



ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Lake Erie International Model United Nations

Northcoast Conference XXXIII

March 22-24, 2012

CHAIRING STYLE

On behalf of myself and the rest of the LEIMUN staff, I would like to welcome you to the Lake Erie International Model United Nations Corporation's Northcoast Conference XXXIII. I am the Chairman of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. I have been a frequent participant in chairing various councils as well as debating.

The point of this section of my Chairman's Letter is to introduce you to my chairing style and the expectations I have for this council.

My associates, former delegates and advisors have described my chairing style as a bit strict. I believe that is a vague description of a chairing style, although I am a serious chair. I am a strict chair but believe that I should enforce the rules as the facilitator of debate and not direct the body in the direction to go. That being said, I will leave all of the debating completely up to you. I will only interject if asked to do so. I will also interject if there is a serious problem such as, the body losing control or straying away from the topic, or if there is a violation of the Rules of Procedure.

As a chair, the Vice-Chairman and I will not only be the facilitators of debate, we will also evaluate each delegation. Our responsibility is to evaluate delegate performance while yours is to debate. That being said, neither I nor the co-chairs will answer any specific questions concerning council topics, country policies, or the Rules of Procedure to a specific delegation. If there is a question, it must be asked through proper parliamentary rules and will be answered to the body as a whole.

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation is a regional international organization and is composed mainly of predominantly Islamic nations. Also, make sure to know the difference between a nation and a state. For instance, Palestine is not classified as a state in the international community; it is classified as a nation due to the lack of a defined border. Every state is a nation but not every nation is a state. Make sure to use the correct terminology when referring to a nation, state or country. The OIC tends to focus more on internal cooperation with its member states in solving problems and does not rely on other states to assist. You will realize that many of the topics overlap one another in information and problems, but while in council stick to the topic that is set.

My expectation is that all delegates do the following.

1. Read the entire Chairman's Letter ☺
2. Have substantial research concerning the OIC as an organization, your country's policy, and the assigned topics.
3. Know the LEIMUN Rules of Procedure and know how to use them.
4. Know the LEIMUN Conference Handbook and Conference Policies.

5. Come to the conference prepared and arrive on time to each session.
6. Be diplomatic (respectful, courteous, and no profanity).
7. Have fun!!!

As a side note, I simply cannot stand the mispronunciation of commonly used country names or words. Commonly mispronounced words: Iran, Iraq and nuclear. These words should be pronounced: Iran (e-rahn), Iraq (e-rak), nuclear (new-clear).

More detailed information on the evaluative process, rules of procedure, and conference policies can be found on our conference website, www.leimun.com.

THE TOPICS

Combating Terrorism

Terrorism has been a major issue that encompasses the majority of the countries in the World. The OIC is not an exception. The United Nations and the OIC have both struggled to define terrorism or an act of terrorism. Although the OIC has not come to a clear definition of terrorism, it noted in 2002 that terrorism was not involved with the situation between the Palestinians and Israel. The OIC stated "We reject any attempt to link terrorism to the struggle of the Palestinian people in the exercise of their inalienable right to establish their independent state with Al-Quds Al-Shrif (Jerusalem) as its capital" in the Dakar Declaration of the OIC from March 17, 2008, The OIC also signed a statement in favor of the Palestinian people's "blessed intifada," meaning the Palestinians are not terrorists. It also condemned Israel for state sponsored terrorism against the Palestinians.

The 1999 Convention to Combat Terrorism is one of the most important events concerning the OIC's battle with terrorism. In the Convention, the OIC member states laid the framework for a basic definition of "terrorism" and "terrorist crime." They also established preventative measures to combat terrorist crimes. Cooperation between member states is another important idea in the convention. The basic framework for cooperation is established in the convention for how states should cooperate. States must exchange information with each other, investigate acts of terrorism conjunctively, exchange expertise, and educate/provide information concerning combating terrorism and the vicious campaign against Islam. The convention also establishes ground rules for extraditing criminals and a rogatory commission.

The OIC defined their position at the OIC summit in Dakar Senegal in 2008. The OIC condemned all forms of terrorism in conjunction with the UN. The Declaration reads "The Leaders of Muslim countries hereby renew their pledge to preserve world peace and security, one of the OIC's objectives, and thus to fully adhere to the United Nations' key mission in this regard as well as international legality as a rule for all without any political double standards." The OIC reaffirmed their confidence and compliance in Security Council resolutions on Al-Quds. The OIC also proclaimed that their common position on the Palestinian question as a whole for supporting UN SC resolutions, the Arab peace Initiative and the Road Map. The OIC continued and continues to condemn Israel for their refusal to comply with resolutions that would lead to the creation of a Palestinian state, the withdrawal of forces from the Syrian Golan and the cessation of hostilities from Lebanon.

Questions:

- 1) How does your country define terrorism?
- 2) In the past, how has your country combated terrorism?

- 3) Has your country contributed to UN and/or OIC efforts in combating terrorism? If so how?

Resources:

www.oic-oci.org

www.oicun.org

www.bbc.co.uk

www.reuters.com

<http://observer.gm/africa/gambia/article/2008/3/17/dakar-declaration-of-the-2008-oic-conference>

<http://www.oicun.org/7/38/>

Combating Islamophobia

Throughout much of the world, the terrorist attacks within this past decade have in one way or another linked with Islam. In the eyes of member states of the OIC, Islamophobia is a form of terrorism. The OIC defines Islamophobia as “a deliberate defamation of Islam and discrimination and intolerance against Muslims.” The OIC also deplores the Western media for misrepresenting Islam and Muslims in correlation with terrorism. “The linkage of terrorists and extremists with Islam in a generalized manner is unacceptable,” they said. “This is further inciting negative sentiments and hatred in the West against Muslims.”

The OIC has also blamed the Western media for not helping rid the world of Islamophobia due to the conditions that Muslims have to live with in Western countries. Foreign ministers have also stated that “because of Islamophobia, millions of Muslims in Western countries, some already underprivileged, are further being alienated and targeted by hatred and discrimination.” They also argue that the anti-discrimination and anti-blasphemy efforts being made by Western countries are not being implemented enough. The ministers argue that when the laws are applied to Muslims, the laws are in a very selective manner.

Despite the lack of efforts from the Western countries, the OIC has made great strides in combating Islamophobia and negative feelings toward the West. The ministers have recognized and agreed that there was a need to promote greater understanding and awareness of Islam. The ministers stated “in the Muslim world, endeavors have to be made to dispel misperceptions about the West and to promote democracy, human rights and good governance.”

There has been some cooperation with the OIC and the West. There have been initiatives to bring the Muslim world and the West together such as the EU-OIC Forum of 2002, Dialogue Among Civilizations and Alliance of Civilizations. However, the OIC still blames the West for being the main culprit of Islamophobia. “It remains a fact that anti-Islamic sentiments are being fanned in the West with the implicit and explicit support of racist anti-immigrant and ultra-right political parties and certain media outlets” (http://www.islamophobia.org/print.php?type=N&item_id=530). The OIC hopes to combat the stereotypes through education and change the mind of Western states by the promotion of Islam’s beliefs and values.

Questions:

- 1) How does your country define Islamophobia?
- 2) In the past, how has your country combated Islamophobia?
- 3) Considering your country’s policies on human/individual rights, how has your country contributed to the negative stereotypes?

Resources:

www.arabnews.com
www.oic-oci.org
www.oicun.org
<http://www.oicun.org/74/>

Supporting the Islamic Development Bank

The Islamic Development Bank is an institution of the OIC that was created in order to support the economic development of its member states and Muslim communities in accordance with Sharia Law. The IDB can be compared to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, but the IDB only helps member states of the OIC. The Bank provides loans for productive projects and financial assistance to member states to further economic and social development. The Bank also provides assistance to help member states increase their foreign trade. The Bank provides loans to governments for government projects that would help increase the stability of their infrastructure such as roads, dams, schools, hospitals, and housing.

Since the Bank operates under Sharia Law, the Bank is very different from a Western bank. The IDB cannot charge interest because of the restrictions of Sharia Law. The Bank makes its money by levying a service fee on the loan which is the same amount as what the interest rate would be on a traditional loan.

One issue that the IDB assists with and will continue to be called upon to assist with is the Arab Spring. The IDB will be called upon to assist countries affected by the Arab Spring to help rebuild countries hurt by conflict and violence. Iraq has already received a large amount of funds from the Bank. The IDB promised Iraq US\$500 million in loans to help rebuild the country. Under Islamic Law, the IDB will be called upon to assist Libya, Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia and other countries affected by violence due to the Arab Spring.

Because of the issues that were the causes of the Arab Spring, such as youth unemployment, the Bank has already taken steps to assist young people in finding work or creating their own business. In April 2011, the IDB promised \$250 million to finance employment opportunities for the youth by establishing projects in Arab countries affected by the Arab Spring. So far the Bank has not distributed any funds for the projects due to the lack of funding from member countries.

The lack of funding is the major issue that must be dealt with. Because the IDB lacks the funds to combat the financial problems of states, the states that lack infrastructure, economic and financial stability will continue to deteriorate in those areas.

Questions:

- 1) Is your country one of the main shareholders of the IDB, and what does that mean?
- 2) Has your country received money from the IDB and what for?
- 3) What ideas does your country have to help promote the IDB, if any?

Resources:

www.isdb.org
www.oic-oci.org
www.web.worldbank.org

The ‘Arab Spring’ or Emerging Popular Uprisings in the Arab World

The Arab Spring is by far one of the most important events in the history the region. The Arab Spring has had an enormous impact across every state in the region. The region has been historically ruled by dictators and corrupt governments that have stripped their people of their basic rights by the use of force and other methods. Those who have wanted freedom from their oppressive governments have toppled multiple regimes and caused others to reform.

The movement started in Tunisia by a young street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi. Bouazizi was protesting against the Tunisian government because he felt that he had been wronged by the government's confiscation of his scales that he needed to make a living. The first protest in Tunisia was by Bouazizi's self-immolation that sparked the start of the revolution in Tunisia and the entire Arab Spring. His actions were so significant because many in Tunisia had similar struggles and could relate to him. Youth unemployment in Tunisia was very high at the time and that generation did not see a future for themselves within the country because of the government. The president of Tunisia at the time, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's government was known as extremely corrupt. After Bouazizi's "statement," there were massive protests in the streets of the capital Tunis. The government was unable to control the massive amount of protesters which led to Ben Ali fleeing the country on January 14, 2011.

After the spark of the Arab Spring in Tunisia, the Arab Spring has spread to a variety of countries and has led to the toppling of governments. In Egypt and Syria, the oppressive governments have fallen and there have been more protests in other countries. There have been a series of protests in Yemen that led to an assassination attempt of their President Ali Abdullah Saleh. In Jordan, King Abdullah II dismissed the government in the face of large scale street protests. The King of Morocco has proposed changes the government including constitutional reforms. The protests by Shia majority were repressed by the Sunni Muslim government in Bahrain with help from Saudi Arabia. There were even protests in Saudi Arabia in which women were protesting the government's laws concerning women driving. One of the most alarming areas is Syria. The government of Syria has been accused of killing and using excessive force in dealing with protesters.

The OIC has some controversial issues to address when dealing with the topic as a whole. First, the OIC must determine if they will support the growth of the Arab Spring and how, or if they will combat it. The OIC has already asked the Syrian government to use restraint when dealing with protesters urging the government to use more peaceful methods, but the violence still continues. Secondly, the OIC must determine whether or not to provide economic assistance and humanitarian aid to countries that have a change in their government. Egypt and Libya currently have transitional governments and elections have been an issue due to the uncertainty of free and fair elections. The OIC has not taken an official particular stance on the issue as a whole but has supported the "national dialogue" that has been taking place.

Questions:

- 1) Has your country been affected by the Arab Spring, if so how?
- 2) Does your country support the changes that are happening in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt and Libya? If so which countries does your country support, why and how?
- 3) What does your country see in the future of the Arab Spring countries?

Resources:

www.foreignaffairs.com

www.oic-oci.org

www.english/aljazeera.net

Additional Research Links for the OIC and Individual Country Policies

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

www.oic-oci.org
www.oic-un.org
www.arab.de/arabinfo/oic.html
www.irna.ir/oic/oicabout.html
www.irna.ir/oic/index.html
www.infoplease.com/spot/oicstates1.html

Individual Country Policies

www.embassy.org
www.newint.org
www.libraryspot.com
www.infoplease.com
www.eldis.org/country
www.economist.com/countries
www.emulateme.com
<http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.htm>
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country_profiles
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middleeast/country_profiles

The World Almanac
The Economist
The New York Times
CIA World Fact Book