. The creation of a secretariat, its functioning being:-
   (a) To act as liaison between the participating states.
   (b) To follow up the implementation of decisions taken by the conference, in particular those regarding the problem of Palestine.
   (c) To prepare the conference's session and to organise them.

2. The secretariat will be headed by a Secretary General appointed by the conference of the Foreign Ministers for a two-year period.

3. The expenses incurred for the administration and the activities of the secretariat will be borne by the member state.

4. Jeddah is the headquarter of the secretariat.

With regard to the Palestinian question, there were also differences among the 'revolutionary' Arab countries and some of the non-Arab Muslim countries

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on the role which the conference could play in bringing out positive results. The 'revolutionary' Arab countries were dissatisfied with the resolutions of the conference on this issue which demanded the restoration of the Arab territories occupied during the June 1967 war and offered "political, material and moral support to the people of Palestine." On the whole the conference was marked by the division of opinion of the participating countries and the influence of Saudi Arabia, particularly, in getting the resolution passed in favour of a permanent secretariat in Jeddah.

**THE KARACHI CONFERENCE (26-28 DECEMBER, 1970)**

The second conference of the Muslim countries Foreign Ministers was held in Karachi, Pakistan on 26th December, 1970. Twenty two countries participated: Afghanistan, Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Tunisia, Turkey and North Yemen. Iraq, Sudan, Syria and South Yemen did not participated, while Iran opposed that the Emirate was still under British domination. The PLO and the Arab League attended as observers.

The agenda of the conference contained three major items: the latest developments in West Asia, Portugal's aggression against Guinea and economic, cultural and social cooperation among the participating countries.

In its discussion of the West Asian situation, the conference merely reiterated the previous positions adopted at Rabat and Jeddah without introducing

any new elements. The conference also discussed the situation created by Portugal's invasion of Guinea and condemned it as an act of aggression. It further expressed it "sympathy with the people of Guinea in their rightful struggle for the safeguard of their liberty and sovereignty" and invited the participating countries "to extend all possible material assistance to the Republic of Guinea. The discussion of the situation in Guinea called attention to one of the important rhetorical tasks of the Islamic Conferences, namely the protection and preservation of all Muslim countries and Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries. In other words their role from now would not be confined to the situation in the West Asia but would include any problem which might threatened Muslims or their countries throughout the world. These rhetoric led to the founding of an exclusively Islamic group in world politics and had a negative impact in the non-Muslim countries.

The important achievement of the Karachi Conference was manifested not in its rhetoric discussion of the political situation in the West Asia, or in Guinea, but in its taking of some concrete steps towards furthering and consolidating the idea of the Islamic Conferences and the cooperation among the Muslim countries. This was evident from the conference's discussion of the following:

First, the discussion on the idea of establishing an international Muslim bank for trade and development was initiated. Pakistan and Egypt submitted proposals related to the idea of establishing either an Islamic Bank or an Islamic Federation of Banks. After lengthy discussion of the subject, the conference

34. Ibid, no.14, p. 21.
charged Egypt with the responsibility of making a comprehensive study of this project in light of its own proposal and the discussions which took place in the conference.\textsuperscript{35} The Secretary-General should then forward this study to the member countries with a view to obtaining their written comments on the study before submitting it to the next conference for further discussion and decision.

Second, the conference agreed in principle to the establishment of an Islamic International News Agency and urged the participants to express their viewpoints in this connection to the secretariat. It also asked the Secretary-General to convene a meeting (to be held in Teheran) of the member states' representatives and experts charged with the study of the practical arrangements for the establishment of such and agency and to submit their report to the conference during its ordinary session.\textsuperscript{36}

Third, the conference discussed various proposals related to the creation and reinforcement of Islamic cultural centres. It asked the Secretary-General to convene a meeting of representatives and experts of member states (to be held in Morocco) to study the practical arrangements for the establishment of cultural centres and to submit their report to the conference in its ordinary third session.\textsuperscript{37}

At the end of the session, the conference decided that its next meeting would be held in Kabul, Afghanistan, in the beginning of September 1971.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, p. 22.
THE JEDDAH CONFERENCE (29 FEBRUARY-4 MARCH 1972)

Although the third session of the Muslim countries' Foreign Ministers was schedule to held in Kabul in September 1971, no conference was held that year because Afghanistan, which would be host country, had that year suffered from an unprecedented drought. However, the year was not wasted. It was utilised by holding meetings of sub-committees for preparing reports on five important subjects. Three of these subjects are: the establishment of an International Islamic Bank, an Islamic News Agency, and Islamic culture centre. The fourth was settlement of the organisational and financial problems of the secretariat and the last was preparation of the final draft of the charter of the Islamic Conference. Meetings were held for those purposes in April, June and July 1971 and February 1972 at Teheran, Rabat, Jeddah and Cairo respectively.

The third Foreign Ministers' conference was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Thirty countries attended: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Chad, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leon, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and North Yemen, The PLO and the Arab League attended as observers, which Iraq and South Yemen refused to participate. 38

The conference adopted the following agenda:

- Latest development in the West Asia.
- Judaisation of Jerusalem.
- The charter of the Islamic Conference.
- The Islamic Cultural organisations centres.
- The International Islamic News Agency.
- The situation in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent.
- The situation of Muslims in the Philippines.
- Date and venue of fourth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.\(^\text{39}\)

It was obvious that such an agenda would give the third session of the Islamic Conference certain significance. Thus, this conference marked its moving forward from the phase of theories to the phase of some concrete and practical applications. For the items relating to the charter, the bank and the news agency were coming to take birth. These fora constituted important tools in the hands of Saudis, because of their being the guiding force in their creation.

Before dealing with these aspects, it should be noted that the conference witnessed some interesting discussion as it dealt with the other political issues on the agenda. It is to be recalled that the conference was held in the aftermath of the Indo-Pak war. Consequently, the conference was dominated by the conflict which resulted in the participation of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. Pakistan got a resolution passed in her favour.

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The conference also reviewed the situation of the Muslims in Philippines and expressed serious concern for the plight of the Muslims living there.⁴⁰ This act of conference was felt from some questions as a gross violation of international principle of unnecessary interference in the internal affairs of another country.

In discussioning the West Asia problem, the only new element was manifested in the decision of the conference to set up a fund to help Palestinian resistance. This decision marked the first step taken by the conference, beside from the traditional position of giving only moral backing to the Palestinian cause and towards a more definite position of material help to the PLO. The name of the fund caused some difference of opinions among the participants. The original resolution stipulated that the conference decided to establish a fund to be called Jihad Fund for the benefit of the Palestinian resistance into which will be paid governmental contributions from the member states as well as private donations.

The representatives of Afghanistan and other countries opposed the use of Jihad and its translation. Finally, the conference adopted the suggestion of the Palestinian delegation by calling it the "Palestinian Fund".⁴¹

Another difference of opinions arose when the conference discussed the resolution on "Judaisation of Jerusalem". Syria supported the use of the word

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⁴⁰ Basic Documents, no. 14, p. 49.
⁴¹ Basic Document, no.14, p 51.
"Zionisation of Jerusalem" instead of Judaisation because the later could imply that Muslims are "against the Jews, from a religious point of view, but the fact is that Muslims are against the Zionists and not the Jews". Saudi Arabia proposed that the word Judaisation should remain. Its representative explained his country's position by stating that "there is no doubt that we are not against Judaism as a religion, but we are, hundred percent, against the Judaisation of Jerusalem, and there is a big difference between the 'Zionisation' of Jerusalem and its 'Judaisation'. Algeria seconded this and the resolution kept its original name. 42

There were many misunderstandings among the participants on the question of setting up an International Islamic Bank. The delegates of Egypt and Senegal in particular were involved in a heated argument over this issue. In the opinion of the Senegalese representative, the time was not ripe for this important step which would affect the economic structure of the participating countries. Hence, it was more reasonable to establish a committee of experts to consult with the governments before creating an organ which would be permanent. The representative of Egypt responded by saying that there was no commitment to the establishment of a bank at this stage. It was that the Muslim world needs economic and financial expertise and the proposed department will render these services.

Finally, the controversy was resolve by adopting a resolution leaning toward the Egyptian point of view. 43 Thus, although the conference was unable

42. Ibid, p.39.
43. Ibid; p. 45.
to agree on the establishment of the proposed bank, studies and discussions which were presented made it possible for the future realisation of this idea.

Afterward, the conference was involved in a lengthy discussion on the various articles of the charter of the Islamic Conference. Because of the historical significance of this discussion, it is worth while to shed some light on those articles which underwent lengthy discussions and differences of opinions.

The first such disagreement arose when the participants discussed the article related to the objectives of the charter. Paragraph 5 of the article had among the objectives: "to coordinate efforts for the liberation of the holy places and support the struggle of the people of Palestine and help them to regain their rights and liberate their lands". The representative of Sierra Leone expressed his objection to this by setting that in preparing a charter one should not be specific because a charter is supposed to be the constitution of the organisation. So he suggested an amendment to the effect that the objective will be "to support the struggle of all Muslims under oppression and help them to regain their legitimate rights and liberate their lands".

Saudi Arabia argued that the Palestine question was a unique one and that the Muslim countries in Rabat met because of that matter, therefore, it was necessary to single out Palestine. If there was a need to generalise this could be done in other articles. Syria, Algeria, Mauritania, Egypt and the representative of the PLO supported this position and it was suggested that a new paragraph be

added which will refer to "support the struggle of all Islamic people to safeguard their independence and integrity". 45

Thus, after the prolonged arguments the conference was able to approve the charter of the organisation of the Islamic Conference, an association of Muslim countries inspired and financed by Saudi Arabia with its permanent seat at Jeddah. 46 The other important development in the Jeddah Conference was its approval of the project for the establishment of an International Islamic News Agency with its headquarters to be in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, amidst reservations from Syria and Lebanon in relation to the future activities of the agency.

THE BENGHAZI CONFERENCE (MARCH 24-27, 1973)

The fourth session of the Muslim countries' Foreign Ministers was held in Benghazi, Libya, on 24 March 1973. It was attended by delegations from: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Chad, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Guinea, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey and North Yemen. The Arab League, the PLO and for the first time, Iraq attended as observers. 47

Two items on the agenda caused the conference to be involved in a prolonged discussion until the agenda was finally adopted: the Jihad fund and the situation of the Muslims in the Philippines.

46. Ibid, p. 287.
It should be recalled that the previous conference witnessed a similar argument over naming the special fund, which was established for Palestinian movement. This time Senegal and Niger suggested changing the name to "Solidarity Fund". Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Libya insisted on keeping the word "Jihad". Algeria proposed a compromise by suggesting to call it "struggle and solidarity fund". When it appeared that the majority of the participants were tending to keep the name, Algeria withdrew its compromise and went along with the majority.48

The question of the Muslims in Philippines was also a matter of controversy. In the beginning, Indonesia attempted to block the inclusion of the subject on the agenda on the grounds that the matter falls essentially under the realm of internal affairs of the government of Philippines. As such, Indonesia urged its exclusion from the agenda. However, Indonesia had to succumb to the wishes of the majority of the participant and particularly of Saudi Arabia.

Finally, the conference agreed to adopt the following important agenda:

--- The tense situation in West Asia.
--- The plight of Muslims in the Philippines,
--- Situation of Muslims in the world.
--- Islamic Year Book.
--- Date and venue of the next Islamic conference of the Foreign Ministers.

By looking at the different items on the agenda it is important to note that

the very nature of these items demonstrates the shift in the activities of the conference. From a cultural and religious rather than a political organisation, it was to become a political instruments in the hands of the some members particularly of Saudi Arabia.49

On the subject of the situation of the Muslims in the Philippines, both Indonesia and Malaysia adopted a position of dissension. It is to be recalled that the Indonesia and Malaysia, along with Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines are members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) founded in 1967 by the Kuala Lumpur Declaration to accelerate economic progress and increase the stability of South East Asia.50 Both Indonesia and Malaysia maintained that it was the strict observance of the principle of the inadmissibility of interference in the internal affairs of other state that has enabled the members of (ASEAN) to build a strong foundation for regional cooperation on the basis of mutual trust and confidence in one another. Accordingly, the tow countries believed that the question of the Muslims in the Philippines was essentially are internal matter of that country and thus fall in the domain of the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of a state, which was also embodied in the Islamic charter. Therefore, they maintained that any resolution which might be taken must include the following three considerations:

First, it should recognise that the issue was essentially an internal matter of the Philippines.

Second, it should provide for rendering humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of those Muslims who have been to victims of the civil strife.

And, third, it should open a channel of communication, dialogue and consultation between the Islamic Conference and the Philippines government with a view to assist the Muslims in their economic, social and other advancements.

The draft resolution presented to the plenary session contained elements from the Libyan draft resolution harsh in nature, and naturally it was not acceptable to Indonesia and Malaysia. The representative of the two countries express their objection. At the same time, the members of the conference were anxious to have unanimity and to avoid any reservation on their resolution so that the solidarity of the conference would be maintained. Therefore, there was no other alternative but to resort to some sort of accommodation and compromise with the result that the final resolution reflected this attitude. The basic element in the resolution was its decision to send a delegation to be composed of the Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, Libya, Senegal and Somalia —— to the Philippines to discuss with its government the conditions of the Muslims there.

Finally, Hasan Tohmy, counselor al-Sadat on Islamic affairs, was elected Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference.

51. Basic Documents, op.cit. no. 14, p. 55.
THE KUALA LUMPUR CONFERENCE (JUNE 21-25, 1974)

The fifth conference of the Muslim countries' Foreign Ministers was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 21 June to 25 June, 1974. Thirty seven Muslim countries attended with no major change in their representation. The agenda of the conference revolved around items related to three major fields: political, economic and administrative.  

In the political sphere, the conference adopted 18 resolutions. The resolution on the situation in West Asia merely reiterated there adopted by the preceding Islamic meetings.

Among other political issues discussed were: the Sahara under Spanish domination, territories under Portuguese domination, cooperation between the Islamic Conference and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), French Somali land and the plight of Muslims in the Philippines.

The conference adopted a resolution on strengthening the security of non-nuclear states. The subject was discussed for the first time and the main reason was that on 18th May 1974, India exploded a nuclear device, thus increasing the number of nuclear power in the world. Understandably enough; Pakistan brought the subject up before the conference.

When the subject was discussed in the political committee, two problems arose: First, Pakistan insisted that the resolution should identify India by name and refer to its explosion of the nuclear device. The representative of Senegal,

on the other hand, argued that the resolution should be general with the need for singling out any country to condemn all the nuclear states. However, if the conference wanted to yield to Pakistan's insistence on singling out India then it was imperative to refer to its (India) declaration to use it nuclear capability for peaceful purposes. Even if India's declaration was a mere formality, it should be recognised that no other nuclear state had issued such a declaration, which in turn should be taken as an official obligation on the part of India not to use nuclear weapons in a war with any country.

However, since the final resolution referred only to India, Senegal expressed its reservation. Second, Pakistan asked that the resolution should include a request to India to accept nuclear inspection by the United Nations and to provide whatever information needed to put all its nuclear activities under the United Nations supervision. Since this implied clear interference in the internal affairs of India it was rejected by the committee. Thus, the final resolution did not refer to the issue of nuclear supervision or inspection and when the name of India was mentioned, a reference was also made to other nuclear powers.54 By bringing the issue up before the meeting of the Islamic Foreign Ministers, it was clear that Pakistan had made the international Muslim forum its tool for an anti-India campaign.

The conference also discussed the plight of the Muslims in the Philippines. It should be recalled that the Fourth Foreign Ministers' meeting at Benghazi had decide to send a four-member special mission to the Philippines to inquire into the problem. Since then criticism and concern had been expressed

from time to time by Muslim states against President Marco's policy. The most vocal had been the government of Libya which also accused by the Philippines of supplying aid to the Muslim rebels. Depending mostly on Arab oil, President Morcos needed the goodwill of the Muslim world. This probably persuaded him to announce certain measures, including the offer of an honoured place to Muslim culture, economic aid to Southern region, amnesty programme, and lately, autonomous rule to the Sahara.

In one of these recommendations the conference considered the establishment of an "Islamic Fund for Economic Settlement", to assist the poor countries in financing their imports through bilateral and multilateral agreements and exchange of experts and scientists. It should, however, be noted that the economic resolutions of Kuala Lumpur Conference were nothing more than the reiterating of the recommendations made in the earlier conferences.

This brings us to the conclusion of our review and analysis of the Islamic Conference which began in Rabat in 1969. It should be pointed out that there were many other Foreign Ministers' conference held after the Kuala Lumpur meeting, so far. However, no discussion of those conferences will be made since the time-frame of this study is confined to the period from the initiation of the call for Islamic solidarity in 1967 until the death of King Faisal on 25 March, 1975.

One may discern from the above discussion that in all these meetings Saudi Arabia played a demagogic role. Faisal's diplomatic skill, the economic stability of the country and the special position of Saudi Arabia in Arab-Islamic politics contributed to this end. Saudi regime used these occasion for the fulfillment of its interest too.

55. Ibid, p. 29.

56. The Arab World Weekly, no. 26, p. 31.