Muslim Statecraft and Subversion

Since the Iranian revolution, two broad approaches to Islam had been in fierce opposition. The first, championed by Saudi Arabia, sought to achieve Muslim renewal and solidarity through the existing political order. The guardians of Mecca and Medina called upon Muslim governments to unite, to recognize Saudi primacy, and to make their societies more Islamic by governmental decree. This method employed statecraft, and rested upon persuasion, compromise, and inducement. The second approach, favoured by Iran, also sought to revive and unite Muslims, but relied upon a direct appeal to the Muslim masses. Iran urged them to recognize the leadership of the Imam Khomeyni, and to demand that their governments follow the example of Islamic authenticity set by his revolution, in language that was militant and uncompromising. Iran cast doubt upon the legitimacy of governments which resisted its appeal, and this sometimes bordered on support for subversion of other governments. In substance and style, these two approaches to Muslim solidarity differed widely, and left the rest of the Muslim world divided.

THE CRISIS OF MUSLIM DIPLOMACY

The Jidda-based Islamic Conference Organization (ICO) continued to suffer from conflicts among its members. (On the ICO's difficulties, see Middle East Contemporary Survey [MECS] 1981-82, pp. 283-84, 298-301; 1982-83, pp. 235-37.) The ICO claimed to represent the collective will of Muslim states before the wider world, particularly on the issue of Palestine. But so long as no end to the Iraqi-Iranian war appeared in sight, the ICO's principal mission had to consist of mending internal divisions, and mediating between its warring members. No real success had been achieved in this effort since the Ta'if Islamic summit conference of January 1981, which committed the ICO's 'good offices' to mediation of the conflict. The matter of Palestine also frustrated the ICO. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), an ICO member, and the recipient of most of the ICO's diplomatic and moral support, was locked in conflict with another ICO member, Syria. (For details, see essay on Iraqi-Iranian war and on the PLO.)

It was with some trepidation that ICO Secretary-General Habib Chatti embarked on a new round of conference diplomacy in late 1983. The timing of this initiative could not have been less auspicious. Chatti admitted that 'we are today not in a better position than at the time of the third Islamic summit conference [in 1981], and one could even say that our position, alas, is only deteriorating.' But Chatti had no room to manoeuvre. While in the past, the ICO convened summit conferences only at the most propitious moments, the 1981 summit had altered the ICO Charter to provide for triennial summit conferences. If the next summit did not materialize at the appointed time and place, the ICO's crisis would be exacerbated. That time was January 1984; the place, Casablanca, in Morocco.

For Chatti, this impending event had represented a personal deadline, since his four-year term as Secretary-General was due to expire on the eve of the summit, in October 1983. But a struggle began earlier in the year between Pakistan and Bangladesh, over which of the two would provide his successor, and this eventually assured
Chatti an extension of his term as Secretary-General. His strategy was to use this next round of diplomacy, however badly timed, to press for progress toward a cease-fire between Iran and Iraq. This inevitably meant pressuring Iran. Iraq had accepted the cease-fire terms offered by the ICO’s ‘good offices’ committee during previous mediation rounds; Iran had rejected them, insisting that Iraq be branded the aggressor and ‘punished’. (On the attitudes of Iraq and Iran to ICO mediation, see MECS 1980-81, pp. 126-27, 134-35; 1981-82, pp. 283, 300-1; 1982-83, p. 236.) To break the deadlock, an attempt would be made to place Iran under mild ICO censure, for failing to respond to disinterested Muslim mediation.

**THE DACCA FOREIGN MINISTERS’ CONFERENCE**

After a fifteen-month hiatus, the ICO’s regular Foreign Ministers’ conference met in Dacca, Bangladesh, from 6-11 December 1983. Only 33 delegations of a possible 41 attended, and only 16 of these were headed by Foreign Ministers. But the Iranian Foreign Minister, ‘Ali Akbar Velayati, did attend, setting the stage for a concerted attempt by some ICO members to pressure Iran into moving toward a cease-fire. Bangladesh’s military ruler, Lt.-Gen. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ershad, opened the conference by calling the war ‘a gaping wound in the body politic of Islam’, and warned that ‘if we do not end this war now, we will all bleed to death’. The confrontation came in the conference’s political committee, when six members, including Jordan, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia, backed a resolution expressing appreciation of Iraq’s attitude toward the ICO’s mediation efforts. Implicit in this resolution was criticism of Iran’s position. Iran, enjoying the support of Libya and Syria, countered with a resolution calling for a special committee to decide who was the war’s aggressor, and to mete out punishment by extracting reparations. Here, the implicit criticism was of Iraq. In the heat of the debate, Iran’s delegation stormed out of an all-night meeting of the committee. The Iranians did not attend a second all-night meeting of full delegations, called to discuss the political committee’s report. In the end, a resolution was adopted expressing satisfaction with Iraq’s acceptance of past ICO résolutions, and calling on Iran to respond to mediation efforts, but fuller discussion of the war was deferred to the forthcoming summit. The point of this strategy, which was probably co-ordinated by Chatti and the Saudis, was to shame the Iranians just enough to lead them to make a gesture of compromise. The attempt backfired. Velayati called the political committee’s resolution on the war ‘worthless’, and Iranian commentary denounced the ICO for ‘following the diplomatic practices so popular with the world Imperialists’. Since it was obvious that the summit would bring yet greater pressure to bear on Iran, Velayati announced two weeks later that Iran would not attend.

In taking this decision, Iran was anxious not to appear isolated: Iranian Foreign Ministry officials embarked on tours of Muslim capitals, bearing messages from Iran’s President, ‘Ali Khameneh’ī, explaining the decision not to attend. The Iranian media also began a campaign, directed not so much against the ICO, as against the summit’s host, King Hasan of Morocco. His palace in Casablanca was said to be ‘a centre of drug smugglers, procurers of women, and every kind of immoral activity, not a suitable site for a conference organized in the name of Islam’. But Iran did not issue a general call for a boycott of the summit, and even expressed its appreciation of ‘friendly countries’ engaged in defending Iran and ‘putting forth its views’. Iran’s strategy was calculated to thwart any attempt to bring world Muslim opinion to bear on Iran, an aim served both by Iran’s absence from the summit, and the presence of
Iran’s friends. Iran thus successfully checked the diplomatic move initiated at Dacca: the Iraqi-Iranian war would not figure prominently in the summit’s deliberations or resolutions.

THE CASABLANCA ISLAMIC SUMMIT AND EGYPT’S RETURN
For a time, there loomed the possibility that the Casablanca Islamic summit would merely repeat the stale resolutions of the last Islamic summit. This was reflected in the level of participation, as many states planned to be represented only at the ministerial level. It was in this atmosphere of discouragement that a new theme for the summit emerged: the restoration of Egypt to the ICO fold. (The following is an assessment of the implications of this development for the ICO. For a detailed discussion of the Arab diplomacy surrounding Egypt’s restoration, see essay on inter-Arab relations.)

Egypt’s suspension from the ICO dated from May 1979, following hard on the conclusion of Egypt’s peace treaty with Israel. But the passage of time, the imbalance in the Arab system, and the desire to counter-balance the Iranian threat eventually led a number of Arab states to seek reconciliation with Egypt. Prominent among them were Iraq and Jordan. The PLO also had effected a rapprochement with Egypt, in a move designed to counter Syria (see chapter on Egypt). Why did these Arab states, and the PLO, choose the medium of an Islamic summit to make a formal gesture to Egypt? Among the ICO’s non-Arab member states, both African and Asian, Egypt counted many supporters, especially where Libyan and Iranian influences were regarded as threatening. In the more friendly company of the ICO, the venom of the Arab rejectionists, led by Syria and Libya, would be far more diluted than in a purely Arab forum.

During the three months prior to the summit, reports circulated about the possibility that an attempt would be made to bring back Egypt, and Egypt discreetly canvassed support for such a move. But the issue was not raised in any of the summit’s preparatory stages. It did not figure in the deliberations or resolutions of the Dacca conference, or even in the summit’s preparatory conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Rabat from 12-14 January 1984. The matter therefore did not figure in the agenda of the summit itself, which met in Casablanca from 16-19 January 1984. There was an obvious reason for this omission: the lingering hope in the ICO that Iran would change its position. Egypt’s restoration only emerged as a serious possibility after it became clear that Iran could not be moved, and that without Iran, any progress towards a cease-fire in the Gulf was a pipe dream. Iran’s absence then lifted a serious obstacle to any proposal for Egypt’s return, since an Iranian delegation would have greatly strengthened those Arab delegations which could be expected to oppose Egypt’s readmission. In the end, the summit devoted virtually all of its deliberations to the issue of Egypt’s restoration, and ended by ‘inviting’ Egypt to ‘resume its membership in the ICO’. Guinea, Iraq, Jordan, Pakistan, the PLO, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, and Sudan, all contributed in varying degrees to this outcome; Libya, Syria, and the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDHY), which led the opposition to the move, were numerically overwhelmed. (For full details, see essay on inter-Arab relations.)

Whatever the political significance of Egypt’s readmission, it was of major organizational and constitutional importance for the ICO itself. First, the debate and resolution reopened the question of the ICO’s broad purpose. In the past, the ICO’s principal role had been to extend the Arab consensus over Palestine to embrace the
broader collective of Muslim states. Its mediatory role had been limited to disputes outside the Arab family; Arab disputes were the preserve of the Arab League. The ICO Secretariat had been careful not to tread on the Arab League’s ground, and Chatti had fostered close co-operation with the Arab League Secretariat. (On past ICO-Arab League co-ordination, see MECS 1980-81, p. 131.) When the ICO suspended Egypt, it did so to meet the demands of a broad Arab consensus, and in imitation of a similar move by the Arab League.

The proposal for Egypt’s readmission at Casablanca was raised by Guinean President Sékou Touré, who directly challenged this conventional notion that the ICO should follow Arab consensus in such matters. ‘I fear no one but God’, Sékou Touré was reported to have said in closed session. ‘The Arab states should go to the Arab League building to discuss their affairs, but here we are interested in Islamic solidarity’. 

Why, he asked, should 42 Muslim states remain paralysed for lack of an Arab decision? ‘You are trying to ruin the deliberations of the Islamic summit by fighting Arab battles that have no place here’, Pakistani President Ziya al-Haqq was reported to have told the Arab rejectionists. ‘Egypt is one of the vanguard states of Islam, and it must occupy its legitimate place in our ranks’. King Hasan of Morocco drew a similar distinction. The ICO had its ‘own rules and commitment clauses...we must differentiate between the ICO and the Arab League’. 

The affair of Egypt’s readmission thus freed the ICO from what had become the ball and chain of the Arab League. But the debate had also resulted in the Arab states’ baring their divisions before the wider Islamic world, something which tended to diminish Arab moral leverage on non-Arab Muslim states. This was of concern to some participants. ‘What I fear most’, said Tunisia’s Foreign Minister Beji Caid Essebsi, ‘is that the decision to invite Egypt to resume its membership in the ICO might encourage a number of African and Asian countries to restore their relations with Israel’. 

Second, the way in which the Egyptian question was handled at the summit raised major questions about the procedures followed in ICO deliberations. With his move, Sékou Touré completely discarded the summit agenda prepared by the Foreign Ministers at Dacca and Rabat. The result, according to Tunisia’s Foreign Minister Essebsi, was that the proposal ‘led to lengthy discussions from the very first session, taking up most of the participants’ time because of the way it was handled. It would have been better and more appropriate if the issue had first been tackled by the Foreign Ministers’. Sékou Touré realized that his proposal deviated from accepted procedure, but pleaded extenuating circumstances, and the procedural objections raised by opponents proved to be of no avail. In the ICO, then, it was possible for a group of states to supersede the agenda and monopolize the deliberations with a surprise initiative.

Third, the debate revealed ambiguities in the constitutional provisions for ICO membership. In fact, the delegations could not agree on whether Egypt had really ever been suspended. No article in the ICO Charter provides for suspension, and this allowed some of Egypt’s supporters to claim that Egypt had never been suspended at all. Other supporters held that the suspension, which occurred at an ICO Foreign Ministers’ conference in 1979, was not formally endorsed by the Islamic summit in 1981, and therefore was not binding. Egypt had not been suspended, but had let its membership lapse. Egypt’s opponents held that a formal suspension was in force, and must remain so until Egypt, in the words of Libya’s representative, ‘Abd al-Salām Jallūd, ‘put Camp David and the results of the Camp David agreement into the
waste-bin'. In short, the very question of suspension was problematic, due to constitutional loopholes. The final resolution did not cancel or revoke any suspension, but simply invited Egypt to ‘resume its membership’.

The outcome thus highlighted the arbitrary and malleable features of the ICO’s procedures and constitution. But the return of Egypt did express the will of the clear majority of ICO members. Actual voting is unusual in ICO conferences, the point of the organization being to demonstrate Muslim solidarity, and every attempt is made to reach agreement by (unanimous) consensus. But in this case there could be no unanimity, and the ICO had rare recourse to its voting procedure, which requires a two-third majority to reach a resolution. While information about the secret polling was contradictory (see essay on inter-Arab relations), all accounts reported an overwhelming majority in favour of the resolution.

An ICO special committee chaired by Sékou Touré left for Egypt after the summit, to convey formally the ICO’s resolution. On that occasion, Egypt’s President, Husni Mubarak, announced that Egypt accepted the invitation to resume membership. Were there conditions attached to Egypt’s readmission, as demanded by some ICO members? Although there were none in the resolution, Sékou Touré’s committee prepared a report, apparently indicating that Egypt ‘has unreservedly committed itself to the rules, principles, and resolutions of the ICO’. Among these resolutions was one adopted at the previous summit, condemning the Camp David agreement; another called for ĵihād to liberate Palestine (see MECS 1980-81, pp. 128-29). But Tunisia’s Foreign Minister Essebsi spoke only of ‘semi-conditions’, and when asked whether Egypt would be called upon to embrace past ICO resolutions, he replied: ‘God knows. This point is somewhat ambiguous, and anything ambiguous cannot have good results’. In fact, as the Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Butrus Butrus-Ghali, declared after the summit, ‘Egypt is ready to re-enter [the ICO] barring any condition which might curtail its sovereignty or that might restrict its policies, notably the agreements it concluded with the State of Israel’. Conditional readmission would be refused ‘without any hesitation’. Thanks to such public and private assurances, Israel did not protest about Egypt’s acceptance of the ICO invitation.

The Casablanca Islamic summit, then, did not simply reiterate old resolutions, but would be remembered for its readmission of Egypt to the ICO. Islamic summits had long dealt in symbols rather than substance, and this move was no exception. Still, Casablanca appeared to be a milestone, albeit a minor one, on Egypt’s road back to Islamo-Arab respectability. The theme of the previous summit had been ĵihād against Israel; the theme of this summit was ‘awda, the ‘return’ to the fold of a Muslim state at peace with Israel. The ICO obviously remained a fine forum for the art of creative ambiguity.

THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION’S NEGLECTED AGENDA
By devoting itself so exclusively to the question of Egypt’s membership, the summit hardly found time for the many other issues on its agenda. The most serious omission was the Iraqi-Iranian war. The Iraqi delegation head, ‘Izzat Ibrāhīm, while supporting Egypt’s readmission, complained: ‘Every day I see my fellow speakers discuss and argue, and turn the world upside-down, over the proposal to return Egypt to the ICO. It is as though the Iraqi-Iranian was not even on your agenda’. But without Iran, all
that the summit could do was ask the President of Guinea, Sékou Touré, who was chairman of the ICO ‘good offices’ committee, to renew his mission.

Then came the war’s dangerous escalation, with the use of chemical weapons and attacks on maritime shipping in the Gulf (see essay on the war). In March 1984, Sékou Touré announced that the ‘good offices’ committee would depart for Tehran at Iran’s request. But the Iranian Foreign Ministry described this report as ‘malicious’, and announced that Iran had only asked the ICO to send experts to investigate Iraq’s alleged use of chemical weapons. After another attempt had failed to convene the committee, Chatti did bring its members together in Jidda, from 18-19 July 1984. Among those attending were Ziya al-Haqq of Pakistan, Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ershad of Bangladesh and Yāsir ʿArafat of the PLO. The only thing to emerge from this meeting was the election of a new chairman to replace Sékou Touré, who had since died. He was succeeded by the President of Gambia, Dawda Jawara.

The meeting prompted the most serious Iranian attack on the ICO committee since its establishment. At a massive Friday prayer meeting in Tehran, Iran’s President, Muhammad ‘Ali Khameneh’i, set this tone:

We don’t consider this ICO committee a peace committee. With what this committee has done so far, it would be more appropriate to call it the committee in support of [Iraqi President] Saddām [Husayn]… Some of the members of this committee even openly declared that they knew Iraq had started the war, but they declined to condemn it… They neither condemned Iraqi attacks on our cities, nor its employment of lethal chemical weapons.

An Iranian Foreign Ministry official declared that other international organizations had taken a far better stand on the war than the ICO, and that the ICO committee served the domestic propaganda needs of some ICO members. As mediator in this war between its own members, the ICO had reached its nadir. But Chatti still claimed for the ICO the exclusive right to mediate. ‘The two countries are Muslim and are members of this organization and have both accepted the organization’s mediation. Therefore, we are more qualified than others to achieve a result. If we do not, neither will others, ever. Our decision is to keep up our mediation efforts’.

The war had inspired another ICO initiative: an international Islamic court of justice. Kuwait first proposed this institution in November 1980, and the Ṭāʾif Islamic summit endorsed the concept (see MECS 1980-81, pp. 131, 143). In October 1981, a committee of experts completed the draft of the court’s charter. The court would provide what ICO mediation committees could not: a standing forum for binding arbitration of disputes. Its first order of business would obviously be the Iraqi-Iranian war. But when the charter was presented for the Casablanca summit’s approval, a debate developed over whether the court would have jurisdiction in disputes submitted by only one side. For example, would it look into the Iraqi-Iranian war, without the assent of Iran? Ziya al-Haqq of Pakistan said that it should; ‘Abd al-Salām Jallūd of Libya argued that it should not. To have forced a vote on this issue would have been pointless, and the summit decided to postpone setting the court in motion. The summit did accept the concept of ‘committees for regional reconciliation and concord’, but no details were given as to their proposed function.

As for Palestine, ‘Arafāt could not complain of neglect, since he greatly contributed to side-tracking the summit onto the Egyptian rail. ‘Arafāt nevertheless continued to play a prominent role in ICO diplomacy, which helped in some small way to stamp his
leadership of the Palestinian movement with international legitimacy. But apart from keeping 'Arafat in the public eye, the ICO could do little else for the PLO. Talk of an ICO military bureau to assist the PLO had become a staple of ICO gatherings, and the bureau even appeared on the ICO's organizational chart (see MECS 1980-81, pp. 125, 129; 1981-82, p. 300; 1982-83, p. 236). But it did not yet function. In an October 1983 report, Chatti said that the ICO had asked Pakistan to nominate an officer to the post of military bureau chief, so that the bureau could be opened 'immediately'. But the officer could not take up his post for 'personal reasons'.

In early April 1984, as the Reagan Administration came under Congressional pressure to move the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem (see essay on the US and the ME), 'Arafat sought an emergency ICO conference of Foreign Ministers. Algeria agreed to host the gathering, and Chatti issued invitations. But only 25 ICO members agreed to attend, four short of a quorum. The emergency session never met. Instead, an emergency meeting of the ICO's Jerusalem Committee met in Fez, from 19-20 April 1984. According to its chairman, King Hasan, there was 'a strong conflict throughout our meetings in Fez between reason and wisdom and emotions and effusiveness'. Apparently, some states urged an immediate severing of relations with the US even before an embassy move, to influence the US Congress; others advised patience, citing assurances sent by President Reagan to King Hasan the day before the committee met. Advocates of patience won the day, although it was decided to urge a severing of relations with El Salvador and Costa Rica, both of which had moved their embassies to Jerusalem. Few ICO states had relations with either country, but Egypt did, and they were promptly severed. In May 1984, Syria suspended its own membership in the Jerusalem Committee, ostensibly to protest about the presence of an Israeli delegation at a conference on Moroccan Jewry held in Rabat, and called on other committee members to follow its example. Syria thus hoped to underline some of the apparent contradictions in King Hasan’s policy toward Israel.

The ICO remained under pressure from other Muslim groups which did not enjoy the prestige of the PLO. These included Afghan resistance organizations, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and representatives of Turkish Cyprus. Their delegations hovered about the conference halls at Dacca, Rabat, and Casablanca; all were reported to have been disappointed by the lack of support expressed for their causes in the diplomacy surrounding the summit.

Less influenced by political turbulence was the ICO’s promotion of economic co-operation, and the continuing activities of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). From its inception until June 1984, the IDB had extended over $4 bn in loans, participation capital, and trade financing. But the IDB had its share of problems. A noted Muslim economist left the bank for a university position, and severely criticized the IDB: 'Analytical research work leading to fact-finding results and policies is viewed with caution, and is unwanted. Academic development of professionals in relevant fields of economic development studies is utterly discouraged. There is a lack of appreciation of these qualities at the departmental levels, particularly in the economic and policy planning department of the IDB. The root cause of this professional malaise appears to be the misplaced and inadequate levels of professional aptitude among the department heads'. There was some ICO progress in the cultural field. In September 1983, Chatti attended the inauguration of an ICO-funded Islamic college in Chicago; a similar ICO-backed university opened in Malaysia, and plans proceeded for universities in Bangladesh, Niger, and Uganda.
But the ICO was a political body, and Muslims were bound to judge it by political criteria. In April 1984, the ICO observed its fifteenth anniversary, and some commentators seized the opportunity to take stock of the ICO's accomplishments. Most argued that the organization was far from having realized its potential, and that on the issue of Israel's hold on Jerusalem—which prompted the first Islamic summit in 1969—the Muslims had lost ground. The Iraqi-Iranian war and the struggle for Afghanistan further underlined the ICO's limitations. Yet the ICO had released great expectations; one Muslim critic called it 'the greatest Muslim dream since the abolition of the caliphate'. The ICO's burden was to stave off disappointment.

THE SAUDI INTERPRETATION

Saudi Arabia continued to press its interpretation of Islam through the conventional means of Muslim conferences and missionary work. At the centre of this activity was the Mecca-based Muslim World League (MWL; رَابِيَةُ ٱلْأَلَٰمِ ٱلْإِلْمَٰلِمِ, on the MWL, see MECS 1981-82, pp. 295-97; 1982-83, pp. 246-47). The MWL's new Secretary-General, Dr 'Abdallah 'Umar Nasif, defined the aims of the MWL as 'distributing Islamic books, setting up schools, educational and religious institutes and libraries, opening mosques, hospitals and cultural offices, distributing copies of the Holy Qur'an, combating the Christianization of Muslims in many Islamic countries, and aiding Muslims in their struggle against colonialists and the enemies of Islam'. To promote such ends, the Second World Conference for Islamic Missions and Preparation of Missionaries met in Medina from 1-3 January 1984. Seven years had passed since the first conference. At this gathering, under the auspices of the Islamic University of Medina, the means of improving missionary effectiveness were discussed in depth. This was followed by the Ninth Congress of the Supreme World Council of Mosques, an arm of the MWL, which met in Mecca from 4-11 January 1984. The purpose of this body was to supervise the construction and activities of mosques throughout the world, for which it spent SR25m annually. The council published the journal Risālat al-Masjid, and supervised continental mosque councils in Europe, North America, and Asia. The Ninth Congress was attended by Shaykh al-Azhar Jādd al-Haqq 'Ali Jādd al-Haqq, who was a permanent member of the council. His participation received much attention in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, coming as it did on the eve of Egypt's readmission to the ICO. Nasif suggested that the ICO's purpose was political, as were the reasons for Egypt's suspension, whereas the MWL was active wherever there were Muslims.

Nasif differed from his late predecessor, since he was a geologist rather than a man of religion by training. It was Nasif's view that 'the time for the traditional method of proselytization has passed, in view of the new currents and the invasion of civilization and culture our modern age has seen. Then there is the revolution in the world of thought which has been wrought by the visual, audio and written means of communication'. The Muslim missionary had to possess not only profound faith, but a knowledge of the modern media and sciences. According to Nasif, a prospective proselytizer wishing to study at the MWL's missionary institute in Mecca, had to be qualified at university level as a physician, engineer, teacher, or other specialist, as was often the case with Christian missionaries. Nasif embarked on several whirlwind tours, to acquaint himself with the world-wide activities of the MWL. He appeared in Bangladesh and Morocco to witness the ICO's conferences; he visited Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, and called in at the US, the UK and Western Europe, India, South
Africa, East Africa, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan and Sudan. The MWL’s Assistant Secretary-General visited West Africa, South-East Asia, and China during the year.

The MWL’s critics regarded the organization as a servile arm of the Saudi regime. Nasif admitted that ‘99 per cent of the financing comes from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the form of a basic budget’, but claimed that Saudi authorities did not dictate or intervene in the MWL’s policies. According to a pro-Iranian source, the MWL’s missionaries ‘are actually spies in the countries they are sent to. Their first duty is to keep an eye on the host Muslim community, help divide them on petty issues, fan sectarian differences, and file regular reports to their headquarters’. In support of this charge, a Saudi opposition group published a purported MWL memorandum, requesting information from MWL missionaries on ‘activities of supporters of the Iranian revolution, and their publications which contradict Islam’. But in its publications, the MWL avoided all mention of Iran’s Islamic activities and policies, so as to minimize the challenge posed by Iran’s competing claim to Muslim primacy.

Saudi insistence upon Saudi primacy in Islam also found expression in the choice of the 1984 recipient of the Faysal Prize for Service to Islam. This award, administered by the Faysal Foundation, was customarily bestowed upon Muslims who had advanced interpretations of Islam compatible with Saudi views. (On the previous year’s award, see MECS 1982-83, p. 247.) In 1984, the prize went to Saudi King Fahd, for, among other achievements, his ‘commendable efforts to unite the Arab and Islamic umma’. The selection of a Saudi monarch was not an innovation; the late Saudi King Khalid had received the award in 1982. Fahd’s selection was attacked in hostile reports, and one pro-Iranian source determined that the award to Fahd, ‘sustainer of sycophants’, revealed the ‘real purpose’ of the prize as ‘another attempt to legitimize Saudi rule’. In October 1984, Fahd gave an example of his solicitude for Islam, by inaugurating a printing plant in Medina for Qur’ān production. Erected at a cost of SR486m, the plant would produce 7,000,000 copies of the Qur’ān annually, in different formats and languages.

In international Islamic banking, a crisis of confidence shook the Geneva-based Dar al-Maal al-Islami (DMI), headed by Saudi Prince Muhammad al-Faysal Al Sa‘ūd. (On DMI’s progress, see MECS 1981-82, p. 277; 1982-83, p. 247.) DMI, with operations in twelve countries, had a targeted capitalization of $1 bn, of which $310 m were subscribed. In early 1984, DMI announced that in the year ending June 1983, it lost $27.9 m, mainly in the bullion market. There was also some adverse publicity surrounding DMI’s procedures, leading to a drop in deposits. As a result, DMI’s chief executive left, and operational costs were cut back. DMI did float a new share issue, but it declared the coming period to be one of consolidation rather than expansion. Although the bank was chaired by a son of the late King Faysal, it had yet to secure a banking licence in Saudi Arabia, so that the venture could not be said to enjoy state sanction.

Nor was DMI without competition. The Jidda-based Al-Baraka Group was the creation of Shaykh Sāliḥ ‘Abdallāh Kāmil, a Saudi billionaire businessman. The principal shareholders were Shaykh Sāliḥ and his brother-in-law, and they had moved Al-Baraka deeply into international Islamic banking, with the planning and opening of banks in Bahrain, Sudan, Tunisia, and Turkey. The rivalry between DMI and Al-Baraka caused considerable concern in Islamic banking circles. ‘Competition in itself is not inherently wrong’, said one Islamic banker. 'It becomes a problem when it
is an obsession and the motives are wrong. If this war is not stopped, we Islamic bankers will be copying our politicians, and becoming equally divided.⁶⁴ The DMI’s former chief executive, İbrahim Kâmil, also set up his own Islamic financial company, the Dar Tadine al-Umma (DTU), based in Geneva.⁶⁵ But large-scale initiative in international Islamic banking, despite the division, remained essentially in Saudi hands.

**A MUSLIM CONFERENCE IN KHARTOUM**
Sudan’s implementation of Islamic law gave rise to considerable comment in the wider Muslim world. (For the domestic causes and consequences of this development, see chapter on Sudan.) Here was an instance of a government seeking to Islamize society by administrative decree, without altering the structure of political authority. The President of Sudan, Ja‘far al-Numayrî, sought to translate that Muslim interest into outside sanction of his policy, particularly in light of the turmoil which engulfed the country’s south. Numayrî therefore sponsored the First International Conference on the Implementation of Shari‘a in Sudan, which met in Khartoum from 22-26 September 1984, to mark the first anniversary of the law’s enforcement. Participants from 70 countries were reported to have attended, although very few delegations were official. The most important delegation was the Saudi one, led by the MWL’s Secretary-General (see above). A sizeable Egyptian delegation also attended, led by the Minister of Religious Endowments. Numayrî urged the participants to tell others on their return home that ‘you did not find tanks roaring in the streets’. But he assured them that, ‘by God, if Fâtima the daughter of Muḥammad stole, I would amputate her hand’.⁶⁶ The delegates resolved to call upon all Muslim states and peoples to implement Islamic law, and urged that the conference be reconvened periodically, to enable mutual consultation.⁶⁷

**EXPORTING IRAN’S REVOLUTION**
The Iranian approach toward exporting Islamic revolution continued to waver between persuasion and subversion. Iran still did not openly embrace the latter method. The Majlis Speaker, Hujjat al-Islam ‘Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, explained that ‘the Islamic revolution does not confine its true and noble nature to geographical borders and deems the conveying of the message of the revolution, which is the selfsame message of Islam, as its duty’. But he rejected ‘the method of force and imposition for the export of ideas’.⁶⁸ The President of Iran, Muḥammad ‘Ali Khameneh‘i, also described Iran’s role as ‘giving depth to Islamic views and ideas’, and declared: ‘We absolutely will not give direct aid to [Muslim] movements...to help them or to force them to change their regimes. The Islamic Republic has a policy of not supporting such acts, and whatever is said about us to the contrary in this regard is untrue’.⁶⁹

Yet Iran was implicated in a number of subversive acts during the year. Its policy seemed to differ widely from country to country, and had more to do with specific circumstances than general principles. There were also numerous interested parties involved in the export of the revolution, and these approached the question of method very differently. The Foreign Ministry and the Islamic Guidance Ministry generally confined their activities to overt campaigns of persuasion. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (Pasداران انقلاب), and some of the émigré Shi‘i organizations based in Iran, took a different tack. They apparently favoured forceful methods wherever
these were likely to speed the revolutionary process. Ayatollah Khomeyni's approach appeared to be one of allowing a variety of organizations to pursue a variety of tactics, in the expectation that one or another method would eventually yield results. (On Iran's past policy in this regard, see MECS 1981-82, pp. 288-92; 1982-83, pp. 240-43.)

IRAN'S CALL TO ISLAM

Iran continued to sponsor Muslim conferences as part of its overt campaign to explain the revolution to other Muslims. The Second Conference on Islamic Thought met in Tehran from 4-6 February 1984. As in 1983, this event coincided with the anniversary of Khomeyni's return to Iran. (On the first conference, see MECS 1982-83, p. 240.) Over 300 guests from 80 countries were reported to have attended the gathering, which unfolded as a rally in support of Khomeyni's and Iran's leadership of Muslim movements throughout the world. During the conference, participants visited the former US embassy, and met the families of 'martyred' Iranians.

A still larger gathering was the Second World Congress of Friday Imâms and Prayer Leaders, which met in Tehran from 6-13 May 1984. (For the emergence of this congress, see MECS 1981-82, pp. 290-91; 1982-83, pp. 239-40.) The gathering was reported to have been attended by over 500 participants from 60 countries, but since no list of participants was published, it was impossible to map the precise impact of Iran's invitation. Iran's leading political clerics addressed the congress, including Khomeyni, Montazeri, Khameneh'î, and Hashemi-Rafsanjani. In his remarks, Khomeyni urged prayer leaders to politicize their sermons, and to take up a provocative tone on their return home: 'Say these things and let them ban Friday prayers; people will react. If a government bans your Friday prayers because of your sermons, it would be confronted with the reaction of the people, and that is exactly what we want'. Khameneh'î, in his remarks, attacked other international Islamic organizations, which had 'turned into an object in the hands of the same powers which themselves were the source of discord among Muslims and the obstacle in the way of their unity'. Muslims had been encouraged to think of themselves 'as Turks, Persians, Arabs, and such like, and this was most surely a Zionist and Imperialist plot'. Numerous foreign guests also addressed the congress. A Shi'i cleric from Lebanon attacked the MWL-backed Supreme World Council of Mosques (see above) which 'did not serve Muslims at all', and he accused Saudi Arabia of claiming Muslim leadership in order to 'sell out' Muslim interests. Most of the congress speakers attacked the US, the Soviet Union, Israel and Iraq. In their final resolutions, the participants accepted Khomeyni 'as having the necessary qualifications for the imamate of Muslims, and we will invite Muslims to follow his call'. Delegations of foreign Muslims also toured other Iranian cities, including Qom, and visited the war front.

The congress itself had immediate propaganda value, but the congress secretariat also maintained ties with the participants after their departure. It issued guidelines on how political issues should be dealt with in Friday sermons, particularly when Iran's position required clarification. Thus, the congress secretariat condemned the Red Sea mining (see special essay on that subject), for which some sources blamed Iran, as an American plot, and called on prayer leaders to preach the same. Iran thus had created a challenge to the Saudi-backed MWL, although the network created by the Congress of Friday Imâms and Prayer Leaders seemed small by comparison.
Also important to Iran’s campaign were the Iranian Foreign Ministry, and Iranian embassies and consulates abroad. There was some confusion about the precise role which the diplomats were to play. Montazeri instructed Iran’s diplomats in Arab and African countries to ‘try to attract those individuals who are interested in Islam’, but to ‘refrain from engaging in actions which are contrary to the programme of the host country’. Still, Khomeyni wanted Iran’s embassies to be ‘very different from other embassies, including the embassies of other Islamic states’. This they usually were, in representing not only the Iranian Government to host governments, but the Iranian revolution to interested Muslims.

The Iranian embassy in Paris was one of the more vigorous diplomatic missions in its cultivation of ties with Muslim activists and associations. France, with a Muslim population of 2.5 m, had become a major arena of rivalry between contending interpretations of Islam. Iran was also very active in the contest, too much so in the official French view. A 1983 report of the French counter-intelligence service claimed that ‘Iran has been engaged in establishing a clandestine organization which is deployed around its embassy in Paris. The Iranian embassy controls a large network made up either of individuals or of cultural associations whose official, religious activities in fact provide cover for their subversive activities...small at first, this network was methodically built up and now covers, if not all of our country, at least all of the areas where significantly large Muslim communities live’. The report also alleged that 150-300 Iranian ‘pseudo-students’ answered directly to the embassy’s diplomatic staff. In December 1983, French authorities, apparently acting on further information, expelled three Iranian diplomats and five Iranian students, and closed Iran’s cultural centre in Paris.

In July 1984, the Spanish Government expelled the Iranian Cultural and Press Attaché in Madrid, for his involvement in a network broken up by the anti-terrorist division of the Spanish police. Four other Iranians were arrested and charged. According to the police, the group had planned assassinations and airline hijackings directed against Arab states, principally Saudi Arabia. The Iranian diplomat was accused of supplying the weapons seized by the police, but the Iranian Foreign Ministry denied any involvement.

As for Muslim countries, support by the Iranian embassy in Dakar, Senegal, for Senegalese Islamic groups led to the closure of the embassy there in February 1984. Iran denied having interfered in Senegal’s internal affairs, and claimed to have observed ‘prevaling standards in diplomatic relations between countries’.

There was also much concern among Malaysian officials about the activities of the Iranian embassy in Kuala Lumpur. To voice these apprehensions, Malaysia’s Foreign Minister visited Tehran in January 1984, and received Iranian assurances that ‘it is not their desire to make revolution in Malaysia’. Iran denied all charges of interference, and Velayati visited Malaysia to reassure Kuala Lumpur. But the Malaysian authorities continued to maintain that the opposition Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party had fallen into the hands of pro-Iranian ‘extremists’. According to Malaysia’s Deputy Foreign Minister, ‘the activities of these groups are regarded by Malaysians as interference by the Iranian Government itself’. But no action was taken against the Iranian embassy.

The question of the role of embassies in the export of revolution thus remained unresolved, since it was not clear precisely how Iran’s embassies could differ from all others, without violating accepted international norms. Some Iranian missions were
more active than others, and where they were, they played an important part in disseminating Iran’s revolutionary interpretation of Islam.

THE NAJAF CONNECTION
Following the Iranian revolution, Iran offered sanctuary to numerous Shi'i activists who were at odds with their own governments. These were permitted to set up offices in Tehran, engage in propaganda, publish newspapers, and recruit members. The most important of these organizations were led by Iraqi Shi'i clerics, who drew their followings from among the many Iraqi Shi'i refugees in Iran. Many of the Iraqi clerics had known and studied under Khomeyni during his fourteen-year exile in Najaf. With the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq, the émigré groups grew in importance.

The Iraqi Shi'i organizations came under the general authority of Hujjat al-Islam Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ḥakīm, ‘spokesman’ of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI; on which see MECS 1982-83, pp. 578-79). This cleric was the son of the late Ayatollah Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm of Najaf, perhaps the leading Shi'i religious authority of his time. He and his family were highly regarded throughout the Shi'i world, and Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ḥakīm was cast to play the role of authoritative cleric in the Islamic republic which Iran wished to establish in Iraq. His prominence in the opposition struggle led the Iraqi regime to attempt to destroy what was left of his family in Najaf. Three of his brothers and three nephews were executed in May 1983, and many other family members of all ages were arrested. Another leading figure in SAIRI was Hujjat al-Islam Sayyid Maḥmūd al-Ḥāshimī, who bore the title of ‘president’ of the assembly.

The oldest of the organizations united by SAIRI was al-Da'wa, led by its Najaf-born ‘spokesman’, Shaykh Muḥammad Mahdī al-'Āsīfī. Shaykh Mahdī al-Ḥakīm—another brother of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ḥakīm—also figured prominently in the organization. Al-Da'wa traced its origins to the Najaf of the 1960s, and revered the late Ayatollah Muḥammad Bāqir al-Sadr as founder and spiritual guide. Although al-Da'wa attracted mostly Iraqi Shi'is, it was also active among other Shi'i refugees in Iran, and among Shi'i associations and student groups in the West. Several military camps in Iran were reportedly run by al-Da'wa, to train Iraqi Shi'i refugees for Iran’s war with Iraq, and to support its own operations against the Iraqi regime. According to one member, Iran ‘gives us no aid other than authorization to be here’, but ‘the main training base is the Iranian front’. Al-Da'wa took credit not only for operations in Iraq, but for attacks upon Iraqi institutions and personnel in other countries. On 12 December 1983, this campaign found a new focus, when a group of Iraqi Shi'is, identified as members of al-Da'wa, carried out a series of bomb attacks in Kuwait, including the suicidal truck-bombing of the US embassy. (For details on bombings and their sequel, see chapter on the Gulf States.) Shaykh 'Āsīfī claimed that ‘we have nothing to do with those attacks’. But a SAIRI resolution declared that the attackers ‘have the right to blow up US and French embassies...they have the right to take their revenge on the US, because it is America which strengthens and supports Saddām [Husayn]’. Another organization, al-Mujāhidūn, was led by yet another brother, ‘Abd al-'Azīz al-Ḥakīm. This group had carried out a number of daring attacks in Iraq, and also regarded itself as having a wider mission. ‘We are working in co-ordination with all Islamic movements throughout the Arab world’, claimed the organization’s leading ideologue. But al-Da'wa and al-Mujāhidūn devoted themselves principally to the war against the Iraqi regime.
Another group with a more universal purpose went by the name of the Islamic Action Organization (Munazzamat al-'Amal al-Islāmī; not to be confused with the Lebanese Islamic Amal). Ḥujjat al-Islam Muḥammad Taqī al-Mudarrisī, the Karbalā-born author of numerous philosophical works and a Qurʾān commentary, headed this group. Khomeyni himself selected Muḥammad Taqī, a personal disciple and former student, to lead the organization. Islamic Action carried out suicidal bombing operations. According to Muḥammad Taqī, 'in one week I can gather 500 of the faithful who are prepared to launch suicide operations. No border will stop them'.'⁹⁶ Such bombings represented the principal tactic of the organization in hitting targets in Baghdad, as it did successfully on 23 November 1983 and 6 July 1984.⁹⁷ Muḥammad Taqī preached the unity of all Muslim movements, and did not hesitate to address appeals to Muslim revolutionaries as far afield as Egypt.⁹⁸ Islamic Action was reported to include Iraqis, Iranians, Bahrainis, Afghans, and North Africans, and worked closely with the Tehran-based Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, directed by Sayyid Ḥādī al-Mudarrisī, who was Muḥammad Taqī's brother.⁹⁹ Muḥammad Taqī was reported to have opposed the creation of SAIRI, since he regarded other Iraqi Shiʿī organizations as lacking in their devotion to Khomeyni.¹⁰⁰ But little more was known about the issues which divided the Iraqi émigré groups.

Iran also advocated the eventual establishment of an Islamic republic in Afghanistan, and the Afghan refugees in Iran created a reservoir of recruits for Shiʿī Afghan groups. (For the beginning of Iranian support for the Shiʿī Afghan resistance, see MECS 1982-83, p. 241.) These groups were allowed to open offices, and to man, train, and supply a resistance organization known as Nasr, while the Revolutionary Guards supported their own Afghan guerrilla organization, Sepah Pasdaran. Afghanistan openly accused Iran of 'training, equipping, and infiltrating mercenary bands under the sacred name of Islam'.¹⁰¹ In February 1984, an Afghan opposition radio station, the first on foreign soil, began to broadcast propaganda from Meshhed.¹⁰² There were obvious constraints on Iran's support for the resistance, and Iran had no desire to become a full party to the Afghan war. Its involvement was a barometer of Soviet-Iranian relations, which had deteriorated, and also reflected the ascendancy of ideologues who wished to give teeth to Iran's slogan of 'neither East nor West'.

IRAN IN LEBANON

Lebanon occupied a special place in Iranian strategy. The former Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon, Ḥujjat al-Islam Fakhr-Ruhani, gave several reasons for Lebanon's importance in Iran's regional calculations. First, there was the weakness of the Lebanese central Government. Governmental authority was 'the biggest obstacle to starting Islamic movements in the world', but since the Lebanese Government 'does not have much power, there is no serious obstacle in the way of the people of Lebanon'. Second, Lebanon constituted the 'heart of the Arab countries', from where ideas spread throughout Arab lands. 'We can conclude that the existence of an Islamic movement in that country will result in Islamic movements throughout the Arab world'. Fakhr-Ruhani believed that 'if activities continue as they are, Lebanon will reach the stage of an Islamic revolution'. Lebanon, in his view, stood where Iran had stood in late 1978.¹⁰³

In each part of Lebanon, Iran followed different tactics. Iranian involvement was most conspicuous in the Biqā' valley, particularly in and around Baʿalbak, where c. 1,500 Iranian Revolutionary Guards were stationed. There they co-operated with the
most openly pro-Iranian factions of Lebanon's Shi'is: Islamic Amal, led by Husayn al-Musawi, and the Party of God (Hizballah), led by 'Abbâs al-Musawi and Shaykh Subhi Tufayli. Husayn al-Musawi claimed that 'the Iranian presence in Ba'albak is cultural, social and informational. It has no military purpose or anything like that'. Revolutionary Guards undoubtedly dealt in indoctrination, and the contingent included 'ulamâ. But reports of other activities led Lebanon to sever relations with Iran in November 1983, when Iran refused to withdraw the Revolutionary Guards. France and Israel also held Iranian-Lebanese Shi'i co-operation responsible for truck-bombing attacks against their personnel in Lebanon, and carried out aerial bombardments against the bases near Ba'albak in November 1983. Thirteen Revolutionary Guards died in the attacks.

Since the Biqa' valley was Syrian-controlled territory, and all men and supplies had to come through Syria, Iran and Syria co-operated in defining the role of the Revolutionary Guards and their Lebanese Shi'i clients. The mediatory task fell to Iran's Ambassador to Syria, Hujjat al-Islam 'Ali Akbar Mohtashemipur, co-ordinator of Iranian activities in Syria and Lebanon. He lost one hand and three fingers of his other hand upon opening a letter-bomb marked as Islamic literature, but remained at his post in Damascus. Khomeini, the Revolutionary Guards, and the Iraqi Shi'i organizations also had their own liaison people in Syria. These secured essential political and logistical support, and were frequent visitors to the Biqa' valley. Syria encouraged this activity throughout 1983 and early 1984, since it served the Syrian aim of driving other foreign forces out of Lebanon. But as this policy succeeded, Syria grew less indulgent, for the next aim of Iran and its Lebanese clients was the establishment of an Islamic republic in Lebanon. A Lebanese cleric in Hizballah, speaking at a Biqa' ceremony marking the fifth anniversary of Iran's revolution, declared that 'we shall continue the struggle until the Jumayyil Government is toppled...we shall not stop fighting until an Islamic Government, led by the Imam of the umma [Khomeyni], is established'. These long-term aims were irreconcilable with Syria's plans for Lebanon. Because of the Iranian presence, Islamic revolution was preached most openly in this part of Lebanon, but the export of revolution had become an obvious source of tension between Iran and Syria by late 1984.

Iran faced different constraints in Beirut. Here an alternative was provided by a Lebanese Shi'i organization which sought redress of the specific grievances of Lebanese Shi'is, rather than Islamic revolution. Nabi Barri, the lawyer who headed the mainstream Amal militia, advocated reform of the Lebanese confessional system, not the establishment of an Islamic republic. According to him, Iran had severed all relations with his movement back in 1982.

But in the Shi'i quarters of Beirut, there was considerable sympathy for the Iranian revolution, and much of it coalesced around one figure: Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah. He was born in Najaf to a Lebanese father, and had also studied there. His preaching, which won him a sizeable following in Beirut, constituted a demand for the eventual constitution of Lebanon as an Islamic republic. Accusations of complicity were levelled at Fadlallah following the bomb attacks on the US and French contingents in Beirut, on 23 October 1983, in which nearly 300 lives were lost (see chapter on Lebanon). He immediately and consistently denied that he had anything to do with attacks on foreign forces. However, he did believe that 'the Iranian regime, with its mistakes, is the most humane regime in the world', and he visited Iran in late January 1984. There he met Khomeyni and Khameneh'i, and hailed Khomeyni as
leader of the world’s Muslims, the only person to confront the infidels with all his power and might'. Still, there were many enigmas surrounding his political attitudes and activities.

In South Lebanon—the Shīʿī heartland of Jabal ‘Āmil—Iran had still less direct influence. This region was under Israeli occupation, and Israel followed a policy of detaining or expelling Shīʿī ‘ulamāʾ who were suspected of religious agitation. A centre of such activity was the village of Jibshīṭ, under the spiritual leadership of a young Shīʿī cleric, Shaykh Rāghib Ḥarb. He also had studied in Najaf, until deported by the Iraqi authorities, and returned to his village where he gradually gained a following and a reputation for militancy. He was detained by the Israelis in the spring of 1983, prompting protests which led to his release. During a visit to Iran in December 1983, he met with the Majlis Speaker, Hashemi-Rafsanjani, and with Ayatollah Montazeri in Qom. While there, he commented on the severing of Lebanese-Iranian diplomatic relations the previous month, declaring that ‘my house in Lebanon is the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran’. At the age of thirty-two, this cleric thus became the most candid advocate of Islamic revolution in the Israeli-occupied part of Lebanon. But in February 1984, unidentified assassins shot him dead near his village. Montazeri sent a message of condolence to Lebanon’s ‘ulamāʾ, on ‘the martyrdom of this fighting clergyman, who spent his life fighting blasphemy and Zionism and exalting the word of Islam’. Prime Minister Musavi declared that the murder would ‘not go unreavenged’. The following month, Israeli units entered Jibshīṭ in force, to break the open defiance which had come to distinguish the village, and which was the legacy of Shaykh Rāghib Ḥarb.

WORLD REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS

Were these many activities subject to any central control and co-ordination? According to some sources, all of the Iranian-supported, Iraqi, Arab Gulf, Afghan, Lebanese, and other organizations, came under the authority of an Islamic Revolutionary Council. This council first met in March 1983, and was headed by Muhammad Taqī al-Mudarrasī (see above). He submitted proposals for action to a still higher authority, the Supreme Co-ordination Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iran and Revolutionary Islamic Movements in the World. Ayatollah Montazeri was reported to have presided over this council, which included Revolutionary Guards Commander Mohsen Rezaʿi, Foreign Ministry Political Under-Secretary Huseyn Sheykholeslam, Iranian Ground Forces Commander Sayyad Shirazi, and others. Of particular importance was the presence on the council of Sayyid Mehdi Hashemi, a personal disciple of Khomeyni, who was reported to have conducted the Foreign Ministry’s liaison with Muslim movements abroad.

The establishment of such a council had been discussed at length during 1982-83. In its annual report for that year, the Majlis Foreign Affairs Committee mentioned a ‘proposal to establish the council for supporting Islamic movements and liberation movements. This proposal was studied in numerous sessions of the Foreign Affairs Committee and, in this connection, meetings were held with the Minister and deputies of the Foreign Ministry, and those who had presented the proposal’. This wording made it apparent that the proposal emanated not from the Foreign Ministry, but from clerics in the Majlis. The debate would have revolved around the tie between such a council and the Foreign Ministry, which did not want to appear to openly support revolution elsewhere. A solution may have been found in attaching the council to
Montazeri’s office. But nothing was known about the council’s mandate, method of operation, or budget.

Iran had built a rudimentary network to spread the message of the revolution, one which relied largely upon Shi’i communities in other countries. From the outset, Khomeyni’s approach had been to reach out to the Muslim masses rather than their rulers, and to urge them to change their form of government. As an alternative, he offered the political doctrine of velayate faqih, the guardianship of the Muslim jurisprudent, meaning clerical rule. While the concept found more ready acceptance among Shi’is, Khomeyni directed his appeal to all Muslims. Sunnīs constituted 90 percent of the world’s Muslim population; exclusive reliance upon Shi’is would still leave Iran isolated. One of Iran’s most outspoken Sunnī supporters, the Pakistani director of the Muslim Institute in London, still believed that the revolution ‘has in a sense yet to emerge from its Iranian and Shi’i shell’. If Iran’s ‘ulamā ‘choose to remain purely Shi’i and Iranian in outlook, their influence outside Iran can only be general and diffuse’.119 The challenge facing Iran, in its contest with Muslim rivals, was to present Islamic revolution in such a way as to captivate the great Sunnī majority.

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD INTERNATIONAL

The Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn) had adherents in most Arab countries, and shared a perspective on politics and society with many like-minded Muslims elsewhere. According to Hasan al-Turābī, the ‘general guide’ of the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood ‘the Muslim Brotherhood is only a broad name that describes different organizations which are not organically linked to one supra-national organization, but they represent the aspirations of all [Muslim] societies to search for and reach their ideals’.120 This contradicted an earlier statement by a leading Egyptian Brotherhood activist, who once announced that ‘there is now, thank God, an international organization of the Muslim Brotherhood which will continue until it creates an Islamic state... We are not supposed to disclose any information about it’.121 In fact, the ties between the various parts were informal, even when close. The Brotherhood generally did not convene open conferences of their leading members, who were linked instead by a discreet network of correspondence and visits. For while the Brothers organized openly and even shared in power in some countries, elsewhere they operated clandestinely and in opposition.122

Many of the movement’s prominent figures did attend a conference on ‘Islam Today’, convened in Islamabad from 10-12 December 1983. The London-based Islamic Council of Europe sponsored the meeting. This organization, established in 1973 with Saudi support, had extensive ties with Muslim Brothers who propagandized and published in Europe. The Islamabad gathering also enjoyed the patronage of Pakistani President Ziya al-Haq. Among the 95 participants were the most important Muslim Brotherhood leaders: ‘Umar al-Tilmāni of Egypt, ‘Abd al-Rahmān Khalīfa of Jordan, ‘Adnān Sa’l-Dīn of Syria, Hasan al-Turābī of the Sudan, and Sa’īd Ramadān, responsible for European liaison through his Islamic Centre in Geneva. They were joined by Nur Misuari, the Filipino Muslim resistance leader, and leaders of the Afghan Muslim resistance groups based in Pakistan. The conference participants drafted a model Islamic constitution, which essentially codified the theory of state long expounded by Muslim Brotherhood ideologues.123

A report appeared during the year, claiming that Iran had established a cooperative relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood. Together they had set up a joint
action committee in Europe. But leading Muslim Brotherhood journals attacked this report as false. The Brothers were ideologically closer to the Saudi interpretation of an Islamic order, and generally benefited from Saudi support. There were also many Brothers who faulted Iran for failing to lend moral support to those Syrian Brothers who revolted against the Syrian regime in 1982. The animosity which separated the Muslim Brotherhood and Iran seriously undermined the Iranian revolution’s claim to represent the Muslim aspirations of Sunnis and Shi’is alike.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF 1984

With the approach of the pilgrimage season in 1984, the prospect of a confrontation between rival views of Islam loomed once again. (On the politics of the pilgrimage during the previous three seasons, see MECS 1981-82, pp. 284-88, 301-3; 1982-83, pp. 238, 249-51.) The past clashes at Mecca and Medina re-enacted the conflicts of the Muslim world on a smaller scale, and these conflicts remained unresolved. The question posed in 1984 was whether Iranian pilgrims would clash with Saudi security forces, or whether an understanding could be reached to preclude violence.

The Iranian Government faced tremendous demand among its nationals for the opportunity to make the pilgrimage to Mecca: 600,000 Iranians had submitted requests. Interest in the pilgrimage ran high because of the generally intensified religiosity of the masses since the revolution, and because war prevented Iranians from visiting the Shi’i pilgrimage cities of Najaf and Karbalā in Iraq. Iran sought to alleviate the pressure by organizing lesser pilgrimages to Syrian shrines, foremost among them the mausoleum of Zaynab in Damascus. About 2,000 Iranian pilgrims arrived in the Syrian capital each week. But this veneration of minor Syrian shrines did not have deep roots in Iranian Islam, and there was far more interest in the Meccan pilgrimage. In 1983, Iran sent 100,000 pilgrims to Mecca; in 1984, Iran announced that it would send 150,000. The Government declared this to be the maximum number which Iran could afford to send at a time of war, and allocated $213m in foreign currency to cover pilgrims’ expenses.

The Saudis now faced their recurring dilemma. Saudi authorities published their usual pilgrimage instructions, forbidding the import of printed matter, leaflets, or photographs of political or propagandizing content. The Saudis would ‘strike with a fist of iron at anyone who tries to tamper with the security and safety of the pilgrims’. But this time it was decided not to follow the policy of obstruction which exasperated the Iranians before the last pilgrimage. Khomeyni’s personal representative to the pilgrimage, Hujjat al-Islam Muḥammad Musavi-Kho’iniha, declared that Saudi officials were ‘generally co-operative’ in making practical arrangements.

This did not prevent various Iranian clerics from airing criticism of the Saudi conception of the pilgrimage as an apolitical ritual. Their platform was a seminar for ‘ulamā, managers, and supervisors assigned to Iran’s pilgrims, who met in a Tehran stadium from 8-10 July 1984. Ayatollah ‘Ali Meshkini, Chairman of the Assembly of Experts, demanded that an international Muslim council be entrusted with administering Mecca and Medina, which ‘must not remain under the control of a ruling group which indirectly supports the Zionists and is inimical towards the interests of Muslims’. But the Majlis Speaker, Hashemi-Rafsanjani, delivered the most important address, disavowing any Iranian advocacy of an international regime. ‘We have no intention of running the Ka’ba or Mecca. [They] are located in your country and it is up to you to run them. But we want you to manage them correctly, so that the people
can realize the goals of the Qurʾān'. He called upon the Saudis to allow Muslims to 'discuss their sufferings at Mecca'. The imperialist powers were 'many times more dangerous than the golden and stone idols of Mecca in the days of the Prophet...Allow the Muslims to break these idols'.

The Saudis read this as a conciliatory speech, and thought Hashemi-Rafsanjani to be amenable to a dialogue, particularly on the question of a negotiated settlement of the Iraqi-Iranian war. King Fahd of Saudi Arabia consequently invited Hashemi-Rafsanjani to perform the pilgrimage himself. The invitation was greeted with guarded thanks by its recipient, and an editorial in the ruling Islamic Republic Party's newspaper declared that the Saudi move indicated 'to some extent that the existing realities of the region have become clear to Riyadh'. But Hashemi-Rafsanjani put off a decision, apparently to seek Khomeyni's blessing, and Khomeyni then vetoed the idea.

Although the visit did not take place, the episode did reflect the attempt of Saudi Arabia to lure Iran into a cease-fire by friendly gestures. Iran did not ridicule the invitation because it sought to draw Saudi Arabia away from Iraq by occasionally showing (or feigning) moderation. This shadow diplomacy also produced the truce reached by both Governments over the political activities of Iran's pilgrims. In 1983, both sides had agreed that Iran's pilgrims could organize limited demonstrations and hold meetings, and this understanding carried over into 1984. Kho'iniha insisted upon the demonstrations, but declared that slogans would be directed only against the US, the USSR, and Israel. No slogans would be aimed at the Saudi Government, other governments, or pilgrims from other countries. After Kho'iniha arrived in Medina, Khomeyni also lent his authority to restraint. He instructed Iran's pilgrims to 'follow the prepared slogans and not respond to other slogans', and ordered that Iranians 'should even be peaceful towards the authorities and should not stand up and confront them'. The largest of the demonstrations took place on 17 August 1984 in Medina. Iran claimed that 100,000 demonstrators marched to the Prophet's Mosque. But there was no comparable march in Mecca of the sort which Iran organized in the past, and for the first time since 1980, Iranian pilgrims did not clash with the police in Mecca.

But it is customary for pilgrims to repair to Medina after the pilgrimage rituals at Mecca, and in Medina there occurred an incident which ended in an Iranian protest. On 12 September 1984, a mêlée broke out between Iranian and Iraqi pilgrims. Accounts of the incident varied, but as a result of the clash of rock-throwing and stick-wielding pilgrims, an Iranian pilgrim died. Some Iraqi pilgrims were arrested, but they were quickly released, for 'lack of evidence'. Saudi police also determined that the Iranians were responsible for starting the fight. The Iranian Foreign Ministry summoned the Saudi Chargé d'Affaires in Tehran, to deliver a protest, and to demand Saudi condemnation of this 'heinous atrocity', and the arrest and punishment of the 'guilty'. The Islamic Guidance Minister, Muḥammad Khatami, even declared that the Israeli provocation occurred with the support of Saudi officials in Medina. Kho'iniha faulted Saudi handling of the incident, which happened 'under the noses of the Saudi police'. But he advised Iran's pilgrims, some of whom rallied near his office in Medina, not to confront Saudi police. The entire episode mirrored the way in which all sides perceived each other's alignment in the Iraqi-Iranian war. But the incident was exceptional in this pilgrimage, and did not involve a confrontation between Iranian pilgrims and Saudi security forces.
Other developments briefly overshadowed the peace of the pilgrimage. The Saudi Arabian Embassy in Beirut delayed the granting of pilgrimage visas, primarily because of security concerns about Lebanese Shi'is applicants. On 24 August 1984, c. 150 armed protesters stormed the embassy's consular section, sacked the offices, and burned the building.\footnote{145} Saudi Arabia still made provisions for issuing 6,000 visas to Lebanese nationals,\footnote{146} but after doing so, closed the embassy in Beirut.\footnote{147} Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, the foremost pro-Iranian cleric in Beirut (see above), regretted the attack, but claimed that 'Saudi Arabia has a negative position towards the Shi'is of the world, including those in Saudi Arabia. The Shi'is feel this. It is fighting Shi'ism around the world, and has added the political dimension to its other [theological] forms of opposition to Shi'is'.\footnote{148}

The second development concerned Libyan pilgrims. These had made for occasional problems in the past, but Libya's relations with Saudi Arabia were generally correct, and Qadhđhāfī had even helped Saudi Arabia and Iran reach an understanding over the pilgrimage the previous year (see MECS 1982-83, p. 250). But during August 1984, two planes and two ships bearing Libyan pilgrims were turned away from Jidda, when the pilgrims, some claiming diplomatic immunity, refused to allow customs authorities to examine their luggage.\footnote{149} In a speech on 1 September 1984, Qadhđhāfī himself made an unusual appeal to Libyan pilgrims already in the country. He called upon them not to threaten security in Mecca and Medina, and not to cause any disturbance. 'I say this because early this morning I received reports from King Hasan, King Fahd, and Syria to the effect that...the Libyan pilgrims have swept or want to sweep the streets of Mecca and take control of the holy mosque'. There were Libyan 'extremists' who threatened to destroy the Great Mosque;\footnote{150} but the Saudis made no public mention of any such conspiracy. Saudi Interior Minister, Nā'iif Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, referred to 'some irresponsible actions' outside the Great Mosque in Mecca, but did not identify the perpetrators.\footnote{151}

The 1984 pilgrimage generally represented a respite from the violence of the past few years. It was also a smaller pilgrimage: 1.64m pilgrims attended, down from 2.5m the previous year.\footnote{152} The Iranians, with their increase, thus constituted a larger proportion of pilgrims than in any pilgrimage season since Iran's revolution, and the largest group (17 per cent) of foreign pilgrims. The potential for confrontation had grown, even as the violence diminished. For Iran's position on the pilgrimage, as explained by Hashemi-Rafsanjani, rested upon a religious principle: 'Should Muslims, in their great and huge gathering, not raise their problems and take at least one step for the sake of the liberation of Palestine? If your answer is no, then you are not Muslims'.\footnote{153}

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NOTES

For the place and frequency of publications cited here, and for the full name of the publication, news agency, radio station or monitoring service where an abbreviation is used, please see 'List of Sources'. Only in the case of more than one publication bearing the same name is the place of publication noted here.

1. Chatti's summit conference speech, NYT, 13 January; MAP, 13 January—DR, 13 January 1984.
2. Pakistan's candidate was Sharifuddin Pirzada, president of the ICO's experts' committee
for an international Islamic court of justice; Bangladesh nominated its current Foreign Minister, A.R. Shamsuddoha, to the position. The selection was scheduled for the Dacca Foreign Ministers’ conference (see below), but was postponed when neither side proved willing to compromise. Still, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, claimed that an ‘amicable understanding’ had been reached between the two States, and that the issue would definitely be settled at the summit conference. (R. Karachi in English, 12 December—DR, 14 December 1983.) But neither side relented, and the summit resolved to extend Chatti’s term until the next annual Foreign Ministers’ conference, held in December 1984 in San‘a. On that occasion, Pirzada was elected Secretary-General.

3. Dacca BSS, 6 December—DR, 6 December. The Bangladeshi conference hosts were reportedly ‘disappointed’ with the low level of attendance; AFP, 6 December—DR, 6 December 1983.


5. Accounts of walk-out, The Times, 12 December; IHT, 12 December; resolutions in SPA, 10 December—DR, 12 December 1983.


12. Egypt sent an official to South-East Asia to win support for such a move; FT, 20 January 1984. As early as July 1983, Bangladesh’s Ambassador to Egypt announced that Egypt might be invited to Dacca; May, 11 July 1983.


22. Such arguments were made by King Hasan and Yāṣir ‘Arafāt; al-‘Alam, Rabat, 22 January; al-Tadhūnūn, 28 January; al-Ahrām, 31 January 1984.


27. Interview with Ghālī, R. Paris, 20 January—DR, 23 January 1984. According to one Egyptian source, Mūbārak received telephone assurances from King Fāhdi of Saudi Arabia, that no conditions would be attached to Egypt’s return; WSJ, 24 January 1984.


34. Interview with Huseyn Sheykhholeslam, IRNA in English, 31 July—SWB, 2 August 1984.


38. This proposal did not figure in the final statement, but in the Casablanca Charter, a general outline of principles of the kind which customarily accompanies the resolutions of an Islamic summit. The task of these committees would be to settle 'differences and conflicts'. The summit 'divided the Islamic world in geographical terms, defining the areas and appointing members of the regional committees of reconciliation and concord'. To assure objectivity in the work of these committees, it was agreed that the region assigned to each committee 'shall be one to which its members do not belong'. More details apparently appeared in an unpublished appendix. Text of Casablanca Charter, R. Rabat, 20 January—SWB, 23 January 1984. The summit asked the next Foreign Ministers' conference in San‘ā to appoint the members of these committees; summit statement, R. Rabat, 19 January—SWB, 21 January 1984.

39. Account of Chatti report to ICO Jerusalem Committee, MAP, 3 October—DR, 4 October. The officer was identified in the report as General Fazal Moqim. At Dacca, Chatti promised once again that the bureau would be established; al-Nūr, 14 December 1983.

40. KUNA, 14 April—DR, 16 April; interview with Chatti, R. Monte Carlo, 25 April—DR, 27 April. Egypt agreed to attend; MENA, 6 April 1984.


42. Details of Fez meeting, 'Ukız, 2 May 1984.


49. Critique of ICO's development, al-Da'wa, Riyadh, 23 April; cf. interview with Hasan al-Tuhāmī, former ICO Secretary-General, al-Sharq al-Awsat, 8 January 1984.

50. Interview with Nasīf, al-Majalla, 1-7 October—JPRS, 2 December 1983.


53. Interview with Nasīf, al-Majalla, 1-7 October—JPRS, 2 December 1983.


57. According to a pro-Iranian newspaper, the MWL had considered calling a world conference of Shi'i 'ulamā' opposed to the Iranian revolution. The creation of a Shi'i cell in the MWL, and a Shi'i section in the Supreme World Council of Mosques, was also reportedly discussed. Crescent International, 1-15 May 1984. None of these proposals figured in MWL publications.


65. MM, 1 October; Arabia, The Islamic World Review, November 1984. Kāmil also proposed the establishment of an 'Islamic free zone' somewhere between Mecca and Jidda, to provide the Islamic world's 'own Bahamas'.


69. Interview with Khameneh’ī’s, Ettela‘at, 7 March 1984.

70. For another account of Iran’s approach to exporting the revolution, with an emphasis on overt methods, see Ahmad Mahrad, ‘Zur Rolle des iranischen Ministeriums für islamische Aufklärung’, Orient, March 1984, pp. 65-82.

71. Accounts of the conference, IRNA, 4, 7 February—DR, 8 February; TT, 7 February; Ettela‘at, 6 February; La Repubblica, 25 February—JPRS, 28 March 1984.

72. The congress reported in MECS 1982-83 as the second, was actually regarded by the organizers as the first, since it was then that the congress established a permanent secretariat. The earlier gathering described in MECS 1981-82 was therefore not counted by the organizers in their formal enumeration of the congresses.

73. Khomeyni’s speech, R. Tehran, 13 May—DR, 14 May; SWB, 15 May; TT, 14 May; KI, 20 May 1984.

74. Khameneh’ī’s speech, IRNA, 6 May—DR, 7 May; TT, 7 May 1984.

75. TT, 19 May 1984.


77. IRNA, 14 August—DR, 15 August 1984.


86. WP, 29 March 1984.


88. NYT, 28 September 1984.


91. Al-Da‘wa’s branches and publications described in al-Mujtama‘, 20, 27 December 1983.

92. Interview with al-Da‘wa activist, AFP, 10 January—DR, 12 January 1982.


102. FR, 2 August 1984.


104. Mūswāt’s interview, al-Majalla, 10-16 December 1983.


106. Barri interview, Le Monde, 22 March; although he declared that 'we would like to establish
112. Ettela'at, 21 December 1983.
116. Accounts of councils in *al-Dustūr*, London, 27 August; FR, 27 September 1984. *FR* reported the same developments, but placed the Supreme Co-ordination Council under both Montazeri and Hujjat al-Islam Musavi-Kho’iniha, and named several different council members, including Revolutionary Guards Minister Moḥsen Rafiqdust.
129. Interview with Kho’iniha, R. Tehran, 6 April—DR, 10 April; *Kayhan*, 7 April 1984.
130. Kho’iniha interview, IRNA, 11 July—SWB, 13 July 1984. Saudi Arabia agreed to allow Iranians to make the lesser pilgrimage (‘umra), which is performed out of season. Iran planned to send 1,000 such pilgrims weekly, for seven months of the year; *TT*, 24 April 1984.
133. Meshkini’s speech, IRNA, 8 July—SWB, 10 July 1984.
134. Rafsanjani’s speech, R. Tehran, 10 July—DR, 11 July; SWB, 12 July 1984.
138. Interview with Kho’iniha, IRNA, 30 July—SWB, 1 August 1984.
139. Khomeyni’s *ʿId al-ʿAdhā* message, IRNA, 29 August—SWB, 31 August, 1984.
144. IRNA, 16 September—SWB, 18 September; IRNA, 18 September—SWB, 20 September 1984.
147. SPA, 2 September—DR, 4 September 1984.
148. Interview with Fadlallah, *Monday Morning*, 15-21 October 1984. Fadlallah himself was in
Saudi Arabia for the pilgrimage, at the time of the incident.

149. MEI, September 1984.
150. Qadhdhafi's speech, R. Tripoli, 1 September—DR, 4 September 1984.
151. Nā'īf's remarks, SPA, 6 September—DR, 7 September; R. Jidda, 7 September—DR, 10 September 1984.
152. Pilgrimage statistics given by SPA, 3 September—SWB, 5 September; SPA, 6 September—SWB, 10 September 1984.