

NO. 09/80

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 1980.

FOREIGN MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

The Foreign Ministers' Conference of the Islamic countries concluded in Islamabad on Tuesday night. Foreign Affairs Adviser Agha Shahi, who is the Chairman of the Conference, stated at the closing session of the Conference that the momentous decisions taken by it would have far-reaching consequences not only within the entire region but also far beyond. He hoped that the message should go to the Super-Powers that in view of the solidarity expressed at the Conference the Muslims would never become pawns or victims of any power. Referring to the conference decision to suspend the membership of Afghanistan and recommendation to member States to withhold recognition of the present Afghan regime, he hoped that the Soviet Union on its part would draw its forces from Afghanistan without delay.

Mr. Habib Chatti, Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference, told a news conference after the concluding session that the suspension of Afghanistan as a member of the Islamic Conference would take effect forthwith. This in fact, initiated the process of immediately translating the Conference resolutions into action. Replying to a question about practical steps which would follow the Conference he said: A three-state committee would soon be set up in consultation with Pakistan and Iran (as neighbours of Afghanistan) to coordinate assistance and succour to Afghan Refugees. The Conference recommendation for non-recognition of Kabul regime would be supported by many states and would be followed by severance of diplomatic relations with Kabul. This would effectively isolate new regime in Kabul from a large part of the Third World. The move to boycott Moscow Olympics is expected to be effected by a large number of States.

Foreign Affairs Adviser Agha Shahi, who was also present during the Press conference said that the Conference Declaration adopted on Tuesday would be sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who would in turn circulate it to the member states of the U.N. He pointed out that the participating Muslim countries at this Conference would also be informing the Soviet Union of its decisions and resolutions and thereby communicating to it the gravity of its military intervention in Afghanistan.

Prince Saud al-Faisal, Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia in his comments on the Conference said that all the participants of the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference are satisfied over the outcome of the Conference. The Prince said the suggestion by President Zia for joint defence is very important for the whole of Muslim world. Arab nations have a common defence strategy and other nations were also interested in such a proposal, he added. The Foreign Minister of Jordan, Mr. Marwan al-Qasim, said that any aggression against any Muslim country should be considered aggression against the Islamic Ummah. He called for a just stand by the Muslim world in the event of any future aggression against any Muslim country.

The Foreign Minister of Mali, Mr. el-Marmoun, expressed confidence that the outcome of the Conference would come up to the expectations of the Muslim world.

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Mr. Kamal Kharrazi, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, expressed full satisfaction over the resolution passed by the Conference on external pressures being exerted by the United States on Iran. Dr. Kharrazi said the resolution demonstrated the concern of the Islamic countries on the pressures being faced by Iran and showed their solidarity in supporting Iran's cause.

The Conference was convened at the requested of Bangladesh to consider "the situation in Afghanistan and also developments in the region which are closely interlinked with the situation in Afghanistan". The Conference remained in session from January 26 to 29, 1980 and was participated by following states of the Muslim world: Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cameroun, Chad, Comoro, Djibouti, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, PLO, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates and Arab Republic of Yemen. (36 countries). The Conference was attended by Nigeria as observer. Besides, there were also observers from 9 organisations: Rabita-e-Alam-Islami, Motammar Al-Alam Al-Islami, Islamic Council of Europe, World Assembly of Muslim Youth, Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, Arab League, Islamic Chamber of Commerce Industry and Commodity Exchange, International Islamic News Agency and Islamic Solidarity Fund.

The Conference was inaugurated by President, General Mohammad Ziaul Haq (January 27) and in his address he observed that the Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan was the latest tragedy to befall the Muslim world. The President urged the Conference to send an unequivocal message to the Soviet Union conveying the grave concern of the Islamic World at the presence of its troops in Afghanistan and calling upon it to terminate its military intervention. The Conference decided that President's address would be considered an official document of the Conference. Delegations of Morocco, Gambia and Malaysia expressed the view that the address would provide the Conference the necessary guidelines for its deliberations.

The Conference elected Mr. Agha Shahi as the Chairman of the Extraordinary session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers. Mr. Shahi in his address as Chairman of the Conference observed that the rivalry and competition of the super powers seeking global domination and their conflicting interests were the primary source of turmoil and upheavals in the world and posed a grave danger to the security and independence of the small and medium sized countries which with their abundant natural resources and strategic location continued to remain the focus of the global rivalry and contention for spheres of influence. The massive armed intervention by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan was the most recent manifestation of this hegemonistic pressure. The Chairman of the Conference emphasised the need for collective response to the challenge faced by the Ummah.

The Conference elected Shaikh Mohammad Bin Mubarak al Khalifa, Foreign Minister and leader of the Bahrain delegation and Alhaj Lamin K. Jabang Minister of External Affairs of Gambia as Vice-Chairman of the Conference. The Secretary-General, Dr. Habib Chatti in his address to the Conference said the events in Afghanistan has created a critical situation which could involve the whole world in the East-West conflict. In the General Debate the Heads of Delegations reviewed the current situation. They focussed their attention on the situation in Afghanistan, developments in the region, and the problems of Jerusalem, Palestine and the Middle and the present evolution of the situation.

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They condemned the Soviet armed intervention against Afghanistan, a Muslim and non-aligned country and called for the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. They declared that the right to sovereignty; territorial integrity and independence were enshrined in international law, in the principles of peaceful coexistence as well as in the UN Charter and must not be violated. They also expressed their solidarity with the countries in the immediate neighbourhood of Afghanistan and their resolve to give them full support. The Leaders of the delegations also expressed their support and solidarity with Iran. They referred to Jerusalem, the Palestine cause and the Middle East issue and condemned the normalisation of relations between Egypt and Israel as a result of the Camp David Accords.

The Conference adopted five resolutions: (1) On the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan and on its ensuing effects (2) On foreign pressures on certain Islamic States (3) On the Palestine question and Jerusalem (4) On external pressures against Iran by the United States of America, and (5) On foreign military intervention in the Horn of Africa.

Condemning the Soviet military aggression against the Afghani people the Conference denounced it as a flagrant violation of international law and demanded the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The Conference suspended the membership of Afghanistan in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and invited Member States to withhold recognition to the illegal regime in Afghanistan and sever diplomatic relations with that country until the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The Conference also called upon Member States to withhold all economic assistance from the present regime in Afghanistan. The Conference called upon Member States to consider not participating in the Moscow Olympics this year unless Soviet Union withdraws all its troops from Afghanistan. (There were eleven reserved reservations on this part of the resolution. The countries which expressed reservations were: Iraq, Algeria, Iran, Kuwait, Jordan, Guinea, Gabon, Niger, Yemen, Cameroon and Chad). The Conference declared its complete solidarity with the countries neighbouring Afghanistan against any threat to their security and well being and called upon Member States to resolutely support and extend all possible cooperation to these countries.

At the recommendation of the Plenary, the Political Committee of the Conference which was headed by Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. S. Shah Nawaz, listed to the representative of the Afghani Mujahideen, Professor Borhan al-Din Rabani who spoke on behalf of the following organisation: (1) Harkat-i-Inklab-i-Islam (2) National Liberation Front (3) The Islamic Party (Hekmetiar group), (4) The Islamic Front (Borhan group), (5) Ittihad Islamic National Front and (6) Islamic Afghani Association al-Din Rabani. These organisations merged into Afghanistan Nationalist Alliance, and Prof. Rabani, as convener of the Alliance made a comprehensive state on the situation in Afghanistan and on the oppression to which the Muslim Afghani people are subjected at the hands of the invading Soviet forces. The statement comprised a number of proposals and requests. The Conference decided to consider giving observer status to Afghanistan Nationalist Alliance at its next meeting, scheduled to be held in Pakistan in April 1980.

Condemning pressures of all kind the Conference warned those western powers which were attempting to exploit the new situation created by Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan of the dire consequence of their policies which would constitute a threat to world peace and security. The Conference warned the Member States of dangers of being drawn into the plans and strategic policies of the super powers of turning the area into an arena for their conflict.

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The Conference affirmed its vital stake in the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Iran and firmly opposed to any threat or use of force or any kind of intimidation or interference or imposition of economic sanctions against Iran or any other Islamic country. (There were eight reservation on this resolution).

The Conference called upon all Islamic States to reaffirm their solidarity with the ILO in its struggle against the Zoinist entity and to secure the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people including their right to establish an independent state in their usurped homeland. The Conference condemned the Egyptian Government's policy of establishing relations with the Zoinist racist entity and called upon all Muslim countries to consider joining in boycotting the Egyptian regime politically, economically and culturally and observing the boycott rules of the Arab League and coordinating their efforts with Arab countries in that respect.

The Conference decided to condemn armed aggression against Somalia and to denounce the presence of military forces of the Soviet Union and some of its allies in the Horn of Africa and to call for the total and unconditional withdrawal of these foreign troops. It also decided to liquidate foreign bases in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea and to remove these areas from the conflict between the great powers. The Conference decided to strengthen the Islamic peoples in the Horn of African region materially and financially and to provide assistance to the refugees driven from their homes by the forces of occupation.
