

Session 5: Samuel Huntington and the Clash of Civilizations

Introduction

SAMUEL Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations?" appeared in 1993, in the same intellectual vacuum that had produced Francis Fukuyama's "end of history." The Cold War had organized international politics around a remarkably simple opposition: two superpowers, two ideological systems, and a global competition between communism and liberal democracy. Once the Soviet Union disappeared, scholars and policymakers urgently sought a replacement framework. Fukuyama proposed that the ideological contest itself was approaching resolution. Huntington offered almost the inverse proposition. The disappearance of ideological rivalry would not produce convergence. It would uncover older and deeper differences—religion, culture, historical memory, and collective identity—and these would increasingly determine where conflicts occurred and how states aligned. In his formulation, the "fault lines between civilizations" would become the principal battle lines of the post-Cold War world.

The argument carried unusual weight because of who made it and where it appeared. Huntington was not an outsider advancing a provocative theory from the margins of political science. He was one of the most prominent American scholars of politics and international affairs, with an established reputation extending well beyond the subject of civilizations. Nor did the argument first appear in an academic specialty journal. *Foreign Affairs* was—and remains—the preeminent American forum linking scholarship to the foreign-policy establishment. An article there addressed not only other professors but also diplomats, officials, journalists, and the broader policy elite. The magazine itself would later rank Huntington's article among the most consequential it had published, comparing its impact to that of George Kennan's famous essay that supplied the intellectual vocabulary of containment.

Its timing was equally important. The early 1990s did not look like the harmonious liberal order anticipated at the end of the Cold War. Yugoslavia was breaking apart amid wars defined by ethnic and religious identity. The Soviet collapse released conflicts in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The

Gulf War had placed a large Western military force in the heart of the Arab world. Islamist movements were gaining strength from Algeria to Egypt, while controversies over immigration and Muslim minorities were becoming more visible in Western Europe. Huntington offered a single conceptual map into which apparently unrelated events could be fitted. Instead of asking which ideology or alliance bloc a country belonged to, one could ask a more elemental question: to which civilization did it belong? Huntington himself later attributed the extraordinary reception of his argument largely to timing.

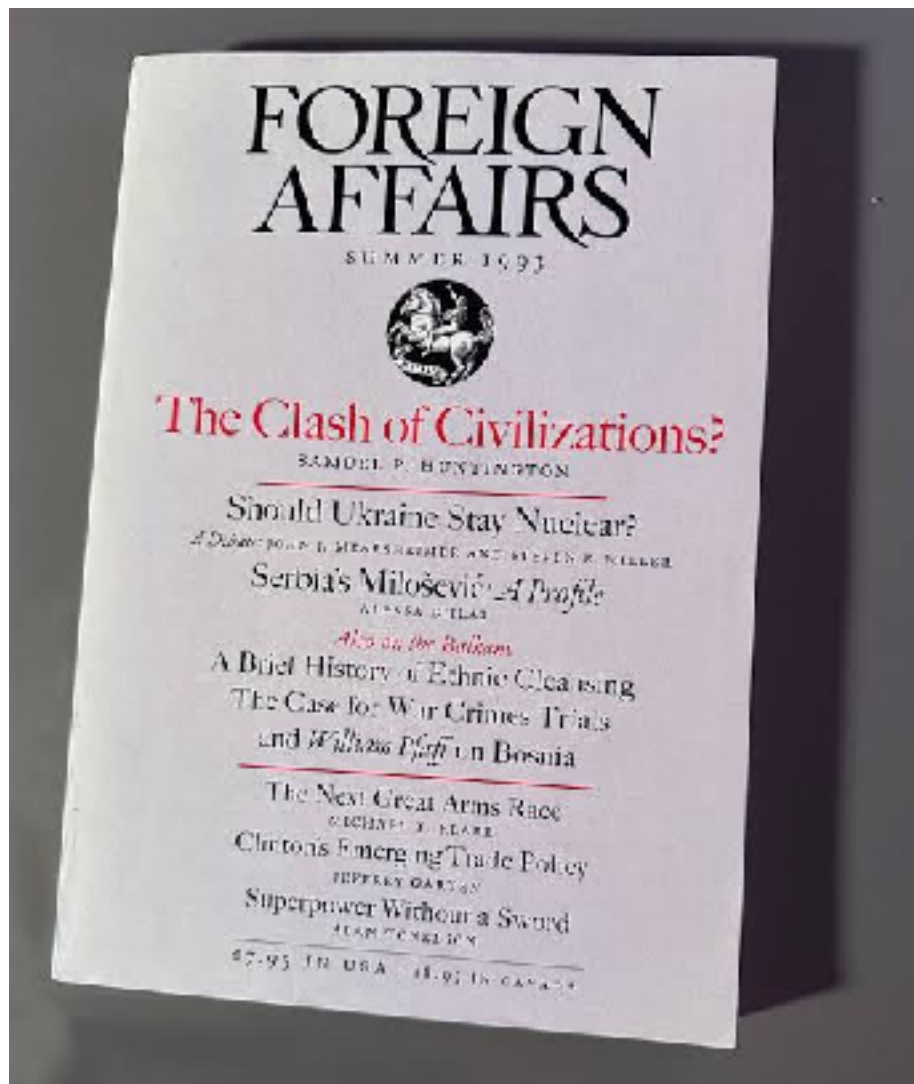
Although Huntington formally described seven or eight civilizations, the controversy quickly acquired a distinctly Middle Eastern and Islamic character. There were good reasons for this. China occupied an important place in his scheme, particularly through his proposed “Confucian-Islamic connection,” but Islam supplied many of his most vivid examples and strongest formulations. Huntington described a 1,300-year history of conflict between Islam and the West, emphasized contemporary conflicts along the boundaries of Muslim populations, and famously concluded that “Islam has bloody borders.” In the later book, he went further, portraying the rivalry between Islam and Christianity as a far deeper historical phenomenon than the comparatively brief twentieth-century conflict between liberalism and communism.

Bernard Lewis helped give this dimension of the argument its particular shape. Huntington explicitly quoted Lewis’s description of a historic “clash of civilizations” between the Islamic world and the Judeo-Christian, secular West; the phrase itself had appeared prominently in Lewis’s 1990 essay “The Roots of Muslim Rage.” Huntington thus inserted an argument already circulating in debates about Islam and the West into a much broader theory of world politics. (Edward Said seized on precisely this intellectual connection, charging that Huntington had adopted from Lewis a picture of Islam as unusually coherent, enduring, and defined by its antagonism toward the West.)

This helps explain why Huntington came to seem more “about Islam” than his formal taxonomy would suggest. The “clash” thesis became inseparable from the contemporary debate over whether the Middle East was merely another region undergoing difficult modernization or a deeper cultural exception to the expected convergence of the post-Cold War world.

The readings in this session therefore concern more than whether Huntington's predictions were empirically correct. They capture a struggle over how to conceptualize the post-Cold War world. The extraordinary resonance of Huntington's argument came from its ability to organize a confusing new world into an intelligible pattern. The intensity of the response came from the fear that the pattern was not simply being discovered but imposed—and that nowhere were the consequences of that act of classification more significant than in relations between the West and Islam.

Explanatory notes to the readings appear from page 65.





Samuel P. Huntington (1927–2008) was an American political scientist whose work ranged across civil-military relations, political development, democratization, and the role of culture in world politics. A longtime Harvard professor and influential participant in policy debates, he first established his reputation with *The Soldier and the State* and *Political Order in Changing Societies*, in which he emphasized the importance of strong institutions and

warned that rapid social mobilization without corresponding political development could produce instability. He later became best known for “The Clash of Civilizations?” (1993 in *Foreign Affairs*) and the book that followed, arguing that after the Cold War the principal lines of international conflict would increasingly be cultural and civilizational rather than ideological. Huntington’s arguments were controversial, especially his treatment of Islam and the West, but they reflected a consistent preoccupation throughout his career: the limits of universalist assumptions and the enduring power of history, identity, institutions, and culture in shaping political order.

Huntington’s article and book became among the most influential works of post-Cold War political analysis. The book was translated into at least thirty-three languages and generated conferences, rejoinders, empirical tests, and entire literatures devoted either to refining or refuting its thesis. By 2018, Google Scholar recorded more than 13,500 citations to the article and nearly 22,000 to the book, extraordinary figures for works of international political analysis. The attacks of September 11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the rise of jihadist movements, and recurrent tensions between Western and Muslim societies repeatedly returned the “clash” thesis to public debate. More than three decades after the article appeared, scholars are still publishing studies asking whether Huntington was right, a measure less of consensus around his argument than of its remarkable durability as a framework that subsequent generations have felt compelled to test, challenge, or reformulate.



The Clash of Civilizations? (excerpts from article, 1993)

THE NEXT PATTERN OF CONFLICT

World politics is entering a new phase, and intellectuals have not hesitated to proliferate visions of what it will be—the end of history, the return of traditional rivalries between nation states, and the decline of the nation state from the conflicting pulls of tribalism and globalism, among others. Each of these visions catches aspects of the emerging reality. Yet they all miss a crucial, indeed a central, aspect of what global politics is likely to be in the coming years.

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.

Conflict between civilizations will be the latest phase in the evolution of conflict in the modern world. For a century and a half after the emergence of the modern international system with the Peace of Westphalia, the conflicts of the Western world were largely among princes—emperors, absolute monarchs and constitutional monarchs attempting to expand their bureaucracies, their armies, their mercantilist economic strength and, most important, the territory they ruled. In the process they created nation states, and beginning with the French Revolution the principal lines of conflict were between nations rather than princes. In 1793, as R. R. Palmer put it, “The wars of kings were over; the wars of peoples had begun.” This nineteenth-century pattern lasted until the end of World War I. Then, as a result of the Russian Revolution and the reaction against it, the conflict of nations yielded to the conflict of ideologies, first among communism, fascism-Nazism and liberal democracy, and then between communism and liberal democracy. During the Cold War, this latter conflict became embodied in the struggle between the two superpowers, neither of which was a nation state in the classical European sense and each of which defined its identity in terms of its ideology.

These conflicts between princes, nation states and ideologies were primarily conflicts within Western civilization, “Western civil wars,” as William Lind has labeled them. This was as true of the Cold War as it was of the world wars and the earlier wars of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the end of the Cold War, international politics moves out of its Western phase, and its centerpiece becomes the interaction between the West and non-Western civilizations and among non-Western civilizations. In the politics of civilizations, the peoples and governments of non-Western civilizations no longer remain the objects of history as targets of Western colonialism but join the West as movers and shapers of history.

THE NATURE OF CIVILIZATIONS

During the cold war the world was divided into the First, Second and Third Worlds. Those divisions are no longer relevant. It is far more meaningful now to group countries not in terms of their political or economic systems or in terms of their level of economic development but rather in terms of their culture and civilization.

What do we mean when we talk of a civilization? A civilization is a cultural entity. Villages, regions, ethnic groups, nationalities, religious groups, all have distinct cultures at different levels of cultural heterogeneity. The culture of a village in southern Italy may be different from that of a village in northern Italy, but both will share in a common Italian culture that distinguishes them from German villages. European communities, in turn, will share cultural features that distinguish them from Arab or Chinese communities. Arabs, Chinese and Westerners, however, are not part of any broader cultural entity. They constitute civilizations. A civilization is thus the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined both by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people. People have levels of identity: a resident of Rome may define himself with varying degrees of intensity as a Roman, an Italian, a Catholic, a Christian, a European, a Westerner. The civilization to which he belongs is the broadest level of identification with which he intensely identifies. People can and do redefine their identities and, as a result, the composition and boundaries of civilizations change.

Civilizations may involve a large number of people, as with China (“a civilization pretending to be a state,” as Lucian Pye put it), or a very small number of people, such as the Anglophone Caribbean. A civilization may

include several nation states, as is the case with Western, Latin American and Arab civilizations, or only one, as is the case with Japanese civilization. Civilizations obviously blend and overlap, and may include subcivilizations. Western civilization has two major variants, European and North American, and Islam has its Arab, Turkic and Malay subdivisions. Civilizations are nonetheless meaningful entities, and while the lines between them are seldom sharp, they are real. Civilizations are dynamic; they rise and fall; they divide and merge. And, as any student of history knows, civilizations disappear and are buried in the sands of time.

Westerners tend to think of nation states as the principal actors in global affairs. They have been that, however, for only a few centuries. The broader reaches of human history have been the history of civilizations. In *A Study of History*, Arnold Toynbee identified 21 major civilizations; only six of them exist in the contemporary world.

WHY CIVILIZATIONS WILL CLASH

Civilization identity will be increasingly important in the future, and the world will be shaped in large measure by the interactions among seven or eight major civilizations. These include Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African civilization. The most important conflicts of the future will occur along the cultural fault lines separating these civilizations from one another.

Why will this be the case?

First, differences among civilizations are not only real; they are basic. Civilizations are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition and, most important, religion. The people of different civilizations have different views on the relations between God and man, the individual and the group, the citizen and the state, parents and children, husband and wife, as well as differing views of the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy. These differences are the product of centuries. They will not soon disappear. They are far more fundamental than differences among political ideologies and political regimes. Differences do not necessarily mean conflict, and conflict does not necessarily mean violence. Over the centuries, however, differences among civilizations have generated the most prolonged and the most violent conflicts.

Second, the world is becoming a smaller place. The interactions between peoples of different civilizations are increasing; these increasing

interactions intensify civilization consciousness and awareness of differences between civilizations and commonalities within civilizations. North African immigration to France generates hostility among Frenchmen and at the same time increased receptivity to immigration by “good” European Catholic Poles. Americans react far more negatively to Japanese investment than to larger investments from Canada and European countries. Similarly, as Donald Horowitz has pointed out, “An Ibo may be... an Owerri Ibo or an Onitsha Ibo in what was the Eastern region of Nigeria. In Lagos, he is simply an Ibo. In London, he is a Nigerian. In New York, he is an African.” The interactions among peoples of different civilizations enhance the civilization-consciousness of people that, in turn, invigorates differences and animosities stretching or thought to stretch back deep into history.

Third, the processes of economic modernization and social change throughout the world are separating people from longstanding local identities. They also weaken the nation state as a source of identity. In much of the world religion has moved in to fill this gap, often in the form of movements that are labeled “fundamentalist.” Such movements are found in Western Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism, as well as in Islam. In most countries and most religions the people active in fundamentalist movements are young, college-educated, middle-class technicians, professionals and business persons. The “unsecularization of the world,” George Weigel has remarked, “is one of the dominant social facts of life in the late twentieth century.” The revival of religion, “la revanche de Dieu,” as Gilles Kepel labeled it, provides a basis for identity and commitment that transcends national boundaries and unites civilizations.

Fourth, the growth of civilization-consciousness is enhanced by the dual role of the West. On the one hand, the West is at a peak of power. At the same time, however, and perhaps as a result, a return to the roots phenomenon is occurring among non-Western civilizations. Increasingly one hears references to trends toward a turning inward and “Asianization” in Japan, the end of the Nehru legacy and the “Hinduization” of India, the failure of Western ideas of socialism and nationalism and hence “re-Islamization” of the Middle East, and now a debate over Westernization versus Russianization in Boris Yeltsin’s country. A West at the peak of its power confronts non-Wests that increasingly have the desire, the will and the resources to shape the world in non-Western ways.

In the past, the elites of non-Western societies were usually the people who were most involved with the West, had been educated at Oxford, the Sorbonne or Sandhurst, and had absorbed Western attitudes and values. At the same time, the populace in non-Western countries often remained deeply imbued with the indigenous culture. Now, however, these relationships are being reversed. A de-Westernization and indigenization of elites is occurring in many non-Western countries at the same time that Western, usually American, cultures, styles and habits become more popular among the mass of the people.

Fifth, cultural characteristics and differences are less mutable and hence less easily compromised and resolved than political and economic ones. In the former Soviet Union, communists can become democrats, the rich can become poor and the poor rich, but Russians cannot become Estonians and Azeris cannot become Armenians. In class and ideological conflicts, the key question was “Which side are you on?” and people could and did choose sides and change sides. In conflicts between civilizations, the question is “What are you?” That is a given that cannot be changed. And as we know, from Bosnia to the Caucasus to the Sudan, the wrong answer to that question can mean a bullet in the head. Even more than ethnicity, religion discriminates sharply and exclusively among people. A person can be half-French and half-Arab and simultaneously even a citizen of two countries. It is more difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim.

Finally, economic regionalism is increasing. The proportions of total trade that were intraregional rose between 1980 and 1989 from 51 percent to 59 percent in Europe, 33 percent to 37 percent in East Asia, and 32 percent to 36 percent in North America. The importance of regional economic blocs is likely to continue to increase in the future. On the one hand, successful economic regionalism will reinforce civilization-consciousness. On the other hand, economic regionalism may succeed only when it is rooted in a common civilization. The European Community rests on the shared foundation of European culture and Western Christianity. The success of the North American Free Trade Area depends on the convergence now underway of Mexican, Canadian and American cultures. Japan, in contrast, faces difficulties in creating a comparable economic entity in East Asia because Japan is a society and civilization unique to itself. However strong the trade and investment links Japan may develop with other East Asian countries, its cultural differences with those countries inhibit and perhaps preclude its promoting regional economic integration like that in Europe and North America.

Common culture, in contrast, is clearly facilitating the rapid expansion of the economic relations between the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and the overseas Chinese communities in other Asian countries. With the Cold War over, cultural commonalities increasingly overcome ideological differences, and mainland China and Taiwan move closer together. If cultural commonality is a prerequisite for economic integration, the principal East Asian economic bloc of the future is likely to be centered on China.

Culture and religion also form the basis of the Economic Cooperation Organization, which brings together ten non-Arab Muslim countries: Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. One impetus to the revival and expansion of this organization, founded originally in the 1960s by Turkey, Pakistan and Iran, is the realization by the leaders of several of these countries that they had no chance of admission to the European Community. Similarly, Caricom, the Central American Common Market and Mercosur rest on common cultural foundations. Efforts to build a broader Caribbean-Central American economic entity bridging the Anglo-Latin divide, however, have to date failed.

As people define their identity in ethnic and religious terms, they are likely to see an "us" versus "them" relation existing between themselves and people of different ethnicity or religion. The end of ideologically defined states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union permits traditional ethnic identities and animosities to come to the fore. Differences in culture and religion create differences over policy issues, ranging from human rights to immigration to trade and commerce to the environment. Geographical propinquity gives rise to conflicting territorial claims from Bosnia to Mindanao. Most important, the efforts of the West to promote its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values, to maintain its military predominance and to advance its economic interests engender countering responses from other civilizations. Decreasingly able to mobilize support and form coalitions on the basis of ideology, governments and groups will increasingly attempt to mobilize support by appealing to common religion and civilization identity. The clash of civilizations thus occurs at two levels. At the micro-level, adjacent groups along the fault lines between civilizations struggle, often violently, over the control of territory and each other. At the macro-level, states from different civilizations compete for relative military and economic power, struggle

over the control of international institutions and third parties, and competitively promote their particular political and religious values.

THE FAULT LINES BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS

The fault lines between civilizations are replacing the political and ideological boundaries of the Cold War as the flash points for crisis and bloodshed. The Cold War began when the Iron Curtain divided Europe politically and ideologically. The Cold War ended with the end of the Iron Curtain. As the ideological division of Europe has disappeared, the cultural division of Europe between Western Christianity, on the one hand, and Orthodox Christianity and Islam, on the other, has reemerged. The most significant dividing line in Europe, as William Wallace has suggested, may well be the eastern boundary of Western Christianity in the year 1500. This line runs along what are now the boundaries between Finland and Russia and between the Baltic states and Russia, cuts through Belarus and Ukraine separating the more Catholic western Ukraine from Orthodox eastern Ukraine, swings westward separating Transylvania from the rest of Romania, and then goes through Yugoslavia almost exactly along the line now separating Croatia and Slovenia from the rest of Yugoslavia. In the Balkans this line, of course, coincides with the historic boundary between the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires. The peoples to the north and west of this line are Protestant or Catholic; they shared the common experiences of European history—feudalism, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution; they are generally economically better off than the peoples to the east; and they may now look forward to increasing involvement in a common European economy and to the consolidation of democratic political systems. The peoples to the east and south of this line are Orthodox or Muslim; they historically belonged to the Ottoman or Tsarist empires and were only lightly touched by the shaping events in the rest of Europe; they are generally less advanced economically; they seem much less likely to develop stable democratic political systems. The Velvet Curtain of culture has replaced the Iron Curtain of ideology as the most significant dividing line in Europe. As the events in Yugoslavia show, it is not only a line of difference; it is also at times a line of bloody conflict.

Conflict along the fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations has been going on for 1,300 years. After the founding of Islam, the Arab and Moorish surge west and north only ended at Tours in 732. From the eleventh to the thirteenth century the Crusaders attempted with temporary

success to bring Christianity and Christian rule to the Holy Land. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Turks reversed the balance, extended their sway over the Middle East and the Balkans, captured Constantinople, and twice laid siege to Vienna. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as Ottoman power declined Britain, France, and Italy established Western control over most of North Africa and the Middle East.

After World War II, the West, in turn, began to retreat; the colonial empires disappeared; first Arab nationalism and then Islamic fundamentalism manifested themselves; the West became heavily dependent on the Persian Gulf countries for its energy; the oil-rich Muslim countries became money-rich and, when they wished to, weapons-rich. Several wars occurred between Arabs and Israel (created by the West). France fought a bloody and ruthless war in Algeria for most of the 1950s; British and French forces invaded Egypt in 1956; American forces went into Lebanon in 1958; subsequently American forces returned to Lebanon, attacked Libya, and engaged in various military encounters with Iran; Arab and Islamic terrorists, supported by at least three Middle Eastern governments, employed the weapon of the weak and bombed Western planes and installations and seized Western hostages. This warfare between Arabs and the West culminated in 1990, when the United States sent a massive army to the Persian Gulf to defend some Arab countries against aggression by another. In its aftermath NATO planning is increasingly directed to potential threats and instability along its “southern tier.”

This centuries-old military interaction between the West and Islam is unlikely to decline. It could become more virulent. The Gulf War left some Arabs feeling proud that Saddam Hussein had attacked Israel and stood up to the West. It also left many feeling humiliated and resentful of the West’s military presence in the Persian Gulf, the West’s overwhelming military dominance, and their apparent inability to shape their own destiny. Many Arab countries, in addition to the oil exporters, are reaching levels of economic and social development where autocratic forms of government become inappropriate and efforts to introduce democracy become stronger. Some openings in Arab political systems have already occurred. The principal beneficiaries of these openings have been Islamist movements. In the Arab world, in short, Western democracy strengthens anti-Western political forces. This may be a passing phenomenon, but it surely complicates relations between Islamic countries and the West.

Those relations are also complicated by demography. The spectacular population growth in Arab countries, particularly in North Africa, has led to increased migration to Western Europe. The movement within Western Europe toward minimizing internal boundaries has sharpened political sensitivities with respect to this development. In Italy, France and Germany, racism is increasingly open, and political reactions and violence against Arab and Turkish migrants have become more intense and more widespread since 1990:

On both sides the interaction between Islam and the West is seen as a Clash of civilizations. The West's "next confrontation," observes M. J. Akbar, an Indian Muslim author, "is definitely going to come from the Muslim world. It is in the sweep of the Islamic nations from the Maghreb to Pakistan that the struggle for a new world order will begin." Bernard Lewis comes to a similar conclusion:

We are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations—the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.

Historically, the other great antagonistic interaction of Arab Islamic civilization has been with the pagan, animist, and now increasingly Christian black peoples to the south. In the past, this antagonism was epitomized in the image of Arab slave dealers and black slaves. It has been reflected in the on-going civil war in the Sudan between Arabs and blacks, the fighting in Chad between Libyan-supported insurgents and the government, the tensions between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the Horn of Africa, and the political conflicts, recurring riots and communal violence between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. The modernization of Africa and the spread of Christianity are likely to enhance the probability of violence along this fault line. Symptomatic of the intensification of this conflict was the Pope John Paul II's speech in Khartoum in February 1993 attacking the actions of the Sudan's Islamist government against the Christian minority there.

On the northern border of Islam, conflict has increasingly erupted between Orthodox and Muslim peoples, including the carnage of Bosnia and Sarajevo, the simmering violence between Serb and Albanian, the tenuous relations between Bulgarians and their Turkish minority, the violence between Ossetians and Ingush, the unremitting slaughter of each other by

Armenians and Azeris, the tense relations between Russians and Muslims in Central Asia, and the deployment of Russian troops to protect Russian interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Religion reinforces the revival of ethnic identities and restimulates Russian fears about the security of their southern borders. This concern is well captured by Archie Roosevelt:

Much of Russian history concerns the struggle between the Slavs and the Turkic peoples on their borders, which dates back to the foundation of the Russian state more than a thousand years ago. In the Slavs' millennium-long confrontation with their eastern neighbors lies the key to an understanding not only of Russian history, but Russian character. To understand Russian realities today one has to have a concept of the great Turkic ethnic group that has preoccupied Russians through the centuries.

The conflict of civilizations is deeply rooted elsewhere in Asia. The historic clash between Muslim and Hindu in the subcontinent manifests itself now not only in the rivalry between Pakistan and India but also in intensifying religious strife within India between increasingly militant Hindu groups and India's substantial Muslim minority. The destruction of the Ayodhya mosque in December 1992 brought to the fore the issue of whether India will remain a secular democratic state or become a Hindu one. In East Asia, China has outstanding territorial disputes with most of its neighbors. It has pursued a ruthless policy toward the Buddhist people of Tibet, and it is pursuing an increasingly ruthless policy toward its Turkic-Muslim minority. With the Cold War over, the underlying differences between China and the United States have reasserted themselves in areas such as human rights, trade and weapons proliferation. These differences are unlikely to moderate. A "new cold war," Deng Xiaoping reportedly asserted in 1991, is under way between China and America.

The same phrase has been applied to the increasingly difficult relations between Japan and the United States. Here cultural difference exacerbates economic conflict. People on each side allege racism on the other, but at least on the American side the antipathies are not racial but cultural. The basic values, attitudes, behavioral patterns of the two societies could hardly be more different. The economic issues between the United States and Europe are no less serious than those between the United States and Japan, but they do not have the same political salience and emotional intensity because the differences between American culture and European culture are

so much less than those between American civilization and Japanese civilization.

The interactions between civilizations vary greatly in the extent to which they are likely to be characterized by violence. Economic competition clearly predominates between the American and European subcivilizations of the West and between both of them and Japan. On the Eurasian continent, however, the proliferation of ethnic conflict, epitomized at the extreme in “ethnic cleansing,” has not been totally random. It has been most frequent and most violent between groups belonging to different civilizations. In Eurasia the great historic fault lines between civilizations are once more aflame. This is particularly true along the boundaries of the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc of nations from the bulge of Africa to central Asia. Violence also occurs between Muslims, on the one hand, and Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Jews in Israel, Hindus in India, Buddhists in Burma and Catholics in the Philippines. Islam has bloody borders.

CIVILIZATION RALLYING: THE KIN-COUNTRY SYNDROME

Groups or states belonging to one civilization that become involved in war with people from a different civilization naturally try to rally support from other members of their own civilization. As the post-Cold War world evolves, civilization commonality, what H. D. S. Greenway has termed the “kin-country” syndrome, is replacing political ideology and traditional balance of power considerations as the principal basis for cooperation and coalitions. It can be seen gradually emerging in the post-Cold War conflicts in the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus and Bosnia. None of these was a full-scale war between civilizations, but each involved some elements of civilizational rallying, which seemed to become more important as the conflict continued and which may provide a foretaste of the future.

First, in the Gulf War one Arab state invaded another and then fought a coalition of Arab, Western and other states. While only a few Muslim governments overtly supported Saddam Hussein, many Arab elites privately cheered him on, and he was highly popular among large sections of the Arab publics. Islamic fundamentalist movements universally supported Iraq rather than the Western-backed governments of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Forswearing Arab nationalism, Saddam Hussein explicitly invoked an Islamic appeal. He and his supporters attempted to define the war as a war between civilizations. “It is not the world against Iraq,” as Safar Al-Hawali, dean of Islamic Studies at the Umm Al-Qura University in Mecca, put it in a widely circulated tape. “It is the West against Islam.”

Ignoring the rivalry between Iran and Iraq, the chief Iranian religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, called for a holy war against the West: "The struggle against American aggression, greed, plans and policies will be counted as a jihad, and anybody who is killed on that path is a martyr." "This is a war," King Hussein of Jordan argued, "against all Arabs and all Muslims and not against Iraq alone."

The rallying of substantial sections of Arab elites and publics behind Saddam Hussein caused those Arab governments in the anti-Iraq coalition to moderate their activities and temper their public statements. Arab governments opposed or distanced themselves from subsequent Western efforts to apply pressure on Iraq, including enforcement of a no-fly zone in the summer of 1992 and the bombing of Iraq in January 1993. The Western-Soviet-Turkish-Arab anti-Iraq coalition of 1990 had by 1993 become a coalition of almost only the West and Kuwait against Iraq.

Muslims contrasted Western actions against Iraq with the West's failure to protect Bosnians against Serbs and to impose sanctions on Israel for violating U.N. resolutions. The West, they alleged, was using a double standard. A world of clashing civilizations, however, is inevitably a world of double standards: people apply one standard to their kin-countries and a different standard to others.

Second, the kin-country syndrome also appeared in conflicts in the former Soviet Union. Armenian military successes in 1992 and 1993 stimulated Turkey to become increasingly supportive of its religious, ethnic and linguistic brethren in Azerbaijan. "We have a Turkish nation feeling the same sentiments as the Azerbaijanis," said one Turkish official in 1992. "We are under pressure. Our newspapers are full of the photos of atrocities and are asking us if we are still serious about pursuing our neutral policy. Maybe we should show Armenia that there's a big Turkey in the region." President Turgut Ozal agreed, remarking that Turkey should at least "scare the Armenians a little bit." Turkey, Ozal threatened again in 1993, would "show its fangs." Turkish Air Force jets flew reconnaissance flights along the Armenian border; Turkey suspended food shipments and air flights to Armenia; and Turkey and Iran announced they would not accept dismemberment of Azerbaijan. In the last years of its existence, the Soviet government supported Azerbaijan because its government was dominated by former communists. With the end of the Soviet Union, however, political considerations gave way to religious ones. Russian troops fought on the

side of the Armenians, and Azerbaijan accused the “Russian government of turning 180 degrees” toward support for Christian Armenia.

Third, with respect to the fighting in the former Yugoslavia, Western publics manifested sympathy and support for the Bosnian Muslims and the horrors they suffered at the hands of the Serbs. Relatively little concern was expressed, however, over Croatian attacks on Muslims and participation in the dismemberment of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the early stages of the Yugoslav breakup, Germany, in an unusual display of diplomatic initiative and muscle, induced the other 11 members of the European Community to follow its lead in recognizing Slovenia and Croatia. As a result of the pope’s determination to provide strong backing to the two Catholic countries, the Vatican extended recognition even before the Community did. The United States followed the European lead. Thus the leading actors in Western civilization rallied behind their coreligionists. Subsequently Croatia was reported to be receiving substantial quantities of arms from Central European and other Western countries. Boris Yeltsin’s government, on the other hand, attempted to pursue a middle course that would be sympathetic to the Orthodox Serbs but not alienate Russia from the West. Russian conservative and nationalist groups, however, including many legislators, attacked the government for not being more forthcoming in its support for the Serbs. By early 1993 several hundred Russians apparently were serving with the Serbian forces, and reports circulated of Russian arms being supplied to Serbia.

Islamic governments and groups, on the other hand, castigated the West for not coming to the defense of the Bosnians. Iranian leaders urged Muslims from all countries to provide help to Bosnia; in violation of the U.N. arms embargo, Iran supplied weapons and men for the Bosnians; Iranian-supported Lebanese groups sent guerrillas to train and organize the Bosnian forces. In 1993 up to 4,000 Muslims from over two dozen Islamic countries were reported to be fighting in Bosnia. The governments of Saudi Arabia and other countries felt under increasing pressure from fundamentalist groups in their own societies to provide more vigorous support for the Bosnians. By the end of 1992, Saudi Arabia had reportedly supplied substantial funding for weapons and supplies for the Bosnians, which significantly increased their military capabilities vis-a-vis the Serbs.

In the 1930s the Spanish Civil War provoked intervention from countries that politically were fascist, communist and democratic. In the 1990s the Yugoslav conflict is provoking intervention from countries that are Muslim,

Orthodox and Western Christian. The parallel has not gone unnoticed. “The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina has become the emotional equivalent of the fight against fascism in the Spanish Civil War,” one Saudi editor observed. “Those who died there are regarded as martyrs who tried to save their fellow Muslims.”

Conflicts and violence will also occur between states and groups within the same civilization. Such conflicts, however, are likely to be less intense and less likely to expand than conflicts between civilizations. Common membership in a civilization reduces the probability of violence in situations where it might otherwise occur. In 1991 and 1992 many people were alarmed by the possibility of violent conflict between Russia and Ukraine over territory, particularly Crimea, the Black Sea fleet, nuclear weapons and economic issues. If civilization is what counts, however, the likelihood of violence between Ukrainians and Russians should be low. They are two Slavic, primarily Orthodox peoples who have had close relationships with each other for centuries. As of early 1993, despite all the reasons for conflict, the leaders of the two countries were effectively negotiating and defusing the issues between the two countries. While there has been serious fighting between Muslims and Christians elsewhere in the former Soviet Union and much tension and some fighting between Western and Orthodox Christians in the Baltic states, there has been virtually no violence between Russians and Ukrainians.

Civilization rallying to date has been limited, but it has been growing, and it clearly has the potential to spread much further. As the conflicts in the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus and Bosnia continued, the positions of nations and the cleavages between them increasingly were along civilizational lines. Populist politicians, religious leaders and the media have found it a potent means of arousing mass support and of pressuring hesitant governments. In the coming years, the local conflicts most likely to escalate into major wars will be those, as in Bosnia and the Caucasus, along the fault lines between civilizations. The next world war, if there is one, will be a war between civilizations.

THE WEST VERSUS THE REST

The West is now at an extraordinary peak of power in relation to other civilizations. Its superpower opponent has disappeared from the map. Military conflict among Western states is unthinkable, and Western military power is unrivaled. Apart from Japan, the West faces no economic challenge. It dominates international political and security institutions and

with Japan international economic institutions. Global political and security issues are effectively settled by a directorate of the United States, Britain and France, world economic issues by a directorate of the United States, Germany and Japan, all of which maintain extraordinarily close relations with each other to the exclusion of lesser and largely non-Western countries. Decisions made at the U.N. Security Council or in the International Monetary Fund that reflect the interests of the West are presented to the world as reflecting the desires of the world community. The very phrase “the world community” has become the euphemistic collective noun (replacing “the Free World”) to give global legitimacy to actions reflecting the interests of the United States and other Western powers. Through the IMF and other international economic institutions, the West promotes its economic interests and imposes on other nations the economic policies it thinks appropriate. In any poll of non-Western peoples, the IMF undoubtedly would win the support of finance ministers and a few others, but get an overwhelmingly unfavorable rating from just about everyone else, who would agree with Georgy Arbatov’s characterization of IMF officials as “neo-Bolsheviks who love expropriating other people’s money, imposing undemocratic and alien rules of economic and political conduct and stifling economic freedom.”

Western domination of the U.N. Security Council and its decisions, tempered only by occasional abstention by China, produced U.N. legitimization of the West’s use of force to drive Iraq out of Kuwait and its elimination of Iraq’s sophisticated weapons and capacity to produce such weapons. It also produced the quite unprecedented action by the United States, Britain and France in getting the Security Council to demand that Libya hand over the Pan Am 103 bombing suspects and then to impose sanctions when Libya refused. After defeating the largest Arab army, the West did not hesitate to throw its weight around in the Arab world. The West in effect is using international institutions, military power and economic resources to run the world in ways that will maintain Western predominance, protect Western interests and promote Western political and economic values.

That at least is the way in which non-Westerners see the new world, and there is a significant element of truth in their view. Differences in power and struggles for military, economic and institutional power are thus one source of conflict between the West and other civilizations. Differences in culture, that is basic values and beliefs, are a second source of conflict. V. S. Naipaul has argued that Western civilization is the “universal

civilization” that “fits all men.” At a superficial level much of Western culture has indeed permeated the rest of the world. At a more basic level, however, Western concepts differ fundamentally from those prevalent in other civilizations. Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state, often have little resonance in Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist or Orthodox cultures. Western efforts to propagate such ideas produce instead a reaction against “human rights imperialism” and a reaffirmation of indigenous values, as can be seen in the support for religious fundamentalism by the younger generation in non-Western cultures. The very notion that there could be a “universal civilization” is a Western idea, directly at odds with the particularism of most Asian societies and their emphasis on what distinguishes one people from another. Indeed, the author of a review of 100 comparative studies of values in different societies concluded that “the values that are most important in the West are least important worldwide.” In the political realm, of course, these differences are most manifest in the efforts of the United States and other Western powers to induce other peoples to adopt Western ideas concerning democracy and human rights. Modern democratic government originated in the West. When it has developed in non-Western societies it has usually been the product of Western colonialism or imposition.

The central axis of world politics in the future is likely to be, in Kishore Mahbubani’s phrase, the conflict between “the West and the Rest” and the responses of non-Western civilizations to Western power and values. Those responses generally take one or a combination of three forms. At one extreme, non-Western states can, like Burma and North Korea, attempt to pursue a course of isolation, to insulate their societies from penetration or “corruption” by the West, and, in effect, to opt out of participation in the Western-dominated global community. The costs of this course, however, are high, and few states have pursued it exclusively. A second alternative, the equivalent of “band-wagoning” in international relations theory, is to attempt to join the West and accept its values and institutions. The third alternative is to attempt to “balance” the West by developing economic and military power and cooperating with other non-Western societies against the West, while preserving indigenous values and institutions; in short, to modernize but not to Westernize.

THE TORN COUNTRIES

In the future, as people differentiate themselves by civilization, countries with large numbers of peoples of different civilizations, such as the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, are candidates for dismemberment. Some other countries have a fair degree of cultural homogeneity but are divided over whether their society belongs to one civilization or another. These are torn countries. Their leaders typically wish to pursue a bandwagoning strategy and to make their countries members of the West, but the history, culture and traditions of their countries are non-Western. The most obvious and prototypical torn country is Turkey. The late twentieth-century leaders of Turkey have followed in the Atatürk tradition and defined Turkey as a modern, secular, Western nation state. They allied Turkey with the West in NATO and in the Gulf War; they applied for membership in the European Community. At the same time, however, elements in Turkish society have supported an Islamic revival and have argued that Turkey is basically a Middle Eastern Muslim society. In addition, while the elite of Turkey has defined Turkey as a Western society, the elite of the West refuses to accept Turkey as such. Turkey will not become a member of the European Community, and the real reason, as President Ozal said, “is that we are Muslim and they are Christian and they don’t say that.” Having rejected Mecca, and then being rejected by Brussels, where does Turkey look? Tashkent may be the answer. The end of the Soviet Union gives Turkey the opportunity to become the leader of a revived Turkic civilization involving seven countries from the borders of Greece to those of China. Encouraged by the West, Turkey is making strenuous efforts to carve out this new identity for itself....

THE CONFUCIAN-ISLAMIC CONNECTION

The obstacles to non-Western countries joining the West vary considerably. They are least for Latin American and East European countries. They are greater for the Orthodox countries of the former Soviet Union. They are still greater for Muslim, Confucian, Hindu and Buddhist societies. Japan has established a unique position for itself as an associate member of the West: it is in the West in some respects but clearly not of the West in important dimensions. Those countries that for reason of culture and power do not wish to, or cannot, join the West compete with the West by developing their own economic, military and political power. They do this by promoting their internal development and by cooperating with other non-Western countries. The most prominent form of this cooperation is the Confucian-Islamic connection that has emerged to challenge Western interests, values and power.

Almost without exception, Western countries are reducing their military power; under Yeltsin's leadership so also is Russia. China, North Korea and several Middle Eastern states, however, are significantly expanding their military capabilities. They are doing this by the import of arms from Western and non-Western sources and by the development of indigenous arms industries. One result is the emergence of what Charles Krauthammer has called "Weapon States," and the Weapon States are not Western states. Another result is the redefinition of arms control, which is a Western concept and a Western goal. During the Cold War the primary purpose of arms control was to establish a stable military balance between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies. In the post-Cold War world the primary objective of arms control is to prevent the development by non-Western societies of military capabilities that could threaten Western interests. The West attempts to do this through international agreements, economic pressure and controls on the transfer of arms and weapons technologies.

The conflict between the West and the Confucian-Islamic states focuses largely, although not exclusively, on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, ballistic missiles and other sophisticated means for delivering them, and the guidance, intelligence and other electronic capabilities for achieving that goal. The West promotes nonproliferation as a universal norm and nonproliferation treaties and inspections as means of realizing that norm. It also threatens a variety of sanctions against those who promote the spread of sophisticated weapons and proposes some benefits for those who do not. The attention of the West focuses, naturally, on nations that are actually or potentially hostile to the West.

The non-Western nations, on the other hand, assert their right to acquire and to deploy whatever weapons they think necessary for their security. They also have absorbed, to the full, the truth of the response of the Indian defense minister when asked what lesson he learned from the Gulf War: "Don't fight the United States unless you have nuclear weapons." Nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and missiles are viewed, probably erroneously, as the potential equalizer of superior Western conventional power. China, of course, already has nuclear weapons; Pakistan and India have the capability to deploy them. North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Libya and Algeria appear to be attempting to acquire them. A top Iranian official has declared that all Muslim states should acquire nuclear weapons, and in 1988 the president of Iran reportedly issued a directive calling for development of "offensive and defensive chemical, biological and radiological weapons."

Centrally important to the development of counter-West military capabilities is the sustained expansion of China's military power and its means to create military power. Buoyed by spectacular economic development, China is rapidly increasing its military spending and vigorously moving forward with the modernization of its armed forces. It is purchasing weapons from the former Soviet states; it is developing long-range missiles; in 1992 it tested a one-megaton nuclear device. It is developing power-projection capabilities, acquiring aerial refueling technology, and trying to purchase an aircraft carrier. Its military buildup and assertion of sovereignty over the South China Sea are provoking a multilateral regional arms race in East Asia. China is also a major exporter of arms and weapons technology. It has exported materials to Libya and Iraq that could be used to manufacture nuclear weapons and nerve gas. It has helped Algeria build a reactor suitable for nuclear weapons research and production. China has sold to Iran nuclear technology that American officials believe could only be used to create weapons and apparently has shipped components of 300-mile-range missiles to Pakistan. North Korea has had a nuclear weapons program under way for some while and has sold advanced missiles and missile technology to Syria and Iran. The flow of weapons and weapons technology is generally from East Asia to the Middle East. There is, however, some movement in the reverse direction; China has received Stinger missiles from Pakistan.

A Confucian-Islamic military connection has thus come into being, designed to promote acquisition by its members of the weapons and weapons technologies needed to counter the military power of the West. It may or may not last. At present, however, it is, as Dave McCurdy has said, "a renegades' mutual support pact, run by the proliferators and their backers." A new form of arms competition is thus occurring between Islamic-Confucian states and the West. In an old-fashioned arms race, each side developed its own arms to balance or to achieve superiority against the other side. In this new form of arms competition, one side is developing its arms and the other side is attempting not to balance but to limit and prevent that arms build-up while at the same time reducing its own military capabilities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WEST

This article does not argue that civilization identities will replace all other identities, that nation states will disappear, that each civilization will become a single coherent political entity, that groups within a civilization

will not conflict with and even fight each other. This paper does set forth the hypotheses that differences between civilizations are real and important; civilization-consciousness is increasing; conflict between civilizations will supplant ideological and other forms of conflict as the dominant global form of conflict; international relations, historically a game played out within Western civilization, will increasingly be de-Westernized and become a game in which non-Western civilizations are actors and not simply objects; successful political, security and economic international institutions are more likely to develop within civilizations than across civilizations; conflicts between groups in different civilizations will be more frequent, more sustained and more violent than conflicts between groups in the same civilization; violent conflicts between groups in different civilizations are the most likely and most dangerous source of escalation that could lead to global wars; the paramount axis of world politics will be the relations between “the West and the Rest”; the elites in some torn non-Western countries will try to make their countries part of the West, but in most cases face major obstacles to accomplishing this; a central focus of conflict for the immediate future will be between the West and several Islamic-Confucian states.

This is not to advocate the desirability of conflicts between civilizations. It is to set forth descriptive hypotheses as to what the future may be like. If these are plausible hypotheses, however, it is necessary to consider their implications for Western policy. These implications should be divided between short-term advantage and long-term accommodation. In the short term it is clearly in the interest of the West to promote greater cooperation and unity within its own civilization, particularly between its European and North American components; to incorporate into the West societies in Eastern Europe and Latin America whose cultures are close to those of the West; to promote and maintain cooperative relations with Russia and Japan; to prevent escalation of local inter-civilization conflicts into major inter-civilization wars; to limit the expansion of the military strength of Confucian and Islamic states; to moderate the reduction of Western military capabilities and maintain military superiority in East and Southwest Asia; to exploit differences and conflicts among Confucian and Islamic states; to support in other civilizations groups sympathetic to Western values and interests; to strengthen international institutions that reflect and legitimate Western interests and values and to promote the involvement of non-Western states in those institutions.

In the longer term other measures would be called for. Western civilization is both Western and modern. Non-Western civilizations have attempted to become modern without becoming Western. To date only Japan has fully succeeded in this quest. Non-Western civilizations will continue to attempt to acquire the wealth, technology, skills, machines and weapons that are part of being modern. They will also attempt to reconcile this modernity with their traditional culture and values. Their economic and military strength relative to the West will increase. Hence the West will increasingly have to accommodate these non-Western modern civilizations whose power approaches that of the West but whose values and interests differ significantly from those of the West. This will require the West to maintain the economic and military power necessary to protect its interests in relation to these civilizations. It will also, however, require the West to develop a more profound understanding of the basic religious and philosophical assumptions underlying other civilizations and the ways in which people in those civilizations see their interests. It will require an effort to identify elements of commonality between Western and other civilizations. For the relevant future, there will be no universal civilization, but instead a world of different civilizations, each of which will have to learn to coexist with the others.



**The Clash of Civilizations
and the Remaking of World Order
(excerpts from book, 1996)**

Islam And The West

Some Westerners, including President Bill Clinton, have argued that the West does not have problems with Islam but only with violent Islamist extremists. Fourteen hundred years of history demonstrate otherwise. The relations between Islam and Christianity, both Orthodox and Western, have often been stormy. Each has been the other's Other. The twentieth-century conflict between liberal democracy and Marxist-Leninism is only a fleeting and superficial historical phenomenon compared to the continuing and deeply conflictual relation between Islam and Christianity. At times, peaceful coexistence has prevailed; more often the relation has been one of intense rivalry and of varying degrees of hot war. Their "historical

dynamics,” John Esposito comments, “... often found the two communities in competition, and locked at times in deadly combat, for power, land, and souls.” Across the centuries the fortunes of the two religions have risen and fallen in a sequence of momentous surges, pauses, and countersurges.

The initial Arab-Islamic sweep outward from the early seventh to the mid-eighth century established Muslim rule in North Africa, Iberia, the Middle East, Persia, and northern India. For two centuries or so the lines of division between Islam and Christianity stabilized. Then in the late eleventh century, Christians reasserted control of the western Mediterranean, conquered Sicily, and captured Toledo. In 1095, Christendom launched the Crusades, and for a century and a half, Christian potentates attempted, with decreasing success, to establish Christian rule in the Holy Land and adjoining areas in the Near East, losing Acre, their last foothold there, in 1291. Meanwhile the Ottoman Turks had appeared on the scene. They first weakened Byzantium and then conquered much of the Balkans as well as North Africa, captured Constantinople in 1453, and besieged Vienna in 1529. “For almost a thousand years,” Bernard Lewis observes, “from the first Moorish landing in Spain to the second Turkish siege of Vienna, Europe was under constant threat from Islam.” Islam is the only civilization which has put the survival of the West in doubt, and it has done that at least twice.

By the fifteenth century, however, the tide had begun to turn. The Christians gradually recovered Iberia, completing the task at Granada in 1492. Meanwhile European innovations in ocean navigation enabled the Portuguese and then others to circumvent the Muslim heartland and penetrate into the Indian Ocean and beyond. Simultaneously the Russians brought to an end two centuries of Tatar rule. The Ottomans subsequently made one last push forward, besieging Vienna again in 1683. Their failure there marked the beginning of a long retreat, involving the struggle of Orthodox peoples in the Balkans to free themselves from Ottoman rule, the expansion of the Hapsburg Empire, and the dramatic advance of the Russians to the Black Sea and the Caucasus. In the course of a century or so “the scourge of Christendom” was transformed into “the sick man of Europe.” At the conclusion of World War I, Britain, France, and Italy administered the coup de grace and established their direct or indirect rule throughout the remaining Ottoman lands except for the territory of the Turkish Republic. By 1920 only four Muslim countries—Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Afghanistan—remained independent of some form of non-Muslim rule.

The retreat of Western colonialism, in turn, began slowly in the 1920s and 1930s and accelerated dramatically in the aftermath of World War II. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought independence to additional Muslim societies. According to one count, some ninety-two acquisitions of Muslim territory by non-Muslim governments occurred between 1757 and 1919. By 1995, sixty-nine of these territories were once again under Muslim rule, and about forty-five independent states had overwhelmingly Muslim populations. The violent nature of these shifting relationships is reflected in the fact that 50 percent of wars involving pairs of states of different religions between 1820 and 1929 were wars between Muslims and Christians.

The causes of this ongoing pattern of conflict lie not in transitory phenomena such as twelfth-century Christian passion or twentieth-century Muslim fundamentalism. They flow from the nature of the two religions and the civilizations based on them. Conflict was, on the one hand, a product of difference, particularly the Muslim concept of Islam as a way of life transcending and uniting religion and politics versus the Western Christian concept of the separate realms of God and Caesar. The conflict also stemmed, however, from their similarities. Both are monotheistic religions, which, unlike polytheistic ones, cannot easily assimilate additional deities, and which see the world in dualistic, us-and-them terms. Both are universalistic, claiming to be the one true faith to which all humans can adhere. Both are missionary religions believing that their adherents have an obligation to convert nonbelievers to that one true faith. From its origins Islam expanded by conquest and when the opportunity existed Christianity did also. The parallel concepts of “jihad” and “crusade” not only resemble each other but distinguish these two faiths from other major world religions. Islam and Christianity, along with Judaism, also have teleological views of history in contrast to the cyclical or static views prevalent in other civilizations.

The level of violent conflict between Islam and Christianity over time has been influenced by demographic growth and decline, economic developments, technological change, and intensity of religious commitment. The spread of Islam in the seventh century was accompanied by massive migrations of Arab peoples, “the scale and speed” of which were unprecedented, into the lands of the Byzantine and Sassanian empires. A few centuries later, the Crusades were in large part a product of economic

growth, population expansion, and the “Clunaic revival” in eleventh-century Europe, which made it possible to mobilize large numbers of knights and peasants for the march to the Holy Land. When the First Crusade reached Constantinople, one Byzantine observer wrote, it seemed like “the entire West, including all the tribes of the barbarians living beyond the Adriatic Sea to the Pillars of Hercules, had started a mass migration and was on the march, bursting forth into Asia in a solid mass, with all its belongings.” In the nineteenth century spectacular population growth again produced a European eruption, generating the largest migration in history, which flowed into Muslim as well as other lands.

A comparable mix of factors has increased the conflict between Islam and the West in the late twentieth century. First, Muslim population growth has generated large numbers of unemployed and disaffected young people who become recruits to Islamist causes, exert pressure on neighboring societies, and migrate to the West. Second, the Islamic Resurgence has given Muslims renewed confidence in the distinctive character and worth of their civilization and values compared to those of the West. Third, the West’s simultaneous efforts to universalize its values and institutions, to maintain its military and economic superiority, and to intervene in conflicts in the Muslim world generate intense resentment among Muslims. Fourth, the collapse of communism removed a common enemy of the West and Islam and left each the perceived major threat to the other. Fifth, the increasing contact between and intermingling of Muslims and Westerners stimulate in each a new sense of their own identity and how it differs from that of the other. Interaction and intermingling also exacerbate differences over the rights of the members of one civilization in a country dominated by members of the other civilization. Within both Muslim and Christian societies, tolerance for the other declined sharply in the 1980s and 1990s.

The causes of the renewed conflict between Islam and the West thus lie in fundamental questions of power and culture. *Kto? Kovo?* Who is to rule? Who is to be ruled? The central issue of politics defined by Lenin is the root of the contest between Islam and the West. There is, however, the additional conflict, which Lenin would have considered meaningless, between two different versions of what is right and what is wrong and, as a consequence, who is right and who is wrong. So long as Islam remains Islam (which it will) and the West remains the West (which is more dubious), this fundamental conflict between two great civilizations and ways of life will

continue to define their relations in the future even as it has defined them for the past fourteen centuries.

These relations are further roiled by a number of substantive issues on which their positions differ or conflict. Historically one major issue was the control of territory, but that is now relatively insignificant. Nineteen of twenty-eight fault line conflicts in the mid-1990s between Muslims and non-Muslims were between Muslims and Christians. Eleven were with Orthodox Christians and seven with adherents of Western Christianity in Africa and Southeast Asia. Only one of these violent or potentially violent conflicts, that between Croats and Bosnians, occurred directly along the fault line between the West and Islam. The effective end of Western territorial imperialism and the absence so far of renewed Muslim territorial expansion have produced a geographical segregation so that only in a few places in the Balkans do Western and Muslim communities directly border on each other. Conflicts between the West and Islam thus focus less on territory than on broader intercivilizational issues such as weapons proliferation, human rights and democracy, control of oil, migration, Islamist terrorism, and Western intervention....

In the 1980s and 1990s the overall trend in Islam has been in an anti-Western direction. In part, this is the natural consequence of the Islamic Resurgence and the reaction against the perceived “gharbzadegi” or Westoxication of Muslim societies.... On occasion in the past, Muslim leaders did tell their people: “We must Westernize.” If any Muslim leader has said that in the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, he is a lonely figure. Indeed, it is hard to find statements by any Muslims, whether politicians, officials, academics, businesspersons, or journalists, praising Western values and institutions. They instead stress the differences between their civilization and Western civilization, the superiority of their culture, and the need to maintain the integrity of that culture against Western onslaught. Muslims fear and resent Western power and the threat which this poses to their society and beliefs. They see Western culture as materialistic, corrupt, decadent, and immoral. They also see it as seductive, and hence stress all the more the need to resist its impact on their way of life. Increasingly, Muslims attack the West not for adhering to an imperfect, erroneous religion, which is nonetheless a “religion of the book,” but for not adhering to any religion at all. In Muslim eyes Western secularism, irreligiosity, and hence immorality are worse evils than the Western Christianity that produced them. In the Cold War the West labeled its

opponent “godless communism”; in the post-Cold War conflict of civilizations Muslims see their opponent as “the godless West”....

The reaction against the West can be seen not only in the central intellectual thrust of the Islamic Resurgence but also in the shift in the attitudes toward the West of governments in Muslim countries. The immediate postcolonial governments were generally Western in their political and economic ideologies and policies and pro-Western in their foreign policies, with partial exceptions, like Algeria and Indonesia, where independence resulted from a nationalist revolution. One by one, however, pro-Western governments gave way to governments less identified with the West or explicitly anti-Western in Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Lebanon, and Afghanistan. Less dramatic changes in the same direction occurred in the orientation and alignment of other states including Tunisia, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The two staunchest Cold War Muslim military allies of the United States, Turkey and Pakistan, are under Islamist political pressure internally and their ties with the West subject to increased strain.

In 1995 the only Muslim state which was clearly more pro-Western than it had been ten years previously was Kuwait. The West’s close friends in the Muslim world are now either like Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf sheikdoms dependent on the West militarily or like Egypt and Algeria dependent on it economically. In the late 1980s the communist regimes of Eastern Europe collapsed when it became apparent that the Soviet Union no longer could or would provide them with economic and military support. If it became apparent that the West would no longer maintain its Muslim satellite regimes, they are likely to suffer a comparable fate.

Growing Muslim anti-Westernism has been paralleled by expanding Western concern with the “Islamic threat” posed particularly by Muslim extremism. Islam is seen as a source of nuclear proliferation, terrorism, and, in Europe, unwanted migrants. These concerns are shared by both publics and leaders. Asked in November 1994 whether the “Islamic revival” was a threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East, for instance, 61 percent of a sample of 35,000 Americans interested in foreign policy said yes and only 28 percent no. A year earlier, when asked what country posed the greatest danger to the United States, a random sample of the public picked Iran, China, and Iraq as the top three. Similarly, asked in 1994 to identify “critical threats” to the United States, 72 percent of the public and 61 percent of foreign policy leaders said nuclear proliferation and 69 percent

of the public and 33 percent of leaders international terrorism—two issues widely associated with Islam. In addition, 33 percent of the public and 39 percent of the leaders saw a threat in the possible expansion of Islamic fundamentalism. Europeans have similar attitudes. In the spring of 1991, for instance, 51 percent of the French public said the principal threat to France was from the South with only 8 percent saying it would come from the East. The four countries which the French public most feared were all Muslim: Iraq, 52 percent; Iran, 35 percent; Libya, 26 percent; and Algeria, 22 percent. Western political leaders, including the German chancellor and the French prime minister, expressed similar concerns, with the secretary general of NATO declaring in 1995 that Islamic fundamentalism was “at least as dangerous as communism” had been to the West, and a “very senior member” of the Clinton administration pointing to Islam as the global rival of the West.

With the virtual disappearance of a military threat from the east, NATO’s planning is increasingly directed toward potential threats from the south. “The Southern Tier,” one U.S. Army analyst observed in 1992, is replacing the Central Front and “is rapidly becoming NATO’s new front line.” To meet these southern threats, NATO’s southern members—Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal—began joint military planning and operations and at the same time enlisted the Maghreb governments in consultations on ways of countering Islamist extremists. These perceived threats also provided a rationale for continuing a substantial U.S. military presence in Europe. “While U.S. forces in Europe are not a panacea for the problems created by fundamentalist Islam,” one former senior U.S. official observed, “those forces do cast a powerful shadow on military planning throughout the area. Remember the successful deployment of U.S., French and British forces from Europe in the Gulf War of 1990-1991? Those in the region do.” And, he might have added, they remember it with fear, resentment, and hate.

Given the prevailing perceptions Muslims and Westerners have of each other plus the rise of Islamist extremism, it is hardly surprising that following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, an intercivilizational quasi war developed between Islam and the West. It is a quasi war for three reasons. First, all of Islam has not been fighting all of the West. Two fundamentalist states (Iran, Sudan), three nonfundamentalist states (Iraq, Libya, Syria), plus a wide range of Islamist organizations, with financial support from other Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, have been fighting the United States and, at times, Britain, France, and other Western states and groups, as

well as Israel and Jews generally. Second, it is a quasi war because, apart from the Gulf War of 1990-1991, it has been fought with limited means: terrorism on one side and air power, covert action, and economic sanctions on the other. Third, it is a quasi war because while the violence has been continuing, it has also not been continuous. It has involved intermittent actions by one side which provoke responses by the other. Yet a quasi war is still a war. Even excluding the tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians killed by Western bombing in January-February 1991, the deaths and other casualties number well into the thousands, and they occurred in virtually every year after 1979. Many more Westerners have been killed in this quasi war than were killed in the “real” war in the Gulf.

Both sides have, moreover, recognized this conflict to be a war. Early on, Khomeini declared, quite accurately, that “Iran is effectively at war with America,” and Qadhafi regularly proclaims holy war against the West. Muslim leaders of other extremist groups and states have spoken in similar terms. On the Western side, the United States has classified seven countries as “terrorist states,” five of which are Muslim (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan); Cuba and North Korea are the others. This, in effect, identifies them as enemies, because they are attacking the United States and its friends with the most effective weapon at their disposal, and thus recognizes the existence of a state of war with them. U.S. officials repeatedly refer to these states as “outlaw,” “backlash,” and “rogue” states—thereby placing them outside the civilized international order and making them legitimate targets for multilateral or unilateral counter-measures. The United States Government charged the World Trade Center bombers with intending “to levy a war of urban terrorism against the United States” and argued that conspirators charged with planning further bombings in Manhattan were “soldiers” in a struggle “involving a war” against the United States. If Muslims allege that the West wars on Islam and if Westerners allege that Islamic groups war on the West, it seems reasonable to conclude that something very much like a war is underway.

In this quasi war, each side has capitalized on its own strengths and the other side’s weaknesses. Militarily it has been largely a war of terrorism versus air power. Dedicated Islamic militants exploit the open societies of the West and plant car bombs at selected targets. Western military professionals exploit the open skies of Islam and drop smart bombs on selected targets. The Islamic participants plot the assassination of prominent Westerners; the United States plots the overthrow of extremist Islamic

regimes. During the fifteen years between 1980 and 1995, according to the U.S. Defense Department, the United States engaged in seventeen military operations in the Middle East, all of them directed against Muslims. No comparable pattern of U.S. military operations occurred against the people of any other civilization.

To date, each side has, apart from the Gulf War, kept the intensity of the violence at reasonably low levels and refrained from labeling violent acts as acts of war requiring an all-out response. "If Libya ordered one of its submarines to sink an American liner," *The Economist* observed, "the United States would treat it as an act of war by a government, not seek the extradition of the submarine commander. In principle, the bombing of an airliner by Libya's secret service is no different." Yet the participants in this war employ much more violent tactics against each other than the United States and Soviet Union directly employed against each other in the Cold War. With rare exceptions neither superpower purposefully killed civilians or even military belonging to the other. This, however, repeatedly happens in the quasi war.

American leaders allege that the Muslims involved in the quasi war are a small minority whose use of violence is rejected by the great majority of moderate Muslims. This may be true, but evidence to support it is lacking. Protests against anti-Western violence have been totally absent in Muslim countries. Muslim governments, even the bunker governments friendly to and dependent on the West, have been strikingly reticent when it comes to condemning terrorist acts against the West. On the other side, European governments and publics have largely supported and rarely criticized actions the United States has taken against its Muslim opponents, in striking contrast to the strenuous opposition they often expressed to American actions against the Soviet Union and communism during the Cold War. In civilizational conflicts, unlike ideological ones, kin stand by their kin.

The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. The problem for Islam is not the CIA or the U.S. Department of Defense. It is the West, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and believe that their superior, if declining, power imposes on them the obligation to extend that culture throughout the

world. These are the basic ingredients that fuel conflict between Islam and the West....

Incidence: Islam's Bloody Borders

Communal conflicts and fault line wars are the stuff of history, and by one count some thirty-two ethnic conflicts occurred during the Cold War, including fault line wars between Arabs and Israelis, Indians and Pakistanis, Sudanese Muslims and Christians, Sri Lankan Buddhists and Tamils, and Lebanese Shi'ites and Maronites. Identity wars constituted about half of all civil wars during the 1940s and 1950s but about three-quarters of civil wars during the following decades, and the intensity of rebellions involving ethnic groups tripled between the early 1950s and the late 1980s. Given the overreaching superpower rivalry, however, these conflicts, with some notable exceptions, attracted relatively little attention and were often viewed through the prism of the Cold War. As the Cold War wound down, communal conflicts became more prominent and, arguably, more prevalent than they had been previously. Something closely resembling an "upsurge" in ethnic conflict did in fact happen.

These ethnic conflicts and fault line wars have not been evenly distributed among the world's civilizations. Major fault line fighting has occurred between Serbs and Croats in the former Yugoslavia and between Buddhists and Hindus in Sri Lanka, while less violent conflicts took place between non-Muslim groups in a few other places. The overwhelming majority of fault line conflicts, however, have taken place along the boundary looping across Eurasia and Africa that separates Muslims from non-Muslims. While at the macro or global level of world politics the primary clash of civilizations is between the West and the rest, at the micro or local level it is between Islam and the others.

Intense antagonisms and violent conflicts are pervasive between local Muslim and non-Muslim peoples. In Bosnia, Muslims have fought a bloody and disastrous war with Orthodox Serbs and have engaged in other violence with Catholic Croatians. In Kosovo, Albanian Muslims unhappily suffer Serbian rule and maintain their own underground parallel government, with high expectations of the probability of violence between the two groups. The Albanian and Greek governments are at loggerheads over the rights of their minorities in each other's countries. Turks and Greeks are historically at each others throats. On Cyprus, Muslim Turks and Orthodox Greeks

maintain hostile adjoining states. In the Caucasus, Turkey and Armenia are historic enemies, and Azeris and Armenians have been at war over control of Nagorno-Karabakh. In the North Caucasus, for two hundred years Chechens, Ingush, and other Muslim peoples have fought on and off for their independence from Russia, a struggle bloodily resumed by Russia and Chechnya in 1994. Fighting also has occurred between the Ingush and the Orthodox Ossetians. In the Volga basin, the Muslim Tatars have fought the Russians in the past and in the early 1990s reached an uneasy compromise with Russia for limited sovereignty.

Throughout the nineteenth century Russia gradually extended by force its control over the Muslim peoples of Central Asia. During the 1980s Afghans and Russians fought a major war, and with the Russian retreat its sequel continued in Tajikistan between Russian forces supporting the existing government and largely Islamist insurgents. In Xinjiang, Uighurs and other Muslim groups struggle against Sinification and are developing relations with their ethnic and religious kin in the former Soviet republics. In the Subcontinent, Pakistan and India have fought three wars, a Muslim insurgency contests Indian rule in Kashmir, Muslim immigrants fight tribal peoples in Assam, and Muslims and Hindus engage in periodic riots and violence across India, these outbreaks fueled by the rise of fundamentalist movements in both religious communities. In Bangladesh, Buddhists protest discrimination against them by the majority Muslims, while in Myanmar Muslims protest discrimination by the Buddhist majority. In Malaysia and Indonesia, Muslims periodically riot against Chinese, protesting their domination of the economy. In southern Thailand, Muslim groups have been involved in an intermittent insurgency against a Buddhist government, while in the southern Philippines a Muslim insurgency fights for independence from a Catholic country and government. In Indonesia, on the other hand, Catholic East Timorians struggle against repression by a Muslim government.

In the Middle East, conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine goes back to the establishment of the Jewish homeland. Four wars have occurred between Israel and Arab states, and the Palestinians engaged in the intifada against Israeli rule. In Lebanon, Maronite Christians have fought a losing battle against Shi'ites and other Muslims. In Ethiopia, the Orthodox Amharas have historically suppressed Muslim ethnic groups and have confronted an insurgency from the Muslim Oromos. Across the bulge of Africa, a variety of conflicts have gone on between the Arab and Muslim

peoples to the north and animist-Christian black peoples to the south. The bloodiest Muslim-Christian war has been in Sudan, which has gone on for decades and produced hundreds of thousands of casualties. Nigerian politics has been dominated by the conflict between the Muslim Fulani-Hausa in the north and Christian tribes in the south, with frequent riots and coups and one major war. In Chad, Kenya, and Tanzania, comparable struggles have occurred between Muslim and Christian groups.

In all these places, the relations between Muslims and peoples of other civilizations—Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Hindu, Chinese, Buddhist, Jewish—have been generally antagonistic; most of these relations have been violent at some point in the past; many have been violent in the 1990s. Wherever one looks along the perimeter of Islam, Muslims have problems living peaceably with their neighbors. The question naturally rises as to whether this pattern of late-twentieth-century conflict between Muslim and non-Muslim groups is equally true of relations between groups from other civilizations. In fact, it is not. Muslims make up about one-fifth of the world's population but in the 1990s they have been far more involved in intergroup violence than the people of any other civilization. The evidence is overwhelming.

1. Muslims were participants in twenty-six of fifty ethnopolitical conflicts in 1993-1994 analyzed in depth by Ted Robert Gun (Table 10.1). Twenty of these conflicts were between groups from different civilizations, of which fifteen were between Muslims and non-Muslims. There were, in short, three times as many intercivilizational conflicts involving Muslims as there were conflicts between all non-Muslim civilizations. The conflicts within Islam also were more numerous than those in any other civilization, including tribal conflicts in Africa. In contrast to Islam, the West was involved in only two intracivilizational and two intercivilizational conflicts. Conflicts involving Muslims also tended to be heavy in casualties. Of the six wars in which Gurr estimates that 200,000 or more people were killed, three (Sudan, Bosnia, East Timor) were between Muslims and non-Muslims, two (Somalia, Iraq-Kurds) were between Muslims, and only one (Angola) involved only non-Muslims.

Table 10.1 - Ethnopolitical Conflicts, 1993-1994

ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICTS, 1993-1994

	Intracivilization	Intercivilization	Total
Islam	11	15	26
Others	19*	5	24
Total	30	20	50

* Of which 10 were tribal conflicts in Africa

Source: Ted Robert Gurr, "Peoples Against States: Ethnopolitical Conflict and the Changing World System," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 38 (September 1994), pp. 347-378. I have used Gurr's classification of conflicts except for shifting the Chinese Tibetan conflict, which he classifies as noncivilizational into the intercivilizational category, since it clearly is a clash between Confucian Han Chinese and Lamaist Buddhist Tibetans.

2. The *New York Times* identified forty-eight locations in which some fifty-nine ethnic conflicts were occurring in 1993. In half these places Muslims were clashing with other Muslims or with non-Muslims. Thirty-one of the fifty-nine conflicts were between groups from different civilizations, and, paralleling Gurr's data, two-thirds (twenty-one) of these intercivilizational conflicts were between Muslims and others (Table 10.2).

Table 10.2 - Ethnic Conflicts, 1993

	Intracivilization	Intercivilization	Total
Islam	7	21	28
Others	21*	10	31
Total	28	31	59

* Of which 10 were tribal conflicts in Africa

Source: *New York Times*, Feb. 7, 1993, pp. 1, 11.

3. In yet another analysis, Ruth Leger Sivard identified twenty-nine wars (defined as conflicts involving 1000 or more deaths in a year) under way in 1992. Nine of twelve intercivilizational conflicts were between Muslims and non-Muslims, and Muslims were once again fighting more wars than people from any other civilization.

Three different compilations of data thus yield the same conclusion: In the early 1990s Muslims were engaged in more intergroup violence than were non-Muslims, and two-thirds to three-quarters of intercivilizational wars were between Muslims and non-Muslims. Islam's borders are bloody, and so are its innards.

The Muslim propensity toward violent conflict is also suggested by the degree to which Muslim societies are militarized. In the 1980s Muslim countries had military force ratios (that is, the number of military personnel

per 1000 population) and military effort indices (force ratio adjusted for a country's wealth) significantly higher than those for other countries. Christian countries, in contrast, had force ratios and military effort indices significantly lower than those for other countries. The average force ratios and military effort ratios of Muslim countries were roughly twice those of Christian countries (Table 10.3). "Quite clearly," James Payne concludes, "there is a connection between Islam and militarism."

Table 10.3 - Militarism of Muslim and Christian Countries

	Average force ratio	Average military effort
Muslim countries (n = 25)	11.8	17.7
Other countries (n = 112)	7.1	12.3
Christian countries (n = 57)	5.8	8.2
Other countries (n = 80)	9.5	16.9

Source: James L. Payne, *Why Nations Are* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 125, 138-139. Muslim and Christian countries are those in which more than 80 percent of the population adhere to the defining religion.

Muslim states also have had a high propensity to resort to violence in international crises, employing it to resolve 76 crises out of a total of 142 in which they were involved between 1928 and 1979. In 25 cases violence was the primary means of dealing with the crisis; in 51 crises Muslim states used violence in addition to other means. When they did use violence, Muslim states used high-intensity violence, resorting to full-scale war in 41 percent of the cases where violence was used and engaging in major clashes in another 38 percent of the cases. While Muslim states resorted to violence in 53.5 percent of their crises, violence was used by the United Kingdom in only 11.5 percent, by the United States in 17.9 percent, and by the Soviet Union in 28.5 percent of the crises in which they were involved. Among the major powers only China's violence propensity exceeded that of the Muslim states: it employed violence in 76.9 percent of its crises. Muslim bellicosity and violence are late-twentieth-century facts which neither Muslims nor non-Muslims can deny.



If Not Civilizations, What? (1993, excerpts)

Paradigms of the Post-Cold War World

When people think seriously, they think abstractly; they conjure up simplified pictures of reality called concepts, theories, models, paradigms. Without such intellectual constructs, there is, William James said, only “a bloomin’ buzzin’ confusion.” Intellectual and scientific advance, as Thomas Kuhn showed in his classic *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, consists of the displacement of one paradigm, which has become increasingly incapable of explaining new or newly discovered facts, by a new paradigm that accounts for those facts in a more satisfactory fashion. “To be accepted as a paradigm,” Kuhn wrote, “a theory must seem better than its competitors, but it need not, and in fact never does, explain all the facts with which it can be confronted.”

For 40 years students and practitioners of international relations thought and acted in terms of a highly simplified but very useful picture of world affairs, the Cold War paradigm. The world was divided between one group of relatively wealthy and mostly democratic societies, led by the United States, and another group of somewhat poorer, communist societies, led by the Soviet Union, engaged in pervasive ideological, political, economic, and, at times, military conflict.

Much of this conflict occurred in the Third World outside of these two camps, composed of countries which often were poor, lacked political stability, were recently independent and claimed to be non-aligned. The Cold War paradigm could not account for everything that went on in world politics. There were many anomalies, to use Kuhn's term, and at times the paradigm blinded scholars and statesmen to major developments, such as the Sino-Soviet split. Yet as a simple model of global politics, it accounted for more important phenomena than any of its rivals; it was an indispensable starting point for thinking about international affairs; it came to be almost universally accepted; and it shaped thinking about world politics for two generations.

The dramatic events of the past five years have made that paradigm intellectual history. There is clearly a need for a new model that will help us

to order and to understand central developments in world politics. What is the best simple map of the post-Cold War world?

A MAP OF THE NEW WORLD

“The Clash of Civilizations?” is an effort to lay out elements of a post-Cold War paradigm. As with any paradigm, there is much the civilization paradigm does not account for, and critics will have no trouble citing events—even important events like Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait—that it does not explain and would not have predicted (although it would have predicted the evaporation of the anti-Iraq coalition after March 1991). Yet, as Kuhn demonstrates, anomalous events do not falsify a paradigm. A paradigm is disproved only by the creation of an alternative paradigm that accounts for more crucial facts in equally simple or simpler terms (that is, at a comparable level of intellectual abstraction; a more complex theory can always account for more things than a more parsimonious theory). The debates the civilizational paradigm has generated around the world show that, in some measure, it strikes home; it either accords with reality as people see it or it comes close enough so that people who do not accept it have to attack it.

What groupings of countries will be most important in world affairs and most relevant to understanding and making sense of global politics? Countries no longer belong to the Free World, the communist bloc, or the Third World. Simple two-way divisions of countries into rich and poor or democratic and nondemocratic may help some but not all that much. Global politics are now too complex to be stuffed into two pigeonholes. For reasons outlined in the original article, civilizations are the natural successors to the three worlds of the Cold War. At the macro level world politics are likely to involve conflicts and shifting power balances of states from different civilizations, and at the micro level the most violent, prolonged and dangerous (because of the possibility of escalation) conflicts are likely to be between states and groups from different civilizations. As the article pointed out, this civilization paradigm accounts for many important developments in international affairs in recent years, including the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the wars going on in their former territories, the rise of religious fundamentalism throughout the world, the struggles within Russia, Turkey and Mexico over their identity, the intensity of the trade conflicts between the United States and Japan, the resistance of Islamic states to Western pressure on Iraq and Libya, the

efforts of Islamic and Confucian states to acquire nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them, China's continuing role as an "outsider" great power, the consolidation of new democratic regimes in some countries and not in others, and the escalating arms race in East Asia....

Does a "clash of civilizations" perspective account for everything of significance in world affairs...? Of course not. It could be argued, for instance, that the agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli government on the Gaza Strip and Jericho is a dramatic anomaly to the civilizational paradigm, and in some sense it is. Such an event, however, does not invalidate a civilizational approach: it is historically significant precisely because it is between groups from two different civilizations who have been fighting each other for over four decades. Truces and limited agreements are as much a part of the clashes between civilizations as Soviet-American arms control agreements were part of the Cold War; and while the conflict between Jew and Arab may be circumscribed, it still continues. Inter-civilizational issues are increasingly replacing inter-superpower issues as the top items on the international agenda. These issues include arms proliferation (particularly of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering them), human rights, and immigration. On these three issues, the West is on one side and most of the other major civilizations are on the other. President Clinton at the United Nations urges intensified efforts to curb nuclear and other unconventional weapons; Islamic and Confucian states plunge ahead in their efforts to acquire them; Russia practices ambivalence. The extent to which countries observe human rights corresponds overwhelmingly with divisions among civilizations: the West and Japan are highly protective of human rights; Latin America, India, Russia, and parts of Africa protect some human rights; China, many other Asian countries, and most Muslim societies are least protective of human rights. Rising immigration from non-Western sources is provoking rising concern in both Europe and America. Other European countries in addition to Germany are tightening their restrictions at the same time that the barriers to movement of people within the European Community are rapidly disappearing. In the United States, massive waves of new immigrants are generating support for new controls, despite the fact that most studies show immigrants to be making a net positive contribution to the American economy.

AMERICA UNDONE?

One function of a paradigm is to highlight what is important (e.g., the potential for escalation in clashes between groups from different civilizations); another is to place familiar phenomena in a new perspective. In this respect, the civilizational paradigm may have implications for the United States. Countries like the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia that bestride civilizational fault lines tend to come apart. The unity of the United States has historically rested on the twin bedrocks of European culture and political democracy. These have been essentials of America to which generations of immigrants have assimilated. The essence of the American creed has been equal rights for the individual, and historically immigrant and outcast groups have invoked and thereby reinvigorated the principles of the creed in their struggles for equal treatment in American society. The most notable and successful effort was the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr., in the 1950s and 1960s. Subsequently, however, the demand shifted from equal rights for individuals to special rights (affirmative action and similar measures) for blacks and other groups. Such claims run directly counter to the underlying principles that have been the basis of American political unity; they reject the idea of a “color-blind” society of equal individuals and instead promote a “color-conscious” society with government-sanctioned privileges for some groups. In a parallel movement, intellectuals and politicians began to push the ideology of “multiculturalism,” and to insist on the rewriting of American political, social, and literary history from the viewpoint of non-European groups. At the extreme, this movement tends to elevate obscure leaders of minority groups to a level of importance equal to that of the Founding Fathers. Both the demands for special group rights and for multiculturalism encourage a clash of civilizations within the United States and encourage what Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., terms “the disuniting of America.”

The United States is becoming increasingly diverse ethnically and racially. The Census Bureau estimates that by 2050 the American population will be 23 percent Hispanic, 16 percent black and 10 percent Asian-American. In the past the United States has successfully absorbed millions of immigrants from scores of countries because they adapted to the prevailing European culture and enthusiastically embraced the American Creed of liberty, equality, individualism, democracy. Will this pattern continue to prevail as 50 percent of the population becomes Hispanic or nonwhite? Will the new immigrants be assimilated into the hitherto dominant European culture of

the United States? If they are not, if the United States becomes truly multicultural and pervaded with an internal clash of civilizations, will it survive as a liberal democracy? The political identity of the United States is rooted in the principles articulated in its founding documents. Will the de-Westernization of the United States, if it occurs, also mean its de-Americanization? If it does and Americans cease to adhere to their liberal democratic and European-rooted political ideology, the United States as we have known it will cease to exist and will follow the other ideologically defined superpower onto the ash heap of history.

GOT A BETTER IDEA?

A civilizational approach explains much and orders much of the “bloomin’ buzzin’ confusion” of the post-Cold War world, which is why it has attracted so much attention and generated so much debate around the world. Can any other paradigm do better? If not civilizations, what? The responses... to my article did not provide any compelling alternative picture of the world. At best they suggested one pseudo-alternative and one unreal alternative.

The pseudo-alternative is a statist paradigm that constructs a totally irrelevant and artificial opposition between states and civilizations...States, of course, try to balance power, but if that is all they did, West European countries would have coalesced with the Soviet Union against the United States in the late 1940s. States respond primarily to perceived threats, and the West European states then saw a political and ideological threat from the East. As my original article argued, civilizations are composed of one or more states, and “Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs.” Just as nation states generally belonged to one of three worlds in the Cold War, they also belong to civilizations.

With the demise of the three worlds, nation states increasingly define their identity and their interests in civilizational terms, and West European peoples and states now see a cultural threat from the South replacing the ideological threat from the East.

We do not live in a world of countries characterized by [states] with no connections between them. Our world is one of overlapping groupings of states brought together in varying degrees by history, culture, religion, language, location and institutions. At the broadest level these groupings

are civilizations. To deny their existence is to deny the basic realities of human existence.

The unreal alternative is the one-world paradigm that a universal civilization now exists or is likely to exist in the coming years. Obviously people now have and for millennia have had common characteristics that distinguish humans from other species. These characteristics have always been compatible with the existence of very different cultures. The argument that a universal culture or civilization is now emerging takes various forms, none of which withstands even passing scrutiny. First, there is the argument that the collapse of Soviet communism means the end of history and the universal victory of liberal democracy throughout the world. This argument suffers from the Single Alternative Fallacy. It is rooted in the Cold War assumption that the only alternative to communism is liberal democracy and that the demise of the first produces the universality of the second. Obviously, however, there are many forms of authoritarianism, nationalism, corporatism and market communism (as in China) that are alive and well in today's world. More significantly, there are all the religious alternatives that lie outside the world that is perceived in terms of secular ideologies. In the modern world, religion is a central, perhaps the central, force that motivates and mobilizes people. It is sheer hubris to think that because Soviet communism has collapsed the West has won the world for all time.

Second, there is the assumption that increased interaction—greater communication and transportation—produces a common culture. In some circumstances this may be the case. But wars occur most frequently between societies with high levels of interaction, and interaction frequently reinforces existing identities and produces resistance, reaction and confrontation.

Third, there is the assumption that modernization and economic development have a homogenizing effect and produce a common modern culture closely resembling that which has existed in the West in this century. Clearly, modern urban, literate, wealthy, industrialized societies do share cultural traits that distinguish them from backward, rural, poor, undeveloped societies. In the contemporary world most modern societies have been Western societies. But modernization does not equal Westernization. Japan, Singapore and Saudi Arabia are modern, prosperous societies but they clearly are non-Western. The presumption of Westerners that other peoples who modernize must become “like us” is a bit of Western arrogance that in itself illustrates the clash of civilizations. To argue that

Slovenes and Serbs, Arabs and Jews, Hindus and Muslims, Russians and Tajiks, Tamils and Sinhalese, Tibetans and Chinese, Japanese and Americans all belong to a single Western-defined universal civilization is to fly in the face of reality.

A universal civilization can only be the product of universal power. Roman power created a near-universal civilization within the limited confines of the ancient world. Western power in the form of European colonialism in the nineteenth century and American hegemony in the twentieth century extended Western culture throughout much of the contemporary world. European colonialism is over; American hegemony is receding. The erosion of Western culture follows, as indigenous, historically rooted mores, languages, beliefs and institutions reassert themselves....

CULTURE IS TO DIE FOR

Wherever one turns, the world is at odds with itself. If differences in civilization are not responsible for these conflicts, what is? The critics of the civilization paradigm have not produced a better explanation for what is going on in the world. The civilizational paradigm, in contrast, strikes a responsive chord throughout the world. In Asia, as one U.S. ambassador reported, it is “spreading like wildfire.” In Europe, European Community President Jacques Delors explicitly endorsed its argument that “future conflicts will be sparked by cultural factors rather than economics or ideology” and warned, “The West needs to develop a deeper understanding of the religious and philosophical assumptions underlying other civilizations, and the way other nations see their interests, to identify what we have in common.” Muslims, in turn, have seen “the clash” as providing recognition and, in some degree, legitimation for the distinctiveness of their own civilization and its independence from the West. That civilizations are meaningful entities accords with the way in which people see and experience reality.

History has not ended. The world is not one. Civilizations unite and divide humankind. The forces making for clashes between civilizations can be contained only if they are recognized. In a “world of different civilizations,” as my article concluded, each “will have to learn to coexist with the others.” What ultimately counts for people is not political ideology or economic interest. Faith and family, blood and belief, are what people identify with and what they will fight and die for. And that is why the clash of civilizations is replacing the Cold War as the central phenomenon of

global politics, and why a civilizational paradigm provides, better than any alternative, a useful starting point for understanding and coping with the changes going on in the world.



Fukuyama's Counter-Point: Still a Dangerous Place (1996)

Mr. Huntington has underscored a basic truth that many of his critics don't want to accept: After the Cold War, we will all have to be more conscious of cultural issues in world politics. Religion has not disappeared from the world stage; in many places (not least the U.S.) it remains an important source of cohesion and identity. Nevertheless, Mr. Huntington's argument continues to suffer from two flaws that lead him to take an unduly pessimistic view of world politics.

The first concerns the way he draws cultural boundaries around very large units like "the West" or "Islam." In fact, civilizations have nowhere replaced nation-states as the primary actors in world politics: A Chinese-Iranian agreement to transfer missile technology does not constitute an alignment of Confucianism and Islam. Consciousness of belonging to a larger civilization is at least plausible in the case of the Islamic world. In Asia, by contrast, Mr. Huntington has taken far too seriously rhetoric about "Asian values" from leaders like Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad or Singapore's Lee Kwan Yew, whose policies are based on simple national interest.

Mr. Huntington's emphasis on civilizations obscures the smaller cultural identities that often divide nations within a single civilization. The world is beset not by thundering clashes of civilizations but by petty clashes of sects within weak nation-states. (One of the book's tables shows there have been more conflicts in the early '90s between subgroups within civilizations than between the civilizations themselves.)

The more serious flaw in Mr. Huntington's argument is his assertion that modernization and Westernization are distinct phenomena. The Chinese or Iranians can have technologically advanced industrial economies, he argues, and yet not share any of the West's cultural and political norms concerning pluralism, the separation of religion from political life, individualism or democracy. People in the West, then, are deluded in believing that their basic values are universal, or at least the universal result of modernization.

There is considerable reason to question this view. It is not an accident that modernity was born not in the Middle East or India but in the West, where

the development of free institutions liberated men from the strictures of traditional authority and allowed them to apply reason to the mastery of politics and nature. To the extent that non-Western societies like Japan, Korea and now China have been able to modernize, it is because they either have already absorbed important elements of Western culture (like rationalism) or else have found analogs in their own cultures to Western values like the work ethic, secular politics and religious toleration. There is a strong empirical correlation between development and stable democracy. Mr. Huntington himself suggests that as China develops it will create an educated middle class that is likely to demand greater political participation.

Of course the modernizing process will not result in the total homogenization of otherwise disparate cultures, but culture can survive in a variety of subpolitical or apolitical forms while adapting to a modernity that will look essentially Western.

Mr. Huntington argues that the West should stop believing that its values are universal and deal with the outside world in cultural rather than ideological terms. This view leads to some unsettling policy conclusions—e.g., that we ought to align ourselves with an authoritarian Croatia rather than a democratizing Ukraine, simply because the former is part of Western Christendom while the latter is part of the Orthodox world. Moreover, it is unclear whether it will be possible to sustain free institutions at home if we take so relativistic a view of our own values. The Declaration of Independence stated not that Westerners are created equal but that all men are created equal, and that this is a “self-evident truth” rather than a prejudice of Anglo-Saxon culture.

Mr. Huntington rightly attacks multiculturalism in the U.S. But if the Western tradition does not represent a universal value, why should it be “privileged” (as the deconstructionists say) over the non-Western traditions of the other ethnic and racial groups making up the country? If we take Mr. Huntington too seriously, the clash of civilizations may start at home.

Edward Said



Edward Said (1935–2003) was a Palestinian-American literary critic and public intellectual whose 1978 book *Orientalism* transformed the study of Western representations of the Middle East. A professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University, Said argued that European scholarship, literature, and political writing about the “Orient” had not merely described the East but had constructed it as an inferior, static, and irrational opposite of the West, thereby reinforcing imperial power.

Orientalism exerted enormous influence across the humanities and social sciences, but it also provoked sustained criticism from historians and area specialists who charged Said with treating a highly diverse body of Western scholarship too selectively, minimizing differences among countries and periods, and too readily reducing intellectual inquiry to an instrument of empire. Beyond his academic work, Said was a prominent advocate of Palestinian national rights and an influential critic of both Israeli policy and American involvement in the Middle East.



Said: The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations (1998, excerpts)

The core of Huntington’s vision (not really original with him) is the idea of an unceasing clash, a concept of conflict which slides somewhat effortlessly into the political space vacated by the unremitting bipolar war of ideas and values embodied in the unregretted Cold War. I do not, therefore, think it is inaccurate to suggest that what Huntington is providing in this essay of his —especially since it is primarily addressed to Washington-based opinion and policy-makers who subscribe to *Foreign Affairs*, the leading U.S.

journal of foreign policy discussion—is a recycled version of the Cold War thesis, that conflicts in today's and tomorrow's world will remain not economic or social in essence but ideological; and if that is so then one ideology, the West's, is the still point or locus around which for Huntington all others turn. In effect, then, the Cold War continues, but this time on many fronts, with many more serious and basic systems of values and ideas (like Islam and Confucianism) struggling for ascendancy and even dominance over the West. Not surprisingly, therefore, Huntington concludes his essay with a brief survey of what the West might do to remain strong and keep its putative opponents weak and divided (it must “exploit differences and conflicts among Confucian and Islamic states;... support in other civilizations groups sympathetic to Western values and interests;... strengthen international institutions that reflect and legitimate Western interests and values and... promote the involvement of non-Western states in those institutions”)....

It is as a very brief and rather crudely articulated manual in the art of maintaining a wartime status in the minds of Americans and others that Huntington's essay has to be understood. I would go so far as to say that it argues from the standpoint of Pentagon planners and defense industry executives who may have temporarily lost their occupations after the end of the Cold War, but have now discovered a new vocation for themselves. Huntington at least has the merit of underlining the cultural component in relationships among different countries, traditions, and peoples....

Huntington's authorities are not the cultures themselves but a small handful of authorities picked by him because they emphasize the latent bellicosity in one or another statement by one or another so-called spokesman for or about that culture. The giveaway for me is the title of his essay—“The Clash of Civilizations”—which is not his phrase but Bernard Lewis's.... Huntington has picked up from Lewis the notion that civilizations are monolithic and homogenous, and second, how—again from Lewis—he assumes the unchanging character of the duality between “us” and “them.”

In other words, I think it is absolutely imperative to stress that like Bernard Lewis, Samuel Huntington does not write a neutral, descriptive, and objective prose, but is himself a polemicist whose rhetoric not only depends heavily on prior arguments about a war of all against all, but in effect perpetuates them. Far from being an arbiter between civilizations, therefore, Huntington is a partisan, an advocate of one so-called civilization over all

others. Like Lewis, Huntington defines Islamic civilization reductively, as if what matters most about it is its supposed anti-Westernism. For his part Lewis tries to give a set of reasons for his definition—that Islam has never modernized, that it never separated between Church and State, that it has been incapable of understanding other civilizations—but Huntington does not bother with them. For him Islam, Confucianism, and the other five or six civilizations (Hindu, Japanese, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and African) that still exist are separate from one another, and consequently potentially in a conflict which he wants to manage, not resolve. He writes as a crisis manager, not as a student of civilization, nor as a reconciler between them.

At the core of his essay, and this is what has made it strike so responsive a chord among post-Cold War policy-makers, is this sense of cutting through a lot of unnecessary detail, of masses of scholarship and huge amounts of experience, and boiling all of them down to a couple of catchy, easy-to-quote-and-remember ideas, which are then passed off as pragmatic, practical, sensible, and clear. But is this the best way to understand the world we live in? Is it wise as an intellectual and a scholarly expert to produce a simplified map of the world and then hand it to generals and civilian law-makers as a prescription for first comprehending and then acting in the world? Doesn't this method in effect prolong, exacerbate, and deepen conflict? What does it do to minimize civilizational conflict? Do we want the clash of civilizations? Doesn't it mobilize nationalist passions and therefore nationalist murderousness? Shouldn't we ask the question, Why is one doing this sort of thing: to understand or to act? to mitigate or to aggravate the likelihood of conflict?...

To build a conceptual framework around the notion of us-versus-them is in effect to pretend that the principal consideration is epistemological and natural—our civilization is known and accepted, theirs is different and strange—whereas in fact the framework separating us from them is belligerent, constructed, and situational. Within each civilizational camp, we will notice, there are official representatives of that culture or civilization who make themselves into its mouthpiece, who assign themselves the role of articulating “our” (or for that matter “their”) essence. This always necessitates a fair amount of compression, reduction, and exaggeration. So on the first and most immediate level, then, statements about what “our” culture or civilization is, or ought to be, necessarily involve a contest over the definition. This is certainly true of Huntington,

who writes his essay at a time in U.S. history when a great deal of turmoil has surrounded the very definition of Western civilization. Recall that in the United States many college campuses have been shaken during the past couple of decades over what the canon of Western civilization is, which books should be taught, which ones read or not read, included, or otherwise given attention. Places like Stanford and Columbia debated the issue not simply because it was a matter of habitual academic concern but because the definition of the West and consequently of America was at stake....

In the United States the debate about what is American has gone through a large number of transformations and sometimes dramatic shifts. When I was growing up, the Western film depicted Native Americans as evil devils to be destroyed or tamed; they were called Red Indians, and insofar as they had any function in the culture at large—this was as true of films as it was of the writing of academic history—it was to be a foil to the advancing course of white civilization. Today that has changed completely. Native Americans are seen as victims, not villains, of the country's Western progress. There has even been a change in the status of Columbus. There are even more dramatic reversals in the depictions of African Americans and women.... Which vision is the real America, and who can lay claim to represent and define it? The question is a complex and deeply interesting one, but it cannot be settled by reducing the whole matter to a few clichés....

There is a similar debate inside the Islamic world today which, in the often hysterical outcry about the threat of Islam, Islamic fundamentalism, and terrorism that one encounters so often in the Western media, is often lost sight of completely. Like any other major world culture, Islam contains within itself an astonishing variety of currents and counter-currents, most of them undiscerned by tendentious Orientalist scholars for whom Islam is an object of fear and hostility, or by journalists who do not know any of the languages or relevant histories and are content to rely on persistent stereotypes that have lingered in the West since the tenth century ... Far from there being a surge of Islamic fundamentalism as it is reductively described in the Western media, there is a great deal of secular opposition to it, in the form of various contests over the interpretation of sunnah in matters of law, personal conduct, political decision-making, and so on. Moreover, what is often forgotten is that movements like Hamas and Islamic Jihad are essentially protest movements that go against the

capitulationist policies of the PLO and mobilize the will to resist Israeli occupation practices, expropriation of land, and the like.

I find it surprising and indeed disquieting that Huntington gives no indication anywhere in his essay that he is aware of these complex disputes, or that he realized that the nature and identity of a civilization are never taken as unquestioned axioms by every single member of that civilization.... To Huntington, what he calls "civilization identity" is a stable and undisturbed thing, like a roomful of furniture in the back of your house. This is extremely far from the truth, not just in the Islamic world but throughout the entire surface of the globe. To emphasize the differences among cultures and civilizations—incidentally, I find his use of the words "culture" and "civilization" extremely sloppy, precisely because for him the two words represent fixed and reified objects, rather than the dynamic, ceaselessly turbulent things that they in fact are—is completely to ignore the literally unending debate or contest (to use the more active and energetic of the two words) about defining the culture or civilization within those civilizations, including various "Western" ones. These debates completely undermine any idea of a fixed identity, and hence of relationships between identities, what Huntington considers to be a sort of ontological fact of political existence, to wit the clash of civilizations

Huntington's prose... in turn relies on what I would call a managerial poetics, a strategy for assuming the existence of stable and metaphorically defined entities called civilizations which the writer proceeds quite emotively to manipulate, as in the phrase "the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc, from the bulge of Africa to central Asia, has bloody borders".... What is evident from Huntington's language is the way he uses figurative language to accentuate the distance between "our" world—normal, acceptable, familiar, logical—and, as an especially striking example, the world of Islam, with its bloody borders, bulging contours, and so on. This suggests not so much analysis on Huntington's part but a series of determinations which, as I said earlier, creates the very clash he seems in his essay to be discovering and pointing to.... So in reading about the clash of civilizations we are less likely to assent to analysis of the clash than we are to ask the question, Why do you pinion civilizations into so unyielding an embrace, and why then do you go on to describe their relationship as one of basic conflict, as if the borrowing and overlappings between them were not a much more interesting and significant feature?...

As I have argued in several of my own books, in today's Europe and the United States what is described as "Islam" belongs to the discourse of Orientalism, a construction fabricated to whip up feelings of hostility and antipathy against a part of the world that happens to be of strategic importance for its oil, its threatening adjacency to the Christian world, and its formidable history of competitiveness with the West. Yet this is a very different thing from what, to Muslims who live within its domain, Islam really is. There is a world of difference between Islam in Indonesia and Islam in Egypt. By the same token, the volatility of today's struggle over the meaning of Islam is evident in Egypt, where the secular powers of society are in conflict with various Islamic protest movements and reformers over the nature of Islam. In such circumstances the easiest, and the least accurate, thing is to say: that is the world of Islam, and see how it is all terrorists and fundamentalists, and see also how different they are from us.

But the truly weakest part of the clash of civilizations thesis is the rigid separation assumed among civilizations, despite the overwhelming evidence that today's world is in fact a world of mixtures, of migrations, of crossings over.... There are no insulated cultures or civilizations. Any attempt made to separate them into the watertight compartments alleged by Huntington does damage to their variety, their diversity, their sheer complexity of elements, their radical hybridity. The more insistent we are on the separation of cultures and civilizations, the more inaccurate we are about ourselves and others. The notion of an exclusionary civilization is, to my way of thinking, an impossible one.

The real question, then, is whether in the end we want to work for civilizations that are separate or whether we should be taking the more integrative, but perhaps more difficult, path, which is to try to see them as making one vast whole whose exact contours are impossible for one person to grasp, but whose certain existence we can intuit and feel. In any case, a number of political scientists, economists, and cultural analysts have for some years been speaking of an integrative world system, largely economic, it is true, but nonetheless knitted together, overriding many of the clashes spoken of so hastily and imprudently by Huntington....

It would seem to me, therefore, that efforts to return the community of civilizations to a primitive stage of narcissistic struggle must be understood not as descriptions about how in fact they behave but rather as incitements

to wasteful conflict and unedifying chauvinism. And that seems to be exactly what we do not need.

Niall Ferguson



Niall Ferguson (born 1964) is a British-born historian and public intellectual known for ambitious works on empire, finance, war, and the institutions that shaped the modern West. Educated at Oxford, he taught at Oxford, New York University, Harvard, and later Stanford, and became widely known through books such as *The Pity of War*, *Empire*, *Colossus*, *The Ascent of Money*, and *Civilization*. He is also the authorized biographer of Henry Kissinger;

the first volume of his biography, *Kissinger, 1923–1968: The Idealist*, appeared in 2015. Ferguson has argued against accounts of modern history that treat Western imperialism primarily as a story of exploitation, emphasizing instead the global diffusion of institutions such as markets, law, representative government, and modern infrastructure, while also acknowledging the violence and coercion of empire. His work is distinguished by broad comparative argument, extensive use of counterfactual history, and a willingness to challenge prevailing academic orthodoxies. These qualities have made him one of the most visible historians of his generation, but also a controversial figure, criticized by some scholars for sweeping generalization, political conservatism, and a tendency to cast complex historical developments in strongly revisionist terms.



Ferguson: The Crash of Civilizations (2006)

It has been nearly 13 years since Samuel Huntington published his seminal essay “The Clash of Civilizations?” in *Foreign Affairs*. As works of academic prophecy go, this has been a real winner — up there with George Kennan’s epoch-making 1947 essay “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” which laid out the rationale for containment of the Soviet Union.

“In this new world,” wrote Huntington, “the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations.... The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.”

The other great think-piece of the post-Cold War period was Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History." Published in 1989, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, it argued that liberal democracy had conquered, once and for all, rival ideologies such as fascism and communism. But Fukuyama went from seeming prescient to seeming overoptimistic within just a few years. In particular, Bosnia's civil war showed how history might actually resume with a vengeance in some post-communist societies.

By contrast, Huntington's vision of a world divided along ancient cultural fault lines has stood up much better. Indeed, the Bosnian war was a good example of what Huntington had in mind, because it was a conflict located precisely on the fault line between Western Christianity, Orthodoxy and Islam.

Muslims were the losers in Bosnia. But Huntington's point was that in other respects, Islam was an ascendant civilization, not least because of the high birthrates prevalent in most Muslim societies. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 were interpreted by many Americans in Huntington's terms; this was an attack on America's Judeo-Christian civilization by the fanatical followers of a prophet spurned by both Jews and Christians.

Also ascendant, Huntington argued, was Confucianism, the civilization of China. This forecast, too, has been vindicated by the seemingly unstoppable growth of the Chinese economy.

Huntington's model makes sense of an impressively high proportion of the news. When young Muslim men riot in protest against Danish cartoons, it looks like another case of clashing civilizations. Small wonder many congressmen are baffled by the Bush administration's willingness to let a Dubai-based firm take over terminal operations at six U.S. ports: wrong civilization.

Strife between Nigerian Muslims and Christians? Chalk up another one to Huntington. Trouble in the Caucasus? That's two. Darfur? Three, and counting.

And yet, for all its seductive simplicity, I have never entirely bought the theory that the future will be dominated by the clash of civilizations.

For one thing, the term “civilization” has always struck me as much too woolly. I know what a religion is. I know what an empire is. But, as Henry Kissinger might have said, whom do I call when I want to talk to Western civilization? Anyone who crosses the Atlantic on a regular basis quickly learns how vacuous that phrase has become.

As for “Judeo-Christian civilization” (a phrase popularized by Bernard Lewis), I don’t remember that being a terribly harmonious union in the 1940s.

The really big problem with the theory, however, is right in front of our noses. Question: Who has killed the most Muslims in the last 12 months? The answer, of course, is other Muslims.

I’ve been predicting for some time that Iraq could end up being like Lebanon to the power of 10 if the civil war already underway there should escalate. Last week’s bomb attack on the Shiites’ Golden Mosque in Samarra may be the trigger for precisely that escalation. The point is that Iraq’s “clash” is not between civilizations but within Islamic civilization — between the country’s Sunni minority and its Shiite majority.

Now, Huntington is too clever a man not to hedge his bets. “This article does not argue,” he wrote back in 1993, “that groups within a civilization will not conflict with and even fight one another.”

But he went on to say: “Conflicts between groups in different civilizations will be more frequent, more sustained and more violent than conflicts between groups in the same civilization.”

Sorry, wrong. It’s well known that the overwhelming majority of conflicts since the end of the Cold War have been civil wars. The interesting thing is that only a minority of them have conformed to Huntington’s model of inter-civilization wars. More often than not, the wars of the “new world disorder” have been fought between ethnic groups within one of Huntington’s civilizations.

To be precise: Of 30 major armed conflicts that are either still going on or have recently ended, only 10 or 11 can be regarded as being in any sense between civilizations. But 14 were essentially ethnic conflicts, the worst being the wars that continue to bedevil Central Africa. Moreover, many of

those conflicts that have a religious dimension are also ethnic conflicts; in many cases, religious affiliation has more to do with the localized success of missionaries in the past than with long-standing membership of a Christian or Muslim civilization.

In reality, the problems of the Middle East have little to do with a clash of civilizations and a lot to do with the Arab world's "civilization of clashes" — the propensity of its political culture to resolve disputes by violence rather than negotiation. The same applies a fortiori to sub-Saharan Africa.

The future, therefore, looks more likely to bring multiple local wars — most of them ethnic conflicts in Africa, South Asia and the Middle East — than a global collision of value systems.

Indeed, my prediction would be that precisely these centrifugal tendencies will tend to tear apart at least one (and maybe more) of the very civilizations identified by Huntington.

In short, for the "clash of civilizations," read the "crash of civilizations."



Five Years After 9/11, The Clash of Civilizations Revisited (interview with Huntington, 2006)

***Q:** The editors of Foreign Affairs magazine have said your article, “The Clash of Civilizations?” which led, of course, to the book of the same title, was one of the most influential pieces in the magazine’s illustrious history, second only to George Kennan’s article based on his “Long Telegram” on the doctrine of containment that would form the basis of U.S. Cold War policy. Why do you think that article struck such a nerve?*

A: I’m delighted it struck such a nerve. I was rather surprised that it did when it was published. But in looking back at the things I’ve written and things other people have written, I think the extent to which something has an impact depends, in part, upon the logic of its argument and the evidence it presents; but it also depends overwhelmingly on timing. You’ve got to set that argument forth at the right time. If you set it forth five years too early, or five years too late, nobody pays attention to it.

***Q:** You were certainly ahead of the curve in focusing on religion. Do you see your colleagues at Harvard and other academics realizing its importance?*

A: You say I was ahead of the curve, but I was part of a wave of thinking, as people became aware that, despite whatever secularization had occurred, most individuals did start their thinking from religious premises, even if these were just absorbed unconsciously from the environment in which they lived.

***Q:** You, of course, did not predict 9/11, but one could say that you did predict the context in which a 9/11-type incident would emerge.*

A: I wouldn’t argue with that.

***Q:** In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, you wrote that the attack was Osama bin Laden’s attempt to draw the U.S. and the West into a full-fledged clash of civilizations with Islam. As we commemorate the 5th anniversary of that tragic day, do you think he succeeded?*

A: I don’t know that I would give him credit, but it certainly seems to me that relations between Islam and the West during the past several years involved a variety of difficulties. In large part, these difficulties are the

result of the extent to which a good portion of the Muslim world was subject to Western colonialism. The peoples in those areas have now asserted themselves. So you have a natural tension and conflicts occurring between the gradually retreating imperial powers and the asserting native people.

Q: Would you say that we are now in a full-fledged clash of civilizations?

A: Not simply one clash, but clashes of civilizations certainly occur. And this doesn't mean, as I think I emphasized in what I wrote, that there are no clashes within civilizations; obviously there are. To a very large extent, most of the conflicts and wars are between people within the same civilization. Look at European history. The Europeans were fighting each other all the time.

But now, because of all of the momentous changes in communications and transportation, people from different civilizations are interacting in a way they haven't before, and are interacting on a more equal basis. In the past, people in one civilization, for example, the Chinese or Europeans, have expanded, conquered and dominated people from other civilizations.

We have a world in which there are a significant number of major civilizations — it's a pluralistic world. And while the United States is undoubtedly more powerful than other countries, it's not terribly useful to think of it roughly, or even primarily, in terms of a hierarchical world. The United States, as well as the European Union, Japan and other major actors all have to take into consideration the interests and probable responses of other major actors to what they do. I think religion certainly plays a tremendously important role. It is manifest broadly, but not exclusively, in the rise of religious consciousness in the Muslim world.

Q: How can we defuse the tension with the Muslim world?

A: I think we have to take a calmer attitude and try to understand what their concerns are. I think we have to recognize that there are tremendous divisions within the Muslim world, between different varieties of Islam and different states. It is a very pluralistic world. We should recognize it as such, and deal with the individual segments of that world, and try to accommodate, to the extent that we can, their particular interests.

Q: You have counseled the U.S. and the West to aggressively combat terrorism, but without violating a sense of security in the Islamic world — in other words, to not make it seem as if the U.S. is attacking Islam itself.

How would you assess the Bush administration's performance in this regard?

A: I'm a Democrat, but I think they have done all right in that regard. You use the term "the Islamic world," but the Islamic world is highly divided — different varieties of Islam and different states. Inevitably, you end up having different types of relations with these different entities. We certainly haven't had a major, violent clash of civilizations. There have been lots of issues. Some of them have been dealt with more successfully than others. I guess I am reasonably satisfied with what has happened just because I can contemplate how it could have been so much worse.

Q: What would the worse scenario look like?

A: The development of major coalitions on each side, if the Muslim countries had come together effectively and attempted to reassert their control over broad sections of the West, which after all, they did control a thousand years ago when they controlled all of Spain and a good part of southern France. Conceivably, that might happen in the future, but it certainly hasn't happened yet.

Q: You wrote in your latest book, Who Are We? that at its core, the United States is an Anglo-Protestant culture. If that is indeed true, how is this missionary core, if I can use that word, contributing to a clash of civilizations with Islam?

A: We have an Anglo-Protestant culture. It's fairly clear. You used the word missionary. I don't think it necessarily has to be a missionary culture. But, at times it certainly has been, because, after all, virtually all the settlements here on the East coast in the 17th and 18th century were established by religious groups. In our origins we are a religious nation. We have sent missionaries out all over the world from the Protestant, Catholic and other denominations. Since the expansion of Islam in the seventh century, I don't think any other groups besides Western Christians — even Orthodox Christians in Russia — have done the kind of proselytizing that Western Christians have done. Western religions are missionary religions.

Q: Do you see our attempt to export democratic values, some might say American values, as part of a missionary impulse or an Anglo-Protestant impulse?

A: As far as the United States is concerned, that impulse certainly derives from our Anglo-Protestant heritage. But that is not the only source. Catholics are often driven by that impulse. There are people in every

religion who share the impulse to go out and try to convert other people. But in American history, that certainly has been, if not a powerful motivation, then certainly a central characteristic. As the settlers here expanded westward, they often massacred the Indians, but those they didn't massacre they converted, or tried to convert.

Q: You have criticized the idea that American values are universal, and that these values should be exported to other countries through democracy. Could you elaborate on that point?

A: I have argued that there are a variety of different cultures and value systems in the world. They have many common elements, but they are also different entities. Western culture, particularly American culture, emphasizes individualism to an extent no other culture that I know of does. Other cultures put the emphasis on community, family, and social factors, whereas we talk about the rights of individuals. When we have gone abroad and have had to exercise our influence, very naturally, we bring our values and cultures with us and try to persuade, at times coerce, other people to accept them.

Q: Has it surprised you that when democratic elections have been held in some Muslim countries recently, that Islamist parties have been chosen by the electorate?

A: I can honestly say, no, it did not surprise me. I have, at various times, expressed warnings to people out promoting democracy to not assume just because a government wins power through relatively fair elections, it is going to implement the same values we have and be friendly to us.

Governments that do win by elections have to appeal to the sentiments, and, in large part, nationalist sentiments, of their peoples, and for understandable reasons, are often rather anti-Western.

Q: Do you think the Bush administration miscalculated in not anticipating that Hamas would be thrust into power by Palestinian voters?

A: I think there is a general failure on the part of many Americans — this would include people in the Bush administration — to appreciate the probability of that sort of thing happening, and its religious appeal. Again, we have tended to make it seem that religion was somehow a thing of the past.

Q: Looking to the future, do you anticipate that where democratic elections are held in Islamic countries, we will see a trend of Islamist parties rising to power?

A: I wouldn't make a prediction, but it seems to me that is a big possibility, and a good probability in some societies.

Q: You were critical of the U.S. going into Iraq.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remain critical?

A: Yes. I didn't see the need to go in. Sure, Iraq is an important oil producer. Obviously, we want to have stability in the Persian Gulf area. We want to counter the expansion of the influence of radical Iran. But I didn't see the need for us to go into Iraq.

Q: Do you see a way for us to get out?

A: There are many ways to get out. The question is how to get out in a fairly responsible fashion that won't produce even worse consequences than our being there. And that won't be easy. But I think setting a timetable, which we wouldn't necessarily have to announce in advance, of gradual withdrawal, and trying to shift some of the responsibilities for dealing with Iraq to other countries, other Gulf states, or the European Union would be a start.

Q: You were a State Department consultant in the 1960s for the Johnson administration. But you later concluded that a major problem with our Vietnam policy was our idealism. Similarly, do you see idealism driving our Iraq policy? Is that a problem?

A: The central, unifying factor for this country is a set of political beliefs and ideals. Quite naturally, when we go abroad, we try to persuade people of the validity of these beliefs and ideals. And in a relatively small number of direct colonies that we have had, we tried to construct democratic institutions on the American model. And that's perfectly natural; all countries do that when they expand their influence.

But I am impressed with the extent to which our culture and values differ from those of other major portions of the world. We have to recognize the limits of what we can do. If you look at what has happened, usually in Asian or Eurasian societies, in terms of the impact of the West — a relatively small number of the elites, intellectuals and political leaders, many of whom have probably studied at Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard do

imbibe Western values and attitudes and go back to their societies, but normally don't have a great deal of political success. Sometimes they do, but the politicians that are staying at home and appealing to nationalist sentiments are much more likely to be successful in their countries.

Explanatory Notes

- **p. 6 — Lucian Pye** — American political scientist and specialist on China and political culture. Huntington borrows Pye’s description of China as “a civilization pretending to be a state.”
- **p. 7 — Arnold Toynbee, A Study of History** — Monumental twelve-volume comparative history of civilizations, published between 1934 and 1961. Toynbee treated civilizations, rather than nation-states, as the principal units of historical rise and decline.
- **p. 8 — la revanche de Dieu** — “The revenge of God,” the title of Gilles Kepel’s 1991 study of the worldwide resurgence of politically assertive religion in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.
- **p. 10 — Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)** — Regional organization originating in a 1964 grouping of Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey and enlarged after the Soviet collapse to include Afghanistan and the new Muslim-majority Central Asian republics.
- **p. 10 — propinquity** — Geographic proximity; in international-relations writing, often used to describe the tendency of neighboring states or groups to have more opportunities for conflict.
- **p. 15 — “kin-country syndrome”** — Huntington’s term for the tendency of states or populations to rally behind parties to a conflict that belong to the same civilization, religion, or cultural community.
- **p. 15 — Safar al-Hawali** — Saudi Islamist cleric associated with the *Sahwa* (“Awakening”) current. He became a prominent critic of the deployment of U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia during the 1990–91 Gulf crisis.
- **p. 19 — Georgy Arbatov** — Soviet specialist on the United States and longtime director of the Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies, an influential adviser on Soviet-American affairs.
- **p. 20 — “West and the Rest”** — Phrase associated here with Singaporean diplomat and intellectual Kishore Mahbubani, denoting a structural opposition between Western power and non-Western societies.
- **p. 20 — bandwagoning / balancing** — Terms of art in international-relations theory. **Bandwagoning** means aligning with a stronger power; **balancing** means building or joining countervailing power against it.

- **p. 21 — “torn country”** — Huntington’s term for a society whose elites seek membership in one civilization while much of its history, culture, or population identifies it with another. Turkey is his principal example.
- **p. 21 — “Confucian-Islamic connection”** — Huntington’s controversial claim that Chinese and Muslim states were developing a strategic relationship, particularly through transfers of weapons and military technology, in resistance to Western predominance.
- **p. 22 — “Weapon States”** — Charles Krauthammer’s early post-Cold War term for revisionist or hostile states seeking advanced weaponry, especially weapons of mass destruction, as a way to offset Western conventional superiority.
- **p. 25 — “the Other”** — Term widely used in philosophy, anthropology, and postcolonial studies for the external group against which a community defines its own identity.
- **p. 26 — “sick man of Europe”** — Nineteenth-century expression for the weakening Ottoman Empire, traditionally attributed to Tsar Nicholas I.
- **p. 27 — teleological view of history** — Understanding history as moving toward an ultimate end or purpose rather than simply as an open-ended sequence of events.
- **p. 28 — Cluniac revival** — Monastic reform movement centered on the Abbey of Cluny that strengthened religious institutions and devotional activism in medieval Western Europe; Huntington links it to the religious mobilization preceding the Crusades.
- **p. 28 — “Kto? Kovo?”** — Russian for “Who [does] whom?” Lenin’s compressed formulation of politics as the struggle over who dominates whom. Huntington applies it to the power dimension of Islam-West relations.
- **p. 29 — gharbzadegi** — Persian term commonly translated as “Westoxication” or “West-struckness,” popularized by Iranian writer Jalal Al-e Ahmad to criticize cultural dependence on and imitation of the West.
- **p. 31 — “Southern Tier”** — In early post-Cold War NATO usage, the Mediterranean, North African, and Middle Eastern zone increasingly viewed as a potential source of instability after the Soviet threat to NATO’s Central Front receded.
- **p. 31 — “quasi war”** — Huntington’s term for the intermittent pattern of terrorism, covert action, sanctions, air strikes, and other limited violence

between Western states and several Muslim states and movements after 1979.

- **p. 32 — “rogue state” / “backlash state”** — 1990s U.S. policy terms for regimes viewed as rejecting prevailing international norms, supporting terrorism, or pursuing weapons of mass destruction. “Backlash states” was particularly associated with Clinton-era national-security adviser Anthony Lake.
- **p. 36 — Ted Robert Gurr** — Political scientist known for quantitative work on political violence and ethnic conflict; Huntington relies on his datasets to support the “bloody borders” argument.
- **p. 37 — Ruth Leger Sivard** — Researcher best known for the annual *World Military and Social Expenditures* reports, which compiled comparative data on wars, military spending, and social indicators.
- **p. 38 — military force ratio / military effort index** — Comparative measures of militarization. The first measures military personnel relative to population; the second adjusts military participation for a country’s level of economic resources.
- **p. 39 — William James, “bloomin’ buzzin’ confusion”** — James’s phrase for the undifferentiated sensory world before the mind organizes it into categories; Huntington uses it to defend the necessity of simplified conceptual frameworks.
- **p. 39 — Thomas Kuhn / paradigm** — Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* argued that scientific inquiry operates within broad conceptual frameworks, or paradigms, which are displaced when a rival explains important anomalies more successfully.
- **p. 40 — parsimony** — In theory-building, explaining as much as possible with as few assumptions or variables as necessary. Huntington argues that a useful paradigm need not explain every case if it explains major patterns simply.
- **p. 42 — Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., “the disuniting of America”** — Reference to Schlesinger’s 1991 book *The Disuniting of America*, a critique of multiculturalism and identity-based approaches to American history and citizenship.
- **p. 44 — “Single Alternative Fallacy”** — Huntington’s label for the assumption that because communism collapsed, its principal Cold War rival—liberal democracy—must therefore become universal.

- **p. 47 — “privileged,” in the deconstructionist sense** — In poststructuralist criticism, to “privilege” a concept or tradition is to treat it as authoritative or normative while marginalizing alternatives.
- **p. 49 — “war of all against all”** — Allusion to Hobbes’s description of the state of nature in *Leviathan*: a condition of insecurity in which no common authority restrains conflict.
- **p. 50 — epistemological** — Concerning the nature and limits of knowledge. Said argues that Huntington presents the division between “us” and “them” as something objectively knowable when it is actually historically and politically constructed.
- **p. 52 — reified** — Treated as if an abstract or changing phenomenon were a fixed, concrete thing. Said accuses Huntington of reifying “civilizations.”
- **p. 52 — ontological** — Concerning what fundamentally exists. Said’s point is that Huntington treats civilizational identities as basic facts of political existence rather than historically contested constructions.
- **p. 52 — “managerial poetics”** — Said’s phrase for Huntington’s rhetorical method: representing civilizations as bounded, manageable objects that policymakers can classify, manipulate, and strategically position.
- **p. 53 — hybridity** — Important concept in postcolonial theory referring to identities and cultures formed through mixture, borrowing, migration, and interaction rather than existing as sealed, homogeneous wholes.
- **p. 56 — Danish cartoons** — The 2005 publication by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* of cartoons depicting Muhammad, which provoked protests and violence in several Muslim countries.
- **p. 56 — Dubai ports controversy** — 2006 U.S. political controversy over Dubai Ports World’s proposed acquisition of terminal operations at several American ports; critics raised national-security objections because the company was based in the UAE.
- **p. 57 — Golden Mosque in Samarra** — The al-Askari shrine, one of Shi‘ism’s most important holy sites. Its February 2006 bombing accelerated sectarian violence between Iraqi Sunnis and Shi‘ites.
- **p. 58 — a fortiori** — Latin: “with even stronger reason.” Ferguson means that his argument applies still more strongly to sub-Saharan Africa.

- **p. 59 — Kennan’s “Long Telegram” / “Sources of Soviet Conduct”** — George Kennan’s 1946 telegram from Moscow and his 1947 *Foreign Affairs* article under the pseudonym “X,” which supplied the intellectual foundation for the U.S. strategy of containment. The comparison emphasizes the perceived stature of Huntington’s essay.
- **p. 61 — Who Are We?** — Huntington’s 2004 book on American national identity, in which he argued that the country’s core political culture was historically rooted in Anglo-Protestant institutions and values.