

independence, to establish very close co-operation with Iran in diverse fields, including common membership of military pacts.

Iran also sought to maintain a strong relationship with Pakistan. At the end of the Second World War, Iran was a vulnerable country. The Soviet Union, which had occupied northern Iran during the War, finally withdrew only after considerable pressure by the West. The Soviet expansionist designs in Iran were proved by the Soviet-German Pact of 1940. Iran had oil wealth of its own and was also the gateway to the Gulf. Left on its own, it was vulnerable to the Soviet Union as well as the threat from its local Soviet-inspired communists. Iran had, therefore, to look for an equalizer from the West. However, the oil interests of the West also made Iran vulnerable to manipulations by the Western countries in its internal and external policies. The West even intervened in Iran in the 1950s to overthrow the nationalistic government of Prime Minister Dr Mossaddegh.

Iran, therefore, welcomed in its vicinity the emergence of a friend like Pakistan as a counter-balance against these security threats. Till 1971, Pakistan was also viewed as militarily stronger than Iran and relatively more developed than Iran in the technical and industrial fields. Pakistan's geo-strategic importance was also understood by Iran. In view of the traditional rivalry between Iran and the Arab countries, Iran took satisfaction from the presence of Pakistan as another non-Arab Muslim country in the region. In consequence, the fifties and sixties saw a kind of special relationship between Iran and Pakistan, marked by close co-ordination between the two countries in the political, military, and other fields. In particular, Iran extended valuable military assistance to Pakistan in the two wars against India.

With the defeat of Pakistan in the 1971 War, the emergence of Bangladesh and the growth of centrifugal tendencies in Pakistan, the Iranian posture, under its increasingly imperious ruler, the Shah—now styled as the Shahenshah—underwent a change. The growing affluence of Iran in the seventies, as a result of the oil boom, added to his arrogance. In this period, Iran also extended some financial assistance to Pakistan. This,

if anything, added to the Shah's condescending attitude towards Pakistan. He openly hinted that in the case of a 'further disintegration' of Pakistan, Iran might take over Pakistan's Balochistan province located on Iran's eastern border. The Shah started to act as the senior partner in the relationship. For instance, he declined to participate in the Islamic Summit held in Pakistan in 1974 because it was also being attended by the Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi, whom he despised. The Shah was, in fact, furious when Gaddafi was given a big welcome in Pakistan. He commented contemptuously that 'supplicants' before Gaddafi (meaning Pakistan) did not rank high in his esteem. It took a great deal of effort from Pakistan before the Shah could be mollified.

As the Shah's relations with the Gulf Arab countries deteriorated in the early 1970s, following Iran's seizure of three islands belonging to the UAE, Pakistan's friendly ties with these countries came under Iranian suspicions. The Arab insistence on calling the Persian Gulf as the 'Arab' Gulf angered the Shah. It was somewhat characteristic of the bilateral relationship with Pakistan in this period that the Iranian Ambassador in Islamabad, instead of working on the positive elements in the bilateral relationship, was spending his time looking at all kinds of official and unofficial documents in Pakistan to find out if any nomenclature other than the Persian Gulf had been used. Indeed, diplomatic protests were lodged with Pakistan whenever the correct name was not used, reflecting poorly on the state of bilateral relations in which even such a trivial 'offence' by Pakistan drew Iranian ire. Moreover, the absurdity of this exercise was clearly not understood by the Iranians, nor by the Arabs for that matter, either at that time or even now. The fact of the matter is that a geographical name confers no political rights, otherwise the Arabian Sea would belong to Saudi Arabia, the English Channel would belong to England and the Indian Ocean would belong to India!

The fall of the Shah of Iran in January 1979 and the coming of the Islamic Revolution under Khomeini's leadership brought about a transformation in Iran's external as well as internal

abiding passion and dream. Gaddafi has also been bitterly critical of the US for its support of Israel. Anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism have thus been the main planks of Libya's foreign policy under Gaddafi.

Gaddafi also espoused Islamic causes. For instance, he denounced India for the 1971 War and also extended some military assistance to Pakistan. This had an electrifying effect on Pakistani public opinion. As a result, when Gaddafi visited Pakistan to attend the Islamic Summit in Lahore in 1974, he received a rapturous welcome as a great Islamic hero. During this visit, Libya and Pakistan signed several very ambitious and wide-ranging agreements, including one on nuclear collaboration. However, Pakistan soon found out that Gaddafi's promises of big economic support hardly ever materialized. Contrary to popular perceptions which somehow continue to persist in Pakistan and elsewhere, very little money ever came from Libya to Pakistan, as compared to, say, what Pakistan received from Saudi Arabia or UAE or Iran. Similarly, contrary to impressions in some quarters, there was never any meaningful co-operation between Libya and Pakistan in the nuclear field.

A basic difficulty was that the Libyans were insistent, in general, on locating any joint projects in Libyan territory. This made little economic sense since it was obvious that the manpower and expertise was to be found in Pakistan while the capital was available in Libya. Hence, logically, the location of the projects should have been in Pakistan. Libya's growing notoriety and international isolation, as a state encouraging international terrorism, made Pakistan hesitant to establish close contacts with Libya in the nuclear field which would only have jeopardized Pakistan's more important relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the US. Hence, the various agreements with Libya remained largely on paper only. This was not a unique case. Libya had signed similarly ambitious agreements with several other countries and nothing seems to have come out of them. Impractical schemes have been a trademark of Gaddafi.

In the mid-seventies, Gaddafi was coming increasingly under the influence of the Soviet bloc and was moving closer to

socialistic ideas. Practically all business establishments in Libya were nationalized, leading to great shortages of consumer goods in the country. In opposition to both capitalism and communism, Gaddafi espoused his own 'third theory' of political and economic system, which was supposed to be neither like the West nor the East. He developed his own version of the socialist concept of the 'withering away of the state.' In Gaddafi's version, the state would be replaced by the *jamahiriyah* or a kind of people's self-rule at the grass-roots level. In such a state, in theory, there would be no government, no ministers, no army, no embassies etc. Instead, everything would be decided by the people themselves operating through people's committees. Libya was even declared to have become the first such *jamahiriyah* in the world and other countries were expected to follow suit. But, of course, all the state institutions in Libya including the army continued to function, albeit under different names.

In the process of this ideological slant towards socialistic ideas, Gaddafi was in fact moving away from traditional Islam. His 'Green Book' is mainly a hotchpotch of socialism and anti-imperialist ideas and makes practically no mention of Islam. The slogan displayed in some places in Libya that 'the Quran is our Constitution' has been devoid of any meaning. The most determined internal opposition to Gaddafi has come from the Islamic circles who, in turn, have been suppressed by Gaddafi with an iron hand. Abroad, he has been at odds with nearly all Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia. The impression that Gaddafi is an ardent Muslim spread from such early acts like prohibition, the ban on night clubs and Gaddafi's publicized leading of Islamic prayers. However, as the saying goes, a man is known by the company he keeps. Until the collapse of the Soviet Communist bloc in 1991, Gaddafi's best friends were the communist countries and he had hardly any friends among governments in the Islamic world. When the Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan, Gaddafi felt no concern for the Afghan Muslims. In fact, Libya was one of the few Islamic countries to receive the representatives of the Afghan communist regime. Gaddafi was even bitterly critical of Pakistan's support for the

Afghan Mujahideen in collaboration with the US. He once publicly said in 1980 that he did not believe in 'the Islam of Islamabad whose Ka'aba is Washington.'

Gaddafi's friendship with Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has received much publicity. The main reason for this warmth for Bhutto was the big popular reception that Gaddafi received during his visit to Pakistan in 1974. Actually, the Pakistani people had idealized Gaddafi as a great Muslim leader and friend of Pakistan for his role in the 1971 War. This spontaneous reception had even embarrassed Bhutto because the Shah of Iran had already kept away from the Lahore Summit due to Gaddafi's presence and was further peeved by the popularity of Gaddafi in Pakistan. For his part, Gaddafi assumed that it was Bhutto who had specially organized this great welcome. After having signed the various ambitious agreements for collaboration with Libya, Bhutto had second thoughts and he ordered a go-slow on these agreements. This was partially done for fear that too close a friendship with Libya would adversely affect Pakistan's important relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the US. Moreover, Libya's reluctance to part with money for various projects also cooled down the enthusiasm in Pakistan for Gaddafi.

It is true that Bhutto's overthrow was seen as a setback by Gaddafi. However, General Ziaul Haq, who had ousted Bhutto, visited Libya in 1978 and there were also other high-ranking visits exchanged between the two countries. In fact, Gaddafi, who was having problems with several neighbours, was very keen in this period to secure Ziaul Haq's approval to allow Pakistanis to serve in the Libyan armed forces, basically as mercenaries. It was Ziaul Haq's refusal to permit such use of Pakistani manpower that really irked Gaddafi. Moreover, his appeals for clemency for Bhutto were turned down. There is no doubt that Bhutto's execution greatly shocked Gaddafi. The Libyan Ambassador in Islamabad was quietly recalled. The collaboration with Pakistan, however, continued and a large number of Pakistani military deputationists remained in Libya.

But the bilateral climate had been vitiated by a number of factors mentioned above.

In this situation, Pakistan's abrupt decision, in early 1980, to recall all military deputationists from Libya, ostensibly because their services were needed back home due to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, triggered a grave crisis in the bilateral relations. Libya found out that military deputationists were not being withdrawn at that time from Syria and elsewhere. Angered, Gaddafi issued secret orders for the expulsion of some 80000 Pakistani workers in Libya within a period of three months. Officially, the Libyans denied that any such orders had been issued. Only after considerable persuasion on both sides, the two governments revoked their respective orders. However, Gaddafi's main focus still remained on securing Pakistani mercenaries and his clandestine efforts to do so provoked a fresh crisis in relations with Pakistan in 1981. Having failed in this bid again, Gaddafi tried to make amends with Ziaul Haq. In 1982, he extended an invitation to General Ziaul Haq to visit Libya. Opinion was divided on the Pakistani side on this issue but, finally, this invitation was not accepted.

Islamabad came to the conclusion that it made little sense to adopt an unfriendly attitude towards Gaddafi. For one thing, his reputation for harbouring political opponents of various regimes in the world also dictated prudence for Ziaul Haq who had no shortage of opponents. This was illustrated by the case of hijacking of a PIA plane in 1981 by the Al-Zulfikar terrorists, headed by the late Bhutto's son Murtaza, which was heading for Libya but was finally not allowed to land there. With the consent of Ziaul Haq, the political activists released on the demand of the hijackers were given political asylum in Libya. Islamabad thus agreed with the recommendation that the prudent course for Pakistan was to have a balanced relationship with Libya, getting neither too close to it nor too distant from it. This policy has since been maintained and was not materially changed even when Bhutto's daughter Benazir twice became the Prime Minister of Pakistan between 1988 to 1996.



Egypt

Even before Pakistan's independence the Muslim League had established a good equation with Wafd, the main Egyptian political party. Pakistan's strong espousal of the Palestinian and Arab cause endeared it to the Egyptians and other Arabs. However, the early efforts by Pakistan to set up an Islamic bloc were rebuffed by King Farooq who evidently saw this as a move by Pakistan to bid for leadership of the Islamic world.

The radicalization of Arab public opinion, following the Egyptian Revolution in 1953, adversely affected relations with Pakistan because of the latter's close identification at that time with the Western world. Even a traditional friend like Saudi Arabia was critical of Pakistan's joining the Baghdad Pact, which enrolled an Arab country, Iraq, in a Western-sponsored military pact. The strongest criticism of Pakistan came from Egypt, Syria and, later on, from Iraq after the overthrow of its monarchy in 1958. Arising out of their opposition to US support for Israel, these countries also drew closer to the Soviet bloc.

As a philosophy, Pan-Arabism in general excluded the non-Arabs and thus worked to Pakistan's disadvantage. The influence of Nasserism and Ba'athism in some of the Arab countries like Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, apart from the Palestinians, also created strains with Pakistan. Their emphasis on Arabism, socialism, and secularism left Pakistan out in the cold. At the same time, their relations with India warmed up. Subsequently, Nasser and Nehru became the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement. In any case, India's large size has always been a strong attraction for at least some of the Arab countries.

Pakistan's diplomatic bungling during the 1956 Suez crisis angered the Egyptians and the radical Arabs. Thus, the gains made by Pakistan's staunch support of the Palestinian cause in the late 1940s were at least partially eroded. In fact, Pakistani-Egyptian relations reached their all-time low during the Suez Canal crisis when Egypt accused Pakistan of going back on its promises of support. The irony was that Pakistan had been supportive of Egypt during this crisis. Prime Minister

Subhrawardy even warned the British that Pakistan would withdraw from the Commonwealth if British aggression against Egypt were to continue.³ Nevertheless, Pakistan showed inconsistencies in its policy towards Egypt during the crisis, arising out of its dilemma which was not to upset relations with the West whose military and economic assistance was needed by Pakistan to strengthen itself against India. On the whole, there had been a failure in communications between Pakistan and Egypt. The latter evidently saw Pakistan only as a Western lackey. An important Muslim country like Egypt's show of preference for India over Pakistan hurt the sensitivities of the Pakistani people. Nasser's reported remark that 'Suez is as dear to Egypt as Kashmir is to India'⁴ was particularly resented by Pakistanis. Bitter charges were exchanged between the two countries.

Relations, however, started to improve somewhat after Iraq withdrew from the Baghdad Pact in 1958. When Ayub Khan came to power in Pakistan, Nasser paid a friendly visit to Pakistan in 1960 followed by a return visit to Egypt by the Pakistani President. However, Nasser remained close to Nehru whom he joined in setting up the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. Thus, during the 1965 War, Egypt seemed relatively more sympathetic to India. A second reason for Nasser's coolness towards Pakistan was that he had a strained relationship with King Faisal of Saudi Arabia who was very friendly towards Pakistan.

Egypt's disastrous performance in the 1967 War with Israel brought a mellowing of Nasser's radicalism. His successor Sadat was basically pro-West and was also more sympathetic to Islamic causes. Moreover, Pakistan's strong support for the Arabs during the Ramadan War of 1973, in which Pakistani pilots on deputation with Syria even shot down Israeli jets, also resulted in a warming of relations with Egypt as well as with Syria. Later on, Sadat strongly supported Pakistan in the struggle against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Pakistan won the gratitude of Egypt in 1984 for its efforts to bring back Egypt in

the OIC and the Arab League from which it had been expelled after signing the Camp David Accords.

Other Islamic States

The Gulf states have long been a priority area for Pakistan, mainly for economic reasons. They gained independence in 1971, after the British decision to withdraw from the east of Suez. These states were tiny in size and population and were generally quite backward. However, oil was found in the Gulf states and the oil boom, which started from around 1974, made them very rich. Pakistan was able to establish a relationship of trust and close mutual co-operation with the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. In particular, the President of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed has been one of the best friends of Pakistan. He made Pakistan his winter home where he spent long periods on vacation for bird hunting, particularly the Houbara (bustard). During his long stewardship of his country, Pakistan has received very substantial economic aid from the UAE, second only to that of Saudi Arabia. Pakistanis have been prominent as advisers and trainers in various fields of activities in the UAE. Its air force was at one time like an extension of the Pakistan Air Force. Thousands of Pakistanis have been employed in the UAE.

In varying degrees, the same has been the position of Pakistan in the other Gulf states. Qatar has had a large number of Pakistani workers who at one time, and possibly even now, exceeded the number of the indigenous Qatari population. In all of these countries, Pakistani workers enjoy a reputation of being hard-working and dependable. They pose no political threat to the security of these small states, unlike the suspicions of the local authorities regarding workers from Arab countries like Egypt or Sudan. In the case of Oman, Pakistani Baloch have for long served in its armed forces. The Omani coast is only about 180 miles from the Pakistani coast. In fact, it takes less time to fly from Karachi to Muscat than from Karachi to Islamabad.

Kuwait too has extended considerable financial aid to Pakistan in the past twenty-five years and a large number of expatriate Pakistanis work there. The armed forces of all the Gulf states have had an active training programme with Pakistan. For these reasons, it can be said that Pakistan enjoys a special relationship with the Gulf countries, particularly with the UAE. There is a clear strategic dimension to these relations. In reverse, if an unfriendly country acquires dominance in these countries it would be injurious to Pakistan's vital interests.

With the rest of the Islamic world, Pakistan's relations have been generally good without being very consequential. In general, Pakistan is admired as a large Islamic country with considerable expertise in diverse fields, including nuclear technology. Pakistan's sincere support for the Arab and Islamic causes has won it considerable goodwill among most of the Islamic countries. But there has been a varied pattern to these relations, which is not surprising when one considers the large number of Islamic countries.

The radicalization of Arab opinion following the Egyptian Revolution of 1953 hurt Pakistan's relations with several of these states, particularly during the fifties and the sixties. The Palestinians were angered by Pakistan's military support for King Hussein of Jordan in the early seventies. The Ba'athists, who seized power in both Iraq and Syria during the sixties, have followed a secular and socialist ideology and the Islamic factor has mattered little to them. Thus, Syria and Iraq have been generally cool towards Pakistan and have shown pro-Indian inclinations on the Kashmir issue. In fact, Iraq even sided with India during the 1971 War. Later, in 1973, Pakistan broke off diplomatic relations with Iraq after arms were found to have been smuggled by the Iraqi Embassy in Islamabad, meant for militants in Iranian Balochistan.

As Pakistan's relations with the US started to cool in the sixties and, more so, as a result of Pakistan's strong moral and even material support for the Arabs in the 1967 and 1973 Wars with Israel, Pakistan's stature rose again in the Arab world. It is notable that during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971, the Arab

countries generally supported Pakistan. Even afterwards, on the issue of the recognition of Bangladesh, the Arabs showed solidarity with Pakistan.

From the early 1970s, Pakistan sought to adopt a policy of keeping out of inter-Arab disputes and by following a policy of bilateralism in relations with the various-Arab countries. In the case of an Arab consensus, Pakistan usually went along with whatever the Arabs wanted to do in matters pertaining to the Arab world itself. This helped Pakistan to avoid the pitfalls involved in the case of inter-Arab disputes. The Arab world has never been a monolith and has had a wide variety of political ideologies and divergent pulls.

The signing of the Camp David Accords by Egypt and Israel in 1978 shook the Arab world to the core. It reacted angrily by expelling Egypt from the Arab League. Pakistan went along with the majority Arab view. The loss of Egypt greatly weakened the capacity of the Arab world to challenge Israel militarily. In time, the rest of the Arab world had to come to the grudging conclusion that some kind of accommodation with Israel was inevitable. At the 1984 Casablanca Islamic Summit, President Ziaul Haq took the lead in pleading that Egypt should be allowed re-entry into the OIC and the Arab League. This was found generally acceptable, ushering in an era of warm friendship between Pakistan and Egypt. Pakistan had been appreciative of the strong support given by President Sadat to Pakistan in the context of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The Egyptian government, however, had been alarmed by the role played by Arab extremists trained in Afghanistan in opposing the pro-West Egyptian regime. Thus, Egypt applied strong pressure on Pakistan to expel all such Arab 'fundamentalists' from its soil.

The Arab Maghreb—Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia—have generally been very friendly with Pakistan without having much concrete collaboration with it. They remember the key role played by Pakistan in their liberation struggle in the 1950s and this has been the source of great goodwill for Pakistan in these countries. However, Algeria has been relatively less enthusiastic about Pakistan. It has had a long rule of the socialist-minded

FLN which had close links with the Soviet bloc. In Algeria's dispute with Morocco on the Sahara issue, there have been misgivings in Algeria that Pakistan was leaning towards Morocco. More recently, the Algerian armed forces have cracked down on the growing Islamic movement in the country, which has unleashed counter-terrorism by the Islamists. The Algerian regime has been accusing Islamic 'fundamentalists', trained in Afghanistan, of involvement in terrorism and thus in some ways Pakistan has also been implicated in this controversy.

With most of the African Muslim countries, Pakistan has enjoyed not only goodwill but also a certain degree of admiration. Pakistan was active in the liberation struggle of many of these countries. On the issue of liberation from colonialism, as also in opposing racial discrimination, Pakistan has always been outspoken. Moreover, Pakistan has been extending technical assistance to many African countries since the early 1980s. In spite of these advantages, Pakistan has tended to neglect the countries of Africa and has instead concentrated much more on Western countries. The African countries are remembered by Pakistani policy-makers only when Pakistan needs their votes at the UN or elsewhere. This has been a short-sighted approach.

With the South-East Asian Muslim countries, Pakistan's relations have been cordial without having much content. In the early 1960s, there was a period when Indonesia, under President Soekarno, showed a pronounced leaning towards Pakistan and extended some military support to Pakistan during the 1965 War. This was the period when Soekarno was very pro-China. China's problems with India and its friendship with Pakistan also had a beneficial effect for Pakistan in its relations with Indonesia.⁵ However, after Soekarno's fall, Indonesia adopted an even-handed policy towards India and Pakistan. There have been instances when Indonesia has refused to support OIC resolutions in favour of Pakistan on the Kashmir question and has either abstained or reserved its position.

Brunei Darussalam too has at times followed Indonesia's example on Kashmir. Malaysia has been generally more

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Forthcoming towards Pakistan. But, ironically, in the 1965 War, Pakistan took the unprecedented step of breaking diplomatic relations with Malaysia on the ground that its representative at the UN (a Hindu of Indian origin) had made some unfavourable comments on the creation of Pakistan. Foreign Minister Bhutto was evidently responsible for this extreme reaction and it was some time before Pakistan-Malaysia relations could be put back on the rails. In fact, most Malaysian Muslims have always had a soft corner for Pakistan. However, by and large, the south-east Asian countries have been more preoccupied with their own region and have maintained a relatively low profile in issues of the Muslim world.

Conclusion

All of these complexities have not always been appreciated by Pakistani public opinion and even by the policy-makers. They have had difficulty in understanding as to how there could be anything but love for an Islamic country like Pakistan which has been such a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause and had done so much for the liberation struggle of many Arab countries. No doubt, these Pakistani policies have been appreciated by all Arab countries but there have also been other factors in operation like ideology and strategic interests. The Soviet bloc was a natural ally for the radical Arabs because of the strong American support for Israel. Substantial military assistance and strong diplomatic support was extended to the Arabs by the Soviet bloc which was crucial for their security against Israel. There had to be some *quid pro quo* for the Soviet support. It was thus unfortunate for Pakistan that in the two wars against India in 1965 and 1971, some of the Arab countries not only kept aloof from Pakistan but like South Yemen and Iraq were actively sympathetic towards India.

Even the Arab and other Muslim countries, which have been very friendly to Pakistan, have only been willing to give a limited amount of material support to Pakistan, in terms of

military hardware and financial assistance. Their priority has obviously been closer to home. The oil-rich Arab countries have given much more assistance to fellow Arab countries than to Pakistan.

The conclusion from the foregoing account has to be that Pakistan has only received limited assistance in the past from the Arab and Islamic world in its confrontation with India. Indeed, some Islamic countries, for reasons of their own, have been sympathetic to or even helped India. There has also been a decline in the degree of support for Pakistan. For instance, the support received in the 1971 War was less than the support received in the 1965 War. Moreover, the degree of diplomatic support for Pakistan from the Islamic countries on the Kashmir issue has also been declining.

Under the circumstances, it would be risky to make any strategic planning for the future on the premise of any kind of solid support from the Arab and Islamic world for Pakistan in its conflict with India. Some Pakistanis feel that the Islamic world is a solid entity and would come to Pakistan's rescue in meeting the challenge of India. In reality, this kind of thinking is little more than a romantic illusion. Among the Islamic countries, there are always diverse interests at play, which pull different countries apart. The Islamic world is not, and probably cannot be, a monolith. Islamic solidarity exists but it is not an overriding factor in determining national priorities. Some of these countries are secular in their outlook and have had a problem in matching their membership of the OIC, an organization based on religious affinity, with their secular ideology. Turkey and Syria have been members of the OIC more for political than for religious reasons. Basically, they did not want to be left out of this large grouping and also hoped to use it for their own political and economic objectives. There is no such thing as an Islamic bloc. For one thing, most Islamic countries do not have the kind of ideological commitment to Islam as a political philosophy which Pakistan has had. Pan-Islamism as a philosophy has had little appeal in Islamic countries in the twentieth century.