

## **Muslim Powerlessness and the Nation-State**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Allah (SWT) in order to save communities from injustice makes them check and counter each other. This mutual checking produces the necessary balance and equilibrium that enable human societies to live in peace and tranquility. When the Muslim Ummah was powerful this provided the required check over other communities that consequently brought about justice and order to human societies. However, Muslims are in decline, they are no longer able to check other communities and defend themselves. There are many factors responsible for the powerlessness of the Muslim world. This paper focuses on the composition of the Muslim nation-state and its consequences. It argues that the present treatment of ethnic, cultural, and lingual diversities within the Muslim nation-state is the source of many problems that confront the Muslim world. The paper argues for the recognition of ethnic, lingual, and cultural diversities within the Muslim nation-state. It suggests that institutions be established to investigate conflicts that may arise from the composition of the Muslim nation-state. The policy of accommodation may, to a greater extent, eliminate the sources of conflicts within the Muslim nation-state and among the nation-states. This subsequently may bring about a degree of unity to the Muslim world that would enable them to check and counter other communities.*

## INTRODUCTION

This paper begins with a discussion on the *Qurānic* verses of 2: 251 and 22: 40. According to these verses it is one of Allah's s.w.t. *sunnah* that He enables groups of people to repel and check each other. The paper examines classical as well as contemporary exegeses on the meanings and implications of these verses. The main objective of the paper is to investigate the reasons behind Muslims' failure to repel and check other communities. The paper argues that the composition of the Muslim nation-state, in many cases, has led to injustices and intra-Muslim conflicts both within and outside the state. Subsequently, this has divided Muslims and provided a fertile ground for manipulation by others. The paper proposes the establishment of an institution within the OIC to investigate potential conflicts that may arise from the composition of the Muslim nation-state, act as a conflict data bank, and find possible ways for the solution and prevention of these conflicts. The paper also argues that unity among Muslims should not be associated with the idea of having a single government for the *Ummah*. The paper concludes that a strong and united Muslim world would provide a responsible check on others and bring a balance to global disorder. It will contribute to global peace and stability that will eventually make the world a more peaceful place for all.

## GOD'S *SUNNAH*<sup>1</sup> CONCERNING HUMAN SOCIETIES

The Holy *Qurān* maintains that "were it not that God repels some people by means of others, corruption-*fasād*-would surely overwhelm the earth" (2:251).<sup>2</sup> The *Qurān* also states that "were it not that God repels some people by means of others, [all] monasteries

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<sup>1</sup> *sunnah* refers to the general norms and orders that Allah has set for human being's life in this world.

<sup>2</sup> Almost all translations of the *Qurānic* verses under our discussion are quoted from, Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qurān*, (Gibraltar: Dar al - Andalus, 1980). Occasionally some references are also made to 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*, (Brentwood: Amanat Corporation, 1992).

and churches and synagogues and mosques – in [all of] which God's name is abundantly extolled would surely have been destroyed [ere now]" (22:40). Some Muslim commentators are of the view that these verses refer to two groups of people one standing for justice, peace, and order (*islāh*) and the other representing the forces that are for oppression, war, and disorder (*fasād*).<sup>3</sup> They subsequently argue that if the forces that are for *islāh* do not check others, then *fasād* will prevail on earth. From this they conclude that if Muslims do not check and repel the non-Muslims the outcome will be *fasād* on earth.<sup>4</sup>

This interpretation, however, unnecessarily restricted the wide implications of the verses. The Holy *Qurān* in these verses refers

<sup>3</sup> The word *fasād* and its derivatives occur "50" times in the Holy *Qurān*. The *Qurān*, however, does not give *fasād* an exact definition. The word covers such general concepts as "denying the truth" and turning "others away from the path of God" (16:88). Depriving "people of what is rightfully theirs" and acting "wickedly on earth" (11:85, 26: 181-183, 29:36) are also forms of *fasād*. It is also considered as the opposite of 'setting things to right' (26:152). The Pharaoh who rebelled against God (20:43), declared himself as "Lord All Highest" (79:24), and "transgressed all bound of what is right" (79:17) was one of those who "spread corruption"-*Mufsideen* (10:91, 28:4). The Holy *Qurān* maintains that "had there been in heaven or on earth any deities other than God, both [those realms] would surely have fallen into ruin!"-*Lafasādātā* (21:22). The *Qurān* also stresses that, "if the truth had been in accord with (unbelievers) desires, truly the heavens and the earth, and all beings therein would have been in confusion and corruption!" - *Lafasādāt* - (23:71). *Fasād*, therefore, has a wide range of meaning. It signifies "a state of disorder, or disturbance, or of destruction, annihilation, consumption, waste, or ruin." See Edward William Lane, *Arabic -English Lexicon*, (Lahore, Islamic Book Centre, 1982) Book 1, 2396. It also connotes mischief, corruption, exploitation and wrong, all forms of injustice, anarchy, and chaos. See al-Syed Muhammad Murtaza al-Zubaidi, *Taj-ul-A'rose*, (Jamalia, Misir: Matbaat al-Khyeria, 1306 H), Vol 2, 452. Mustansir Mir, *Dictionary of Qurānic Terms and Concepts*, (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1987), p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> See for example, Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Beirut: Dar al-Marifah, n.d.); Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad, al-Ansari *al-Qurtabi, al-Jami-ul-Ahkam-ul-Qurān*, (Qairo: Dar al-Shu'b, n.d.); Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad al-Shawkani, *Fathal-Qadeer*, (Beirut: Dar-al-Fiqir, 1973) 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *jamiu al-Bayan a'n Tawel Al-Qurān*, (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), see also Abi al-Qasim Mahmood ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshaf* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, n.d.) p. 382 and Jalal al-Din al-Suiti, *Tafsir al-dor al-Manthur fi Tafsir al- Mathur* (Beirut: Dar - al - Fiqir, 1993) pp. 764-9. For a more comprehensive analysis see Muhammad al-Tahir ibn 'Ashore, *Tafsir al Tahsir wa al-Tamveer* (Lybia: al-Dar-al Tunisyah lil Nashr, n.d.) pp. 500-3; Muhammad Husain Fadhlullah, *Min Wahy al-Qurān* (Beirut: Dar al - Zahra, 1983) pp. 220-21.

to one of the *sunnah* of Allah s.w.t. whereby groups of people are empowered to keep each other, through mutual repelling and checking, in their proper places. It may cover a situation where the forces of *fasād* are checked by other forces that are for justice and order- *islāh*. But it may also equally cover situations when two equally oppressive or evil groups or powers or two groups which are equally just may find themselves, because of their conflict of interests, in a situation where they have to repel and check each other. It is therefore argued that the concept is of a more general import and is not necessarily confined to a struggle between the forces of power (*islāh*) and *fasād*. The verses deal with groups of people as against the individuals to repel and check each other irrespective of their faith or composition. It is this mutual repelling and checking that keeps different groups of people in their proper places and subsequently brings about an equilibrium and balance of power (*islāh*) that saves everyone from injustices. It is, therefore, argued that God in order to protect some from being oppressed by others, makes a group of people whether Muslims or non-Muslims repel and check other equally powerful groups of people

Checking, however, does not mean a "clash."<sup>5</sup> Literally *dafa'* means repelling, repulsing, pushing, thrusting, and driving away a thing from a place with force or strength.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the word *dafa'* embraces the meanings of defending, repelling, and checking as defence means to repel aggressors and to check them. The essence of checking or repelling is to counter aggression and oppression if committed against a certain people. The act is, therefore, defensive in its character and will ultimately produce an equilibrium which will keep different groups of people in a state of balance where no one

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<sup>5</sup> See Samuel P. Huntington. "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, pp. 22-49.

<sup>6</sup> See Edward William Lane. *Arabic-English Lexicon*, (Lahore, Islamic Book Centre, 1982) vol. 1, p. 890. The two most widely used translations of the meaning of the Holy *Qurān* rendered by Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Muhammad Asad translate the word *dafa'* as "check" and "defend (ing) themselves against one another" respectively. In this paper the word *dafa'* is used in a sense that embraces all the three meanings of defending, repelling, and checking as defence means to repel aggressors and to check them.

will be suffer injustice. A “clash,” on the other hand, is offensive in its nature and connotes a sort of conflict where the parties involved are seeking domination. This in itself will result in injustice and is, therefore, a form of *fasād*. Furthermore, unlike checking or repelling which has a purpose behind it the resulting equilibrium “clash” is without any purpose that could serve humanity and is, therefore, a blind and aimless exercise.

Mutual repelling and checking could take various forms and is not necessarily confined to actual wars.<sup>7</sup> It embraces all situations where the interplay of different powers may produce the required checking and the resulting equilibrium. The necessary pre-requisite for mutual checking is the multiplicity of powers. The concept also covers all sorts of local, national, regional and international rivalries and conflicts where mutual repelling and checking by different groups at each level prevent total domination of any one force, produce balance of power, and ensure justice, liberty and order. Disturbing this delicate balance or replacing it with a domination of a certain group will only cause chaos, disorder and thus *fasād*.

It follows from this that it is the *sunnah* of Allah s.w.t. that there should always be multiple centres of power in the world so that “ambition must be made to counteract ambition”<sup>8</sup> to borrow James Madison’s famous sentence in *The Federalist*. Multiple centres of power is, therefore, a healthy phenomenon and in accordance with the laws of God that govern societies. They can balance each other and in the process the occurrence of *fasād* is minimized. Mutual repelling and checking by different groups of mankind provide an opportunity to the small, weak, and oppressed groups or powers to use the rivalries among the big groups or powers to their own advantage and to grow in an atmosphere of equilibrium and balance of power. This will ensure that liberty, justice, and order are provided

<sup>7</sup> See Rashid Riza, *Tafsir-al-Manar*, (Beirut: Dar-al-Ma’rifah, n.d.), Vol. 1, pp. 495-6.

<sup>8</sup> James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, Issac Kramnick (ed.), (London: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 51, 319. *The Federalist Papers* were written during debates over ratification of the American Constitution by State Conventions in 1787.

for both the strong and the weak.<sup>9</sup>

Unipolarity or the concentration of powers, on the other hand, leads to domination of one individual or a group over mankind. There will be no opportunity for the weak groups to assert themselves, to have the necessary freedom for their growth or to be treated with justice. A single power will rule over entire human population, impose its own standards of what is good or right, tolerate no opposition, and will punish any who dare to stand against it. A single power will become both judge and prosecutor and mankind will experience a global tyranny and dictatorship that will lead to *fasād* at a global scale.

But the formation of a “universal monarchy” to use Kant’s phrase is not practical or possible. He argues that the establishment of a universal monarchy would lead to a peace of despotism which would be worse than war.<sup>10</sup> According to him the prospect of a universal monarchy runs contrary to the nature who “employs two means to separate people and to prevent them from mixing: difference of language and of religion.”<sup>11</sup> Allah s.w.t has divided mankind into many different groups which has made it impossible for a single group to dominate the whole human race. By dividing mankind into numerous groups, diversities erect structural safeguards against the potentially oppressive consequence of a monolithic totalitarian world order that would have concentrated world power in a few hands.

It has made it extremely impossible for mankind to unite on any thing but justice. These diversities also enable different groups of mankind to resist and check each other’s encroachment and aggression. If a group is oppressed, colonized, or threatened by another group it will be ethnically, lingually, and culturally, distinct enough to resist the oppressors and oppose their alien and foreign domination. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, for example, European colonizers were resisted by Asian and African nations. They were forced to end their occupation of lands that were not theirs and to abandon their dream

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<sup>9</sup> Muhammad al-Tahir ibn ‘Aashore, *Supra* note 3.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, (Blackwell: Oxford, 1996), p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

of ruling over peoples who were racially, lingually, and culturally different from them. Thus, any conquest of other groups will be a temporary phenomenon and empires would not be everlasting.

The question of how a group can gain power that would enable it to repel, check and counter other powers is a cardinal question of human history and civilization. The rise and fall of nations and civilizations are not mere accidents of history as God "changes(s) the conditions of a people until they change it themselves (13:11)." It is therefore the outcome of their own actions and inactions that affects the journey of nations and civilizations in the ups and downs of history.

One of the most important factors that help a community to gain strength is unity. The Holy *Qurān* urges Muslims to "hold fast, all together by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves" (3:103). The Holy *Qurān* considers all Muslims as "brethren" (49:10) and requires them to help their fellow Muslims if they are aggressed or oppressed by the non-Muslims (4:75-76). They are reminded that "those who are bent on denying the truth are allies of one another, and unless you act likewise (among yourselves), oppressions will reign on earth, and great corruption" *Fasādhu Kabīr* (8:73). They are also warned that as a consequence of disputes they will lose their power (8:46). The following discussion will explore the reasons behind Muslims' failure to unite and make possible suggestions.

## MUSLIMS AND UNITY

Although Muslims solidarity was shown from time to time throughout history, today intra-Muslim conflicts have damaged Muslim unity. Most of these conflicts arise from the nature and composition of the nation-state. The last few decades have witnessed devastating wars among different Muslim nation-states and within Muslim nation-states among different ethnic groups. The idea of the nation-state is a foreign concept that was introduced to facilitate foreign domination over Muslims. In most cases Muslim nation-states are designed not only to be multi-ethnic, multi-national, and multi-lingual entities but

also to divide a certain ethnic or lingual group or groups. The issue of divided ethnicity has produced territorial disputes among neighboring Muslim nation-states which become enemies to each other. Internally, a Muslim nation-state has become a tool for suppressing and destroying ethnic, lingual and cultural diversities. In most cases the majority ethnic group in a Muslim nation-state, in order to achieve lingual and cultural uniformity, has not only imposed its language and culture on the minorities but also tried to achieve homogeneity through assimilation of smaller ethnic minorities.<sup>12</sup>

These ethnic minorities are usually grouped territorially and their loyalty to the state is always suspected. Subsequently, the minority and divided ethnic groups have feelings similar to those which initially existed during the colonial period against the then colonial powers. This has, therefore, turned them into disintegrating forces who are always ready to oppose the political and economic hegemony of a more dominant ethnic or racial group. This could naturally produce demands for greater autonomy or secession which are met by counter-demands by the majority ethnic group for a greater degree of centralisation. There are, therefore, constant struggles between centripetal and centrifugal forces which are exploited from time to time by others. Thus, the nation-state is one of the most divisive institutions that the Muslims world has ever seen.

The inability of Muslims to recognize the fragmented nature of the nation-state and to deal with the diversities in a proper way has further deepened ethnic, cultural, lingual, and sectarian cleavages. The adoption of secularism did away with the unifying factor of Islam that could have been a rallying point for different Muslim ethnic, lingual, cultural or sectarian groups. Democracy in the absence of a genuine power sharing among different ethnic groups entitled the majority ethnic group to take all. Thus, majority rule in a multi-ethnic nation-state means the rule by the majority ethnic group. Democracy with its majoritarian bias offers little to solve the problems of a multi-ethnic

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<sup>12</sup> Malaysia, however, stands as an excellent example of ethnic harmony and deserves to be emulated by other nation-states. Despite the fact that the Malays are the majority and their language is the national language, Malaysian Chinese and Indians have newspapers, Radio and TV channels, and schools in their own languages. They also have their own ethnically based political parties and are given proportional representation both in Parliament and Cabinet.



Muslims nation-state.<sup>13</sup>

Collectively, these internal and external problems have made Muslim nation-states extremely fragile, volatile, and explosive. In order to contain such a state of affairs it is necessary to use force both internally, to deal with problems arising out of ethnicity, and externally to challenge the territorial claims of neighbouring states. This has made the Muslim *Ummah* quite vulnerable, internally, to tensions between different national, ethnic, cultural, and lingual groups and externally, to divisively nefarious interventions that manipulate these tensions.<sup>14</sup> These internal and external problems provide a fertile ground for plunging the entire Muslim world into instability and disorder. Unless these problems are addressed, Muslim *Ummah* will not be able to unite and rise as a power that could provide a check in the interplay of global politics.

This paper does not suggest the dismantling of the present Muslim nation-states. Unity among Muslims cannot be achieved by dismantling all the present Muslim nation-states and replacing them with a single entity or by allowing some of them to annex others by force. A lasting unity needs the willing participation of all Muslim nation-states. Any move towards a genuine unity should start in the Muslim nation-state itself. As a first step towards solving the problems, Muslim nation-states should adopt the policy of ethnic, cultural, and lingual recognition. All ethnic groups should be given a meaningful participation in the affairs of the state including their proportional representation in cabinet, civil service, military, and other important state institutions. They should also have an equitable share in the distribution of economic and other employment opportunities. Assurances should also be provided to them that their ethnicity,

<sup>13</sup> Again Malaysian experience in this respect is instructive. Malaysian Indians who constitute 8% of the population are scattered throughout the country. Thus they do not form a majority in any of the constituencies and therefore can not obtain a single seat in Parliament. To enable the Indian community to have a proportional representation in the country's legislature and cabinet the candidates of Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) are usually voted in by members of other ethnically based political parties. For a detailed discussion on this point and other related problems of democracy see Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, *The Malaysian System of Government* (Kuala Lumpur: Prime Minister's Office, 1995) pp. 33-38.

<sup>14</sup> See Hasan al-Turabi, *Islam as a Pan-National Movement and Nation-states* (Kuala Lumpur: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, 1992), p. 20.

language, and culture are not threatened but are protected by the state. They should also be given the right to maintain contact with citizens of other states with whom they share a common language, culture and ethnic origin. This fair and just treatment of ethnic, cultural, and lingual minorities will greatly diffuse tensions, create and cement good brotherly relations among different components of the Muslim nation-state.

Externally, the need for a closer union among Muslim nation-states cannot be overemphasized. The move in Europe towards a greater union and the emergence of regional economic groupings give nation-states very little future. The Muslim world is almost a contiguous entity and unity among them is dictated by religion, geography, and economy. The Muslim *Ummah*, however, is a multi-ethnic multi-lingual, and a multi-cultural community and any notion of unity should give allowances to these diversities. The issue of reconciling the diversity among Muslims with the unity among them is one of immense significance and is worthy of sustained analysis and research. Among many reasons that led to the disintegration of the Ottoman Caliphate was the dissatisfaction and infighting among Muslims. During its last days the Ottoman Caliphate, especially after 1909, saw the Arabs revolting against the Turks that led to its disintegration. While the Ottoman Caliphate was suffering from internal weaknesses and external pressures, both the British and the French "were planning to divide the Middle East into spheres of influence."<sup>15</sup>

In 1947, almost 23 years after the disintegration of the Ottoman Caliphate, a regional attempt was made to unite the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent in a separate state Pakistan. It was aimed to be an ideological state and was intended to include other Muslims outside the sub-continent as well.<sup>16</sup> However, soon after its establishment, differences surfaced between East Pakistan now Bangladesh and

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<sup>15</sup> James P. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 70.

<sup>16</sup> See Yunas Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan: 1937-1958* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995), pp. 30, 64.

West Pakistan the present Pakistan. These differences evolved around language, representation, and economic disparity. These issues heightened provincial tensions and created suspicions among different ethnic components of the state. In 1970, almost 23 years after the creation of Pakistan, war broke out between the two wings and Pakistan was divided.<sup>17</sup>

The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the division of Pakistan show that Muslims need a new mechanism to untie them in the age of representation and self-government. The Holy *Qurān* is explicit in calling all Muslims as “brethren” (49:10) and any unity among them should reflect this brotherhood. The Object of Islam to form one Muslim *Ummah* is not to destroy the nations as they are God-created entities (49:13), but to make them brothers. The question however, is how should these brothers manage their affairs in relation to each other? A unity that gives rise to a domination of one over others or leads to oppression or injustices or to a destruction of identities and languages destroys the brotherhood among Muslims and is not desirable. It is, therefore, argued that unity among Muslims or the concept of the *Ummah* does not necessarily mean that the whole *Ummah* should be ruled by a single government.<sup>18</sup> It rather means a unity among different independent Muslim nation-states. They, irrespective of their forms of government, may enter into an alliance or a union.

This however, is possible when Muslim countries attempt to solve their old problems, liquidate their old quarrels, and remove their old fears and suspicions. They in this respect can learn from the experience of the European Union. In Europe there are organizations such as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (C. S. C. E.), Conflict Prevention Centre, and Conflict Data Bank that deal with security matters. It is, therefore, suggested that a think-tank be

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<sup>17</sup> For a discussion see Justice (Retd.) Masud Ahmad, *Pakistan: A Study of its Constitutional History* (Lahore: University of the Punjab 1978), Chapter III- XI; M. G. Hussain, *Constitutional History of Pakistan* (Lahore: Kausar Brothers, 1991), Chapter II-VI

<sup>18</sup> The idea of more than one government is not new to the history of Islam. As early as second century after *Hijrah* when *Umayyad* was defeated in Sham by the *Abbasids* they set up a rival government in Andalusia.

established, under the OIC, to collect data and do research on conflicts in the Muslim world. This will open new ways for settling potential disputes and solving border, ethnic, and minority problems.

Furthermore, Muslim countries should also close their ranks by entering into trade agreements among themselves and removing all barriers to a free passage of people, goods, or information. This will promote a greater understanding among them and will make them economically interdependent. Economic, political, cultural and security links among Muslim countries will result in a greater interaction among their people. Subsequently, cohesion will emerge among them that will eventually lead to closer relations among different components of the Muslim world.

## MUSLIM UNITY AND NON-MUSLIMS

Muslim unity, however, should not be construed as a step towards their isolation from the rest of the world. Today, we live in a world where Islam is fast spreading among other communities. Mosques are built in non-Muslim countries and the sounds of *adhan* reverberate across their lands. Islamic *da'wah* and intellectual institutions are operative and people are daily converting to Islam. A unified front will enable Muslims to have a common stand on issues that confront them and to take an active part in global politics. They will play their role as a moderate community *Ummatan Wasatan* that stands for international justice and fair play among different communities and nations (2:143, 3: 110). Muslims' history testifies to the fact that their relationship with other communities was based on justice and fairness and there is no reason that this impression should be changed. Muslims in their history did not colonize other nations, nor did they practice ethnic cleansing or the occupation of lands. Instead they conquered the hearts of the people and showed great respect for other religions and their followers. Muslims, then and now stand for justice and competition with other communities "in doing good works" (5:48). Unity, it is argued, will once again enable Muslims to play their rightful role in global politics by providing a responsible check on other communities

that would produce a balance of power that will make the world a more peaceful place and free from *fasād* and aggression.

## CONCLUSION

It is one of Allah's s.w.t. *sunnah* that He enables communities to check each other. When Muslims united and powerful they were able to check other powerful communities as they used to in history. Today, internal divisions have weakened the Muslims and they have lost their ability to provide a responsible check on other communities. The *sunnah* of Allah s.w.t. however, is operational and other communities are rising to provide the necessary checks on each other.

One of the factors that affect the rise and fall of communities is unity among its members. Unity by giving direction to the collective will of a community enables it to gain power and authority for self-defence and checking others. However, today Muslims are a fragmented community. This state of affairs could be attributed among other things to the composition of the Muslim nation-state. It has become a tool for suppressing ethnic, lingual and cultural diversities and a fertile ground for manipulation by others. This, subsequently, has weakened the Muslim *Ummah* and prevented it to act as a united entity that would provide a responsible check on others.

This paper appeals for a greater recognition of diversities in the Muslim nation-states and within the Muslim *Ummah*. It is also suggested that a think-tank be established under the O. I. C. to investigate potential conflicts that may arise from the composition of the Muslim nation-state and to provide possible solutions. It is also argued that unity of the Muslim *Ummah* does not mean the creation of one central government but rather a union among different Muslim countries. The unity of the *Ummah* should give allowances to ethnic, lingual, and cultural diversities. Unless there is a fundamental change in our attitude towards ethnic, lingual and cultural diversities, conflicts may arise. These conflicts have the potential to prevent the Muslim *Ummah* from acting in unity that may provide a responsible check on others.

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