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Author(s): Glenn E. Perry

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## HUNTINGTON AND HIS CRITICS: THE WEST AND ISLAM

Glenn E. Perry

THE THIRD MILLENNIUM A.D. HAS STARTED with the specter of a clash among civilizations haunting humanity. Already, during the 1990s, as bewildered intellectuals, used to looking through the lens of the Cold War, were trying to make sense of the changed shape of the world, few notions gained more attention than Samuel H. Huntington's proposition—first publicized in the form of articles (Huntington 1993a; Huntington 1993b) and then elaborated on in a volume (Huntington 1996\*) which in October 2001, five years after its publication, the British magazine *New Statesman* picked as the book of the week—that conflict among civilizations is emerging as a dominant pattern of world politics. This is in line with Huntington's stress on the importance of culture in politics, and particularly for democratization, in many other works (see Huntington, 1987: 21ff; Huntington, 1991: *passim*; Huntington, 1984: 207ff and Harrison and Huntington 2001), although his concept of civilization has more to do with shared identities of large groups of peoples ("super tribes") than, as is sometimes imagined, with broader cultural differences, i.e., irreconcilable "value systems" (see Ruthven, 2000: 352-353). (Western, Latin American, Orthodox, and Islamic civilizations are closely related and arguably part of the "West" in the broadest sense of the word.) For many, the dramatic events of Autumn 2001 indeed confirmed Huntington's warning that the world seemed to be "poised on the brink of a global intercivilizational war without battlefields and borders" (Falk, 2001).

Huntington has spawned a new vocabulary as well as a thesis. Major concepts include not just the old idea of distinct civilizations but also of a "member state" (e.g., Egypt as a part of Islam or Germany as part of the West), "core state" (a country, such as China, that constitutes the main representative of a civilization), "lone country" (Japan, which coincides with a whole civilization), "cleft country" (one so unfortunate, as in the case of the Sudan, to be split into two or more civilizations), and "torn country" (one such as Turkey whose leadership has—unwisely from Huntington's point of view—tried to uproot it from its own civilization and transplant it in alien soil).

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Glenn E. Perry is Professor of Political Science at Indiana State University.

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Drawing fire particularly from many who—incorrectly, as I argue—interpret him as inciting intercivilizational conflict, particularly between the West and Islam, Huntington's thesis has inspired a clash among wielders of pens, if not swords. Responding to a general combination of misconceptions about and prejudice against Islam, which Huntington identifies with one of the major civilizational entities or "super tribes," along with its Western, Orthodox, Hindu, Sinic, Japanese, Latin American, African and (sometimes) Buddhist counterparts (and at a time when others were already debating whether the so-called Red peril was being replaced by a Green, that is, Islamic, one, e.g., Hadar 1993; Miller, 1993), there has been a tendency for enlightened scholars to strike back at his thesis as the main incarnation of such bias. However, at least one student of United States foreign policy who is sympathetic with the aspirations of non-Western peoples invokes Huntington in his analysis of the influence of American prejudice against "culturally different 'others,'" particularly the Islamic world (Payne, 1995: xiii, 6, and *passim*). Exemplifying the tendency to read the worst into Huntington's thesis, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad (1999: 632)—generally one of the finest, most careful scholars in the field (and writing for a first-rate volume on Islam)—dismisses it as:

...a rehash of a century-old myth that under girded European hegemonic policies justifying wars of colonial expansion and missionary crusades during the nineteenth century under the rubric of 'civilizational mission,' 'white man's burden,' or Manifest Destiny. It posited the superiority of European man, the acme of human civilization, who willingly assumes the burden of sharing his values and achievements with the rest of the backward world. In the process, this myth justified the ransacking of the cultures of the conquered people and confining Muslim achievements to ethnological museums or the dustbin of history.

Indeed, there is much to object to in Huntington's writings on this subject, but critics—some of whose otherwise excellent books, cases in point being those of John L. Esposito (1999), Fawaz A. Gerges (1999), Fred Halliday (1996; also see Halliday, 2000), and Shireen T. Hunter (1998) appear at least in large part to be inspired by and designed as responses to Huntington's thesis (and in some cases, are simply attempts to refute Huntington)—often demonstrate little evidence that they even have read his work. Ironically (as will become apparent), it is those commentators who are committed to maintaining cultural Westernization and/or Western political hegemony in the Islamic world who would rightly be angered by Huntington's thesis insofar as they actually have read his writings on the subject. While providing excellent responses to the writing of Islamophobes in general, some of the critics' (Secretary General Kofi Annan's [1999] observations stated in a speech at Oxford University providing one partial exception, as do some serious reviews of Huntington's book [e.g., see McNeill 1997])<sup>1</sup>, many commentators fail to deal with Huntington's specific ideas but only launch broadside attacks against

him. They sometimes seem not to realize that he has, in fact, already denounced the very ideas that they have accused him of having articulated. Thus in his fall convocation address at the University of Virginia in 1994, R.K. Ramazani (n.d.: 4) lambasted Huntington's thesis as "a reincarnation of the old Cold War [but now against the Islamic and Confucian worlds] under a new name." Responding during the Autumn 2001 crisis to what he believed was a call for an inevitable conflict with Islam, Edward W. Said characterized the Huntington thesis as a "Clash of Ignorance." (Said 2001). Huntington's critics repeatedly and unwittingly hurl back the same ideas that Huntington himself has espoused and sometimes demonstrate how poorly they have done their homework both by misquoting him on the simplest matters<sup>2</sup> and—more seriously—by vituperatively attacking him, as in the case of Haddad (see above) for what they think are his basic themes but which in fact epitomize the opposite of what he says. Admittedly, some of the hostile reactions to Huntington's civilizational thesis appeared before he elaborated on it in the book published in 1996, but a careful reading of his articles reveal that from the onset, at least in a rudimentary way, he was expressing themes that his critics failed to notice.

The slogan of those who are shocked by what they perceive as Huntington's call for a new crusade has gained the label "dialogue among civilizations." A clear attempt to rebut Huntington, this phrase apparently was first articulated by President Muhammad Khatami of Iran in an address to the United Nations General Assembly in 1998, with the year 2001, on his suggestion, being designated by the world organization as the "Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations." The Iranian government established an International Centre for Dialogue Among Civilizations (ICDAC) in 1999 in order "to promote ...mutual understanding and tolerance" (IDAC website). Although proposed as a refutation, this concept of "dialogue"—as I show below—ironically in many ways is consistent with much, though not all, of what Huntington says. Huntington may even be waiting for an invitation to participate in these activities, the initiation of which in fact he has given himself "some small credit by frightening people as to the dangers of clashes of civilizations." (Huntington, 1998). While abhorring (like Huntington) the prospect of a "clash," proponents of "dialogue" also implicitly accept the centrality of civilizations as the major units into which the world is divided. Even, as in his address to a conference in Tehran in 2001, when speaking of the goal of "pav[ing] the ground for setting the foundations of a global civilization in which all nations and civilizations can actively participate," President Khatami seems to accept the fact that there are separate civilizations and that they will continue as separate entities when a future world civilization comes into being (see the IC DAC website).

A more nuanced analysis by a scholar who shares those critics' concerns is consequently overdue. The sensational nature of warnings about a "clash of civilizations" as well as of some specific statements that Huntington makes notwithstanding, much of what he says might evoke anger, even accusations of appeasement (though not civilizational disloyalty, for one of his main concerns is the West's self-interest even as he condemns its attitudes and policies toward "the

rest”), from proponents of continuing Western domination of the world. Within the Islamic world, it is the West’s copycats (“Kemalists”) that Huntington writes about most contemptuously, similarly he also condemns the West’s client regimes in general and his prognosis for them is particularly pessimistic. From the side of those in the Islamic world who resent the erosion of their culture and their religion by Westernization, Huntington would understandably win loud applause to the extent that his writing might come to be known within their ranks. It is ironic that Huntington’s Islamophile critics find Fuad Ajami (1993: 2ff)—an analyst now famous as a spokesman for Western militancy against those whose roots he shares and dismissed by Huntington (citing Edward Said) as “a White man’s nigger”(p. 66)—joining them in their denunciations of the civilizational approach, demonstrating that Ajami at least had read and understood Huntington’s writing. Those in the non-Western civilizations, perhaps most of all in the Islamic world, who are angry about the undemocratic nature of today’s world order might find in Huntington a spokesperson for the idea that their civilizations must be allowed to take a position of equality in a world in which Western arrogance is becoming outdated and untenable. The central thrust of Huntington’s thesis is a warning against—and a call for avoiding—a clash between the West and Islam or any others among the “rest” of the world’s civilizations.

#### SOME SHAKY IDEAS

Identifying “civilizations”—that is, broad cultural groupings that in most cases include many countries—as the basic divisions of humanity (excluding those that at least in the past had not reached the stage of “civilization”)—hardly starts with Huntington. It is an old idea that forms the basis for the elaborate analyses of such disparate philosophers of history as Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee. It is represented in commonplace phrases such as “Western colonialism” as well as in titles of courses in any college catalogue even though at least one writer on Islamic civilization (see Williams, 1971: 2-3) once prematurely suggested that separate past civilizations had made way for a new, universal “Modern Technological” civilization. The distinction represented by such a label that puts, say, China or India in one camp and Morocco and Afghanistan (or Norway and Italy) together in another grouping points to a cultural distinction that if the word “civilizations” did not already exist would have to be described by some new term.

Yet the concept suffers from imprecision. Although Huntington argues that religion provides the main basis for distinction, it is obvious (as he recognizes) that that is not true in all cases. Different alphabets also provide important markers of civilizational distinctions, as shown by the significance Kemalists give in switching from Arabic to Roman scripts. But neither religion nor alphabet would justify identifying mutually distinctive Western and Latin American civilizations, as Huntington does. Indeed, he sees the division between these two separate “civilizations” as less fundamental than in other cases as demonstrated by his openness to the idea that the latter may ultimately merge with the former. After all, he views Spain as having recently opted to be part of the West rather than as part of a trans-Atlantic Iberian civilization. And what is the civilizational commonality of a

region with as many diverse cultural backgrounds as sub-Saharan Africa (at one point, Huntington understandably treats Ethiopia as a distinct civilization)? While Huntington sometimes alleges that the lines between civilizations represent fundamental cultural differences, he also reveals that these are partly subjective perceptions. Notably in the case of the former Yugoslavia (as Huntington seems to recognize), where the erosion of religion in general often left little objective distinction among Muslims, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians; the divisions would therefore seem to be more a matter of identity than of inherent cultural differences.

Huntington's notion of growing civilizational clashes also is slippery. He is attempting to identify what he sees as one important trend today but not necessarily one that is manifested everywhere (and recognizing that this may wane in the future). He does not deny that the demands of *realpolitik* continue to have their effects, resulting in opportunistic alliances that cut across civilizational lines. In fact, he agrees (Huntington, 1998) that power politics is a constant while arguing that the upsurge of civilizational politics is something new ("...power as well as culture counts in international relations. Unlike culture...power, always counted"). It becomes impossible to use facts to refute a generalization whose advocate himself proclaims that it is "highly simplified," and that it "omits many things, distorts some things, and obscures others" (p. 29). Perhaps rather than challenging his basic idea that people throughout the world tend to side with "their own kind" (not Huntington's phrase), one should question the novelty of such—that is, of Muslims everywhere sympathizing with their fellow Muslims as in Kashmir and Palestine or of Westerners siding with those who came to be defined as sharing a common "Judeo-Christian" heritage against what they often see as the more alien Arabs and Muslims. The whole thrust of Western colonialism and of non-Western anti-colonialism always represented clashes of civilizations (such terms as "Third World" and "South" relate to aggregations of non-Western civilizations, i.e., "the rest"), as has the cultural conflict within Third World/non-Western countries between Westernization on the one hand and traditionalists, revivalists or millenarians (see Rinehart, 1997) on the other hand. Even at the height of the Cold War one could find future scenarios that put the West and Russia (two related civilizations) in the same camp defending themselves against an alien, non-Western (non-White?) China. However, the Cold War did at times run counter to, or at least complicate, this civilizational divide, though not nearly as much as Huntington would have us believe.

But Huntington's thesis is far from rigid, as critics seem to think. He does not portray civilizations as monolithic entities (see Huntington, 2001: 11). He does not even proclaim with certainty how many civilizations exist, merely estimating that there are "seven or eight major civilizations." (p. 21) and sometimes suggesting the existence of minor ones as well. Nor is he deterministic about the way his perceived danger of a "clash" will unfold or, as becomes apparent below, whether it will either consume the world with violence or make way for a new global multicultural, multicivilizational order to replace what he sees as, in the long run, the non-viability of continuing Western domination. Most of all, he is not calling

for a crusade against the Islamic world or any other civilization outside the West but rather warning of the dangers of Western arrogance and disrespect for the "rest."

#### SOME INSIDIOUS "ORIENTALISM."

There is much that deserves to be challenged in Huntington's writing on this subject. At some points he demonstrates typical "Orientalist" tendencies in the meaning that Edward W. Said (1976) gave to the word, although this is the result of his not being an Orientalist in the true sense, i.e., an expert on the "Orient," particularly the Islamic world (on which his knowledge tends to be impressionistic at best, understandably for a broad theorist whose knowledge is based on a few general secondary sources) and although his "Orientalism" eschews, as is shown below, the goal of domination that Said attributes to the "Orientalist" approach. A case in point is the ease with which Huntington attributes the failure of liberal democracy "at least in part" to "the inhospitable nature of Islamic culture and society" (p. 114). Such a conclusion, admittedly with qualifications here that water it down considerably, was stated by Huntington (1984: 208) at least once before, although in a later work he was less adamant (Huntington, 1991: 307-309). The point is that the debate about the relationship between Islam and democracy is still open and there are other possible explanations for the failure of democracy. The failure was shared equally with most of the non-Islamic parts of the Third World at least until fairly recently. The paucity of democracy in the Islamic world, even by Third World standards, may in part be a result of Western intervention on the side of authoritarianism, a phenomenon that Huntington himself briefly notes in his reference to the American choice in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt as being "between a friendly tyrant and an unfriendly democracy" (p. 198) and reiterates with great candor in an interview in 2001 (Huntington, 2001: 11). He also dismisses pro-American ruling classes as mere "satellite regimes" (p. 215). Considering the many grievances, real or otherwise, that the Islamic world has against the West, it is hard to see how such "satellite" status could be consistent with democracy.

At the risk of joining Huntington's other critics in conveying an oversimplified picture of what he says (including his sharp attacks on Western, particularly American, attitudes), I believe that his readiness to attribute violence to Islam is particularly objectionable. Backing his conclusion up with statistics, he notes "wherever one looks along the perimeter of Islam, Muslims have problems living peacefully with their neighbors" (p. 256). Citing James Payne's study of arms races worldwide (p. 258), he attributes an alleged violent streak in Muslim societies historically to Islam, thus explaining why today "Islam's borders are bloody, and so are its innards." (p. 258). He examines but cursorily dismisses the "Muslim as victim argument" on the ground that it "does not explain conflicts between Muslim majorities and non-Muslim minorities in countries such as Sudan, Egypt, Iran, and Indonesia" (p. 264). At least in the cases of Sudan and Indonesia (particularly connected to the military takeover in the 1960s and to the East Timor question), one can easily recognize that it is non-Muslims who have been victims.

But Huntington failed to notice that, unlike in the cases of Palestine, Bosnia, Chechnya, and Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, instances where Muslims have been the victimizers are not the ones that evoke the sympathies of their whole civilization.

There are other examples as well that Huntington might have cited of non-Muslim victims (aside of course from Muslim victims of other Muslims). He might have mentioned the ethnic cleansing of the Greek population in northern Cyprus in the 1970s (as well as those of western Anatolia in the 1920s, and the Armenians of the same period). That said, one can point to a host of situations where Muslim minorities or Muslim majorities have long been victims and are seeking self-determination or equality in the face of domination by Orthodox Christian, Hindu, and Sinic societies in particular, not to mention Palestine. As Fred Halliday (2000: 80) has observed, Huntington fails to “provide an accurate account of where the responsibility for this bloodiness may lie—in some cases prime responsibility lies with Muslims, in others not. In Bosnia, Kosovo, Palestine, Kashmir, to take but four examples, it does not.” Even if the rights and wrongs in the Indian subcontinent have been complicated since the British withdrawal, the fact remains that it is a Muslim territory, Kashmir, that is struggling for self-determination (not a Hindu province of Pakistan or Bangladesh that is being held against its will) and that the Muslim population of India has cause for concern in the face of increasing Hindu “fundamentalism.” The large number of such conflicts might more adequately be explained by the way the boundaries of the Islamic world have been rolled back during the past two centuries, leaving Muslims (when not actually “cleansed”) in many cases under non-Muslim rule, or, as in the case of the former republics of the Soviet Union, under regimes that represent the continuity of old Soviet elites. In the words of Akbar S. Ahmed (1999: 165), “No religion in the world has so many people trapped in an alien environment as the Muslims.” In his 2001 interview, Huntington (2001: 11) articulated much of this himself (noting that the geographic spread of Muslims puts them in contact with many non-Muslims, thereby increasing the likelihood of conflict) and clearly rejected the notion that “there is anything inherently violent in Muslim theology.”

Another problem relates to Huntington’s emphasis on the primacy of “fault-line conflicts.” He refers to local struggles between ethnic groups belonging to different civilizations that evoke wider solidarity and interventionism on each side, leading us to infer that these conflicts are on the periphery of each civilization (although he does not explicitly limit “fault-line conflicts” to such). In fact, the grievances of Muslims are much more fundamental. Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, the southern Sudan, and others lie along such “fault lines.” But what he terms “satellite regimes” in places such as the Arabian Peninsula and against which he sees brewing opposition are in the heartland of Islamic civilization. If his own characterization of such regimes is accurate, then Huntington has overlooked the mountain by focusing on the molehills of “fault-line conflicts.” For Huntington to proclaim Afghanistan as the first fault-line conflict was a matter of his falling victim to the older ways of thinking that he purports to disavow, for although Afghanistan was on the border of the Soviet state it lies at the heart of the historic



territories of Islamic civilization and remains surrounded by other Muslim countries, including the adjacent former Soviet republics.

The scantiness of Huntington's references to Palestine provides an oddity for an analysis that focuses on conflicts among civilizations. To an extent that is not true of issues such as Kashmir, Palestine provides a rallying cry for Muslims everywhere. This is partly because the Palestine issue goes beyond mere denial of self-determination, involving the actual displacement by outsiders of a former Muslim country's population. Furthermore, instead of being on the "fault-line" between the Islamic world and another civilization, Palestine (that is, today's "Israel proper" and the other territories that were part of the Palestine Mandate and have been occupied since 1967) is definitely in the center. One of the first territories outside the Arabian Peninsula incorporated into the realm of Islam in the seventh century, Palestine constitutes the bridge that connects the African and Eurasian parts of the contemporary Islamic world. This is in addition to the Islamic holy places in Jerusalem that are second only to those in the Hijaz. Whether the conflict between Zionism and, since 1948, the State of Israel is seen as one with the Arab world or the Islamic world, a glance at the map conveys the image of a "wedge" dividing two halves asunder. Both the Zionists and the Arab/Muslim world recurrently have presented the conflict over Palestine as a clash between the European and Islamic worlds like no other (although to the extent that the Jews in Israel originated in Orthodox Christian and Islamic lands the term "Western" would seem questionable). Even more relevant, one party has drawn extraordinary support from Western societies, notably from the United States; the Islamic world sees this as a strategy of dismantling and controlling its civilization, while perhaps solidarity at the personal, emotional level throughout the Islamic world has hardly persisted to the same degree and duration on any other "fault-line conflict" that is comparable to that felt regarding Palestine. If anything justifies making one totally pessimistic about the future of Western-Islamic relations, it is the unlikelihood that the West will drop its support of Zionism or that the Islamic world will drop its opposition to it.

Yet Huntington writes almost nothing about the civilizational dimension of this conflict. McNeill (1997) notes this, suggesting that the explanation may lie in Huntington's uncertainty about whether the Jews form a distinct civilization. At one point, Huntington (p. 188) casually refers to "Zionism and politicized Judaism" as a civilization, but his reticence on this topic may stem from a prudent hesitation to apply his broader arguments to this "hot potato".

Admittedly, Huntington suggests reasons other than such alleged Islamic militarism for Islam's "bloody borders." He recognizes that the West's expansion was largely by sea, with its victims being "virtually decimated" (p. 264), while by contrast the course of early Islamic expansion "by land" and subsequent encroachment by others on Islamic countries has left mutually hostile peoples "in territorial proximity" (p. 263). A further point—and one that has more merit than the militarism argument—is that Muslim peoples are "indigestible," that is, less subject to being merged into larger entities (applying to non-Muslim minorities in predominantly Islamic countries as well) because of the close relationship between Islam and national identity. Further, Huntington recognizes that "the absence of

one or more core states in Islam” (p. 264) is part of the reason for “instability.” This is a situation hardly attributable to solely Islamic doctrine. Considering the importance of the concept of the unity of the Islamic *umma* (which would mean not merely a “core state” but rather that *dar al-Islam* would constitute a vast “lone country.”)

Finally, Huntington seems to recognize that all of these causes of bloodiness are questionable (“Whatever other causes may be at work...”) in light of another, temporary explanation (which, he projects, may end by 2020 as a result of economic development) that “would go a long way to explaining Muslim violence in the 1980s and 1990s.” This explanation relates to “the demographic explosion” that has resulted in an unusual number of “often unemployed males between the ages of fifteen and thirty” (pp. 264-265). This group provides the raw material for civil wars and revolts, but their diminishing numbers, if such indeed occurs, would still leave the grievances of Muslim peoples intact. Instead of diminishing violence, economic development might well accelerate it by providing other foundations for military power (as Huntington recognizes elsewhere). Huntington also deals more broadly with demographic changes, which often involve Muslim minorities becoming majorities—as in Kosovo and Lebanon—because of high birth rates (see p. 259), a factor whose attribution to Islam one cannot easily dismiss. It is understandable that a portion of the population that has gained greater numbers would invoke democratic principles to demand a correspondingly greater voice. Thus a careful reading reveals that Huntington is not putting the entire onus for violence on Islam.

#### HUNTINGTON’S GLOBAL MULTICULTURAL AGENDA

Far from dismissing Islamic or other non-European civilizations as passé or calling for converting Muslims or for undermining their civilization, Huntington has announced that these civilizations are alive and well. He informs the reader that Islam will soon overtake Christianity as the religion with the most adherents. Generally Westerners are becoming an increasingly small minority in the world and cannot forever dominate it. “Modernization,” he insists, does not necessarily mean Westernization” (p. 78) but actually is reviving the diverse civilizations (p.92).<sup>3</sup>

He derides the idea that the West is the center of the universe—the “Ptolemaic approach to history”—and “the widespread and parochial conceit that the European civilization of the West is now the universal civilization of the world” (p. 55). He proclaims the need to accept an equal role for each of the major civilizations in an inevitably “multipolar and multicivilizational” (p. 20) world, while he warns the West about its “universal pretensions” that “increasingly bring it into conflict with other civilizations, most seriously with Islam and China” (p. 20). He rails against the idea that there is simply “East and West,” as though the former were half the world rather than just one among “many non-Wests.” He emphasizes the mutual diversity by calling them, from a Western perspective, “the rest” (p. 33).

## KEMALISM AS A SICKNESS

In light of Haddad's and others' characterization of Huntington as wanting to relegate Islam to museums, it is ironic that it is the Kemalists (Westernizers) that he treats with the most contempt. Far from calling for the Westernization of the "rest," Huntington seems to be saying that the pale imitations of the West should and must rediscover their real identities. He deals with Kemalism virtually as a sickness caused by the wrong medicine having been prescribed. He makes Turkey the prototype of a "torn country" (p. 138), infected by a "Western virus" that leaves its victim alive but "never whole" and infested with "cultural schizophrenia" (p. 154). Huntington makes the Kemalists' expectation that their country can actually change its civilizational identity and become part of the West seem hopeless, as the rise of Islamism among the public, which previously was "acquiescent" to Kemalism, undermine[s] the secularist, pro-Western orientation of the Turkish elites" (pp. 148-149). In any case the West always was unwilling to accept such an alien country into its ranks: "They [Westerners] felt that culturally the Turks did not belong to Europe" (p. 146). Turkey's alliance with the West against the non-Islamic USSR provided no test for Turkey, while the continuation of its alignment at a time when the end of the Cold War made way for a conflict between the West and Islam, he believes, will not be possible. (p. 145). It seems that not only should the Turks be allowed to be real Turks again but that they must become such in order for them and perhaps for all Islamic peoples to regain their health. According to Huntington, Kemalism has therefore deprived the Islamic civilization of a "core state" to stand up for it, and here the onus is on "the imperialism of the Western powers, who divided [the Islamic world and other non-Western civilizations] among themselves" (p. 135).

Huntington recognizes that this shift of Turkey back to where it belongs "is unlikely in the near future" (p. 162). But he suggests that:

At some point, Turkey could be ready to give up its frustrating and humiliating role as a beggar pleading for membership in the West and to resume its much more impressive and elevated historical role as the principal Islamic interlocutor and antagonist of the West. ... Conceivably, Turkey, in effect, could "do a South Africa": abandoning secularism as alien to its being as South Africa abandoned apartheid and thereby changed itself from a pariah state in its civilization the leading state of that civilization. ... having experienced the bad and the good of the West in secularism and democracy, Turkey may be equally qualified to lead Islam. But to do so it would have to reject Ataturk's legacy more thoroughly than Russia has rejected Lenin's. It would also take a leader of Ataturk's caliber and one who combined religious and political legitimacy to remake Turkey from a torn country into a core state. (pp. 178-179)

Thus Huntington seems to be calling for a massive gain for Islamic civilization, that is, the return of Turkey to its ranks both culturally and politically, allowing it both to struggle and negotiate with the others on a basis of greater equality.

#### AN AGENDA FOR GLOBAL EQUALITY

Huntington comes down hard against Western hegemonism. He stresses that domination by one civilization, which he reminds us was just a “two hundred year Western blip on the world economy” (p. 88), must end. He ridicules the form of recent Western triumphalism that declares history to have come to an end (p. 302). He hardly takes the role of apologist for the record of the West during its period of imperial domination; his assessment on many matters recurrently meshes with that of dependency or world system theorists or of those non-Westerners who most resent the domination their societies have endured.

The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion...but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact; non-Westerners never do. (p. 51)

He comes close to calling contemporary Western policies racist, as his reference to “swift retribution to non-white Iraqis or Somalis, but not to white Serbians.” (p. 59) He condemns Western “arrogance” (p. 183) and pretensions of support for universal principles as being rife with “Hypocrisy and double standards” that the rest of the world sees as “imperialism” (p. 184).

Huntington warns about the danger that the West will continue to bully the rest, noting “Deep imperatives within American culture” that “impel the United States” to act that way. Only such behavior, he believes, could bring into being the scenario of a future alliance of Islam and China, two civilizations that are so different from each other—“even as the Allies did against Hitler” (p. 185). (Considering that Sinic and Islamic civilizations are much more foreign to each other than is the latter to the West, Huntington clearly is not talking about problems caused by cultural differences as such.) He approvingly quotes Graham Fuller’s opinion that such civilizations “feel ‘they don’t have to take it [bullying by the West] anymore’” (citing a statement by Mu`ammar al-Qadhdhafi calling for such Sino-Islamic cooperation).

Far from calling for a clash between his own civilization and “the rest,” Huntington emphasizes the imperative nature of accepting the emerging world of equal civilizations. Proclaiming that “Western intervention in the affairs of other civilizations is probably the single most dangerous source of instability and potential global conflict,” he presents a future scenario, which he deems “highly improbable but not impossible” (p. 312). His scenario begins with a war between the West and China arising from a conflict between China and Vietnam and with imprudent United States intervention transforming this into a global struggle. An

alternative scenario is a fault-line conflict between a Muslim and a non-Muslim people that keeps drawing others in. In any case, he envisages that such Western intrusion into other peoples' affairs would result in "a drastic decline in the economic, demographic, and military power of all the major participants," with Africans overrunning Europe, Hispanics taking over the United States, and the "center of world politics moving south" (p. 319). This leads to Huntington's first rule (and one that he is pessimistic about the willingness of the United States to accept), namely the "*abstention rule* that core states abstain from intervention in conflicts in other civilizations" (p. 316).

Huntington goes on to call for two additional rules that add up virtually to a new concept of collective security in which representatives of all the major civilizations would be elevated to positions of equality. First is the "joint mediation rule." He proposes, as the basis of "a reasonably stable world", that one or two core states (and not more than that) in each civilization be allowed to have nuclear weapons. (Huntington may not have thought of this, but it would follow from my reading of his book for Israel to have to give up its nuclear weapons unless he wishes to list it as the "lone country" of an additional major civilization in its own right.) Pointing to the obvious sense of unfairness among Muslims over Israel's dispensation from controls over nuclear proliferation, Huntington hints that in the absence of an Islamic core state Pakistan and Iran should be the two Islamic nuclear powers. More to the point, he calls for a revamping of the Security Council to make it more representative. According to his plan, the West would lose one of its permanent memberships with the British and French seats making way for a single seat for the European Union. As core states largely coterminous with their civilizations, China, Japan, and India would also become permanent members. Civilizations lacking core states would have rotating seats; the Islamic member would be selected by the Organization of the Islamic Conference. (pp. 317-318) (When President Khatami, speaking to a conference on "Dialogue among Asian Civilizations" in 2001, proposed a permanent Security Council seat for the Islamic world, he may not have realized that he was echoing an idea espoused by Huntington.) Although this reconfiguration would still leave the West with two seats and only one for the each of "the rest," Huntington notes, somewhat apologetically, that at present this is consistent with the former's population, economic strength, and power. He proposes that this double representation for Western civilization should end as other civilizations inevitably reach parity with it.

#### HUNTINGTON'S WESTERN THREAT

Indeed, Huntington calls for measures to revive the West in order to delay what he sees as its inevitable diminution in the face of the resurgent "rest." As shown above, he has some harsh words about "Islam's bloody borders." Still, a careful reading of his book does not reveal an attempt to present Islam or any other civilization as an inherent threat to the West. The exception to this is—as shown below—Huntington's worry that unassimilated immigrants will undermine the cohesion and Western character of some up-to-now Western societies. Nowhere does he suggest that any of the other civilizations is going to gain a military might

that would put the West at its mercy. What comes out of Huntington's writing is rather that by continuing to bully and to interfere across the globe and generally to refuse to learn that a multicivilizational balance is slowly emerging after the short era of Western hegemony the West constitutes a threat not just to the rest but particularly to itself as well.

#### HUNTINGTON'S DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS

Huntington's third commandment is the "commonalities rule." Although he rejects universalist concepts of human rights, he lets the idea come back in by endorsing "a thin universalism," the idea that "Cultures are relative" but that "Morality is absolute." He means that although one civilization should not force its ideas on the others, all of them have much in common and that at a time when "clashes of civilizations are the greatest threat to world peace" it is essential if "peace and civilization" are to endure for "cooperation among the political, spiritual, and intellectual leaders of the world's major civilizations" to take place." (p. 321) Although he does not fully develop this idea, it is strikingly reminiscent of the way the *jus gentium* developed in the Roman Empire (see Briery, 1963: 17ff); he has laid out a foundation block for his own civilizational dialogue.

Huntington's writing meshes with the idea of dialogue in other ways. Just as civilizations, while retaining their own integrity within their respective regions of the world, learned from one another, there is nothing in his book or his other writings to suggest that the separate civilizations should not freely trade both goods and ideas with one another—even transforming themselves in the process—just as civilizations have done throughout history. There is no suggestion that educational systems should be insular, or that research and teaching being limited largely to one's own civilization, as in the case of old-fashioned "Eurocentrism." In fact, it is implicit in his rejection of the "Ptolemaic" attitude toward Western civilization that the other planets should occupy a more nearly equal place alongside "Western civilization" in our educational system. For that matter, Huntington's proposal for a multicivilizational Security Council (see above) constitutes a scheme for dialogue on the level of dealing with current political problems. Indeed, recognition that there are separate civilizations may constitute a prerequisite for any real multicultural dialogue.

#### EQUAL—BUT SEPARATE

Huntington's multiculturalism on a global level is matched by an insistence on uniculturalism within nations. Just as he insists on the indelible nature of Islamic civilization (and on the damage caused by trying to erase it), he believes that the West must remain Western. He sees "the erosion of Christianity among Westerners [as] likely to be only a long term threat to the health of Western civilization" (p. 305). But particularly for Europe he sees non-Western immigration as a greater threat to the integrity of its civilization in the near future, and he warns that for the United States to become multicivilizational rather than Western would

be the end of this country "as we have known it" and indeed "the end of Western civilization" (p. 307). Thus the counterpart to Huntington's rejection of the Westernization of "the rest" (except possibly Latin America) is his insistence that while immigration can provide an infusion of "new vigor and human capital," it is imperative that the incoming population be assimilated, that is, Westernized. (p. 304) in order that the lands that receive them not become "cleft countries" like Bosnia. He concludes that, "In Western Europe, anti-Semitism directed against Arabs has largely replaced anti-Semitism directed against Jews" (p. 200); while he sees this Islamic "danger" ending as the population of the Islamic world (which fuels emigration) "peaks" by 2025, he predicts that this will only make way for a similar demographic threat resulting from accelerated immigration from Sub-Saharan Africa (p. 204). Just as Huntington sees greater potential for the Westernization of Latin America itself, he is more amenable to the assimilation of Latin Americans in the United States (except for their greater numbers) than for the Westernization of those belonging to a clearly different civilization, as in the case of the Muslim immigrants in Europe. In this particular sense, it is correct to attribute to Huntington warnings of an "Islamic threat" to the West analogous to the Western threat to Islamic civilization and to itself.

Multiculturalism at home threatens the United States and the West; universalism abroad threatens the West and the World. ... The global monoculturalists want to make the world like America. The domestic multiculturalists want to make America like the world. A multicultural America is impossible because a non-Western America is not American. A multicultural world is unavoidable because global empire is impossible. The preservation of the United States and the West requires the renewal of Western identity. The security of the world requires acceptance of global multiculturality. (p. 318)

Huntington's willingness to accept an influx of outsiders into the West as long as they are assimilated belies any accusation of racism in the narrowest sense. Still, U. N. Secretary General Kofi Annan may have hit the mark in contrasting Huntington's acceptance of the "cultural diversity at the global level" with the "depressingly closed and monolithic culture on the local level" (Annan, 1999). In a future world in which the various civilizations have achieved economic as well as political equality (an ambitious goal for the foreseeable future) there may not be a need for, say, Pakistanis or Mexicans to seek employment in Europe or North America. Yet some of the scary scenarios Huntington presents of cleft societies and of the West being overrun may strike many readers as inviting prejudice among those who fail to read his writing more carefully, if not as an expression of his own prejudice. But there is nothing in Huntington's work to suggest that Muslim immigrants in the West have to become Protestants or Catholics in order to be Westernized, or that Islam in the West cannot become a Western religion just as did other Eastern faiths or that the existence of a Muslim minority in Western civilization is more anomalous than is the presence of Jews or Orthodox Christians.

Huntington is not suggesting the “transfer” of non-Western immigrants back to the countries of origin, but the logic of his analysis suggests that the acceptance of such newcomers must not be unduly accelerated.

#### ISLAMIC THREAT TO THE WEST?

Aside from his specter of immigrants undermining the Western character of Europe, Huntington does not make a case for any Islamic threat to the Western world. Even in the case of Europe, the danger perceived by Huntington is equally one of the decline of Christianity. In his thriller scenario for 2020 A.D. it is hordes from Sub-Saharan Africa, not from the Islamic world, which overrun the lands north of the Mediterranean (and then as part of the end of a series of events starting with unwarranted Western interference in Asian affairs). As for North America, it is Hispanic rather than Muslim immigration that Huntington sees as a threat to its Western identity, while the danger to Australia—a part of the West—is endangered by its willingness to take on an Asian identity (a repetition of Kemal Ataturk’s attempt to make Turkey part of the West).

What emerges from a careful reading of Huntington is that the threat to the West as well as to the “rest” comes from the West itself. It is not just a matter of the West neglecting to preserve its own religious cohesiveness but also of failing to adjust to a world in which the “rest” inevitably must take their equal places politically as well as culturally. He presents the danger of a West that is such an arrogant bully that the Sinic and Islamic world, in spite of the existence of territorial conflicts (notable in the struggle of Muslim in Xingiang/Turkistan against Chinese rule), will be pushed into an anti-Western alliance.

Although Huntington and others fail to state this explicitly, the West (along with Latin America) is exceptional in its paucity of direct territorial conflicts with the Islamic world. The expulsion centuries ago of Islam from the Iberian Peninsula and Sicily and more recently of Western settler communities in North Africa (the trivial anomalies of Ceuta and Mellia in Morocco notwithstanding) has (aside from the contiguity of Muslims with the Christians of Croatia) left the Mediterranean as the demarcation line.

The relationship of Islamdom (to borrow a term from Marshal Hodgson) with other adjacent civilizations, notably the Orthodox Christian, Sinic, and Hindu ones, is inherently more hostile than that with the West. Sub-Saharan Africa (despite a few situations, notably the Southern Sudan, where Muslims and others are in conflict) may be an exception, as this region is united more by a shared racial and geographic consciousness rather than by a common culture or religion. Indeed, the extent to which so much of Sub-Saharan Africa is also Islamic diminishes the likelihood of a civilizational clash between them. It is only in the case of the Croatians and Muslims of the former Yugoslavia that Islamdom has a territorial conflict with Western Christendom, for surely the Filipino and West Timorese converts to the Western branch of Christianity and a Middle Eastern, Rome-affiliated Christian sect such as the Maronites, who indeed have conflicts with their Muslim neighbors, are hardly more “Western” than are Latin America and the



Catholic and Protestant populations of Sub-Saharan Africa. Israel is an outpost of Europe in the Islamic world, but in Huntington's terms it hardly constitutes part of the West. In the former Yugoslavia the Croatian (Western Christian)-Muslim conflict is far overshadowed by the clash between Muslims and Orthodox Serbs and even by the latter's clash with the "Western" Croats. Arguably this is a microcosm of a much larger conflict between Islamic and Orthodox peoples that extends from the Balkans through Central Eurasia and is paralleled by similar situations involving Muslims on one side and both Chinese and Hindus (in Sinkiang, Kashmir, and elsewhere) in which the former, whose forebears indeed were expansionist many centuries ago, now seek self-determination and/or equality in the face of civilizations who at present victimize them. The inherent basis for a clash between Orthodox Christian and Islamic civilizations in particular, resulting from issues such as Chechnya, manifested itself in the eagerness with which Russia joined the United States "coalition against terrorism" in 2001. By contrast, one should not be totally surprised if at some point in the twenty-first century the Russian/Orthodox territorial conflict with the Islamic world intensifies while the West finally concludes that it can flourish quite well without either the local client regimes or the Zionist enterprise whose maintenance has caused both it and the Islamic world so much useless pain.

The conflict between the West and Islamdom results from the former's thus-far successful attempt to maintain hegemony over the latter. It is hardly the result of being pulled into "fault line" conflicts between Western and Islamic peoples, for I have shown that such Western-Muslim frontiers can scarcely be found among the many "bloody borders" (again to use Huntington's phrase) between Islamic and non-Islamic peoples. The basis for a Western-Muslim conflict is Western policies of intervention to establish and maintain client regimes and to bolster pre-existing regimes that have signed up as clients, branding those who resist such relationships as "rogues" and increasingly bombing and boycotting them, and supporting Israel as a bridgehead inside the Islamic world, all in violation of the principles of world order and democracy that the West (particularly Washington) proclaims as its values. Huntington does not explicitly address any of these matters; however, the world of equal civilizations, which he advocates, implies a reversal of such Western policies. He may be faulted for his "Know-Nothingism" on the issue of immigration, but the insistence of such an important member of the intellectual establishment on a world of equal civilizations that are not becoming more Western as they modernize and that must eventually share power on par with the West provides a breath of fresh air. Only a distorted understanding of Huntington's thesis is conducive to the purposes of those who want to incite the West against Islam (for an example, see Gerech, 2000).

## CONCLUSION

There is much in Huntington's recent writing about the emerging salience of civilizational divisions that understandably offend many. But it is not true, as so many have claimed, that he is calling for hostility to the Islamic world or to its religion and culture. He adamantly rejects illusions of the superiority of the West to

other civilizations. He wants the West to adjust to the impending reappearance of normalcy in world history, with the West's recent centuries of bullying the other civilizations rightfully coming to a close. He stresses that Westernization is neither a necessary nor a desirable facet of modernization. He treats Kemalism in particular as a disease that creates "a torn country" and that needs to be eradicated before Turkey or any other such victim can be healthy again. He is hopeful that a Turkey that quits trying to be Western might provide the leadership ("core state") that Islamic civilization needs. Those who believe that the West must continue to dominate the globe culturally and militarily are the ones who would have reason to accuse Huntington of defeatism, for he presents Western arrogance as the greatest threat to the world, although his acceptance of the inevitability and desirability of "the rest" resuming their rightful place in the world balance of power is matched by a concern that the West renew itself. On the other hand, it is understandable that many, having read the work, object to Huntington's warning about large-scale immigration involving people of different civilizations to the extent that assimilation is not feasible, what I have called his "equal but separate" position.

At a few points, Huntington's tone regarding Islam sounds hostile. This is particularly true of his famous phrases "bloody borders" and "bloody innards," although a careful reading demonstrates that he is talking more about such passing factors as demographic changes and the absence of a core state, as well as the difficulty of merging Muslim minorities with non-Muslim majorities (and vice versa) than about any inherent Islamic proclivity to violence as such, which he recently has clearly rejected. By emphasizing "fault-line conflicts," he fails to stress the way Western imperialism continues its presence in the heart of the Islamic world, although he demonstrates that he is aware of the continued existence of Western "satellite regimes" whose days are numbered.

Huntington is not calling for a Western crusade against Islam. Far from that, he is demanding recognition of the need to allow the various civilizations to take their place in the world after centuries of Western domination that cannot continue much longer. Indeed, he is loyal to the West and calls for measures to revitalize it. But he wants the Islamic world not only to be what he considers truly Islamic—rather than Westernized—but also again to occupy an important part, alongside other civilizations, in the power structure of the world. Although he fails to pursue some particular matters (notably, the issue of Palestine), the overall thrust of Huntington's work deserves to be seen as a ray of light coming from the American establishment.

Perhaps it could be argued—I mention such a strange idea only because so many who might have been expected to applaud his ideas, in fact, oddly have denounced him—that one can read a book too carefully. It might contain an underlying message that overrides careful analysis discoverable only by the few who go through it with a fine-tooth comb. Many "readers" never get beyond the message evoked by a sensational title and cover. And those who are eager to conjure up the image of a "Green peril" may use a work such as Huntington's to feed fear and hatred in the West. But one must take at face value Huntington's call for the West to respect Islamic and other civilizations and for an end to Western

domination. What he says generally meshes quite well with anti-imperialist positions throughout the Islamic world, particularly the Islamist ones whose vision he accepts as authentic (another likely ground for objection by some). Notably, it is people such as Edward Said and Ali Mazrui that he quotes approvingly, while he disparages the opinions of Daniel Pipes and his ilk. Not a prescription for immediate policy changes and likely sometimes sounding farfetched to those who cannot see beyond the world they have known, Huntington provides a vision of a future world of diverse civilizations in which power is shared on a relatively equal basis unknown for centuries.

## ENDNOTES

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\*Unless otherwise indicated, all citations are from Huntington, 1996.

1. Although McNeill (1997) generally provides an excellent summary of Huntington, he (presumably owing to a short deadline) distorts some of the latter's basic definitions, as in having the term "core state" refer to countries such as Egypt and Iran. Even the most capable reviewer does not provide a satisfactory alternative to reading a book as densely written as Huntington's.

2. Hunter(1998)—who disagrees with Huntington far less than she seems to realize—presents some of the best general analyses of Western-Islamic relations, but she rather carelessly notes that Huntington classifies Japan—is main example of a "lone country," i.e., one which is coterminous with the civilization it represents (1996: 137)—as part of the West (p.28).

3. This is a reiteration of Huntington's outline, first published in 1971, for "modernization revisionism," which emphasized that not only were "traditional societies" different from one another (and not "changeless") but also that societies passing "across...the Grand Process of Modernization" will not Westernize in the process, that is, a non-linear concept of Westernization. See Huntington, 1978.