**The OIC and Afghanistan**

**[Imran Malik](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/imran-malik)**

December 24, 2021

Pakistan’s Foreign Office has done a commendable job by hosting the KSA inspired OIC Foreign Minister’s Summit on Afghanistan in Islamabad. It gathered an impressive array of delegates representing all major global players to consider the humanitarian crisis besetting the Afghan nation and seek measures to avert a colossal human tragedy in the making.

Regardless of the summit’s objectives and assumed success a reality check is in order. The US, the proverbial elephant in the room, probably predetermined the outcome of this summit; the degree of relief or the lack of it that was to be allowed to the Afghans.

As is usual with OIC endeavours, this summit too was rather heavy on optics, rhetoric, light on real substance and essentially uninspiring. There were only two outcomes of this extraordinary session of the OIC FMs. One, was the establishment of a Humanitarian Trust Fund (to be managed by the Islamic Development Bank and made operational by March 2022) and the other was a Food Security Programme (details unknown) to forestall debilitating hunger in Afghanistan.

[PM expresses condolence on Archbishop Tutu's death](https://nation.com.pk/26-Dec-2021/pm-expresses-condolence-on-archbishop-tutu-s-death)

No financial pledges were made by any delegates except KSA which pledged a billion riyals (US$265 million). The Afghans will apparently have to live through a very harsh and cold winter with precious little to feed them or keep them warm. Their Islamic brethren are apparently too beholden to the US to consider helping them forestall the inevitable catastrophe that looms overhead.

The OIC/Islamic world has never had the spine to practically support Muslims in distress anywhere in the world. The plight of the Kashmiris, Palestinians, Myanmar Rohingyas, Indian Muslims etc all present a very sorry picture of Islamic unity and solidarity. It reflects too the sheer inability of the OIC/Islamic World to rise above its own self-enervating prejudices.

The OIC/Islamic world has let them down massively. Considering the enormous human, economic, technological, mineral and military resources that the Islamic World collectively possesses, the clout it exercises in global even regional affairs is grossly incompatible, unrealistic and abysmal.

[Mustafa Kamal complains to govt on being unheard](https://nation.com.pk/26-Dec-2021/mustafa-kamal-complains-govt-on-being-unheard)

It clearly has enough leverages, the required capacities and capabilities to influence and mould international opinion in favour of Muslim peoples at large but lacks the will, unity, cohesiveness, collective wisdom, the congruence in thought and purpose and the finesse to do so. This is the direct result of its internal divisions brought forth by political, religious-sectarian, regional leadership and other conflicting interests. Divided on itself, it has continuously fallen victim to skilful exploitation by the US. It has thus forfeited its freedom of action to pursue issues that beset the Muslim Ummah.

One would have expected a more nuanced and well thought out approach to the Afghan issue than the rather limited humanitarian one selected for this Summit. The Summit could have laid out a phased, time bound plan of action to deal with the Afghan imbroglio comprehensively. A desired end state aimed at making Afghanistan a responsible, respected, recognised and willingly accepted member of the international community could have given strategic direction to the Summit.

[41 people killed in Burkina Faso attack](https://nation.com.pk/26-Dec-2021/41-people-killed-in-burkina-faso-attack)

A road map then could have highlighted the ways and means to get there. A system of achievable milestones with compatible relief at each corresponding level could have motivated the Afghans to meet international expectations. The milestones could have been an inclusive government, the practical application of human and women rights including universal education, waging a war on Terrorism Central (the macabre collection of terrorist groups in Afghanistan), a political dispensation as close to democracy as is possible and so on and so forth.

The compatible relief measures could have included the provision of unrestricted humanitarian aid, the revival of the banking sector, the release of held up Afghan funds, the granting of aid and loans by the IFIs, rehabilitating and reconstructing the Afghan economy and infrastructure, opening up investment and trade opportunities etc. A practical, comprehensive plan of action of give and take was the need of the hour, not vacuous promises.

[At least 8 dead in suicide bomb attack in NE DR Congo on Christmas](https://nation.com.pk/26-Dec-2021/at-least-8-dead-in-suicide-bomb-attack-in-ne-dr-congo-on-christmas)

The OIC lacks credibility. It is dominated by the KSA-led Arabs who in turn are ruthlessly manipulated by the US. It is through this channel that the US leverages the OIC to secure its own interests in the Greater Middle East Region (GMER)/Islamic World.

The Arabs pitilessly exploit the OIC to pursue their own self-interests too, even to the detriment of Kashmiris, (the elusive OIC FMs Summit on Kashmir?) Palestinians etc. This channel is again being used to keep Afghanistan off-kilter and the South-Central Asian Region (SCAR) destabilised. An undermined Afghanistan helps the US achieve a number of its geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomics objectives in the larger GMER-SCAR complex. Where it satiates the US’ desire for vengeance somewhat it also upsets the time frames that China and Russia might have laid down for pursuing their own interests in the regions.

An Afghanistan in upheaval will preclude a direct link between South and Central Asia and thus impede China’s BRI-CPEC enormously. A chaotic Afghanistan will deny Russia and the CARs access to the Arabian Sea and China’s BRI further ingress into Iran and the GMER.

[Govt taking steps for prosperity of common man under leadership of PM: Shafqat Mehmood](https://nation.com.pk/26-Dec-2021/govt-taking-steps-for-prosperity-of-common-man-under-leadership-of-pm-shafqat-mehmood)

The US now has Afghanistan by the scruff of its neck and is apparently the master of the game in the region. The Afghans might eventually get the desperately sought-after elixir of life, albeit one tiny sip at a time, as and when ordained by the US.

It is now time for CRIPT—China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey—as a subset of the SCO, to give up its reticence, move proactively to secure its collective interests in the GMER-SCAR Complex, spare Afghanistan further despair and restore strategic balance in the region. The OIC and the UN are unequal to this task.

The OIC needs a paradigm shift. It needs to become an assertive, egalitarian organisation immune to external pressures and internal machinations. Till that happens, Muslims in Kashmir, Palestine, Myanmar, India and now in Afghanistan will continue to be victims of cold, self-serving (geo)politics.

Is Afghanistan too destined to end up as another long festering wound on the Muslim and world consciences as Kashmir, Palestine, the Rohingya and Indian Muslims are?