Hubris in the World of Ideas and Debris in the World of Affairs
The Clash of Civilizations Revisited: A Critique

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I. Introduction

Samuel P. Huntington’s article in Foreign Affairs appeared in 1993 and its expanded book version was published three years later. His thesis was first made public in 1992 at the American Enterprise Institute’s Bradley Lecture1.

The timing of his article along with Francis Fukuyama’s essay, “The End of History,” in 1989 and its book version three years later2 was almost perfect in that it brought about wider global audience and attention in media as well as in the international security and foreign affairs community.

The validity and feasibility of their worldviews aside, one obvious and simple reason was that their analyses were to fill the intellectual vacuum created by the demise of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet and Eastern European communism on the one hand and the triumph of democracy and market economy on the other.

Both authors succeeded, at least initially, in quenching the thirst of many intellectuals, policy analysts and public officials everywhere who were not only looking for explanations for the collapse of communism but also for the new unfolding post-Cold War world order. Their theses, thus, became highly controversial, generating heated debates among scholars, pundits and policy analysts.

The aim of this review essay will be basically two-fold. First, I will summarize Huntington’s thesis, and his diagnosis and prognosis, i.e., his version of “the post-Cold War new world order.” Second, I will critically examine the feasibility of his paradigm of global conflicts in particular reference to East Asia.

II. Huntington’s Paradigm

Huntington claims that his book is not a work of social science but “an interpretation of the evolution of global politics after the Cold War.” It is a kind of “framework” or “paradigm” for viewing global politics, meaningful to scholars and useful to policymakers (p. 13).

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1. **Main Theses**

His theses consist of the following 12 subject matters: 1) the concept of civilizations; 2) the question of a universal civilization; 3) the shifting balance of power among civilizations; 4) cultural indigenization in non-Western societies; 5) the political structure of civilizations; 6) conflicts generated by Western universalism; 7) Muslim militancy; 8) Chinese assertion; 9) balancing and band-wagoning responses to the rise of Chinese power; 10) the futures of the West and of a world of civilizations; 11) the crucial impact of population growth on instability and the balance of power; and 12) clashes of civilizations as the greatest threat to world peace, and an international order based on civilizations as the surest safeguard against world war.

The last two subjects—global demographic instability and a multipolar, multicivilizational world order—were not covered in his *Foreign Affairs*’ article.

2. **Central Themes**

Huntington contends that culture and cultural identities at the broadest level are civilizational identities, which are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world (p. 20). To explain his contention, the book is divided into five parts. In Part I, he argues that for the first time in history global politics is both multipolar and multicivilizational. Modernization, which is not Westernization, is producing neither a universal civilization nor the Westernization of non-Western societies. In Part II, he pinpoints at the shifting balance of power among civilizations. To support his idea, he indicates to the relative decline of the West, the expanding economic, military and political influences of Asian civilizations, the demographic explosion of Islam and its destabilizing consequences for Muslim countries and their neighbors, and the reaffirming of the value of their own cultures by the people of non-Western civilizations.

In Part III, he posits that a civilization-based world order is emerging. It means that societies sharing cultural affinities are cooperating with each other. Thus, efforts to shift societies from one civilization to another are (will be) unsuccessful, and countries (will) group themselves around the core states of their civilizations. In Part IV, he presages two kinds of conflicts. At the inter-civilization level, the West’s universalist pretensions will clash with other civilizations, most seriously with Islamic and Sinic. At the local level, fault line wars, largely between Muslims and non-Muslims, will occur, escalating to a broader conflict which can be halted only by the efforts of core states. Finally, in Part V, he asserts that the survival of the West depends on Americans reaffirming their Western identity and Westerners accepting their civilization as “unique not universal” and uniting to renew and preserve it against the challenges from non-Western societies. He stresses that a global war of civilizations can be avoided only when world leaders accept and cooperate to maintain the multicivilizational character of global politics (pp. 20-21).

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3 By core states he means “…most powerful and culturally central state or states.” For details, see *Op.Cit.*, p. 135.
3. On Civilization(s) and Culture

He believes that people define themselves in terms of “ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions.” He argues that “we know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against.” He emphasizes that religion is “the principal defining” characteristic of civilizations (p. 21, p. 47, and p. 253). He considers language, second only to religion, to be “a factor distinguishing people of one culture from those of another” (p. 70).

To substantiate his definition, he quotes Christopher Dawson: “the great religions are the foundations on which the great civilizations rest,” but misquotes Max Weber: “of Weber’s five world religions, four—Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Confucianism—are associated with major civilizations” (p. 47). He then divides post-1990 world of civilizations into nine regions: Western, Latin American, African, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist, and Japanese (pp. 21-29).

Since “the central elements of any culture or civilization are language and religion,” he postulates that a universal civilization requires a universal language and a universal religion. But he denies both the existence and the emergence of a universal civilization. He is also skeptical about whether or not the Western civilization is a universal civilization. The past, the present and the future worlds have not been moving in the direction of creating a universal civilization (p. 59).

As an example, English is “the world’s way of communicating interculturally just as the Christian calendar is the world’s way of tracking time, Arabic numbers are the world’s way of counting, and the metric system is, for the most part, the world’s way of measuring.” It is a tool for communication, but not a source of identity and community (p. 61).

To begin with, what is Western civilization? Eight distinctive characteristics of Western civilization are identified: 1) the classical legacy such as Greek philosophy, Roman law, Latin, and Christianity; 2) Catholicism and Protestantism; 3) European languages; 4) separation of spiritual and temporal authority; 5) rule of law; 6) social pluralism; 7) representative bodies; and 8) individualism (pp. 69-72). Later he reemphasizes uniquely Western heritages and American political creed such as liberty, democracy, equality before the law, rule of law, constitutionalism and private property (p. 305). Quoting Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., he lists “ideas of individual liberty, political democracy, rule of law, human rights, and cultural freedom” as uniquely European ideas, which make Western civilization unique (p. 311).

He adopts, wittingly or unwittingly, both the cyclical view of world civilizations and the decline thesis of the West. Among others, he quotes Carroll Quigley’s 1961 seven-stage cycle of a civilization: mixture, gestation, expansion, age of conflict, universal empire, decay, and invasion (p. 44, pp. 302-303). By applying this

5 Weber cites six, not five great religions including Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. For details, see Max Weber, Economy and Society; eds. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), Volume 1, pp. 611-634.
civilization cycle, he argues that the West is, presently, somewhere in the stages of decay and invasion (pp. 302-303). He writes:

_The Islamic Resurgence and the economic dynamism of Asia demonstrate that other civilizations are alive and well and at least potentially threatening to the West. A major war involving the West and the core states of other civilizations is not inevitable, but it could happen. Alternatively, the gradual and irregular decline of the West which started in the early twentieth century could continue for decades and perhaps centuries to come. Or the West could go through a period of revival, reverse its declining influence in world affairs, and reconfirm its position as the leader whom other civilizations follow and imitate (p. 302)._  

During the Cold War, countries in relation to the two superpowers were classified as “allies, satellites, clients, neutrals, and nonaligned.” But in the post-Cold War world he classifies countries in relation to civilizations as “member states, core states, lone countries, cleft countries, and torn countries” (p. 135). A core state is defined as the most powerful and culturally central state or states, viewed by the member states of a civilization. A lone country like Ethiopia is “culturally isolated by its predominant language, Amharic, written in the Ethiopian script; its predominant religion, Coptic Orthodoxy; its imperial history; and its religious differentiation from the largely Muslim surrounding peoples” (p. 136). Haiti and Japan, too, belong to this category (pp. 136-137). A cleft country is, like Sudan, where a large group belongs to different civilizations. He puts in this category the Baltic (Protestant and Catholic), Orthodox and Muslim republics in the former Soviet Union, Catholic Slovenia and Croatia, partially Muslim Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Orthodox Serbia-Montenegro and Macedonia in the former Yugoslavia. A torn country is one which has a single predominant culture in one civilization but its leaders want to shift it to another civilization (p. 138). Peter the Great’s Czarist Russia, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s Turkey since the 1920s, Mexico since 1980 and Australia in the early 1990s belong to this group (pp. 139-154).

Further, he believes that the West “has now two cores, the United States and a Franco-German core in Europe, with Britain an additional center of power adrift between them. Islam, Latin America, and Africa lack a recognized core state, while Sinic (China), Orthodox (Russia), and Hindu (India) civilizations each have one dominant core state” (p. 135).

4. Fault Line Conflicts and War in the post-Cold War World

Huntington asserts that in the post-Cold War world intercivilizational conflict takes two forms. At the micro level, fault line conflicts occur between neighboring states from different civilizations, between groups from different civilizations within a state, and between groups which are attempting to create new states out of the wreckage of old as in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. At the macro level, core state conflicts occur among the major states of different civilizations (pp. 207-208, p. 255). He posits that core state wars are likely to arise under two circumstances—either when the fault line conflicts between local groups escalate or when the global balance of
power among civilizations shifts (pp. 208-209, p. 255).

Concretely, the dynamism of Islam is the ongoing source of many relatively small fault line wars and the rise of China is the potential source of a big intercivilizational war of core states (p. 209). He, thus, devotes a considerable amount of space to the rise of East Asia, especially China. He reminds us that the economic changes in Asia, particularly East Asia, are one of the most significant developments in the world in the second half of the twentieth century and that “the Asia of economic sunshine will generate an Asia of political shadows, an Asia of instability and conflict” (p. 218). He writes:

Insofar as the international relations that count in the post-Cold War world have a primary turf, that turf is Asia and particularly East Asia. Asia is the cauldron of civilizations. East Asia alone contains societies belonging to six civilizations—Japanese, Sinic, Orthodox, Buddhist, Muslim, and Western—and South Asia adds Hinduism. The core states of four civilizations, Japan, China, Russia, and the United States, are major actors in East Asia; South Asia adds India; and Indonesia is a rising Muslim power. In addition, East Asia contains several middle-level powers with increasing economic clout, such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Malaysia, plus a potentially strong Vietnam. The result is a highly complex pattern of international relationships, comparable in many ways to those which existed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe, and fraught with all the fluidity and uncertainty that characterize multipolar situations (p. 219).

He also identifies the two Koreas and the two Chinas as the “leftovers from the Cold War” in the region (p. 219). He posits that the probability of Koreans fighting Koreans exists but is low and the prospects of Chinese fighting Chinese are higher but still limited, unless the Taiwanese should renounce their Chinese identity and formally declare an independent republic of Taiwan. While violence between the two Koreas or the two Chinas remains possible, cultural commonalities are likely to erode that possibility over time. After centuries of strife, Western Europe is peaceful and war is unthinkable except in East Asia. Economic dynamism, territorial disputes, resurrected rivalries, and political uncertainties fueled significant increases in the East Asian military budgets and military capabilities in the 1980s and 1990s. He quotes Aaron Friedberg: “Europe’s past could be Asia’s future” (p. 220). Later he writes that “more probably, Asia’s past will be Asia’s future” (p. 238).

He juxtaposes the fundamental differences in society and culture as the source of conflict between Asia and America. Asian societies stress the values of authority, hierarchy, subordination of individual rights and interests, importance of consensus, avoidance of confrontation, “saving of face” and, in general, supremacy of the state over society and of society over the individual. In contrast, America believes in liberty, equality, democracy, and individualism, and exhibits a proclivity for distrust of government, opposition of authority, promotion of checks and balances, encouragement of competition, sanctity of human rights, forgetting the past, ignoring the future and focusing on maximizing immediate gains (p. 225).

He posits that the rise of China poses a more fundamental challenge to the United States. U.S. conflicts with China cover a much broader range of issues than those with Japan, including economic questions, human rights, Tibet, Taiwan, the South
China Sea, and weapons proliferation. The point is that both China and the United States are unwilling to accept each other’s leadership or hegemony in Asia.

For over two hundred years, the United States has attempted to prevent the emergence of an overwhelmingly dominant power in Europe and for almost a hundred years, beginning with its Open Door policy towards China, it has attempted to do the same in East Asia. To achieve these goals, America has fought two world wars and a cold war against Imperial Germany, Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, the Soviet Union, and Communist China. And the emergence of China as the dominant regional power in East Asia challenges the core interests and strategic objectives of America (pp. 228-229).

What he called Asian assertiveness or affirmation has four components: (1) East Asia’s rapid economic development will soon surpass that of the West; (2) Asian economic success is largely a product of Asian culture, basically Confucian—order, discipline, family responsibility, hard work, collectivism, and abstemiousness. Asian Confucian culture is superior to that of the culturally and socially decadent West, typified by self-indulgence, sloth, individualism, crime, inferior education, disrespect for authority, and mental ossification (p. 108); (3) significant commonalities among Asian societies exist such as thrift, family, work, discipline, the rejection of individualism, and the prevalence of “soft authoritarianism” or very limited forms of democracy; and (4) East Asian development and Asian values are models which non-Western societies should emulate in their efforts to catch up with the West (pp. 108-109).

He points out that “the economy of East Asia is increasingly China-centered and Chinese-dominated” (p. 169). He quotes Murray Weidenbaum:

*Despite the current Japanese dominance of the region, the Chinese economy is rapidly emerging as a new epicenter for industry, commerce, and finance. This strategic area contains substantial amounts of technology and manufacturing capability (Taiwan), outstanding entrepreneurial, marketing, and services acumen (Hong Kong), a fine communications network (Singapore), a tremendous pool of financial capital (all three), and very large endowments of land, resources, and labor (mainland China) (p. 171).*

He adds that “Korea culturally has much in common with China and historically has tilted towards China” (p. 235). Japan, too, he believes, “over time and with great anguish and soul-searching is likely to shift away from the United States in the direction of China” (p. 241). He predicts that “as China scores military successes, Japan nervously begins to bandwagon with China, shifting its position from neutrality to pro-Chinese positive neutrality and then yielding to China’s demands and becoming a cobelligerent” (p. 315).

For the United States he advises that neither internationalism nor isolationism, neither multilateralism nor unilateralism will serve its interests, and urges it to adopt “an Atlanticist policy of close cooperation with its European partners to protect and advance the interests and values of the unique civilization they share” (p. 312).

Finally, he hypothesizes the “most plausible and hence most disturbing” cause of war scenario: intervention by the core state of one civilization (the United States) in a dispute between the core state of another civilization (China) and a member state of that civilization (Vietnam). To the United States such intervention is necessary to uphold international law, repel aggression, protect freedom of the seas, maintain its access to
South China Sea oil, and prevent the domination of East Asia by a single power. To China, American intervention is a totally intolerable but typically arrogant attempt by the leading Western state to humiliate and browbeat China, provoke opposition to China within its legitimate sphere of influence, and deny China its appropriate role in world affairs (p. 316).

Is war in a multicivilizational, multipolar world inevitable or unavoidable? He proposes a set of three rules which may prevent such war. By the abstention rule, he means that the core states abstain from intervention in conflicts in other civilizations. The joint mediation rule is required for core states to negotiate with each other and to contain or halt fault line wars between states or groups from their civilizations. The third is the commonalities rule which makes peoples in all civilizations to search for and attempt to expand the values, institutions, and practices they have in common with peoples of other civilizations (pp. 316-320).

In brief, a kind of gloom and doom for the future of human civilizations runs deep throughout his book as his phrase, “a global Dark Ages, possibly descending on humanity” attests (p. 321). Nevertheless, his plea for the world’s great civilizations to hang together continues until the end.

III. A Critique

Huntington admits that “the world is too complex to be usefully envisioned for most purposes as simply divided economically between North and South or culturally between East and West” (p. 33). He acknowledges that his “civilizational paradigm” is a relatively simple map and declares that “no paradigm is good forever.” “Paradigms,” he elaborates, “generate predictions, and a crucial test of a paradigm’s validity and usefulness is the extent to which the predictions derived from it turn out to be more accurate than those from alternative paradigms” (p. 37). If one applies his yardstick, the civilizational paradigm is undoubtedly useful in explaining the post-Cold War conflicts around the world to a certain extent. Validity and usefulness aside, his predictions of, and prescriptions for, future conflicts both at the local and global dimensions are noteworthy.

Bearing the above in mind, the following questions regarding Huntington’s clash of civilization paradigm are raised here.

First, many, especially anthropologists, are critical of Huntington’s usage of the concepts(-) “civilizations” (plural) and “civilization” (singular) as well as his deliberate muddling of “cultures” and “civilizations.” Roger Sandall, for instance, contends that “by degrading the concept of universal “civilization” and elevating a multiplicity of “civilizations” in its stead, Huntington mimics an already well-established and disastrous precedent—the transformation of “culture” (singular) into a multiplicity of uncultures, noncultures, and unmistakable anticultures.” Further, he writes:

...the deliberate muddling of “cultures” and “civilizations,” of the great and the small, of the significant and the insignificant, of the ancient and ossified alongside the

modern and progressive, is how Huntington routinely proceeds. In a number of places he tells that “civilizations are cultures at large,” making it sound as if size and scope and complexity matter little.8

For example, can Huntington explain why and how Arab, Turkish, Persian, and Indonesian differences outweigh their Islamic civilizational unity?9 Or, as Peter Sederberg wrote, “upon closer examination, though, local aspirations for autonomy in places like Kashmir and Chechnya seem more important than contending civilizations.” Moreover, we must not underestimate “the divisions within Islam that could degenerate again into bloody wars.”10

Second, his categorization of Japanese civilization as a unique and independent entity is untenable, unless he had other hidden agenda and/or motivations. He, for instance, uses the phrase “re-Asianize” Japan both to stress Japan’s uniqueness and independence from the rest of Asia and to remind us of Japan’s exceptionalism in non-Western cultures and civilizations (p. 237). In some ways, Japan has been unique and exceptional,11 at least since the Meiji Restoration of 1868, among Asian nations. It was the only non-Western colonial power before World War I through World War II, the only non-Western member nation of the OECD12 until Mexico and the Republic of Korea joined it in 1994 and 1996, respectively, and the first non-Western country to have hosted the Olympic Games in 196413 until Mexico and Korea hosted them in 1968 and 1988, respectively.

Above all, Huntington’s treatment of Japan as a unique and independent civilization contradicts his own definition of civilizations as being “the most enduring of human associations.” He writes that “empires rise and fall, governments come and go, civilizations remain and survive political, social, economic, even ideological upheavals” (p. 43). If civilizations are “very long-lived,” and “the longest story of all,” then, separating Japanese civilization from what he called Sinic civilization is even more unpersuasive. Lumping Korea under Sinic rather than East Asian civilization, too, is unconvincing. For, the history of East Asia, like that of the other parts of the world, attests that the flow of culture and civilization is not a one-way but two-way interaction.

Specifically, China, Korea and Japan share centuries-long historical traditions and religious heritages such as Buddhism (Mahayana) and Confucianism, not to

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8 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Japan made a horrendous mistake when it tried to retain a command economy and to rely on huge corporate structures. The inherent inflexibility of this centrally planned and oligarchic system has debilitated their economy. Added to this is the demographic crisis they face—declining birthrates, more abortions than live births, low immigration—and the resulting problems which include reduced economic growth and an eventual collapse of the social welfare net as there are fewer and fewer workers left to pay for the retirement of the aged. Japan is a civilization in decline, perhaps irreversible decline. The only imaginable way for them to reverse their slide is to become more Western. In Brothersjudd.com.
12 Japan joined OECD in 1964, three years after it was founded in 1961. Turkey was the only non-Western state among its 20 founding members. Slovakia is the latest and the 30th member of OECD. For details, see Katarina Trajkinkova, “Review of Slovakia’s Accession to the OECD,” BIAEC, recnik 9, 2/2001, pp. 33-36.
13 The 1940 Tokyo Olympiad was cancelled due to the outbreak of World War Two.
mention their proclivity for religious syncretism. Besides, how can Huntington explain his placing of Korea under the Sinic civilization when the Korean language is closer to Japanese than to Chinese? Even more perplexing is the fact that Korea and Japan have incorporated Chinese characters in their respective languages like European languages incorporated Latin.

Third, notwithstanding his defining characteristics of civilization as long-lived and the most enduring heritage of human society, his three maps—Figure 1, “West and the Rest: 1920,” Figure 2, “the Cold War world: 1960s,” and Figure 3, “the World of Civilizations: 1990s”—cover a time span of little over 80 years at most. There is thus a built-in mismatch here because his civilization paradigm stresses longevity while it attempts to cover a very short period.

Besides, his explanation of why the clash of civilizations in post-Cold War world is the defining factor in global politics is unconvincing at best and erroneous at worst. It is unconvincing because throughout world history, wars primarily caused by, or under the pretext of religion (“jihad” or “crusade”), have been numerous. The demise of communism and the triumph of democracy alone cannot fully explain the “clash of civilizations” as being the cause of present and future global conflicts. Lumping together conflicts of today and tomorrow under his broad fault line war categories both at the micro and macro levels is too sweeping.

Not all present and future local and global conflicts and tensions are, however, explainable solely by religious, linguistic and/or ethnic causes. Such factors of culture and civilization have been and will be the underlying, contributing and/or exacerbating causes. Throughout history, however, conflicts and wars have been far more frequently triggered by mutually irreconcilable, conflicting, and/or unyielding positions, policies, and politics of each nation’s pursuit of security, economic interests and/or prestige.

As a case in point, he characterizes the Gulf War in 1990 as “the first post-Cold War resource war between civilizations.” At stake was the issue of “whether the Saudi and Emirate governments are dependent on Western military power for their security or are independent anti-Western regimes which would be able and might be willing to use the oil weapon against the West” (pp. 251-252). Calling it a “resource war” may make sense but characterizing it as the resource war between Muslim and Western civilizations seems farfetched. How can, then, he explain Japan, Korea, China, and India as being the 2nd, 3rd, 7th and 10th largest oil importers in the world respectively? How can he explain the serious policy and strategic discord and differences among the EU member states such as Germany, France, and Britain, not to mention Russia, over the current Iraq War operation? As Jack F. Matlock, Jr. aptly pointed out, “there are at least as many conflicts within the civilizations...as there are between them, probably more, in fact.”

He wrote:

...cultural differences are not only sources of potential conflict; they are also the spice of life. Many differences are benign, even productive, and the variety they contribute to civilization in the singular enriches all mankind.

15 Ibid., p. 433.
Matlock went even further: “often, it is cultural similarity, not difference that nurtures conflict.” Specifically, he contended that “the people of Bosnia shared language, culture, ethnicity, and history but “the conflict there was ultimately one over political power, not a part of some transcendental civilizational struggle.” Cultural affinities, throughout the twentieth century, have proven secondary to geopolitical realities.

Fourth, his West-centric proclivity and the rather casual bifurcation of the world into “the West and the Rest” or “America against the world,” are of Kipling’s east-west-twin-shall-never-meet variety. His broad-scope global dichotomy (the West and the Rest), trichotomy (the Islamic resurgence, the East Asian dynamism, and the West) and nine-fold classification of the post-Cold War world are neither theoretical nor conducive to policy improvement, as compared to the Cold War era taxonomies such as the free world, the Communist world and the non-aligned, or the first world, the second world, the third world and the like. His post-Cold War world taxonomy is, in short, more like a new wrap on the same cake rather than two different cakes.

Even in his most recent book, Who Are We?: The Challenges to America’s National Identity, he unabashedly claims that he is a patriot and a scholar and advocates “the importance of Anglo-Protestant culture and creed of the American founding fathers.” Although he distinguishes Anglo-Protestant culture from Anglo-Protestant people, his advocacy certainly does not reflect what America today is or should be. As an example, he proclaims that “America becomes the world. The world becomes America. America remains America.” But America, albeit its greatness, is only a part of the world, and the world doesn’t become America; only America becomes the world.

Above all, America does not remain America. As America’s past differs from its present, its future will also differ from its present. Longing for, and clinging to, the past, therefore, is antiquated and even atavistic. Perhaps, it is better to search for a new creed compatible with the rapidly transforming multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious America.

He contends that “American nationalism has been an idealistic nationalism, justified, not by the assertion of the superiority of the American people over other peoples, but by the assertion of the superiority of American ideals over other ideals.” He further writes: “Critics say that America is a lie because its reality falls so far short of ideals. They are wrong. America is not a lie; it is a disappointment. But it can be a disappointment only because it is also a hope.” The crux of the matter here is, however, that America even as a hope is increasingly losing its ground, particularly under the Bush administration and its America-first unilateralist policy predilection.

It is also all the more puzzling because Huntington is an American. Granted that America today is not exactly a melting pot, but more of a salad bowl, and granted

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16 Ibid., p. 433.
17 Ibid., p. 434. and p. 436.
19 Ibid., p. 366.
further that the deep-seated racial divisions still persist, but American racial relations today are not like those in America’s pre-colonial, colonial, pre and post-Civil War, the World War One and Two, the Korean War and the Vietnam War eras. Doubtless, many areas need improvement and correction, but the race question in America today is not the same as in the past. America, a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, poly-cultural land of natives and immigrants, is and should be a model of future society and polity where people can live together peacefully rather than a core state of the Western civilization ready to confront the rest of the world civilizations, be they the resurgent Islamic militancy, the Sinic or East Asian assertiveness or the non-Anglo-Protestant culture within America.

His categorizing of the United States as the core state of the Western civilization is not only a misnomer but a dangerous bias. It is against the American founding spirit of liberty, openness, opportunity and diversity. It is dangerous because his clash paradigm of tri-polar world civilizations, like a self-fulfilling prophecy, may encourage a pessimistic future world order rather than accurately reflecting the changing realities of America and the world. How can his Western Christian Anglo-Protestant culture explain what Philip Jenkins called “the clash between declining liberal Western churches and the growing Pentecostal and fundamentalist churches of Africa, Asia, and Latin America?” How can he reconcile his own preaching—“there can be no true friends without true enemies. Unless we hate what we are not, we cannot love what we are”—with the fundamental teachings of Christianity, which are, as he himself readily admits, the basis of Western civilization? Is what he called “America’s Anglo-Protestant culture” such as the English language, Christianity, the rule of law, the responsibilities of rulers, the rights of individuals, dissenting Protestant values of individualism, the work ethic and the belief that humans have the ability and duty to create heaven on earth and ‘city on the hill’ uniquely and exclusively American?

How can he explain the current diverse racial mix of his own Harvard campus? Has he heard the campus joke that the UCLA stands for the University of Caucasians Lost among Asians and that the University of California, Irvine, is known as the University of Chinese Immigrants? Are these increasingly multi-racial American campuses having serious problems that cannot be resolved? Is this increasing multi-racial mix a threat? If so, it is a threat to whom? How can he explain the state of Hawaii today where diverse racial groups live harmoniously together?

There is no denying that wars and bloody conflicts have been rampant for the

21 Of the approximately two billion Christians today (one-third of the planetary population), 560 million live in Europe and 260 in North America, for a total of 820 million. The combined number of Christians in Latin America (480 million), Africa (360 million), and Asia (313 million) is 1.15 billion. On a percentage basis, then, almost 60% of Christians in the world today live in the Third World. Jenkins forecasts that of the expected 2.6 billion Christians in 2025, 67% will live in Africa (633 million), Asia (640 million), or Latin America (460 million). He writes that “soon the phrase ‘a White Christian’ may sound like a curious and mildly surprising as ‘a Swedish Buddhist.’ For details, see Philip Jenkins, The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), which was reviewed by Ian T. Douglas, “The Clash of Global Christianity,” Wordandi.com (2003).


bulk of human history. Still, the trend has been of minimization of bloody solutions and steady expansion of more civil resolutions. After all, ignorance breeds arrogance, and arrogance invites antagonism. Hubris leads to debris. War brings death and destruction.

The world of ideas differs vastly from the world of affairs. As the knowledge base of humanity expands, the space of inter-personal, in-group, inter-group, intra-state, inter-state and inter-cultural conflicts, or to use Huntington’s phrase, inter-civilizational fault lines are bound to shrink. Rather than claiming a unique culture and civilization to defend against other surging civilizations and culture, it is time to pursue dialogue for the survival of common humanity.

Fifth, the recent World Values Survey, conducted twice in 1995-96 and 2000-2002 covering 70 countries, challenges Huntington’s premise that the core clash between the West and Islam is over political values. Societies throughout the world, Muslim and Judeo-Christians alike, see democracy as the best form of government. The real fault lines at this point in history between these two cultures are gender equality and sexual liberalization, let alone the widening economic divide.24

Sixth, his clash-of-civilization paradigm fails to explicate the present Korean situation. Except that divided Korea is the last vestige of the Cold War era or the conspicuous exception to his paradigm, can his paradigm answer the Korean question? Specifically, Korea has one of the most racially, linguistically and culturally homogeneous people in the world and hence there exist little or no fault line between the North and the South. How can, then, his thesis explain the persistence of Korean division?

Most importantly, the Koreans are one of the most syncretic people, linguistically and religiously. Korean youngsters are enthusiastic about learning English and are now increasingly pursuing the study of Chinese language. Christianity is growing rapidly in Korea. The recent survey of the newly elected Korean National Assemblymen’s religious affiliations reveals that 57% or 173 out of the total 299 members are Christians (34.4% or 103 members are Protestants, 23.4% or 70 members are Catholics), only 11.4% or 34 members are Buddhists, 30.4% or 91 members have no religious affiliations, and 0.3% or one member belongs to other religions. Buddhists, Protestants and Catholics constitute 25%, 20%, and 8%, respectively, of all Korean people.25

One thing is self-evident in both data. Christianity has become the leading religion in the Republic of Korea. How can then Huntington explain the current Korean situation by using his Sinic civilization paradigm? Korea does not fit either his so-called “cleft state” or “torn state” category.

The primary or ultimate cause of the Korean division persisting for nearly 60 years can be found not in ideological or cultural clashes between the two halves, but in political-leadership dynamics of the two regimes and in their irreconcilable strategic power calculus. This can be seen from the conflict between Park Chung Hee (1917-1979) and Kim Il Sung (1912-1994) while they ruled the South and the North, respectively, which arose not from their different approaches to the Korean reunification.

question, but to their identical obsession to power\textsuperscript{26}.

**IV. Concluding Remarks**

Huntington has not only been likened to Mussolini, Hitler, and Josef Goebbels,\textsuperscript{27} but also dubbed as a “vulgar Hegelian”,\textsuperscript{28} a Hobbesian, “a spokesman for an influential faction in the foreign policy establishment,”\textsuperscript{29} and even as an Orwellian “news-speaker.”\textsuperscript{30} The accolades for him also abound: a neo-Hamiltonian, who “has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to realism,”\textsuperscript{31} “the most important political scientist in America,”\textsuperscript{32} “one of the West’s most eminent political scientists,” and “the renowned political scientist.”\textsuperscript{33}

Huntington’s paradigm is a conceptual guide in dealing with the post-Cold War world. In terms of the ladder of abstraction, his framework is one of the most abstract and the broadest kinds, analogous to someone portraying a mountain as a triangle. There are other competing “grand” theories, strategies, or visions of the current world and its future direction. Francis Fukuyama’s end-of-history-and-the-final-triumph-of-liberal-democracy-free-market thesis, John Mearsheimer’s state-centric-realism-based balance of power rivalry,\textsuperscript{34} Charles Kupchan’s realism plus internationalism,\textsuperscript{35} Thomas Friedman’s globalization bandwagoning,\textsuperscript{36} Paul Kennedy’s North-South global schism model\textsuperscript{37} replacing the East-West conflict during the Cold War era, and Jane Jacobs’ commercial moral syndrome and guardian moral syndrome\textsuperscript{38} are some prime examples.


\textsuperscript{27} For example, Mark Burdman argues that “the substance of Huntington’s academic meanderings has no more claim to truth, than the speeches of Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels in mobilizing the German population behind the Fuhrer’s wars against Nazi Germany’s neighbors.” See his Book review, “Harvard’s Huntington promotes descent into barbarism,” *Executive Intelligence Review* (March 7, 1997), pp. 57-61.

\textsuperscript{28} Peter Sederberg, *Op. Cit.*

\textsuperscript{29} Robert Trout, *Op. Cit.*


\textsuperscript{31} Alan Wolfe, “Native Son: Samuel Huntington Defends the Homeland,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2004).


\textsuperscript{33} Henry A. Kissinger’s book jacket review of Huntington.


\textsuperscript{38} These two moral syndromes prescribe divergent ways of organizing social relations and treating other people. The commercial syndrome proscribes the use of force, promotes voluntary agreements and honesty in relations; supports collaboration with strangers for mutual benefit; urges competition, industriousness, initiative, efficiency, inventiveness, thrift, and investment. Dissent is tolerated for the sake of the task of promoting mutual profit. The guardian syndrome, in contrast, shuns trading while embracing force and taking vengeance; promotes obedience, hierarchy, tradition, loyalty, fortitude, and honor. Guardians dispense largesse, indulge in ostentatious displays, and protect exclusive communities. They are willing to deceive for the sake of the task of protection. Sederberg asserts that “while the guardian syndrome leads civilizations to clash, the commercial syndrome encourages the cross fertilization of trade and ideas.” For details, see her book, *Systems of Survival* (1992). Quoted in Peter Sederberg, *Op. Cit.*
It is relatively easy to coin faddish catch phrases to characterize change in global dynamics. For instance, the shift from the world of 

**haves** and **have nots** to that of **knows** and **knows not**, or the transition from the Cold War world of “**wall**” (e.g., the Berlin Wall or the demarcation lines such as the erstwhile Vietnamese 17^th^ Parallel or Korea’s DMZ) which **divides**, to the **World-Wide Web** which **unites**. Other cases are the shift from the first, second, and third worlds of the Cold War era to the worlds of **digital divide**, or from the **slow world** to the **fast world**.

As Huntington readily admits, the world is too complex to be reduced to simple dichotomy, trichotomy or any other set of neat catch phrases. He is right to advocate that “in a multicivilizational world, the constructive course is to renounce universalism, accept diversity, and seek commonalities” (p. 318). But the gap between the world of ideas and the world of affairs is vast and inevitable. So are the gaps between the ideals and the reality, between theory and practice, and between policy or strategic objectives and its actual implementation. The confusion and/or lack of clarity between what the world **is** and what the world **should be** also continues.

Time and time again history has demonstrated that peace or war between and among states depends critically upon the leader in power and his or her vision and policy. How about Adolph Hitler’s and Konrad Adenauer’s Germany or Mao Zedong’s and Deng Xiaoping’s China? Such list of the present and past drastically contrasting political leaders is limitless. More profoundly, would Hegel or Nietzsche have been happy or sad to witness the rise of Hitler’s Nazism? Would Karl Marx have been disillusioned or exhilarated by the communist realities (or utopias) constructed by Stalin, Mao or Kim Il Sung?

The causes of conflicts and wars are not predetermined, but vary in each and every case. It is, thus, too simplistic and even perilous for any analyst to claim that his/her paradigm fully explicates present and future conflicts, let alone is a recipe for world peace. Huntington’s thesis is certainly useful as a policy reference, but his Anglo-Protestant cultural predilection needs to be excoriated.

As a Korean saying goes, if “words become seeds,” preaching and practicing “**convergence**” and dialogue and cooperation are far more preferable to “clash of civilizations” and schisms and conflicts among civilizations.

### References


The Clash of Civilizations was a controversial theory developed in the 1990s that warned of world wars caused by different cultural ideas. This critique condemns the clash of civilizations for its elitist, realist, and orientalist outlook. This criticism tears about the assumption of the persistent probability of war between civilizations, which it says shows a fear that is embedded in political realism. The critique also points out how the language of "them" and "us" is deeply rooted in Huntington's thesis, creating a sense of otherness which can open the door to prejudice. Methodological Critique. This critique states that Huntington neglects to consider the internal dynamics and myriad complexities of
Following the explanations of the separate civilizations in the new paradigm, Huntington describes the relations among civilizations. Before 1500 A.D., civilizations were separated geographically and the spread of ideas and technology took centuries. Huntington argues that research and technology are the catalyst for civilization creation and development. By 1500 A.D., evolution in ocean navigation by Western cultures led to rapid expansion and eventual domination of ideas, values, and religion. Twentieth century relations among civilizations have moved beyond the unidirectional influence of t. Today, in the post-Cold War world, the critical distinctions between people are not primarily ideological or economic; they are cultural. World politics is being reconfigured along cultural lines, with new patterns of conflict and cooperation replacing those of the Cold War. 

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order is one of the most important books to have emerged since the end of the Cold War." —Henry A. Kissinger "An intellectual tour de force: bold, imaginative, and provocative."

The journal Foreign Affairs published an article on the same title in 1993. That article, according to the Foreign Affairs editors, stirred up more discussion in three years than any other article they had published since the 1940s. Clash of Civilizations Revisited - Free download as Word Doc (.doc), PDF File (.pdf), Text File (.txt) or read online for free. Although the book and a previous article of the same title in Foreign Affairs magazine did not predict the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, Huntington has been credited with forecasting the cultural and religious context in which a 9/11type incident could emerge. 

There are many cultures in the world, most of them involving a relatively small number of people. But there are, I argue, maybe eight or nine major cultures, so I focus my attention on those -- how they developed, how they are interacting with each other now and to what extent cultural differences make a difference in the way states deal with one another. A fantastic mosaic in Ravenna from the year 546 depicts a Justinian much younger than 64, his age at the time. He was a prodigy of energy and embellished Constantinople non-stop. The apex was the Church of St. Sophia the largest building in the world for centuries. So here we have Sultan Mehmet silently proceeding with his slow ride all the way to the central bronze doors of St Sophia. He dismounts and picks up a handful of dust and in a gesture of humility, sprinkles it over his turban. Then he enters the Great Church. He walks towards the altar. A barely perceptible command leads his top Likewise, in the few instances in which the notion of soft power has been used explicitly, it has played a conceptual and symbolical rather than instrumental role. More generally, this article argues that accessible framing and paradigm compatibility are essential for political utilisation of ideas. 

1 Samuel Huntington, â€œThe Clash of Civilizationsâ€, Foreign Affairs, 72 (Summer 1993), pp. 22â€“49. 