

# Samuel p. huntington's essay on the clash of civilization review

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Samuel P. Huntington's essay on the Clash of Civilizations can be summarized as a snapshot of the current state of political affairs of the world through the lens of western civilization. Throughout the paper the author had made numerous hypotheses that stated while nation states will remain a powerful and formidable force in the foreseeable future, it is the non-visible boundaries of civilizations that will shape the future of conflicts and forge allies as well as adversaries. The author has drawn from history in creating his assumption that current and future conflicts will be founded on the basis of civilizations as opposed to kingdoms and emperors.

Huntington had stated that with the rise of governments "for the people" that "...the wars of the peoples had begun" signaling a major change in why mankind has waged warfare. As such, populations of each respective culture will more than likely form alliances with populations from their own civilizations and forge enemies with those they have no common ground with. The author doesn't take the time to explain the "why" this phenomena is occurring but chooses to merely gloss over any underlying reasons it may be happening and instead reiterate that it is in fact occurring.

Many assumptions are made throughout the paper by evidence of a lack of adequate sources for many hypotheses which would leave the reader to assume that what is said is merely "common knowledge". The author glazes over major historical events which had demonstrated peoples from different cultures and civilizations working together towards economic benefit such as the Silk Road. 1

Persuasion of the Theorist

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Samuel P. Huntington's essay on the Clash of Civilizations is persuasive in historical anecdotes and real world current events. Most of Huntington's essay need not say anything more than what is already repeated on major media outlets around the world. The essay states what has long been opposed by the far left; namely, that people choose to interact, trade and form alliances with "like peoples". It then, shouldn't come as a surprise that the author needs to say little in order to sway an audience to his hypothesis by simply relating real world events such as rising nationalism in Russia<sup>2</sup>, Greece<sup>3</sup> and France.

One only has to look at the Anglo sphere of alliances in areas of conflict in the Middle East to find that Huntington's persuasive argument is a narrative of real world events<sup>4</sup>. Non-Western nations that hope to transition into modern nations form alliances with Western nations but such alliances only serve to further destroy the credibility of the elites within those non-western countries. The elites are viewed simply as "puppets" of foreign interest.

The rise of extremist organizations such as Hezbollah that have successfully achieved legitimacy through the democratic process of their respective nation states further proves that the will of the people in non-western countries is not to be "let into the club" so to speak, but to form their independent civilizations identity while modernizing their economies and infrastructure. Huntington's essay was able to be persuasive due to how it presented historical information in light of real world events but failed to mention historical periods that saw massive growth in economic trade and cross pollination of civilizations such as the silk road <sup>6</sup>, Incense Road<sup>7</sup> or even the lesser known Tea Horse Road <sup>8</sup>.

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## Threats, Challenges, and Opportunities

Samuel P. Huntington's essay can alternatively be summed up as a threat brief and the challenges it bears provide little opportunity for western nations to exploit economic ventures in developing nations. However, Huntington's essay does provide a ray of light by illuminating the opportunities Western nations have to form and cultivate defense, economic and intellectual relationships within their own civilizations<sup>9</sup>. Hunting has shown that civilizations that are similar generally avoid conflicts in national security and economic trade while the reverse seems to only exacerbate the two.

This presents a unique opportunity for western nations to carefully examine who they consider as allies and coalition partners while also providing incentives for rethinking our security strategy of disarmament while simultaneously attempting to dissuade developing nations from increasing their arsenals. When one begins to look at current events and policies through the lens of civilizations it becomes apparent that many of our previous alliances with those different from us had been doomed from the start as evidence by the low participation rates of countries from East Asia who only sent token forces for operations in OIF and OEF.

One could easily support Hunting's warning of working together with unlike civilizations by simply looking at the debacle of the South Korea armed forces in Afghanistan and its failure to support US operations while despite US forces that had shed blood on their soil in order in conflicts past<sup>10</sup>.

## Analysis of the Future Operational Environment

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In reviewing Samuel P. Huntington's essay on the Clash of Civilizations it is painfully obvious that our previous alliances had been formed on convenience rather than an introspective look into who "we" as Americans are and how our supposed allies view our relationships. Do our current noticeable dearth of allies view themselves as western nations, are they simply trying to "join the club" or are they simply biding their time until they can switch alliances to a group that resembles their civilization and values more than we do?

It is my opinion based upon token efforts from allies during wartime, combined with an eager willingness to negotiate with terrorist and non-state actors that our current slew of "allies" are a bigger threat than some of our enemies. If present conflicts dictate what future areas of concern will be, we should form stronger alliances with like minded civilizations that have already proven their dedication to our shared values such as Poland<sup>11</sup>, Georgia and former East Bloc countries that have taken similar stances against terrorism by deeds and not words.

Based upon the technological advantage and intellectual innovation I would argue that the "where" US forces might deploy is irrelevant compared to "who" we might deploy with. Potential enemies to western interest will remain non-western countries for the foreseeable future and despite Russia's growing nationalism and desire to increase its military strength it will remain an economic defunct nation susceptible to the effects of brain drain<sup>12</sup> and disenfranchisement of its middle class.

The issues and concerns of redefining our allies along the thread of a common civilization will greatly increase the complexity of logistics in <https://assignbuster.com/samuel-p-huntingtons-essay-on-the-clash-of-civilization-review/>

military operations due to our geographic locations as compared to those of our adversaries. For example, due to past examples of cowardice; such as negotiating with terrorist, if the US would remove South Korea as an ally it would have increased logistical challenges in dealing with North Korea and China should tensions continue to escalate.

One would be safe to assume that South Korea would naturally befriend China, a country with a history and civilization similar to its own, which would rule out the possibility of using such a former " friend" as a logistic hub for staging operations. However such friends have only proven to be costly relationships in the long run which seldom paid dividends for services rendered unto them in their time of need. The Western way of warfare has been one of discipline and the leveraging of technology in order to gain tactical superiority over our enemies.

As such, we should look to cultivate advanced technologies with nations that share our civilization's culture and use the inherent technological innovations of these cultures to develop weapons systems that will give us the necessary edge to engage and destroy our enemies. By doing so, western civilization such as the United States of America would not have to get into bed with nation states of civilizations much different than our own whose motives remain unclear and questionable.