

BANGLADESH AND MUSLIM COUNTRIES:
A POLITICAL STUDY (1972-1990)

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

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APRIL 1996

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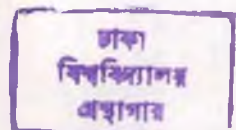
BANGLADESH AND MUSLIM COUNTRIES: A POLITICAL STUDY (1972-1990)

This dissertation is carried out and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.), 1988-1989 in the Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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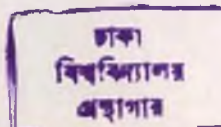
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D E C L A R A T I O N

To the best of my knowledge, I confirm that this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except by way of quotation and duly acknowledged. It is based on my own research work and has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma of any University at home and abroad.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACU	- Asian Clearing Union.
ADB	- Asian Development Bank.
ADP	- Annual Development Programme.
AAPSO	- Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation.
ASEAN	- Association of South East Asian Nations.
BBC	- British Broadcasting Corporation.
BBS	- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.
BMET	- Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.
BNP	- Bangladesh Nationalist Party.
C-in-C	- Commander-in-Chief.
CENTO	- Central Treaty Organization.
CMLA	- Chief Martial law Administrator.
COMECON	- Council of Mutual Economic Assistance.
CPE	- Centrally Planned Economies.
DAC	- Development Assistance Committee.
DCMLA	- Deputy-Chief Martial Law Administrator.
EEC	- European Economic Community.
ERD	- Economic Relations Division.
EPB	- Export Promotion Bureau.
FRG	- Federal Republic of Germany.
FY	- Financial Year.
GCC	- Gulf Co-operation Council.
GOB	- Government of Bangladesh.
GDR	- German Democratic Republic.
GNP	- Gross National Product.
GSTP	- Global System of Trade Preferences (Among the Developing Countries).
ICTVTR	- Islamic Centre for Technical and Vocational Training and Research.
IDA	- International Development Agency.
IDB	- Islamic Development Bank.
IFAD	- International Fund for Agricultural Development.
IFC	- International Finance Corporation.
IFMC	- Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference.
IIIC	- International Islamic Institute of Colombo.
IIRO	- International Islamic Relief Organization.
IIT	- Islamic Institute of Technology (formerly ICTVTR).

ABBREVIATIONS

- KSA - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- LDCs - Least Developed Countries.
NAM - Non-aligned Movement.
- OECD - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.
OIC - Organization of the Islamic Conference.
OPEC - Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.
- PLO - Palestine Liberation Organization.
POW - Prisoners of War.
PPR - Political Parties Regulations.
- RCD - Regional Co-operation for Development.
- SAARC - South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.
SDF - Saudi Fund for Development.
SEATO - Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.
- UAE - United Arab Emirates.
UAR - United Arab Republic.
UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
UNICEF - United Nations International Children Emergency Fund.
UNO - United Nations Organization.
UNROB - United Nations Relief Operations in Bangladesh.
USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
UK - United Kingdom.
- WES - Wage Earners' Scheme.
WHO - World Health Organization.
WMC - World Muslim Congress.

GLOSSARY

- Hajj* - Annual Pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Ijmah* - Popular consensus.
- Ijtihad* - The application of the mind to the verses of Qur'an and Hadith for applying them to particular situations on problems/interpretation.
- Imam* - A religious leader.
- Islamiat* - Islamic Religious Studies.
- Jamiatue Mudderassin* - An Organization of Madrasha Teachers.
- Jihad* - Literally, the utmost effort; a war in the cause of Islam or holy war.
- Kafir* - One who refuses to believe in the existence of Allah.
- Qiyas/Kiyas* - Logical analogy.
- Madrassah* - Mosque school/Traditional institution of Islamic education.
- Maktab* - School of religious teachings.
- Maulana* - Religious leader.
- Monajat* - The traditional Islamic form of Prayer.
- Mujaheddin* - Rebels.
- Mukti Baheni* - Liberation Forces.
- Omra Hajj* - Omra is a pilgrimage outside the season of the Hajj.
- Pesh Imam* - Chief Imam of the Mosque.
- Pir* - Literally an old man; teacher, master, a religious leader.
- Sepoy* - Soldier.
- Shari'ah* - Social-religious law of Islam.
- Sunnah* - The Practices of the Prophet (Muhammad SAW)
- Ulama* - The theoretician of Islamic religion / Traditional scholars of Islam.
- Ummah* - A community, A people, A nation, A sect.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh emerged as an independent state through nine months long liberation war in 1971 in a complex international political and economic scenario. The world community was divided with regard to the liberation war of Bangladesh. Some countries notably, USA, People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Muslim world did not support the liberation war. On the other hand, countries like India, USSR and East European countries were sympathetic to the liberation war and extended their support.

Post-independent Bangladesh had faced formidable political and economic challenges. For the reconstruction of the war-ravaged economy and to speed up the pace of economic and social development, the country needed international recognition, political stability and adequate foreign assistance. To achieve these objectives, Bangladesh fashioned its foreign policy to establish meaningful relations with all the countries irrespective of their political orientations.

The major objectives of Bangladesh's foreign policies are: (i) maintaining the integrity of the state; (ii) promoting economic conditions; (iii) ensuring of national security; (iv) promoting national prestige and developing national power; and (v) strengthening of fraternal ties with the Muslim world. The foreign policy of Bangladesh initiated by the Mujib government was mainly centered on the principles of neutrality, non-alignment, peaceful co-existence and the development of friendly relations with all countries on the basis of sovereign equality, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.

The 1972 constitution of Bangladesh adopted 'Nationalism', 'Democracy', 'Socialism' and 'Secularism' as the state principles. With regard to the foreign policy of Bangladesh, Article 25 of the Constitution stated that:

The State shall base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international disputes and respect for international law and the

principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter, and on the basis of those principles shall- (a) strive for the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament; (b) Uphold the right of every people freely to determine and build up its own social, economic and political system by ways and means of its free choice; and (c) support oppressed peoples throughout the world waging a just struggle against imperialism, colonialism or racialism.¹

The constitution of Bangladesh (after the 5th amendment) also emphasized special relationship with the Muslim countries and stronger Islamic solidarity. Article 25(2) of the amended constitution clearly states that: "The State shall endeavour to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity."²

From the very beginning, Bangladesh made efforts to develop friendship with all the countries irrespective of political ideologies. The constitutional provisions of Bangladesh continue to be the fundamental basis of its approach to world politics as well as its relationships with the Muslim and other countries. Bangladesh is committed to extend its support to those who are fighting against colonialism and imperialism, so that all peoples, everywhere can be free to build their own destiny. Its desire to strengthen relationships with the Muslim world is not an end in itself but as a means for achieving certain objectives concerning national interest.

Geographically, Bangladesh is a bridge between South and South-East Asia. It has the second largest Muslim population next to Indonesia in the world. The Muslims of Bangladesh in general, have profound attachment to their fellow Muslim brethren all over

¹. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. (As modified up to 25th January, 1975). Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Justice, pp. 8-9.

². Ibid., (As modified up to 31st December, 1990). GOB, Ministry of Law and Justice, pp. 15-17.

the world. They are closely linked with each other by common faith and tradition, culture and religious values. Post-independent Mujib government initiated to establish cordial relations with the Muslim countries. Not only the Mujib Government, every government of Bangladesh wanted to have good relationship with the Muslim countries. However, during the initial stage of the Mujib regime had witnessed strained relationship with some of the Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Libya, Sudan etc. After achieving the membership of the OIC on February 22, 1974, Bangladesh had played an active role as a member of the OIC and tried to demonstrate its full support to the commitments and objectives of the OIC. It cooperated in different ways with the OIC member countries. It also intensified efforts for more meaningful cooperation among the Muslim countries in safeguarding and promoting its national interests.

Although initially Bangladesh had a strained relationship with the oil rich Arab and other Muslim countries, subsequently Bangladesh's relation with the said countries gradually improved. At present it has aid, trade and overseas employment relations with most of them.³ In particular, the economic relation with the Muslim countries is significantly important for an underdeveloped country like Bangladesh. In the international affairs, Bangladesh has normally extended its support to the Muslim world. For example, it took a sympathetic attitude to the Palestinian crisis also made efforts to resolve the Iraq-Iran war. During the Gulf crisis in 1990 (Iraqi's invasion to Kuwait), Bangladesh sided with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and USA sponsored joint multinational forces.

Conceptual Perspectives

The concepts of the "Islamic world", "Islamic countries", "Muslim world" and "Muslim countries" are ambiguous terms. There lies some basic distinctions in the concepts. The term "Islam" is an Arabic word, which means "submission (to God)", "surrender (to

³. Moreover, Bangladesh is also dependent on the Middle Eastern countries for almost total of her crude oil requirements.

God)" or "commitment (to God)." It is the religion of those who follow the Prophet Mohammed(SM). Islam is based on the sacred book, the Holy Qur'an, revealed by God (called Allah in Arabic) to Mohammed and the term Islam occurs eight times in the Al-Qur'an. The term also means surrender to Allah's will and includes acceptance of those articles of faith, commands and ordinance revealed through Mohammed(SM). Followers of and adherents to Islam are called Muslim or Moslem (popularly also Mohammedan) that is "submitter" to God, those who commit themselves to Him. ⁴

The concept of an Islamic state is therefore very difficult to determine. The Prophet himself did not leave behind any comprehensive theory of an Islamic state. However, the establishment of the first Islamic state by Mohammed(SM) in Medina (by the Charter of Medina) was based on a formal and legal political organization.⁵

The Islamic state was a political community. Its members were bound together by the common subjection to the central authority and its government exercised political control over the people in accordance with the Islamic laws. The Islamic state, first founded by Mohammad(SM), consolidated by Hazrat Abu Baker(RA), organized

⁴. For details see Chamber's Encyclopedia, (London:Pergamon Press, Vol. VII, 1987), p. 775; Payton's Proper Names, compiled by Geoffray Payton (New York: Frederick Wanne, 1969), p. 230; The Encyclopedia Americana, (International edition) Vol.15, (Danbury, USA : Grolien Incorporation, 1983), p.491; M.T.H. Houtsma, et al., E. J. Brills First Encyclopedia of Islam (1913-1936). Vol. 6, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), p. 755; and The Islamic Bishawkoash, (vernacular), Islamic Encyclopedia, Vol. 5, (Dhaka: Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh, 1990), p. 195.

⁵. "Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.) established the first Islamic state after migrating to Medina in 622 A.D. The people of Medina accepted the Prophet as their religious as well as political leader". Professor Hitti while commenting on the Prophet's role in politics and administration said, "He performed the functions of Prophet, Law giver, Chief Judge, Commander of the Armies and Civil Head of State." Quoted from Ziauddin Ahmad, "Concept of Islamic State in Modern World", Pakistan Horizon, (Karachi), Vol.XXXVIII, No. 4, 1985, p. 69.

and institutionalized by Hazrat Umar(RA) was governed by four principal sources of Islamic law. These are: (i) The Qur'an; (ii) *The Sunnah*; (iii) *The Izmah*; and (iv) *The Kiyas*.⁶

In course of time, the concept of Islamic state/country has changed. In modern world we do not see any classical Islamic state as initiated by the Prophet Mohammed(SM). The historical, social, political and economic differences, which characterize the various Muslim countries have given Islam a different interpretation, a different resonance in each of them.⁷ Naturally, the concept of Islamic state has perhaps been changed with the change of time and circumstances. The '*Ulama*' (theoreticians of Islam) accordingly modified their conception of an Islamic state in order to suit the new realities.⁸ This resulted in serious controversy with regard to an ideal Islamic state.

According to the classical concept of Islamic state there is no Islamic state in the contemporary world - a state absolutely based on the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. The Holy Qur'an, elucidates the concept of a society, not a state. The Islamic rule during the Prophet's time was confined to the Arabian peninsula that was mostly inhabited by nomadic tribes.⁹ In the contemporary world some countries namely Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Libya etc. have adopted Islamic Laws and principles in their statecraft. But these are not Islamic states in the classical sense. These States

⁶.For the concept of Islamic state and its evolution, see Asghar Ali Engineer, The Islamic State, (Dhaka : Nawroze Kitabistan, 1980), pp. 3, 199; Akram Raslan Deiranieh, The Classical Concept of State in Islam, Ph. D. Dissertation, (Washington, Department of Political Science, Howard University, 1975), p. 95 ; and Ziauddin Ahmed, "Concept of Islamic State in Modern World", op.cit., pp. 68-83.

⁷. Adeed Dawisha, "Islam in Foreign Policy : Some Methodological Issues", in Adeed Dawisha (ed.), Islam in Foreign Policy, (London : Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.4.

⁸. Asghar Ali Engineer, The Islamic State, op. cit., p. 89.

⁹. Ibid., p.199.

have not totally incorporated Islamic laws and principles and distorted the formation of the classical Islamic state. As aptly pointed out by a scholar, " . . . inhabited predominantly or even entirely, by Muslims is not necessarily synonymous with a classical 'Islamic state'. It can become truly Islamic only by virtue of a conscious application of the socio-political tenets of Islam to the life of the nation and by an incorporation of these tenets into the basic constitution of the country.... .¹⁰"

The concept of the Muslim state denotes those states, which have a vast Muslim population. It may be a secular state or it may adopt "Islam" as the state religion or it may declare itself as an Islamic Republic constitutionally (like Pakistan, Iran). According to Syed Kamal Mostafa, "There is a basic difference between a 'Muslim state' and an 'Islamic state'. A Muslim state is one which is ruled by the Muslims. It can become Islamic by application of the socio-political tenets of Islam to the life of the state and by an inclusion of those tenets in the constitution."¹¹

It is also pertinent to mention that some scholars used "Islamic state" in a narrow sense, differentiating the classical outlook of an Islamic state. They used it as a synonym of the Muslim state. In this study, the term " Muslim countries " refers to the Islamic identity of the member country of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), whose people are predominantly Muslims. They are united on the basis of spiritual bond of Islamic brotherhood for achieving stated objectives in domestic and international affairs. So, in this study we have broadly used the term Muslim countries comprising the pre-dominantly Muslim populated states.

¹⁰. Akram Raslan Deiranieh, The Classical Concept of State in Islam, op. cit., p. 2.

¹¹. Syed Kamal Mostafa, " Principles of An Islamic State : A Quar'nic Analysis", The Rajshahi University Studies (Part A), Vol. XV, 1987, p. 277.

Geographical Settings of Muslim Countries

Islam is the religion of around one billion people inhabiting in the regions of Asia, Africa and Europe. Among the prominent Muslim states of the modern world are: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Yemen, Indonesia, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Bangladesh etc. Muslim community also exists in Lebanon, former Yugoslavia, former USSR, China, India, the Balkan countries, Africa and in the Philippines.

A Framework for Analysis

A state's overall national policy comprises, first, the domestic policy and second, the foreign policy. Foreign policy refers to the external actions and interactions of states. It consists of decisions and actions, which involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state and others. It provides an explanation of a nation's international behavior. According to scholars, " . . . foreign policy may be viewed as those official actions (and reactions) which sovereign states initiate (or receive and subsequently react to) for the purpose of altering or creating a condition (or problem) outside their territorial-sovereign boundaries."¹² Obviously, it operates in the context of national interests and objectives.

According to Otto Von Bismarck, "the extension of domestic policy is foreign policy."¹³ So, it is the domestic circumstances that largely shape external priorities. External affairs tend to follow the internal affairs of a country. James Rosenau described, "the Foreign policy of a state as a complex and dynamic political course that it pursues in relation to other states with a view mainly to protecting its own interests and achieving its own

¹². Jonathan Wilkenfeld, Gerald W. Hoppole, Paul J. Rossa and Stephen J. Andriole (eds.), Foreign Policy Behavior : The International Behavior Analysis Model, (London : Sage Pub. 1980), p. 22.

¹³. Md. Abdul Halim, "Foreign Policy of Bangladesh : Framework of Analysis", in Emajuddin Ahamed (ed.), Foreign Policy of Bangladesh : A Small State's Imperative, (Dhaka : UPL, 1984), p. 2.

objectives."¹⁴ In fact, foreign policy, is regarded as an instrument to realizing of national objectives. It is indeed a means to an end. The end is to realize the socio-economic and political objectives keeping in view the national and international political situation.

Determinants

Foreign policy of a nation is moulded by the nature of actions and interactions with the international actors. The foreign policy determinants of a state, is constrained or affected, not only by its own capabilities, goals, politics and actions but also by the states with which it interacts. It is a two-way channel of interaction, as the actors interact for achieving their respective goals. Bangladesh's relation with the Muslim World and vice-versa is no exception to those determinants.

As the second largest Muslim country, Bangladesh has initially needed international recognition when it emerged as an Independent State in 1971. Later on, it needed support and help from Muslim countries to develop the country. Being an underdeveloped and one of the poorest countries, it needed substantial foreign aid to build its economy. The expectation of getting foreign aid is one of the determinants of Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim countries specially with the oil rich Gulf Countries. The large number of skilled, un-skilled and unemployed man power that Bangladesh has, perceived a prospective market in the labour-scarce Muslim countries in the Middle East. Since the beginning of manpower export to Middle East, the remittances of the labourers have been contributing largely to the economy of Bangladesh. Obviously, it is a major determining factor of Bangladesh's relationship with the Middle Eastern Muslim countries. Furthermore, the establishment of a long term trade relation with the Middle

¹⁴. Cited from Emajuddin Ahamed (ed.) Foreign policy of Bangladesh : A Small State's Imperative, op. cit., p. v. (introduction); and see also James Rosenau, The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy, (New York : The Free Press, 1971), p. 67.

Eastern Countries was also considered as an important determining factor.

Energy is an essential element for any nation's economic development activities. Crude oil the main import item of Bangladesh comes from the Middle Eastern Muslim countries. For assured and continuous inflow of crude oil supply, Bangladesh interacts with the oil exporting Middle East countries. Last but not the least, Bangladesh also needs support of the Muslim Countries mainly because of the threat perception from its biggest neighbour India.

The geo-political position of Bangladesh is of some importance for the Middle East countries since it's a bridge between the Middle East, South and South-East Asia. It may help the Muslim Countries in opening new vistas for closer cooperation with the countries in the region.¹⁵ The boom in oil exploration and economic development needs more cheaper labourers in the labour scarce oil-rich Muslim countries, which Bangladesh can provide. The Muslim Countries also needed Bangladesh's diplomatic and moral support in different international forums and in the conflict resolution of international disputes like the Palestinian crisis and the Afghan crisis etc.

Besides the above determinants, both Bangladesh and the Muslim countries have some common interests to uphold the '*Islamic Ummah*' and strengthening of Islamic solidarity.

Scope, Objectives and Limitations of the Study

Bangladesh is the second largest Muslim country of the World. An attempt is made here to examine and analyse, Bangladesh's external relations with the Muslim World during 1972-90 from a historical perspective. It will deal with the political and economic relations. The scope of the study is however limited. It

¹⁵. Syed Anwar Husain, "Bangladesh and Islamic Countries, 1972-1983", in Mohammad Mohabbat Khan and Syed Anwar Husain (eds.), Bangladesh Studies : Politics, Administration, Rural Development and Foreign Policy, (Dhaka : Center for Administrative Studies, 1986), p.243.

will not provide an extensive chronological survey of political and economic relations with all the Muslim countries or every issue related to Bangladesh. Precisely, the study will look into only the vital aspects of Bangladesh's relations with some Muslim countries during the Mujib, Zia and Ershad regimes.

From the very beginning of its emergence, Bangladesh wanted to develop a special relationship with the Muslim countries. These countries had played a negative role during the liberation war of Bangladesh. After independence, the Mujib Government tried to initiate foreign relations with them. Subsequently, the Zia regime and Ershad regime strived to have meaningful relationships with them.¹⁶ Bangladesh needed external support, free flow of foreign aid, promotion of trade and overseas employment. The successive governments of Bangladesh considered the Muslim World as an important region for achieving the above goals for the socio-economic development of Bangladesh.

The Muslim countries of the world are many in number. The main organization of the Muslim or Islamic countries is - Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and its current members are 51.¹⁷ As earlier mentioned, this study does not attempt to focus Bangladesh's relations with all the OIC member countries. Because many of OIC countries have a little or no relationship with Bangladesh. Only the leading OIC member countries, which have significant relationships and interactions with Bangladesh have been examined in this study. In our study we have purposively dropped various countries namely Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia, Lebanon, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Somalia, Tunisia, Uganda etc. as they have very insignificant relationship with Bangladesh during the last two decades or so.

¹⁶. The short period of Khondoker Mushtaq Ahmed and Justice (retired) Abdus Sattar have been overlooked. Because both these periods were transitional period.

¹⁷. The Bangladesh Times, (Dhaka), 9 November, 1995.

Importance of the Study

There are some incomprehensive studies on Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim countries. Syed Anwar Husain¹⁸ in his article, "Bangladesh and Islamic Countries, 1972-1983" examines Bangladesh relationships with the Islamic countries. It briefly highlighted the role of the Muslim world during the liberation war of Bangladesh, subsequent trade relationship, exports of manpower and flow of aid from the Muslim countries.

Akmal Hussain in his paper¹⁹ entitled, "Bangladesh and the Muslim World," has made some brief observations on the gradual development of Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim countries. He also provided data on the quantum of aid from the Muslim World to Bangladesh between 1971 and 1981.

Denis Wright in his study, Bangladesh Origins and Indian Ocean Relations (1971-1975) analyzed Bangladesh relationship with the Islamic states of the Indian Ocean area. He examined Bangladesh and Islamic states relationship from 1971 to 1975 considering historical perspective²⁰. An Indian scholar, Virendra Narain has examined Bangladesh's relationship with the Islamic World in a chapter of his book.²¹ The former Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Muhammad Shamsul Huq, in his book, Bangladesh in International Politics: The Dilemmas of the Weak States, has also studied Bangladesh's relations with Islamic countries. It is a brief description of the development of Bangladesh's relations with

¹⁸. Syed Anwar Husain, "Bangladesh and Islamic Countries, 1972-1983", op.cit., pp. 239-278.

¹⁹. Akmal Hussain, "Bangladesh and the Muslim World", in Emajuddin Ahamed(ed.), Foreign Policy of Bangladesh : A Small State's Imperative, op. cit., pp. 81-92.

²⁰. Denis Wright, Bangladesh : Origins and Indian Ocean Relations (1971-1975), (New Delhi : Sterling Pub.Pvt., Ltd., 1988), pp. 222-252.

²¹. Virendra Narain, Foreign Policy of Bangladesh (1971-1981), (Jaipur : Aalekh publishers, 1987), pp. 159-183.

Muslim countries and the role played by Bangladesh as a member of the Organization of Islamic Conference during 1977 - 1982, when the author himself was in the charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs²². These are some of the works concerning Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim countries. As mentioned earlier, no comprehensive work has been undertaken by any scholar on the subject. Indeed, these studies are inadequate to understand the dynamics and intricacy of Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim World during the past two decades. The above cited studies have a very limited scope and time span.

The present study, Bangladesh and Muslim Countries: A Political Study (1972-1990) is an attempt to discuss elaborately Bangladesh's relationships with the Muslim countries between 1972 --1990. The following questions are examined here: (i) Why did the Muslim countries hesitate to recognize Bangladesh? (ii) What were the initiatives and steps taken by the first regime of Bangladesh (the Mujib regime) to establish relationship with the Muslim countries and how did the Muslim World respond? (iii) What are the main objectives of Bangladesh's Muslim world policy? (iv) What were the nature of Muslim countries' attitudes towards President Zia and President Ershad regimes? (v) Is the relationship developing further? (vi) What is the expectation of the Muslim countries from Bangladesh? (vii) What are the nature and quantum of economic assistance from the Muslim countries? Is this aid influencing the ruling elites in formulating its domestic policy making? Although efforts will be made in this study to examine and analyse the above questions, this study should be considered as a prelude to further studies and research.

Methodology and Sources of Data

The study is a historical, descriptive, comparative and analytical one. Both primary and secondary sources of information and data have been used. The main sources of this study are

²². Muhammad Shamsul Huq, Bangladesh in International Politics : The Dilemmas of the Weak States, (Dhaka : UPL, 1993), pp. 234-278.

gathered from various published materials such as Bangladesh government documents, books, journals, monographs, newspapers, unpublished reports and dissertations. The study also depends on official statements and interviews with the concerned policy makers and diplomats.

CHAPTER II

ROLE OF THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES DURING THE LIBERATION WAR OF BANGLADESH

The role of the Muslim countries during the liberation war of Bangladesh and subsequent years was shaped by the previous relationship of united Pakistan with them. The states most closely related with Pakistan's ruling Government gave their full support to the ruling military junta and supplied various arms and ammunition (e.g. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya etc.). But it was surprising that some of the Muslim countries, which had strained relationship with Pakistan did not support the liberation war of Bangladesh and they remained neutral (e.g. Egypt, Syria, Algeria, Iraq etc.), although some of the youth organizations of these countries supported the liberation war of Bangladesh and expressed their support through newspapers. To have a clear idea about the Muslim world's role during the liberation war and subsequent years, it is needed to go through the formative phases of Pakistan's foreign policy.

Background of the Study

In 1947, Indian Sub-continent was divided on the basis of Mohammed Ali Jinnah's 'Two Nation Theory' which created two new states- Indian Union and Pakistan- by the British Government that had been ruling for near about one hundred and ninety years.¹

¹. In 1757, East-India Company took over the power of a part of the Indian Subcontinent and consequently in 1857, after *Sepoy Mutiny* the British government formally took over the power.

According to Jinnah's two nation theory, "... Musalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation and they must have their homeland, their territory and their state and that it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve as a common nationality."² The two wings of Pakistan (East Bengal and West Pakistan) were related only with religious Islamic bonds; there was no harmony in socio-economic and cultural aspects. Moreover, the two wings were separated by nearly a thousand miles of Indian territory.

The Hindu-Muslim conflict within the sub-continent did not end with the creation of two successor states. Hostility within the sub-continent was transferred to inter-state relations between India and Pakistan. At the very first stage of division, Indian extreme nationalist leadership opposed the division by the communal two nation theory instead of 'All Indian Nationalism'. At that time they always hoped for united Indian region, which was expressed through many of their addresses and anti-Pakistani propoganda. They thought united Indian region was a matter of time. Even the Congress leaders who agreed to the partition of the sub-continent and the creation of Pakistan, were rearing some mental

². Jinnah's Presidential address at annual session of the All India Muslim league at Lahore in March 1940, in Jamil-ud-din Ahmad (ed.), Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah, (Lahore: Md. Ashraf, Fifth edition, 1952), Vol. 1, p. 160. See also, Sailesh Kumar Banarjee, Jinnah : Pakistan-Natun Bhabana, (vernacular), Jinnah : Pakistan-New Evaluation, (Calcutta; Mitra and Gosh Pub. Second edition, 1989), p.152.

reservation.³ They nursed the illusion that the new Pakistan state would not be viable enough to last long and would soon have to ask for reunion with India. According to Ataur R. Khan :

Political necessity apart, Indian unity has a religious connotation as well. The Hindu religious faith, complex and ramified as it is, has held the subcontinent, the Bharat Mata (Mother India), as a sacred and protecting deity. In the vast and complicated pantheon of Hinduism, the Indian rivers, mountains, plains and the land scape--each has an evocative, long and distinct spiritual association for a Hindu.⁴

Sardar Patel, one of the prominent leaders of Congress Party was "convinced that the new State of Pakistan was not viable and could not last. He thought that the acceptance of Pakistan would teach the Muslim league a bitter lesson. Pakistan would collapse in a short time and the provinces which had seceded from India would have to face untold difficulty and hardship."⁵ Jawaharlal Nehru also subscribed to (united India concept) sentiment that was expressed in his speech on 3 June 1947. Even seventeen years later, Nehru's dream had not died. As late as 1964 not long before his death Nehru expressed a desire that, " India and Pakistan come constitutionally closer... [because] there is no other way for

³. Latif Ahmed Sherwani, "The Objectives of Pakistan's Foreign Policy," in Latif Ahmed Sherwani et al., Foreign Policy of Pakistan: An Analysis, (Karachi: The Allies Book Corporation, 1964), p. 11.

⁴. Ataur R. Khan, India Pakistan and Bangladesh: Conflict or Cooperation?, (Dacca: Sindabad, 1976), p.5.

⁵. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India Wins Freedom: An Autobiographical Narrative, (Calcutta: Orient Longsman Pvt. Ltd. 1959), p. 207; see also Latif Ahmed Sherwani et.al., op.cit., pp.11-12.

India and Pakistan.⁶" Nehru himself also told to Josef Korbel, a member of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan, "We want to cooperate and work towards cooperation, and one day integration will inevitably come. If it will be in four, five, ten years- I do not know."⁷ This type of Indian propaganda⁸ worried the newly born Pakistan about her sovereignty and independence. It was also mentioned that Pakistan had territorial disputes both with its immediate neighbour India and Afghanistan⁹ over Kashmir and Pakhtunistan issues. The other disputes with India such as differences over the division of common assets, trade, water disputes and religious minority was not ignoreable. In these circumstances, Pakistan was making its domestic and external policy and the previous mentioned disputes played a decisive role on its policy making and initiatives.

At the dawn of independence, the objectives of Pakistan's foreign policy were to secure the integrity of Pakistan. The policy aimed at the security and sovereignty of territory (including disputed areas), to promote national identity and ideology, to

⁶. Quoted from Mizanur Rahman Shelly, Emergence of a New Nation in a Multipolar World: Bangladesh, (Bangladesh: UPL, 1979), p. 52.

⁷. Latif Ahmed Sherwani et al, op.cit., p. 12; and see also Josef Korbel, Danger in Kashmir, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, First edition, 1954), p.128.

⁸. For details see Lalif Ahmed Sherwani et al., op.cit., pp.11-13.

⁹. It is to be mentioned that Afghanistan was the lone country, who objected to Pakistan's admission in the United Nations.

maintain relationship with the Muslim world and to work for economic advancement¹⁰.

Alliance for Security

At the primary stage, Pakistan's foreign policy was formulated on the basis of neutrality. "Pakistani [policy makers] originally thought that the best guarantee of their independence was that they should neither be tied to the apron strings of the Anglo-American bloc, nor be a camp follower of the communist bloc... ." ¹¹ This policy was introduced by the first Prime Minister of Pakistan Liaquat Ali Khan. But within two years of Liaquat's death the whole basis of foreign policy was changed and Pakistan moved from a position of qualified neutrality to unqualified alignment with the West.¹² It was from the rising fear of probable attack of India and threatening tensions in the frontiers. The Pakistani policy makers thought that it was impossible on their part to save its sovereignty and national security all alone. For that reason, it reoriented its external policy and searched for a strong foreign ally.

At the same time the Western powers, especially the United States, realized that Pakistan occupied a very important strategic position.¹³ It needed a friend in this region to execute Delusion

¹⁰. Latif Ahmed Sherwani et al., op.cit, p.11-19.

¹¹. Ibid., p.14.

¹². Mushtaq Ahmad, Government and Politics in Pakistan, (Karachi: Pakistan Pub. Hse., Second edition, 1963), p.232.

¹³. G.W. Choudhury, India, Pakistan, Banqladesh and the Major Powers: Politics of a Divided Subcontinent, (New York: The Free

alliance system for the containment of Communism. Thus American and Pakistani quest for friends and allies coincided. These circumstances led Pakistan to join the military pacts. It [Pakistan] formally became allied to the United States on 19 May 1954 when the two sides signed a Mutual Aid and Security Agreement in Karachi. In September 1954, Pakistan became a member of the U.S. sponsored South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) along with the United States, France, Britain, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand. In November 1955, Pakistan Joined the "Baghdad Pact" (renamed in 1958, the Central Treaty Organization, CENTO) with Iran, Turkey, Britain and Iraq. According to former President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan:

There is no doubt that if a larger number of countries in the Middle East had come into the Baghdad Pact, it would have provided an excellent opportunity and a unique platform for the Muslim countries to get to know one another and to co-ordinate their policies and plans. The Muslims had no forum and the Baghdad Pact offered a promise of becoming a powerful forum where the Muslim peoples could explore areas of co-operation¹⁴.

Early in 1959, Pakistan, (along with Turkey and Iran) signed a bilateral agreement of cooperation with the United States. The new arrangement was designed further to reinforce the defensive purposes of CENTO.¹⁵ President Ayub Khan was one of the Chief Pakistani architects of early US-Pakistani Military ties. Later Pakistan was associated with the U.S. by four mutual security arrangements. For this reason Pakistan was sometimes regarded as

Press, 1975) pp.78-90; Virendra Narain, op.cit., pp.34-35.

¹⁴. Mohammad Ayub Khan, Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography, (Lahore: Oxford University Press, 1967) pp. 154-155.

¹⁵. Ibid, p.130.

America's best ally in Asia. After its alignment with the United States, Pakistan began to receive U.S. arms and aid also improved its defence and security to a considerable level. These agreements and military alliances were hostile to its relationship with the USSR, China, India and the Muslim World. Specially some Muslim countries held a negative view on the alignment of CENTO, which created strained relationship with some of the Muslim countries.

For the changing pattern of global scenario in the mid-sixties especially post Sino-Indian conflict, Pakistan reoriented and reshaped its external policy and introduced bilateralism, which meant Pakistani efforts to establish bilateral relations with the United States, the Soviet Union, and China without annoying or antagonizing any of the three. In 1969, President Ayub Khan was ousted by the mass uprising and the successive Yahya military regime had introduced no major shift in the previous external relations.¹⁶

Ideology and Relations with Muslim Countries

"... Pakistan was created to strengthen ties between Muslims of the sub-continent and those of the other parts of the world."¹⁷ It was the main focal point that Muslims all over the world would have a common cultural outlook and common cultural heritage that would bind them together and Pakistan would play a leading role. And they should highlight the Islamic Solidarity or *Ummah* for their strength and advancement. It also appears that an overwhelming majority of Muslims in other lands also believe that Islam should provide the basic code of conduct in their private and public life

¹⁶. M.G. Kabir in his article, "Pakistan's Middle East Policy: A Dilemma of Passion and Interest," observed four phases of Pakistan's foreign policy, i.e. (i) The Non-aligned years 1947-53 (ii) The aligned Years 1954-62 (iii) The years of re-evaluation-1962-71 and (iv) The years of Bilateralism since 1972. BISS Journal, vol. 7, No.4, 1986, p.458.

¹⁷. Mohammed Ahsen Chaudhri, " Foundations of Pakistan's Foreign Policy," in Latif Ahmed Sherwani et al., op. cit., p.20.

and there should be cooperation and unity in the Muslim World.¹⁸ Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan, had repeatedly declared that Muslims, all over the world should follow the path of mutual consultations. Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan had felt that Muslim countries should get together to promote their interests and to show the world that they have an ideology, which can ensure peace and harmony in the world.¹⁹ According to Khaja Nazimuddin, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, "Islam is a body; pain inflicted on any part of the body gives pain and anguish to the whole body." Keeping with this spirit, Pakistan expressed its views on Islamic world crisis.²⁰ Fazlur Rahman, who served as Pakistan's Minister for Education, writes:

Unless we offer to the world an ideology that will provide an effective answer to both communism and capitalism, we may not be able to keep at bay the influences that emanate from them. It is my faith and conviction that Islam supplies the ideology we are looking for.²¹

These were the optimistic views about Islam, but the reality was different. Sometimes national interest and religious solidarity (*Islamic Ummah*) contrast each other and conflicts arose among various Muslim countries on their attitude towards national interest. Then Islamic solidarity only stands for a slogan, rather than ideology. The history of Pakistan and other Muslim countries'

¹⁸. Latif Ahmed Sherwani et al., op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁹. In the Constituent Assembly [of Pakistan] debates he also said "Pakistan was founded because the Muslims of the sub-continent wanted to build up their lives in accordance with the teachings and traditions of Islam, because they wanted to demonstrate to the world that Islam provides a panacea to the many diseases which have crept into the life of humanity today." See Keith Callard, Pakistan: A Political Study, (London:George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957), p.197.

²⁰. Mohammad Ahsen Chaudhri, op. cit., p.21.

²¹. Quoted from, Ibid., p.21; see also Fazlur Rahman, Pakistan: One and Indivisible, (Karachi: N.A., 1960), p.31.

inter-relationship frequently faced this dilemma. National interest plays the decisive role for making external relations. But it is also observed that there was a thirst for *Islamic Ummah/Solidarity*, but in practice its achievement was minimal. Although, in order to strengthen Pakistan's tie with the Muslim world, during 1950-53 it signed various treaties of friendship with almost every Muslim country.²²

We have already mentioned that owing to the rising threats against security from its neighbours and its need for foreign aid, Pakistan tied itself with Western powers (especially USA, UK) and joined SEATO in 1954, CENTO in 1958, the military alliances sponsored by the Western powers. This shifting of its foreign policy was subjected to criticism both at home and abroad. Some Muslim countries, e.g. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia reacted negatively.²³ This made Pakistan's relationship strained with those countries. And they criticized Pakistan, saying that it was Pakistan's leadership thrust over the Muslim countries and subsequent invitations of the western powers in this region was harmful to their national interests. This decision was guided by the concept of national interest, but it was not altogether devoid of ideological consideration. Pakistan's decision to join the Baghdad Pact, although brought it nearer to two non-Arab Muslim states (e.g. Iran and Turkey), but it was responsible for a great deal of misunderstanding between Pakistan and several Arab countries, although Pakistan initiated to neutralize the strained relationship with those countries.²⁴

One of the defenders of Pakistan's alliance with Western power, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, H.S. Suhrawardy evaluated Muslim countries as a Zero in the context of power

²². Azizul Haque, Trends in Pakistan's External Policy, 1947-1971, (Dhaka : Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1985), p.xv.

²³. Mushtaq Ahmad, op.cit., p.234.

²⁴. Latif Ahmed Sherwani et al., op. cit., p. 16.

perception. In his own words:

The question is asked: why don't (we the Muslim countries) get together rather than be tied to a big power like UK or America? My answer to that is that zero plus zero plus zero is after all equal to zero. We have, therefore, to go further afield rather than get all the zeros together because they will never be able to produce any thing which is substantial.²⁵

By mid-sixties Pakistan reshaped its external relations on the policy of bilateralism and started to neutralize strained relationship with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and supported the various disputed issues of the Muslim countries in the international forum. The President of Pakistan, Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan said, "... We in Pakistan cannot ignore the fact that our country is the product of the ideology of Islam. This is the foremost justification of our existence and we cannot be true to Pakistan without being true to this ideology." ²⁶ Military junta General Yahya Khan, the successor of Ayub Khan did not change the external policy of Pakistan.

One of the noted architects of Pakistan's foreign policy wrote:

... For Pakistan, its membership of the Islamic Conference, its bonds with Iran and Turkey and its link with Saudi Arabia as the cradle of Islam govern a considerable segment of its external relations. Then, there are causes of the emancipation of states from alien subjugation, the ending of usurpation or dominance and hegemony to which Pakistan cannot ideologically foreswear its allegiance. The cause of the Arab world, Africa's struggle against racism or residual colonialism and the general interest of the Third World in the establishment of an equitable economic order cannot but decisively influence our attitudes towards international issues and, to that extent, mould our external relationships. ²⁷

²⁵. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Bilateralism: New Direction. (Islamabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Government of Pakistan, 1976). p.43.

²⁶. Latif Ahmed Sherwani et al., op. cit., p.15.

²⁷. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, op.cit., pp.2-3

The above pattern of ideological stand determined the relationship of Pakistan with Muslim countries and other powers of the world. Subsequently these relationships determined their role in the liberation war of Bangladesh to some extent.

East Bengalees Attitude Towards the Foreign Policy of United Pakistan:

Denis Wright²⁸ observed that:

The history of Pakistan's relations with the Muslim countries of the region [Indian Ocean region, most of the Muslim countries are in this region] from 1947 to 1971 has been entirely circumscribed by West Pakistani interest and perspectives. The elite which decided the priorities in Pakistani foreign policy was [came] primarily by [from] West Pakistani, and the most serious international disputes in which Pakistan was engaged, were located in or adjacent to the west wing of the country [e.g. Kashmir dispute with India, Pakhtunistan disputes with Afghanistan].

He also added that, at least until 1965, East Pakistanis did not interfere in the central government's foreign policy, though they had their own interest. This foreign policy till then, served the purpose of West Pakistan alone, and East Pakistan did not object. Even when Mujib's Six-point programme was launched, foreign policy was regarded under the scheme as the proper responsibility of the central government. Fear of India dictated this, but during 1965 Pak-India War, East Pakistan remained, insecure. This attitude of the central ruling elite resulted in rethinking the security perception of the East Pakistani rising vernacular elites.²⁹

It is noteworthy that some Bengali leaders opposed Pakistan's military pact with western powers (specially SEATO, CENTO pact). But Suharawardy faction of the Awami league supported this alignment. Maulana Bhashani and his associates left the ruling Awami league and formed the National Awami Party in 1957 on the

²⁸. Denis Wright, op. cit., p. 224.

²⁹. Ibid., p.225.

controversy of Bengali autonomy issue and pro-western foreign policy, which Suhrawardy cabinet exercised.³⁰ Maulana Bhashani and his left leaning progressive associates frequently demanded non-aligned foreign policy and anti-imperialist stand and contended that due to military alliances with imperialist power Pakistan lost its support in the Muslim countries. In 1956, during the Suez Crisis Bengalis extended their whole hearted support to Egypt and on 9th November, 1956 the whole East Bengal observed one day 'Hartal' [general strike] called on by Maulana Bhashani for the solidarity of Muslim brotherhood with Egypt. In 1968, the Student Action Committee declared their Eleven-point programme. The 5th schedule of the programme demanded Pakistani withdrawal from SEATO, CENTO and the banning of Pak-USA military ties and demanded Pakistan to pursue non-aligned foreign policy.³¹

Domestic Politics of United Pakistan

Pakistan emerged as an independent state in 1947, which is not a nation in being but only nations in hope. According to Rupert Emerson, "... by the accepted criteria of nationhood there was in fact no such thing as a Pakistani nation." ³² Only religious Islamic bond was common with the two wings and there was no harmony in socio-economic and cultural aspects. The ruling elite of Pakistan had failed to nation building as well as state building task. The ruling elite of Pakistan used Islam as a common interest or factor and fear of India, a common threat for their security by which they exploited the people of East Bengal. But eventually Islam was not a sufficiently durable common interest or factor to hold the two wings together in the face of physical, economic, social and

³⁰. Mizanur Rahman Shelly, op.cit., p.33.

³¹. Shah Ahmed Reza, "The 37 years of Awami League," Weekly Bichitra, (vernacular weekly), 26 December, 1986. pp. 18-37.

³². Quoted from Rounaq Jahan, Pakistan: Failure in National Integration, (Bangladesh: Oxford University Press and University Press Limited, 1972), pp.1,9; see also Rupert Emerson, From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-assertion on Asian and African Peoples. (Cambridge Mass. Harvard University Press, 1960). pp.92,94.

political differences. The threat or fear of India was an insufficient force promoting common anxiety that the ruling elites expected, giving different interpretations of the nature of that threat. This meant that the East and the West wings lacked the necessary ingredients for a successful political synthesis. The divergence of interests between the two was at once an immediate cause and a consequence of the country's failure to evolve a political system that worked.³³

Post-independent Pakistan's internal politics faced very crucial problems: failure to building a fundamental political consensus, of introducing a constitution, the autocratic attitude of the ruling elite and the imbalance of development work between two wings East Bengal and West Pakistan. After sometime it became clear to the East Bengal nationals and the rising vernacular elite that East Bengal was being suppressed and oppressed by the West Pakistani ruling elite in social, political, economic and cultural aspects in the name of Islamic solidarity. Therefore, East Bengali nationals were gradually alienating themselves from West Pakistani rule and initiated Bengali nationalist movement against western ruling elite. These were the mile stones in the history of Pakistan: in 1952, the historical Language Movement, in 1954, the victory of the United Front, in 1956, rule of the central Unit, in 1966, six point movements by Sheikh Mujib, in 1968, Agartala conspiracy case, in 1968, Eleven point programmes by the Student Action Committee, in 1969, the mass uprising, which ousted President Ayub Khan and in 1970, the landslide victory of the Bengali nationalist sentiment in election. These were the historical movements chronologically led to a nine-month bloody liberation

³³. Louis D. Hayes, Politics in Pakistan : The Struggle for legitimacy, (USA : Westview Press, 1984), p.3; According to Hans J. Morgenthau, "... it is hard to see how anything but a miracle, or else a revival of religious fanaticism, will assure Pakistan's future". See Hans J. Morgenthau, " The Underlying Weakness of Pakistan," in Sheelendra K. Singh et al, (eds.) Bangladesh Documents, Vol. 1, p.5.

war against West Pakistan and ultimately Bangladesh emerged as an independent state in December 1971.³⁴

Role of Muslim World During the Liberation War

During the different phases of Liberation War of Bangladesh (March 25 to December 16, 1971) different Muslim states reacted in different ways. According to Syed Anwar Husain:

The initial response of the Muslim world to the liberation war was one of opposition and a bland support for Pakistan. To them, the struggle of the Bengalis appeared to be anti-Islamic as it aimed at breaking up Pakistan thereby driving a wedge into so-called Islamic solidarity. In June 1971, the twenty-two nation Conference of Islamic countries in Jeddah supported Pakistan's efforts to safeguard national unity and territorial integrity. A communique issued by the Conference condemned any foreign interference in Pakistan's internal affairs.³⁵

The relatively feudal conservative states emphasized on 'Islamic Unity' and supported the ruling Pakistani military junta. Disintegration of a Muslim country like Pakistan was a great concern for them. These were Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Libya, Jordan etc. The more or less progressive states in the Muslim world did not see the Liberation War of Bangladesh as a threat to Islam. For them it was a political conflict and their reaction was also political. They remained passive or silent. They hesitated to support or to react as they had been in obsession regarding Indo-Soviet involvement and in Pakistani military junta's anti-Liberation propaganda. The secular orientation of the Awami League also put them in obsession.

³⁴. For a discussion of the emergence of Bangladesh and the (main) role played by nationalist leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and others see Rounaq Jahan, op.cit.; Talukdar Maniruzzaman, Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh, (Dacca: Bangladesh Books International Ltd., 1975); A.M.A. Muhith, Bangladesh Emergence of a Nation, (Dacca: Bangladesh Books International Ltd., 1978).

³⁵. Quoted from Syed Anwar Husain, op. cit., p.256; and see also Pakistan Times, June 26, 1971.

On the other hand, at that time different Muslim countries also had an information gap about Bangladesh liberation war, its leadership, objectives and validity of a just war. According to a reputed journalist of Egyptian Al-Ahram newspaper, Mohammed Hassnain Heykal, "...during the liberation struggle, Arab countries were not neutral and that although at the initial stages there was some confusion owing to lack of information, they were sympathetic to the cause of Bangladesh."³⁶

The role of some selected Muslim countries during the liberation war of Bangladesh are discussed below.

Iran : Historically, Iran-Pakistan relationship was quite close. Pakistan has always considered that it had a special relationship with Iran, based upon perceived ethnic links and a common cultural heritage. These factors were shared between Iranians and West wing of pre-1971 Pakistan and not with East Bengalis. Iran and Pakistan traditionally had certain foreign policy interest in common; In particular, a concern for Afghan irredentist claims on Pakistani territory. They supported each other in the international politics in conflicting issues; they joined CENTO with Turkey, they formed RCD, and both entered into defence agreement with the Soviet Union in 1959 for their common interest. Although initially they had some sort of rivalry between them for the leadership of the Muslim nations, but it could not affect their traditional warm relations.³⁷ Moreover, Iran sided with Pakistan during the 1965 War, supplied fuel but no arms. When Bangladesh emerged in 1971, Pakistan became more attached to Iran than ever before for emotional as well as logical reasons, which was determined by the previous hearty

³⁶. He stressed that "there was no religious consideration whatsoever with regard to the general attitude of the Arab nations toward the Bangladesh issue." Condemning the genocide committed by Pakistan in Bangladesh, Mohammad Heykal said that a consensus among the Arab nations was being worked out and this had caused delay in actual recognition..." Cited from Virendra Narain, Foreign Policy of Bangladesh (1971-1981), op.cit., p.178 (footnote no.7); also see Indian Express (New Delhi), 31 January 1973.

³⁷. Denis Wright, op.cit., pp. 227-229.

relationship. At first on 28 March, 1971 an Iranian Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman said that Iran has strongly suggested to all nations of the world not to interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan during the present crisis³⁸. On July 2, 1971, the visiting Iranian, Home Minister Mr. Hassan Zahedi, in an interview (in Lahore) stated that Iran would side with Pakistan in every hour of trial against powers bent upon doing harm to both these Muslim countries.³⁹

Iran expressed the desire of fighting along with Pakistan in times of necessity. It was her obligation to protect Islamic solidarity and to participate in a holy *jihad*. In mid-September 1971, President Yahya Khan visited Iran and sought more active support. At the end of President Yahya Khan's visit, a joint communique was issued on September 15. Iran and Pakistan pledged continued support to each other in matter of mutual interest.⁴⁰ Later, in an interview with newspaper (on September 28, 1971), the Shah of Iran declared that "his country was 100 percent behind Pakistan" in the East Pakistan crisis⁴¹.

Iraq : Iraq was the first among the Muslim countries to recognize independent Bangladesh. During the liberation war of Bangladesh, the first Iraqi response to Bangladesh Liberation movement was that, President Ahmed Hassan al-Baker of Iraq sent a message (on April 28, 1971) to the President of Pakistan, where he stated that

³⁸. Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1971, p.156.

³⁹. Ibid., vol. 24, No. 3, 1971, p.77.

⁴⁰. Ibid., Vol. 24, No. 4, 1971, p. 94. At that time Iran gave five F-5 and F-82 jets, helicopters and M-47 Tanks to Pakistan. See Asian Recorder 1971, p. 10230; Vinod Gupta, Anderson Papers-A Study of Nixon's Blackmail of India, (Delhi : Indian School Supply Depot, 19972), pp.79-80, 141-142.

⁴¹. Shah of Iran added that he had abandoned his attempt to mediate between India and Pakistan in the current crisis, when the Indian government spurned these attempts. Pakistan Honizon, Vol. 24, No. 4, p.98.

his country fully understood the measures being taken to preserve the unity and sovereignty of Pakistan.⁴² After this statement, Iraq did not make any noteworthy comment on this issue. On the other hand, some Iraqi progressive organizations and press had a sympathy towards Bangladesh liberation war. As that Iraq had a strained relationship with Pakistan and at the same time it was a traditional friend of India, it could not give direct or positive support to Bangladesh.

Turkey : Turkey, one of the best allies of Pakistan, had made a comment, on 3 April, 1971 that the crisis of East Pakistan was Pakistan's internal matter and it would be settled without foreign interference.⁴³ The Turkish Prime Minister Nihat Erim emphasized (on November 26, 1971) the absolute necessity of immediate withdrawal of Indian troops from Pakistan territory under ceasefire agreement and peaceful negotiation to solve the existing Indo-Pakistan disputes.⁴⁴ At the last phase of Bangladesh liberation war, Turkish Foreign Minister visited Pakistan and in a joint statement (on December 1, 1971) urged the international community to influence to bring about cessation of Indo-Pakistan hostilities and sought respect for Pakistan's territorial integrity.⁴⁵ After the liberation of Bangladesh, a spokesman of the Turkish Foreign Ministry expressed (on December 17, 1971) that the occupation of East Pakistan by force was a matter of great regret to Turkey and in a programme submitted by the Prime Minister of Turkey, it was stated that Turkey would support Pakistan in its efforts to free

⁴². Ibid., Vol.24, No.2, 1971, pp.71,162.

⁴³. Ibid., pp.62,157.

⁴⁴. Ibid., Vol. 24, No.4, 1971, p.126.

⁴⁵. Ibid., Vol. 25, No.1, 1972, p.103. According to Vinod Gupta, "Iran and Turkey, members of the US sponsored military alliance CENTO also rushed airmen to Pakistan". Vinod Gupta, op.cit., p.141; S.R. Sharma, Bangladesh Crisis and Indian Foreign Policy, (New Delhi : Young Asia Publications, 1978), p.232.

itself from dangers directed against its national unity.⁴⁶

Saudi Arabia: The conservative Kingdom of Saudi Arabia played a negative role in the liberation war of Bangladesh, because of its cordial relationship with Pakistan. In an official statement (on April 28, 1971) the Government of Saudi Arabia declared its firm support for Pakistan's efforts to preserve its territorial integrity and sovereignty.⁴⁷ *The Daily Al-Bilad* of Jeddah in an editorial [on 17 September, 1971] also reflected the attitude of Saudi Government expressing that Bangladesh liberation war was a secessionist movement; it had a relation with Israel, the enemy of Arabs. The secessionists sought support from Israel and one of their representatives, Mohammad Qasim visited Israel for assistance. So, they supported the ruling government of Pakistan due to their anti-Israeli stand. The editorial also pointed out that the Arabs were indebted to Pakistan for extending permanent moral support even at a time when its relation with some of the Arab states were not on an even keel. In another editorial the daily *Al-Medina* of Jeddah expressed [on 30 September, 1971] that Indo-Russian interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan made the situation complex. The Indian propaganda against Pakistan for a large influx of refugees was not true. India sabotaged Pakistani interests and security.⁴⁸ On December 5, 1971, in another statement Saudi Arabia said, "the treacherous aggression launched by India

⁴⁶. Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1972, pp.113,120. On January 20, 1972, the Turkish Foreign Minister had said that East Pakistan was Pakistan's internal matter and it had every right to take action against separatists. He blamed India for not accepting the proposals for solution of refugee problem which resulted in war. Later Pakistan's ally Turkey (and Iran and others) continued to extend their support on P.O.W.'s issue and wanted a peaceful solution. Ibid., p.121.

⁴⁷. Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 24, No.2, 1971. p.71.

⁴⁸. M.D. Husain, International Press on Bangladesh liberation War, (USA: Rahfat M.Hussain, GOE College IOWA, USA, 1989), pp.264-265, 283,284.

against Pakistan flagrantly violates all international charters and human values which should adorn the community of man."⁴⁹

During the liberation war, Saudi Arabia provided Pakistan with 20 F-86 Sabrejets and other assistance. Saudi Press also expressed that "it was an act of solidarity by the Saudis when Pakistan was under pressure."⁵⁰ A US columnist, Jack Anderson, giving "leaked" information (on January 1, 1972) about the United States role during the Indo-Pakistan Crisis, said that the Nixon administration had asked Jordan and Saudi Arabia to quietly turn American arms shipment to Pakistan.⁵¹

Jordan : Pakistan-Jordan relations, based on mutual respect and understanding, provided a strong base for beneficial co-operation between the armed forces of the two countries. The Pakistan Army (specially Air force) had a valuable contribution to the Royal Jordanian Air Force. The spirit of co-relationship was reflected in Jordan's role played during the liberation war of Bangladesh.⁵²

Jordan adopted a negative attitude towards Bangladesh (and India) during the 1971 Liberation war. It sent ten F-104 super sonic Starfighters to Pakistan.⁵³ The stand taken by Jordan reflected its alignment with the Arabs and Pakistan. Syed Kamel-Al-Shareef, Ambassador of Jordan, said in Dhaka on July 25, 1971 that, a strong and unified Pakistan was a source of inspiration for all the Muslim countries. He said that, Jordan fully supported the

⁴⁹. Pakistan Horizon, Vol.25, No.1, 1972, p.106.

⁵⁰. Vinod Gupta, op.cit., pp. 141,144; Syed Anwar Husain, op.cit., p.276.

⁵¹. Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 25, No.1, 1972, p.117; see also Vinod Gupta, op.cit., p.20.

⁵². Pakistan Observer, 26 July, 1971.

⁵³. Vinod Gupta, op.cit., p. 141; Denis Wright, op.cit., p.230.

steps taken by the Pakistan government to preserve its solidarity⁵⁴. On December 3, 1971, the King of Jordan sent a message to the President of Pakistan, expressing that "under no circumstances we can close our eyes to any harm caused of the largest sister of Islamic State on any danger to security of its territory, unity or its people."⁵⁵

Egypt (The Arab Republic of Egypt): The Arab Republic of Egypt Government and the press have refrained from making any comment on the developments in East Pakistan. But Cairo Radio on March 30 came out with a commentary suggesting that there had been "mishandling" of the problem. The commentary, which could be taken to reflect official thinking, pleaded strongly for maintaining unity between the two parts of Pakistan and said, "a collective solution would bring to repair mistakes" within the framework of national unity. Otherwise, the consequence of the present situation would be more mistakes that would only destroy the unity of the country⁵⁶. On June 14, 1971, the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat while talking to the visiting C-in-C of Pakistan Navy, Vice-Admiral Muzaffar Hassan, referring to the situation in Pakistan said that, he was glad to know that President Yahya Khan had decided to go ahead and announce his political plan. He also added, "whatever happens, we shall

⁵⁴. Syed Kamel-Al-Shareef also visited Comilla, Feni, and Noakhali (in East Pakistan) with Lt.- General Tikka Khan, Governor of East Pakistan on July 26, 1971. He stated that his impression of the people of East Pakistan was that, "their survival was linked with a strong and integrated Pakistan". But he regretted that, "hostile propaganda and interference would only prevent them from implementing constructive plans and add to the hardship of the common people". See Morning News, July 26, 1971.

⁵⁵. Pakistan Horizon, Vol.25, No.1, 1972, p.104.

⁵⁶. The commentary recalled Jinnah's statement that "if we think ourselves as Punjabis or Bengalis and not as Pakistanis, Pakistan will be torn apart and if this happens, nobody will be pleased except enemies of Pakistan." The commentary added that the latest development in East Pakistan stirred feelings of pain among all those who loved the "brotherly people of Pakistan." It would be deplorable if East Pakistan was separated from West Pakistan. See Pakistan Times, 15 June, 1971.

continue to support the integrity of Pakistan." Other than that there was no noteworthy comment or move taken by Egypt Government during the liberation war of Bangladesh.⁵⁷

It is also pertinent to mention that Egypt was one of the traditional and close friends of India. Because of its [Egypt] economic dependence on Saudi Arabia, Libya and other Gulf countries, it was not in a position to support the liberation war of Bangladesh. It did not irritate those countries on the question of Bangladesh liberation war.

Libya : People of the Libyan Arab Republic and its Government have supported the people of Pakistan and its Government in their (Pakistan) hour of crisis with steadfastness and sincerity. According to Libyan view, it is necessary that the brotherly people of the Libyan Arab Republic should know that they are not supporting their brethren in Pakistan just because they are their brethren, but because they are supporting a right and just cause. They also pointed out that it was international and Zionist propaganda to destroy Pakistan. It also said that by their massive and vicious propaganda they succeeded sometimes in creating wrong impression about Pakistan even in the minds of its sincere friends.⁵⁸

⁵⁷. Pakistan Horizon, Vol.24, No.3, 1971,p.73. According to Robert Jackson, "The only significant Muslim voice not wholly sympathetic to Pakistan was Egypt; and although in June President Sadat referred to Egypt's support for Pakistan's integrity, his government continued to express its sympathy towards its Indian partner in non-alignment and friendship with the Soviet Union". Robert Jackson, South Asian Crisis : India-Pakistan-Bangladesh, (New Delhi : Vikas Pub. Hse. Pvt. Ltd., 1978), p.39.

⁵⁸. M.D.Hussain, op. cit., p.269. Concerning these situation, The Daily Thaura of Tripoli expressed that, "Some of our Arab friends who have been taken in by the BBC campaign against Pakistan, all that can be said is that if you can rely on the BBC for news of the Middle East; then certainly also rely on them for news on Pakistan. You Know that the BBC and the Western news represent the zionist view of events in the Middle East; how can you accept their words for events in East Pakistan where none of them saw what was happening?" Quoted from Ibid., p.273.

It was also noteworthy that Libyan leader Qadhafi was hostile to Bangladesh's Liberation War and sent American supplied B-52 bombers to Pakistan as symbol of friendship to preserve its unity and territorial integrity.⁵⁹

Algeria : African Arab state, Algerian President, Hourri Boumedienne sent a message to President Yahya Khan (on April 21, 1971) expressing solidarity and support for Pakistan in its efforts to preserve its unity and territorial integrity. He stated that Pakistan was competent to settle its affairs without external interference.⁶⁰ On May 2, 1971, Algerian envoy in Pakistan (Seedi Bin-Abdul Rahman) assured that Algerian people and their government would always be with Pakistan because it was not only of duty but a support to their own struggle against imperialism and colonialism.⁶¹ These were the initial reactions of Algerian Government.

Algeria several times expressed its great concern over Bangladesh liberation war and Indo-Pakistan conflict, but would not comment on the atrocities committed by the Pakistani ruling military junta⁶². On 8th December 1971 the Secretary General of the

⁵⁹. Vinod Gupta, op.cit., p.142.

Not only that, on December 11, 1971, he also sent messages to the Presidents of Somalia, Nigeria, Yugoslavia and Zambia, reaffirming his country's support for the unity and integration of Pakistan. After Bangladesh liberation, Libyan attitude remained same and President Qadhafi had made a gift of a large quantity of medicines for war victims of Pakistan. On January 27, 1972 Pakistan President Z. A. Bhutto visited Libya and talked with his counterpart. A joint communique was issued which called for the implementation of UN resolutions and assured full support of Libya to Pakistan. Pakistan also asked for Libyan intervention for the safety of non-Bengalies. At the same time, Libya played negative role against Bangladesh liberation War in the Arab League and AAPSO. See also Pakistan Horizon, Vol.25, No.1, 1972, pp.110,122,123,119.

⁶⁰. Pakistan Horizon, Vol.24, No.2, 1971, pp.70,160-161.

⁶¹. Ibid., p.73. Because Algeria had a long tradition to fight against colonialism.

⁶². Robert Jackson, op.cit., p.85.

Algerian Foreign Ministry told the representatives of Pakistan and India that Algerian position on the Indo-Pakistan problem was based on the principle of territorial integrity of all states and the unity of the people. Even before two days of the end of the liberation war (on 14 December, 1971) of Bangladesh, the President of Algeria held a meeting of the Council of Ministers to review situation in the sub-continent, Algeria opposed any violation of territorial integrity and any action directed at breaking up of unity of a sovereign state. It also appealed to India and Pakistan to reach a peaceful solution of the conflict.⁶³ **Morocco** : On April 18, 1971, the Moroccan *Istiqlal Party* at its special session considering the East Pakistan situation passed a resolution pleading for the unity of Pakistan, which was being disrupted under an imperialist plan. It appealed to the Muslim countries to help Pakistan to maintain its unity during the present crisis.⁶⁴ Officially Moroccan Foreign Minister reaffirmed his government's support for the unity and territorial integrity of Pakistan.⁶⁵ On the other hand, King Hassan [of Morocco] had asked all Muslim states, "In the name of Islamic solidarity," to increase their efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to the Indo-Pakistan conflict.⁶⁶

⁶³. Ibid., Vol.25, No.1,1972 p.112. After the victory of Bangladesh, Algeria and Pakistan issued (on January 26, 1972) a joint communique at the end of Pakistani President's talk with the President of Algeria. It stated that precipitous action taken by other countries in the context of the present situation in the sub-continent would handicap negotiations. So it is better for the elected leaders of East and West Pakistan to resolve the problems/conflicts. Ibid., p.123.

⁶⁴. Ibid., Vol.24, No.2, 1971, p.67.

⁶⁵. Ibid., p.71.

⁶⁶. Ibid., Vol.24, No.4, 1971, p.126. Later when (on January 26, 1972) President Bhutto visited Morocco, a Joint Communique stated that "any preoccupied action by other countries can only hinder talks between leaders seeking a solution to the problem of Pakistan". Ibid., Vol.25, No.1, 1972, p.123.

Malaysia : On April 3, 1971, the Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak commented that "the recent development in East Pakistan was purely an internal matter for the Pakistanis to deal with. We have no right to interfere with it."⁶⁷ When Bangladesh liberation war was at the mid-phase, and Pakistan was committing atrocities throughout the country, in a policy statement in parliament (on July 7, 1971), the Malaysian Prime Minister again said that East Pakistan was an integral part of Pakistan and therefore the question of recognition to an imaginary 'Bangladesh' does not arise.⁶⁸ The Malaysian Deputy Premier, Tun Ismail Abdul Rahman stated (on November 29, 1971) that, the UN as the World's only impartial body should intervene in the "Undeclared War" between India and Pakistan.⁶⁹ In post-liberation Bangladesh, Malaysia retained its previous attitude⁷⁰.

Indonesia : Indonesia, the largest Muslim populated country of the world, was concerned about the situation in Pakistan. After the 25th March '71 massacre, the then Foreign Minister of Indonesia Adam Malik expressed (on March 27, 1971) that the outsiders (indicating India) should not intervene in the crisis in Pakistan.⁷¹ Indonesia highly appreciated Pakistan's previous support to the

⁶⁷. Ibid., Vol. 24, No.2, 1971, pp.62, 157.

⁶⁸. Ibid., Vol. 25, No.3, 1971, p.78.

⁶⁹. Ibid., Vol.25, No.4, p.127. Later the then Malaysia's Prime Minister (on 8 December, 1971) appealed to the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and President Yahya Khan on 'humanitarian ground' for an immediate cessation of hostilities and expressed the hope that the two countries would resolve their differences by 'peaceful means'. Sheelendra K. Singh et al. Bangladesh Documents, Vol. 1, op.cit., p.219.

⁷⁰. Pakistan Horizon, Vol.25, No.1, 1972, p.120. The Malaysian Prime Minister (on January 15, 1972) said that the "so called Bangladesh government" was not yet a *de-facto* government and that Malaysia would only recognize a *de-facto* government. Later on, it tried its best to bring about an understanding between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Ibid., p.79.

⁷¹. Ibid., Vol.24, No.2, 1971. p.60.

Palestinian and to the cause of the independence of Indonesia, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Algeria, and felt that it should be reciprocated by all Muslim countries (except Egypt and Afghanistan who had certain political differences with Pakistan). It is worthwhile to mention that in 1965, when Pakistan was fighting a war for its very survival against India, Muslim countries rose to the occasion and offered their moral and material help to Pakistan⁷². On May 28, 1971, Indonesian President Suharto sent a message to President Yahya Khan, expressing his understanding of Pakistan's stand on the developments in East Pakistan and had stated that no country had the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the other countries.⁷³ Some of the Indonesian press and political organizations criticized Bangladesh liberation war and accused India as a provocateur of the War.

When Bangladesh was near to its liberation and Indo-Pakistan war had begun, Indonesia wanted to mediate in the Indo-Pak conflict.⁷⁴ Soon after the independence of Bangladesh, Indonesia initially refused to recognize Bangladesh, which it called the secessionist regime of the so called 'Bangladesh'.⁷⁵

Other Muslim Countries: Other Muslim countries extended their moral support to Pakistan. These countries were the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Uganda etc. Some countries remained indifferent. They did not play any active role or make any comment. These countries were: Afghanistan,⁷⁶ Arab Republic of Yemen, Lebanon etc. The other

⁷². Then the firm support given by Indonesia, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, Syria and Algeria in that war would always fill the Pakistanis with a sense of pride and gratitude.

⁷³. Ibid., p.80.

⁷⁴. Ibid., Vol.25, No.1, 1972, pp.107, 113.

⁷⁵. Ibid., p.117.

⁷⁶. Afghanistan was though one of the consistent enemies of Pakistan, it did not support the liberation war of Bangladesh. But the *Afghan Millat* and other newspapers representing the sentiments

G.C.C. countries like Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE, morally supported Pakistan, but internationally their role was minimal/insignificant. **Organizations** : During the liberation war the world's leading Muslim organizations and other alliances reacted seriously. Most of them supported Pakistani ruling military junta and hoped for a united Pakistan and condemned India for its interference in Pakistan's internal crisis. These Organizations were, (1) The International Islamic Institute of Colombo, (IIIC) (2) World Muslim Congress (3) CENTO (4) OIC (5) Arab League (6) Organization of African Unity (7) *Motamare-Alam I Islami* (8) *Rabita-Al Alam Al Islami*⁷⁷

Concluding the discussion, it can be said that the East Pakistan crisis enabled Pakistan once again to know who were its friends and to what extent.

Support of the Press, Organizations and Leaders of Muslim Countries Towards the Bangladesh Liberation War: Although the Muslim countries played negative or neutral role on the just war of Bangladesh liberation, some of the progressive organizations, world leaders⁷⁸ and press⁷⁹ supported Bangladesh. Five youth organization

of the Afghan nation support to the struggle of the people of Bangladesh for self-determination. In many demonstrations, which took place in support of Bangladesh in Kabul and Jalalabad. Afghan people expressed their warm sympathies. See Ranjit Gupta & Radha Krishana(eds.), World Meet on Bangladesh : Report of the International Conference on Bangladesh, (New Delhi : Impex India, n.d., 1972?).

⁷⁷. For details see the Appendix - 1 for the Statements/Comments of the various Muslim organisation and alliances during the liberation war of Bangladesh.

⁷⁸. A.A.P.S.O, the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization had sympathy towards Bangladesh's liberation movement. At a meeting (October 1, 1971) held in Cairo, Pakistan could not resist an Indian move to get the "Bangladesh" issue included in the draft agenda for the fifth Afro-Asian Conference. See Pakistan Horizon, vol.24, No.4, 1971, p.100. Among world leaders who supported Bangladesh liberation war was Zaichack (Former Prime Minister and the Speaker of Indonesian Parliaments commented on 30th May, 1971) and Air Martial Azgar Khan (Former Air Chief of Pakistan) condemning Sheikh Mujib's trial organized by the Military

of Arab states pleaded strongly for the liberation war of the seventy-five million Bengali people, they urged that Arab world would support and help the heroic struggle of the Bengali freedom fighters. These organizations are: Democratic Union of Youth of Syria, Democratic Youth Union of Iraq, Ashshalfi Youth Movements of Yemen People's Republic and Democratic Youth Union of Lebanon and Youth Union of the Sudan⁸⁰. Besides this, on September 23, a three-day international conference on Bangladesh was held in Delhi, which was presided over by Joy Prokash Narayan, an Indian leader. Many delegates from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia, Malaysia, Lebanon and UAR participated in the conference. The participant states were twenty-five in number. This meeting

junta of West Pakistan. See Hasan Hafizur Rahman (ed.), Bangladesher Swadinata Juddah: Dalil Patra, (vernacular), History of Bangladesh War of Independence: Documents, Vol.5, (Ministry of Information, GOB. First edition, 1982), pp.62,87. On the other hand, according to Ataur R. Khan, "Military action of the junta in March was not endorsed by West Pakistan. It was an act of ruling and unrepresentative minority taken to achieve a short-sighted aim and with the exception of Mr. Z.A.Bhutto it was not supported by any political party or leader in West Pakistan." See Ataur R. Khan, op.cit., pp.69-70.

⁷⁹. Several newspapers extended their support to the liberation war of Bangladesh. They published special articles on Bangladesh issue. These were:

The daily Zunaidian, (of Turkey), on 29 March, 1971 (editorial).

Al-Hawadith, (of Lebanon), on 20 August, 1971.

Al-Taura (of Syria), on 27 March, 1971 (editorial).

Uthusha Malaysia, on 30 March 1971 (editorial).

Rosey-Al-Yusuf, (Arabic weekly of UAR).

Afghan Millat (a daily) of Afghanistan.

Akbar-Al-Kuwait (a daily) on 6 April 1971.

The daily Al-Shabs, (of Lebanon) on 10 July 1971.

Jakarta Times, on 16 August, 1971.

Al-Saffa, (of Sudan) on 5 April, 1971.

Cited from Hasan Hafizur Rahman(ed.), Bangladesher Swadinata Juddah: Dalil Patra, Vol.5, op.cit., pp.242-244, 75,86.

⁸⁰. Ibid.,pp. 64-65.

condemned the farcical secret trial of Sheikh Mujib.⁸¹

From the above discussion, we can understand why the Muslim world could not play any positive role or remained neutral during the independence war of Bangladesh. An Arab explains Arab apathy towards the liberation war of Bangladesh. According to him :

... You have been (The Bengalis) baffled by the role the Arab governments are playing in respect of the horror that has been perpetrated by the Pakistani military junta over the people of Bangladesh. But let me tell you that our people (Arab People) in general do not approve of it. Unfortunately there is so little information available about the tragedy. Most of the newspapers being owned by the vested interests either kept silent or published an occasional press handout from the Pakistan embassy. ...Pakistan regime is providing successful publicity campaign mainly because there is none from Bangladesh to explain the cause of your people and also because (as you know) the governments here are prejudiced by that religious factor... But a large number of the educated people know the facts through French and English newspapers and magazines from Europe and America.⁸²

The Indian government also tried heart and soul to internationalize Bangladesh liberation war and wanted positive/direct support from the international community. In most of the cases, the Indian government succeeded on this issue⁸³. However, it had faced difficulties to achieve Muslim countries' support, because of the Muslim world's 'cruel apathy' to the developments in East Pakistan. Even those Muslim countries regarded by India as 'progressive' and responsive to its approach to international

⁸¹. Ibid., p.139; also see Bangladesh Documents, (by Govt. of India) Vol.1, p.65.

⁸². Alamgir Kabir, This was Radio Bangladesh : 1971, (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1984), p. 47.

⁸³. S.R. Sharma, op.cit., pp. 56-61, 330-331; Robert Jackson, op.cit., p.150. "Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, on 31 March 1971, moved a resolution in her Parliament in which it was stated that as India was bound to the people of the subcontinent by centuries old ties of history, culture and tradition, she could not remain indifferent to happenings so close to her border". Quoted from Mehrunnisa Hatim Iqbal, "India and the 1971 War with Pakistan", Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1972, p.23.

problems, have indicated that they agree little with India's assessment of the political aspects of the conflict in East Pakistan. For example countries like the UAR, Algeria and Syria with which India has had intimate relations in the past had not reacted properly, which dejected India.

Indicating the role of Muslim countries during the liberation war of Bangladesh, former Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad had commented:

None of the Muslim countries had been able to show even the least amount of sympathy, not to speak of fellow feeling, during the nine-months when the military junta in Islamabad had ordered its army to crush and subjugate the 75 million unarmed people of Bangladesh.⁸⁴

There were several reasons why the Muslim countries supported the Pakistani military junta, and condemned Bangladesh liberation war movement. It was noteworthy that when the liberation war was going on intensively, some so-called Muslim states remained neutral (e.g. Egypt, Syria, Iraq, South Yemen etc.). Most of the close allies of Pakistan directly supported the ruling government of Pakistan and sent arms and other assistance. However, some progressive countries remained neutral on the war question. These states and their press, youth and student organizations and individuals who were progressive, sympathized with the liberation war of Bangladesh. They criticized Pakistan ruling military junta's atrocity committed over innocent people.

The following causes explain why they supported Pakistan or remained neutral: (i) Pakistan was an influential and the largest Muslim populated country. It had significant influence over the

⁸⁴. Quoted from Virendra Narain, op.cit., p.169. Syed Nazrul Islam, the then Acting President of Bangladesh on 24 June, 1971 sent a telegram to Tengku Abdul Rahman, the then Secretary General of the OIC, to use its influence and authority to put an immediate end to the genocide in Bangladesh. He also requested him to support the independence demand of Bangladesh and referred to the killings, torture, desecration of mosques, murders of *Imams* and the burning of the holy Qur'an. Sheelendra K. Singh et al., Bangladesh Documents, Vol. 1, op.cit., p. 330.

Muslim world. Pakistan created a wrong impression and confusing environment in the Islamic world about the political situation in its erstwhile eastern province and most of the Muslim countries had no clear picture about the liberation war of Bangladesh and its ideology, aim, goal and leadership. (ii) Pakistan was one of the strongest (on military strength consideration) states and one of the pioneer countries of Islamic *Ummah*. They did not want its dismemberment, which would ultimately weaken their strength and strategic consideration⁸⁵ of this sub-continent that would cause imbalance. (iii) Indian and Soviet Union's involvement in the liberation war made the Muslim countries think that this state would be a satellite of Indo-Soviet axis. (iv) The Awami League government's ideology and secularism frightened them, especially the feudal monarchical Arab countries, whose leadership thought that it was a deviation from Islam and closer to atheism or communism, (v) Information gap, Israeli government's role⁸⁶ and

⁸⁵. Pakistan's strategic link with the Middle East is one of the most important bonds holding the two regions together. Pakistan occupies a vital position in the strategic planning of Iran on the one hand, and the Arabs on the other. Considering Iran's security and strategic links with Pakistan, Tehran was frightened by the East Pakistan situation. In an interview in Washington the Shahanshah spoke very candidly, "The integrity of Pakistan is vital for us. If it were threatened and some separatist movement started, this would create an absolutely intolerable situation for our eastern frontiers". Zubeida Mustafa, "Recent Trends in Pakistan's Policy Towards the Middle East," Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 28, No. 4, 1975, p.9.

⁸⁶. During the liberation war of Bangladesh Israel played a confusing role which made Pakistan and his Arab allies worried. On 2 July 1971, the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) condemned the butchery, destruction and wanton torture carried out by the army of west Pakistan. Israel even sent medicines, equipment and food through Magen David Adom (Israeli Red Cross) to the Bangladesh refugees in India. Not only that in April 1972, Israel extended recognition to Bangladesh and wanted to send weapons for the new nation. Bangladesh, however, declined both. Muslim countries accused Israel that Bangladesh liberation war had a connection with Israel and both of them wanted to destroy largest populous Muslim

Pakistani government's propaganda against the liberation war, made them perplexed. Israel and Zionism were the common enemy of Muslim world; its so-called support towards Bangladesh movement caused Muslim world to support Pakistani military junta directly.

Muslim World's role during the liberation war was concerned with their own national interest and national alignment, not to the just causes of liberation war of fellow Muslims of Eastern part. Their activities, initiatives were concerned with the following principles: (i) adhering to the principles of non-interference; (ii) treating the affairs in East Pakistan as an internal matter; (iii) asking foreign powers not to interfere in Pakistan's domestic matter; (iv) sending (few of them) arms and other assistance, (e.g. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya) and some of them (specially Iran) wanted to fight for Pakistan's integration and (v) commenting the liberation war of Bangladesh was a secessionist movement.

It was Pakistani ruling elites' intensive diplomatic endeavours that they achieved Muslim countries' active support as were indicated by the Joint Communiques and statements issued by the various governments and organisations. Those countries with whom Pakistan enjoyed close relationship and cordialities, which were more explicit in their support to Pakistan were: Iran, Turkey,

country. But connection with Israeli government was denied by exiled Bangladesh government and Bangladesh authority refused Israeli assistance. Pakistan Horizon, reported that in Jerusalem (on September 16, 1971) a self styled emissary of "Bangladesh", during his mission to seek Israeli military aid, expressed satisfaction at his talks with Israeli authorities and stated that the Israeli government would give proper consideration to "Bangladesh" request if it was approached through the Israeli consulate in Bombay with the knowledge of the Indian government. According to another report, (on November 5, 1971) the Israeli consul general in Bombay told a meeting held in jullunder of India, that Israel had pledged full political, moral and material support to India against Pakistan. There was no validity of this propaganda of Bangladesh's connection with Israel in its liberation war. This propaganda confused other Muslim countries which considered Israel as enemy of Islam, and its existence. See Syed Anwar Husain, op.cit., p.138; Pakistan Horizon, Vol.24, No.4, 1971, pp.94,115; M.D.Husain, op.cit., pp.264-265; Sheelendra K. Singh et al., Bangladesh Documents, Vol. 2, pp.154-155.

Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Malaysia, Indonesia etc. Other governments whose attitudes were more non-committal and passive were Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Afghanistan and South Yemen. In fact, the Muslim countries had failed to respond adequately to the cry of the sufferings of fellow Muslims of Bangladesh for sympathy and support to their struggle for existence and independence.

CHAPTER III

RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES: MUJIB REGIME

Post-liberation Bangladesh immediately faced nation building as well as state building task, which was a complex and multidimensional process and at the same time, the most cherished goal of any nation state. Post-liberation Awami League Government faced many formidable problems such as the restoration of civil administration all over the country, promotion of law and order situation, rehabilitation of war victims, reconstruction of war-devastated economy, infrastructure and consolidation of national independence and securing foreign recognition, which depended mostly on socio-economic and political developments. To achieve these objectives, the Awami League government formulated policies concerning foreign relations with various countries as well as Muslim countries. The Mujib administration launched a massive diplomatic campaign to achieve these goals and early recognition by the world communities including Muslim countries for the greater interest of newly emerged Bangladesh.

Post - Independent Bangladesh and Muslim World Reactions or Responses on the Question of Recognition

When the Indo-Bangladesh allied forces defeated the West Pakistani military force on 16 December, 1971 and Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign state, (till then) the Muslim countries' attitudes towards Bangladesh remained unfavourable and negative. The Muslim countries did not provide support to the newly independent state, because, on Bangladesh questions they only

believed the West Pakistan Government's statement received through mass media and diplomatic channels. They had no clear picture about what was going on then.¹ On the 16th December 1971, the then President of Pakistan while addressing the nation expressed, "we have been overwhelmed in the eastern sector, but a temporary setback in eastern theater of war does not by any means signify the end of struggle. ... We may lose a battle but final victory in this war of survival shall inshaallah be ours."²

Bearing this presidential address in mind, the Muslim countries could not immediately recognize Bangladesh. On the other hand, the (West) Pakistan government pursued its strong propaganda against Bangladesh. The President of Pakistan visited Iran (on 24.1.72), Turkey (on 25.1.72), Morocco (on 26.1.72), Algeria (on 26.1.72), Syria (on 27.1.72), Libya (on 27.1.72), Egypt (on 27.1.72) and other countries for seeking support and cooperation for a united Pakistan.³ The Muslim countries namely, Turkey, Tunisia, Indonesia, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Libya and others continued their support to the West Pakistani military junta. To show its sympathy, Libya- a close ally of Pakistan, sent a large quantity of gifts for the war victims of Pakistan. Pakistan also made efforts to achieve support and assistance of those countries who had already supported its stand or had been apparently neutral on the

¹. Moreover, most of the Muslim countries also had close associations with the US and China. Both the US and China played negative role against Bangladesh emergence.

². Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1972, p.112.

³. Ibid., pp.122-123.

independence of Bangladesh. It is also noteworthy that Pakistan severed her diplomatic relations and withdrew its representatives from Poland, Mongolia, Nepal, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Cyprus etc. as those countries had recognized the newly independent Bangladesh.

Notably, when the USSR recognized Bangladesh on January 25, 1972, the then Pakistan's President said in Rabat that "Pakistan would not break off relations with the Soviet Union following Moscow's recognition of the so-called Bangladesh."⁴ However, Pakistan severed its relationship with above-mentioned countries and withdrew its membership from the Commonwealth in protest against those countries' and Britain's recognition to Bangladesh. By February 1972, many countries such as Britain, West Germany, Irish Republic, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Austria and Norway recognized Bangladesh. Pakistani Foreign Office spokesman described the recognition of the so-called Bangladesh by certain countries as "an unfriendly act" and Pakistan cannot accept the contention that these countries have acted in accordance with any principles.⁵

It is to be mentioned that Pakistan severed its diplomatic relations with those countries with whom it had a limited or minimal political and economic relationships. When African Muslim country Senegal recognized Bangladesh, Pakistan expressed its

⁴. Ibid., Vol. 25, No. 1, 1972, p. 123.

⁵. Ibid., p. 126.

profound regret, but did not sever its relationship with it.⁶ Some countries delayed their recognition because of Pakistani attitude and presence of Indian military in Bangladesh. On the question of recognition to Bangladesh, Indonesia expressed, "until the foreign troops were withdrawn from Bangladesh it could not extend its recognition to Bangladesh."⁷ While inaugurating the third meeting of Muslim Foreign Ministers in Jeddah (on 1 March, 1972), the King of Saudi Arabia said that:

The enemies of Islam were responsible for the crisis in Pakistan. The enemies had exploited the differences and conflict between its Eastern and Western wings to further their own interest.⁸

In that conference the leader of the Pakistan delegation Malik Meraj Khalid said that President Bhutto was eager to meet Sheikh Mujibur Rahman anywhere and anytime in an atmosphere of freedom and dignity. In this regard, the Islamic Conference could play an important role, he added. Libya also circulated a statement among the delegates asking them not to recognize the so-called government of Bangladesh, till the two wings of Pakistan sorted out their relations through mutual negotiation. The Libyan statement also proposed that a Committee of the Foreign Ministers' conference should establish contact with both wings of Pakistan and work out a formula by which the unity of two wings could be maintained. The conference passed the resolution and decided to send a commission

⁶. Ibid., p.128.

⁷. Ibid., p. 125.

⁸. Ibid., p.133.

to Bangladesh representing six member states Tunisia, Iran, Morocco, Algeria, Somalia and Malaysia.⁹

Commenting on the proposal by the Islamic Conference, a Bangladesh Foreign Office spokesman stated that his government would not allow any member of the delegation, to visit Bangladesh, which had not yet recognized Bangladesh. Out of the six members of the delegation only Malaysia had recognized Bangladesh. At that time the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, said in an interview that he hoped "the cloud hanging over Dacca's relations with the Arabs would soon be dispersed." He criticized the Arab states for ignoring the principles of Islamic solidarity by refraining from recognizing his 'State'.¹⁰

Pakistan continued to secure Muslim countries' support in its favour. President Bhutto again initiated 13 days' (from May 29, 1972) visit to 14 Middle Eastern and African countries in a bid to withhold recognition of these countries (e.g. UAE, Kuwait, Iraq, Lebanon, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Nigeria, Guinea, Turkey, Iran etc.). On the other hand, during the Indo-Pak talk (Simla talk), Pakistan also sent a representative to Muslim countries to support its position on POW's issue, Kashmir crisis and Pak-Bangladesh mediation. Pakistan also requested Egypt, Uganda, Libya and Algeria to mediate Pak-Bangladesh crisis. On August 24, 1972 as a special emissary of President Bhutto of Pakistan, Ghaus Bakhsh Raisami (the then Food Minister) visited six African countries namely Kenya,

⁹. Ibid., Vol.25, No.2, 1972, p.74,76.

¹⁰. Ibid., Vol. 25, No. 2, 1972.p.88.

Uganda, Tanzania, Gambia, Malagasy and Mauritius. His tour was aimed at mustering support for Pakistan's stand on 'Bangladesh' and the prisoners' of war and other issues likely to come before the next UN General Assembly sessions.¹¹

Mujib's Foreign Policy Initiatives

Despite Pakistan's and her allied states' negative role on the question of recognition of the newly born Bangladesh, it could achieve recognition of 95 countries and had become a member of several international bodies including WHO, Commonwealth, World Bank, IMF, ILO, UNESCO etc. within a year of her independence (16.12.1972).¹² Its efforts to be a member of the United Nations were opposed by the People's Republic of China, the Security Council's veto-powered member and the closest ally of Pakistan. Since liberation, Bangladesh has been pursuing an independent non-aligned foreign policy, and Sheikh Mujib, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh repeatedly said, "I would like it [Bangladesh] to become the Switzerland of the East."¹³

Article 25 of the first constitution of Bangladesh (1972) states that "Bangladesh shall base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international disputes and respect for

¹¹. Ibid., Vol. 25, No.3, 1972, p.95.

¹². Nurul Momen, Bangladesh: The First Four Years. (From 16 December 1971 to 15 December, 1975), (Dacca : Bangladesh Institute of law & International Affairs, 1980).

¹³. The Bangladesh Observer, 14 January, 1972.

international law and the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter."¹⁴ Article 25 goes on to state that Bangladesh will strive for the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament."¹⁵ The same article emphasized " the right of every people freely to determine and build up its own social, economic and political system by ways and means of its own free choice and supports the oppressed people throughout the world waging a just struggle against imperialism, colonialism or racialism."¹⁶ Article 63 of the constitution also stated that "War shall not be declared and the Republic shall not participate in any war except with the assent of Parliament."¹⁷ Thus, Articles 25 and 63 of the constitution highlighted Bangladesh's foreign policy guidelines and principles in the early years of independence.

Albeit, in this constitutional or ideological stand Bangladesh is putting priority on cordial relationships with its immediate neighbour India and at the same time with the USSR. On 19 March (1972) Bangladesh signed a treaty of Peace and Friendship with India based on the model of the Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971.¹⁸ Bangladesh was also keen to establish close relations with its

¹⁴. For details see, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, (As modified up to 25th January, 1975), op.cit., p.8.

¹⁵. Loc.cit.

¹⁶. Loc.cit.

¹⁷. Ibid., p.23.

¹⁸. Nurul Momen, Bangladesh: The First Four Years, op.cit., p.7.

other South and South East Asian neighbours and other Muslim countries. With the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc countries it had visible warm relations because of their support of the liberation war and their post-liberation quick recognition. On the other hand, with the United States the relationship was very cool and low profiled because of its anti-Bangladesh stand during the liberation war. The USA took four months to recognize Bangladesh.¹⁹ Despite quasi-superpower China and Muslim countries' refusal to recognize Bangladesh till 1974, the Mujib government continued to make efforts to establish diplomatic relations with them. It also took measures for the normalization of relations with the USA, China and other Muslim countries.

Mujib's government, however, achieved recognition and established diplomatic relations with the two Muslim countries of the South East Asia (e.g. Malaysia and Indonesia) at the very early stage of independence (on 25.2.72). Before their recognition Malaysia and Indonesia made strong pleas on the UN platform to admit Bangladesh in the UNO. Then Malaysia, also helped Bangladesh to purchase a Fokker Friendship plane by extending the necessary amount as grant.²⁰ But it took sometime for Bangladesh to secure recognition from the Muslim countries of the Middle and West Asia. On 6 January 1972, a four-member delegation headed by Mollah Jalaluddin [a leader of ruling Awami league] visited Cairo to

¹⁹. The U.S.A. recognized Bangladesh on 4 April, 1972.

²⁰. Akmal Hussain, "Bangladesh and the Muslim World," in Emajuddin Ahamed (ed.), op.cit., pp.85-86.

attend the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference.²¹ Then contacts were also made with Iraq, South Yemen and Algeria. It was reported that with the full support of the majority of Arab States, Bangladesh was admitted as a member of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (on 27 March, 1972). It was the first indication that Muslim States were gradually changing their attitude towards Bangladesh.

Despite Pakistani propaganda against newly independent Bangladesh, Iraq was the first Arab Muslim country, which recognized Bangladesh on July 8, 1972 and was followed by South Yemen. After the Iraqi recognition, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Abdus Samad Azad visited Baghdad and categorically denied that Bangladesh was considering the establishment of diplomatic relation with Israel and he also hoped that all Arab states would follow the example of Iraq and the Democratic Republic of Yemen in recognizing Bangladesh.²²

In 1972 only two Arab countries e.g. Iraq and South Yemen recognized the Mujib regime. It is also pertinent to mention that only Iraq, which had close links with the Soviet Union and was not dependent on the subsidy from either Saudi Arabia or Libya ignored all opposition in the Muslim world and recognized Bangladesh on 8 July 1972. It (Iraq) became the 79th and the first Arab country to

²¹. Nurul Momen, Bangladesh: The First Four Years, op.cit., p.7.

²². Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 25, No. 3. 1972, p.101.

recognize the nascent state of Bangladesh.²³ In the following year, a major break-through was made in the Arab world. Eleven more Arab countries including Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Morocco and Kuwait accorded recognition to Bangladesh in 1973²⁴. It is to be mentioned that in 1972, UAR, Iraq and South Yemen voted in favour of Bangladesh in the World Health Organization (WHO). But before their recognition to Bangladesh as an independent state, most of the Muslim countries were concerned with the presence of Indian troops in the newly emerged country. The question of stranded Bengalis in Pakistan, the problem of stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh, Pakistani prisoners of war issue and secular ideology of Mujib Government were also areas of concern for them. These issues created negative impact among them for which they delayed their recognition.

It is important to note here that in the 4th Non-aligned Movement Summit held in Algeria (September 1973), Bangladesh got a unique opportunity for making personal contacts and exchange views with Arab and the African leaders present there. The Bangladesh Prime Minister held a series of meetings with the King of Saudi Arabia, President of Egypt, Uganda, Libya and Prime Minister of Lebanon. At that summit, Sheikh Mujib exchanged views specially

²³. Mr Hasan Al-Ambabi, the first Iraqi Charge D' Affairs to Bangladesh came to Dhaka to take the office of their diplomatic mission. Iraq was the first Arab country to establish diplomatic mission in Dhaka. The Daily Ittefaq, (vernacular newspaper), 3 July, 1973.

²⁴. Department of Publications, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (GOB), Banladesh Progress 1973, p.101.

with the Libyan leader Qadhafi and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and reversed Qadhafi's attitude towards Bangladesh.²⁵ But the meeting with Saudi King did not produce any significant results.

In course of time, Pakistan and its allies' (Muslim countries) attitude towards Bangladesh gradually changed. By late 1973 Bangladesh sent special emissaries/envoys to Muslim countries to secure their recognition. For instance (the then) President Abu Sayed Chowdhury, after he resigned from the presidency in December 1973, was made Prime Minister Mujib's personal emissary/envoy to Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Saudi Arabia.

On the eve of the Second OIC Summit, the Muslim countries extended support to Pakistan in its stand on POW questions also wanted Bangladesh's participation in that summit, which was held in Lahore (Pakistan). Then several countries of the OIC, its Secretary General Hasan-Al-Tohmy and representatives of Kuwait, Somalia, Lebanon, Algeria, Senegal and PLO, made strong diplomatic efforts on POW questions and Pakistan's recognition to Bangladesh. Bangladesh categorically expressed willingness to join the Second O.I.C Summit because it was the second largest Muslim country of the world. Pakistan diplomatically proposed that it would provide recognition to Bangladesh if Bangladesh assured Pakistan not to carry out the proposed trial of 195 POW's. However, Bangladesh refused the Pakistani conditionality publicly. On the POW issue several Muslim countries played a decisive and dynamic role to make

²⁵. Nurul Momen, Bangladesh: The First Four Years, op.cit., p.74; Syed Anwar Husain, op.cit., p. 259.

Bangladesh participate in that summit. After several initiatives by the OIC countries, Pakistan eventually recognized Bangladesh on February 22, 1974. And a 22-member Bangladeshi delegation led by Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, went to Pakistan on an aircraft provided by Algeria to attend the summit. After Pakistan's recognition, several Muslim countries (Pakistan's close R.C.D. allies Iran and Turkey), recognized Bangladesh.

In this connection, Bangladesh's close ally India tried to prevent Bangladesh from joining the Organization of the Islamic Conference. According to Shaukat Hasan:

Mujib did not consult Indira Gandhi prior to his decision to attend the Lahore Summit as was assumed under Article 4 of the treaty [Indo-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty]. Mujib also decided not to stop in New Delhi on his way to Lahore, though the Tajuddin Lobby [of ruling Awami League Government] strongly argued for the necessity of such a gesture to the Indian Government.²⁶

Notably, Mrs. Gandhi's government was also against Bangladesh's membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The probable factors, which compelled Mujib to join the Second OIC summit were: (a) to get recognition from powerful rich Muslim countries including Pakistan with the aim to open avenues of closer co-operation between Bangladesh and those countries; (b) to squeeze anti-Indian propaganda domestically; (c) to get aid from oil-rich Arab countries; and (d) to create a favourable atmosphere to secure Chinese recognition.

²⁶. Shaukat Hasan, India-Bangladesh Political Relations During the Awami League Government, 1972-75, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Australian National University, 1988), p.205.

Bangladesh's participation in the Second OIC Summit was widely acclaimed by the Muslim world. According to President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, it was the summit's greatest achievement. At that summit, Sheikh Mujib declared total solidarity with the Arabs and announced that grave injustices that had been inflicted on our Arab brethren must be redressed and the occupied Arab lands and Jerusalem must be regained. The Second OIC summit, which brought together the Islamic leaders from as many as 37 countries provided a great opportunity to Bangladesh for establishing contacts and exchanging ideas with the Arab leaders. In response to Mujib's invitations, President Anwar Sadat and President Houari Boumedienne of Algeria, the two prominent leaders of Arab world paid a short visit to Dhaka on February 25, 1974 and March 8, 1974 respectively. Their visits went a long way in further cementing the bonds of relations between Bangladesh and the two countries and the Arab world in general.

Highlights of Bilateral Co-operation with the Muslim Countries

It was Mujib government's cautious and dynamic endeavours by which Bangladesh repeatedly desired to improve relationships with Muslim countries. At that time the Mujib government crucially faced a serious economic crisis.²⁷ In order to improve relationships and to get foreign aid/ assistance from the Muslim countries, the Mujib government frequently arranged exchange of visits²⁸ between Bangladesh and the Muslim countries. Some outstanding Muslim world

²⁷. See Chapter VI of this thesis.

²⁸. See the Appendix-II of this study, for Exchange of high level visits between Bangladesh and Muslim countries.

personalities visited Bangladesh and Mujib also visited different Muslim countries (e.g. Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, UAE, Iraq etc.) during his tenure.

After Foreign Minister Dr. Kamal Hossain's visit to Iraq (on February 15-19, 1974), a joint statement expressed that the presence of foreign military bases in the Indian Ocean was a threat to the independence of the concerned countries as well as peace, security and progress of the region. They also reiterated support for a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. The two sides reviewed that the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean region's security and peace were inter-connected.²⁹ Both sides agreed to exchange economic delegations for promoting economic co-operation. During the Egyptian Foreign Minister Hasan-Al-Zayyat's visit to Bangladesh the joint communique expressed unconditional and immediate repatriation of all Bengalis from Pakistan and all Pakistanis from Bangladesh. Both sides also extended their support to the "just and legitimate right of the Arab people."³⁰

It was decided by an agreement after Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib's visit to Egypt that the mutual exchange of professors, specialists, technicians and scholarships as well as participation in conferences and scientific seminars would take place. They also agreed to setup cultural centers and institutions, exchange

²⁹. They also expressed full support to the Palestinian's right to self-determination, recovery of their full rights and exercise of complete sovereignty over Palestinian territory. Asian Recorder-1974, p.11893.

³⁰. Asian Recorder-1973, p.11348.

cultural troupes, hold exhibitions and co-operation in the fields of sports and mass media. On the other hand, Bangladesh supported Egypt's struggle against Zionist aggression and expansion also for the achievement of all nationalist aspirations of the Palestinians. Egypt also expressed its desire to stand by Bangladesh in its struggle for peace and reconstruction. ³¹

Bangladesh and Afghanistan had close identity of views on various international issues, which were reflected in the joint declaration, after President Daud's visit to Bangladesh.³² During the Senegal President L.Senghor's visit to Bangladesh (on May 26,1974) two agreements were signed concerning cultural co-operations and trade relations.³³ Senegal was one of the co-sponsors of the resolution, which sought Bangladesh's admission/membership in the UNO. Even President Senghor himself wanted to mediate among India, Bangladesh and China to normalize their conflicting relationships. Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib's visits also improved Bangladesh's relations with Kuwait³⁴ and UAE³⁵. Both

³¹. Asian Recorder-1974, p.12343.

³². The communique declared Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and support to the Arab struggle against Israel, uphold non-alignment policy and peaceful co-existence and common view on Baluch and Pushtu issue. They also signed a cultural agreement at that time. Asian Recorder-1975,p.12535.

³³. Which decided that Bangladesh would import, phosphate and cement from Senegal, in exchange of jute, hides and skin and tea. Asian Recorder-1974, p.12053.

³⁴. Kuwait was among the first of Gulf countries to recognise the independent entity of Bangladesh. Even prior to that, Sheikh Sabah Ahmed Jaber Al-Sabah Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Kuwait, had visited Bangladesh in the early 1974 as a

the countries extended financial and economic assistance to Bangladesh. It was Bangladesh's complete identification with Arab cause and its identity to be the second largest Muslim country and eight largest population of the world that played the most important role behind Bangladesh's close economic ties with [or receiving aid from] those countries. During the Mujib rule, for the first time Iran and Kuwait, two of world's leading oil-producing countries joined the World Bank sponsored international aid groups to extend assistance to Bangladesh. It can also be mentioned that, in spite of Saudi Arabia's non-recognition to Bangladesh, it provided 11.923 metric tons of wheat as a grant in November, 1974.

Despite Muslim countries initial negative attitude towards Bangladesh, it resolutely supported the just cause and the legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people and other Arab nations. Moreover, it desired a peaceful settlement of the Middle

part of a OIC-delegation. He accompanied the Bangladeshi leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to the OIC summit in Lahore. That visit had opened a new vista in the Kuwait-Bangladesh ties. On the other hand, at the conclusion of Mujib's visit to Kuwait, it was declared that Bangladesh was totally committed to the Palestinian cause. Both sides had reached an understanding on Kuwait's investment and economic assistance in Bangladesh development activities. Pakistan Horizon, Vol.27. No.4, 1974. p.112,113.

³⁵. During Sheikh Mujib visit to the U.A.E. (18-20 December, 1974) it was announced that U.A.E would give Bangladesh a soft term loan of \$50 million for helping Bangladesh to narrow its balance of payments gap and balance for enabling it to import essential raw materials. Besides UAE also helped Bangladesh to set up a cement and fertilizer plant by providing long term loans amounting to nearly \$100 million. A joint commission was also set up for continuous consultation to ensure the economic co-operation of the two countries. See Asian Recorder-1975, p.12411.

East dispute and the complete Israeli withdrawal from Jerusalem and other occupied Arab territories. In pursuance of this policy, at the outbreak of the Middle East war in October 1973, Bangladesh expressed its full support and solidarity with the fellow Arab countries fighting Israeli aggression. Bangladesh's President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister sent several messages to the Arab leaders expressing full support and condemning Israeli aggression. As a token of solidarity and friendship, Bangladesh also donated 75,000 pounds of tea to Egypt and despatched a 28-member medical team to Syria³⁶. Egypt gratefully accepted the offer and later it reciprocally gifted thirty T-54 Tanks for the Bangladesh Armed Forces.³⁷ This gesture of Bangladesh was very much appreciated in the Arab world and it helped to further cement the relationships with them. In this regard, Virendra Narain opined that:

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman did every thing to foster friendly relations with the Arab world and fully supported the Palestine Liberation Front in its struggle for Palestinian independence and against Zionism.³⁸

During the economic crisis of 1974-75, Iran and Abu Dhabi, in particular considered Bangladesh's proposal for the supply of crude oil at concessional rates on short and long term basis. But Bangladesh was not able to get oil at concessional rates. However,

³⁶.GOB, Banladesh Progress 1973, op.cit.,p.101.

³⁷. Anthony Mascarenhas, Banladesh : A Legacy of Blood, (London : Hodder and Sloughton, 1986), p.36.

³⁸. Virendra Narain, Foreign Policy of Bangladesh (1971-1981), op.cit., p.174.

Iran and Abu Dhabi allowed it to import oil on deferred payments. Iraq provided one lac ton of oil to cope with the crisis. Although Bangladesh has not been favoured with an exceptional consideration in terms of lower oil price, the OPEC Special Fund did help in some ways those affected by the price rise.³⁹ At that time Arab Emirates deposited 60 lac Dinars worth Taka 76 crore and 80 lac in Bangladesh Bank.⁴⁰

Mujib government seriously relied on foreign resources to face the crisis due to deteriorated economic situation in 1974, and again earnestly desired more help and assistance from the Western as well as Muslim countries. Financial assistance from Muslim states following the severe flood amounted to only a small fraction of the needs. Considering the situation Sheikh Mujib and his lieutenants visited different Arab countries in September 1974, to try to persuade those governments to increase their assistance.⁴¹

The Mujib government used Islamic image being the 2nd largest Muslim country of the world. Despite Article 12 of Bangladesh Constitution, which provided for secular policies like abolition of all kinds of political recognition by any religion by the state, exploitation of religion for political ends and discrimination of anybody on religious grounds, the government retained the study of

³⁹. Syed Anwar Husain, "Bangladesh and Islamic Countries, 1972-1983", op.cit. p. 250.

⁴⁰. Mawlana Abdul Auwal, Banghabandhu O Islamy Mulloavoud, (vernacular), Banghabandhu and Islamic Values, (Dhaka: Bangladesh Olama Parishad, 1972), p.28.

⁴¹. See the Appendix No. III for the donation of different donors during the food crises of 1974.

Islamiyat and Arabic in school syllabus introduced during the Pakistan days. It is noteworthy that the defunct Islamic Foundation was revived during this time and frequently publicized that "secularism," in Bangladesh constitution did not mean the absence of religion.

Moreover, during his short tenure of power, Sheikh Mujib banned all kinds of anti-Islamic amusement such as wine, lottery, gambling, and horse-race. Wine was also prohibited for foreigners at official/governmental functions. He reinstated *Madrasha* Education Board and took the initiative to expand the premises of Kakrail Mosque. He encouraged the World Ijtema of Tablegue at Tungi of Dhaka. Different sports clubs were shifted from the premises of Baitul Mukarram during his tenure. According to Fakhruddin Ahmed:

Sheikh Mujib's government by taking initiatives to strengthen ties with the Muslim world sincerely worked to give a broad, balanced and respected shape in the conduct of foreign policy. It was in recognition of this that 12 heads of state and government visited Bangladesh at their own initiative in 1974, which speaks the importance that Bangladesh enjoyed.⁴²

On the other hand, Moudud Ahmed described Mujib's personal role in shaping of Bangladesh foreign policy. According to him:

As a nationalist he [Mujib] tried his best to bring Bangladesh out of the Indian subjugation. He signed a Friendship Treaty with India, but he was able to send out the Indian troops from the soil of Bangladesh within 2 months after his arrival [in the country from Pakistan during the year]. He flew over the Indian territory to their utter disgust to attend the Islamic summit at Lahore. By inviting Bhutto to Bangladesh he [Mujib] normalized relationship with Pakistan. By calling on King Khaled and visiting a large number of Arab countries, he

⁴². Fakhruddin Ahmed, "Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: A Review of Past Two Decades," BIISS journal, Vol.14, No.2, 1993, p. 177.

improved Bangladesh's relationship with the Islamic bloc. By restoration of trade with a number of middle eastern countries, the economic transactions with Arab world generally increased⁴³.

It was during the Mujib period when Bangladesh reconciled with the Muslim countries. It was also Mujib's cautious and farsighted diplomacy by which Bangladesh got recognition from most of the Muslim countries. By the end of 1973, Arab world was more united on the question of Bangladesh's sovereignty than ever before, and extended recognition to Bangladesh. This change in attitudes had taken place for several reasons. These were: First, it was simply a matter of the passage of time. The Muslim states in spite of their initial concern about Pakistan, took Bangladesh as a viable state. Secondly, they also realized gradually that the dismemberment of Pakistan was not a serious threat to the security of West Asia. Thirdly, gradual development of Bangladesh existence and comparatively independent posture of Mujib administration towards India on Farakka question created hostility between Bangladesh and India. Fourthly, Bangladesh's strong support for the Arab world during Arab-Israeli war. And lastly, Bangladesh's strong urge to get the membership of OIC as it was the second largest Muslim populated country in the world.⁴⁴

In conclusion, in the aftermath of the liberation war, a great deal of time and attention of Mujib regime was absorbed by such

⁴³. Moudud Ahmed, Bangladesh: Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, (Dhaka: UPL, 1983), p. 266.

⁴⁴. See Denis Wright, Bangladesh Origins and Indian Ocean Relations (1971-1975), op.cit., p.235.

issues as the establishment of civil administration all over the country, the restoration of law and order situation, the rehabilitation of war victims, the reconstruction of war devastated economy and securing diplomatic recognition and establishing working relationship with several states of the world. The establishment of friendly relations with the developed world as well as Muslim countries was an essential prerequisite for its security, sovereignty /integrity, for the expansion of trade and for securing badly needed foreign economic assistance.

Mujib government successfully established foreign relations with the Muslim countries by overcoming all the impediments, e.g. alleged Indo-Soviet alignment, secularism, socialism (principles of constitution) and resisted above all Pakistani propaganda (against Bangladesh). To create considerable working relationships with the Muslim countries, Mujib administration also readjusted its domestic policies to attract those countries. Mujib government made efforts to improve external relationships with those countries and explore economic and trade relations with them.⁴⁵ During the last phases of Mujib regime, Bangladesh had almost normal working relationships with Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, South Yemen, UAE, Kuwait, Afghanistan etc.

After the fall of Mujib regime, foreign relations with the Muslim countries became more cordial. The successive regimes of Zia and Ershad had developed strong and warm relations with those countries.

⁴⁵. For the discussion of Mujib's regime economic relations with Muslim countries, see chapter VI and VII of this thesis.

CHAPTER IV
CONSOLIDATION OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MUSLIM
COUNTRIES: ZIA AND ERSHAD REGIMES

Zia Regime:

The brutal killing of Sheikh Mujib¹ and the subsequent *coup* of November 3, led by Brigadier Khaled Musharraf and the *sepoy* revolution of November 7, 1975 brought Major General Ziaur Rahman to power. During the initial days, Zia tried to maintain a low profile. The post-7 November regime of Bangladesh was a mixed regime consisting of a civilian President, Chief Justice Abu Sadat Mohammed Sayem who was also the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and a council of advisors, consisting of civilian and military personnel. Zia was the Chief of Staff of the army and one of the three Deputy Chief Martial law Administrators (DCMLA), but he was the *de facto* leader of the military regime.² The military took over was complete in form as well as in substance when Major General Ziaur Rahman, one of the three leading *Mukti Bahini*

¹. On 15th August 1975, President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed by a group of army officers. After his assassination, his cabinet minister for Commerce, Khandoker Mushtaq Ahmed was sworn in as President. Khandoker Mushtaq was well-known for his anti-Indian-USSR, and pro-USA attitude. During his short tenure Saudi Arabia and China extended recognition to Bangladesh. He was also ousted by a counter military *coup* of November 3, led by Brigadier Khaled Musharraf. For details see Anthony Mascarenhas, Banqladesh: A legacy of Blood, op.cit.; Zillur R. Khan, Martial law to Martial Law : Leadership Crisis in Bangladesh, (Dhaka: UPL, 1984) ; Habiba Zaman, "The Military in Bangladesh Politics," in Chowdhury E. Haque (ed.), Banqladesh: Politics Economy and Society, (Canada: Bangladesh Studies Assemblage, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 1982), pp. 20-32; Lawrence Lifschultz, Banqladesh: The Un-finished Revolution, (London: Zed Press, 1979), pp.98-107.

². A.N. Shamsul Hoque, "Nation-Building in Bangladesh: The Process of Institution Building" in M. Abdul Hafiz & Abdur Rab Khan (eds.), Nation Building in Bangladesh: Retrospect and Prospect, (Dhaka: BIISS, 1986), p.162.

officers of the independence war and the Chief of Staff of the Bangladesh Army, became President on 21 April, 1977.³

The sudden change of government in August 1975 started the beginning of a major shift in Bangladesh's domestic and foreign policies. On December 15, 1975, in a broadcast to the nation, the then Bangladesh President A.S.M. Sayem said that his government would continue its efforts to strengthen their relations with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and China. On the other hand, addressing a public meeting (on May 27, 1976) at Dhaka, the then DCMLA, Major General Ziaur Rahman called for unity to safeguard the national integrity and sovereignty. He also said that his government wanted to develop good relations with neighbouring states and strengthen fraternal relations with the Muslim countries. Zia said, "we have religious, historical, cultural relations with all the Muslim countries of the world and we want to further strengthen our relation with them."⁴

³. Mizanur Rahman Shelly, *op.cit.*, p.141. Similar to other military rulers, General Zia by assuming the title of President, began to move towards civilianization of his military regime while retaining his position as Chief Martial Law Administrator and Supreme Commander of the Armed forces. In a broadcast on April 22, 1978, President Zia announced that parliamentary election would be held in December 1978, but a referendum would be held on May 30, to "ascertain your [people's] confidence in [to] me." He also announced that due to the dissatisfaction among people, some basic principles of the constitution would be amended in the near future. Zia also offered a 19-point socio-economic programme on April 30, just a month before the referendum. Shortly the 19 point programme promised to provide the basic necessities of life, e.g. food, clothing, shelter, education, and medical facilities for the people. In general, the programme aimed at building a "self-reliant" economy without any structural change in the Bangladesh society.

⁴. Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 29, No. 2, 1976. p.105; The Dainik Banqla, 28 May, 1976.

The August *coup* in 1975 also created a favourable atmosphere for developing relations with the Muslim countries (specially, Saudi Arabia). The US and Chinese support were very significant to the Zia regime because of its threat apprehension both from internal and external sources, particularly from Mujib government's close ally India. At the same time, some important steps, including change in some fundamental clauses of the constitution of 1972, were taken ostensibly to satisfy some quarters in the Arab world and in consonance with the bulk of Islamic constituency within the country.⁵

Constitutional Amendments of Zia Regime

Bangladesh was born as a secular state. The fifth amendment to the constitution in 1977 by Zia government brought some basic changes on the questions of state policy (as well as religious questions) which had a long term effect on the body-politic of Bangladesh. The Article 8 in the constitution concerning fundamental principles of state policy was amended in 1977 by the Proclamation Order No.1, Clause 1, of the Article 8 which stipulates:

The principles of absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah, Nationalism, Democracy and Socialism meaning economic and social justice, together with the principles derived from them as set out in this Part, shall constitute the fundamental principles of state policy.⁶

⁵. Md. Golam Mostafa, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: The Middle East Factor," BIISS Journal, Vol.7, No.1, 1986, pp.39-40.

⁶. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, [As modified up to 31 December 1990], op.cit., p.8.

The Clause 1(A) states that: "Absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah shall be the basis of all actions." These two clauses were substituted for the previous clause 1, which included secularism with the other three principles. The same proclamation omitted Article 12, which called for realizing secularism by the elimination of (a) communalism in all its forms; (b) political status in favour of any religion; (c) abuse of religion for political purposes and (d) any discrimination against, or persecution of, persons practising a particular religion. On the other hand, Socialism, one of the basic principles of the 1972 constitution was thoroughly redefined. The 1972 constitution stated: "A socialist economic system shall be established with a view to ensuring the attainment of a just and egalitarian society, free from exploitation of man by man." ⁷

Ziaur Rahman redefined it by including the clause that the economic system shall safeguard 'private property'. The first amendment pleased the Muslim world and later amendments pleased both the United States and the pro-Western forces. In this regard, Virendra Narain commented that, "the US interests were also served if Bangladesh adopted communal approach in foreign relations."⁸ The policy of denationalization was initiated and the private sector as an engine of growth was encouraged. This was in keeping with the

⁷. Ibid., [As modified up to 25th January, 1975], op.cit., p.5.

⁸. Virendra Narain, op.cit., p.130.

world capitalist system.⁹ President Zia also amended the provision, which forbade the operation of religion-based political parties in Article 38 of the constitution¹⁰ of 1972.

Moreover, in August 1976, his regime introduced 'Political Parties Regulations (PPR)' order by which it wanted to create a favourable atmosphere for multi party system. But both these steps allowed the Islam oriented parties to return to the political arena in Bangladesh. These initiatives brought changes in domestic politics; those who had opposed the liberation war of Bangladesh and co-operated with the then ruling Military Junta of Pakistan were rehabilitated. Zia mobilized these elements' political support in favour of his regime. During the presidential election some of them supported Zia's candidature negatively to squeeze or defeat Awami league candidate. Shah Azizur Rahman, one of the key leaders of anti-liberation forces became the Prime Minister of Zia's government. Not only that, other anti-liberation forces also held important posts in Zia's cabinet and his ruling party. This was all

⁹. Imtiaz Ahmed, "A Projection of the Dynamism of Bangladesh-United States Relations," in Mohammad Mohabbat Khan and Syed Anwar Husain, (eds.), Bangladesh Studies: Politics, Administration, Rural Development and Foreign Policy, op.cit., p. 202.

¹⁰. The Article 38 of the constitution states: "Every citizen shall have the right to form associations or unions, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of morality or public order: Provided that no person shall have the right to form, or be a member or otherwise take part in the activities of, any communal or other association or union which in the name or on the basis of any religion has for its objects, or pursues, a political purpose". See the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, [As modified up to 25th January, 1975], op.cit., p.13.

the more encouraging for the Muslim countries, as they were the politicians who by supporting Pakistan had indirectly supported some of the Muslim countries during the liberation war. This rehabilitation further consolidated Bangladesh relations with Muslim countries to some extent.¹¹

Since 1976 religious slogans have been immensely used through Radio, Television, Government - owned newspapers and Government-sponsored functions. The then government officially observed *Eid*, *Muharram*, *Eid-E-Miladunnabi* including different religious functions. But Zia had a cautionary view to make Bangladesh an Islamic polity. He was able to pick up a considerable support from Muslim segments of the population by establishing a Ministry of Religion, making religious studies compulsory in all schools, introducing modern education in the *Madrashas* (traditional centers of Islamic learning) and establishing huge billboards with quotes from the verses of the Holy Qur'an in the different main cities of Bangladesh. Virtually, he had no intention to develop fundamentalist Islamic politics like Iran and Pakistan.¹²

¹¹. For details see Chapter V of this study.

¹². On the other hand, Zia regime also had developed a close relationship with major Muslim countries (like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya etc.) and also developed a working relationship with India [the then ruling Janata Party's Government]. For details see Marcus Franda, Bangladesh: The First Decade, (New Delhi : South Asian Pub. Pvt. Ltd., 1982), pp. 269,233.

Zia also initiated a 'tactical retreat in the military training programme of Bangladesh' armed forces. Bangladesh withdrew most of its officers from Indian defence academies and decided to use training establishments in the Sudan, Pakistan, Malaysia, Britain and the USA.¹³

Zia's Foreign Policy Initiatives

At the very beginning, Zia repeatedly expressed the solidarity of Bangladesh with the Muslim Countries and intended to improve relations with them indeed. Efforts were taken to establish closer relations with important Middle Eastern countries, which also emerged as a dependable source of aid and manpower exports. A large network of embassies in the Middle East was also setup to foster close bilateral ties with most of the countries there. According to Professor Muhammad Shamsul Huq:

This was not merely because they were oil-rich, but also because the misgivings about Bangladesh created by the anti-Bangladesh propaganda during the war of independence appeared still to linger among influential sections of the Gulf countries.¹⁴

To consolidate relations with them, General Zia (later President Zia) and his government officials visited oil-rich Muslim countries. Zia continued active foreign policy initiatives over the years and visited Saudi Arabia (May 1976, July 1977, January, February, 1981), Kuwait (June 1979), UAE (June 1977, March 1978), Syria (May 1981), Egypt (September 1977), Libya (May 1977), Iran (May 1976, October 1978, February 1981), Iraq (March 1979, February

¹³. Far Eastern Economic Review, 29 October, 1976, p.7.

¹⁴. Quoted from Muhammad Shamsul Huq, op.cit., p.235.

1981), Turkey (May 1976, October 1978), Malaysia (April 1979), Indonesia (July 1978), Morocco and Guinea (November 1980), during his tenure. In turn, the distinguished leaders of Muslim countries who visited Bangladesh during the Zia regime were: Vice-President of Iraq (July 1978), President of Indonesia (November 1979), Amir of Kuwait (September 1980), President of Guinea (September-October, 1980), P.L.O. leader Yasser Arafat (March 1981) and a number of princely visitors from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and other Muslim countries.¹⁵ Besides this, a number of important delegations at ministerial level exchanged visits with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Iran, UAE, Malaysia, Indonesia and other Muslim countries. Different bilateral agreements were signed concerning foreign aid, trade, employment exchange with various Muslim countries (mostly with Middle Eastern countries). The external relations of Zia regime with some selected Muslim countries are discussed below.

Saudi Arabia: Bangladesh relations with the Muslim Countries are rooted in common religion, history, tradition and culture. President Zia visited above-mentioned Muslim countries to consolidate bilateral relations. According to former Foreign Minister, the visit to Saudi Arabia got the top priority because among the Arab countries in the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia was one of the last countries to exchange diplomatic missions with Bangladesh. Moreover, it was the custodian of the two most sacred

¹⁵. See Appendix-IV for the exchange of high level visits between Bangladesh and Muslim Countries during the Zia regime.

places for the Muslims, namely, *Makkah-al-Muazzama* and *Medina-al-Mukauramah*, which have a close spiritual relationship with Bangladeshi people.¹⁶ Not only that Saudi Arabia also emerged as a rich nation. Bangladesh also had some interests to develop bilateral relations with K.S.A. concerning aid, trade and overseas employment relations. In Saudi Arabia the first talk between General Zia and King Khaled was held in an atmosphere of trust and friendship. The two countries discussed the problems arising out of the Farakka Barrage [Ganges Water dispute] and expressed their satisfaction with the efforts made by Bangladesh to arrive at a peaceful and just solution of the problem and also expressed their hope that 'a final solution to the problem will be achieved without delay'.¹⁷

But it was a fact that on Farakka question, Saudi Arabia's support was only verbal, never intending to compel India to mediate the crisis with Bangladesh, whereas Saudi Arabia including different Muslim countries had significant trade relations with India. If these countries had been sincere to mediate the issue, they could have considerably influenced India, as they had mentionable trade relations with India. On the other hand, Zia also expressed total support for the Arab cause. Bangladesh viewed the Middle East problem as one of the major security concerns of the Islamic world. The situation in the Gulf region has become highly complicated and volatile by Israel's forceful occupation of Arab

¹⁶. Muhammad Shamsul Huq, *op.cit.*, p.244.

¹⁷. The Bangladesh Times, 30 July, 1977.

and Palestinian territories including Jerusalem. USSR, ties with Syria, Iraq and Yemen, and US policy of building a strategic consensus embracing the Islamic countries from Turkey to Pakistan is also a major concern for the Middle Eastern countries. Arab countries are too weak to depend wholly on their own strength to safeguard their security interests, found themselves willy-nilly split into pro-US and pro-USSR groups.¹⁸

Later, different level of official visits to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in fact laid the foundation for the further development of Bangladesh's relations with it. Bangladesh-Saudi relations were further consolidated during the U.N. Security Council election, when Bangladesh contested for a non-permanent seat with Japan. Saudi Arabia not only extended support to Bangladesh, but also played an important role in favour of Bangladesh, through Jamil Baroddy, a permanent representative to the UNO. It also welcomed the normalization of Bangladesh-Pakistan relationship. Saudi Arabia pledged substantial assistance to Bangladesh.¹⁹

It is also to be mentioned that in December, 1978 a Joint Saudi-Bangladesh Commission was formed under the General Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation between the two countries.

¹⁸. Muhammad Shamsul Huq, op.cit., p.243.

¹⁹. In 1976 Saudi government had granted \$ 150 million as project assistance and \$ 30 million as cash grant to Bangladesh. Later it also donated \$ 10 lakh for the Burmese Rohingya Refugee. Pakistan Horizon, Vol.29, No.4, 1976, p.124. For details see the chapter VI of this study.

The Commission would act as the main vehicle for identifying the areas of economic and technical cooperation in a concrete manner and for promoting closer bilateral economic relationship.²⁰ A Saudi-Bangladesh joint investment company (SABINCO)²¹ was setup in 1983 with an authorised capital of US\$ 60 million to promote Saudi investment in Bangladesh. Till 1992 it has extended financial assistance to 37 projects of vital national interests to Bangladesh. SABINCO had been playing a catalytic role in attracting investment from Saudi Arabia and elsewhere through co-financing.

Another important area of bilateral co-operation relates to export of Bangladeshi manpower to Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom is the single largest job market for expatriate Bangladeshis providing employment for over two hundred thousand workers from Bangladesh. Foreign exchange earned by these large number of people enriches Bangladesh's national economy apart from easing mostly the acute unemployment problem. It is also providing generous humanitarian assistance to several educational institutions, orphanages and

²⁰. Syed Anwar Husain, op.cit. p. 250.

²¹. The main purpose of 'SABINCO' is to make investment in the industrial and agro-based industrial fields in Bangladesh on commercial basis through carrying out of industrial and agro-based industrial projects and marketing of their products, goods and services in Bangladesh and abroad. The 'SABINCO' has an authorised capital of US\$ 60 million divided into 20,000 shares of 3,000 dollar each which has been fully subscribed in equal proportions by the two participating governments. The Company has at present a six-member board of directors in which the Chairman and two members are nominated by the government of Saudi Arabia while the Deputy Chairman and two other members are nominated by the government of Bangladesh. See the Bangladesh Observer, 23 September 1994, Dialogue (A Weekly Magazine, Dhaka), 2-8 January, 1995, p.12.

other organisations. Bangladesh has sought Saudi co-operation in the field of exploration and mineral resources.²²

Kuwait: The relation between Bangladesh and the State of Kuwait has its roots in the historical and cultural affinity of the two countries. The relationship is guided by the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the affairs of each country and identical interests and a common view on international and bilateral issues. A series of visits at the highest level consolidated the ties further.

In June 1979, President Zia visited Kuwait. At that time both the countries were the members of OIC, NAM, and non-permanent members of Security Council. Five-year-long agreement was signed for better bilateral cooperation. Ministerial level joint commission was also set up. It was decided that bilateral cooperation in economic, cultural, trade and manpower employment would be strengthened. It also provided fund for the development work of Bangladesh and wanted to cooperate in gas and oil sectors.²³ Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al-Sabah also visited Bangladesh (on 11-13 September, 1980) as part of his first official visit abroad since assuming the leadership. His visit to Bangladesh was a reflection of the importance that Kuwait attaches to its friendship with Bangladesh. Both sides agreed on bilateral

²². Bangladesh is also receiving Saudi assistance for the development of the Islamic Centre for Technical and Vocational Training and Research (ICTVTR) as well as for the Islamic University. The Bangladesh Observer, 23 September, 1994.

²³. Weekly Bichitra, 8 June, 1979.

cooperation concerning economic and trade relations, oil & gas drilling and civil aviation. Both countries also established a commission to explore the field of bilateral cooperation.²⁴

President Ziaur Rahman reciprocated the Kuwaiti gesture by making a subsequent official visit to Kuwait. In fact, the late Bangladeshi President made several brief visits to Kuwait in course of his mediating excursions to Iran and Iraq at the height of the Gulf war and succeeded in establishing a personal rapport with the Kuwaiti leadership. The exchange of visits resulted in a number of agreements under which it agreed to finance several development projects including Second Five Year Plan in Bangladesh. Kuwait provided soft term loans to Bangladesh against 1% interest to cover administrative costs. Simultaneously it opened its gate to Bangladeshi manpower. Not only that it also deposited \$ 100 million to Bangladesh Bank to make up the seasonal foreign currency reserve decline. As a mark of respect to President Ziaur Rahman, Kuwait subsequently gifted a 707-Boeing Aircraft to Biman Bangladesh Airlines to help it to expand its area of operation. Besides these, Bangladesh and Kuwait agreed on several points of Iraq-Iran crisis to stop the atrocity within the fellow Muslim brethren.²⁵

United Arab Emirates: At the last phase of Mujib regime, Bangladesh improved bilateral relations with UAE. Zia's visit to

²⁴. Both of them had a common view on security perception of the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf region and Middle East crisis. Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al-Sabah personally praised Zia's role in strengthening Islamic *Ummah*. *Ibid*, 18 September, 1980; Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 33, No. 3, 1980, p.99.

²⁵. Muhammad Shamsul Huq, op.cit., pp.247-248.

UAE in March, 1978, further consolidated bilateral relationship with that country. The joint communique expressed [at the end of Zia's visit] bilateral cooperation a need for the betterment of both countries. The two sides agreed to set up a joint ministerial commission for expanding economic and other cooperation concerning governmental and non-governmental initiatives.²⁶ On the other hand, Sheikh Jaid, the President of the UAE, came to the rescue of Bangladesh Bank in Abu Dhabi by agreeing to make a personal deposit of \$ 30 million with Janata Bank.²⁷ During UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, visit to Bangladesh (on 26 December, 1980), the joint ministerial commission declared four working group to explore four probable areas of cooperation concerning: (i) new and on-going project; (ii) shipping and trade, joint initiative for investment/ joint venture and (iv) manpower, technical, scientific and cultural working group. The communique also declared that they would continue their cooperation and explore other area of cooperation.²⁸

Syria : During President Zia's visit to Syria in May 1981, bilateral talks with President Hafiz-el-Assad was held in a cordial atmosphere. It supported Bangladesh candidature in the Security Council election. Subsequently, in the quadrangular contest for the Presidency of the UN General Assembly in 1981, Syria, one of the

²⁶. Weekly Bichitra, 17 March, 1978.

²⁷. Hasan Zaman (ed.) World News Digest, Vol.1, No. 2, July-December 1977, p.183; Muhammad Shamsul Huq. op.cit., p.247.

²⁸. Weekly Bichitra, 2 January, 1981.

four candidates, (namely Bangladesh, Iraq, Syria and Singapore) finally withdrew in favour of Bangladesh (though Bangladesh lost the election to Iraq).²⁹

Palestine : From Mujib period, Bangladesh categorically supported Palestinian cause. The P.L.O. Chairman also several times visited Dhaka to seek more active support. Dictated by its well-known position on this issue, Bangladesh during March 1979 Security Council debate insisted on Israel's immediate withdrawal from all Arab territories including the holy city of Jerusalem and restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It also stressed on the solution of Palestine problem in the light of Security Council Resolution No. 446 (1979), which proposed for a three-member commission to examine the conditions in the Israeli occupied territories. Bangladesh as a proof of its stand, supported the subsequent Security Council Resolution No. 465 (1980), condemning Israel's plan to reshuffle institutional structures in the occupied areas. Bangladesh upheld its principle in the Security Council Resolution No. 468 (1980) expressing deep concern over Israel's expulsion of Arab Mayors from the occupied areas.

In many other resolutions either passed or vetoed, Bangladesh always stood firmly by the Palestinian people and strongly defended their interests. On the realization of the just and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, Bangladesh was not only inspired by religion and historical ties with the Palestinian people, but also with unflinching support for the self determination of people

²⁹. Ibid., 8 May, 1981.

all over the world. Bangladesh as a Security Council member was always committed to Palestinian rights by upholding and defending their interests.³⁰

Egypt : Egypt is one of the most influential countries of the Muslim world. It is the most populous Arab nation also a most powerful military power among the Arab countries. From the very inception of Bangladesh, it had a good relation with Egypt.³¹ Both Bangladesh and Egypt were active members of NAM and OIC and had a common outlook in international politics. Egypt was visited by President Zia, in September 1977 that was extremely important, because at that time it was a member of the contact group appointed by U.N. General assembly to bring about a peaceful settlement between India and Bangladesh over the sharing of the Ganges Water (though this group remained inactive). President Zia discussed with President Anwar Sadat, for the support of Egypt and Arab League in favour of Bangladesh's candidature in the UN Security Council election. At that time, Bangladesh was contesting with Japan. Bangladesh had officially asked (on May 8, 1978) for Egyptian

³⁰. A. H. S. Ataul Karim, "Bangladesh in the Security Council: Working for Peace and Progress," in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, 1984, Bangladesh and the UN: A Decade of Commitment, p.12.

³¹. At the initial stage of Zia regime Bangladesh and Egypt signed (December 28, 1975) a trade protocol and both of them agreed to exchange goods and commodities worth 6.107 million pound each way. According to protocol, Bangladesh would export tea, paper and newsprint, jute and jute goods to Egypt and import raw cotton, cotton yarn, pig iron and rock phosphate. Asian Recorder-1976, p.13013.

mediation in its dispute with Burma over the influx of Burmese Muslims into Bangladesh.³²

During the Zia period Bangladesh expressed its full support to Egypt's Middle East Peace efforts.³³ Later it cautiously avoided inter Muslim world conflict. Bangladesh maintained neutrality during the Camp David Agreement, the unilateral peace initiative in November, 1977 by Egypt with Israel.³⁴

Iran : During the Zia period, Iran and Bangladesh had agreed to begin a new era of extensive economic, industrial and agricultural cooperation. On his way back home from 7th OIC Foreign Ministers Conference [held in Turkey] Zia stopped over in Iran. It was decided that Bangladesh and Iran would set up a joint economic commission for better cooperation. Bangladesh signed trade agreement with Iran also agreed to exchange skilled labour technicians and students. From OPEC fund, it would help Bangladesh

³². In that talk, the Egyptian President also informed Zia that Egyptian intelligence services had uncovered a left-wing plot to assassinate General Zia and Bangladesh's top ranking military command. This information was life and death question for Zia regime. Later, President Zia was congratulated by President Sadat for crushing the military rebellion. After Zia's assassination Egypt observed three days' state mourning. Equally it had been reciprocated by Bangladesh after the assassination of President Sadat. Fate might have bound the two leaders with the same tragic end. Vide Anthony Mascarenhas, op.cit., pp.145,148; Pakistan Horizon, Vol.31. No. 2&3, 1978. p.177; Dainik Desh (a vernacular newspaper), 1 January , 1982.

³³. Hasan Zaman(ed.) World News Digest, op.cit., p.120.

³⁴. At that time, Syria, Algeria, Libya, South Yemen and PLO reacted sharply by breaking diplomatic relations with Egypt. Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain and Qatar reacted mildly. They nevertheless broke ties with Egypt. Syed Anwar Husain, op.cit., p.266.

in shipping and in establishment of a Urea Fertilizer Company. It also agreed to cooperate in Chittagong Oil Refinery Project. Bangladesh depended for its crude oil needs on Iran.³⁵

During the hostage crisis in Iran, Bangladesh being neutral dictated by the genuine expectation to see the end of the problem and being influenced by its traditionally good relations with both Iran and the United States, communicated with both the countries in a very constructive and amicable approach to solve the crisis. Immediately considering the case on the humanitarian ground, it joined with other members of the UN Security Council in issuing a statement on 9 November, 1979 urging Iran to release the hostages. On 4 December, 1979, when the Security Council adopted a resolution urging Iran to settle the dispute through peaceful means, Bangladesh supported it. The main thing was that Bangladesh was prepared to do whatever necessary to ensure a fair and just consideration of Iran's case.

On 31 December, 1979 the Security Council's resolution expressed that effective measures would be taken against Iran unless it freed the hostages by the first week of January 1980. Bangladesh decided to abstain. Later, on 13 January 1980, when the Security Council tried to impose a resolution on Iran, Bangladesh voted against the sanction. Indeed, that resolution could not be adopted due to the USSR's veto. Bangladesh's stand on this issue was that the imposition of any sanction would neither ensure the

³⁵. Weekly Bichitra, 13 August, 1976; Pakistan Horizon, Vol.29. No.3, 1976, p.84.

peace nor expedite release of hostages. Bangladesh mentioned that it might be solved only through peaceful and amiable means. In this regard a very fair and peaceful policy was maintained by Bangladesh and it was proved in toto when the crisis was solved by a mutually agreed formula mediated by Algeria.³⁶ Bangladesh supported the unanimous resolution for the release of the American diplomatic personnel who were detained in Tehran. It also expressed a fair and just consideration of the Iranian allegations under the international law.³⁷

Iraq : It can be recalled here that Iraqi Vice- President Taha Mohiuddin Maruf was the first Iraqi leader who visited Bangladesh in July, 1978. During his visit, the previously signed (1978) commercial agreement was discussed. At that time Iraq helped for rehabilitation of the Burmese refugees and pursued Bangladesh stand on Rohingya issue in international arena.³⁸ In December, 1978 Bangladesh and Iraq agreed to set up a joint fishing company in which Bangladesh would have 51% share.³⁹ Iraqi News Agency reported (on March 2, 1979) that during the first visit of President Zia (on 28 February, 1979), the two countries signed an agreement on technical co-operation.⁴⁰ It was also decided that Iraq would grant US\$ 3 crore loan without interest. Joint initiatives were taken for

³⁶. A.H.S. Ataul Karim, op.cit., pp.12-13.

³⁷. Syed Anwar Husain, op.cit. p.268.

³⁸. Weekly Bichitra, 7 July, 1978.

³⁹. Syed Anwar Hussain, op.cit., p.251.

⁴⁰. Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 32, No. 1 & 2, 1979 p. 207.

joint project and to set up a joint ministerial commission for bilateral issues. Bangladesh also in its turn helped Iraq providing manpower in its development work.⁴¹ Both the countries were adherents to NAM policy. Later seven bilateral agreements were signed during the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yeasmin Ramjan's visit to Bangladesh (on 8 May, 1981). According to an agreement, Iraq sanctioned US\$ 4 crore and 58 lac for Bangladesh. These Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding were all related to economic and technical co-operation, long term trade, scientific and cultural co-operation, building of Khulna Cement Clinker Factory, Habiganj-Ashuganj Gas Transmission Project, and Manpower Export. Iraq also agreed to fund another special project worth US\$ 3 Crore. On the other hand, at that time Bangladesh provided 6000 skilled labourer and 150 trainers/technicians to Iraq.⁴²

Bangladesh's Role on the Iraq-Iran War

The fratricidal war between Iran and Iraq, which broke out in September 1980, was the most intensely debated issue before the Security Council. Bangladesh maintained very close and cordial relations with both the countries. It made all out efforts, both within and outside the Council, to bring a quick end to the war. The UN passed a resolution on 28th September, 1980, calling upon the belligerent countries to minimize their bellicosity by refraining from further use of force and urged upon settling their disputes through peaceful means. Having participated in debate

⁴¹. Weekly Bichitra, 9 March, 1979.

⁴². Ibid., 15 May, 1981.

before the passage of the UN Resolution No. 479(1979) Bangladesh strongly supported the resolution. It strongly endorsed UN Secretary General's volunteering mediation in the war. Outside the UN in various political and international fora like OIC, NAM etc. Bangladesh tirelessly tried to bring an end to the hostilities. It forcefully supported the Security Council's effort for ensuring free and safe passage for all ships and release of neutral ships trapped in the Gulf.⁴³ It was due to Zia's personal efforts that Bangladesh could play a mediatory role between Iran and Iraq. During this period Bangladesh was neutral on Iraq-Iran conflict, but this was later reversed by Ershad regime when he (Ershad) tilted towards Iraq.⁴⁴

Afghanistan : Just from the beginning of Afghan crisis, Bangladesh had reiterated its declared principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and respect sovereignty of all states, justifying the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan. Both inside and outside of the UN, Bangladesh had been demanding the safe return of Afghan refugees and the free choice of Afghan people to select their preferred form of government.⁴⁵ According to Professor Syed Anwar Husain:

⁴³. A.H.S. Ataul Karim, op.cit., p.12.

⁴⁴. Akmal Hussain, "An Appraisal of Bangladesh Foreign Policy in the Gulf Crisis'90-91", Journal of Administration and Diplomacy, Vol. 2, No.1, January-June 1994, p.31.

⁴⁵. A.H.S. Ataul Karim, op.cit., p.13.

The Afghan crisis presented another dilemma for Bangladesh as it involved a super power that had played a significant role in her emergence as an independent nation.⁴⁶

Bangladesh along with other four non-aligned countries co-sponsored a resolution stressing withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan during the 5 January, 1980, Security Council debate. However, the Soviet Union vetoed it. Bangladesh also tabled this proposal in the General Assembly of the UN.⁴⁷

Malaysia : An important feature of Bangladesh's foreign relations has been its efforts to develop friendly, bilateral relations with countries in its own region and with neighbouring region like ASEAN. With these countries Bangladesh had a shared perception on many economic and political issues, affecting the contemporary world, and therefore Bangladesh's efforts at developing close relations with the countries of this group. The visit to Dhaka by several Malaysian ministers and the exchange of economic delegations between these two countries reflected their close ties. Malaysia provided fund for "Food for Works" and extended Student Scholarship for Bangladesh. The two countries also emphasized to co-operate in Cultural, Educational, Scientific and Sports programmes. A joint commission would be set up for exploring

⁴⁶. For details see Syed Anwar Husain, op.cit., pp.267-268.

⁴⁷. Weekly Bichitra, 11 & 18 January, 1980 issues; A.H.S.Ataul Karim, op.cit., p.13.

co-operation.⁴⁸ On the other hand in another agreement, the Bangladesh government got the confirmation to extend the stay of about 60 Bangladeshi doctors in Malaysia, who were sent previously under a bilateral agreement (a few years ago) also agreed to send more experts.⁴⁹

Malaysia had offered to mediate between Bangladesh and Burma in their disputes over the Burmese Rohingya Muslim Refugees issue.⁵⁰ In a joint communique issued in Kuala Lumpur at the conclusion of Bangladesh President Ziaur Rahman's visit to Malaysia, both countries expressed concern about the situation in Indochina, and called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the areas of conflict.⁵¹

Indonesia: Indonesia wanted to co-operate in the industrial field particularly in exploring the national resources of Bangladesh.⁵² Both the countries wanted the effectiveness of New International Economic Order, the implementation of Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Kampuchea. Two agreements were signed in the field of Technical cooperation, Educational and Cultural Co-operation. In different

⁴⁸. It was declared after the Malaysian Foreign Minister's visit to Dhaka on 18 April, 1978. Weekly Bichitra, 28 April, 1978. Bangladesh-Malaysia joint Commission (JC) constituted in Dhaka in August 1989. The first meeting was held in Dhaka in February, 1993. The Daily Star, 10 August, 1994.

⁴⁹. Far Eastern Economic Review, Asia 1978 YearBook, p.132.

⁵⁰. Pakistan Horizon, Vol.31, No.2 & 3, 1978, p.180.

⁵¹. Ibid., Vol.32, No.1 & 2, 1979, p.212.

⁵². Ibid., Vol.31, No.2 & 3, 1978, p.184.

times of Zia period, both countries exchanged views on bilateral issues.⁵³

Apart from this, during the Zia regime Bangladesh also developed relationships with Turkey,⁵⁴ Libya, Sudan, Senegal, Morocco, Guinea etc. Libya donated for Rohingya refugees a substantive amount of fund also provided fund to build Islamic Research Center in Gulshan [Dhaka]. Sudan-Bangladesh trade relations increased during this regime. President Zia was conferred the highest award of Guinea, "the National Order of Fidelity to the People."⁵⁵ Both the countries exchanged several different level visits, which consolidated their relationship. In Morocco, Zia attended (on 7 November, 1980) the 3-member International Summit Committee on Jerusalem issue. The joint communique declared that Middle East peace depends on the unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territory. It also emphasized on better bilateral cooperation with them.⁵⁶

⁵³. These were determined in a joint communique after President Shuharto's visit to Bangladesh in November, 1979. Weekly Bichitra, 30 November, 1979; Ibid., 28 November, 1980, p.6.

⁵⁴. After 1975, Bangladesh and Turkey had signed several agreements viz. Trade Agreement (1976), Economic and Technical Co-operation (1979), Exchange of Cultural Delegation Agreement (1981). In Bangladesh a school was named after Kamal Ataturk of Turkey (established in 1939) and it was funded by Turkey Government. See Weekly Bichitra, 31 December, 1982; ibid., 27 May 1987; Akmal Hosain, "Foreign Policy' 87", op.cit., p.59.

⁵⁵. Weekly Bichitra, 14 November, 1980, p.6. President Ahmed Sekou Toure considered President Zia as one of the best personal friends. And both of them were the influential leaders of the Muslim world.

⁵⁶. Ibid., 21 November, 1980, p.6.

Bangladesh and the OIC: Since its joining the OIC in February 1974, Bangladesh has been playing an important role in upholding the principles and purposes of the charter of the OIC. In 1976, General Zia attended the Seventh Islamic Foreign Minister Conference [IFMC] in Istanbul (Turkey). In that conference, he internationalized the Ganges water disputes with India and sought support in favour of Bangladesh stand. The 42-nation IFMC unanimously supported the position of Bangladesh. The joint communique expressed deep concern over the problem of equitable distribution in the international river Ganges, which resulted in the aggravation of economic hardships and retardation in the process of national reconstruction in Bangladesh.⁵⁷ Later Bangladesh contested for the Security Council seat (in the UN) its candidature was supported and endorsed by the 9th IFMC held in Dakar in 1978.⁵⁸ At the 11th IFMC in Pakistan (on 17-22 May, 1980) Bangladesh had presented two proposals: (i) to establish a permanent committee of ministers among the OIC countries, and (ii) to establish an Islamic economic community. Both the proposals were widely acclaimed by the member countries.⁵⁹

It is also noteworthy that at the Third Islamic Summit in Taif (Saudi Arabia) in January 1981, Bangladesh under Zia's leadership also played a leading role on various issues concerning Iraq-Iran war, Afghanistan and Jerusalem crises. These activities culminated

⁵⁷. The Bangladesh Observer, 17 May, 1976; Weekly Bichitra, 21 May, 1976.

⁵⁸. Md. Golam Mustafa, op.cit., p.41.

⁵⁹. Weekly Bichitra, 23 May, 1980.

in his election as one of the three Vice-Presidents of OIC and a member of OIC's Middle East peace mission. Zia was involved in trying to arrange a peaceful solution of the Iran-Iraq war and in early May was authorized by the peace mission to visit Iran and Iraq. Since November 1980 when special committee headed by King Hasan - 2nd of Morocco met in Rabat, President Zia's main efforts were directed to trying to establish peace in the Middle East. At that summit, President Zia proposed 18-point programme for better cooperation among the Muslim countries. In his address in the executive council, he reaffirmed Bangladesh's solidarity with Palestine's just struggle. He urged all the Muslim countries to stand by Palestine. ⁶⁰

Under Zia's leadership Bangladesh became an influential member of the OIC and its sister organizations. Bangladesh became a member of (i) fifteen-member Jerusalem committee (also six-member coordinating committee on Jerusalem at the UN) (ii) three-member Al-Quds committee, (iii) nine-member committee on Iran and Iraq and (iv) Islamic Solidarity Fund. Moreover, all the members states of the OIC extended their support for the establishment of the ICTVTR⁶¹

⁶⁰. In this summit he also discussed separately bilateral matters with the leader of Algeria, Iraq and Jordan. In his key speech on 28th January, he proposed 11-point charter to ensure economic, political security and solidarity of the Muslim world. He also urged to initiate a long term strategy and planning for bilateral interest among the Muslim countries. Weekly Bichitra, 6 February, 1981.

⁶¹. It was launched by the Ninth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Dakar, Senegal in 1978. Its foundation stone was laid by President Ziaur Rahman in presence of PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and Dr. Habib Chatti, the then Secretary General of the OIC in March 1981.

at Dhaka. The ICTVTR is a glowing symbol of joint Islamic action, unity and solidarity. Its mandate is to develop the human resources of the Muslim countries. Bangladesh feels very proud and honoured for being chosen as its location and deeply involved in rendering service to the *Islamic Ummah* in an important area.⁶² On the other hand, during the Burmese Rohingya problems, like other friendly countries, OIC Secretary General also expressed great concern on that issue. He appealed to the world community to react against inhuman trespassing of the Muslim refugees.

The Jerusalem Committee (of the OIC), chaired by King Hassan 2nd of Morocco, devoted itself to the protection of Islamic holy places in Jerusalem thorough joint efforts by the member states at bilateral, Islamic and international level. As a member of Jerusalem Committee, President Zia had a keen personal interest in the Palestine problem. In Rabat summit (on November 6-8, 1980) he presented a concrete action plan for the solution of the problem, which was well received as a valuable effort in developing the future strategy.⁶³ Later Bangladesh itself tabled a resolution on 30 April, 1980, which *inter-alia* reaffirmed that Israel should withdraw from all Arab territories occupied since June, 1977.⁶⁴

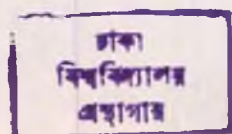
Despite President Ziaur Rahman's assassination, the following Sattar administration continued to pursue an active foreign policy

⁶². Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bangladesh and the Islamic Solidarity Fund made generous donations for ICTVTR in addition to their mandatory contributions.

⁶³. Muhammad Shamsul Huq, op.cit., p.260.

⁶⁴. Syed Anwar Husain, op.cit., p.259.

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apparently to maintain the late president's legacy. A vacuum was created by Zia's absence in respect of Bangladesh involvement in the OIC peace mission in the Middle East. But Bangladesh's active participation in OIC remained unchanged. The main thrust of Bangladesh's active foreign policy, as formulated and shaped by Zia, was to maintain peace and security, emphasize special measures to immediately accelerate the peace and economic development in the world's poorest country like Bangladesh.⁶⁵

Under Zia's administration, Bangladesh while maintaining, its non-aligned foreign policy ⁶⁶grew closer to the Muslim countries and the Western countries. Bangladesh's ties with China strengthened but slackened with Soviet bloc countries. President Zia made efforts to consolidate relationships with the Muslim countries reflected in the exchange of bilateral visits, ⁶⁷bilateral agreements on aid, trade, overseas employment and cultural relations with various Muslim countries. He also amended constitution and patronized rightist elements to stimulate Muslim

⁶⁵. President Zia also emphasized the necessity to maintain good and friendly relationship with close neighbours but the disputes between Bangladesh and its neighbours (India and Pakistan) in various aspects remained unresolved.

⁶⁶. Despite growing ties with the West, China and the Muslim countries, Bangladesh perceived itself as an effective non-aligned country. Like Prime Minister Mujib, President Zia was also a supporter of non-aligned movement. President Ziaur Rahman expressed in the Sixth Non-aligned Summit at Havana that "the policy of non-alignment is a cornerstone of our foreign policy". Emajuddin Ahamed, "Bangladesh and the Policy of Peace and Non-alignment" in Emajuddin Ahamed (ed.), Foreign Policy of Bangladesh, op.cit., p.16.

⁶⁷. Since 1977, visits at different levels became a common phenomenon in Bangladesh-Muslim countries relations.

countries' better responses.

During Zia period, economic, trade ⁶⁵ and overseas employment relations with various Muslim countries increased as compared to the previous Mujib period. It was Zia's period that Bangladesh first exported manpower to the Gulf countries and volume of these overseas employment increased over the years.⁶⁶ This regime received most of the aid from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Libya and OPEC sources. Saudi Arabia provided US\$ 284,472 million foreign assistance to this regime, placed first, among the Muslim donor countries. Bangladesh also received crucial support from the Arab and Muslim world in time of necessity. It can be said that it was Zia-period when Bangladesh consolidated its relations with the Muslim countries.⁶⁷

Ershad Regime: Following President Zia's death, the then Vice-President Abdus Sattar⁶⁸ took over as the Acting President of Bangladesh. He was formally elected President on November 15, 1991.

⁶⁵. This regime had a considerable trade relation with Saudi Arabia, Sudan, UAE, Egypt etc. and volume of trade increased over the years.

⁶⁶. During this period, Bangladesh widened overseas employment to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, Oman, Iraq, Iran, Libya etc.

⁶⁷. For the comparison of Muslim countries' aid and trade relations with Bangladesh in the successive Mujib, Zia and Ershad period, see Chapters VI & VII of this study.

⁶⁸. After Zia's assassination," the ten month of Sattar's regime was a pale imitation of the five and half years of Ziaur Rahman. The 75- year old Sattar, who was elected President on November 15, 1981, tried to follow Zia's policies in both domestic and foreign affairs, perhaps with a slightly more rightist bend". Md. Ataur Rahman, "Bangladesh in 1982: Beginning of the Second Decade, "Asian Survey, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, Feb. 1983. p. 149.

but was soon toppled by a bloodless coup led by Army Chief of Staff Lieut. General H.M. Ershad on March 24, 1982. At first General Ershad ruled the country as the Chief Martial Law Administrator and Head of the Government with a 17-member cabinet. The new military regime initially consolidated its position and cautiously followed the domestic and foreign policy of late President Ziaur Rahman. From the very beginning, General Ershad as the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and the head of government stated categorically that the principles of Islam would be incorporated in the constitution of Bangladesh.⁷² In a mammoth meeting of the *Bangladesh Jamiat-ul Mudderessin* (BJM) on January 20, 1983, he stated the cultural life of Bangladesh would be firmly based on Islamic principles.⁷³ Ershad's Foreign Minister A.R.S. Doha described:

... Bangladesh foreign policy emphasizing as Islamic, aiming at good neighborliness, non-alignment and close relationship with China without prejudice to the third country.⁷⁴

During his tenure,⁷⁵ Ershad also visited ten times in Saudi Arabia, three times both in Iraq and Malaysia and once in U.A.E.,

⁷². The Daily Ittefaq, 19 December, 1982.

⁷³. The Bangladesh Observer, 21 January, 1983.

⁷⁴. Quoted from Md. Ataur Rahman, op.cit., p.156.

⁷⁵. During his tenure, President Ershad 65 times visited foreign countries. Among these visits 10 times in Saudi Arabia, 6 times in USA, 5 times in both India and China. Agker Kagoj, (a vernacular daily), 19 August, 1993. See also appendix V for exchange of high level visits between Bangladesh and Muslim countries during the Ershad regime.

Kuwait, Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia, Morocco, etc. Besides this, different ministers and government officials of Bangladesh also exchanged visits with various Muslim countries to strengthen bilateral relations. In turn, official visits from various Muslim countries to Bangladesh were significant phenomena for the bilateral relations. Among the prominent leaders, who visited Bangladesh were: President of Turkey (December 1982), President of UAE (May 1984), President of Senegal (June 1986), Prime Minister of Turkey (August 1986), Vice-President of Iraq (December 1986), President of the Gambia (December 1988), Chairman of the PLO (May 1984, April 1985, July 1987, March 1989), Secretary General of OIC (December 1982, February 1985, August 1989) and Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia⁷⁶. These exchange of visits marked a positive development in the bilateral relations. Although several top level visits from Bangladesh were one-sided visits to influential Muslim countries, counter visits to Bangladesh did not occur by them. For example, President and other Ministers of Bangladesh several times visited Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, Malaysia, Indonesia and other countries, but only one Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, President of Turkey, Senegal, the Gambia and Vice-President of Iraq respectively visited Bangladesh.

From 1982 to 1990, Ershad made various efforts to continue the policy of rehabilitating anti-liberation forces and Islamisation of Bangladesh polity, which culminated in the 8th

⁷⁶. In addition, other ministers and government officials also visited Bangladesh.

amendment to the constitution, declaring Islam as a state religion. Comparatively, President Ershad more than President Ziaur Rahman, was eager to show his superficial Islamic orientation.⁷⁷ To consolidate his position in domestic politics as well as to legitimize his regime and to get better response from oil rich Muslim countries, President Ershad also used 'Islam' as a political weapon to reach his ends. His regime had made positive contribution to the development and to the strengthening of rightist political elements of Bangladesh. His regime got support from a section of the rightist and anti-liberation forces for the 8th amendment of the constitution (which declared 'Islam' as a state religion). In introducing 'Islam' as a state religion, Ershad's government motives were more political than religious commitment.⁷⁸ During his tenure some rightists and anti-liberation elements also held top positions in his government like Zia regime. The 8th constitutional amendment was officially appreciated by Saudi Arabia and Al-Azhar University of Egypt. President Ershad's nine year foreign policy

⁷⁷. Ershad government also became interested in continuing the process of Islamisation. The establishment of Zakat fund headed by the President himself and the proposed education policy of the government intending to introduce Arabic and Islamic education from class one in the schools were indicative of the regime's interest in the Islamization process. Not only that, Ershad himself had made frequent trips to the Peer of Atrosi (Faridpur), attended the juma congregation throughout the country, most of the time wearing islamic outfits.

⁷⁸. All opposition political parties including the three main alliances (seven-party, eight-party & five party alliances), *Jamaat-e-Islami* and different professional and social groups had declared their rejection of the idea. They opposed the very idea of a constitutionally declared state religion and strongly upheld that the existing illegitimate parliament could not bring any constitutional change.

was in effect a continuation of Zia's foreign policy. According to Md. Ataur Rahman:

There was not any significant change in Bangladesh's foreign policy in other spheres. Zia's "full-blown" diplomacy with its concomitant involvements in many areas of the world had already begun to return to more traditional modes under Sattar. General Ershad, however, seemed to have shown his aspiration to playing an important role in the Islamic world, the Non-aligned movement, United Nations' forums' and North-South relations.⁷⁹

Major Issues on Bilateral Relations with Muslim Countries

The Ershad regime also established good relations with various Muslim countries' mainly Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Yemen, Egypt, Libya, Morocco etc.⁸⁰ Over the years, these countries emerged as important aid sources, trade partners and overseas employment markets of Bangladesh. President Ershad himself and other Ministers as well as high Foreign Ministry officials played important role to boost Bangladesh relations with them. For example the Religious Affairs Minister Mawlana Abdul Mannan also played an important role in the Middle Eastern diplomacy.⁸¹

In 1987, when Bangladesh was severely devastated by flood, Mowlana Abdul Mannan, the Religious Affairs Minister of Bangladesh, was also given the portfolio of the Ministry of Relief and

⁷⁹. Md. Ataur Rahman, op.cit., p.156.

⁸⁰. In 1983 Morocco started a full-fledged Embassy in Bangladesh; previously it used a hotel for its diplomatic work. Far Eastern Economic Review Asia Year Book 1983, pp.114-115.

⁸¹. He was considered Ershad's special envoy or shadow Foreign Minister to the Middle Eastern country. He several times handed over Ershad's special messages to UAE, Yemen, Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq during his visit to those countries.

Rehabilitation, because of his excellent connections with the oil rich Arab countries. Immediately after taking the charge, he convened a meeting and discussed with ambassadors of Muslim countries to assist the fellow Bangladeshi Muslims. Then Muslim countries especially Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq assisted Bangladesh significantly.⁸² In 1988, Bangladesh was again hit by unprecedented devastating floods. The Middle-Eastern countries again provided massive relief materials to Bangladesh.⁸³ The major issues of Ershad's regime relations with some Muslim countries are discussed below.

Saudi Arabia: General Ershad's first⁸⁴ visit abroad after the take over was Saudi Arabia at the invitation of the late Saudi King Khaled. He made several visits to that country. During his visits several rounds of talks were held with Saudi leaders concerning bilateral interests. It emerged as a significant donor to

⁸². Akmal Hussain, "Porarashtraniti' 87 : Saffallayer Bachar", (Vernacular), "Foreign Policy '87 : The Year of Success or Achievements", Bichitra Varshaw Patra, 88, (Bichitra Year Book' 88) (vernacular weekly), (translation mine), 8 January, 1988, p. 57.

⁸³. Saudi Arabia provided one crore dollar worth of food, medicine and other materials, Iraq sent relief materials. It is also mentionable that both Saudi Arabia and Iraq send helicopters for carry relief goods to flood hit areas. UAE also provided 2 lakh 75 thousand dollar to the flood affected people of Bangladesh. Weekly Bichitra, 4 September, 11 September and 6 November issue of 1987; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (GOB), Bangladesh Documents, January-March 1989. p.14. It can be recalled here that during the 1984 flood Saudi Arabia also donated near about 28 lakh dollar and 50 thousand tons of wheat to the flood affected people of Bangladesh.

⁸⁴. The joint communique issued at the time of Ershad's first visit emphasized that "Islam provides the principal framework and the guiding strength for our policies and acts". See Progoti Prokashani (Dhaka) 1983, Bangladesh Year Book 1983, p. 50.

Bangladesh. In international politics, both of them had a close identity of views. Although Ershad regime had a more cordial relation with Saudi Arabia, it faced some misunderstanding too. In early 1987, Bangladesh government accused the General Manager of Saudia (Airliner) for interference in domestic affairs of Bangladesh and compelled him to leave Bangladesh within 7 days. In response to Bangladeshi measures, Saudi authority postponed the visa of a Bangladeshi official and exerted pressure on the authority of Bangladesh Biman to pay the dues within twelve days. Saudi Arabia also postponed the visit of the *Pesh Imam* of Mecca Sharif to Bangladesh. Moreover, it (Saudi Arabia) demanded 50% of Bangladeshi *Hajj* pilgrimages to fly with its airliner. After several bilateral talks, Bangladesh Foreign Minister visited Saudi Arabia and met this demand and normalized the conflict relations.⁸⁵ Ershad government also sided with Kuwait-Saudi Arabia stand during the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait. Bangladesh government sent troops to Saudi Arabia to protect the holy land.

It is also mentionable that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had started its participation in development of Bangladesh since mid 1970's in which grants, commodity aid and loans have been extended towards developing various sectors in Bangladesh economy. The loans are usually provided through the Saudi Fund for Development (SDF), which is the main channel through which Saudi bilateral

⁸⁵. And it was decided that the Saudi authorities would not raise previous demands. Weekly Bichitra, 30 January, 1987. In June 1987, President Ershad had a short visit to Saudi Arabia, on his way to New York and exchanged views with Saudi King Fahd on Gulf war, PLO crisis and bilateral issues.

concessional loans are routed.⁸⁶

United Arab Emirates: During President Sheikh Zaid-Bin-Sultan Al-Nahian's (of UAE) visit to Bangladesh in 1984, it was declared that two sides would co-operate with each other in religion, education, culture, trade and economic issues.⁸⁷ To show its friendship with the Gulf-state UAE, Bangladesh government allotted one hundred and ten (110) acres of land in Chittagong Hill Tracts for the President Sheikh Zaid-Bin-Sultan Al-Nahiyah of UAE.⁸⁸

Qatar : Bangladesh- Qatar relations were consolidated in 1989 when Qatar government decided to employ more Bangladeshi labour instead of Indians. Consequently, a delegation of Qatar labour ministry visited Bangladesh. The previous agreement of 1986 permitted 30,000 Bangladesh laborers to work in Qatar.⁸⁹

⁸⁶. SDF has also administered grants extended by the Kingdom to Bangladesh during natural calamities for the objective of rehabilitating the affected services, saving human lives and alleviating the severe effects of such calamities on the people.

⁸⁷. Peter J. Bertoci, "Bangladesh in 1984 : A Year of protracted Turmoil," Asian Survey, Vol.15, No.2, February 1985, p. 167; Weekly Bichitra, 18 May, 1984.

⁸⁸. Syed Anwar Husain, "Porarashtraniti' 85 : Varsammay O SAARC Ar Bachar," (Vernacular), "Foreign Policy' 85 : The Year of Balance and SAARC", Weekly Bichitra : Bangladesh Varshaw Patra' 85; (Bichitra Year Book' 85), (vernacular weekly), 4 January, 1985, p.122.

⁸⁹. Syed Anwar Husain, "Porarashtraniti' 89 : Samajtantrik Deshgulur Shathe Samparka Unnayan ar Bachar", (Vernacular), "Foreign Policy' 89 : The Year of Developed/Improved Relations with the Socialist Countries", Weekly Bichitra, Varsha Patra' 90 ; (Bichitra Year Book' 90), (vernacular weekly), 5 January, 1990, p. 58.

North Yemen: Besides this, President Ershad also visited the Gulf state of North Yemen in 1987. During his visit President Ershad said in a press statement that:

The natural and spontaneous friendship that had grown between our two brotherly countries find there roots in our traditional ties of history, culture and religion. Both countries share the common values and destiny of the Islamic Ummah and work together in the OIC and other Islamic forums for the unity, peace and solidarity of the Islamic Ummah.⁹⁰

President Ershad also signed a treaty concerning bilateral economic and cultural affairs. Both countries wanted to promote technical co-operation, technical education co-operation and expanding of bilateral trade. Bangladesh provided manpower in their development activities.⁹¹

Oman : During Oman's Deputy Foreign Minister's visit to Bangladesh (on April 1984) the two sides discussed bilateral and international issues and agreed on how to resolve several Muslim world crises.⁹² Bangladesh and Sultanate of Oman on April 30, 1987 signed an air services agreement. The agreement was signed in Muscat by the visiting Bangladesh State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism

⁹⁰. President Ershad also said both the countries have identical perceptions on issues that confront the members of the developing Third World countries and are working in full cooperation and understanding with each other in various international forums including the Non-Aligned Movement. See Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs, Bangladesh in International Affairs, Vol. 10, No.7. July 1987, p.8.

⁹¹. Akmal Hussain, "Porarastroniti' 87 : Saffalleyer Bachar," (vernacular), "Foreign Policy' 87 : The Year of Achievements/Success," op.cit., p. 59.

⁹². Weekly Bichitra, 4 May, 1984.

Abdus Sattar and Sheikh Hamoud Bin Abdullah Al Harthy, Omanese Minister for Communication on behalf of their respective government⁹³. The Deputy Foreign Minister (of Bangladesh) visited Oman, made another positive developments concerning Bangladeshi migrated workers to Oman. Oman accused a huge number of Bangladeshi workers employed there of working without proper official permission and documents. After having talks with his counterpart, Oman Minister agreed to serve proper work permit and official documents to them.⁹⁴

Palestine : During Ershad period, the P.L.O. leader Yaseer Arafat visited Bangladesh several times in 1984, 1985, 1987, and 1989. He was awarded with the citizenship of Bangladesh during his earlier visit in March, 1981. Ershad's policy towards the PLO was the same as Zia regime's. ⁹⁵ On 2nd July 1982 Bangladesh observed "Munajat day" (praying day) to express solidarity with Palestinian people.⁹⁶ It also boycotted UN General Assembly meeting in protest against Israel's sudden bombing on PLO headquarters in Tunisia (in October,

⁹³. Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs, op.cit., Vol. 10, No.5. May 1987, p.39.

⁹⁴. Ibid. 4 May, 1984 and Ibid., 31 July, 1987. Later Bangladesh and Oman on April 30, 1987 signed an air services agreement in Muscat. See Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs, Bangladesh in International Affairs, Vol. 10, No.5. May 1987, p.39.

⁹⁵. Syed Anwar Husain, "Foreign Policy' 85", op.cit., p. 112.

⁹⁶. Weekly Bichitra, 8 October, 1987. It is worth remembering here that Bangladesh has been observing 21 August each year in a befitting manner as the Day of Jerusalem and Solidarity with Palestinian people. In 1980, Bangladesh also issued a commemorative stamp on this occasion. Muhammad Shamsul Huq, op.cit., p.261.

1985).⁹⁷ The Ershad regime repeatedly extended its firm support for the just cause of the PLO. Bangladesh severed its diplomatic relations with Liberia in protest against Liberia's diplomatic relations with Israel.⁹⁸ Domestically, Bangladesh observed six-hour token of refrain from work, in protest against Israeli attack on holy places like Alaksa Mosque. In 1989 PLO chief Arafat, laid the foundation stone of Palestine Embassy at Baridhara, the diplomatic zone of Dhaka. The Bangladesh government provided this land for the construction of the embassy.⁹⁹ This co-operative support reflected Bangladesh's government honest desire for the fellow Muslim country and Islamic brotherhood. When the PLO chief declared independent Palestine state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, Bangladesh recognized it without delay.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷. Weekly Bichitra, 11 October, 1985.

⁹⁸. Robert Fraser (ed.) Keesing's Contemporary Archives, Vol. 31, (London : Longman, 1985), p.33335.

⁹⁹. On the occasion of formal inauguration of the Palestine Embassy in Dhaka on 11 March 1989, President Ershad expressed, " we the people of Bangladesh have stood by our Palestinian brethren in the historic search for their rightful destiny. We have watched with profound admiration the indomitable spirit of our Palestinian brethren engaging in the epic struggle. Our commitment to support and sustain your struggle will continue unabated and the Government and the people of Bangladesh shall remain by your side till final victory has been won. We look forward with the greatest confidence to the day when the flag of Bangladesh will be hoisted in the liberated and independent land of Palestine. The day when we all in the Islamic Ummah, will join your praying together in the sacred Al-Aqsa Mosque. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (GOB), Bangladesh Documents, January-March 1989, p.85.

¹⁰⁰. Ibid., p.153. It is also to be mentioned that near about 500-600 Bangladeshi were tortured in the Israeli jail and near about 400 were killed while fighting against Israel. Weekly Bichitra, 8 October 1982; Ibid., 15 February 1986; Bangladesh

Egypt : Bangladesh and Egypt have very close friendly relation not only in trade field but in political, diplomatic and cultural fields as well. At the very beginning of 1988, President Ershad visited Egypt. Bangladesh exported 70 thousand tons of raw jute to Egypt through an agreement. In another memorandum of understanding, Bangladesh also exported 25 thousand tons of jute materials to Egypt. They signed a shipping agreement.¹⁰¹

It is also mentionable that the Trade Centre of Egypt (TCE) in Dhaka was established in 1960 to promote and to enhance trade between the two brotherly countries. Throughout this long period the TCE was serving and still serving both markets in Bangladesh and Egypt.

Libya : Although Bangladesh-Libya overall relationship remained the same like Zia period, in 1985 Bangladesh government had faced strained relations with Libya, because of Ghadafi's so-called bagman Salem Ibrahim's visit (on 8 January, 1985) to Bangladesh. He was a *persona non grata* in Bangladesh and so Bangladesh government compelled him to leave the country.¹⁰²

Turkey : After 1975, Bangladesh-Turkey relations improved significantly. The Ershad regime also had a dynamic relations with Turkey. President Kenan Ebrahim (of Turkey) visited Bangladesh (on

Times, 28 September, 1982. Notably, Bangladesh's government Palestine policy during Ershad period had been vaguely formed as it was extremely vocal against Israel but equally uncritical of the US which actually patronized Israel in all its anti-Arab activities.

¹⁰¹. Syed Anwar Husain, "Foreign Policy' 88", op.cit., p.56.

¹⁰². Syed Anwar Husain, "Foreign Policy' 85", op.cit., p.112.

14 December 1982) which consolidated bilateral relations. They had a common view on Palestine and Lebanon crises. Both sides condemned Israeli aggression over Arab territory. The bilateral relations improved in the field of economic, social and cultural affairs of both the countries.¹⁰³ President Ershad also paid another visit to Turkey on 6th October, 1985. Later in 1986, Prime Minister of Turkey visited Bangladesh. A bilateral agreement was signed for naval shipment, and Bangladesh also got US \$ 60 million from Turkey.¹⁰⁴ This regime signed bilateral agreement with Turkey concerning an economic commission forming, abolishing dual tax imposition, cultural and aviation issues.¹⁰⁵

Iran : Intricacy arose between Bangladesh and Iran in 1986 regarding the oil import policy and the postponement of the then Foreign Minister Humayun Rasheed Choudhury's visit to Iran. Because of the decrease of oil price in the international market, Bangladesh refused to buy oil from Iran at the previous price rate.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³. Weekly Bichitra, 31 December, 1982.

¹⁰⁴. A bilateral visit of foreign minister was exchanged between Bangladesh and Turkey in 1986. Syed Anwar Husain, "Foreign Policy' 86", op.cit., p.121.

¹⁰⁵. A cultural agreement was signed during the foreign minister of Turkey's visit to Bangladesh on 8 March, 1988. Previously it also provided fund for Ataturk School of Feni. Weekly Bichitra, 8 December, 1989, p.10. Moreover, both the countries had also several agreements like Shipping Agreement (1986), Investment intensives and Security Agreement (1987) and Visa Agreement (1987). Weekly Bichitra, 31 December 1982, Ibid, 27 May 1987; Akmal Hussain, "Foreign Policy' 87", op.cit., p.59. Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs, op.cit., Vol.11, No.1. January 1988, p.35.

Moreover, Bangladesh's relations with Iran became strained, because of its cordial relations with Iraq. It can also be mentioned that the Religious Minister Mowlana Mannan had a fascination for Iraq, which irritated Iran. To normalize relation with Iran, a delegation led by the Commerce Minister visited Iran in 1987.¹⁰⁷

On the other hand, in September 1989, the visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Ali Akber Velayeti signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" with Bangladesh. According to this Memorandum of Understanding, Bangladesh exported jute, jute materials, tea, fertilizer etc. to Iran and Bangladesh imported petroleum materials and cement.¹⁰⁸ Foreign Minister Humayun Rasheed Choudhury postponed his (July 1986) visit to Iran before 24 hours of departure due to illness. Iran reacted negatively and commented that the postponement of the visit was undesirable and as a matter of grief.¹⁰⁹ During Khomeini's funeral Bangladesh could not send any

¹⁰⁶. Syed Anwar Husain, "Porarashtraniti' 86 : Paribartanheen Porarashtranitir Bachar", (Vernacular), "Foreign Policy 86 : The Year of Stagnant Relations", Weekly Bichitra : Bangladesh Varshaw Patra' 87 ; (Bichitra Year Book' 87), (vernacular Weekly), 2 January 1987 p.120.

¹⁰⁷. Akmal Hussain, "Foreign Policy' 87," op.cit., p.59.

¹⁰⁸. Syed Anwar Husain, "Foreign Policy' 89," op.cit., p.58.

¹⁰⁹. At that time (1986) Foreign Minister Humayun Rasheed Choudhury was the President of UN General Assembly. The Security Council sent a resolution of cease-fire between Iran and Iraq. Iran refused to accept this proposal which created a great anguish in UN body. It was perhaps the reason of postponement his visit to Iran. It is interesting, at that time PLO chief Arafat was in Dhaka. The press of Bangladesh then speculated that PLO Chief's presence might have links to this postponed visit. To counter this measure, Iran refused to provide visa to a Bangladeshi diplomat. On the other

representative. But Pakistan and India observed 7 and 3 days of 'mourning' respectively to show their honour to Khomeini. It is worth remembering that during the death of Japanese Emperor, Bangladesh observed 7 days' 'mourning' to honour him.¹¹⁰ Later, relations between the two countries improved slightly from Rafshanjani period as compared to previous Khomeini period. The present Rafshanjani government is more willing to promote relations with Bangladesh.

Iraq : President Ershad visited Baghdad in September and November' 1984 that culminated in the signing of a trade protocol to recruit 11,000 Bangladeshi skilled workers by Iraq.¹¹¹ Bangladesh-Iraq joint commission for trade, economic and technical co-operation previously decided that Bangladesh would supply Iraq's total demand of jute and Iraq would supply Bangladesh's total demand of sulphur and super phosphate fertilizer.¹¹² Bangladesh under President Ershad, moved closer to Iraq at the end of the Iran-Iraq war. Although it was a member of the Peace (Al-Quds) Committee, set up by the OIC to mediate between the two belligerent countries, President Ershad postponed his proposed visit to Iran for an

hand, Foreign Minister clarified that due to his illness, he postponed the proposed visit to Iran and Yemen. Weekly Bichitra, 7 August, 1987; also see Akmal Hussain, "Foreign Policy' 87", op.cit., p.59.

¹¹⁰. Khoberer Kagoj, (vernacular weekly), 27 July, 1989. Bangladesh Government declared 3 days mourning (on June 13, 1982) at the death of King Khaled of Saudi Arabia. Progoti Prokashoni, Bangladesh Yearbook 1983, op.cit., p.229.

¹¹¹. Peter J. Bertoci, op.cit., p. 167.

¹¹². Weekly Bichitra, 26 August, 1983.

indefinite period. But he made two different visits to Iraq. In 1989, former Religious Affairs Minister Mowlana Mohammed Abdul Mannan visited Iraq and made a favourable background for Ershad's further visit to Iraq.¹¹³ At the fag end of the Ershad regime when Iraq-Kuwait war was started, the friendly relations became strained, as Bangladesh sided with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and USA-led multinational initiatives. Bangladesh condemned Iraq's annexation of Kuwait.¹¹⁴

Afghanistan : The main focal point of Bangladesh's Afghan policy was that, Afghanistan is allowed to determine its own destiny without any outside interference and intervention. During the Ershad regime, Bangladesh's external policy towards Afghanistan was perplexing. On 8 April, 1989, the interim Foreign Minister of *Mujahideen* government, Gulbuddin Hekmetiar visited Bangladesh to achieve recognition and further cooperation. Bangladesh remained silent on this matter. Apart from this, Bangladesh attitude on Afghan crisis was ambiguous. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan was welcomed by Bangladesh. Such attitude of Bangladesh irritated Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. After sometime Bangladesh

¹¹³. Syed Anwar Husain, "Foreign Policy' 89", op.cit., p.58.

¹¹⁴. The Gulf crisis begun by Iraq's annexation of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 and the role of Bangladesh in this crisis became more crucial when Bangladesh Government decided to send troops to Saudi Arabia. Previously, Bangladesh declared its defiance of Iraqi instructions to close down its embassy in Kuwait by August 24 deadline. It also expressed its intention to join in economic blockade against Iraq and voted in favour of ousting Iraq from Asian Games held in Beijing. See Akmal Hussain, "An Appraisal of Bangladesh Foreign Policy in the Gulf Crisis' 90-91", op.cit., p.32.

explained its previous attitude and told them that withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan was a phase of mediation and not the absolute end of the crisis. So, it was worthy of felicitation. Later, Bangladesh Foreign Minister talked with Afghan Foreign Minister in UN assembly, also irritated Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Bangladesh explained it was not unnatural to talk with a UN member country.¹¹⁵

Malaysia : The Ershad regime also took special care to retain friendly relations with ASEAN countries' especially Malaysia and Indonesia. Collaborative efforts in the field of culture, education, agriculture, religious affairs, administrative and technical training are also being actively pursued by both Bangladesh and Malaysia with the framework of the Ministerial Level Joint Commission(JCM). Although in 1988 Bangladesh had an awkward relationship with Malaysia because of its contest for a UN Security Council seat. This embarrassed relation was normalized after the Commonwealth summit where President Ershad led the Bangladesh delegation. In the Security Council election Bangladesh was defeated by Malaysia in the first round of voting (55 votes in favour of Bangladesh and 104 votes in favour of Malaysia). During the second round of vote, Bangladesh withdrew its candidature. At that time, Bangladesh could not ensure support from the Muslim world and SAARC countries. Moreover, Saudi Arabia requested Bangladesh to withdraw its candidature. Malaysia chided Bangladesh

¹¹⁵. Far Eastern Economic Review: Asia 1990 Year Book, p.84; see also Syed Anwar Husain, "Foreign Policy' 89," op.cit., p.58.

for its undiplomatic attitude during the election period. Therefore, Bangladesh faced some strained relationship with that country.¹¹⁶

Indonesia : President Ershad accompanied by various Ministers also visited Indonesia in January 1987, where he held talks on bilateral issues with President Suharto. During his visit a commission was set up, to level for the prevailing trade imbalance and feasibility study of economic and technical co-operation.¹¹⁷

Bangladesh and the OIC: Since its joining the Organization of Islamic Conference in 1974 at the Second Islamic Summit in Lahore, Bangladesh has been in the forefront of championing the cause of Muslim world. Bangladesh, under Ershad regime continued to be an active member of the OIC. It participated with keen interest in all activities of the OIC and its sister organizations. As a member of the three-member peace committee of the OIC, Ershad made several trips to the Middle East and made efforts to mediate in the prolonged Iran-Iraq war.

Because of Bangladesh constructive role in the Islamic Conference, Dhaka was selected as the venue of the 14th IFMC on 6-11 December 1983. President Ershad successfully organized this Conference.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶. It is notable that Malaysia had played an important role in 1973-74 to normalize Bangladesh relationship with Muslim countries. Far Eastern Economic Review: Asia 1990 Year Book, p.84.

¹¹⁷. Roger East (ed.) Keesing's Record of World Events, 1987, p.35575; Akmal Hussain, "Foreign Policy' 87," op.cit., p.59.

¹¹⁸. The Conference was attended by 41 representatives of the member countries. Among them 18 countries were represented at foreign ministerial level, 8 countries in other ministerial level, 5 countries in deputy ministerial level and others in ambassador

As a Chairman of the Conference, Bangladesh played a leading role in the adoption of several important resolutions and decisions, which *inter alia*, included the Dhaka Declaration on Human Rights in Islam. The Conference okayed 'Islamic humanitarian Dhaka declaration' which emphasized human rights within the Muslim countries. As President Ershad in his inaugural address at that Conference said:

I have spoken about Islam in Bangladesh and our Islamic heritage so that you understand why we in Bangladesh attach the highest importance to our relations with Islamic world. It is this Islamic legacy which prompted us to involve ourselves fully in the Islamic world; to devote ourselves to strengthening Islamic co-operation and in working for Islamic unity and solidarity. Our policies and programmes, therefore, make a conscious effort to strengthen our bonds with the Islamic world and to that end we have always worked towards developing the OIC into a dynamic and vibrant organization.¹¹⁹

Within 9 years of Bangladesh entry in the OIC, it was important and pride for Ershad government to organize the conference.¹²⁰ But it was also a fact that Bangladesh failed to be benefitted economically holding the Conference in Bangladesh. Even it could not get the subscription from Muslim countries (for the

and government official level. In that conference 94 issues were discussed (e.g. Palestine, Lebanon crisis, Chad-Libya relations, Gulf war crisis etc.).

¹¹⁹. Quoted from Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, "Multilateralism and the Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: Model of pragmatism," in Bangladesh and the UN: A Decade of Commitment, *op.cit.*, p.3.

¹²⁰. Not only that the sixth Annual Meeting of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and Islamic Finance Ministers' Conference were held in Dhaka. Weekly Bichitra, 2 December, 1983, pp.10-14; Weekly Bichitra, the Bijoy Divos Shankha, (the victory day issue), 1983, pp.12-14.

cost of meeting) properly.¹²¹ At the 4th OIC summit, General Ershad presented a 11-point proposal to promote and ensure Muslim worlds' economic security. To clarify his proposal he emphasized on an elaborate working plan for the Palestine problem. He urged for setting up a conciliatory committee and a political committee to stop conflicts and wars among the Muslim countries. In the economic sector he also urged to work out a plan to promote cooperation among less developing Muslim countries and to set up a common Islamic market.¹²² Ershad proposed that governmental and non-governmental level of investment should be generated for the industrialization of Muslim countries. In that summit, Bangladesh played an important role to consolidate *Islamic Ummah*.¹²³ Later in 1987 President Ershad led the Bangladesh delegation to the 5th OIC summit held in Kuwait. He again declared that Bangladesh had a friendly relation with Muslim countries. Bangladesh also joined

¹²¹. Hasanuzzaman, Bangladeshe Dharma Babosher Rainiti: Shawrup Unmochon, (vernacular), The Religious Business Politics of Bangladesh: The Real Truth, (Dhaka: Suborna Prokashani, 1987), p.39.

¹²². At the policy level, Bangladesh launched for the first time the idea of an Islamic Common Market in the Third Summit meeting of the heads of states of the OIC held in Taif in 1981 and in the same year, it tabled a draft resolution on the matter at the General Assembly of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce (ICC) held in Kuwait. The General Assembly supported the idea and referred it to the General Secretariat of the OIC for consideration. The issue was again raised by Morocco in the Third General Assembly of the ICC held in Casablanca in 1982. The Fourth General Assembly of the ICC held in Jakarta in 1983 reiterated once again the need and importance of an Islamic Common Market. Anwar Harjono, Discussion on Muslim Common Market, (Jakarta : Islamic Centre for Research and Development, 1983), pp.i-ii.

¹²³. Weekly Bichitra, 27 January, 1984.

every IFMC and played an important role concerning Muslim world and International crisis.¹²⁴

Bangladesh's important role in the OIC was reflected in the election of OIC Assistant-Secretary General.¹²⁵ In 1989, Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mohammed Mohsin was elected one of the OIC's

¹²⁴. In the 13th IFMC in Niemy, Bangladesh was elected Vice-Chairman of the conference. *Ibid.*, 8 October 1982. Bangladesh also joined 16th IFMC held in the city of Morocco (on January 6-10th, 1986). It proposed 7 point demands for the economic development and to ensure the security of Islamic world. These were : (i) A specialized aid programme needed for the economically recession-ridden Islamic country; (ii) To invest capital in food and agriculture sector at the poor Islamic countries; (iii) A special fund for the catastrophe-prone countries; (iv) To implement the Substantial Programme of Action, 1981 (which was accepted in the UNCTAD Conference in 1981) of UNCTAD decisions for the developing of Muslim State; (v) Abolition of protectionism in the international trade; (vi) To remove the hindrance of trade related matters in international trade and (vii) To organize international conference for considering economic problems. Syed Anwar Husain, "Foreign Policy' 86," *op.cit.*, p.120; In 17th IFMC, Bangladesh proposed to end the Gulf war and enforce conciliation and fraternity among them. Syed Anwar Husain, "Foreign Policy' 88," *op.cit.*, p.54. In the 18th IFMC, Anisul Islam Mahmud led the Bangladesh delegation. At that time some OIC member countries expressed concern for the internal and administrative irregularities of ICTVTR which was established near Dhaka. Syed Anwar Husain, "Foreign Policy' 89," *op.cit.*, p.55. At the 8th conference of Islamic Peace Committee on Iraq-Iran, which was held in Jeddah (September 1985), Bangladesh proposed "a high power committee should be organized under the leadership of Malaysian Foreign Minister for the immediate solution of the Iran-Iraq crisis. Syed Anwar Husain, "Foreign Policy' 85," *op.cit.*, p.122.

¹²⁵. In 1984 Bangladesh also intended to secure OIC Secretary-General post. The then Foreign Minister ARS Doha visited 30 member countries of OIC. But Bangladesh could not ensure majority support from Muslim countries. Even Ershad's regime close ally Saudi Arabia openly declared that it was not in favour of Bangladesh. Sharfuddin Pirzada of Pakistan was elected Secretary General of OIC. *Weekly Bichitra*, 28 December, 1984.

Assistant Secretary-Generals.¹²⁶

The Secretary-General of OIC several times visited Bangladesh to consolidate relations between Bangladesh and OIC. The OIC and its subsidiary organization (like ICTVTR-renamed IIT, IDB, Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Commodity Exchange and Islamic Centre for Development of Trade) also helped in the development work of Bangladesh in its hour of need.

Gulf Crisis and Bangladesh: Bangladesh remained quite active in the international field both in bilateral and multi-lateral forums during the Gulf crisis. After the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Bangladesh faced crisis. Near about 75,000 Bangladeshi workers were employed in Kuwait. The number of Bangladeshi migrants in both Iraq and Kuwait were near about one and half lac. Bangladesh instantly condemned the Iraqi invasion. It took some special initiatives to hammer out a peace formula on behalf of the 5 non-Arab, Asian Muslim countries. Bangladesh Foreign Minister undertook a tour in Pakistan, Maldives, Malaysia, Indonesia and Bahrain in a diplomatic mission. This initiative was taken at the request¹²⁷ of King Fahd of

¹²⁶. During the election, his counter candidate was an Indonesian diplomat. The other three Assistant Secretary-Generals were elected from Saudi Arabia, Palestine and the Gambia. Not only that Bangladesh also selected as a member of the Islamic Peace Committee, comprising of the heads of the States and Governments with Gambia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Senegal, Turkey, Palestine and the OIC Secretary-General. It was set up in 1988 with the aim of bringing an end to the war between fellow Muslim countries.

¹²⁷. On August 15, 1990 the Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs met President Ershad and handed over a message of the Saudi King.

Saudi Arabia, but Bangladesh had its own urgency too, to rescue several thousands of Bangladeshi workers. Bangladesh has become dependent on their remittances to bolster its foreign exchange reserves over the years.¹²⁸

During the Gulf crisis, Bangladesh responded quickly at the request of Saudi Arabia and the USA by sending a token contingent of 5,000 troops in fulfilling its international obligations.¹²⁹ The political and social organizations of Bangladesh were divided regarding the invasion. Some of them supported President Saddam's initiatives. And others condemned his activities and supported Saudi-USA led multinational initiatives.

The decision of sending the army to Saudi Arabia received wide criticism from the various political parties. They accused the Ershad government for supporting a belligerent, which led to an involvement in a war.¹³⁰ During the Gulf crisis Bangladesh economy

¹²⁸. The initiative helped Bangladesh to repatriate promptly the bulk of its stranded work force of nearly 100,000 in Kuwait and Iraq with financial and logistical help from international agencies. President Ershad personally visited the refugee camps in Jordan and talked to a host of government leaders to provide all possible help for quick repatriation of the victims. He had discussions with the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates on how they could help Bangladesh in over-coming the socio-economic problems caused by the Iraqi invasion. See Far Eastern Economic Review - Asia Year Book, 1991, p.74; Weekly Bichitra, 14 September, 1990.

¹²⁹. Roger East (ed.), Keesing's Record of World Events 1990, op.cit., p.37641; Weekly Bichitra, 14 September, 1990.

¹³⁰. They were also concerned about the stranded Bangladeshis and their repatriation. After sometime with the help of several friendly countries, international agencies, UNIHR and EEC's initiatives and financial support they were repatriated to Bangladesh.

faced serious setbacks. According to the then Finance Minister Abdul Munem, due to Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Bangladesh lost US \$ 500 million yearly and total losses would be more than US\$ 1,000 million ¹³¹ and remittance flow from these two countries became squeezed.

Akmal Hussain and Meghna Guhathakurata¹³² criticized Bangladesh decision during the Gulf crisis. According to them, Bangladesh foreign policy during the Gulf crisis indicates:

- (a) a pro-US and pro-Saudi tilt . . . in Bangladesh's foreign policy, the reason for which may be ascribed to the strong economic dependence pattern on US and Saudi aid.
- (b) also the current position taken by the Bangladesh government in the Gulf crisis, enables it to reconcile its apparently two opposing ideological stance: the declaration of solidarity with the pro-Islamic bloc and the proclamation to defend pro-Western status quo by upholding the decisions taken by the UN Security Council.
- (c) Its pro-Islamic posture, however, have been challenged by Iraq and Iran declaring Jihad against the USA. Bangladesh's peace initiative to involve five other non-Arab Muslim states can thus be viewed as a defensive posture to demonstrate its pro-Islamic solidarity.
- (d) . . . Gulf war crisis indicates that decision-making of Bangladesh foreign policy was highly personalized [determined by Ershad].
- (e) Finally . . . Bangladesh seemed to have sided with pro-status quo powers, who

¹³¹. Bangladesh economy and society also faced some difficulties, due to the rise of oil price in the international market. Bangladesh government also trimmed its budget, announced austerity programme. The price of consumer goods, oil, industrial goods and other essential goods increased which created social tension and misery. Dialogue, (Dhaka, A Weekly Magazine), 23 October, 1993; K. R. Singh, "South Asia and the Gulf Crisis," in Shelton U. Kodikara (ed.), External Compulsions of South Asian Politics, (New Delhi, London : Sage Publications, 1993), pp. 287-309.

¹³². Akmal Hussain and Meghna Guhathakurata, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy Decisions in the Gulf Crisis: A Theoretical Review", paper presented in the International Studies Association of Bangladesh (ISAB) seminar at Teachers and Students Center of Dhaka University on 11.1.1991.

whether they are Islamic or western, favour the protection and maintenance of the existing world order.

In conclusion, it should be noted that during Ershad period, economic, trade and overseas employment relations with various Muslim countries improved as compared to the previous Zia regime.¹³³ It was in Ershad period, Bangladesh extended its international role in the Muslim world. Bilateral ties on trade, employment and cultural relations increased considerably, although during the Gulf crisis Bangladesh economic relations with Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia faced some difficulties. The Ershad's regime foreign relation reflected the more cordial relation as compared to the previous Zia regime although this regime had faced some bitter relationship with Iran, Malaysia, Libya and Saudi Arabia for a time being. Immediate efforts by Bangladesh normalized relationship with them. This regime received most of its aid from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE Pakistan, Iraq and OPEC sources. Saudi Arabia provided US \$ 350,672 million, topping the list of Muslim country donors. This regime had trade and overseas employment relations with Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Sudan etc. and volume of trade and remittances of migrated workers increased over the years as compared to the previous regime.

Besides this, Ershad's regime declaration of Islam as a state religion gave Bangladesh a separate entity in the Muslim world. This regime was very much vocal about the Islamization of Bangladesh polity. This regime also took some measures to please the Muslim countries. After this discussion, we can conclude that it was during the Ershad regime that Bangladesh strengthened its relations with the Muslim countries.

¹³³. See the Chapter VI & VII of this Study.

CHAPTER V

INFLUENCE OF THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES IN THE POLITICS OF
BANGLADESH

Generally the people of Bangladesh are religious and tradition loving community. As an independent nation-state, its cultural and political life continues to be influenced by religion. Islam is the faith of more than 86 percent of the people, which is officially recognized¹. In terms of population, Bangladesh is considered one of the largest Muslim states in the world. Its Islamic heritage and cultural influence mould its relationship with the Muslim world. One of the key objectives of its foreign policy is to foster close and friendly relations with the Muslim countries. In fact, religious sentiment and cultural outlook of the overwhelming majority people of Bangladesh confirm to this policy preference. Bangladesh is firmly associated with different political, economic and cultural institutions of the Muslim world.

Though the relation of Bangladesh with the Muslim states was initiated during the end of the Mujib regime, post-Mujib governments of Zia and Ershad further strengthened it in various fields and ways. Mujib administration's relation with the Muslim countries was, indeed confined in the efforts to secure recognition and establishment of diplomatic missions. In this process successive regimes of Bangladesh gradually began to receive foreign assistance, made trade relations and established manpower relation.

¹. The percentage of Muslim population was 86.6 while that of Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian was 12.1, 0.6 and 0.3 respectively. See Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh, 1992, p. 4.

The Mujib regime, and post-Mujib governments were very much active in building economic relations with the Muslim countries. Bangladesh chalked out plans and programmes to please the countries of the Muslim world in different ways. Bangladeshi delegates visited various Muslim countries to mobilize foreign aid and to impress that it strongly upholds Islamic values in domestic politics .² By late 1973, Bangladesh sent special envoys to different Muslim countries to secure recognition. As a result of these intensive diplomatic efforts, Bangladesh was able to secure recognition from most of the countries of the Muslim world by 1974. In the second Islamic Summit Conference in February 1974, Pakistan sent an invitation to Bangladesh to participate in the conference. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, himself attended the summit in order to express solidarity with the Muslim countries, which reportedly displeased New Delhi.

Government Initiatives Towards Islamization and Responses of the Muslim Countries

The Mujib government first introduced "secularism" as one of its fundamental state principles in the constitution of Bangladesh. But it was obvious that the government was somewhat reluctant to implement its secular principle. That developed doubts in the

². For details see K.M. Mohsin, "Trends of Islam in Bangladesh" in Rafiuddin Ahmed (ed.), Islam in Bangladesh: Society, Culture and Politics, (Dhaka: Bangladesh Itihas Samity, 1983), pp.226-241; Emajuddin Ahamed, "Current Trends of Islam in Bangladesh "in Emajuddin Ahamed (ed.) Society and Politics in Bangladesh (Dhaka: Academic publishers, 1989), pp.135-149; Hasanuzzaman Chowdhury, "Underdevelopment and State in Bangladesh," in Choudhury E. Haque (ed.), Bangladesh: Politics, Economy and Society, (Manitoba, BSA, 1987), pp.49-62.

public mind about its secular tenets. As a result, many people thought that secularism was a manifestation of Indian influence while some people perceived it to be an Indian imposition. As the then Foreign Secretary Abul Fateh has noticed:

Secularism came by compulsion because Mujibnagar Government [the provisional Government] was in India and heavily dependent on India for moral, material and diplomatic support. Its secular policy existed only to the extent that the party opened its doors to the Hindus.³

G. W. Choudhury was also very much critical about Mujib's secular policy. According to him:

Mujib, out of 'gratitude' to India or more accurately out of his stupidity, diliminated Islam from the 1972 constitution and, following India as an example, declared Bangladesh a 'secular state'.⁴

Mujib Government eventually reversed his position and made Bangladesh more Islamic than before. Although Bangladesh adopted secularism in its constitution, the nature of the society and people was pro-Islamic. Islam was temporarily discarded as it was used by the Muslim League, and other religious political parties. But the leaders of Bangladesh were aware of the need to enter the Islamic bloc in order to obtain aid and recognition. Immediately after the constitution was adopted in 1972, there were attempts to make friendship with the Muslim states. The Prime Minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in June 7, 1972, declared:

³. Shaukat Hassan, India-Bangladesh Political Relations During the Awami League Government, 1972-75, op.cit., p.77.

⁴. G. W. Choudhury, Islam and the Contemporary World, (Dhaka : Academic Publishers, 1991), p. 133.

Secularism does not mean the absence of religion. You are Musalman, you perform your religious rites. The Hindus, the Christians, the Buddhists all will freely perform their religious rites. There is no irreligiousness in the soil of Bangladesh but there is secularism. None would be allowed to exploit the people in the name of religion, no one to meet such fascist organization as the Al-Badr, Razakars, etc. No communal politics will be allowed in the country... .⁵

Albeit the Mujib regime adopted "secularism" as one of its fundamental state principles, the regime reinstated Islamic Foundation and declared general mercy for the people believing in rightist religion-oriented parties and factions who opposed the liberation war of Bangladesh and helped the Pakistani military junta to carry out genocide in Bangladesh. Sheikh Mujib restored religious broadcasts on the state-owned radio and television, prohibited the serving of alcoholic beverages in private clubs to Muslims, granted clemency to Bengali Muslims who had collaborated with the Pakistanis in the name of Islam, and attended Islamic Summit Conference [in Lahore] in 1974 after withdrawing his earlier demands for the trial of Pakistani prisoners of war for war crimes. In 1974, Mujib accorded diplomatic recognition to Pakistan. Hence it created a strong debate about secularism of Mujib regime whether it was secularism in the true sense or multi-theocracy.⁶

⁵. English translation of June 7, 1972 speech (Dacca: External Publicity Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GOB, 1972), pp. 16-17.

⁶. Professor Talukder Maniruzzaman was very critical of the Awami League's secularism as it did not take into account the general religious susceptibilities of the people of Bangladesh. See Talukder Maniruzzaman "Bangladesh Politics: Secular and Islamic Trends", in S.R. Charkravarty & Virendra Narain (eds.), Bangladesh Politics : History and Culture, Vol. 1, op.cit., pp.42-77.

Secularism was discarded from the constitution of Bangladesh by the Zia regime. Without naming Islam the constitution was made Islamic by the fifth amendment. Later on, President Ershad declared Islam as the state religion of Bangladesh. It can be stated here that all the rightist and religious oriented parties were banned⁷ by the Mujib government. Subsequently all religion based, rightist political parties became active through the Political Parties Regulation (PPR) act, a brainchild of Ziaur Rahman. This aimed to create support base for the ruling BNP government. A number of fundamentalist political leaders then joined the BNP and a few of them occupied vital portfolios in Zia's cabinet.⁸ President Zia did not stop there. He officially visited more than a dozen of Muslim countries and expressed his desire to uphold Islam in both domestic and international politics. He also amended the constitution of Bangladesh and added Article 25(2) of the constitutions, which read, "the state shall endeavour to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity."⁹

⁷. The banned political parties were the *Jamaati-e-Islam*, *Council Muslim league*, the *Nijam-i-Islam* and the *Convention Muslim league*.

⁸. Shah Aziz was one of them, who actively played a vital role in the home and international forum against the liberation war. Later on, President Zia rehabilitated him in politics in 1979 by offering him the prestigious position of Prime Minister and leader of the parliament. For the discussion of rightist elements and anti-liberations forces of Zia's cabinet. See Marcus Franda, *Bangladesh: The First Decade*, *op.cit.*, pp. 230-231.

⁹. *The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, (As modified upto 31st December 1990), *op.cit.*, p. 17.

On the other hand, Bangladesh during the Zia regime got as many as four significant posts in the OIC, ¹⁰ which reflected its status in the Muslim world. Regarding Zia government's special relationship with Muslim countries, DR. Shaukat Hassan wisely commented that:

The warming up of relations with the Muslim countries which followed was an important psychological prop after the deterioration of relations with India in the preceding years, but on the whole this shift in policy neither enhanced Bangladesh's security nor provided Bangladesh with a balanced foreign policy. The move to identify more closely with the Muslim countries was equated with the Zia government's anti-secular policy and was generally seen as a substitute for good relations with India.¹¹

President Ershad went a step forward and declared Islam as the state religion in Bangladesh Constitution. Because of the failure to acquire legitimacy through electoral process, the Ershad regime resorted to widen its support base by exploiting the religious sentiments of the country's overwhelming majority of Muslim population.¹² To introduce Islam as a state religion in fact is a matter of name and an aspiration rather than a decision on form and content. He attended different religious functions, symposia of religion-based groups. During Ershad regime, Saudi Arabia came closest to Bangladesh in terms of bilateral trade, overseas

¹⁰. Syed Anwar Husain, op. cit., p.269.

¹¹. Shaukat Hassan, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Introductory Remarks." in M.G. Kabir and Shaukat Hassan (eds.) op.cit., pp.3-4.

¹². The Constitution (8th Amendment) Act (1988), proposed in May, introduced a new article (2A) that declared Islam to be the state religion of Bangladesh, and further stated that other religions could be freely practised. The bill was passed in June 1988.

migration and assistance. The declaration of Islam as a state religion was welcomed by Saudi Arabia and Al-Azhar University of Egypt. President Ershad's commitment to uphold Islamic values raised the credibility of the regime in the eyes of some Arab countries especially Saudi Arabia.¹³

Foreign Aid and Its Impact on Domestic Politics

Approximately, 90% of Bangladesh Annual Development Programme (ADP) is dependent on foreign aid. Moreover, its domestic resources are inadequate and have remained unexplored. Having no other alternative economic resources, it has to receive aid from different donors and international agencies. This dependence increased gradually and still continues. The Muslim world, Japan, USA, Canada, Germany, UK along with the World Bank, IMF, ADB and IDB are the major donors for Bangladesh.¹⁴ Generally donor agencies or countries while providing assistance to a recipient country regulates the rate of interest, appoint expert, select their own technical know-how, supply goods, materials and ships and influence in changing trend of domestic and foreign policies. Thus, foreign policies along with domestic policies are shaped to suit the interest of the donors. On the other hand, International organizations, such as, the World Bank, IMF, IDA, ADB and IDB being

¹³. Abdul Bayes, "Foreign Policy and External Economic Relations of Bangladesh: Direction, Nature and Implications," in M.G. Kabir and Shaukat Hassan (eds.) op. cit., p 179; and see also Syed Anwar Husain, "Pararashtraniti'88: Kutnititea Vabmurti Bippannar Bachar," (vernacular), "Foreign Policy'88: The Year of Diplomatic Loss," Weekly Bichitra: Varshaw Patra' 89, 6 January, 1989, p. 56.

¹⁴. See Chapter VI of this Study.

multinational agencies, dominated by few nations, impose conditionalities on the aid package. According to an economist, the donor dictations are accepted in the country because foreign aid has been allowed to become the cornerstone of development strategy and therefore, the aid donors have assumed the role of philosophers and guides in the development process.¹⁵ They imposed the interest rate, determined the timing of project completion and project selection. Theoretically, there is a debate¹⁶ regarding the necessity of foreign aid and its impact on the socio-economic development of a country. Underdeveloped, resource less, poor countries like Bangladesh, with a sick economy do not have any option other than receiving foreign aid.

Though countries of the Muslim world came forward to assist Bangladesh after 1975, their role in assisting Bangladesh economy reached to a considerable stage gradually. However, foreign aid received by Bangladesh from the Muslim countries is less than the amount it received from the Western World. It is widely believed that their aid policy is flexible compared to other donors. But in spite of this apparent flexibility in their aid policy, it is not out of the political-cultural bondage. Meghna Guhathakurta in her

¹⁵. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, "Counting the Costs of Foreign Aid in Bangladesh " in M.Abdul Hafiz and Abdur Rob Khan (eds.) Nation Building in Bangladesh, op.cit.,p.147.

¹⁶. For details see Md. Gyasuddin Molla, Politics of Food Aid: Case of Bangladesh, (Dhaka: Academic Publishers,1990), pp.15-19; Rehman Sobhan, The Crisis of External Dependence: The Political Economy of Foreign Aid to Bangladesh, (Dhaka:UPL,1982);Rehman Sobhan (ed.), From Aid Dependence to Self-Reliance: Development Options for Bangladesh, (Dhaka: BIDS & UPL, 1990).

study stated that in some respects especially regarding the leniency of its terms, the Saudi economic assistance to Bangladesh can be looked upon as non-political. Although the Saudi aid apparently was not tied to any purchases from that country, it was somewhat tied to the ideology of Islam and its propagation especially in the perspective of current global politics.¹⁷ Saudi assistance also goes towards the funding of orphanages and *Madrashas*, which are involved in teaching and propagating Islamic values as opposed to secular values. Syed Anwar Husain in his paper "Bangladesh and Islamic countries, 1972-1983" emphasized that:

.... the donor countries influence[d] internal affairs of receiving countries [like Bangladesh]...in more than one sense. Firstly, the beginning of fundamentalism in politics synchronizes with the beginning of the flow of aid. All Islamic oriented parties, which had been declared illegal immediately after independence, began to function since 1975. It has already been shown that an obscure figure like Hafiz-zi-Huzur secured third position in the presidential election of 1981. However, insignificant number of votes that Hafiz-zi- H u z u r secured, it remains a point to ponder that he did create a good deal of commotion in the unsteady politics of Bangladesh. Secondly, there has been a phenomenal growth of institutional Islam evidently backed by a huge injection of petro-dollars. Thirdly, there has been a growing tendency to display Arabic bill-boards at public places and posting of quotations from scriptures on office walls and beautification of some leading mosques in city centers. These steps are taken evidently to please the visiting Arab dignitaries. Fourthly, the interest shown by the Ershad regime to introduce Islamic education is significant. Never before has there been an attempt-

¹⁷. Meghna Guhathakurata, "The Pattern of Saudi Aid to Bangladesh", in B.K. Jahangir (ed.), Perspective in Social Science, (Dhaka: Center for Advanced Research in Social Science, 1988), p.65. Ideological factors have affected Saudi Arabia's security and foreign policies and hence its aid policies - to a great extent. It may be the nature of Saudi society and leadership to be based on Islam and Islamic law is rigorously applied in the country. In addition, Islam has been the principal legitimizing force for the Saudi leadership, both internally and in the Arab and Islamic world.

of such seriousness to introduce Islamic education in Bangladesh. And above all, the present [Ershad] regime has declared to give Islam its rightful place in the future constitutions of the country.¹⁸

It will not be an exaggeration to say that economic situation had compelled Mujib government to turn to the West and express his government's eagerness to accept American or any donor aid. It is widely discussed that Sheikh Mujib sacked his pro-Indian, pro-Soviet Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmed in order to show (or appease the USA) his neutrality on aid or assistance questions. On the other hand, he also replaced Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, a pro Indian-USSR leader and placed Dr. Kamal Hossain who was believed to have a western connection. This reshuffle (and sacked or dropping of) was a preemptive measure to create a favourable atmosphere to reestablish and get more aid from the USA and other western countries as well as Muslim countries.¹⁹

Influence of Muslim Countries on the Domestic Political Trends of Bangladesh

An expert on the Middle East affairs has observed that the Arab economic aid has also brought pressure on the Bangladesh government to cling to Islamic values. Notably all the regimes after the Awami League regime embraced both Western and Islamic values. A suspicion also prevails in some quarters that Bangladesh is under some subtle pressure from Saudi Arabia to become an

¹⁸. Syed Anwar Husain, "Bangladesh and Islamic Countries, 1972-1983," op.cit., pp.271-272.

¹⁹. Bichitra, 20 April, 1973, 8 November, 1974 issues; Virendra Narain, op.cit.p.123; Ishtiaq Hossain, "Bangladesh-United States Relations : The First Decade," in Emajuddin Ahmed (ed.), Foreign Policy of Bangladesh, op.cit., p.74.

Islamic Republic and eventually adopt *Sharia* Law as Pakistan did.²⁰

Fragility of Bangladesh economy is an impediment to the agility of its foreign policy. Donors often exert a heavy pressure on the rulers to adjust domestic politics of Bangladesh and due to weak economic base they succumbed. For example when Abu Sayeed Chowdhury (Mujib's personal envoy to Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia) met with King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, the King himself asked about secularism in Bangladesh Constitution, its nature and scope. Mr. Chowdhury clarified that it did not mean irreligiousness, it merely meant that all persons professing different faiths would be treated with equality in the state affairs, i.e. they could profess and practise their own religion and could maintain their own religious institutions and would have equal opportunity in life. The King replied that he would be happy if the word 'secularism' was omitted from the constitution and if it was declared as an Islamic Republic of Bangladesh. Ultimately his government did not recognize secular Bangladesh. But the then Saudi Monarch King Khalid on hearing the news of Mujib's assassination and Major Dalim's declaration²¹ of an Islamic Republic, rushed in with the long-denied recognition.

²⁰. Akmal Hussain, "Bangladesh and the Muslim World", in Emajuddin Ahamed, (ed.), Foreign Policy of Bangladesh, op.cit., p.91 ; See also Shaheen F. Dil, "The Myth of Islamic Resurgence in South Asia", Current History, April 1980, p. 185.

²¹. Though initially Major Dalim (one of the coup makers of August 15, 1975) declared Bangladesh as an Islamic Republic, later it was rejected by the new President Khondoker Mushtaque Ahamed. He retained the country's secular status. For details see Anthony Mascarenhas, op.cit., pp.81-82.

Pakistan also announced its recognition of the succeeding government headed by Khondoker Mushtaq Ahamed. It was the first country to do so, and Mr. Bhutto urged the other Muslim states to follow Pakistan. It also made available an immediate gift of 50,000 tons of rice and 15 million yards of cloth as a goodwill gesture. Then Saudi Arabia also extended its full support to Bangladesh in its efforts to safeguard independence and sovereignty. A considerable amount of loan worth \$ 217 million was given as economic assistance besides the supply of 200,000 tons of urea free of cost.²²

It is also to be mentioned that being influenced by several Arab countries, Mujib government dramatically initiated to leave the Soviet sphere of influence. In March 1974, Prime Minister Mujib ordered Soviet Naval Forces to quit Chittagong Port area, where they were engaged for sweeping and clearing the mines and sunken ships. That were set and destroyed during the liberation war by the liberation forces to create obstacles on Pakistani Naval Force's free movement. China did not provide recognition to Bangladesh for a long time due to USSR naval forces' presence in Bangladesh territory. Moreover, some critics expressed that the Soviet forces in the Bay of Bengal were engaged to observe the movements of their enemy ships. At that time Arab countries might have advised Mujib that any foreign troop presence in the Bangladesh territorial area was harmful for its sovereignty and security. He could not ignore Arab advice. However, Bangladesh did not then get adequate

²².The Bangladesh Observer, 28 October, 1976.

financial assistance from the USSR. On the other hand, at that time the Middle East countries assured Mujib to provide more assistance. So, Mujib ordered USSR naval forces to leave Bangladesh territorial area.²³ It indicates the influence of foreign countries on Mujib's tactical shift for getting more assistance from extra-regional sources.

Professor Nurul Momen has opined that, on several occasions, Bangladesh also succumbed to unusual pattern of external pressures. Both during the Zia and Ershad regimes even small powers have sought to intervene in the domestic affairs of Bangladesh. In 1980, a visiting Minister of Saudi Arabia reportedly expressed his indignation at the sight of female police in the streets of Dhaka. Consequently, the Bangladesh Government immediately ordered the withdrawal of all female police from the streets.²⁴

Muslim Countries' Linkage with Political Parties and Non-governmental Organizations

In Bangladesh domestic politics, there is an allegation that many of the rightist fundamentalist political parties have direct or indirect linkage with some Muslim countries (especially with Saudi Arabia, Libya, Iran, Iraq and other gulf countries) and these countries provided financial assistance for encouraging so-called Islamic revolution or values in Bangladesh.

²³. Tareq Shamsur Rehman, Soviet-Bangladesh Shamparka, 1971-1975, (vernacular), Soviet-Bangladesh Relations, 1971-1975, (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1993), p.74.

²⁴. Nurul Momen, "Some Reflections on the Strengths and Weakness of Bangladesh's Foreign Policy" in M. G. Kabir and Shaukat Hasan (eds.), op.cit., pp. 127-128; Marcus Franda, op.cit., p.300.

Fundamentalism was criticized by the progressive national and international mass media. According to critics, the government's use of religion in politics was due to the influence of some oil rich Muslim countries. These countries encouraged the adoption of Islamic values in the political culture of Bangladesh. Here lies the difference between the objectives of Western donors and the Muslim countries. The Western world desired Bangladesh to pursue the capitalist path of development through the instrument of aid. According to Professor Emajuddin Ahamed:

The current trends of Islam in Bangladesh are not however due to Islamic revivalism or resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism. These are due partly to the role some of the ambitious Muslim states of West Asia and North Africa are playing all over the world including Bangladesh and partly to internal developments in Bangladesh such as the restricted nature of political activities, co-option of the hitherto discarded rightist elements as the support base of the regime and sagging economic activities, with the consequent uneasiness and distress of the people who are driven to Islam for comfort and peace. ²⁵

In the short history of Bangladesh, it faced two major military rules, when the free flow of political activities was restricted. Both Zia and Ershad regimes used the religion of 'Islam' as a political weapon to reach their goals. During the Zia and Ershad regimes the religion-oriented rightist parties expanded their support base and consolidated their own organizations. Sometimes they helped the ruling party in domestic politics to legitimize their organizations and activities, and opposed the secular forces and parties. Discussing the consequences of the

²⁵. Emajuddin Ahamed, " Current Trends of Islam in Bangladesh" in Emajuddin Ahamed (ed.) Society and Politics in Bangladesh, (Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1989), p.147.

ascendancy of rightist religious forces in Bangladesh domestic politics, a scholar wisely indicated:

Where there are free flows of political activities, Islamic ideology generally becomes separated from the mainstream of politics; but where the flow of politics is emaciated and where democratic institutions are weak and subjugated to repression by the conservative regimes, religious activities get mixed up with politics and tend to over-flood the social terrain.²⁶

The *Jamaat-e-Islami* of Bangladesh is a fundamentalist political party, which reportedly has connection with similar parties in other parts of the world, particularly with those in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Malaysia and other Muslim countries.²⁷ In an interview with the Statesman of India, President Ershad accused *Jamaat-e-Islami* of Bangladesh of getting foreign money. He also said that the motive behind his 8th amendment of the constitution was to resist fundamentalist forces like *Jamaat-e-Islami*.²⁸ The *Jamaat-e-Islami* of Bangladesh, a party that opposed the national independence movement and preached Islamic fundamentalism as its ideology, emphasized the establishment of an Islamic polity as the

²⁶. Quoted from Ibid., p.135.

²⁷. For details see, Weekly Bichitra several issues of 27 April, 1984; 13 March, 1987; 11 November, 1988; 26 June, 1987; 13 January, 1984; Weekly Sandip, 11 December, 1988; Weekly Shadesh Khabar, 7 October, 1988 and also see Badruddin Umar, Bangladesher Dharmar Rajnaitik Babsha, (vernacular), The Political Use of Religion in the Bangladesh Politics (Calcutta; Chirayat Prokashani Pvt. Ltd. 1989); A.T. Moimony, The Fifty Year of Jamaat-e-Islamie, (vernacular) (Sunamgonj: K.S. 1992); Weekly Bichitra, 11 October, 1987; 24 January, 1988, Weekly Agami, 29 April, 1988, Holiday, 22 October 1983 and June 3 1988 issues and Syed Anwar Husain, Bangladesh, Dokhin Asia O Bohirviswa, (vernacular) Bangladesh, South Asia and the World, (Dhaka : Agami Prokashani, 1994), p.11.

²⁸. Khoborer Kagoj, (vernacular weekly magazine), Vol. 30, 27 July, 1989.

only means of eradicating corruption and exploitation, ensuring welfare of the impoverished masses, and safeguarding the independence and sovereignty of the country. Other than *Jamaat-e-Islami*, Colonel (Rtd.) Faruk Rahman and Colonel (Rtd.) Abdur Rashid of the Freedom Party had a strong link with the two most important men of Libya, one was Major Salim Ebrahim (head of the military intelligence of Benzhazi) and other was Major Suleiman (a member of Ghadafi's Revolutionary Command Council). They would unofficially give them all necessary assistance.²⁹

Besides this, Mawlana M.A. Mannan, the leader of *Jamiatue-Mudderassin*, (an organization of *Madrasha* teachers) also keeps link with other Muslim countries.³⁰ He is widely criticized by the press of Bangladesh for his antiliberation activities. He achieved support from the *Madrasha* teachers for bargaining with the government on their demands. He is reportedly known for his wide connection with Muslim countries especially Iraq and other Gulf countries. He played a noteworthy role to build closer relationship with Bangladesh and these countries. These countries also had an influence over him.³¹

²⁹. Weekly Bichitra, 10 June, 1987; Anthony Mascarenhas, op.cit., p. 140.

³⁰. Because of Mawlana Mannan's wide connection with the Muslim countries, he was described as the shadow foreign Minister of Ershad Government. See Weekly Bichitra, 1 July, 1988. Later former Religious Minister Mawlana Mannan, was reportedly accused of the misuse of foreign donation/grant in 1985, when he was in power. For details see, Ajker Kagoj, (a vernacular daily), 25 May, 1994; 9 June, 1994 issue.

³¹. During the President Satter and President Ershad regimes, he was made minister of Bangladesh Government with the portfolio of

Mawlana Muhammad Ullah (popularly named *Hafiz-zi-Huzur*), a spiritual religious leader and former *Pesh-Imam* (Chief Imam) of Lalbag Shahi Mosque (at Dhaka) became a candidate and secured 3rd position in 1981 Presidential election. *The Bangladesh Khilafat Andolon*, founded by *Hafiz-zi-Huzur* after the 1981 presidential elections, was a new party. Its programmes included introduction of the principles of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, reorientation of the judicial systems in the light of Islam, reformation of education system in the light of Qur'an and *Sunnah*, recognition of *Jakat* and *Wakf* etc. His religion-based organization was not widely known all over the country. His performance during the presidential election created much confusion in the political arena. It is reportedly said that he had close relations with Iran and his organization got financial support from Iran. This accusation was not refuted either by the *Khilafat Andolon* or by the Irani government.

Although it was hard to prove such accusations that the *Jamate-e-Islami* and other rightist religion-based parties and their leaders (above mentioned) have international connections for fund, *Jamate-e-Islami* as well as other rightist parties and their leadership failed to disprove the accusations either.

Different Islamic oriented NGOs, e.g. *Rabaat-al-Alame Islam*, IIRO,³² *Masjid Mission*, *Islam Mission*, *Ibne-Sina Trust*, KJRC³³ and

Education and Religious Affairs Ministry respectively. Later he was given Relief and Rehabilitation Ministry for his wide connection or linkage with Muslim world. During the devastating floods he arranged a special meeting with Muslim countries' envoys, ambassadors and charge d'affaires for getting aid to face the critical situation. For his pro-Iraq identity Bangladesh faced problems in its relations with Iran.

³². Bangladesh also received generous disaster assistance from the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO) and the world Muslim League (*Rabeta Alam-Al-Islami*). These organisations are also helping Rohingya refugees. The IIRO is also extending donations to

some charitable organizations also depended on the assistance from Middle East countries³⁴. These organizations are found engaged in spreading fundamentalist ideas in the remote areas of Bangladesh. They also help in establishing mosques, *madrashas*, orphanages in different parts of the country and assist the less fortunates living in the rural areas. These activities of the Islam-oriented organizations have two major objectives: (a) religious and (b) political. The political motive is camouflaged by religious motive and propaganda.

The oil-rich Muslim countries especially Saudi Arabia from the beginning of the decade of 70's with the means of petro-dollar intervened in the internal politics of the poor Muslim countries directly or indirectly. Saudi Arabia often assisted these countries graciously and became more or less a catalyst in shaping domestic and foreign policies. Since Bangladesh is dependent on the assistance from Saudi Arabia, the fundamentalist politics of Bangladesh, to a greater extent, a by-product of the same.

different charitable and Islamic Organisations by helping the distressed and helpless people in Bangladesh since 1986. The Bangladesh Times, 22 October, 1994.

³³. The various Kuwaiti charitable and philanthropic organizations merged their efforts by forming Kuwait Joint Relief Committee(KJRC), a Kuwaiti NGO, in order to enhance the socio-economic condition of the people of Bangladesh. It has undertaken a number of welfare oriented projects since its inception which includes setting up of self supporting clustered villages in different parts of Bangladesh.

³⁴. Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, U.A.E, Libya and Iran mostly had built up a network in the disguise of preaching Islam.

During Ershad regime, Saudi Arabia allotted more aid so that the regime did not face a 1974 type economic crisis. And with the flow of food aid, in time, two near famine situations were averted during Ershad rule. Thus, Islam was used as a vital issue in both the domestic and foreign affairs of the country and subsequently it became one of the most powerful factors in the image building activities of Bangladesh.

By using Islam, Ershad not only saved his regime from the uninterrupted actions of the opposition parties, but also used external events to wash the public eye and to enhance his role. For example, the Government of Ershad observed eight hours suspension of all activities of government and public institutions (of Bangladesh) responding to the OIC call for Israeli desecration of sacred Muslim shrines in Jerusalem. But different Muslim countries did not observe more than five to ten minutes' suspension of normal activities for the same purpose.³⁵ This suggests that Bangladesh over responded to a call from the Muslim world. Not only that during the *Babri Masjid* (mosque) crisis in November 1990 in India, the Ershad government imposed curfew and helped to create communal disharmony or riot in different parts of the country to foil strong opposition movement against him.³⁶

However, both Islamization and secularization are negative in the context of Bangladesh politics and society. Since both are

³⁵. Lawrence Ziring, Bangladesh: From Mujib to Ershad: An Interpretive Study, (Dhaka: U.P.L, 1992). p.180.

³⁶. Roger East (ed.), Keesing's Records of World Events 1990, op.cit., p.37856.

extremists as far as the majority people are concerned, they cannot accommodate majority sentiments. So, secularization was negatively accepted in the early seventies, on charges of Indian machination in domestic politics. Similarly, fundamentalism also negatively accepted as opportunities for interference by extra-regional sources.³⁷ The Ershad regime of Bangladesh had shown increasing devotion to Islam by taking a series of initiatives over the years.

Professor K. M. Mohsin ³⁸ attributing to probable factors responsible for successive Bangladesh governments' concerning to Islam said, " Firstly, the regimes' awareness to the rise of Islamic sentiments. Secondly, the implementation of the regimes' economic programme with aid from Muslim countries." Naturally, political leaders of the Awami league, BNP and the Jatiyo Party frequently visited the countries of the Muslim World to secure much needed foreign assistance. The domestic and external politics were determined by the nature of Bangladesh society that initiated the spirit of Bangladesh to be an active member of Islamic bloc with the expectation of getting aid and potential market for surplus manpower externally; internally the government wilfully identified itself as pro-Islamic to win over the majority Muslim electorate.³⁹

³⁷. Shaukat Hassan, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Introductory Remarks," in M.G. Golam Kabir and Shaukat Hasan (eds.) op.cit., p.6.

³⁸. K.M. Mohsin, "Trends of Islam in Bangladesh," in S. R. Chakravarty and Virendra Narain (eds.) Bangladesh: History and Culture, vol.1, (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1986), pp.37-38.

³⁹. Ahmed Shafiqul Huque and Muhammad Yeahia Akhter, "The Ubiquity of Islam: Religion and Society in Bangladesh," Pacific

In conclusion, it is worth reiterating that Bangladesh's Islamic heritage and culture have an important role to shape its relation with the Muslim countries. During the Mujib regime, Bangladesh first established relationship with the Muslim countries, which was indeed confined in the efforts to secure recognition and the establishment of diplomatic missions. To develop relations with those countries, the Awami League government readjusted its domestic politics and foreign policy outlook. Due to this regime's pragmatic policy, Bangladesh was able to secure recognition from most of the countries of the Muslim world by 1974 and Mujib himself joined the second OIC summit held in Pakistan. Though the Mujib regime introduced 'Secularism' and 'Socialism' in the first constitution of Bangladesh, in fact the nature of secularism and socialism in Mujib era were not the true implementation of these concepts in classical outlook. The concepts were in fact, self created by the Mujib government as well as distorted.

The Zia regime abolished secularism from the constitution and successive Ershad regime introduced 'Islam' as a state religion. Both the regimes used 'Islam' as a political weapon to reach their desired goal and mobilizing the rightist support in their favour. It was a fact that all the governments of Bangladesh have shown increasing devotion to Islam by taking a series of initiatives over the years. Moreover, the rightist political parties and groups also got a chance to organize themselves. Sometimes they helped the

Affairs, Vol. 60, No.2, Summer 1987, p. 207.

ruling conservative governments of Zia and Ershad to squeeze pro-Indian elements and their influence in the domestic politics.

From Mujib to Ershad all the regimes considered Muslim world as an area of getting foreign aid. For this reason every regime wanted to establish a cordial relationship with those countries. Over the years aid from the Muslim countries increased substantially. Despite the fact that those countries' aid policy was comparatively and apparently flexible, it was not out of political and cultural bondage. The Bangladesh government sometimes faced their instructions regarding its domestic politics. Moreover, it was widely reported that the oil rich gulf countries patronized the rightist political parties and N.G.O's of Bangladesh. For getting more economic assistance from the Muslim countries, Bangladesh has changed her political and ideological position and gradually been Islamized. As a consequence of shifting policy, rightist and religious forces got opportunity to revive themselves. By receiving Muslim countries' aid, Bangladesh felt moral obligation about Islamization of its polity. Sometimes it overreacted regarding the issues of the Muslim countries. Thus, the succeeding governments (Mujib, Zia and Ershad) of Bangladesh had emphasized Islamic values to give more Islamic tone in their domestic and external policies to keep Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim countries strong and warm.

CHAPTER VI

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO BANGLADESH BY THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES

Post-independent Economic Situation of Bangladesh

Bangladesh inherited a wrecked economy¹ from Pakistan, which was politically dominated and economically exploited for 24 years (1947-71) by the West Pakistani ruling elite.² It was on the economic front that the Mujib Government found grave difficulties. It (Bangladesh) had started life with an economy disrupted by war and dislocated by the exodus of non-local owners and managers of industries leaving no foreign exchange in the coffers. The entire foreign exchange reserves had been held by erstwhile [Pakistan] Central Government and with no food stocks, the spectre of famine had loomed large.³ According to Rounaq Jahan:

The structure of the economy was primitive with large scale economy sector contributing a merely 6% of the GNP. Nearly half of the population had a deficiency in calorie intake, and the literacy rate was as low as 17%. While the economy was underdeveloped to begin with, the destruction incurred in 1971 was extensive. A U.N. report estimated the cost of reconstruction in Bangladesh at \$ 938 million. Since liberation the Awami League regime has been faced with three-fold problem of providing immediate relief to the returning refugees, reconstructing the economic infrastructure, back to 1969-70 level, and planning for a socialist economy in Bangladesh.⁴

¹. For details see, A.K. Monaw-War Uddin Ahmed, "External Economic Relations of Bangladesh: An Overview" in Muzaffer Ahmad and Abul Kalam (eds.), Bangladesh Foreign Relations: Changes and Directions, (Dhaka : UPL, 1989), pp. 113-128.

². Kamaluddin Ahmed, "Economic Situation: Some Trends" in S.R. Chakravarty & Virendra Narain (eds.) Bangladesh: Domestic Politics, Vol.II, (New Delhi: South Asian Pub. 1986), pp. 122-137.

³. Kamal Hossain, " Political Development in Bangladesh: Promise and Reality" in K. Ishwaran (ed.) Contribution to Asian Studies, Vol. 14 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), p.112.

⁴. Raunag Jahan, "Bangladesh in 1972 : Nation Building in a New State," in Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues, (Dhaka:

Considering the situation, Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib in his first press conference⁵ appealed to all countries and international humanitarian organizations for assistance. It was also emphasized that Bangladesh would accept aid from any sources but without any political tag or binding.

The drought of 1972, the floods of 1973 and 1974, and above all the global inflation were some of the natural and external determining factors of Bangladesh economy that threw it before a commodity shortage and spiralling inflation.⁶ At that time it was impossible for the Mujib government to face this situation without external economic and technological help. At such a critical juncture the Mujib administration appealed to the world community to assist in their efforts to rebuild the economy. We can mention here that due to Indo-Soviet direct help to the liberation war of Bangladesh, the initial years of the Mujib government had cordial relationship with India, the Soviet Union and East European Socialist countries. These countries were the major sources of

UPL, 1980), p. 73.

⁵. Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib appealed to all States, to the freedom loving people of the world and to international humanitarian organizations to generously come to the assistance of Bangladesh in all spheres including supply of essential commodities which were urgently required. For the reconstruction of the war-torn economy, the Prime Minister said, "we urgently need assistance from abroad to supplement our own resources. He also said the relief and rehabilitation of millions of uprooted people will be taken up on an emergency basis. Morning News, 15 January, 1972.

⁶. At that time Bangladesh was placed by UN on the top of the list of the countries most severely affected (MSA) by worldwide inflation. Nurul Islam, Development Planning in Bangladesh: A Study of Political Economy, (Dhaka: UPL, 1977), p.146.

foreign assistance. On the other hand, the USA and its allies sent relief materials and other assistance through UN agencies also. Concerning these situations Shaukat Hassan remarked that:

After independence the [Awami] League Government found itself beholden to Mrs. Gandhi's government for aid and advice. To balance India off, but without committing a volte-face in its basic secular, socialistic, non-aligned orientation, Mujib tried to enlist Soviet assistance. But the Soviet leaders demurred. The then Foreign Secretary, S. A. Karim recalls: We realized pretty early that the Soviet Union was not going to give us much economic assistance. The Soviet leaders made it quite clear to us in Moscow during our very first visit there that they were not in a position to help us substantially.⁷

A significant quantum of the assistance in the initial phase of reconstruction came from India, which donated US \$ 142.7 million in cash and commodities up to May 1972, followed by the United States with US \$ 119 million. By March 1973, the United States became the largest donor with US \$ 318 million as compared to US \$ 262 million from India and US \$ 136 million from the Soviet Union.⁸ To receive more aid from the international sources, the then Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Abdus Samad Azad declared, "Bangladesh had no alliance with any superpower, but it had accepted the assistance of the Soviet Union and this cooperation would not affect the non-

7. The USSR authority said that when the Communist Party came to power in 1917, the country was totally devastated and nobody came to help them. So, Bangladesh should follow their (USSR) example to build its own economy as well as infrastructure. Shaukat Hassan, India- Bangladesh Political Relations During the Awami League Government, 1972-75, op. cit., pp. 164-165.

⁸. Ibid., p.165. According to United States Agency for International Development study, India by mid-1974 was the second largest aid giver to Bangladesh after the United States, with the Soviet Union being only the fifth among the major donors. The Indian commitment was 18% of total foreign assistance to Bangladesh. Denis Wright, op.cit., p.164.

aligned policy of Bangladesh." He also stated that his country would welcome unconditional assistance from other countries.⁹ The inflow of aid increased because within a year of its independence Bangladesh had been recognized by 95 countries and had become a member of several international bodies like-WHO, World Bank, IMF, ILO, UNESCO etc.¹⁰

Sympathy for the people of Bangladesh blossomed all over the world after the liberation war. And the world community was also very much aware of the socio-economic conditions of Bangladesh. They provided a total of about US\$ 1373 million as loans and grants up to December 31, 1973. In the total aid package, Bangladesh had received food aid worth US\$ 173 million and multilateral assistance worth US\$ 350 million through the United Nations Relief Operations in Bangladesh (UNROB) and other international agencies during the same period. In addition to that, friendly countries disbursed a total of US\$ 850 million as grants and credits during this period.¹¹ This huge aid in fact saved the fragile economy of Bangladesh in the initial two years period of its independence. But with the closing down of the UNROB¹² on December 31, 1973, Bangladesh

⁹. Pakistan Horizon, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1972., pp. 78-79.

¹⁰. By 31 August 1975 Bangladesh also got the membership in UN, Commonwealth, OIC and 14 other international organizations and recognition from 124 countries. The Bangladesh Observer, 15 August, 1995; see also Nurul Momen, op.cit., p.184.

¹¹. The United States provided highest assistance among the donor countries. The Bangladesh Observer, 26 March, 1974.

¹². During the war, the United Nations Relief Operation in Dhaka (UNROD) had been setup to conduct food and emergency relief operations, which closed down on 31 March, 1973. Later UNROD was

economy faced acute crisis for several reasons. First, the global inflation in 1972 affected Bangladesh economy largely. Secondly, the newly political appointed officials in the nationalized industries had hardly any managerial skills. Consequently, production in most of the industries fell to 9% of the total capacity¹³. Thirdly, the illegal trade with India smuggled out about 15% of Bangladesh total production of jute (which had contributed 85% of Bangladesh's total foreign exchange prior to 1971) and rice.¹⁴

The short-lived brightness of Bangladesh economy, therefore, soon fell in the grip of bleakness and brought the country at the beginning of 1974 to the brink of an economic disaster. Increasing paper money circulation by the government worsened the situation when the spiralling inflation soared up to more than 300% in the prices of consumer goods between 1969 and 1973¹⁵. After the winding up of UNROB operations, there was little inflow of foreign aid,

succeeded by a modified organization, UNROB. It was the largest operation of its kind ever conducted under United Nations auspices, ended on 31st December, 1973. Yearbook of the United Nations 1973, Vol. 27, (New York : Office of the Public Information United Nations), p. 149.

¹³. Banqlar Bani (Dhaka), 13 November, 1974.

¹⁴. Talukder Maniruzzaman, The Bangladesh Revolution and Its Aftermath, (Dhaka: UPL, second edition, 1988), p.161.

¹⁵. By the end of 1974 consumer prices were about four times what they had been in 1969-70. Just Faaland & J.R. Parkinson, Bangladesh : The Test Case for Development, (Bangladesh : UPL, 1976), p. 16.

excepting that was in the pipeline¹⁶. There was also massive shortfall in projected government revenue. Moreover, Bangladesh had a narrow export base. Export earnings of Bangladesh could not finance the country's total import payments. So, in June 1974, the then Finance Minister, Tajuddin Ahmed admitted that the implementation of the development plan of 1973-1974 would be impossible and that the economy of the country had almost broken down.¹⁷ In this regard, Professor Talukder Maniruzzaman correctly analyzed:

While the economy of Bangladesh was on the point of collapse, the situation was aggravated by "the worst floods in our [Bangladesh] history" in July and August 1974, which, according to an estimate of the Planning Commission, caused damage to more than 1 million tons of food grains and 10 to 15 million dollars worth of Jute exports. During the floods, prices of essential goods began to rise rapidly and by September had risen (from 1969-70) by 700-800 per cent. According to official figures, 27,500 persons had died of starvation by November 22, 1974. Unofficial sources estimated the number of deaths at 100,000 by the end of October. International emergency assistance of about \$ 400 million (in cash and kind) and \$145 million in loans during the period August-November 1974 gave the Bangladesh economy a temporary lease of life for the immediate future.¹⁸

The Awami League government due to the deteriorating economic situation, absolutely depended on foreign assistance to face the crisis. Although Bangladesh developed close friendly relations with socialist countries and India at the initial stage of its

¹⁶. The Mujib government also failed to set up an alternative frame-work for flow of foreign assistance.

¹⁷. Holiday (Dhaka), 9 June, 1974; see also Planning Commission (GOB), 1974, Economic Development in 1973-74 and Annual Plan for 1974-75, pp. 1-9.

¹⁸. Talukder Maniruzzaman, op.cit., p.162.

independence, the aid received from these sources was insufficient to meet the growing need of the new nation. "In October 1974, after more than two years of determined resistance,¹⁹ Bangladesh crumbled before 'aid donor' pressure and agreed to the formation of a multinational aid consortium."²⁰ Previously, Bangladesh had only accepted aid on a negotiated bilateral basis, on state to state terms. So, the unarmed determination of resistance failed.

Muslim Countries' Aid To Bangladesh

Foreign aid generally means transfer of resources from rich countries to the poor ones to help the latter attain socio-economic development. It is a major "instrument" or economic reward or technique, which involves the transfer of economic goods or services from donor to the recipient. These might be any resource, or commodity, money, service, or technical advice. For the newly independent and economically backward countries like Bangladesh, the needs for development capital (money and goods) and technological skills were acute to build a modern economy.

¹⁹. "The resistance was partly because of her apprehension that this would enable the donors to combine to exert pressure on and influence the pattern of her economic policies and indirectly on her political choices, both internally and externally." Nurul Islam, op.cit., pp.147-148.

²⁰. A 24-nation Aid Bangladesh Club was formed and was chaired by the World Bank. Bangladesh was compelled to devalue its currency (50%), denationalization of major financial institutions and disinvestment of state-owned industries, liberalization of import sector, and creating favourable atmosphere for private sector and foreign investment due to World Bank affiliation. Lawrence Lifschultz, Bangladesh: The Un-finished Revolution, (London; Zed press, 1979), pp. 140-141.

From December 16, 1971 to June 30, 1990, Bangladesh received commitments from different donors valued at US \$ 26,581.7 million of which 17% was accounted for commodity aid and 54% for project aid. In the total aid package, an amount of US \$ 20,727.5 million was disbursed up to June 30, 1990 of which 48.7% was grant and 51.3% was loan.²¹ The yearly level of external assistance to Bangladesh increased quite substantially, over the years from an annual figure of US.\$ 270.800 million in 1971-72 to US. \$ 1089.559 million in 1989-90. Besides this, the composition of aid also changed drastically over the years. Food aid, as a proportion of total aid flows to Bangladesh decreased, whereas the corresponding share for project aid showed a significant upward trend.²²

To date Bangladesh received foreign aid from five sources: (i) The DACs which are also identified as those countries, which are members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These countries are all drawn from North America, Western Europe, Japan and Australia; (ii) The International Multilateral Agencies. These agencies are all largely controlled by the DAC. This category includes UN system, UNICEF, EEC, IFAD, ADB, IDA, IDB, OPEC, IFC, Ford Foundation etc.; (iii) The third category included the member countries of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC); In practice this category included some Muslim countries

²¹. Flow of External Resources into Bangladesh, (Dhaka: ERD, Ministry of Finance, GOB, August 18, 1991), p.1. and see also appendix no. VI.

²². Ibid, pp.9,11,12,13,147.

e.g. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Iran, Iraq and Libya; (iv) The fourth category represented Centrally Planned Countries (former Socialist bloc): former USSR, China, GDR, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Poland etc.; (v) The fifth category of 'Other Countries' included a few third World countries who provided small amounts of aid to Bangladesh, e.g. India, Pakistan, Turkey etc. In all, ten Muslim Countries and Organizations provided aid to Bangladesh. They are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Turkey, Pakistan, OPEC Fund and Islamic Development Bank (IDB).²³

From 16 December 1971 to 30 June 1990, Bangladesh received a total of US\$ 20,727.551 million aid from above-mentioned sources. The share of (i) OECD's DAC countries were 52.48% (Disbursed US\$ 10,878.919 million). (ii) The International/ Multilateral Agencies (excluding OPEC and IDB were 34.46% (disbursed US\$ 7,143.442 million). (iii) The Muslim Countries'/Organizations' sources (OPEC member countries including Pakistan, Turkey, IDB and OPEC fund) were 6.60% (disbursement US\$ 1367.869 million). (iv) The Centrally Planned Countries' sources were 3.33% (disbursed US\$ 689.386 million) and (v) the 'Other Countries' sources were 3.13% (disbursed US\$ 648.135 million).²⁴

²³. In this discussion we included all the categories of Muslim Countries' aid giving sources named as Muslim Countries'/Organizations' Aid sources.

²⁴. See also the table-I.

Flow of External Resources into Bangladesh
(From December 16, 1971 to June 30, 1990)

Category of the donor	Disbursement (In million US\$)	% of Total disbursement
DAC Countries (of the OECD)	10,878.719	52.48
International/Multilateral Agencies (excluding OPEC fund and IDB)	7,143.442	34.46
Muslim Countries/Organizations (Included OPEC fund, IDB, Turkey and Pakistan)	1,367.869	6.60
Centrally Planned Countries (Former Socialist countries)	689.386	3.33
Other Countries (excluding Pakistan and Turkey)	648.135	3.13
Total:	20,727.551	100%

Source: The table has been prepared from data presented in the Flow of External Resources into Bangladesh (As of June 30, 1990.)

Bangladesh received most of the aid from Japan, USA, Canada, F.R.Germany, UK, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Sweden and major multi-national agencies including, IDA, ADB, UN system and EEC. Among the 15 major donor sources, the IDA was on the top of the list, followed by Japan, USA and the OPEC member country-Saudi Arabia was placed in 10th position.²⁵ About 6.60% of total aid was provided by 10 Muslim countries and Organizations.

From December 16, 1971 to 30 June 1990, the above mentioned 10 Muslim Countries/Organizations committed US\$ 1675.229 million aid to Bangladesh and the disbursement was US\$ 1367.869 million. The disbursement percentage to the total commitment was 98.24%. During the Mujib period the total aid commitment amounted to US\$ 173.8 million and disbursement was US\$ 91.6 million. During Zia regime the total commitment was US \$ 646.13 million and disbursement

²⁵. See the Appendix No. VII.

amounted to US\$ 505.913 million. The aid receiving performance (both commitment and disbursement) of Ershad period was the highest as compared to previous two regimes. The total commitment during this regime was US\$ 855.369 million and disbursement was US\$ 770.356 million. The overall flow of Muslim Countries'/Organizations' aid disbursement to Bangladesh increased gradually. During the study period, the Mujib regime received 6.70%, Zia regime received 36.98% and Ershad regime received 56.32% of total aid disbursement respectively from Muslim Countries/Organizations²⁶.

Analysis of Received Aid from Different Sources

In the aid front, Muslim countries came to the scene by the end of 1973 as a potential donor. Over the past decades, the Oil rich Muslim countries have gradually emerged as an important source of external assistance for Bangladesh. Both bilateral and multilateral aid comprises the total flow of resources from these countries. External assistance from these countries comprises of food aid, commodity aid and project aid. The relative share of these different types of aid and loans from these countries varies as compared to the aid composition of Bangladesh. From December 16, 1971 to June 30, 1990, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Pakistan and Turkey, among the Muslim countries' disbursed 100% of their

²⁶. It is also mentionable that in terms of the volume of the largest share of aid went to the Ershad period. This may be due to the fact that this regime was in power for the greatest length of period in the period under consideration. See also the Appendix No. VIII for the flow of Muslim countries aid during the Mujib, Zia, Ershad period, and Appendix IX for the source-wise & category-wise aid disbursement respectively to Bangladesh and their positions as donors.

committed food aid. Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Pakistan also extended 100% of their committed commodity aid at the same time. The IDB and the OPEC fund disbursed the same aid, 89.22% and 98.42% respectively²⁷. In the project aid category 100% commitment were fulfilled by Iran, Iraq, UAE and Turkey. During the same period Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, IDB and OPEC Fund extended project aid to the tune of 81.24%, 73.53%, 64.67% and 69.88% of their commitment respectively.²⁸ Most of the commodity aid was funded to oil price support, import of commodity (like cement, clinker, rock phosphate and urea); to cash foreign exchange and to support balance of payment. According to Rehman Sobhan and Tajul Islam :

... there are three distinctly differentiable approaches to tying of foreign aid to Bangladesh. Most major bilateral donors offer predominantly tied aid. These include USA, UK, Netherlands and the Socialist countries. Exceptions to this practice amongst bilateral donors include Japan, Sweden, and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia and indeed other Arab aid donors such as Kuwait and the UAE give 100% of their aid in an untied form. Of the other bilateral donors some offer a slightly larger component as untied aid. These include Australia (20%), FRG (15%) and some unspecified D.A.C countries."²⁹

The same authors in another article also observed, at least four broad categories of loans were received by Bangladesh in terms of hardness and softness. Soft loan can be defined as the loans having a grant element of 70% or above, the loans of Belgium, Bulgaria, EEC, Finland, Iran, Switzerland, ADB, IDA and IFAD can be

²⁷. But IDB's US\$ 17.586 million & OPEC's US\$ 0.964 million commodity aid were in pipeline on July 01, 1990. Flow of External Resources into Bangladesh, 1990, op.cit., pp. 16-20.

²⁸. Pakistan's commitment of US\$ 50.000 million project aid was in pipeline on July 01, 1990. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

²⁹. Rehman Sobhan and Tajul Islam, "The Costs of Aid : An Analysis of Price Discrimination in Tied and Untied Imports," in Rehman Sobhan (ed.) From Aid Dependence to Self-Reliance, op.cit., pp. 118-119.

classified in this group. A grant element in between 40% and 70%, can be categorised as moderate loan and can be put loans from the France Treasury, Japan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Turkey, UAE, IDB, and OPEC. Loans from Czechoslovakia, India, Iraq, Poland, Saudi Arabia, USSR and Yugoslavia, having a grant element of less than 40%, have been termed as hard loans. The general attributes of hard loans involve high rates of interest and very short grace and repayment periods. Most of the suppliers credit received from UK Singapore, Netherlands and Pakistan, and loans from France Banks fall into the category of "very hard" loans. It is also noteworthy that hard loans constituting 12.88% of Bangladesh's total loan portfolio, are mostly supplied by the CPE(52.46%) and OPEC countries (22.9%).³⁰

Sector-wise Distribution of Muslim Countries'/Organizations' Aid to Bangladesh:

After 1974 some OPEC countries such as Iraq and the UAE financed oil purchases through commodity loans. Iraq's initial commitment of aid to Bangladesh in 1974 was largely influenced by Bangladesh's strong non-aligned and anti-imperialist position in international forums. Kuwait and UAE aid to Bangladesh emanated from the cordial relations developed between the respective heads

³⁰. Idem, "Debt Burden and the Terms of External Borrowing," in *Ibid.*, pp.98-101. On the other hand, repayment conditions of loans available often are found to vary. Loans received from IDA, IFAD, and EEC have a repayment period of 40 years each on an average. This seems to be the longest repayment period offered to Bangladesh since its independence. Loans from the USA, (29.5 yrs.), UAE (25.58 yrs.), Japan (20 Yrs.), France (20 yrs.) etc. are also considerably longer repayment periods. However, the medium range loans, ranging from 8 to 12 years, dominate the loan portfolio of Bangladesh. The grace period for repayment has been found to have a close direct relation with the repayment period. The grace period is usually longer in the case of loans having longer repayment period. *Ibid.*, p.92.

of those countries (during the 2nd OIC summit). Kuwait provided project aid for Power Supply for Irrigation, Monu River Project, East-West Inter-Connector, Rural Electrification, Deep Tube well and Ashuganj Thermal Power Project; UAE, funded projects were Machines Tools Factory, East-West Electrical Inter-Connector and Chittagong Urea Factory. Of the other OPEC countries Libya and Iran made a negligible contribution (US\$ 1,000 million) and US\$ 12.5 million respectively which they committed for the Ashuganj Fertilizer Factory.³¹

After the abrupt change of Bangladesh polity in August 1975, Saudi Arabia recognized the new regime and emerged as a principal donor to Bangladesh. It is also noteworthy that without extending recognition to Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia also made a grant of US\$ 1 million to Bangladesh in 1974-75 as emergency relief of finance the purchase of food grains. During the regimes of Zia and Ershad, Saudi Arabia provided a significant³² amount of aid to Bangladesh. It disbursed fund for Railway Project, Joypurhat Limestone, Chittagong Urea Factory, DIW Project, Oil and Gas Drilling, Teesta Barrage Project and the Rural Electrification Project. According to a critique:

The 'riyal diplomacy' of Saudi Arabia has thus been successful in helping to bolster the economies of less developed countries, and meeting their balance of payments gap, as well as encouraging and strengthening Islamic and anti communist forces in these countries e.g. rebels in Afghanistan, the more conservative forces in the PLO and right wing fundamentalists-

³¹. It is also to be mentioned that Pakistan and Turkey had a negligible aid relation with Bangladesh. They were providing fund for Railway project and Sugar Mill (at Natore) respectively. See also Appendix-X.

³². From 16 December 1971 to 30 June 1990, among the overall aid disbursements by the 15 major donors, Saudi Arabia ranked 10th.

The Jeddah based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is an international financial institution established to foster the economic development and social progress of OIC member countries and Muslim communities individually as well as jointly in accordance with the principles of *Shariah*.³⁴ Bangladesh became a founder member of the IDB during the Mujib period in August 13, 1974. It extended fund for the project of Kurmitola International Airport, East-West Electric Inter-connector, Chittagong Urea Fertilizer, Teesta Barrage and Kurigram Flood Control and Irrigation.

The OPEC members³⁵ also provided assistance jointly by the OPEC Special Fund-now the OPEC Fund for International Development for the social and economic development of the third world countries. It provided fund for the projects of Kurmitola International Airport, Ashugonj Fertilizer Factory, Greater Khulna Power Station, East West Inter-connector, Bhakrabad Gash Project, Ashuganj Thermal

³³. Meghna Guhathakurata, "The Pattern of Saudi Aid to Bangladesh" in B.K. Jahangir (ed), Perspective in Social Science, op.cit., p.60.

³⁴. The functions of the IDB are to participate in equity capital and grant loans for productive projects and enterprises besides providing financial assistance to member countries in other forms for economic and social development. The Bank is also required to establish and operate special funds for specific purposes including a fund for assistance to Muslim communities in non-member countries, in addition to setting up Trust Fund. See Islamic Development Bank, Eighth Annual Report, 1403H (1982-1983), Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

³⁵. Six of OPEC's 13 members are Arab states and they also have largest share of OPEC's oil reserves and financial surpluses. OPEC fund is supposed to serve two important purposes : to help offset the negative impact of oil price increase on OPEC - Third World relations and thus to gain goodwill for OPEC and to preserve and enhance OPEC's prestige among the Third World Countries.

Power Project, Small Industries Project and Technical Education Project etc. This source's aid has low interest rate/service charge around 0.500% - 2.00%.

Although the Muslim Countries/Organizations provided only 6.60% of total aid, these were mostly soft with low interest rates, flexible and without any strings. According to Rehman Sobhan:³⁶

The OPEC countries, who are the latest entrant into the ranks of aid donors to Bangladesh have tended to be unconcerned with the direction or specific of Bangladesh development strategy. Once the decision to give aid had been taken they tended to leave the identification of projects or areas of aid to Bangladesh government. They only focus their attention on the technical and economic feasibility of the project. Since they invariably gave untied aid, Bangladesh retains the maximum flexibility in their investment decisions. Since they have so far indicated no great interest in building commercial links with Bangladesh.

He also commented that, they have been relatively unconcerned with the nature of domestic policy and its impact on the local economic development.³⁷ But in spite of their apparent flexibility in their aid policy it is not out of the political and cultural bondage (though this aid is apparently not tied to any purchases from donor country, it is tied to the ideology of Islam).

In summing up the above discussion we may note the following is that, in the post-independent years the general objectives of Bangladesh foreign policy were mainly to meet the immediate economic survival. From the very beginning it faced economic crisis-firstly due to the inherited economy that it had from Pakistan, secondly the acute resource constraint, thirdly the disruption of economy by the long nine months liberation war,

³⁶. Rehman Sobhan, The Crisis of External Dependence: The Political Economy of Foreign Aid to Bangladesh, op.cit., p.153.

³⁷. Ibid., p.144.

fourthly, the successive calamities just after the emergence, of it (1971-1974), Fifthly, the worldwide inflation and last of all its narrow export-base.

Under these circumstances, the then Mujib government having no other alternative had to depend upon foreign aid. But when it was clear to the Mujib administration that the aid from the allied countries were insufficient to face the economic crisis, it tried to expand sources of aid and appealed for more assistance from both the westerns as well as Muslim countries (although the Muslim countries opposed it in the independence war). However, in the last phases of the Mujib era, Bangladesh started to receive Muslim countries' aid. The flow of aid from these countries gradually increased in the successive regimes of Zia and Ershad and reached to a noted margin, but not impressive in comparison to western donors. With comparison to other sources, the aid of these Muslim countries was more or less untied, soft with low interest rates or service charge.

CHAPTER VII

TRADE AND OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS WITH THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES

From the very beginning of independence, Bangladesh has been facing economic disruption along with its growing resource constraints, poverty, unemployment and balance of payment difficulties. The socio-economic and political development of the country like Bangladesh depends on how best these crucial problems can be redressed. Foreign economic relation (which include trade, export, import and aid relation) is one of the important weapons by which Bangladesh improved its economic situation. Foreign economic relation of a country is a complex exercise. It is determined by a number of domestic and external factors. According to Professor A. K. Monaw-war-Uddin Ahmed, the most important domestic factors appear to be (a) the structure of the economy; (b) the nature of government; (c) the economic policies pursued, and (d) the bureaucracy. Besides this, there are a large number of external factors, which influence the foreign economic relations of a country like Bangladesh. These are, among others, (i) political attitude of the foreign countries; (ii) international economic environment; and (iii) economic policies of partner countries concerned.¹

Bangladesh suffers from a chronic deficit in the balance of payments. It has a narrow export base. Export earnings of

¹.A. K. Monaw-war-Uddin Ahmed, "External Economic Relation of Bangladesh : An Overview" in Muzaffer Ahmad and Abul Kalam (eds.) Bangladesh Foreign Relations: Changes and Direction, op.cit., pp.113-115.

Bangladesh cannot finance the country's total import payments. The export structures or sectors continue to be dominated by a few products, which are beset with multifarious problems related to internal supply and external competition from alternative sources and production. For example, during 1972-73 to 1979-80, six (6) export products namely raw-jute, jute goods, tea, leather, frozen seafood and marine products as well as paper and newsprint accounted for an average of 95 percent of the total export proceeds. Raw jute and jute products alone accounted for nearly 78 percent of the average income during the same period². The first few years of independence were essentially a period of reconstruction, rehabilitation and adjustment. Before independence, roughly one-third of Bangladesh's export trade and a half of the country's import trade was with Pakistan. The problems that emerged in the export sector of Bangladesh as a result of the cessation of inter-wing trade were among others the following (i) recovering lost markets for a commodity like tea; (ii) expanding existing markets for commodities like leather and jute manufactures and (iii) exploration of completely new markets for commodities like matches, paper and paste board.³

The first year of the country's independence (1972-73); prior to the launching of the 'First Annual Plan, ' Bangladesh had hardly

².Sadrel Reza and Hafiz G.A. Siddiqi (eds.), Bangladesh in South Asia and ASEAN : A Study in Economic Co-operation (Dhaka: Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad, first edition, 1984), p.4.

³.Moudud Ahmed, Bangladesh : Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, (Dhaka : UPL, 1983), p.165.

seen any progress in the domestic economic production. In 1972 the rice production was about 15% lower than that of 1969-70, industrial output was lower by 30%, jute industry's output was lower by 28%, textile by 23% and cloth by 3%. Within 15 months of its independence money supply increased by 83%. Consequently, the Annual Plan could neither achieve its economic targets nor its political objectives. Steering of the economic situation by the Awami League government during 1972-1973, was poor and unsatisfactory.⁴ Major targets of the first annual plan were to revive the economy and to achieve the production level that existed in 1969-70, rather than for development. The government failed to achieve these targets. Although there was considerable recovery both in agriculture and industrial sector, in the first year of plan the total output in the industrial sector was 25% lower and in agriculture sector 12-13% lower than in 1969-70. Exports in 1972-73 were estimated to be 30% lower than 1969-70 level. Import of non-food item was 30% less than normal requirements. However, this shortfall in imports, together with a sharp increase in money supply and a decline in production, made the average price level double.⁵

In such an economic perspective, hardly there could be any expectation of a dynamic change towards development; rather the deterioration was inevitable as the black money earners induced

⁴. Ibid., pp. 167-175.

⁵. Rounaq Jahan, "Bangladesh in 1973: Management of Factional Politics," in Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues, (Dhaka : UPL, 1980), p.80.

more complexity to the economic scene of the country. It is reported that during the FY 1973-74, about 1.5 million tons of paddy and 80,000 tons of rice were smuggled out to India.⁶ So, by December 1974, Bangladesh was reeling from a yearly increase of 400 % in commodity prices and 80% increase in its import bill, while the value of jute and tea exports rose only 10% (price compared with 1973 levels). The cost of oil consumed 30% of foreign exchange of Bangladesh as compared with 8% before the price rise in 1974. Though it imported relatively little oil that relatively little had followed world price trends and knocked down the fragile economy of Bangladesh. According to BBS report, the cost of living for the middle class increased at 270% between 1971 and 1974 resulting in widespread economic disorder in the society.⁷ The gap between export and import widened over the years⁸ and Bangladesh had to surrender before the aid club in 1974 for the foreign economic assistance to overcome its economic necessities or crises.

⁶. Banqlar Bani, (a vernacular news paper), 29 September, 1974.

⁷. Denis Wright, op.cit., p.200.

⁸. See the table No. II.

Table-IIExport, Import and Balance of Trade
(Taka in crore)

Year	Export Receipts	Import Payments	Surplus(+) Deficit(-)
1973-74	297.4	732.0	(-) 434.5
1974-75	306.1	1,084.2	(-) 778.1
1975-76	551.7	1,470.3	(-) 918.6
1976-77	625.5	1,399.3	(-) 773.8
1977-78	740.6	1,821.6	(-) 1,081.0
1978-79	928.2	2,334.3	(-) 1,406.1
1979-80	1,124.2	3,676.0	(-) 2,551.8
1980-81	1,159.9	4,139.0	(-) 2,979.1
1981-82	1,255.5	5,155.0	(-) 3,899.5
1982-83	1,616.3	5,488.9	(-) 3,872.7
1983-84	1,990.2	5,843.3	(-) 3,853.1
1984-85	2,415.5	6,877.0	(-) 4,461.5
1985-86	2,431.4	7,065.0	(-) 4,633.6
1986-87	3,263.2	8,026.1	(-) 4,762.9
1987-88	3,808.1	9,329.0	(-) 5,520.9
1988-89	4,096.8	10,848.0	(-) 6,751.2
1989-90 Estimated	4,950.0	12,663.0	(-) 7,713.3

Source: 1. Export Promotion Bureau: Export Receipts from 1973-74 to 1989-90.
2. Planning Commission: Import Payments from 1973-74 to 1989-90.

Note : Adopted from Banladesh Arthanaitik Jarip, 1989/90,
(vernacular) Banladesh Economic Survey, 1989-90, p.346.

After independence, the Mujib government had a good political relationship with India, the Soviet union and the East European countries, which created some new economic opportunities for

Bangladesh. The cessation of inter-wing trade with Pakistan increased problems of adjustment in external economic relations. Besides this, the Mujib period also had considerable bilateral trade with some Muslim countries (e.g. Egypt, UAE, Kuwait, Iraq etc.) Though Egypt has not initially recognized Bangladesh, it has entered into a one-year trade agreement with the Mujib government. The agreement concerning exchange of various commodities between the two countries was signed in Dhaka on December 15, 1972⁹. It made a contract to export to Egypt such commodities as jute and jute products, newsprint and paper and to import rice, cotton, cotton yarn and textiles from Egypt. The agreement helped Bangladesh to a great extent as it faced with acute shortage of the commodities it had been allowed to import. This was a breakthrough for Bangladesh in establishing trade relations with Muslim countries. Because, initially these countries hesitated to establish any kind of relationship with Bangladesh. The following year (1973) Egypt again purchased jute goods from Bangladesh that amounted to Taka 5 crore.

During the visit of Senegal President in Bangladesh, a bilateral trade agreement was signed (in May 1974) which stipulated that Bangladesh would import phosphate and cement from Senegal and in exchange, export jute, hides and skin and tea.¹⁰ At that time Bangladesh also had a bilateral trade agreement with Afghanistan. The agreement provided that both the sides would offer "most

⁹. Asian Recorder, 1973, p.11170.

¹⁰. Asian Recorder, 1974, p. 12053.

favoured-nation treatment" to each other in their deals. Afghanistan became interested in importing jute and jute goods, hides, skin and tea. It wanted to export yarns, cement, lather and other goods¹¹. Following Sheikh Mujib's visit to UAE, it decided to provide Bangladesh with a soft term loan of \$500 million for helping Bangladesh to narrow its balance of payments gap and to enabling it to import essential raw-materials. Besides UAE would help Bangladesh in setting up a cement plant and fertilizer plant by providing a long term foreign currency loan of US\$ 100 million. A joint commission of the two countries would be set up "for continuous consultation." ¹² Besides these, the Mujib administration also established trade relations with other Muslim countries like Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Algeria, Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco and others¹³. Due to Bangladesh's narrow export base, the items exported by Bangladesh to these countries were mainly primary goods (e.g. jute, jute goods, tea, leather etc.). Bangladesh imported from these countries mainly petroleum, crude and refined oil, petroleum products etc.

¹¹. Ibid., p.12112.

¹². Ibid., 1975, p. 12411.

¹³. See the table III and table IV.

Table-III

Total Export Receipts by Countries/Territories-Time
Series-Selected Muslim Countries

(Taka in thousands)

Country	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77
Afghanistan	4,19	14,90	28,39	1,02,01	1,02,43
Algeria	40,28	33,19	38,54	77,33	1,50,52
Bahrain	--	--	--	--	--
Egypt (U.A.R.)	2,75,93	9,38,48	11,10,12	22,52,16	24,95,04
Indonesia	83,90	1,14	--	10,62	14,37
Iran	2,35,01	5,43,16	12,00,13	17,89,61	20,79,36
Iraq	3,45,82	1,58,86	15,25,63	12,15,86	1,40,71
Kuwait	39,80	8,09	16,28	6,78	37,70
Malaysia	1,84	22,91	18,58	1,19,45	69,09
Morocco	58,57	93,58	1,00,75	60,28	2,09,13
Nigeria	1,36,61	93,69	4,24,60	2,30,33	11,76,73
Oman	--	--	--	1,90	--
Pakistan	--	--	--	6,45,02	35,78,65
Qatar	4,87	1	2	7	2,24
Saudi Arabia	5,27	5,19	--	--	32,81
Sudan	4,92,77	4,25,52	10,21,15	7,36,60	9,00,03
Turkey	22,20	75,85	3,07,38	6,80,82	8,64,85
UAE	2,74	6,60	4,62	25,07	38,34
Other n.e.i/ Countries	1,07,47+	28,53+	20,77+	20,12+	19,28+
Grand Total: (+including other countries)	2856033	2521448	3423310	4806330	7114436

Source :- Compiled from Annual Export Receipts 1976-77, pp.83-88.

Table - IV

Total Import Payments by Countries/Territories, Time Series of Some Selected Muslim Countries.

1. Imports Through Authorized Dealers and Bangladesh Bank.

(Taka in thousands)

Country	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77
Afghanistan	14	--	--	1,48,88
Algeria	40	98	3,77	--
Bahrain	--	11,79	--	15
Egypt (U.A.R.)	4,81,23	4,73,30	96	83,87
Indonesia	4,74	1,96	8,45	48,05
Iran	4,80,00	1,70,58	42,88,03	73,31,36
Iraq	13,94,96	4,06,95	14,90,01	1,02,03
Kuwait	23,56,18	5,60,50	--	17,67,69
Malaysia	2,98,66	1,97,10	6,67,62	7,25,31
Morocco	61,39	64,69	--	--
Nigeria	--	5	--	--
Oman	--	5,51,47	72,01,51	--
Pakistan	--	--	10,23,15	4,44,10
Qatar	--	--	2,58,48	--
Saudi Arabia	56,40	--	1,39,78	24,39,77
Sudan	82	7	2,75	16
Tunisia	--	1,35,71	--	--
Turkey	--	7	--	8,56,29
UAE	--	12,03,95	--	38,40,03
Other Countries	3161140	2644597	4891166	3548226

Sub Total: 367,46,32 302,25,14 639,96,17 532,69,95

2. Imports Under Wage Earners' Scheme Through direct import permits : -- 34,90,83 47,71,78 80,77,68

3. Imports under loans and grants 371,25,57 661,04,56 1178,54,35 668,54,18

Grand Total: 738,71,89 998,20,53 1920,22,30 1282,01,81

Note: Details of Country for items 2 and 3 are not available.

Source : Compiled from Annual Import Payments 1976-77.
Statistics Department, Bangladesh Bank, pp.84-87.

Since the 1980s, Bangladesh has witnessed a striking change in the composition of its trade, non-traditional exports like

manpower export, ready made garments¹⁴ and frozen fish have grown rapidly while traditional exports like jute, leather and tea have virtually been stagnated. Introduction of non-traditional items in the export sector has brought changes in the economy of Bangladesh. The policy of Bangladesh government and international trade environment played significant role in these changes. Still, the traditional export base remained narrow within the previously mentioned six categories. These categories bring nearly 32% of the total export earnings during 1989-90.¹⁵

On the other hand, GATT study suggests, due to natural calamities, food grain imports have risen, investment became import-intensive. Despite that there was slow growth in public and private investment that implied slow growth in capital goods imports. The total imports increased to 45 percent between 1980-81 and 1989-90, while capital imports increased by 16 percent.¹⁶ In the 1980's the European communities and Japan had replaced the United States and became the main source of import of machinery, transport

¹⁴. Garments export in the 1980's sparked up the export economy. In 1982-83 it earned US\$ 7 million and US\$ 600 million in 1989-90, accounting for 40 percent of total export earnings of the country. Among the total exported garments 55 percent went to the United States, 35 percent to Europe and 15% mainly to Canada, Sweden and Norway. Thus quantity wise Bangladesh was the tenth largest supplier of garments to the European Community and to Canada and seventh largest to the United States. See General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), Trade Policy Review : Bangladesh, Vol. 1, (Geneva : GATT, 1992), p.3.

¹⁵. Bangladesh Arthanaitik Jarip, 1989/90, (vernacular) Bangladesh Economic Survey, 1989-90, p.129.

¹⁶. GATT, Trade Policy Review : Bangladesh, op.cit., p.41.

equipment and chemicals. The United States remained the chief source of raw cotton and cereals import. Relocation of garments products to Bangladesh drew the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong closer to Bangladesh as they were the main sources of textile goods imports.¹⁷

Although initially the trade performances with Muslim countries were limited in comparison with other countries, it was significant for the newly emerged Bangladesh to establish relationship with them. The successive Zia's period and Ershad's period trade performances with these Muslim countries increased over the years.¹⁸

According to Bangladesh Bank Report (from 1976-77 to 1989-90) Bangladesh has been keeping trade relations (both export and import) with countries of 12 categories¹⁹. These are:

¹⁷. Ibid., p.42.

¹⁸. See table V and VI for the destinational pattern of Bangladesh export and import by bloc/group/community respectively and also see Appendix-XI for the share(%) of Bangladesh export by destinations (some selected Muslim countries).

¹⁹. It is also mentionable that over the years (from 1976-77 to 1989-90) the name of different categories of countries interms of bloc/group/community has changed apparently in the publications of Bangladesh Bank reports : Annual Export Receipts and Annual Import Payments, such as during 1976-77 to 1977-78 financial years both the reports described counties belonging to OIC category as 'Muslim Countries'. Corresponding to the same period the Centrally Planned Countries category under communist rule were named sometimes as 'Communist Countries' (1976-77 to 1977-78) and sometimes as 'Socialist Countries' (1978-79 to 1980-81) and also 'Centrally Planned Economies' (1981-82 to 1986-87). Another example of such incidents is that 'Other West European Countries' were named as 'Other European Countries' (1988-89 to 1989-90). RCD category country was in existence only during 1976-77 and 77-78 in the reports, which (RCD) later on became defunct. We placed the data of RCD countries in the vacant place of the category of 'SAARC member

- i) North American Countries (e.g. USA, Canada, Mexico and Surinam).
- ii) EEC (e.g. UK, France, Germany, Italy etc.)
- iii) OIC (e.g. Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Pakistan, Indonesia etc.)
- iv) OPEC (e.g. Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Oman and Indonesia etc.)
- v) CPE (e.g. ex-USSR, Bulgaria, ex-East Germany etc.)
- vi) COMECON (e.g. USSR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary etc.)
- vii) Other West European Countries (e.g. Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Iceland etc.)
- viii) Other Asian Countries (e.g. China, Japan, Hong Kong etc.)
- ix) ASEAN (e.g. Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand etc.)
- x) ACU (e.g. Nepal, Burma, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka etc.)
- (xi) SAARC (e.g. Nepal, India, Bhutan etc.) and
- xii) Other Countries, which include rest of the world.

These categories are overlapping and provisional. For example, 'Indonesia' is classified in OIC countries as well as in ASEAN and OPEC category. As the data of these export and import categories are overlapping, it is provisional (not accurate figures) trade performance regarding these categories.²⁰ Trade performance of Bangladesh (both exports and imports) with those categories has been changing. Over the years though both export and import volume

countries', because of space constraint of the table (V & VI). Facing to the same cause we also placed the 'Central American Common Market' - category data in the vacant place of the category of 'Member country under ACU'. All these trade figures mentioned in both table are overlapping/provisional of the trade performances of Bangladesh with the said countries according to Bangladesh Bank.

²⁰. See the various Issues of Export Receipts and Import Payments of Bangladesh Bank Report. The data of trade direction both import and export are seriously dislocated in Bangladesh's Government reports prepared by different agencies. Since the data has been collated from different editions of Annual Export Receipts & Annual Import Payments, the data categories have differed from one edition to the other. On the other hand, the scarcity and the severity of all data has been shown by country wise and by year wise and alternatively by bloc/group/community, which ultimately create obstacles in flat analysis of the data over the period under the study. And that is why the analysis of the data in this study was performed on the basis of the data availability.

increased, the balance of payments gap remained in all the financial years.

The comparative position of major trade partners of Bangladesh and their relative shares over the years were projected in the table V (for export total) and table VI (for import total). The table V and VI showed that the trade relations with various categories of the countries, their amounts were changing. The tables (V and VI) also indicate that, Bangladesh had a considerable trade relations with OIC, OPEC and ASEAN category countries (most of these category countries belong to the Muslim world).

Although the categories were overlapping, from the FY 1976-77 to 1985-86 Bangladesh had exported highest amount of commodities to the OIC countries. From the FY 1986-87 to 1988-89 its position was third among the categories²¹. Mineral, fuel, lubricant, petroleum and related materials are important items²² of Bangladesh's import during the period under review. The import payments of Bangladesh from these countries were significant at the same time. In FY 1980-81, the OIC countries placed 1st position among the mentioned categories, while in FY 1976-77, 79-80, 81-82, 82-83, 85-86, 88-89, its position was second, and in FY 1977-78, 83-84, 86-87, 87-88, remained 3rd among the mentioned categories. The table indicates

²¹. North American Countries became topped the buyers' list during the FY 1986-87 to 1989-90. In FY 1989-90, OIC trade performance again decreased and placed 4th position among the export partners.

²². Energy is among the three most important items for which the country's dependence on external sources is most crucial, the other two items are food and capital.

Table - V : Destination pattern of Bangladesh Exports by Bloc/Group/Community

Bloc/Group/Community	1976-77		1977-78		1978-79		1979-80		1980-81		1981-82		1982-83		1983-84		1984-85		1985-86		1986-87		1987-88		1988-89		1989-90			
	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total	Amount % of Total		
O I C	177.2	189.2	211.2	246.0	321.4	320.2	485.1	636.5	580.0	665.8	407.7	479.2	537.5	456.4	23	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	
	24.9	25.1	23.7	21.4	27.9	22.0	26.1	31.0	23.3	24.5	13.3	12.9	13.1	9.3	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	
OPEC	37.8	30.8	52.8	85.0	114.8	123.3	115.5	305.8	229.5	253.0	180.7	145.5	168.2	213.9	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	
	5.3	4.1	5.9	7.4	8.6	8.5	6.2	14.9	9.1	9.3	5.8	4.1	4.1	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4
ASEAN	22.6	20.0	11.5	65.8	116.3	182.1	220.8	69.9	97.7	104.3	98.9	135.0	199.5	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
	3.2	2.6	1.3	5.7	8.7	12.5	11.9	3.4	3.9	3.8	3.2	3.6	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
North American Countries	86.8	116.7	145.3	199.0	138.9	153.2	225.8	277.2	448.1	601.1	932.4	1091.9	1093.6	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159
	12.2	15.5	16.3	12.1	10.4	10.5	13.7	13.5	17.8	22.1	30.4	29.5	26.6	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
E E C	140.4	136.2	166.8	232.8	178.4	222.5	287.3	463.3	582.4	468.6	669.1	993.7	1048.3	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127
	19.7	18.0	18.7	20.2	13.3	15.3	15.4	22.6	23.1	17.2	21.8	26.8	35.5	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
Centrally Planned Countries	123.4	126.8	178.3	215.9	165.1	219.8	279.0	182.5	224.4	283.9	303.1	352.4	435.8	520	520	520	520	520	520	520	520	520	520	520	520	520	520	520	520	520
	17.3	16.8	20.0	18.8	12.3	15.1	15.0	8.9	9.7	10.5	9.9	9.0	10.6	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8
COMSOIN Countries	65.2	87.7	123.2	115.8	102.0	169.8	203.0	134.4	180.5	181.0	225.8	241.1	303.5	459	459	459	459	459	459	459	459	459	459	459	459	459	459	459	459	459
	9.2	11.6	13.8	10.1	7.6	11.7	10.9	6.6	7.5	6.7	7.3	6.5	7.4	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3
Other Best European Countries	17.6	10.8	10.8	23.9	52.4	70.4	37.3	50.4	82.0	126.8	161.2	165.6	249.5	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9	271.9
	2.5	1.4	1.2	3.1	3.9	4.8	2.0	2.5	3.3	4.7	5.2	4.5	6.1	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	
Other Asian Countries	22.5	14.1	25.4	130.2	144.0	111.0	82.2	107.0	153.1	80.9	95.4	605.5	264.4	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3	258.3
	3.2	1.9	2.8	11.3	10.7	7.6	4.4	5.2	6.1	3.0	3.1	7.8	6.4	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	
Member Countries under ACP/COMON	1.0	1.6	1.4	...	1.8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	0.1	0.2	0.2	...	0.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
SARC Member Countries	70.6	100.3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	9.9	13.3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other Countries	118.3	125.8	129.2	144.2	180.3	208.0	154.1	152.4	186.7	225.0	163.7	240.0	267.9	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6	228.6
	16.6	16.7	14.5	13.5	13.5	14.3	8.3	7.4	7.4	8.3	5.3	6.5	6.5	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	

1. Bloc/Group/Community totals do not add to the total exports due to inter-classification of the individual country into bloc/group/community etc. For example 'Indonesia' is classified in OIC countries as well as in ASEAN and OPEC.

Table - VI : Destinal pattern of Bangladesh imports by Bloc/Group/Community

Bloc/Group/Community	1976-77		1977-78		1978-79		1979-80		1980-81		1981-82		1982-83		1983-84		1984-85		1985-86		1986-87		1987-88		1988-89		1989-90			
	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total		
OIC	203.4	331.1	287.9	662.2	1085.9	1306.2	1327.9	722.7	837.5	1176.3	1084.3	1141.1	1347.4	1249.1	10.1															
	16.9	16.1	11.5	18.3	24.9	24.4																								
	W O R L D I M P O R T S																													
OPEC	173.1	291.8	332.2	568.8	888.6	1314.5	1537.0	569.9	599.7	883.5	339.5	757.6	978.9	892.0																
	14.4	14.1	9.3	15.7	20.4	24.5	27.9	9.5	8.7	12.5	11.7	8.1	9.0	7.2																
ASEAN	37.5	93.5	97.6	195.6	351.5	435.0	406.9	722.8	1314.5	855.8	780.2	939.9	1005.7	1783.5																
	3.1	4.5	3.9	5.4	8.1	8.1	7.4	12.0	19.1	12.1	9.7	10.1	9.3	14.4																
North American Countries	183.2	376.6	445.2	596.3	523.4	468.4	883.2	887.2	988.7	819.9	898.6	971.4	1280.3	1073.5																
	15.3	18.3	17.8	16.5	12.0	8.8	16.0	14.7	14.3	11.6	11.2	10.4	11.8	9.7																
EPC	224.0	349.5	456.7	597.0	611.3	839.6	745.1	508.6	944.1	974.8	1153.4	1227.8	1271.4	1836.9																
	18.7	16.9	18.3	16.5	14.0	15.7	13.5	8.5	13.7	13.8	14.4	13.2	11.7	14.8																
Centrally Planned Countries	108.0	181.0	233.3	276.4	386.2	454.5	424.9	566.4	517.2	622.7	725.4	653.1	933.6	843.4																
	9.0	8.8	9.3	7.5	8.8	8.5	7.7	9.4	7.5	8.8	9.0	1.0	8.6	6.8																
	Communist countries																													
	Socialist countries																													
	Centrally Planned Economies																													
COMCON Countries	na	na	112.3	145.0	167.3	102.5	205.4	314.6	256.5	319.0	436.7	313.0	530.9	315.0																
			4.5	3.9	3.8	1.9	3.7	5.2	3.4	4.5	5.0	3.4	4.9	2.5																
Other West European Countries	63.8	83.5	72.6	114.2	112.4	120.9	209.9	139.9	163.4	242.8	438.6	432.2	490.4	533.4																
	5.3	4.0	2.9	3.1	3.8	2.3	3.8	2.3	2.4	3.4	5.5	4.6	4.5	4.2																
	Other European Countries																													
Other Asian Countries	88.2	128.5	417.8	665.1	686.7	487.0	207.4	249.4	1276.6	1195.4	1778.1	2030.9	2134.8	2496.2																
	7.4	6.2	16.7	18.4	15.7	15.8	3.8	4.1	18.6	16.9	22.2	21.8	19.7	20.2																
Member Countries under ACP/COMEX	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-																
SMARC Member Countries	83.3	116.5	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	700.3																
	6.9	5.6												5.3																
	R. C. D. Countries																													
Other Countries	329.8	565.4	461.0	538.9	772.1	964.5	966.4	1970.0	938.9	1534.8	1340.5	1890.4	2173.0	2360.9																
	27.5	27.4	18.5	15.4	17.7	18.0	17.5	32.7	13.7	21.6	16.7	20.3	20.0	19.1																

Notes : 1. Value: Mixed CIF and F.O.B. basis.
 2. Bloc/Group/Community totals do not add to the total imports due to inter-classification of the individual countries into bloc/group/community etc. For example 'Indonesia' is classified in OIC countries as well as in ASEAN and OPEC.
 3. The imports from other countries includes those under loan and grants from international organisations viz. IDA, ADB, IBRD, UNICEF, UNDP etc.
 Source: Adopted from various issues of Annual Report Payments, (from 1976-77 to 1989-90) published by Statistics Department of Bangladesh Bank, Dhaka.

the amounts and volume increasing in both export and import relations of Bangladesh with those countries. Bangladesh for a time being, faced difficulties in carrying its trade relations with some of these countries due to the gulf crisis.

It is also to be mentioned that Bangladesh depends almost total for the supply of petroleum and petroleum products to Middle Eastern countries. Crude petroleum and petroleum products accounted near about 8% to 10% of the import bill.²³ During the year between 1972/73 and 1975/76 the total import requirements of crude petroleum and petroleum products were estimated about 1.6 million tons, but actual imports varied between 1.0 million and 1.3 million tons.²⁴ Between 1976-77 and 1986-87, Bangladesh annually imported an average of 1.09 million tons of crude petroleum, 0.52 millions of petroleum products. The import of petroleum products experienced a significant upward trend. Between 1976-78 and 1986-87 the volume of petroleum products imported by the country increased about 2.8 times, while the import of crude petroleum remained almost at its earlier level. Energy imports are nearly equivalent to 20% of the export receipt of the country. Crude petroleum and petroleum products consumed by the country came mostly from the Middle East. The UAE, KSA and Kuwait accounting for three-fourth of the imports

²³. Raisul Awal Mahmood, "Bangladesh's External Economic Relations," BISS journal, Vol.13, No.4, October 1992, p.451.

²⁴. Nurul Islam, Development Planning in Bangladesh, op.cit., pp.144-145.

of the country.²⁵

According to the Bangladesh Export Promotion Bureau,²⁶ Bangladesh has 20 considerable exportable markets in the world. Among these countries, 8 Middle Eastern countries have a considerable trade relations with Bangladesh. These are Iran, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen²⁷. Besides this, the African Muslim country Sudan also has a considerable trade relation with Bangladesh. Despite these, the major import trading partners among others are UAE, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt.²⁸ On the other hand, among the Muslim countries, Kuwait was the fourth highest import partner in 1973-74 financial year. In 1976-77, Iran was the top and in FY 1988-89 the UAE occupied the third position in this regard.²⁹

²⁵. Another important source is Singapore which accounted for about 37% of the imports in 1989-90. Raisul Awal Mahmood, op.cit., pp.451-485.

²⁶. Export Promotion Bureau, Raptani Ritinity O Kalakoushal, (vernacular) Export Policy and Strategy (Dhaka: EPB, 1986.) pp.17-28.

²⁷. Bangladesh sells 70% of its jute manufactured products to five Islamic countries : Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Egypt and Iraq. See Islamic Chamber of Commerce Industry and Commodity Exchange, 4th QTR, Oct.-Nov.-Dec.1993, p. 12.

²⁸. It is also to be mentioned that at present Pakistan is the second largest trading partner of Bangladesh, after the United States. See C.M. Shafi Sami, "Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations in the Changing International Environment," Pakistan Horizon, Vol.44, No.4, October 1991, p.27.

²⁹. Annual Import Payments of 1973-74; 1976-77; 1988-89, Statistics Department, Bangladesh Bank. Another study also indicated that from the FY 1972-73 to 1985-86, Iran occupied the 3rd position with regard to her share in aggregate exports of Bangladesh. Her share increased from 1.31% in 1972-73 to 6.23% in

Before 1975 Bangladesh had joint economic commission only with Iraq, but now it has such commissions with several important Middle East countries like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, UAE, Iran, North Yemen, Malaysia, Kuwait etc. Moreover, Bangladesh has General Technical or Economic and Technical Co-operation Agreements with Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Iran.³⁰ Besides this, Bangladesh is a participant in the agreement on the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries (GSTP). It has put bilateral agreements into effect under the GSTP with ten countries. Five of these countries - Argentina, Algeria, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt and Morocco - gave tariff concessions to Bangladesh without reciprocity. The remaining five, India, Iran, Romania, Sudan and Yugoslavia, gave tariff concessions on a token exchange basis of the same. It also benefits from the concessions negotiated and exchanged among other participants.³¹

In fact, the relations with these developed countries, Bangladesh had substantially nourished its economy by manpower exports to oil rich Middle East countries. Worker remittances from Middle East provided major support to the balance of payments. But

1985-86. Sudan was the 4th big importer of Bangladesh exports. Her share increased from 1.73% in 1972-73 to 5.36% in 1985-86. Pakistan was the 7th importer with respect to her share in 1985-86. Her share increased from 1.34% in 1975-76 to 4.28% in 1985-86. See also M. Azizur Rahman, Export and Economic Development of Bangladesh, (Dhaka : Bangladesh Young Economist Association, 1st.ed. 1993), pp.166-169.

³⁰. The Bangladesh Observer, 11 December, 1984.

³¹. GATT, Trade Policy Review: Bangladesh, Vol.1, op.cit., p.56.

despite all these nimble rises in Bangladesh economy, it is yet fragile to absorb any unforeseen external shock like the Middle East crisis of 1990-91, which increased unemployment, and quick fall of remittances that reduced both exports and imports causing loss to Bangladesh of about US\$ 100 million.³²

Many studies and experts are optimistic about Bangladesh's future trade [export] relations with the Muslim Countries. According to Md. Gollam Mostafa,³³

...Arab world has turned into one of the most lucrative markets particularly for consumer goods, Bangladesh has a tremendous scope to increase her export to this area. one of the major bottlenecks to developing trade with West Asia [as well as Muslim countries] is that Bangladesh did not adequately explore markets for her goods in the region and Bangladesh goods and services are not familiar to most of the Arab countries. And it was expressed by many trade experts.

So, measures need to be taken to make Bangladeshi goods and products familiar to different Arab countries.

In view of above discussion, it can be said that the trade relation of Bangladesh with Muslim countries was not minimal in comparison to developed western countries. However, for an under developed country like ours, the trade relations with these countries were not at all ignoreable. It has better possibility to develop economic relations with these countries in near future.

³². GATT, Trade Policy Review : Bangladesh, Vol. 2, op.cit., p. 77.

³³. Md. Golam Mostafa, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy : The Middle East Factor", op.cit., p.52.

Overseas Employment Relations with
the Muslim Countries

The galloping increases of oil revenue of the Middle Eastern countries in the 1960s accelerated the process of investment in socio-economic infrastructure involving in setting up of schools, hospitals, roads, highways and installation of water distillation plants. During 1970s the rapid speed continued. In 1973 alone OPEC countries raised the oil price four times, thus making them capital surplus, with the large amount of idle money they embarked upon large scale development projects to make their backward, thinly populated desert lands into modern ones.³⁴

For these development works, they looked at countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and other South East Asian countries and several other poor African Muslim countries, where manpower was cheaper and unemployment problem was acute. Migration of labour³⁵ from low wage countries to high wage countries in the

³⁴. Md. Mainul Islam, "Manpower Export and Bangladesh Economy," in S. R. Chakravarty & Virendra Narain (eds.), Banqladesh : Global Politics, Vol. 3, op.cit., p.106.

³⁵. According to Muinul Islam et al.,

" Theoretically, international labour migration from poor to wealthy countries can be viewed as a resource flow which should be mutually beneficial to both the sending and the host countries.The potential benefits of labour emigration, from the perspective of sending countries are the acquisition of scarce foreign exchange; the relief of unemployment and underemployment; an increase in national income per capita with a possible consequence, increase in the rate of savings, investment and enhance economic growth; and with the return of emigrants the acquisition of skills which are essential to the development of an industrial base". Quoted from Muinul Islam, Hasanuzzaman Chowdhury, M. Saleh Uddin, Jyoti Prakash Dutta, Muhammad Ali and A.K Enamul Haq (eds.), Overseas Migration from Rural Banqladesh: A Micro

present world is a systematic transfer of labour for developing the infrastructure of the higher wage countries. The labour importing countries allow migration of expatriate labour as a part of their development plans and the labour exporting countries' consider migration as a potential source of foreign exchange earnings. Bangladesh like many other least developed countries have deliberately accepted manpower export for earning foreign exchange.

Labour migration from Bangladesh to the Middle Eastern countries began in the early 1960s, mostly from the district of Chittagong to Saudi Arabia and Qatar in a limited scale. Till then these "fortune hunters" began to pave the way for others. After independence, migration of labour from Bangladesh assumed a new dimension. Acute unemployment problem,³⁶ low level of wages and a chronic deficit in the balance of payments made the government inclined to export man power to the Middle East. So, in the period 1972-75, several unofficial delegations from the Middle East visited Bangladesh for recruitment. These unofficial recruitments caused malpractices. To improve this situation, in 1976 Bureau of Man Power Employment and Training was established. BMET, however, has to perform a variety of functions and manpower export

Study, (R.E.P., Department of Economics, University of Chittagong, 1982), p.1, see also Charles P., Kindleberger, Europe's Post War Growth : The Role of labour Supply, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1967).

³⁶. See the Appendix No. XII for the size of labour force, unemployment and employment.

constitutes only some 10% of its total activities.³⁷

On the other hand, the economy of Bangladesh is labour-intensive. Of its 11.5 crore people, 33% are active and the employment rate is 33%. So, at present, about 1.5 crore of people remain unemployed. With such large number of unemployed people, it is not possible to achieve progress in any development activities. More over, in Bangladesh resources are limited. As a result, it is not possible to give vast unemployed people any job³⁸. According to the World Bank Study Group's observation, the major manpower problems in Bangladesh are huge unemployment and underemployment, underemployment among educated youth, high rate of population growth. Consequently, increase of labour force, low capacity of the economy to produce jobs and failure of the First Five Year Plan to meet the 4.1 million forecasted jobs, deteriorated the unemployment situation and led to the migration of the labourers to the Middle East countries automatically.³⁹

Bangladesh started intensively its manpower export from 1976 after the advent of President Ziaur Rahman and before 1976 overseas

³⁷. Chowdhury Emdadul Haq, "Labour Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East: Development or Dependency?," in Khan Mohammed Mohabbat and Thorp, J.P. (eds.). Bangladesh: Society, Politics and Bureaucracy. op.cit., p.122; see also World Bank Staff Working Paper No.454- Labour Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East, April, 1981, p.I.

³⁸. Sheikh Mohsian Ali, "Manpower Export and Bangladesh," The New Nation (Dhaka), 4 November, 1992.

³⁹. World Bank Staff Working Paper No.454, op.cit., p.2.

Table-VII

Flow of Overseas Labour Migration from Bangladesh and its Remittances into Bangladesh

Year	Number of foreign employees	Remittance (in million)US\$	Taka (in million)
1977-78	16908	102	1544
1978-79	24610	124	1887
1979-80	26106	283	4388
1980-81	38456	381	6194
1981-82	68362	418	8396
1982-83	63551	630	15049
1983-84	50122	597	14111
1984-85	69046	443	11525
1985-86	78422	555	16611
1986-87	63145	696	21359
1987-88	73772	736	22948
1988-89	84196	770	24774
1989-90	110285	760	24960
1990-91	563677	503	17928

Note : Fraction has been omitted.

Source : Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training & Bangladesh Bank.

migration was nominal.⁴⁰ In course of time, manpower export from Bangladesh has been growing and it became one of the major sectors of the economy. During 1977-78 to 1989-90 the figures of migrant workers totalled at little over 766,981. Since early eighties the average number of migrant workers from Bangladesh per year is more than 63,000. From the above table it appears that the out flow of Bangladeshi workers declined to 50,122 during 1983/84 from 68,362

⁴⁰. See the Appendix No. XIII for Bangladeshi Migrants Abroad as of 1982.

during 1981/82. The decline in the number of migrants abroad has been due to slow down of demand in the oil rich countries as a result of decline in development activities in the Middle East following the fall in oil prices. Besides the decline in oil income, shrinkage of wages, increased in the cost of living abroad, impact of the Iran-Iraq war have also caused the shrinkage of job opportunities⁴¹ in the Middle East. The Table VII also shows the number of manpower and remittances sent by them in Bangladesh have grown quickly over the years (from 1984-85 to 1989-90).

Table VIII: Flow of Migration by Country of Employment

Country Year	Saudi Arabia	Kuwait	U.A.E.	Qatar	Iraq	Libya	Bahrain	Oman	Others	Total
1976	217	643	1989	1221	587	173	335	113	809	6087
1977	1379	1315	5819	2263	1238	718	870	1492	632	15725
1978	3212	2243	7512	1303	1454	2394	762	2877	1052	22809
1979	6476	2298	5069	1383	2363	1969	827	3777	333	24495
1980	8695	3687	4847	1455	1927	2976	1351	4745	390	30073
1981	13384	5464	6418	2268	13153	4162	1392	7351	2195	55787
1982	16294	7244	6863	6252	12898	2071	2037	8248	855	62762
1983	12928	10283	6615	7556	4932	2209	2473	11110	1114	59220
1984	20399	5627	5185	2726	4701	3386	2300	10448	1942	56714
1985	37133	7384	8336	4751	5051	1514	2965	9218	1342	77694
1986	27235	10286	8790	4847	4728	3111	2597	6255	809	68658
1987	39292	9559	9953	5889	3847	2271	2055	440	711	74017
1988	27622	6524	13437	7390	4191	2759	3268	2213	717	68121
1989	39949	12402	15184	8462	2573	1609	4830	15429	1286	101724
1990	57086	5957	8307	7672	2700	871	4563	13980	2678	103814
1991	75656	28574	8583	3772	-	1124	3480	23087	2905	147131
Total :	386957	119490	122907	69209	66343	33317	36105	120783	19770	974831

Source :- BMET, Bangladesh.

It is also pertinent to mention that flow of labour migration from Bangladesh to Australia, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States have been

⁴¹. It is also mentionable at that time the number of returnees increased i.e., the migrants who went abroad in large number in the year 1980-81, 1981-82 and 1982-83 have been returning home after completion of 2 to 3 years' contact.

drastically restricted. Although migrations to these countries still take place but not in significant numbers. The countries of the Middle East, specially in the Gulf region are the major employers of Bangladesh expatriate labour. In addition, Bangladesh has markets in Algeria, Malaysia and Nigeria. Recently Brunei, Japan and Singapore have been recruiting from Bangladesh. The above mentioned Table-VIII shows that Bangladesh has a considerable labour market in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Iraq, Bahrain, Libya and other countries.

According to A.R.M. Anwar Hosain, "only seven countries in the Middle East claim 95 percent of Bangladeshi expatriate workers (current migrants) and the rest of the world only 5 percent." His estimates derived on the basis of data from these seven countries -Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and others⁴². These migrated workers employed in Middle Eastern countries are divided into four categories. These are: (i) Professional, (ii) Skilled, (iii) Semi-skilled and (iv) Unskilled workers. The following table-IX demonstrates that during the period of 1979 to 1986, 6.52% of labour came from different professional groups, 34.82% was skilled, while the percentages of semi-skilled and unskilled manpower were 7.28% and 50.98% respectively.

⁴². A.R.M. Anwar Hossain, Remittance from International Labour Migration- A Case Study of Bangladesh, (Dhaka: Bangladesh Manpower Planning Center, 1985), pp.39-40.

TABLE-IX

Categories of Workers in the Middle East

Class	Profess- ional	Skilled	Semi- Skilled	Un- skilled	Total
Number of persons went abroad	29106	154924	34917	227705	446652
Percentage	6.52	34.82	7.28	50.98	100

Source : Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)

Recent study also provided information that from 1976 to 1991 the percentage of workers migrating to Middle East from Professional group is 5, Skilled 36, Semi-skilled 13 and Unskilled 46-47.⁴³ The nature of employment received by Bangladesh migrants is purely temporary. The BIDS survey shows that "nearly 61% workers went abroad with one year contract and only 39% with two or more years of contract. Professionals and technical workers usually get two or more years of contract and in exceptional cases such contracts may be renewable for more terms."⁴⁴

Wages

Surveys and studies show that each Bangladesh migrant gets an

⁴³. Professionals : doctors, engineers, cost and chartered accountants, computer experts, administrators, teachers, nurses, foremen; Skilled : masons, drivers, plumbers, mechanics, welders; Semi-skilled : road binders, mason helpers, laundrymen, mechanic helpers; Un-skilled : municipality workers, and all other trades which are mainly menial. This is also based on BMET.

⁴⁴. Quoted from Salma Khan, "Overseas Contract Workers of Bangladesh: Some Issues of Concern," The Quarterly Journal of the Bangladesh Planning Commission, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 1988, p.118.

average of 4 to 6 times higher than his wages at home and one is able to earn 25% higher than his basic salary by doing overtime works. Professionals on the other hand, earn nearly 18 times higher.⁴⁵ Migrant earnings are tax free in both recruiting country and the native country. In certain countries, migrants can remit a limited amount of their earnings. For example, the government of Iraq allows their imported workers to remit only 60 percent of their pay excluding overtime allowances, the limit was 75 percent in 1981. Also, Libya, Iran and Nigeria have put restrictions on remittances. But many other labour importing countries have no such limitations on remittance. Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia allow any amount to be remitted.⁴⁶

Contribution of Manpower Export to the Economy of Bangladesh

As stated earlier, from the very beginning Bangladesh suffers from a chronic deficit in its balance of payments. After the overseas employment relation was established with various Muslim countries, the remittances provided considerable support to the balance of payments of Bangladesh. Within a relatively short span of 12 years, the impact of foreign exchange remittances by Bangladesh nationals working abroad has percolated to the whole spectrum of economic and social life of Bangladesh. Starting with relatively small amount of Tk.1544 million in 1977-78, the amount of foreign exchange remittances sent by overseas Bangladesh nationals has reached a staggering level of nearly Tk. 24960

⁴⁵. Ibid., p.122.

⁴⁶. A.R.M Anwar Hossain, op.cit., p.38.

million (US\$ 760 million) in 1989-90. According to a study:

The current account deficit is financed largely by official aid flows, but in the recent years an increasingly large proportion of the deficit has been met by workers' remittances. Thus, while in 1972/73 remittances could finance only 9 percent of the current account deficit, in 1979/80, 1984/85 and 1989/90 this proportion was 14.7 percent, 36.3 percent and 49.9 percent respectively.⁴⁷

It is a fact that remittances of wage earners have become an integral part of the import budget soon after the introduction of the Wage Earners' Scheme⁴⁸ in the middle of 1974. The import policy of July-December, 1974 (shipping period) listed 40 different items eligible for import, out of the foreign exchange earning of Bangladesh nationals. The share of wage earners' earning in financing the import bill increased over the time substantially.⁴⁹

Moreover, overseas employments have generated additional economic activities in different economic sectors such as air

⁴⁷. Ayubur Rahman Bhuyan & Mohammad Ali Rashid (eds.), Trade Regimes and Industrial Growth: A Case Study of Bangladesh, (Bangladesh: Bureau of Economic Research, University of Dhaka & San Francisco International Center for Economic Growth, 1993), pp.30-31.

⁴⁸. A controversy exists about the utility of these imports under the wage earners scheme, particularly on the import of essential consumer goods, luxury and foreign travels financed out of wage earners remittances. According to World Bank study, "imports of goods eligible under the WES are unrestricted; no limit exists for the quantity and value of goods that an individual merchant can import. An analysis of the composition of imports in 1978, shows that 13% consisted of essential consumer goods, 17% non-essential consumer goods, 6% capital goods and 64% raw materials. Considering that a large share of the latter eventually is converted into luxury goods, altogether about one-half of imports under the WES goes to luxury items. More-over, this share appears to be rising." See the World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 454, op.cit., p.vi.

⁴⁹. See the Appendix No. XIV, XV for Import under Wage Earners' Scheme.

transport,⁵⁰ hotel business, banking services, health clinics etc.

Consequences of Migration

Some studies and researches are critical,⁵¹ about overseas migration, which has both positive and negative⁵² effects on the economy of Bangladesh. The World Bank study concludes broadly that:

the effects of outmigration on development issues are positive and appears to defend the public policies and programs undertaken during the late 1970s. The study concludes that outmigration relieves unemployment, achieves favorable balance of payments for the sending country and creates a new resource base. A number of other researchers share such a positive evaluation of manpower export, and they argue that the foreign

⁵⁰. Near about 75,000 wage earners visit home every year, paying an estimated Tk. 150 crore to Bangladesh Biman. Syed Anwar Husain, "Bangladesh and Islamic Countries, 1972-1983," op.cit., p.253.

⁵¹. For details see, A.R.M. Anwar Hossain, op.cit.; Mainul Islam et.al., op. cit.; Chowdhury Emdadul Haq, "Labour Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East: Development or Dependency?," in Mohammed Mohabbat Khan and J.P. Thorp (eds.) Bangladesh: Society, Politics and Bureaucracy. op.cit.; A.M.A.H. Siddiqui, Economic and Non-Economic Impact of Migration From Bangladesh : An Overview, (Dhaka: Bangladesh Manpower Planning Center, 1983).

⁵². Migrants' remittances are often blamed as responsible for generating inflationary pressure on the economy and thus creating social tension. The inflow of remittance has thus led to emergence of a new class of "super rich" and has grossly exacerbated the existing problems of income inequality. This view is fortified by the findings that a typical migrant does not belong to the poorest class of the society. All the migrants excepting the unskilled ones are from that income group who had a higher income than average national income before migration. Even within the category of unskilled workers as well, those who were relatively better off had been able to migrate. The direct cost of migration is the loss of domestic output, the extent of which depends mainly on the supply elasticity of different types of labour being exported. Immediate consequence of this migration is the short supply of skilled labours. It may later on lead to disruption of production process and delay the completion of projects. The mass re-entry of migrants at a later date may also create serious problems of labour market adjustments. On the "benefit" side, the foreign exchange earned through remittances can provide the much needed support to the balance of payments.

exchange earned by expatriate labourers is vital to the national economy for meeting balance of payments [gaps] in the underdeveloped countries⁵³.

Whilst examining the social costs of labour migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East countries Whaiduddin Mahmud & Siddiquir Rahman Osmani⁵⁴ two noted scholar have indicated some adverse effects on the overall economy of Bangladesh. In spite of these scholarly controversies of overseas migration, it can be said, Bangladesh has no alternate way to export bulk of its underemployed, unemployed and unskilled people. The remittances from the migrated workers are also needed to support balance of payment and it is also beneficial to the individual migrants. The Government of Bangladesh should take measures for the removal of adverse impact of overseas migration and use it as an additional source of earnings.

It is also relevant to mention that despite the rapid increase in migration to the Middle East since 1976, Bangladesh still occupies one of the lowest positions in the field of labour-supply and a strong effort will be needed to overcome this low position. The number of Bangladeshi workers in the Middle East is very small compared to other countries, probably not more than 3%.⁵⁵ In the

⁵³. Quoted from Chowdhury Emdadul Haq, "Labour Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East: Development or Dependency?", op.cit., p.119.

⁵⁴. Whaiduddin Mahmud and Siddiquir Rahman Osmani, "Social Cost-Benefit Analysis of Manpower Export from Bangladesh", in The World Bank Staff Working Paper No.454, op.cit., pp.193-225.

⁵⁵. The World Bank Staff Working Paper No.454, op.cit., p.XV.

1980's competition became severe because of the Middle East preference for Far East countries and the emergence of China as a labour exporter country⁵⁶.

Now we can conclude that during the Zia regime, Bangladesh emerged as a potential labour exporter country and over the years the number of overseas migration and its remittances flow increased significantly. The remittances from the migrated people had a considerable support in the balance of payments deficits of the country's economy.

Bangladesh had a considerable overseas employment relations with Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, Bahrain and Libya. Manpower has replaced jute as major export items of Bangladesh and this item is given credit for keeping the Bangladesh economy afloat in the face of increasing critical economic circumstances. It should also be mentioned that though the garments' industry⁵⁷ is officially treated as the largest export earner in the country, in real terms the highest quantum of foreign exchange is earned through manpower exports. It would be no exaggeration to say, this outlet for unemployed and underemployed labour has the potential of playing a crucial role in maintaining the *status quo* in the economy, society and body-politic of Bangladesh.

⁵⁶. In this connection, Bangladesh should explore the potential demand for labour other than the Middle East countries, if possibilities exist there.

⁵⁷. Garments industry is a value added sector and about 70%-75% materials are imported from abroad at the expense of our [Bangladesh] valuable foreign exchange while earnings from manpower export are the net income of the country.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

While examining and analyzing Bangladesh's external relations with the Muslim countries during 1972 to 1990, we have in the first chapter, briefly discussed the objectives of Bangladesh's foreign policy, provided a theoretical framework and highlighted the importance and scope of the study.

The role of the Muslim Countries during the liberation war of Bangladesh is focussed in chapter II of the study. We have also dealt with the historical background of Bangladesh's foreign policy to have a clear idea about the role of Muslim countries during the liberation war of Bangladesh and subsequent years. Notably, Bangladesh was a province of Pakistan before 1971. Only religion was common with the two wings of former Pakistan. However, the religious factor could not hold the two wings united. The ruling elites of Pakistan had failed in nation building, which resulted in the dismemberment of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971.

The role of the Muslim countries during the independence war of Bangladesh till 1974-75 was largely determined by the earlier relationship with the united Pakistan.

The Muslim countries notably Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Indonesia, Malaysia etc. having closer relationship with Pakistan extended their full support for the ruling military junta. Our findings show the following plausible reasons for the support of the Muslim countries for Pakistan during the liberation war of Bangladesh: (i) Pakistan was one of the largest Muslim populated countries having significant influence over the Muslim countries. Pakistan government provided a distorted impression to the Muslim countries with regard to Bangladesh's liberation war. Furthermore, most of the Muslim countries had no clear picture about the liberation war of Bangladesh; (ii) Pakistan had consistently played an important role in the Islamic *Ummah*; (iii) Because of the direct Indo-Soviet involvement in the liberation war of Bangladesh, the Muslim countries perceived that

it would be a satellite of the Indo-Soviet axis; (iv) The political ideology of the Awami League, e.g. secularism and socialism, seemed to have concerned especially the feudal monarchic Arab Countries; (v) The so-called support of Israel towards Bangladesh's movement steered the Muslim countries to support the Pakistani military junta.

During the liberation war of Bangladesh, the response of the Muslim countries also centered on the following reasons: - (i) adhering to the principles of non-interference; (ii) considering the developments in the former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) as an internal matter; (iii) viewing the liberation war of Bangladesh-a secessionist movement.

Because of Pakistan ruling elite's extensive diplomatic efforts, it mastered the support of the Muslim countries, which were manifested in the joint communiques and statements issued between Pakistan and various Muslim countries. The countries that were more explicit in their support to Pakistan included Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Indonesia, Malaysia etc.

In Chapter III we have discussed the major initiatives taken by the Mujib government to establish relationship with the Muslim countries. After Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign state, the Muslim countries did not immediately extend diplomatic recognition to the new state. The Pakistan government also pursued strong propaganda against Bangladesh. The Pakistani President and other high officials visited various Muslim countries in a bid to withhold recognition to Bangladesh. Pakistan also severed its diplomatic relations and withdrew its representatives from some of the countries, which recognized the newly independent Bangladesh. Despite Pakistan's and its allied states' negative stand on the question of recognition, the Mujib regime subsequently achieved diplomatic recognition of most of the Muslim countries. In fact, it was during the Mujib period when Bangladesh initiated rapprochement with the Muslim countries. Mujib's farsighted diplomacy enabled Bangladesh to obtain recognition of most of the Muslim countries.

The Mujib government normalized relationship with the said countries and gradually established diplomatic and economic ties with them. During the Mujib regime Bangladesh could build relationships with some Muslim countries such as Iraq, South Yemen, Egypt and Algeria. Bangladesh's Indo-Soviet policy and friendship treaty with India were the main hindrances to establish immediate relations with other Muslim countries. Despite best efforts, the Mujib regime was unable to secure recognition from Saudi Arabia.

Chapter IV, dealt with the nature of Bangladesh's external relations with the Muslim countries during President Zia and President Ershad regimes. Immediately after assuming power, President Zia took an anti-Indian and anti-Soviet posture. The August coup in 1975, which toppled the seemingly Pro-Indian Awami League regime created a favourable atmosphere for developing relations with the Muslim countries. Under President Zia's administration, Bangladesh while maintaining its non-aligned foreign policies, made efforts to develop closer relations with the Muslim World and the Western countries. These are reflected in the exchange of visits, bilateral agreements on aid, trade, export of manpower and cultural relations with the Muslim countries.

President Zia also amended the constitution and patronized rightist elements in his administration and domestic politics in order to consolidate his position and to secure foreign assistance from the Muslim countries. Domestically, his regime also obtained the support of the rightist political parties. The Zia regime received most of the aid from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Libya, IDB and OPEC sources. Saudi Arabia provided US \$ 284.42 million of foreign assistance. During the Zia regime, economic, trade and overseas employment relations with various Muslim countries were developed significantly as compared with the previous Mujib period. It was during Zia's regime that Bangladesh first officially exported manpower to the Middle Eastern Muslim countries. The volume of overseas employment has increased over the years. All these demonstrated that Bangladesh consolidated and strengthened its relations with different Muslim countries.

However, during Ershad regime, bilateral economic, trade, cultural and overseas employment relations with various Muslim countries were further developed compared with the previous Zia regime. During the Gulf crisis Bangladesh's economic relations with Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were seriously disrupted. The Ershad regime received most of the aid from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Pakistan, Iraq and OPEC sources. Saudi Arabia provided US \$ 350.672 million aid and became the top donor among the Muslim countries.

The Ershad regime also developed trade relations with Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Sudan and other countries and the volume of trade increased over the years. During the Gulf-crisis, Bangladesh supported the U.S.-Saudi Arabia led multi-national forces and sent Bangladeshi soldiers. Moreover, overseas employment to oil rich Middle Eastern countries and remittances of workers increased substantially. The Ershad regime also amended the Constitution of Bangladesh and made "Islam" as the state religion. The regime was apparently vocal about Islamization of Bangladesh polity. The regime also took some measures to appease the Muslim countries. The series of constitutional amendments beginning from the Zia regime to the Ershad regime were made to secure economic aid and to develop relationship with the Muslim World. In fact, Ershad's nine years' foreign policy was in effect the continuity of Zia's foreign policy.

Chapter V concerned with the influences of the Muslim countries in the politics of Bangladesh. Although, the Mujib Government introduced 'secularism' as one of the fundamental state principles in the constitution of Bangladesh. But, 'Secularism' was discarded from the constitution by President Zia regime by the fifth amendment. Later on, the Ershad regime by another amendment, declared 'Islam' as a state religion of Bangladesh. Many experts on Middle East affairs have contended that economic aid from the Muslim countries steered Bangladesh government to cling to Islamic values.

The rightist, fundamentalist political parties have direct or indirect involvement with some oil-rich Muslim countries and these countries provided financial assistance for encouraging the Islamic renaissance in Bangladesh. Although it is difficult to prove this, these parties received money from the Muslim countries. The Islamic N.G.O.s in Bangladesh also got funds from the Middle Eastern countries. They are found to be engaged in spreading Islamic ideas and values in the remote areas of Bangladesh. Thus, Islam was used as an instrument in both domestic and foreign affairs of the country. Subsequently, it became one of the most powerful factors in the process of nation building of Bangladesh. Thus, the successive governments of Bangladesh emphasized Islamic ideology to keep Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim World always strong and warm.

In Chapter VI, we have analyzed the flow of Muslim countries'/Organizations' aid to Bangladesh during the Mujib, Zia and Ershad regimes. Our findings indicate that since post-independent Mujib administration faced severe economic problems, having little option, Mujib administration appealed to the world community to assist in the reconstruction of the war-ravaged economy. Although Bangladesh developed friendly relations with the socialist countries and India at the initial stage of her independence, the aid received from these sources was meagre to meet the needs of the nascent nation. The Muslim donor countries also responded quite late, e.g. after the fall of the Mujib regime. Since 1976, the oil-rich Muslim countries have gradually emerged as an important source of external assistance for Bangladesh.

From 16 December 1971 to 30 June 1990, Bangladesh received a total of US \$ 1367.869 million dollar aid from the Muslim World. Although the Muslim countries'/Organizations' sources provided only 6.60% of the total aid. The provided aid was soft in nature having low interest rates, flexible and almost without any stings.

We have examined the trade and overseas employment relations with the Muslim World in Chapter VII. Our findings indicate that Bangladesh's trade relations with the Muslim countries was not

minimal. The Mujib administration established trade relations with some Muslim countries such as Egypt, UAE, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Algeria, Indonesia, Malaysia and Morocco.

During the Zia regime, Bangladesh emerged as a leading labour exporter country and over the years the magnitude of overseas employment and remittances increased significantly. The remittances from the wage earner's of the Middle Eastern countries considerably supported the balance of payment's deficit of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has considerable employment relations with Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, Bahrain and Libya. From 1976 to 1991, the percentage of Bangladeshi workers in the Middle East is: Professional 5%, Skilled 36%, Semi-skilled 13% and Un-skilled 46-47%. Their jobs are purely on temporary basis. Bangladeshi workers get on average of 4 to 6 times higher than their wages at home. But they get low wages when compared with workers from other countries. Since massive unemployment and under employment is a great concern for Bangladesh, it has no alternative but to encourage export of manpower. Notably, manpower has replaced jute as the major exports of Bangladesh. Remittances of the workers are keeping the Bangladesh economy steady in the face of critical circumstances. Although ready made garments industry is the largest export earner in the country (not in real terms), the highest quantum of foreign exchange is earned through manpower export. It would be no exaggeration to say that this outlet for unemployed and underemployed labour has the potential of playing a crucial role in sustaining the economy and society.

The comparative analysis of the regimes that ruled Bangladesh during 1972 to 1990, indicates a linkage between the level of legitimacy and that of the political use of Islam. Both President Zia and President Ershad governments used Islam as an instrument to accomplish their objectives and interests. The successive governments, particularly Zia and Ershad emphasized Islamic values in pursuing their foreign policy to ensure much needed foreign aid. However, Bangladesh has received a small amount of aid from these sources compared with Western sources. The stability and sustenance

of any regime depended upon its negotiating ability for more aid. On the other hand, Bangladesh's Islamic image and solidarity with the *Islamic Ummah* were frequently used in the development of relations between Bangladesh and the Muslim World. The OIC, IDB and ICTVTR etc. provide opportunities for promoting solidarity and unity among Muslim countries. The conflicts and wars among member countries of OIC, [e.g. Iraq and Iran, Iraq and Kuwait] were the most frustrating set backs for the OIC as well as of the *Islamic Ummah*. The history of inter-Muslim countries relationship suggests that the so-called "*Ummah*" is not the sole determinant, but national interests largely determined their mutual relationship. Bangladesh's relationship with the Muslim countries also conformed to the aforementioned premises.

A P P E N D I C E S

Appendix-I

STATEMENTS/COMMENTS OF THE VARIOUS MUSLIM ORGANIZATIONS AND ALLIANCES DURING THE LIBERATION WAR OF BANGLADESH.

On April 22, 1971, the International Islamic Institute of Colombo charged India with encouraging anti-Pakistan elements in East Pakistan and, in a telegram, appealed to the UN Secretary General U-Thant to ensure the sovereignty of Pakistan to be respected by other countries. The President of World Muslim Congress, sent a telegram (on April 28, 1971) to the Indian Prime Minister maintaining that the Association considered the attitude of India towards Pakistan as an obvious interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan and a premeditated act of aggression¹.

The defence pact of Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in which Pakistan was one of the most influential members, in a joint communique issued on May 1, 1971 concerning Indo-pak deteriorating relations expressed the hope that steps would be taken in all regions of conflict to promote peace and security with respect for the principles of equality, justice and non-interference in internal affairs².

The OIC, Jeddah based, 22-Muslim nations organization, in a joint communique, issued (on July 1, 1971) at the Jeddah conference, expressed, "full support and backing to sisterly Pakistan," in its struggle to maintain its solidarity and territorial integrity and condemned all outside interference in its internal affairs." Later on August 7, 1971 the Secretary-General of the Islamic Secretariat expressed the hope that the problems of "refugees" from East Pakistan could not be solved because of Indian attitude³.

The Arab League was concerned with Pakistan's crisis. The political committee of the Arab League approved (on September 15, 1971) the proposal of the Libyan delegation, which called for efforts to mediate in the Indo-Pakistan conflict. The committee decided to refer the issue to the governments of the member states. The Secretary-General of the Arab League had sent a message to President Yahya Khan of Pakistan and to the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India urging the solution of the present Indo-Pakistan

¹. For details see Pakistan Horizon, Vol.24, No.2, 1971, pp.70,72;

². Ibid., vol.24, No.2, 1971, p.72.

³. Ibid., vol.24, No.3, 1971, pp.76,86.

crisis through peaceful means⁴.

Again, on November 27, 1971, World Muslim Congress had condemned the Indian aggression against Pakistan and had appealed to the Muslim countries to support Pakistan to foil it⁵. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) declared (on 7 December, 1971) that the African countries would spare no effort in the UN to obtain end of hostilities between India and Pakistan. After the liberation war (December 1971) the *Motamare Alam i Islami* had called for economic boycott of India all over the Muslim world as a mark of solidarity with Pakistan⁶.

It was surprising that when Bangladesh achieved victory on December 16, 1971, another Jeddah based Muslim organization *Rabita Al Alam Al Islami* had called upon the Muslim states to declare Jihad against India sending arms as quickly as possible to Pakistan⁷.

On the other hand, the Islamic World Congress, the joint secretariat of five international Muslim organizations (the five World Muslim organizations are, *Motamar Al Alam*, *Al-Islami*, the International Muslim Organization, the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, the World Muslim Conference for Palestine, and the *Rabita Al Alam Al Islami*) along with the Moroccan *Istiqlal Party* condemned Indian interference and extended their support to Pakistan's unity and integrity. Naturally, this forthright support from Muslim countries, Muslim press and Muslim organizations was highly appreciated by the Pakistanis in their struggle for survival as a united entity⁸.

⁴. *Ibid.*, vol.24, No.4, 1971, pp.94,122;

⁵. *Ibid.*, Vol.24, No.4, 1971, pp.126.

⁶. *Ibid.*, vol.25, No.1, 1972, p.107;

⁷. See *Ibid.*, vol.25, No.1, 1972, p.112.

⁸. Mehrunnisa Ali, "East Pakistan Crisis: International Reactions," *Pakistan Horizon*, vol.24, No.2, 1971, p.58.

Exchange of high level visits between Bangladesh and
Muslim countries : Mujib Regime.

Date	Visiting Dignitary	Country of Visit
July 1972	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Malaysia, Indonesia
August 1972	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh (Private Visit)	Egypt
August 1972	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Iraq
September 1972	Foreign Minister of Indonesia	Bangladesh
March 1973	Foreign Minister of Egypt	Bangladesh
July 1973	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Indonesia, Malaysia
August, 1973	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Indonesia
August 1973	Foreign Minister of Turkey	Bangladesh (stop over)
September 1973	President of Bangladesh	Algeria (4th NAM Summit)
September 1973	President of Bangladesh	Bahrain
January 1974	Special envoy of Prime Minister of Bangladesh	Egypt, Saudi Arabia
February 1974	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Algeria, Libya, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan.
February 1974	President of Egypt	Bangladesh
February 1974	Foreign Minister of Kuwait	Bangladesh
February 1974	Secretary General of OIC	Bangladesh
March 1974	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain
March 1974	Foreign Minister of South Yemen	Bangladesh
April 1974	Industrial Development Minister of Senegal	Bangladesh

Continued to next page.

Date	Visiting Dignitary	Country of Visit
March 1974	<i>Dhaka University Institutional Repository</i> President of Algeria	Bangladesh (stopover)
May 1974	President of Senegal	Bangladesh
June 1974	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Malaysia (5th IFMC Conference), Iran, Qatar, UAE and Bahrain
June 1974	Prime Minister of Pakistan	Bangladesh
June 1974	DY-Foreign Minister of Afghanistan	Bangladesh
July 1974	Commerce Minister of Bangladesh	Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia
August 1974	Finance Minister of Bangladesh	Iraq
September 1974	Commerce & Foreign Trade Minister of Bangladesh	Afghanistan, Iran
October 1974	Prime Minister of Bangladesh	Iraq
October 1974	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia
November 1974	Prime Minister of Bangladesh	Egypt, Kuwait
December 1974	Prime Minister of Bangladesh	UAE
December 1974	King of Malaysia	Bangladesh
March 1975	President of Afghanistan	Bangladesh
May 1975	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia
June 1975	Oil & Petroleum Minister of UAE	Bangladesh
July 1975	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia (6th IFMC Conference)
July 1975	Finance Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia (IDB Conference).
July 1975	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Turkey
September 1975	President of Senegal	Bangladesh
October 1975	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia (Islamic Conference)

Source: Compiled from various issues of The Bangladesh Observer, The Dainik Bangla, Weekly Bichitra, The Asian Recorder, Pakistan Horizon, Far Eastern Economic Review and Bangladesh in International Affairs.

Donation of different ~~Draka University Institutional Repository~~ the Food Crises of 1974 (in Bangladesh).

Date	Donor Country/Organization	Amount In cash or kinds (i.e. Relief Materials/goods etc.)
3 August, 1974	US Ambassador	US\$ 25,000.
8 August, 1974	Red Cross Society of Sweden	1 lakh Swedish kroner.
8 August, 1974	The French government	30,000 francs.
9 August, 1974	FRG Ambassador	Taka 2,46,152.
10 August, 1974	U.N. Disaster Relief Office	US\$ 20,000.
12 August, 1974	W.F.P.	US\$ 1 million food aid.
14 August, 1974	USA	US\$ 4 million.
14 August, 1974	Saudi Arabia	US\$ 10 million. (through U.N.O.)
14 August, 1974	USSR	14,045 pounds.
18 August, 1974	Kuwait	300 tons of food stuff.
18 August, 1974	Egypt	10,000 pounds.
19 August, 1974	IDB	US\$ 10 million.
21 August, 1974	Pakistan	5,500 tons of rice and 830 tons of cotton yarn.
23 August, 1974	USSR	30,000 tons of wheat.
25 August, 1974	U.A.E	US\$ 4 million.
28 August, 1974	Qatar	US\$ 2.5 million.
30 August, 1974	Bulgaria	Relief goods worth US\$ 70,000.
16 September, 1974	Algeria	US\$ 1 million.
23 October, 1974	The Netherlands	TK. 2 Crore.
4 November, 1974	U.A.E	21,978 metric tons of wheat
4 November, 1974	IDB	11.923 metric tons of wheat as a grant.
11 December, 1974	Libya	US\$ 1 million
11 December, 1974	Czechoslovakia	Relief material worth TK. 18 lakhs.

Source : Adopted from Nurul Momen, Bangladesh: The First Four Years, op.cit.; Denis Wright, Bangladesh Origins and Indian Ocean Relations (1971-1975), op.cit.; Akmal Hussain, "Bangladesh and Muslim World," in Emajuddin Ahamed (ed.), op.cit., and various Journals, News paper etc.

Appendix-IV

Dhaka University Institutional Repository
Exchange of high level visits between Bangladesh
and Muslim countries : Zia Regime.

Date	Visiting Dignitary	Country of Visit
May 1976	DCMLA of Bangladesh (General Zia)	Turkey (7th IFMC Foreign Minister Conference)
May 1976	DCMLA of Bangladesh (General Zia)	Saudi Arabia and Iran
August 1976	Industry Minister of Malaysia	Bangladesh
May 1977	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Libya (8th IFMC Conference)
July 1977	DCMLA of Bangladesh (General Zia)	Saudi Arabia
September 1977	President of Bangladesh	Egypt
December 1977	President of Bangladesh	Pakistan
March 1978	President of Bangladesh	UAE
April 1978	Foreign Minister of Malaysia	Bangladesh
May 1978	President of Bangladesh	Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt
May 1978	President of Bangladesh	Indonesia
July 1978	Vice President of Iraq	Bangladesh
October 1978	President of Bangladesh	Turkey (stop over in Iran).
December 1978	Finance Minister of Saudi Arabia	Bangladesh
February- March 1979	President of Bangladesh	Iraq
April 1979	President of Bangladesh	Malaysia
June 1979	President of Bangladesh	Kuwait
July 1979	Speaker of Bangladesh National Assembly	Pakistan
November 1979	President of Indonesia	Bangladesh

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Date	Visiting Dignitary	Country of Visit
January 1980	Secretary General of OIC	Bangladesh
February 1980	Mineral & Energy Minister of Indonesia	Bangladesh
September 1980	Amir of Kuwait	Bangladesh
September 1980	President of Guinea	Bangladesh
October 1980	President of Guinea	Bangladesh
November 1980	President of Bangladesh	Morocco and Guinea
January 1981	President of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia (OIC Summit)
February 1981	Foreign Minister of Syria	Bangladesh
February 1981	President of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia (stop-over), Iran, Iraq
December 1981	President of Bangladesh (President Satter)	Saudi Arabia
March 1981	President of Guinea	Bangladesh
March 1981	Foreign Minister of Turkey	Bangladesh
March 1981	President of Bangladesh	Senegal, Mali
March 1981	President of Guinea	Bangladesh
March 1981	PLO Chief & OIC Sec-General	Bangladesh
March 1981	President of Bangladesh	Iran, Iraq & Saudi Arabia (stop over)
April 1981	Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia	Bangladesh
April 1981	President of Bangladesh	Morocco
April 1981	President of Bangladesh	Iran, Iraq
May 1981	President of Bangladesh	Syria
May 1981	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Algeria
May 1991	Dy-Prime Minister of Iraq	Bangladesh
May 1981	President of Bangladesh	Iraq, Iran
July 1981	President of Guinea	Bangladesh
March 1982	President of Bangladesh (President Satter)	Iran, Iraq (OIC Peace Mission), Saudi Arabia.

Source: Compiled from various issues of The Bangladesh Observer, The Dainik Bangla, Weekly Bichitra, The Asian Recorder, Pakistan Horizon, Far Eastern Economic Review and Bangladesh in International Affairs.

Appendix - V

Exchange of high level visits between Bangladesh and Muslim countries : Ershad Regime.

Date	Visiting Dignitary	Country of Visit
April 1982	CMLA of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia
May 1982	CMLA of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia
August 1982	Finance Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia
September 1982	CMLA of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia (to-perform Hajj)
December 1982	Secretary General of OIC	Bangladesh
December 1982	President of Turkey	Bangladesh
May 1983	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia
August 1983	Foreign Minister of Pakistan	Bangladesh
August 1983	Labour and Manpower Minister of Bangladesh	Iraq
September 1983	CMLA of Bangladesh (Ershad)	Saudi Arabia (first state visit)
September 1983	Foreign Minister of Iran	Bangladesh
July 1983	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Iran
December 1983	Deputy Foreign Minister of Egypt	Bangladesh
January 1984	President of Bangladesh	Morocco (4th OIC Summit)
February 1984	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	UAE, Egypt & Iraq
February 1984	President of Bangladesh	Brunei
March 1984	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	UAE, Iran, Egypt
April 1984	Deputy Foreign Minister of Oman	Bangladesh
May 1984	Chief of PLO	Bangladesh (Stop over)
May 1984	President of UAE	Bangladesh
July 1984	Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran	Bangladesh
August 1984	Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran	Bangladesh
September 1984	President of Bangladesh	Iraq
February 1985	Secretary General of OIC	Bangladesh (9th IDB Conference)
February 1985	President of Bangladesh	Turkey, Malaysia
March 1985	President of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia
April 1985	Chairman of PLO	Bangladesh
June 1985	President of Pakistan	Bangladesh
July 1985	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia
August, 1985	President of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia

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Date	Visiting Dignitary	Country of Visit
October 1985	President of Bangladesh	Turkey
November 1985	President of Bangladesh	Malaysia
December 1985	Deputy Prime Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia
January 1986	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Pakistan
January 1986	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Morocco (16th IFMC conference)
June 1986	President of Senegal	Bangladesh (stop over)
August 1986	Dy. Prime Minister of Bangladesh	Egypt
September 1986	Religious Affairs Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, UAE and Pakistan.
October 1986	Prime Minister of Turkey	Bangladesh
November 1986	Finance Adviser of Bangladesh	Pakistan.
December 1986	Vice-Chairman of Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council	Bangladesh
December 1986	President of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia (to Perform Hajj)
January 1987	President of Bangladesh	Kuwait (OIC Summit)
April 1987	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Turkey
April 1987	Foreign Minister of Turkey	Bangladesh
May 1987	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia
June 1987	President of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia (stop over)
June 1987	Religious Affairs Minister of Bangladesh	UAE, Yemen, Qatar, Bahrain, and Egypt.
July 1987	Chairman of PLO	Bangladesh
July 1987	Commerce Minister of Bangladesh	Iran
July 1987	President of Bangladesh	Yemen
July 1987	President of Bangladesh	Pakistan (stop over)
July 1987	Foreign Minister of Turkey	Bangladesh
July 1987	Deputy Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Oman
July 1987	Labour and Manpower Minister of Bangladesh	UAE
July 1987	President of Bangladesh	Indonesia

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Date	Visiting Dignitary	Country of Visit
January 1988	President of Bangladesh	Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia
March 1988	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Morocco(17th IFMC Foreign Minister Conference)
July 1988	President of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia
November 1988	President of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia (Stop-over, to perform-Omrah)
December 1988	President of Gambia	Bangladesh
December 1988	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Iran
March 1989	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Saudi Arabia(18th IFMC Foreign Minister Conference)
March 1989	Chairman of PLO	Bangladesh
April 1989	Rebel Leader of Afghanistan (Gulboudin Hekmatier)	Bangladesh
April 1989	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Afghanistan
August 1989	President of Bangladesh	Iraq
August 1989	Secretary General of OIC	Bangladesh
September 1989	Foreign Minister of Iran	Bangladesh
October 1989	Prime Minister of Pakistan	Bangladesh
October 1989	President of Bangladesh	Malaysia (Commonwealth Summit)
January 1990	Foreign Minister of Bangladesh	Kuwait, Bahrain
March 1990	Foreign Minister of Pakistan	Bangladesh
October 1990	President of Bangladesh	Jordan
September 1990	President of Bangladesh	UAE

Source: Compiled from various issues of The Bangladesh Observer, The Dainik Bangla, Weekly Bichitra, The Asian Recorder, Pakistan Horizon, Far Eastern Economic Review and Bangladesh in International Affairs.

Appendix - VI : FOREIGN AID TO BANGLADESH AT A GLANCE
 (From Dec. 16, 1971 to June 30, 1990)
 (In the books of ERD)

(US\$ in Million)

Category of Aid	Commitment		Cancellation/Adjustment			Disbursement			Pipeline on July 1, 1990	Disb. % over total availability	
	Grant	Loan	Total	Grant	Loan	Total	Grant	Loan			Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Food Aid	3834.6	762.5	4597.1	43.0	0.0	43.0	3673.7	762.5	4436.2	203.9	95.6
Commodity	3475.7	4069.0	7544.7	20.8	115.9	136.7	3190.5	4012.4	7202.9	478.5	93.8
Project Aid	4893.1	9546.8	14439.9	48.7	-172.2	-123.5	3237.2	5851.2	9088.4	5228.0	63.5
Total:	12203.4	14378.3	26581.7	112.5	-56.3	56.2(a)	10101.4	10626.1	20727.5(b)	5910.4	77.8

Notes : (a) The total amount under cancellation / adjustment column reflects inclusion or deduction on account of inter - category transfer of allocation, cancellation of committed amount and exchange rate adjustment of U.S. Dollar with donor's currencies.

(b) Does not include the disbursed portion of pre - liberation on - going project and pre - liberation debt of completed project visibly located in the territory of Bangladesh.

Source : Adopted from Flow of External Resources into Bangladesh, 1990. p.6.

Dhaka University Institutional Repository
Appendix - VII : SUMMARY OF DISBURSEMENT OF 15 MAJOR DONORS
 (From December 16, 1971 to June 30, 1990).

[In Million US Dollar]

Donor	Food		Commodity			Project	Total				
	Quantity '000MT	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Total	
1. I.D.A					1652.237		1856.186			3508.423	3508.423
2. Japan	1213	160.142	163.210	267.096	1211.913	330.332	691.645	757.570	2066.788	2824.338	
3. U.S.A	7669	858.299	484.240	427.301	146.234	501.027	133.030	1786.627	763.504	2550.131	
4. A.D.B					229.423	1.609	1282.818	1.609	1512.241	1513.850	
5. Canada	3910	718.212	10.000	303.010		333.770	6.000	1354.992	16.000	1370.992	
6. UN System	3923	760.956		143.545		452.532		1357.033		1357.033	
7. F.R.G.	527	93.369	2.450	249.818	196.650	240.324	68.800	583.511	267.900	851.411	
8. U.K.	314	58.511		312.441	62.300	327.587		698.539	62.300	760.839	
9. Netherlands	70	14.772		399.244	23.744	177.938	47.556	591.954	71.300	663.254	
10. Saudi Arabia	516	110.750		287.500		81.192	165.702	479.442	165.702	645.114	
11. E.E.C.	2292	436.735		86.728	48.000	57.498		580.961	48.000	628.961	
12. Sweden	153	31.173		196.336		183.458	6.500	410.967	6.500	417.467	
13. U.S.S.R	227	4.920	45.000	29.650	19.340		289.805	34.570	354.145	388.715	
14. India	800	133.325		69.600	59.482	1.075	124.019	184.000	183.501	357.501	
15. France	217	34.614		11.208	18.903	96.639	186.616	142.461	205.519	347.980	
TOTAL :	21831	3395.778	704.900	2783.477	3668.226	2784.981	4858.677	8964.236	9231.803	18196.039	

Source :- Adopted from Flow External Resources into Bangladesh, 1990, P.24.

Appendix - VIII : Flow of Muslim countries Aid to Bangladesh during the Mujib Period, Zia Period and Ershad Period.

[In Million US Dollar]

Name of the country/ Organization	Mujib Period 1971-72-1974-75(a)		Zia Period 1975-76-1980-81(b)		Ershad Period 1981-82-1989-90(c)		Total 1971-72-1989-90(a+b+c)	
	Commit- ment	Disburse- ment	Commit- ment	Disburse- ment	Commit- ment	Disburse- ment	Commit- ment	Disburse- ment
1. Saudi Arabia	10.000	10.000	345.500	284.472	415.362	350.672	770.862	645.144
2. I.D.B.	0.000	0.000	35.320	25.084	190.566	170.657	225.886	195.741
3. OPEC	0.000	0.000	73.900	24.358	106.000	118.636	179.900	142.994
4. Kuwait	29.700	0.000	75.929	52.663	71.621	88.051	177.250	140.714
5. U.A.E.	60.000	40.000	32.200	47.300	21.250	28.025	113.450	115.325
6. Iraq	53.000	33.000	52.426	33.681	0.000	8.745	105.426 *	75.426
7. Pakistan	7.600	7.600	25.920	25.920	50.570	0.570	84.090	34.090
8. Iran	12.500	0.000	0.000	7.500	0.000	5.000	12.500	12.500
9. Turkey	0.000	0.000	4.935	4.935	0.000	0.000	4.935	4.935
10. Libya	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000
Total :	173.800	91.600	646.130	505.913	855.369	770.356	1675.299	1367.869
	(6.70% of total dis- bursement)		(36.98% of total dis- bursement)		(56.32% of total dis- bursement)			

* In 1979-80 Iraq canceled 30.000 million project loan. So the real figure will be
135.426-30.000=105.426.

Source : Computed from the ERD Report, 1990.

Appendix-IX: SUMMARY OF COMMITMENTS AND DISBURSEMENTS OF FOREIGN AID [to Bangladesh]

(Source - wise and category - wise)
(During December 16, 1971 to June 30, 1990).

(In Million U.S. Dollar)

Name of donor Agency	Commitment			Cancellation / Adjustment			Disbursement			Pipeline on July 01, 1990	Disb. over total availability
	Grant	Loan	Total	Grant	Loan	Total	Grant	Loan	Total		
1. SAUDI ARABIA											
a. Food Aid	110.750		110.750	0.00	0.000	0.000	110.750	0.000	110.750	0.000	100.00
b. Commodity Aid	287.500		287.500	0.00	0.000	0.000	287.500	0.000	287.500	0.000	100.00
c. Project Aid	83.100	289.512	372.612	0.00	-36.848	-36.848	81.192	165.702	246.894	88.870	73.53
2. L.D.B.											
a. Food Aid	0.000		0.000	0.00		0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.00
b. Commodity Aid		147.100	147.100	0.00	16.000	16.000		145.514	145.514	17.586	89.22
c. Project Aid	11.500	67.286	78.786	0.00	-1.119	-1.119	1.158	49.069	50.227	27.440	64.67
3. OPEC											
a. Food Aid	0.000		0.000	0.00		0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.00
b. Commodity Aid		60.900	60.900	0.00	0.000	0.000		59.936	59.936	0.964	98.42
c. Project Aid		119.000	119.000	0.00	-0.139	-0.139		83.058	83.058	35.803	69.88
4. KUWAIT											
a. Food Aid	0.300		0.300	0.00	0.000	0.000	0.300		0.300	0.000	100.00
b. Commodity Aid	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.00		0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.00
c. Project Aid		176.950	176.950	0.00	-4.106	-4.106		140.414	140.414	32.430	81.24
5. U.A.E.											
a. Food Aid	5.000		5.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	5.000		5.000	0.000	100.00
b. Commodity Aid	11.000	50.000	61.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	11.000	50.000	61.000	0.000	100.00
c. Project Aid	1.200	46.250	47.450	0.00	1.875	1.875	1.200	48.125	49.325	0.000	100.00
6. IRAQ											
a. Food Aid	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.00		0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.00
b. Commodity Aid	8.263	47.163	55.426	0.00	0.000	0.000	8.263	47.163	55.426	0.000	100.00
c. Project Aid		80.000	80.000	0.00	-60.000	-60.000	0.000	20.000	20.000	0.000	100.00
7. PAKISTAN.											
a. Food Aid	27.190		17.190	0.00	0.000	0.000	27.190		27.190	0.000	100.00
b. Commodity Aid	6.9.00		6.900	0.00	0.000	0.000	6.900		6.900	0.000	100.00
c. Project Aid		50.000	50.000	0.00	0.000	0.000				50.000	0.00
8. IRAN											
a. Food Aid	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.00		0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.00
b. Commodity Aid	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.00
c. Project Aid		12.500	12.500	0.00	0.000	0.000		12.500	12.5000	0.000	100.00
9. TURKEY.											
a. Food Aid	0.840		0.840	0.00	0.000	0.000	0.840		0.840	0.000	100.00
b. Commodity Aid	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.00
c. Project Aid		4.095	4.095	0.00	0.000	0.000		4.095	4.095	0.000	100.00
10. LIBYA											
a. Food Aid	0.000		0.000	0.00		0.000			0.000	0.000	0.00
b. Commodity Aid	1.000		1.000	0.00	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	100.00
c. Project Aid	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.00		0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.00

Source:- Adopted from ERD Report, 1990, pp.16-23.

Appendix - X : Commitment, Disbursement and Repayment of Foreign loans

(As of June 1990, Per ERD ~~Drake~~ ~~University~~ ~~Institutional~~ ~~Repository~~)

OPEC COUNTRIES

Donor/Loan description/ Agreement Date.	Agency	Loan amount net of Cancellation (million)	Disbursed (million)	Repaid (million)	Interest/ Service Charge rate %	Grace Repayment period (years)
IRAN						
ASHUGONJ FERTILIZER FACTORY, 1975/06/30 (M)	BCIC	US\$ 12.500	12.500	2.499	2.000 3.000	10 30
IRAQ						
1. TWO CARPET FACTORY 5/1978, 1978/12/02 (Z)	BJMC	US\$ 11.250	11.250	7.875	2.000	5 10
2. PROJECT AND COMMODITY 1974/10/06 (M)	GOB	US\$ 27.158	27.158	27.158	2.000	5 10
3. PROJECT AND COMMODITY 1980/02/26 (Z)	GOB	US\$ 20.000	20.000	20.000	2.500	2 8
4. OIL PRICE SUPPORT 1980/02/26 (Z)	GOB	US\$ 2.426	2.426	1.184	0.500	2 17
DONOR TOTAL		60.834	60.834	56.217		
KUWAIT						
1. POWER SUPPLY FOR IRRI- GATION 1975/06/30 (M)	PDB, BADC	KD 6.376	6.376	2.024	2.000	6 25
2. MANU RIVER PROJECT 1985/06/30 (M)	BWDB	KD 2.300	2.300	0.644	1.500	8 25
3. EAST WEST INTER CONNEC- TOR 1978/07/04 (Z)	BPDB	KD 6.750	6.750	3.795	2.000	6 20
4. EAST WEST INTER CONNECTOR SUPPLE. 1980/12/15 (Z)	BPDB	KD 3.500	3.500	0.000	2.000	6 20
5. EIGHT RURAL AREAS ELECTRIFICATION 1981/05/09 (Z)	REB	KD 8.000	7.599	0.800	1.500	7 25
6. DEEP TUBEWELL (N.W. REGION) 1981/07/14 (Z)	BADC	KD 7.750	4.618	0.465	1.500	8 25
7. ASHUGONJ THERMAL POWER PROJECT 1982/12/02 (Z)	BPDB	KD 10.000	7.498	1.250	1.500	5 20
8. NORTH WEST TUBEWELL PROJECT 1990/03/24 (Z)	BADC	KD 5.000			2.000	6 19
DONOR TOTAL		49.676	38.641	8.978		

Donor/Loan description/ Agreement Date.	Agency	Loan amount net of Cancellation (million)	Disbursed (million)	Repaid (million)	Interest/ Service Charge rate %	Grace Repayment period (years)
SAUDI ARABIA						
1. RAILWAY PROJECT 1977/7/27 & 1989/5/20(Z)	B,RLY	SR 252.500	130.127	103.680	2.000	5 15
2. JOYPURHAT LIMESTONE 1979/06/02 (Z)	BOGMC	SR 4.601	4.601	4.601	2.000	6 15
3. CHITTAGONG UREA FACTORY 1982/01/12 (E)	BCIC	SR 283.500	274.284	66.150	4.000	6 15
4. D.T.W. PROJECT 1983/12/27 & 1986/10/3(E)	BADC	SR 69.350	69.350	6.936	1.000	5 20
5. RAILWAY TRACK REHABILI- ATION 1983/05/15 (E)	B,RLY	SR 33.936	2.841	2.841	2.000	5 15
6. OIL AND GAS DRILLING 1984/11/14 (E)	BOGMC	SR 31.000	17.163	7.762	3.000	3 12
7. TEESTA BARRAGE PROJECT 1985/03/12 (E)	BWDB	SR 105.000	6.046	2.625	1.000	5 20
8. RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT 1989/12/06 (E)	REB	SR 50.000			2.000	
DONOR TOTAL		829.887	504.412	194.595		
U.A.E.						
1. COMMODITY LOAN 1974/12/21 (M)	GOB	DIRHM 200.000	2000.000	40.000	2.000	10 30
2. MACHINE TOOLS FACTORY 1976/06/26 (Z)	BSEC	DIRHM 38.187	38.187	38.187	5.000	4 10
3. EAST WEST ELECTRICAL INTERCONNECTION 1978/02/28 (Z)	BPDB	DIRHM 60.000	60.000	30.000	4.000	5 15
4. CHITTAGONG UREA FACTORY 1982/01/06 (E)	BCIC	DIRHM 85.000	84.934	29.750	4.500	5 10
Donor Total		383.187	383.121	137.937		

Note : "M" denote Mujib period.

"Z" denote Zia period.

"E" denote Ershad period.

Source : - Adopted from ERD Report 1990 , pp.84-85.

Appendix-XI: Bangladesh Exports by Destinations (Selected Muslim Countries)

[% of total export]

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

Countries	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
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Afghanistan	0.60	0.07	0.22	0.11	0.06	0.03	0.02
Algeria	0.24	0.34	0.22	0.22	0.08	0.18	0.07
Bahrain	-	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.02	0.02
Brunei	-	0.01	-	...	-	0.01	-
Cameroon	0.12	0.57	0.15	0.23	0.27	0.05	-
Egypt	2.73	2.66	1.31	1.03	1.61	1.29	1.39
Ghana	0.01	0.41	0.20	0.43	0.07	0.17	0.18
Iran	10.38	4.34	3.66	3.64	9.94	1.31	2.97
Iraq	1.01	1.69	1.95	1.02	1.19	0.38	0.41
Indonesia	0.01	0.02	0.12	0.15	-	0.02	0.12
Jordan	0.08	0.28	0.26	0.16	0.25	0.03	0.03
Kuwait	0.15	0.24	0.51	0.42	0.28	0.58	0.47
Libya	0.53	-	-	na	-	0.08	-
Malaysia	0.22	0.22	0.34	0.31	0.62	0.27	0.13
Morocco	0.24	0.30	0.24	0.19	0.13	0.11	0.11
Nigeria	0.21	0.46	0.15	0.13	0.10	0.12	0.01
Oman	0.05	0.09	0.24	0.30	0.11	0.03	0.09
Pakistan	8.17	5.76	7.10	3.04	2.92	2.50	1.87
Qatar	0.04	0.05	0.14	0.19	0.10	0.07	0.05
Turkey	1.37	1.29	1.41	0.90	1.32	0.95	1.38
U A E	0.50	0.48	0.71	0.80	0.49	0.36	0.59
Yemen	0.20	0.44	-	0.02	0.19	0.22	0.08
Sudan	1.55	1.39	5.39	0.63	0.18	2.56	0.59
Saudi Arab	0.37	0.55	0.43	0.16	0.15	0.12	0.09
Syria	1.47	2.55	1.06	0.52	0.70	0.83	0.30
Senegal	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.07	-	-

Source : Bangladesh Export Statistics (from 1983-84 to 1989-90) Various Issue.
Export Promotion Bureau, Dhaka.

Appendix - XII

Size of Labour Force, Unemployment and Employment.

[In Million]

	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82
Labour Force	28.7	29.4	30.10	30.73	31.44	32.02
Employment	17.2	18.30	18.60	18.90	19.53	19.74
Unemployment	11.5	11.20	11.50	11.83	11.91	12.28

Source: Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh, 1981, pp. 400-401.
Adopted from A.M.A Siddique, op.cit., p.6.

Appendix -XIII

Bangladeshi Migrants Abroad as of 1982

[In Thousand]

Period	Middle East	Rest of the World	Total
Before 1976	27	166	193
After 1976	213	5	218
Total	240	171	411
Percentage	(58)	(42)	(100)

Source :

Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Bangladesh Embassies in the Middle East. Adopted from A.R.M. Anwar Hossain, op.cit., p.9.

Appendix-XIV

Import Under Wage Earners' Scheme
[Value in Crore Taka]

Year	Imports under WES	Total Import	Shares of WES import/ percent
1976-77	86.94	1399.29	6.21
1977-78	133.15	1821.62	7.30
1978-79	176.76	2172.66	8.13
1979-80	274.51	2830.40	9.69
1980-81	546.37	3236.87	16.87
1981-82	686.70	3454.35	19.82

Source : Ministry of Finance and Planning, (GOB), Bangladesh Economic Survey 1981-82. pp.176,360; Bangladesh Arthanaitik Jarip 1983-84, (vernacula: pp.258,236.

Appendix-XV

Value of Goods Imported under the Wage Earners' Scheme.

Year	Value of goods		Share in the total import value
	In million dollar	Taka in crore	
1982-83	479.1	1140.2	20.8%
1983-84	494.9	1234.2	21.1%
1984-85	695.9	1806.5	26.3%
1985-86	676.1	2020.9	28.6%
1986-87	879.2	2692.6	33.5%
1987-88	1090.2	3406.1	36.5%
1988-89	1435.3	4613.1	44.0%
1989-90 Estimated	1984.0	6525.0	51.5%

Source : Bangladesh Bank.

Note : Taken from Bangladesh Economic Survey, 1989-90, p.132.

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