



Why do we not have a Muslim Bloc?

The recent summits by the BRICs bloc and the G20 show two blocs are emerging with much of the world soon going to need to need to make a choice of which side they want to be on. For long the liberal order and its institutions dominated financial, economic and social development, but with the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan undermining its position and after the 2008 global economic crisis the global liberal order has taken a big hit, and this is something Russia and China are taking advantage of by proposing an alternative order to the global South. Whether the future belongs to the G20 or BRICS, the Muslim world is central to who turns out victorious.

The BRICs nations gathered in South Africa in August and the main item on the agenda was the expansion of the bloc and the addition of new nations. Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and UAE all joined the bloc and on paper this is a formidable bloc. The bloc consists of 60% of global oil reserves, the majority of the world's critical minerals, 40% of global population with Indonesia also set to join. The bloc is three times the size of NATO and now the largest non-western grouping. For years China and Russia have been eager to get key Muslim nations to join the bloc as this would give credibility and depth to the bloc.

When the G20 gathered in India the main announcement was the new economic corridor that will link India to Europe via the Middle East. The US, India, Saudi Arabia and others signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a network of maritime and rail routes connecting the Indian subcontinent with Europe via the Middle East. Whilst details have been scarce, if the project is completed it will cut transit times by a third. Once again, the Middle East Muslim nations are at the centre of this project. Not to be out done, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that there can be no such corridor without Turkey's participation and without the utilisation of the Development Road project, namely the 1.175-km railway line that will run from the southern port of Faw in Iraq to the Turkish port of Mersin, on the Mediterranean Sea.

For both the G20 and BRICS the Muslim nations are central to their success and both blocs are seeking to win the finance and support of the Muslim rulers. The West and the East are clear the central role the Muslim world plays in the world and their mineral wealth and strategic location is central and critical to both blocs. Especially now that Russia and China are attempting to challenge and possibly replace western institutions.

With both the East and the West seeing the Muslim nation as essential, one would think why the Muslim rulers don't realise this and establish their own bloc. Rather than supporting western or eastern agendas, why don't they utilise their strengths and establish their own bloc and shape the world in their interests. Here the Muslim rulers fall short as they are ultimately concerned only about their thrones and don't have such global aims. Whilst they have the capabilities, something recognised by the East and the West, they themselves don't see things this way. As a result they always join other nations in their blocs and support their agenda, when they could achieve way more.

When the Prophet (saw) established the nascent Islamic state in Madina, despite being weak and lacking resources the Prophet (saw) worked to build the nations strength by alliances, signing treaties and fighting his enemies. The Prophet (saw) monitored the international situation which was dominated by the Byzantines and the Persians and through this he manoeuvred the Islamic state to take advantage of opportunities and defend against any threats. In this way after him, the Sahabah (ra) carried on this work and in time eventually replaced both powers. The mission the Prophet (saw) had was realised after his Sahabah, but the Sahabah contributed to the work knowing it was unlikely to be achieved in their lifetime. Despite this they worked to strengthen the Islamic state and today we have 2 billion Muslims in the world.

Today, the Muslim nations are critical to both the East and the West, but our rulers do not take advantage of this to achieve an Islamic agenda. When we have rulers who do pursue an Islamic agenda, the global balance of power will shift and a new era will begin.

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