

Organization of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) and Prospects of Yemeni Conflict Resolution: Delusion or Plausible Reality

M. Ihsan Qadir and M. Saifur Rehman*

Abstract

The Romans named Yemen 'An Arabian Flex' (Happy Arabia) because of its blossoming rain-fed mountain scenery but the epithet sounds tragically extraneous today. Internal power struggle between various ethno-religious groups and tribes has destabilized the state. This tumultuous situation afforded political and physical space to non-state actors for gaining foot-hold and conducting terrorist activities within and without with impunity. Export of terrorism in the world in general and neighboring states, especially in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in particular, has long term political, social and economic implications for the region. Iran is blamed to be patronizing few terror outfits on sectarian grounds thus adding another dimension to regional instability. Military action initiated by coalition of GCC countries (spearheaded by Saudi Arabia) against sovereign state of Yemen is yet another test for OIC being an inter-governmental organization for resolution of conflicts in Muslim world. This article argues that illusive efforts undertaken by OIC so far in resolving this intra-Muslim world conflict are apocryphal and may pose serious threat to the wanting organization. There is a dire need for adopting a multipronged strategy by OIC for ensuring peace in Arab peninsula as blood never washes the blood.

Keywords: Yemen Conflict, OIC's Involvements, Conflict Resolution, Challenges for OIC

Introduction

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (Arabic: منظمة التعاون الإسلامي) is the second largest *sui generis* intergovernmental organization after United Nation (Hakala & Kettis, 2013) in terms of membership and is mantle of collective voice of the Muslim world which has the mandate to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony. It was established on September 25, 1969 to deal with the emergent situation arising after agonizing event of arson of Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem by an allegedly unbalanced Australian tourist (Hossian, 2012). This watershed event in Muslim history necessitated formulation of an organization for pragmatic handling of any such situation in future. An emergency summit was called by King Hassan of Morocco at Rabat which was attended by 25

*Authors are Ph.D. Scholar and Dean, Faculty of Arts at Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan – KPK – Pakistan.

Muslim states. The Rabat Summit proved stepping stone for establishment of OIC. The membership of the organization expanded with passage of time and today stands at 57 member and 5 observers¹ countries spread over four continents (one-sixth of world land area), constituting 1.5 billion people (one-fifth of world population), possessing 70 per cent of the world energy resources, 40 per cent of the available raw material and combined GDP of about seven trillion dollars (5%) of the world GDP (Siddiqui, 2013). International organizations like League of Arab States, United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and African Union also enjoy observer status in the OIC.

The fledgling organization faced 1st challenge of its existence in 1970 when it encountered Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)-Jordan conflict. Jordan had accommodated large number of Palestinian refugees particularly after 1967 Arab-Israel war and assumed the legitimate role of Palestinian representation for their struggle. However, PLO was concurrently emerging as a force streamlining its struggle against Israeli occupation. This brought PLO face to face with Jordanian government and an armed conflict between PLO and Jordan ensued. Saudi Arabia and Egypt played pivotal role in conflict resolution between both parties. However, OIC just adopted a resolution expressing its appreciation for the efforts of Egypt and Saudi Arabia in seeking to reconcile two of its members². Role played by OIC in resolution of this conflict remained completely murky as no information on mediation has ever been made public till to date.

The OIC encountered second challenge when conflict between Bangladesh (erstwhile East Pakistan) and West Pakistan emerged in 1971. Elections were held in both parts of the country in 1971 and eastern wing politicians (Bengalis) won majority seats in the national assembly however the western part polity (today's Pakistan) refused to hand over power to the legitimate winners. This power struggle led to a civil war in the eastern wing which culminated on dismemberment of Pakistan. OIC launched a mediation initiative and visited Pakistan for resolution of the conflict however could not succeed in interacting with Bengali politicians who had taken refuge in India and India refused the entry of OIC delegation. Thus the initiative failed without any positive outcome. The subsequent efforts of OIC in normalization of bilateral relations did bear some fruit.

¹ Countries having observer status include; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Kingdom of Thailand, Russian Federation and Turkish Cypriot State.

² OIC Resolution 1/3.

Organization of Islamic Co-operation & Prospects of Yemeni Conflict Resolution

Third major challenge faced by the OIC was during Iran-Iraq conflict in early 1980s. This time OIC reacted promptly and launched mediation efforts for resolving the conflict. A goodwill mission headed by Pakistan was formulated in September 1980 with the hope of bringing warring parties to negotiation table (Al-Ahsan, 1988) however mission did not succeed. In continued efforts, mission was reshuffled and renamed as Islamic Peace Committee (IPC) in January 1981. IPC asked belligerents through a summit held in Baghdad to cease fighting. However Iran boycotted the summit on the basis of neutrality of venue and no worthwhile progress could be made as Iran and Iraq both paid no heed to the proposals made by the committee. The biggest sin committed by OIC during Iraq-Iran mediation process was the inclusion of the Iraqi president's statement in its documents considering it to be useful guidance for the organization thus losing credibility as a mediator.

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 posed another great challenge to the Organization. OIC held its 1st ever extraordinary session of Foreign ministers in 1980 and condemned invasion. In post session communiqué, it declared invasion an outright violation of sovereignty of state and suspended membership of USSR installed puppet regime in Afghanistan. It also demanded immediate and total withdrawal of Soviet forces from Islamic state (İhsanoğlu, 2010). Subsequently OIC established a special committee on Afghanistan in 1980 for mediation between Soviet government and Mujahideen for resolution of conflict. However, despite all efforts, OIC could not manage Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan until USSR decided herself to recede due to economic and other geostrategic compulsions. Afghanistan fell in the eye of storm once again when USA invaded the country in post 9/11 scenario in October 2001. OIC, while condemning terrorist attacks on US soil, criticized US aggression and demanded restraint for safety of lives in Afghanistan. However, despite all high level engagements, its hallow whispers were given deaf ear with no plausible results in terms of conflict resolution to celebrate.

This article mainly focuses on the role of OIC in ongoing conflict in Yemen where one Muslim country is blatantly violating the sovereignty of another on the pretext of helping in restoration of an overturned political government and recommends way forward for enhancing its role for effective conflict resolution in world arena.

The Charter and Responsibilities

The charter of the organization was adopted on February 27, 1970 with an initial mandate of liberation of Jerusalem from Zionist's occupation. The

charter encompassed strengthening of Islamic solidarity, cooperation in political, social, cultural, economic and scientific fields and safeguarding of human dignity, independence and national rights of all Muslims residing anywhere in the world. In line with charter contours, OIC has been mandated to deal with a range of issues; peace and conflict resolution, Muslim minority communities issues, women's and children's rights, humanitarian assistance, combating Islamophobia, promotion of intra-OIC trade and investment, cultural exchange and education(Ihsanoğlu, 2010). It employs about 175 professional staff at its headquarters in Jeddah and its 2008 budget was \$22 million³(Petersen, 2012). The Charter also enumerates the principles governing OIC activities:

- Full equality among Member States.
- Support for the right to self determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of member states.
- Support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each member state.
- The settlement of disputes by peaceful means such as negotiations, mediation, conciliation and arbitration.
- A pledge to refrain, in relations among Member states, from resorting to force or threatening to resort to the use of force against the unity and territorial integrity or the political independence of any one of them.

OIC's Past Involvements in Conflicts' Resolution

Organization of the Islamic Conference stands to foster cooperation among Muslim states but its prime objective is to promote Islamic solidarity among member states (Article II A-I). Conflict resolution among member states, therefore, is one of the principal functions of the OIC(Al-Ahsan, 2004).Over the course of recent history, OIC remained involved in conflicts arising within the Islamic world; Jordon-PLO conflict (1970), Pakistan-Bangladesh conflict (1971-74), Iran-Iraq conflict (1980-88), Senegal-Mauritanian conflict (1989), Iraq-Kuwait conflict (1990-91), Afghan civil war (1989 till to date) but failed to amicably resolve any one of these conflicts (Selim, 1997). The anguished states utilized their own political acumen, security resources to control these enigmatic challenges. Over the years, conflicts in Muslim world slowly

³The major contributors to the OIC's budget are: Saudi Arabia (10%), Kuwait (9%), United Arab Emirates (7%), Libya (6%), Iran (5.5%), Malaysia and Turkey (5%) each, Brunei, Indonesia, Qatar (3.5%) each, Algeria 3% and rest of the member provide around 1% as mandatory contribution towards the annual budget of the organization.

Organization of Islamic Co-operation & Prospects of Yemeni Conflict Resolution

transformed into sectarian conflicts becoming a major blow to the concept of Muslim Ummah (community of believers) for which OIC was actually conceived. Sectarian card was skilfully played by extra regional powers to draw a wedge between Muslim states.

Apart from many other causes of disharmony entrenched in varying national interests in geographic and geopolitical terms, Muslim world today stands divided into two distinct sub entities; Shia and Sunnis where both regional players (Saudi Arabia & Iran) are supporting populations of their respective school of thoughts. Both prominent players are culturally most restrictive, socially oppressive and institutionally theocratic (Bradely, 2012) thus 'Middle Eastern Cold War' is continuing since last few decades. In post Arab Spring scenario, sectarian divide beset Iraq, overwhelmed Syria, besieged Libya, inundated Bahrain and beleaguered Yemen. The case of Yemen is vital as military intervention by one member state for restoration of an overturned government in another state is a completely new challenge and siding with either of the member will create further internal divisions within the Muslim world.

Yemeni Conflict – Brief Historic Perspective

Saudi Arabia and Yemen are two neighbouring Muslim Arab states sharing; long border (1800 Km), history, culture, language and traditions. Like most of the Arab states, Yemen has tribal social make up and is divided into many clans', cliques and kinfolds. The topography of the state is mainly mountainous being impenetrable with extremely harsh weather. The sectarian division is very pronounced in the country as northern part is dominated by Shia majority (Zaidi Shias, a sub branch of main Shia sect commonly known as Houthis⁴) whereas southern region is controlled by Sunnis. For much of 20th century Northern (Yemen Arab Republic (YAR)) and Southern parts (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY)) have existed as independent countries however, both states unified in 1990. Since unification, internal stability has remained volatile as southerners soon began complaining of political and economic marginalization by the government and fought a civil war in 1994 in a failed attempt to reverse the merger. Internal instability, large-scale displacement, weak governance, corruption, resource depletion and poor infrastructure have hindered social development in Yemen being the poorest country in Middle East (BBC News, 2015). The internal turmoil resulted

⁴The Houthis take their name from Hussein Badr al-Din al-Houthi who led the group's first uprising in 2004 in an effort to win greater autonomy for their heartland of Saada province, and also to protect Zaidi religious and cultural traditions from perceived encroachment by Sunni Islamists.

in overall lawlessness creating no-go pockets for state security forces which were ill-equipped and undermanned. The security vacuum provided space for non-state actors (Al-Qaida & ISIS) to establish a strong foothold and operated with impunity. Since unification, Yemen has witnessed six major rounds of fighting between the state and various anti-state groups especially Houthis in the north, separatist unrest in the south; frequent attacks by Al-Qaida in Arab Peninsula (AQAP) and power struggles between tribal and military factions.

The geostrategic location of Yemen is extremely vital as the country strides along the strategic shipping lane of Bab Al-Mandib on the confluence of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden from where most of the oil for the West is transported through 20,000 ships annually (Gardner, 2015). This makes Yemen crucially important for the West and any disturbance in this area, especially in the maritime domain, would hit the Western prosperity and way of life. The continued presence of Western naval ships around this critical choke point on one pretext or the other (piracy, drug transportation and human smuggling etc) is testimony of this assertion. Saudi Arabia, being one of the leading oil exporters, has a reason to be worried from unrest in Yemen. She has long claimed that smugglers from Yemen provide explosives and weapons used by radical Islamists who carry out terrorist attacks in the kingdom (Bradely, 2012) thus disturbing the kingdom's internal security and law & order.

Where Does the Conflict Stand Today?

Mr Ali Abdullah Saleh became president of unified Yemen on May 22, 1990 and ruled for almost 33 (including 11 years as president of PDRY) years. He stepped down from power on 27 February 2012 because of the protests caused by Arab Spring. After his unceremonious exit, his Vice President AbdRabbuh Mansur Hadi acceded to power. Since the beginning of 2012, various groups especially the northern Houthis, became very active and started marching towards the south for control of power. Many other groups including few Al-Qaida affiliates rode the bandwagon. Targeted killings and bombings became order of the day descending the state into a violent cauldron. Houthis' spectacular blitzkrieg enjoyed alleged support of Iran which shifted the conflict into a sectarian realm. Though rebels deny Iranian involvement but their senior figures have been seen in Qom⁵ (Gardner, 2015). In an attempt to control the emerging situation, President Hadi announced the plan to restructure the power dispensation and declared Yemen as a federation of six regions. However, Houthis did not agree with the new power structure which stalled the

⁵ Qom is a central city of Iran housing a sprawling seminary where religious education for the Shia branch of Islam is imparted. Many of the Shia clergymen of the world are graduates of this religious institution.

Organization of Islamic Co-operation & Prospects of Yemeni Conflict Resolution

reconciliation process. Reportedly, ex president Saleh was behind Houthis coup d'état through his loyal forces (Salisbury, 2015). The emerging scenario was being carefully watched by Saudis forcing them to believe that external support to Houthis (by Iran) was an undeniable reality. Their argument was centred on as how a rag-tag impoverished group managed to take over most parts of Yemen, who was providing sophisticated weapons and high class military training? Saudi Arabia became suspicious of neighbourhood development and conceived it as encirclement attempt by proxies of Iran; Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and latest in Yemen. This became a turning point in the conflict's history which pre-empted Saudi airstrikes. However, Iran since beginning of airstrikes has vehemently denied any involvement in internal affairs of Yemen and professed to resolve the conflict through peaceful means.

The incumbent president (Hadi) once felt loss of his relevance in the overall political framework of the state requested Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to help in restoring peace and tranquillity in Yemen. In response to this request, on 25 March 2015, Saudi Arabia, spearheading nine Arab States, started air strikes on Yemen heralding intervention code name 'Operation Decisive Storm' (Al-ArabiyaNews, 2015). The Saudi-led intervention has political and military support of USA as actionable intelligence is being provided to Saudi Arabia on regular basis. The biggest danger in the looming situation is that if Saudi Arabia and GCC countries are drawn into the conflict as one party and Iran as another cantankerous participant for a long, the conflict risks getting exponentially worse and would rage for years. As the battle lines of the conflict are extremely blurred, following a successful exit strategy would be a real challenge for the interveners. As per UN and WHO estimates nearly 2000 people have been killed and over 8000 wounded in the conflict from 25 March 2015 (Dawn, 2015) to 6 June 2015 (till this writing). State infrastructure has been mostly destroyed forcing over half a million to become Internally Displaced (Oxfam Estimate) facing severe shortages of food, water, fuel and medical supplies.

Role of OIC in Yemen Conflict

Since the start of Saudi-led airstrikes, Muslim countries have been asking OIC to intervene as mediator for bringing peace and normalcy in Yemen. It is a historic opportunity for OIC for de-stigmatizing itself of being a moribund organization. However, present Secretary General, Iyad Ameen Madani, hailing from Saudi Arabia, has supported Saudi-led intervention in Yemen which has harmed neutrality of the organization. His recent outburst of blaming Houthis for the civil war and claiming that military action was necessary for saving Yemen from 'the chaos unleashed by the Houthi group

and its repercussions for the entire region' (Estimo, 2015) added fuel to the fire. He further asserted that Houthis previously scuttled national dialogue, peace agreements and truncated Gulf initiative on peaceful transfer of power supported by OIC(Ian, 2015) citing it as justification for supporting Saudi intervention. In the same vain he reiterated that OIC rejects any outside intervention in Yemen which could undermine internationally recognized legitimacy of the state as stipulated in OIC's charter(Ian, 2015).It is feared that with this kind of unbalanced approach, the likelihood of Houthis of coming to negotiating table seems farfetched possibility. This parochial and prejudiced approach, if continued, would make OIC hostage of political bickering in whole Muslim world promoting additional fissures on sectarian lines thus loosing relevance in all future conflicts as a mediating body.

Despite the tough stance taken in favour of Saudi intervention, OIC's Secretary General expressed hope on 13 May 2015 that a ministerial level meeting to discuss the Yemen situation will be held soon as requested by incumbent President of Yemen(AI-Kohtani, 2015). The member states were invited to attend 42nd Council of Foreign Ministers (CFMs) meeting in Kuwait which was held on 27-28 May 2015. Agenda of the meeting included; appraisal of situation in Palestine, Syria, Yemen and Libya, fight against international terrorism and Islamophobia. Post conference communiqué signified no positive development with respect to Yemeni conflict as the chair (Emir of Kuwait) defended Saudi-led airstrikes alleging it as a reactionary step against Houthis and their allies who 'threatened our security and captured power by force'.

In parallel, efforts have been launched by UN for resolution for the conflict. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon asked for holding a meeting on May 28, 2015 for restoring momentum toward a Yemeni-led political transition process. Prior to this, on April 14, 2015 UN Security Council adopted resolution 2216 (2015) demanding Houthis to withdraw from all areas seized during the latest conflict, relinquish arms seized from military and security institutions, cease all actions falling exclusively within the authority of the legitimate Government of Yemen and fully implement previous Council resolutions. However, the UN sponsored meeting was postponed just four days prior to the scheduled date citing no particular reason causing a serious setback to the fledgling peace process before start.

Why OIC has not been a Success Story in Conflicts' Resolution?

The world has geopolitically changed since inception of OIC in 1969. Accordingly, demands and expectations of Muslim world have also changed thus mandating expansion and redefining role of OIC as the Organization has

Organization of Islamic Co-operation & Prospects of Yemeni Conflict Resolution

almost never been able to resolve conflicts. The OIC has placed itself in an impossible position and faces a schism between declared ideals and reality and has mostly operated with defensive mindset (Akbarzadeh & Connor, 2005). Organization's over fixation with anti Israel agenda and prophecy for unity of Muslim Ummah has brought it to dead end. In order to meet the ideals of political harmony, socio-economic uplift, cultural integration and advanced scientific knowledge for member states, OIC charted 10 years action plan on June 19, 2006. The plan encompassed key objectives of enhancing Islamic solidarity, projection of soft image of Islam, economic stability, combating violence and peaceful resolution of conflicts amongst the member states. However, honest analysis of the so called action plan shows that most of the objectives could not be realised as soaring political and economic instability in member states looms at large. The widening of regional, sectarian, ethnic and economic divisions among the Muslims has further aggravated the crisis in the Muslim world (Satti, 2013). During majority of Organization's summits held in last four and a half decades, there has always been resonance of conflicts and disputes confronted by member states however action has been mostly limited to passing of high-sounding resolutions with no tangible results ever achieved. The credibility of the organization was further dented by its inaction against massacre of Muslims in Kosovo, Chechnya, Myanmar (ongoing), Bosnia and Somalia in recent past. Its failure in resolution/mediation in long standing Afghan conflict and prevention of invasion of Libya and Iraq by USA are few sad examples. The ongoing Syrian crisis is yet another manifestation of its inaction and ineffectiveness. The recent crises emerging out of Arab Spring phenomena have also not seen any discernable role played by OIC for peaceful resolution of intra-Muslim world crisis. In nutshell, OIC has failed to live up to the warranted expectations during turmoil and tribulation in its member states and has even lost relevance in political landscape of the world. It is pity that second largest transnational organization in the world is less effective than many smaller regional organizations (Satti, 2013) in terms of conflicts' resolution.

There are many reasons for OIC's unsuccessful role in conflict resolution. Firstly, lack of clear framework for dealing with issues of compatibility between other international organizations. Secondly, the conservative brand of Islam professed by its leading member states. Thirdly, organization's over emphasis on national sovereignty has precluded having authority as an effective supra-national body (Kayaoglu, 2013). Fourthly, duplication of mediation⁶ efforts with other regional and international organizations having similar mediatory role

⁶Out of 57 OIC members states, 27 are also members of the African Union, 22 countries are members of the Arab League, and 7 are members of both Arab League and African Union.

leads to conflict of interest and competition for loyalties (Sharqieh, 2012). Non existence of strong political will of member states in the field of conflict resolution is another serious impediment for OIC. Mistrust and Real politik by few major member states is a real hindrance in organizational success as there are different sub-blocks within the organization which safeguard interests of their allies. The lack of unity amongst its diverse member states especially in Arab world is another serious challenge faced by OIC. Economic inequality of the member state is major cause of fissiparous propensities as few Gulf Sheikhdoms are extremely prosperous in comparison to few extremely poor members of African continent. The economic inequalities and varying priorities of richer Muslim nations have seriously affected Muslim unity in general and in OIC in particular.

OIC faces monumental challenges today. Its challenges are wide-ranging; political, security, economic, education, science and technology, media, structural and charter inadequacies etc. Out of these challenges analysis has been restricted to conflict resolution aspect of the Organization for remaining within the scope of this article as set-forth in the beginning. In this context, major challenges with respect to conflict emergence and resolution are as under:

- Injustice and desperation giving rise to extremist proclivities amongst Muslims
- Issue of illegal occupation of Muslim lands
- Oppression of Muslim minorities living in non Muslim countries.
- Soul searching for establishing causes of rampant conflicts in Muslim world

Way Forward

For resolution of above stated challenges OIC needs to adopt proactive approach rather than being reactive to the situation. This can only be achieved by forceful representation of Muslim world in all world forums. Prevalent desperation of member states against OIC can only be alleviated by enhancing its role on collective basis because selective approach as being presently pursued is damaging organization more than any gain. Actions with respect to reduction of Islamophobia by OIC are praiseworthy purporting true image of Islam. Formal and informal sessions for conveying this aspect on different world forums and bodies are required to be undertaken. This will help non-Muslim world in understanding correct perspective of Islam and causes of extremism in Muslim societies which are generally entrenched in social injustice both within and without. Formation of a think tank consisting of renowned academicians, lawyers and unbiased political leaders of high

Organization of Islamic Co-operation & Prospects of Yemeni Conflict Resolution

stature from Muslim world is one option as this group may be able to effectively represent Muslim world at all world forums.

International Islamic Court of Justice (IICJ) established in 1984 may be made more effective body for resolution of intra-Muslim world conflicts by expanding its scope and compulsive binding of its decisions on the member states. The pragmatic approach for conflict resolution will free member states from the clutches of United Nations. It is strongly recommended that OIC may establish an independent Conflict Analysis and Resolution Centre (CA&RC) for focused attention to all prevalent conflicts in the Muslim world. The Centre may work in close liaison and coordination with other international bodies and renowned think tanks. For implementation of decisions taken by OIC, a joint Muslim force in lines with NATO may be raised. Contribution of wherewithal can be made mandatory on member states which will intensify collective security. Militarily powerful member states may take lead role in this initiative. A common foreign policy is another option for conflict avoidance.

The protracted history of OIC has been marred with internal disparities, disagreements and mutual trust deficit amongst its member states. Organization has been unable to unify the Muslim world into a single whole and its members are frequently at each other's throats (Jaynes, 2001). Therefore OIC has to drop the concept of unified Ummah as internal incongruities and divergent national interests of the states would not let it materialize. This may sound odd but is the hard reality of life in present day world. Organization has to pragmatically act as a binding force thus needs to liberalize its charter and act as an international organization like its other contemporaries well above the religious orientations.

Prevailing poverty in majority Muslim countries is the major cause of problems including terrorism and inter and intrastate conflicts. It is common knowledge that national economies grow rapidly when the nation-states increase regional trading with each other. However, the differences in the economic and social structures of the OIC states hinder economic integration (Guveli & Kilickapan, 2000). Poverty alleviation through increased intra-Muslim states trading should be the major focus of OIC. This can be achieved by economic integration and corporate interaction within Muslim world as a first step. The integration with world economies can only be fruitful once Muslim world gains compatible economic strength for avoiding trade deficits.

OIC runs its affairs through mandatory contributions from member states as highlighted earlier and same needs substantial increase for undertaking meaningful projects and effective operations. Increase in contribution would

provide economic freedom to the organization for induction of capable staff for offering better service and delivery both.

OIC is facing leadership crises, it's so called successful role in resolution of two conflicts (PLO-Jordan & Pakistan-Bangladesh conflict) can be attributed to effective leadership of former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tengku Abdul Rahman who used his personal influence and diplomatic skills to draw conflicting parties to negotiating table. The impartiality exhibited by towering personalities of the past like King Faisal and Gamal Abdul Nasir played vital role in mediation efforts by OIC which is completely amiss in present day political leadership of Muslim world.

Lastly, the greatest challenge faced by OIC is political will to implement decisions taken by its various components. Organization will remain impotent till this shortcoming is not made good. The operating processes and procedures may be simplified for quick and timely decision making.

Conclusion

The recently emerged Conflict in Yemen poses great challenge to Muslim world. Usurping of sovereignty of one Muslim state by another is heartrending dire manifestation of 'Bush Doctrine', repeating the depraved precedence in international system thus exacerbating conflict resolution possibilities in the world. OIC was conceived as an intergovernmental organization to resolve intra and inter Muslim world conflicts however the organization has faced serious challenges since inception and remained constrained in delivery. The present challenge of Yemeni conflict is extremely serious in nature but OIC has not been very effective in handling the emerging situation. The steps taken so far have been mere lip service by passing resolutions and demanding restraint. The main reason for inaction is its toothlessness as it is devoid of effective means (political will and military resource) for implementation of decisions. Under these circumstances possibility of any effective role being played by OIC in Yemeni conflict seems farfetched possibility. On other fronts like economy, health, science & technology and good governance, OIC has done better job which needs to be acknowledged. The good work done by OIC can be only taken further by capacity building of this organization. As a mediating body, maintaining of neutrality is of prime importance which affords credibility and OIC has to be mindful of this aspect and should not repeat previous blunders in case of Yemeni conflict as well.

Organization of Islamic Co-operation & Prospects of Yemeni Conflict Resolution

End Notes:

Akbarzadeh, S., & Connor, K. (2005). The Organization of Islamic Conference: Sharing an Illusion. *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XII, No. 2, Summer 2005, pp. 72-92.

Al-Ahsan, A. (2004). Conflict Among Muslim Nations: Role of the OIC in conflict Resolution. *Intellectual Discourse*, Vol 12, No 2, 137-157.

Al-Ahsan, A. (1988). *The Organization of the Islamic Conference: An Introduction to an Islamic Political Institution*. Herndon, VA: IIIT.

Al-ArabiyaNews. (2015, March 25). Saudi 'Decisive Storm' waged to save Yemen. Retrieved May 2015, 17, from Al Arabiya News.com: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/03/26/GCC-states-to-repel-Houthi-aggression-in-Yemen-statement-.html>

Al-Kohtani, S. (2015, March 27). OIC supports military action in Yemen. Retrieved May 23, 2015, from Arabnews.com: <http://www.arabnews.com/news/723946>

BBCNews. (2015, March 26). *Yemen Crisis: Who is fighting Whom?* Retrieved May 17, 2015, from bbc.com: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29319423>

Bradely, J. R. (2012). *After the Arab Spring: How Islamists Hijacked the Middle East Revolts*. New York: Plagave Macmillan.

Dawn. (2015, June 1). *Houthis in Secret Talks with US*, Vol. LXIX No 151, *Karachi Edition*, 12. (Z. Abbas, Ed.) Karachi, Pakistan.

Estimo, R. C. (2015, May 13). OIC appeals for \$32m Yemen aid. Retrieved May 24, 2015, from Arabnews.com: <http://www.Arabnews.com/featured/news/746271>

Gardner, F. (2015, March 25). *Yemen Crisis: An Iranian-Saudi Battleground*. Retrieved May 17, 2015, from BBC.Com: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32044059>

Guardian. (2011, March 22). Arab spring: An Interactive Timeline of Middle East Protests. London.

Guveli, A., & Kilickapan, S. (2000). A ranking of Islamic countries in terms of their levels of socio-economic development. *Journal of Economic Cooperation* 21, 97-114 , 97-114.

Hakala, P., & Kettis, A. (2013). *The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation: Defined – for better and worse - by its religious dimension*. Brussels: European Union.

Hossian, I. (2012). *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. XXIX, No. 1 .

Hossian, I. (2012). The Organization Of Islamic Conference (OIC): Nature, Role and the Issues. *Journal of Third World Studies*, Vol. XXIX, No. 1 , 287-314.

Ian. (2015, March 27). *OIC concerned over Yemen situation*. Retrieved May 24, 2015, from Business-standard.com: http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/oic-concerned-over-yemen-situation-115032700638_1.html

Ihsanoğlu, E. (2010). *The Islamic World in the New Century: The Organization of Islamic Conference, 1969-2009*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Jaynes, J. (2001). Transnational Religious Actors and International Politics. *Third World Quarterly*, No 22 , 152.

Kayaoglu, T. (2013). *A Rights Agenda for the Muslim World? The Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Evolving Human Rights Framework*. Doha (Qatar): Brooking Doha Centre Analysis Paper No 6.

Petersen, M. J. (2012). *Islamic or Universal Human Rights: The OIC's Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission* . Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 46-47.

Salisbury, P. (2015, March 26). *Yemen's Former President Ali Abdullah Saleh Behind Houtis Rise*. Retrieved May 17, 2015, from FinancialTimes.com: <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/dbbc1ddc-d3c2-11e4-99bd-00144feab7de.html#axzz3aOYiyhFK>

Satti, A. H. (2013). *OIC and Challenges Confronting the Muslim Ummah in 21st Century*. Retrieved June 1, 2015, from muslim-institute.org: <http://www.muslim-institute.org/PublicationDetail?publication=81/OIC-&-Challenges-Confronting-the-Muslim-Ummah-in-21st-Century->

Organization of Islamic Co-operation & Prospects of Yemeni Conflict Resolution

Selim, M. E.-S. (1997). The Organisation of Islamic Conference: Towards a new agenda. In *OIC: Contemporary Issues of the Muslim World*. Rawal Pindi, Pakistan: Foundation for Research on International Environment, National Development and Security (FRIENDS).

Sharqieh, I. (2012). Can the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Resolve Conflicts. *Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol 19, No 2 , 219-236.

Siddiqui, T. (2013). OIC – Retrospect and Prospects. *Criterion Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No 3.

