

21st CONFERENCE
OF OIC FOREIGN MINISTERS

SPEECH AS LEADER OF DELEGATION OF
ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF EUROPE LONDON

Karachi

April 1993

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Mr. Chairman respected Foreign Ministers, delegates, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I deem it an honour and a privilege to address this august gathering. The Muslim Ummah today is confronted with a host of gruesome challenges. We are meeting at a time when Bosnia is being fractured and its Muslim people, men, women and children brutally butchered and annihilated. We are meeting at a time when Kashmir is bleeding and the whole State of Jammu and Kashmir is burning. We are meeting at a time when Armenian forces are attacking our brothers and sisters in Azerbaijan and grabbing parts of their homeland, following in the footsteps of the Serbs of Bosnia. We are meeting at a time when the whole of Palestine is on fire and over four hundred innocent Palestinians have been deported with impunity by Israel flouting all norms of international behaviour. We are meeting at a time when Somalia is in the grip of famine and starvation and whole of Africa is being haunted once again by shadows of neo-colonialism. We are meeting at a time when Muslims are suffering in Burma, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Tajikistan and some parts of Russian federation. We are meeting at a time when Afghanistan after liberating itself from Soviet Russia's occupation is still faced with domestic de-stabilisation and threats of civil war. We are meeting at a time when an imaginary Frankenstein of Islamic fundamentalism has been blown up by the Western media and political vested interests. We are meeting at a time when the carcass of the "Rushdi conspiracy" is being resuscitated and the "Satanic Verses" are going to be used once again for maligning Islam and the Muslims.

This is a grim situation and it calls for firm and courageous response from the Islamic Ummah. The Foreign Ministers of the Muslim countries owe a great obligation to the Islamic Ummah. They must address themselves seriously to all these issues and come up with positive response we must move away from verbal platitudes and lifeless resolutions. The Muslim people in general and the over thirty five million Muslims living in Europe in particular are shocked at the immobility of the Muslim countries who are supposed to be at the steering wheel of the Islamic Ummah. As representative of the Islamic Council of Europe I would like to convey the feeling of the Muslims, being in non-Muslim land* that they expect their leadership to adopt a realistic and meaningful approach to the problems of the Islamic Ummah. I would like to make a few suggestions for the consideration of the Foreign Ministers and other organs and institutions of the O.I.C.

1. A task force should be established under the Organization of Islamic Conference to study in-depth the challenges that confront the Islamic Ummah and prepare a master plan for facing those challenges. This plan should be so formulated as also to pin-point responsibility for implementation on different governments, organizations and institutions. The Muslim leadership must realize that if it is not prepared to respond positively to the challenges and fulfill the aspirations of the Islamic Ummah

this cannot but pave the way for fundamental upheavals in the world of Islam. Either -we face the challenges and change ourselves to fulfill the hopes and needs of the Ummah otherwise it would not be possible to stop the forces of history to have their revenge.

2. As far as Bosnia is concerned, the hypocrisy and duplicity of the Western powers and weaknesses and immobility of the Muslim countries has disappointed the Muslim people all over the world. The slaughter of Muslims in Bosnia continues unabated. The dateline given by OIC (15th January 1993) has long passed and nothing worthwhile has come as a fresh initiative from the Muslim world. What is at stake is the very existence of the Muslims not only in Bosnia Herzegovena but the future of around 18 million Muslims in the Balkans. If genocide of the Muslims cannot be stopped in Bosnia Herzegovena, the same tragedy is going to be repeated tomorrow in Kosovo, in Sandjaq, in Macedonia and even in Albania and Hungary, As Islamic Council of Europe, we implore the Muslim Foreign Ministers to take a firm decision on this issue and take it now. Minimum that is expected of the Muslim Ummah on this issue is:
 - i. A categorical declaration that as the illegitimate embargo on supplies to Bosnia, the victim of aggression, has not been lifted so far the Muslim World would openly violate it and ensure enough supplies of defence where-withal to the Bosnian Muslims.
 - ii. Joint military intervention by Muslim countries to protect the lives of innocent men, women and children to Bosnia. Let us take decision in this conference and let the initiative be taken by Pakistan, Turkey and Iran and others to form a joint force and also invite all peace-loving countries of the world to participate in the joint force to protect the lives of the people of Bosnia Herzegovena and the sovereignty of this brotherly state. This force should operate under the OIC and the U.N. if the U.N. is prepared to fulfill its obligation. But if the U.N. fails, OIC must not.
 - iii. Moral, material and political support of the people of Bosnia Herzegovena.
3. Indian aggression in Kashmir and use of state machinery to perpetrate terror and repression upon innocent people has crossed all limits of tolerance. During the last three years over 30,000 people have been martyred, over 55,000 wounded or incapacitated, some 15,000 people have been burnt alive; over 3,300 women have been gang-raped, of who 175 died during this heinous act. Over 35,000 people are

under detention without trials. Some 25,000 schools, houses and shops have been burnt. Indian terror machine swings in full force and there is no end to the of the people of Jammu and Kashmir whose only crime is that they are asking for the fulfillment of the commitments made to them by India, Pakistan and the United Nations for their right of self- determination. International humanitarian and aid agencies and human right groups and media-men have not been allowed even to visit the State of Jammu and Kashmir. India has refused to respect the norms of international behaviour and her own commitments. Mere verbal condemnation is not enough. We urge the Muslim countries to initiate economic boycott of India and impose economic sanctions against her till she stops violation of human rights in Kashmir and agrees to hold a free and fair plebiscite under international supervision as laid down and agreed to in the UN resolutions. All possible diplomatic pressure must be exerted to achieve this objective.

4. A peace mission should be sent to Afghanistan to help them resolve their internal problems and protect them against international machinations to de-stabilize Afghanistan.
5. Warning should be given to the government of Tajekistan over repression and persecution that has been unleashed upon the Muslims of Tajekistan. All possible humanitarian aid should be provided to over 200,000 Tajek refugees in impoverished Afghanistan.
6. As far as the Palestinian issue is concerned it is not merely the concern of the Palestinian people, but of the entire Muslim Ummah. We must not forget that Al-Aqsa is the central concern of the OIC ever since it came into existence. It is important that the Muslim countries should come out with a firm stand on their issue. Efforts are being made to liquidate the issue along with liquidating the Palestinian people. Israel has totally disregarded the UN resolutions. The only answer lies in the unity of the Muslim countries and joint action against Israel. The people of Palestine have proved through Intifadah that they can challenge the Israeli hegemony, even though they are armless. Now it is the time to help them and also put external pressure on Israel with a view to get vacation of its occupation of Palestine.
7. There is a need to establish special task forces to attend to other major problems including the Western threat to declare Muslim countries one after the other terrorist states. There is also an urgent need to warn the Western world in unequivocal terms that western onslaughts on Islamic faith, culture and history like the one made by Rushdi in the Satanic Verses cannot be tolerated. Fresh encouragement that is being given to the central actor in this drama by the French,

German and British governments deserve to be taken note of with great seriousness. The message must be conveyed that the Muslim Ummah will not tolerate these western onslaughts on Islam. This conference should ensure implementation of the earlier OIC resolutions on this issue and convey to the Western countries and all anti- Islamic lobbies the serious commitment of the Muslim Ummah to strike back in response to all such onslaughts.

The Muslim people want to live in peace and amity with all people of the world but if aggression against Islam is not stopped it is bound to produce effective retaliation. We have proposed this in the past and reaffirm that there must be universal protocol to protect the honour of all prophets of God and of all religions of the world. It is height of savagery to hurl abuses and insults on those great leaders of mankind who had been instrumental for spreading virtue and piety throughout history. Those who are trying to destroy the image of these benefactors of mankind are the real enemies of society and civilization.

I take this opportunity to thank the organizers for giving us this opportunity to share with you the thoughts and feelings of the Muslim people in general and of the Muslims living in Europe in particular.
