

NOT THEIR BUSINESS: ON OIC REMARKS ON ARTICLE 370

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: OIC

The statement issued by the Organisation of [Islamic Co-operation's Kashmir Contact Group calling on India to "rescind its actions revoking Article 370"](#), among other stipulations, may not even be worth the paper it is written on. If it has a dubious relevance, it is one that allows the Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan to sell the theory back at home that his trip to New York, focused on Kashmir, has met with some success. From the mid-1990s, when this Contact Group was formed, it has issued several statements on behalf of Pakistan, which happens, not surprisingly, to be a member, as does Turkey, Niger, Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman had Imran Khan flown on his private jet to Saudi Arabia for a two-day visit before speeding him on the same plane to New York and the UNGA. It is also no coincidence that OIC is headquartered in Jeddah and receives its financial raison d'être from its chief benefactor, Saudi Arabia. Further, though it boasts of a membership of 57 countries, its influence on world affairs has always been marginal. It is also extremely doubtful if the statement issued by the Contact Group reflects faithfully the national positions of the individual member states. The United Arab Emirates, for instance, conferred the Order of Zayed, its highest civilian award on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, more than a week after New Delhi's moves on Article 370, and declared that Kashmir was India's internal matter.

The OIC's record of conflict resolution when it comes to issues between OIC member states is poor. In practical terms, its fatuous attempts to meddle in Kashmir, including by appointing a so-called special envoy on Jammu and Kashmir, have amounted to nothing. The organisation, constituted on religious lines, but seeking to fulfil geopolitical interests, needs reforms from within. It could begin by asking Pakistan to change its state policy on terrorism. Imran Khan did admit at various fora that Pakistan had backed entities such as the al-Qaeda, but he should ensure that Pakistan abjures support to Kashmir-centric groups such as the Jaish-e-Mohammed and the Lashkar-e-Taiba. It serves no useful purpose for the OIC to paint Kashmir in communal and religious political colours. India, though not a part of the OIC, has the second largest numbers of Muslims in the world, perhaps more than Pakistan and some of its most ardent backers put together. The OIC would do a lot better if it did something useful to better the lot of its members or mediate between warring Saudi Arabia and Yemen, for instance. In the meanwhile, New Delhi must demonstrate to the world that its new Kashmir policy is in the larger interest of all Kashmiris.

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