

① Current Affairs

Topic: Organisations

Q. Muslim Ummah has failed to unite under one roof. Leadership and Internal divides have contributed in turning the Muslim world into shambles at OIC Level. Discuss the failures of OIC and how it can play a role in uniting the Muslim Ummah in the future?

Answer

1. Introduction

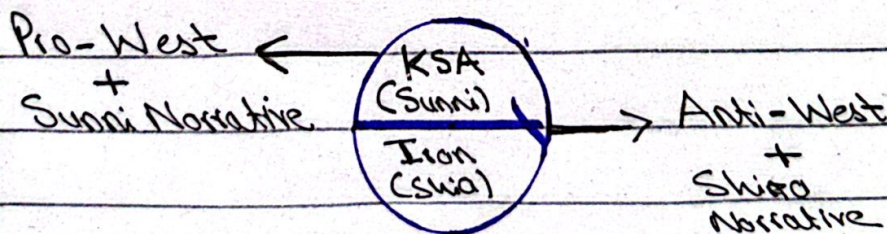
The Muslim Ummah has been facing multiple crisis in the recent years but the collective crisis has not contributed in providing a collective effort with a united front.

In recent times the Iraq invasion of 2003, rising Islamophobia especially since 9/11, Palestine-Israel Conflict (Ongoing till date),

Syria was (still), persecution of Muslim minorities in China and Myanmar have not seen a united response from Muslim states. The Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was founded in 1969 with the aim of acting as a collective voice for Muslims and protecting interests for the Muslim world. Yet, despite having 57 member states it has failed in achieving its objectives by far.

2. The Muslim Ummah Divide

a) KSA vs Iran



Cold War of the Islamic World

The historic divide within two major Muslim nations: KSA

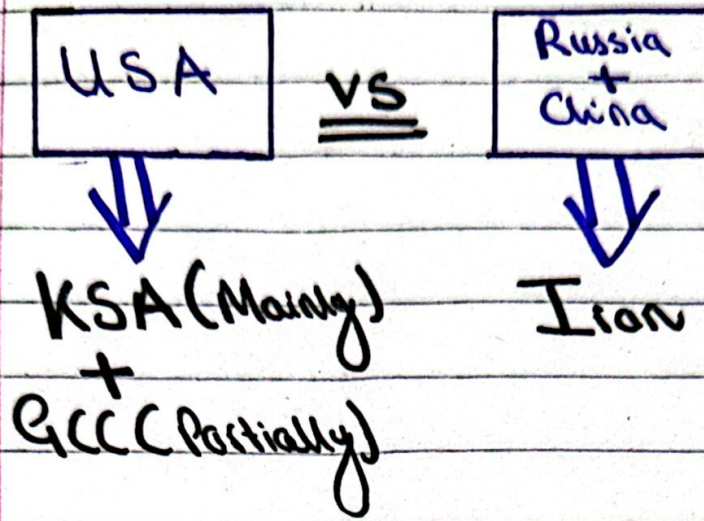
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and Iran has divided the Muslim Ummah on sectarian lines. Dr. P. H. H. in his book refers to it as the Cold War between Saudi Arabia and Iran for supremacy. The supremacy is the desire for being the regional hegemon and the means to attain that is the religious ideology war between the Sunni School of thought and Shia School of thought. The major divide was observed after the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and Iran's expansionist goals. The cold war has resulted in bloc politics within the Muslim world where Iran utilizes Axis of Resistance (proxies) to counter USA influence leading to conflicts and divisioning.

b) External Influences and Alliances

The KSA - Iran divide has allowed external players to influence and exploit the Muslim world by formally and informally aligning with one of the two players leading

Further polarisation.



USA, historically has had strong ties with USA and weaker ties with Iran since the fall of Shah in 1979. Today, due to Israel-USA nexus, US find Iran as a major enemy.

Given the current global dynamics and emerging US vs China-Russia international dynamics, Iran's ties with Russia and China have grown. In 2023 Iran sold drones to Russia which were utilized in Russia-Ukraine conflict. Moreover, China is purchasing oil and gas from Iran despite sanctions.

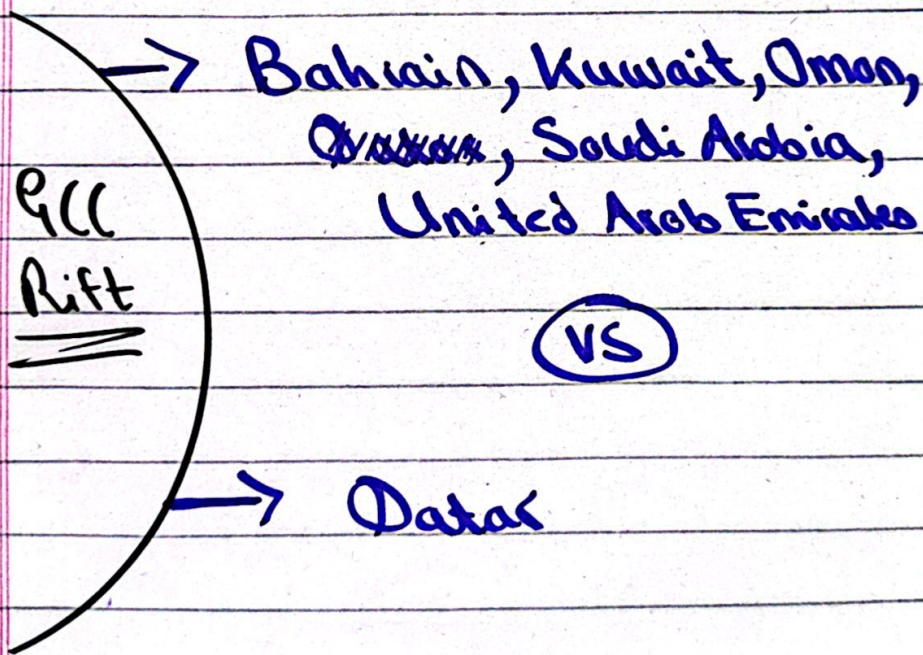
The alignments indicate external influence in the Muslim world which

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Further exacerbates the situation.

c) 5/6 GCC vs Qatar (2017-2021)

Due to diplomatic failure and internal rift, 5 countries of GCC imposed a blockade on Qatar in 2017 which continued till 2021 indicating weakness of Muslim organisations despite the concept of economic interdependence existing.



d) Abraham Accords - Indication of Muslim Ummah Divide

In 2020, 4 muslim countries: ~~Qatar~~ Bahrain, Sudan,

Morocco and U.A.E recognised Israel which defied the united Muslim stance against Israel's illegal occupation within Palestinian territory.

The Abraham Accords, mediated by US, undermined the Muslim stance on Palestine issue as the leaders of the four nations made a shift.

3. The Failures of OIC

a) Inability to Resolve Key Conflicts

Despite being the world's 2nd largest intergovernmental organisation, the OIC has failed to resolve the key conflicts which have engulfed the Muslim world indicating its value as only a "Debating Forum".

Failed IN :

Syria War (2011)

Palestine - Israel Conflict (1948 onwards)
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Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar

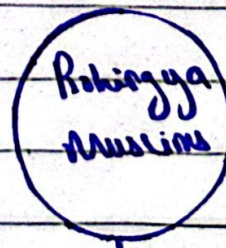
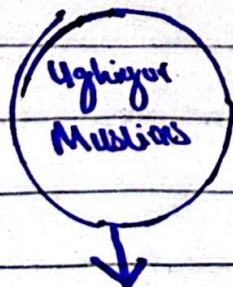
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b) Failed to Combat Islamophobia

Since 9/11, Islamophobia has been growing globally. OIC which stated that its objective is to safeguard Muslims has failed to combat rising Islamophobia successfully. OIC has ^{been} lobbying against Islamophobia and also moved a UN resolution but no meaningful impact has been witnessed.

c) Inability to Protect Muslim Minorities in Non-Muslim Majority States

OIC has played no major role to protect Muslim minorities from persecution. Despite discussing the topic no major step has been taken to resolve the prevailing issue.



Persecuted in
China

Persecuted in
Myanmar

Other than talks no major action or collective effort was observed that defines the power of OIC in protecting Muslims.

4. Prospects for OIC in uniting the Muslim Ummah

a) Strengthening Institutional Mechanism to Increase Effectiveness

The OIC needs to strengthen its institutional mechanism to increase effectiveness. By developing mechanisms OIC can effectively resolve conflicts among member states through creation of mediation and arbitration body within the organisation to unite the Muslim member states and resolve disputes.

b) Enhancing Unity and Cooperation Among Member States

There is a major need of building consensus on key issues which require collective effort such as the Palestine case and countering

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Islamophobia. The division of stance on major issues due to lack of consensus contributes to the failure of OIC and weakened unity among Muslim Ummah. Promoting economic cooperation among OIC states could allow establishing the foundation for broader political and diplomatic collaboration. This could include trade agreements and joint investment projects allowing stronger ties and reduced external influences.

C) Adopting Proactive Advocacy and Diplomacy

OIC needs to adopt a proactive approach towards advocacy and diplomacy. It needs to take a leading role in combating Islamophobia by engaging with international organisations and governments. Through the launch of OIC global awareness campaigns and by lobbying anti-discriminatory legislation this could be achieved. In addition, by forming coalitions and

leveraging diplomatic pressure, and by providing collective humanitarian aid OIC can protect Muslim minorities as per initial vision.

5. Conclusion

At present the Muslim ummah stands divided on highly important issues. The Palestine-Israel war has potential to spread across Middle East posing a potential horror. Countering the threats and rising discrimination against Muslims requires uniting the Muslim Ummah under OIC through reaching consensus, creating economic interdependence, reducing influence of Non Muslim states and by adopting a proactive diplomatic approach.