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THE HISTORIC MAKKAH DECLARATION : AN ANALYTICAL AND EVALUATIVE STUDY

1. Introductory

The Makkah Declaration is admittedly an important landmark in the evolution of the OIC. Adopted at the inaugural session of the Third Summit held at Makkah Al Makarramah on 19 Rabi-ul-Awal, 1401H, corresponding to 25 January 1981, the Makkah Declaration was intended to set the tone for the Summit, inspire its deliberations and also indicate to the OIC and the Islamic countries the directions to follow in charting out their course in meeting the formidable and complex problems that confronted them and the contemporary world. The Declaration is, thus, a document of paramount importance to the Islamic countries and has far-reaching implications for the OIC. The present paper attempts to analyse and evaluate the significance of the Declaration and its major ideological, political, economic and cultural implications.

2. Special significance of the Makkah Declaration

2.1. Any declaration adopted by the Heads of State and Government is a solemn document. In the case of the Makkah Declaration sanctity was added to solemnity. The Kings, Heads of State and Government of member-states participating in the Third Summit assembled in Makkah Al Makarramah and facing the sacred Kabah, the Qibla of all Muslims, adopted this Declaration after the formal inauguration of the Summit by His Majesty

the late King Khalid bin Abdul Aziz. It was also a historic document. In the first place, here in Makkah Al Makarramah 15 years ago His Majesty the late King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz in his inaugural address to the Conference of the Muslim World League lent his full support to the idea of convening an Islamic Summit Conference, an idea which was first mooted at a conference of representatives of Islamic countries in Mogadishu in 1384H (1964).

The Makkah Declaration is a historic document which combines sanctity with solemnity. It reflects the determination of the leaders of the Islamic community to restore unity as an imperative in combating the problems and challenges facing the Islamic World.

In the second place, the Summit was convened "at the dawn of the New Hijra century..... a momentous event in the history of the Islamic Ummah and the beginning of an Islamic resurgence."¹ In the third place, after an interregnum of long seven years,—(Second Summit was held in 1974 in Lahore)—the Third Summit met under the shadow of a deepening crisis in the Middle-East and the gloom cast by the fratricidal Iraq-Iran war. Since the formation of the OIC in the First Islamic Summit held in Rabat, interests of the Islamic countries have never been in greater jeopardy from both internal and external threats. In the fourth place, the Declaration reflected the determination of the leaders assembled at the Summit to come into grips with these threats, and, for this purpose "to pause and take stock of their past, evaluate their present and look forward to a better future in a spirit of Islamic solidarity in order to restore the unity of their ranks, work for their prosperity and advancement, and, achieve, once again, an

1. OIC Document No. IS/3-81/OGN/D.4/REV. 5. p.1.

exalted position in the world community and human civilization.”²

2.2. This searching appraisal was based on a global survey of the major problems that seemed to afflict the contemporary world and the Islamic countries. In a forthright analysis of their causes, the Makkah Declaration underlined among others the following: “.....succumbing to forces of disunity and degradation in the past resulted in many Muslim homelands, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the first Qibla of the Muslims, falling prey to foreign domination. History is replete with instances where Muslim communities have fallen victim to injustice and aggression; their intellectual achievements eroded; their share of their own material resources diminished. Indeed, the dawn of the century saw the Muslim World confronting dangers and challenges to its independence, security, honour and dignity.

We are saddened to note that despite all its material and scientific and technological achievements mankind today suffers from poverty of the spirit, from moral and ethical decay and societies are marred by inequities, economies are crippled by severe crises and international political order is in constant danger of destabilisation. The forces of evils are now on the march, multiplying the hot-beds of war, sowing the seeds of dissensions, threatening the security of the world, man's peace of mind, and jeopardizing human civilisation.”³

3. Ideological Implications

3.1. It is against this backdrop of a gloomy international scenario and mounting internal and external threats to the security, culture and value-system of the Islamic countries that the Makkah Declaration calls for restoring unity and solidarity among the Islamic countries as an imperative in successfully combating the problems and challenges facing the Islamic World. As a matter

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

of fact, the main ideological thrust of the Declaration lies in the strong emphasis laid on the unity and solidarity of the large and diverse Islamic World, and, on Islam and the Islamic heritage as the point of their convergence and the main impulse for their unity.

3.2. Based on the conviction that "the Ummah of 1000 million people possessing enormous resources, fortified by its spiritual power and utilising to the full its human and material potential can achieve an outstanding position in the world and equilibrium for the benefit of all mankind".⁴ The Declaration expresses the determination of the assembled leaders "to reinforce our solidarity and set in motion the process of our renaissance." This determination is predicated on two main premises: (i) restoration of unity and solidarity within the Ummah inspired by a shared religion and cultural heritage, and, (ii) the enormous potential for dynamic advances in all fields but dependent on unity and solidarity.

3.3. It is also significant that the Declaration, in calling upon the Ummah for unity and cooperation and strict adherence to Islamic principles and values, does not attempt to present a paradigm or model of such principles and values, but refers to "the Book of God and the Sunnah" as the source of their inspiration and guidance.

3.4. An important fact to note here is that the profile of the Islamic Ummah in the contemporary world bears the indelible imprint of the historical process that led to the emergence of numerous sovereign independent states in the wake of World War II. As a result, the Ummah now comprises a vast, complex and diverse universe. Geographically spread far and wide from Indonesia in the east to Morocco in the west, and, from the Comoros in the South to Turkey in the north, (map in the annexure), the forty-three member states (including Afghanistan

4. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

suspended since January 1980) were as divergent in their historical background as in their political, economic and social systems. Despite this diversity, they remain united by their shared religion, Islam, which continues to influence profoundly their way of life. The unity of the contemporary Ummah is, thus, placed in perspective when it is seen as *unity in diversity* with the recognized freedom of the sovereign member-states to choose their own political, economic and social systems. The objective of unity among the Islamic states, thus, implies a task for the OIC, which is formidable with a strong political content.

3.5. Another striking strain running through the Makkah Declaration can be seen in its call for cooperation with other nations

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so that they may, *in concert with other nations*, strive for the establishment of equality, peace and prosperity for the whole mankind. The Declaration, thus, clearly recognizes the reality of the growing interdependence of the nations, the global character of many of the problems and the need for international cooperation between the Islamic countries and other nations. Basically the concept of universality and internationalism underlying the message was integral to the principles of Islam, and, thus, implicit in the ideology of the OIC. The Makkah Declaration is striking not only for clearly spelling out this concept but also for endorsing in unequivocal terms the principles and objectives of the United Nations and the Non-aligned Movement and for expression of solidarity with the Third World countries and their regional associations like the Organisation of the African Unity and the Arab League.

3.6. The rationale for international cooperation is explained in the Makkah Declaration in the following words : "The belief

of all Muslims in the eternal principles of liberty, justice, human dignity, fraternity, tolerance and compassion and their constant struggle against injustice and aggression reinforces their determination to establish just peace and harmony among peoples, to ensure respect for human rights and to work for the strengthening of *international organizations* based on humanitarian principles and *peaceful coexistence* among nations.”⁵

3.7. The Makkah Declaration also strongly denounced “all forms of oppression, exploitation, domination, injustice, colonialism and neo-colonialism as well as all kinds of discrimination on grounds of race, colour, creed or sex.”⁶ This denunciation followed as a logical corollary from such universal human, democratic and spiritual values enshrined in Islam and stressed in the Makkah Declaration as “justice”, “equality and dignity” of man, “compassion”, “tolerance,” and “universal brotherhood.”

3.8. This new articulation of the concept of cooperation with emphasis on international cooperation dispels all misgivings about the objectives and status of the OIC and places it in unequivocal terms in a role of mutual cooperation and complementarity with the United Nations, the Non-aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and regional associations of the Third World countries. One important implication is a vastly expanded horizon for the activities of the OIC, both political and economic in character.

4. Political

4.1. The Makkah Declaration may be characterised as an epoch-making event for its clear and firm commitment to mutual cooperation and support in safeguarding the security of the Islamic states. There are two major elements in the conceptual formulation of the principles of such cooperation and support:

(i) “In fulfilment of the aspirations of our peoples, we shall intensify consultations amongst ourselves and complement and

5. *Ibid.*, p.5.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

coordinate our endeavours in the international field in order to better defend our common causes and thus to enhance our prestige and position in the world." (ii) "We are equally determined to engage in Jihad with all the means at our disposal, to liberate our occupied territories, to support one another in defending our independence and territorial integrity, in vindicating our rights and in eliminating the injustices reaked on our nation, depending on our own strength and firm solidarity."⁷

4.2 It may be noted in this context that "Jihad" in terms of the Declaration is not to be construed as a war of aggression. (It is stressed that the term should not be misconstrued or misinterpreted.) In the Declaration it is used in the sense of a legitimate struggle "to liberate illegally occupied territories", or, "defend the independence and sovereignty" of a country against an aggressor,—a right that is universally recognized. The nature of the 'Jihad' and the means to be employed for conducting it, as explained in the Declaration, will depend on the circumstances of the case. 'Jihad' is contemplated in situations where Muslims are "victims of injustices" or "faced with dangers due to the reign of force and politics of violence in international behaviour."

Attention is also drawn to the fact that "Islam enjoins justice and equity both for its followers and others and it also enjoins tolerance and magnanimity towards those who do not combat us, do not force us to leave our homes and do not violate our sacred values and which never takes the side of wrong doing, injustice or oppression".⁸

4.3. Within the above general framework, the Palestine problem which led to the establishment of the OIC in 1969 remains the central concern. The Makkah Declaration reaffirms "our unflinching resolve to combat the Zionist usurpation by force of arms of Palestinian lands and other Arab territories and to frustrate all Zionist designs and actions in this regard. We condemn and

7. *Ibid.*, p.6.

8. *Ibid.*, p.7.

reject the policies of those who assist this aggression by giving the Zionist entity political, economic, demographic and military support. We equally reject all initiatives that are not consistent with the Palestinian choice which calls for a just solution of the Palestinian question based on the realisation of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people including their right to return to their homeland, their right to self-determination including the right to establish an independent Palestinian State in their homeland under the leadership of Palestine Liberation Organisation, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We therefore pledge to wage Jihad with all the means at our disposal for the liberation of Al Quds and the occupied territories. We shall make this liberation struggle the prime Islamic cause of this generation until God willing Al Quds Al Sharif and all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories are restored to their legitimate owners.”⁹

4.4. Expressing deep concern over the situation created by the foreign military intervention in Afghanistan, the leaders reaffirm their “determination to seek a political solution of this crisis, on the basis of an immediate and complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, respect for political independence and territorial integrity, as well as the non-aligned nature of Afghanistan, and respect for the inalienable rights of the heroic Afghan people to self determination without any foreign intervention or pressure.”¹⁰

4.5. After an insightful analysis of the causes of threats to international peace and security stemming from the increasing rivalry between the two superpowers (and the two power-blocs represented by them), the Declaration notes with grave concern “their increasing endeavours to intensify their military presence in the areas near and adjacent to the states of the Islamic World, such as the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and the Gulf.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

10. *Ibid.*, p.9.

“We affirm our common conviction that the peace and stability of the Gulf and the Security of its Sea lanes, is the exclusive responsibility of the Gulf States without any foreign interference.”¹¹ Thus, the Declaration outlines a clear policy based on very cogent reasons to steer clear of the two power-blocs. The Declaration also forcefully states that the security of the Gulf region should be regarded a responsibility of the states in that region and that peace in the region is endangered by super-power presence. It is needless to stress that this emphatic expression of the security concerns of the region reflects the geopolitical realities as perceived not only by the countries in the region but also by the other member states of the OIC.

4.6. The Muslim citizens of non-muslim countries, who are substantial in number, are also included in the concept of Ummah. The Makkah Declaration calls upon “all countries which have Muslim minorities to enable them to perform their religious rites in full freedom and to extend to them equal rights as citizens protected by the State in accordance with the sanctity of law.”¹²

4.7. The Declaration views with great concern the escalating arms race in an inequitable world order still dominated by greed and the use of force and urges upon all states to rebuild the international order on the firm foundation of human values of justice and fraternity, renounce the use of force, settle all disputes peacefully, and, harness human and material resources in the service of humanity. In order to achieve this objective, the Declaration favoured the strengthening of the UN, and expressed solidarity with the Non-aligned Movement and the associations of the Third World countries.

4.8. As an additional instrument for achieving the objectives of unity and solidarity and mutual cooperation and support in safeguarding the security of the Islamic States, the Declaration reiterates the desire of the leaders “to establish the practice of ‘Shura’

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

12. *Ibid.*, p.10

(consultations) among all Muslim States, to normalise this principle in all walks of life, in order that the doing of good deeds may be promoted and wrong-doing eliminated. Thus would

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solidarity be implanted in the collective conscience and people would participate in the running of their affairs putting an end to dissension and discord. We shall make every effort to facilitate contacts between individual Muslims and between specialised institutions in order to provide opportunities for continuous consultation."¹³

4.9. The implementation of the idea of the "Shura" in the true spirit of the Declaration will naturally imply a much greater strength for the OIC than it has at present and also a significant expansion of the activities of the OIC in its political department. An important first step in this direction is evidently the necessary exercise at the appropriate level to work out the structural frame of the institutional arrangements in order to give a concrete and meaningful shape to this idea which is capable of opening up a new horizon of cooperation among the Islamic States.

5. Economic

5.1. Integral to the determination expressed in the Makkah Declaration to securing the fundamental rights of freedom, justice and basic human needs, was the commitment to the elimination of "poverty from which some of our peoples continue to suffer by consolidating our economic cooperation on the basis of com-

13. *Ibid.*, p.12.

plementarity and pooling of our resources to achieve coordinated development of our countries, we also declare our resolve in a spirit of Islamic solidarity, to promote economic development of the countries which are least developed amongst us. We further pronounce our resolve to rationalize our development policies in order to ensure balanced progress in both the material and spiritual domains.”¹⁴

5.2. Recognising that the causes of poverty, economic backwardness and income disparity are rooted in an unjust world economic order inherited from the colonial era, the Declaration stresses the urgent need for restructuring it. “We call for efforts to be made to establish economic relations in the world on the basis of justice, interdependence and mutual interest, to ensure the disappearance of the wide gap separating the industrialised countries and the developing and poor countries, and the institution of a new economic order based on equity and solidarity, under which development policies are rationalized and integrated to eliminate, once and for all, famine and its dangers, as well as all kinds of deprivation and all forms of exploitation of peoples suffering under the effects of colonialism and backwardness and to ensure the development of these countries and the proper utilization of their resources. We reaffirm the right of states to have sovereignty over their natural resources and to control their exploitation.”¹⁵

6. Cultural and Educational

6.1. The indivisibility of “unity and solidarity”, “progress and advancement”, “prosperity and power”, “education and culture” involving a process of interaction with the innate qualities of the Muslim Ummah inspired by its cultural heritage is repeatedly underlined in the Makkah Declaration. Ignorance and illiteracy are regarded as incompatible with the righteous life envisaged

14. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

15. *Ibid.*

for the Muslim Ummah (in the Book of God and the Sunnah). This concept implies the development of "our inherent capabilities to the fullest extent," so as to enable us "to break the shackles of subservience and mobilise in us the spiritual strength" to move forward along the path of goodness, righteousness, progress and prosperity. Hence, Islam's great emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge which also forms an integral part of the cultural heritage of the Ummah. The leaders assembled at Makkah, therefore, expressed their determination to cooperate fully in spreading education and strengthening the educational institutions.

6.2. A great importance has been assigned in the Makkah Declaration to studies of modern sciences and technologies and also to "research and Ijtihad". The objective is to ensure access of the Islamic countries to the latest advances in all fields of knowledge and technology, while safeguarding the human, moral and spiritual values embodied in their cultural heritage. Evidently concerned by the devastating consequences of the erosion of the human and moral values in the industrial societies, the leaders pledged themselves "to coordinate our efforts in the field of education and culture, so that we may draw on our religious and traditional sources in order to unite the Ummah, consolidate its culture and strengthen its solidarity, cleanse our societies of the manifestations of moral laxity and deviation by inculcating moral virtues, protecting our youth from ignorance and from exploitation of the material needs of some Muslims to alienate them from their religion.

"We further pledge ourselves, within a framework of cooperation and a joint programme to develop our mass-media and information institutions, guided in this effort by the precepts and teachings of Islam, in order to ensure that these media and institutions will have an effective role in reforming society, in a manner that helps in the establishment of an international information order characterised by justice, impartiality and morality, so that our nation may be able to show to the world its true qualities,

and refute the systematic media campaigns aimed at isolating, misleading, slandering and defaming our nation.”¹⁶

7. Measures for Implementation

7.1. It will appear from the foregoing analysis that the goals set in the Makkah Declaration embrace the whole gamut of life, ideological, political, economic, educational and cultural, with far-reaching implications. The Third Summit during its working sessions came into grips with the task of devising ways and means for implementing these goals. Some of the problems were on the agenda of the earlier conferences, and, as such, the summit had the benefit of their thoughtful deliberations in deciding on the future course of action. But, in other cases, the Summit had to break new ground while coping with the serious constraint imposed by the limited duration of the Conference.

7.2. The Summit reiterated “the consolidation of Islamic solidarity among member-states as a priority objective” as stressed also by previous conferences. As a matter of fact, throughout the Declaration and the deliberations of the Third Summit, Islamic Solidarity has been viewed as the sheet anchor and spring-head of life-impulse and strength for many of the other objectives and actions stressed in the Declaration and the Resolutions. In addressing one of the major threats to unity and solidarity arising from ideological, political, economic and other differences, the Summit invited the Islamic member states “to pursue a policy based on mutual cooperation and coexistence regardless of differences of their political and economic systems” and “to exert efforts to eliminate any ideological or sectarian differences that may arise among them by stressing the basic spiritual, moral and social values which are common to all Muslims and to eliminate those ideas that are contrary to the essence of Islam by encouraging research, studies and seminars carried out from a scientific and practical outlook on the various problems facing the Islamic

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15

communities; and requests the Secretary General to extend the necessary assistance and facilities to member states to achieve these objectives through the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its subsidiary organs".¹⁷ It is needless to stress that intensified efforts in this direction are clearly warranted by the present state of relations among member states, not only to sharpen but also harmonize the perception of the shared values in the diverse historical, geographical, social, economic and political background of the member states.

7.4. Emphasizing "the issue of Palestine as the essence of Middle East problem" and reaffirming the commitment of the earlier conferences to "the liberation of all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories including Al Quds Al Sharif," the Summit decided to honour the commitment to use "all their military, political and economic capabilities and natural resources" for this purpose. "The Kings, Emirs, and Heads of State of Islamic countries have agreed to declare holy JIHAD for salvaging AL QUDS AL SHARIF, supporting the Palestinian people, and bringing about Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. In their resolve to launch JIHAD, the Islamic states have made it clear that JIHAD has its Islamic concept that permits no mis-interpretations or mis-understandings. They have also agreed that the practical measures to put JIHAD into effect would be taken in accordance with the Islamic concept of JIHAD and in continuous consultation among themselves."¹⁸

7.5. The conference endorsed the action-programme prepared by the Al-Quds Committee and renewed its term of appointment under the Chairmanship of His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco for another term of three years. The gradual swing of public opinion in the West in favour of the just cause of the Palestinians indicates that the programme has started to bear some fruits and that it needs to be further intensified.

17. OIC Third Summit *Resolution* No. 4/3 P (LS) p.752-3.

18. Final Declaration: p.729.

7.6. Since the Summit, the over-all situation in the Middle East has, however, suffered a serious set-back following the invasion of Lebanon by Israel and the perpetration of one of the most brutal massacres in Beirut (in Sabra and Shatila). With the largest Arab country (Egypt) neutralized militarily, with Iraq and Iran still locked in a fratricidal war, and dissension and discord continuing to erode unity in the ranks of the Islamic countries, strategically the situation could not be more favourable to the aggressor. In addition, the spectre of a resumed civil war in Lebanon (unleashed in the wake of the Israeli invasion), though halted following the uneasy truce achieved through Saudi mediation, still looms large in the horizon. The Middle East situation looks grimmer and more challenging than ever and calls for intensification of efforts for securing a just and lasting peace, not only on the part of Arab-Islamic States but also on the part of all member-states in cooperation with like-minded non-member states.

7.5. The initiative taken by the Summit to end the Iraq-Iran war through the strengthening of the Islamic Goodwill Committee has not apparently been able to make any headway in accomplishing its Mission. To say this is not to underrate the wisdom of the initiative and the commendable efforts made by the Members of the expanded Committee comprising Bangladesh, Gambia, Guinea, Malaysia, Pakistan, PLO, Turkey and the Secretary-General to end this fratricidal war. As a matter of fact, the Members took immense pain in shuttling between the capitals of the two belligerent countries and the headquarters of the OIC. In both countries they were received with great courtesy and cordiality reflecting the fraternal spirit. What was most encouraging was the positive response of leaders of the two countries reflected in the desire expressed by them that they would welcome the termination of the war through the good-offices of the Islamic Goodwill Committee set up by the Third Summit of the OIC.

7.6. The progress made by the middle of May 1981 following the negotiations carried out by the late President Ziaur Rahman

on behalf of the Committee raised a glimmer of hope for an early peaceful settlement and end of the conflict. But, subsequent developments including a change in the government in Iran rendered it necessary to resume the negotiations *de novo*. Recently the possibility of a new peace initiative by Algeria and Kuwait was indicated at the end of the visit of the Algerian President to Kuwait. The experience of Algeria in successfully resolving the American hostage issue underlined the merit of quiet diplomacy. Hopefully, similar success can be achieved in ending this long drawn conflict, thus, halting the bleeding of these two important Islamic countries. However, it is also necessary that the Islamic Goodwill Committee resume and intensify the efforts in carrying out the peace mission entrusted to the Committee by the Summit. If negotiations appear to have stalemated, this high-level Committee in performing its task may find an indirect approach through member-states known to be close to the two belligerent countries useful in carrying forward the negotiations.

7.7. Another important issue addressed by the working session was the 'Jihad'. It sounded a strong note of warning against misconstruction on misinterpretation of the Islamic concept of 'Jihad'. In specifically referring to the declaration of Jihad in recovering Al Quds Al Sharif, in providing support to the Palestinian people, and, regaining the illegally occupied Arab territories, the Resolution stressed that such Jihad must strictly be consistent with the Islamic concept and based on necessary consultations among Islamic states. The modality and institutional arrangements in this case and in other cases where Islamic states find their sovereignty and territorial integrity under external threats, however, remain to be worked out in consultation among the Islamic countries.¹⁹

7.8. On the economic, cultural and educational fronts some of the important steps taken at the working session are reflected in the decision to establish a number of new institutions like (i) The

19. Resolution No 573/P (LS) p. 754.

Standing Committee for Economic and Trade Cooperation, (ii) Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs and (iii) Standing Committee for Scientific and Technical Cooperation to follow up the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Conference in the related fields. Other highlights were strengthening of the Islamic Development Bank and the creation of a Development Fund of \$3 billion. HRH Crown Prince Fahd bin Abdul Aziz moved this proposal from the chair and announced the Saudi contribution of \$1 billion to the fund.²⁰ Subsequently, the following contributions were announced: Kuwait \$500 million, UAE \$ 500 million and Qatar \$300 million.²¹

7.9. Notable among other resolutions with their important impact on stepping up economic cooperation were (i) The creation of a Joint Islamic Shipping Cooperation (ii) Agreement on Promotion, Protection and Guarantee of Investment in member states and (iii) Establishment of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade in Morocco. The new economic institutions established under the Plan of Action for strengthening economic cooperation and assistance to the Least Developed Countries adopted by the Third Summit along with the strengthening of those earlier established such as the Islamic Development Bank and The Islamic Chamber of Commerce are expected to provide further impetus for growing cooperation in various economic fields, such as, food and agriculture, trade, industry, manpower, transport communications, tourism and energy.

7.10. The responsibility of the three Standing Committees, each with 10 Ministers and chaired by the Head of an Islamic state is to draw up programmes for implementation and monitor the progress of implementation in the fields of economic and trade cooperation, scientific and technological cooperation and information and culture. The fact that these standing committees were at the level of Ministers and their Chairmen were Heads of

20. OIC Third Summit *Resolution* No. 1/3:E(IS) p. 777.

21. *Sixth Annual Report*, Islamic Development Bank, p. 29.

State reflected the importance attached by the Summit to the effective implementation of its decisions in these three fields

8.1. In any objective evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the major goals stressed in the Makkah Declaration, it can be asserted that the performance in the economic and cultural fields is marked by steadily increasing success despite the highly adverse repercussion of the current international economic difficulties on the Islamic countries.

8.2. Since the Summit, the Islamic countries continued to suffer from a spiralling inflation in the prices of their imports and a sharp decline in the prices of their exports. Besides, the phenomenal change in the behaviour of the world oil-market depressing both output and price of oil was a great set back for the oil-producing Islamic countries. The economies of the Islamic countries have for historical reasons been almost entirely dependent on the industrialized countries. As a result, the latter continue to be the largest trade partners of the Islamic countries. The flow of trade among the member-states of the OIC (with the exception of petroleum products) is slowly rising, but still remains negligible. The total flow of exports to member countries rose from 6.2 percent in 1970 to 8.4 percent in 1981, and that of imports from 9.2 percent in 1970 to 10.7 percent in 1981.²² However, the growing awareness of the advantages of economic cooperation among the member states sharpened by the prevailing international economic situation, combined with the initiatives taken in the Islamic forums are factors favourable to the development of more effective cooperation and coordination of their industrial and trade policies and also to generation of greater resource-flow for joint-ventures, thus, providing a further fillip to increasing cooperation in agriculture, trade and industry.

8.3. In the meantime the funds provided by the Islamic Development Bank for project financing, technical assistance, foreign

22. Islamic Development Bank, *Seventh Annual Report (1981-1982)* Jeddah, PP. 26-28.

trade financing and operations have increased to US \$ 2,831 million.²³ A rising trend is also observed in the level of aid through Arab/OPEC Aid Agencies.²⁴ The creation of the Consolidated Development Fund of US \$ 3 billion and the adoption of the programme of special assistance to the 16 least developed countries alongwith the programme for strengthening economic co-operation represent important measures aiming especially at assisting the less developed countries to combat poverty and raise the quality of life of the people living below the poverty-line. In the sixteen least developed member states the annual per capita income ranges from \$ 120 to under \$ 300. It is in this grim context that a high priority has been assigned in the Makkah Declaration to economic cooperation in fighting the scourge of poverty. Given the political will on the part of the member states to back up the new action programme in letter and spirit, economic cooperation in its various forms may be expected to gather more momentum in future.

8.4. In contrast, the progress in political cooperation has been faltering, besmirched by discords, dissensions, even armed hostilities and fratricidal wars. The Islamic countries do not appear

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to have moved any closer to the goal of Islamic unity and solidarity adressed in the Makkah Declaration as the key-factor determining the furture of the Ummah. In terms of their strength to safeguard their security, the Islamic Countries appear to be more fragile and vulnerable than ever in a deteriorating international situation marked by a diminishing regard for the rule of

23. *Seventh Annual Report*, Islamic Development Bank 1981-82, p. 51

24. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

law based on justice and morality and an increasing dependence on the use of force. The goal of political cohesion faces a most formidable challenge from the divisive forces. While some of them are domestic and regional in character, others are clearly bound up with global factors beyond their control. Among the latter, the most serious ones stem from the escalating great power rivalry and the resulting ambition for extending their "spheres of influence" and controlling regions and resources perceived by them to be of strategic importance to their geo-political interests.

8.5. Northwithstanding these harsh and disquieting realities, the fact remains that the OIC possesses organically a source of strength that most other international organisations lack. Ideologically the OIC member states are less polarized than, for example, those of the UN and the Non-aligned Movement. The OIC membership is not within the ambit of the direct influence of the great powers; nor is it dependent financially or otherwise on their support in carrying forward its programme. The task before the OIC is essentially one of gearing its political efforts for mobilizing and sustaining the political will of the member states towards greater unity and closer cooperation in achieving the political, economic and other objectives set forth in the Makkah Declaration. An obvious lacunae in the structural framework of the OIC is the absence of an appropriate body to undertake this enormously difficult, delicate and complex task. The OIC does not have a standing political committee comparable to the high level standing committee set up for other fields to follow up the implementation of the decisions of the Islamic Conferences. Besides, the Makkah Declaration also envisages for the OIC a political responsibility of challenging magnitude, namely, securing cooperation between Islamic countries and others in realizing their shared objectives, and, also for conducting meaningful consultations (Shura) among the member-states in countering threats to their security and regaining their territories lost through acts of aggression. This underscores the supreme necessity of a

high-level Standing Committee charged with monitoring the developing international situation, locating and identifying the perceived threats and conducting consultations among the member states,

An obvious lacunae in the structural framework of the OIC is the absence of a high level standing political committee to undertake the enormously difficult, delicate and complex task of steering its political efforts.

and also between them and other states, where necessary, besides intensifying efforts for political cohesion, unity and solidarity, imperative for sustained cooperation among the member states.²⁵

8.6. The decision to establish an Islamic Court of Justice to act "as an arbiter, judge and umpire in all conflicts that may arise between Islamic countries is historic in character, and, may prove to be an important contribution to the peaceful settlement of all disputes and discords, thus, hopefully eliminating or reducing the chances of armed conflicts among member countries. But, the fruitful use of the offices of such a court is primarily dependent on two important factors: (i) the existence of a collective political will and consensus with its moral weight and support expressed in favour of using good offices of such a court and (ii) a machinery to locate and identify the disputes and conduct consultations at an appropriate level before the disputes escalate into armed conflicts.

8.7. Keeping in view this need for a standing political body (brought into a sharp relief by the military invasion of Afghanistan) Bangladesh mooted a proposal at the 11th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Islamabad in September, 1980, for the establishment of a Standing Committee of Islamic Foreign Ministers. The proposal has since been examined in depth and in all aspects by two successive "Experts' Committees." The

²⁵ OIC Third Summit Resolution No. 11/3-P(IS), p. 791.

Second Committee met in Dhaka on 23 January 1981 (after the referral of the proposal to it by the 12th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers) and unanimously supported the proposal: "The Experts agreed that the current international situation underscored the need to strengthen Islamic unity and solidarity. In particular, it was felt that the present framework of the OIC does not provide any institutional set up for speedy consultation and coordination at an appropriately high level. In a rapidly changing world it is imperative to keep the international situation under constant review and evolve a common Islamic position and collective response to assist one or more member states whose stability or security may be threatened due to the emergence of a sudden crisis." The Committee recommended a standing Committee of Foreign Ministers, essentially a monitoring and advisory body of the OIC, composed of 9 representatives of member states (3 from African member states, 3 from Arab member states and 3 from Asian member states) and the Secretary General of the OIC, with the membership rotating among the countries of each region every two years to ensure participation of all. Such a committee would add considerable strength to the political wing of the OIC. The increasing anarchy in international relations and mounting threats to the security of Islamic states have clearly added a great urgency to the need for such a committee. However, if this Committee is to be effective, it should be comparable in its composition and functions to the other three Standing Committees.

8.8. If the hopes and aspirations reflected in the Makkah Declaration are shared by the member states of the OIC, their realization is a task that is far from easy to accomplish. Simultaneously with strengthening the political wing of the OIC through the creation of an appropriate and adequate institutional arrangement for mobilizing and sustaining the political will of the member states to this end, it is essential that efforts in all fields, political, economic and cultural should be coordinated and attuned to this central

objective. As stressed in the Declaration, the most important first step in this direction is the restoration of unity among the

Islam's basic teachings and cultural heritage together constitute a bridge of fraternal unity interlinking the Islamic countries despite differences in political, economic and social system observed to exist among them.

Islamic states and that the foundation of such unity should be sought in Islam's basic teachings and cultural heritage. Together they constitute a bridge of fraternal unity interlinking the Islamic countries despite the differences in political, economic and social systems observed to exist among them. This bridge apparently rendered weak and fragile by the vicissitudes of time and history, is currently held in a tenuous balance by the OIC. In to-day's objective conditions, there is clearly a need to strengthen and broaden it.

8.9. For this purpose, culture has a critical role to play in providing the spiritual, emotional and intellectual inputs. Considering the special emphasis laid by Islam on the acquisition of knowledge and the great lee-way that Islamic countries have to make up in view of rapid advances in nearly all fields of knowledge during the last two centuries, inter-state cooperation in culture and education will naturally have to cope with a formidable challenge. But, high priority needs to be assigned to the wide dissemination of knowledge of the the land and people of the Islamic countries, the present state of such knowledge being utterly unadequate. Equally important is development of study and research involving active participation of all member states (and not limited to the narrow confines of a few localized centres) to deepen the understanding of what constitutes the common Islamic bond—the shared cultural heritage, and, in what manner and to what extent this bond can act as a motive-force

to move widely divergent Islamic states to greater unity and closer cooperation in the contemporary world.

8.10. The focus of such study and research should be on programmes directed to explore and unravel the enduring human, spiritual and intellectual values at the core of the Islamic cultural heritage and interpret them in the context of the dynamics of a changing world and the hopes and aspirations of the member states. It is imperative that the differences inevitable in the thinking and views of scholars do not undermine unity and are informed and inspired by the Islamic values of tolerance and magnanimity. The aim should be to rekindle the creative flame that dispelled the "Dark Ages" and heralded a new era in the history of human civilization through Islam's outstanding and pioneering contributions in arts, science, medicine, engineering and other fields of human endeavour.

8.11. Needless to stress that in order to achieve this objective a concerted and speedy movement in the three interrelated fields—political, economic and cultural—each reinforcing the other, is most desirable. However, past experiences indicate that such a harmonious movement may not be achievable particularly in view of the varying gestation periods for various programmes under implementation. Keeping in view this reality and the complex situation in which the OIC has to function, a good strategy seems to lie in using the fast moving sector as a catalytic agent. For example, if conditions are more favourable to the

A concerted and speedy movement in the three inter-related fields—political, economic and cultural each reinforcing the other—is most desirable. A good strategy, however, seems to lie in using the fast moving sector of them as the catalytic force.

faster growth of cooperation the economic sector (as found to be the case in the foregoing analysis), all possible impetus should

be provided to accelerate the pace of growth of co-operation in this sector. Speedy expansion of economic cooperation to a sufficiently high level, producing visible mutually beneficial results, reducing external dependence and increasing the interdependence of the member states may act as a viable fulcrum for closer political cooperation and greater cohesion and unity among the member states as envisaged in the Makkah Declaration.

8.12. The forthcoming 14th ICFM and the Fourth Summit will no doubt review in detail the progress of the various programmes now underway in the political, economic and cultural fields, address the problems and challenges identified during the last three years in the implementation of the decisions of the Third Summit and the 12th and 13th ICFMs and initiate adequate action including the removal of some of the visible lacuna mentioned in this paper. What is, however, of paramount importance is that the unique opportunity provided by these two high level political forums is fully utilized by the member states to keep alive the spirit of the Makkah Declaration by their renewed commitment to this great charter, a blue-print of the hopes and aspirations of the Islamic countries. Hopefully, the two bodies through their collective wisdom also succeed in charting out a course reflecting the true spirit of this historic Declaration in order to enable the member states to move in unity and cooperation in countering the threats to their political and economic security and in upholding and carrying forward their shared values, goals and ideals.

