

The clash of civilization and the remaking of world order essay sample



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The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order provides a newer perspective of world order. It provides a key to understanding where we are in a geopolitical sense as we approach the millennium after the shocking collapse of the communist world. Huntington's civilizational approach posits the following: "Spurred by modernization, global politics is being reconfigured along cultural lines. People and countries with similar cultures are coming apart forming alignments defined by culture and civilization. Political boundaries increasingly are redrawn to coincide with cultural ones: ethnic, religious, and civilizational. Cultural communities are replacing Cold War blocs, and fault lines between civilizations are becoming the central lines of conflicts in global politics..."

Huntington also argues that Western domination in the world system and its wish to be superior for all time to come would antagonize the other civilization. The author identifies a major shift of economic, military, and political power from the West to other civilization of the world, most significantly to what he identifies as the two "Challenger Civilization" Sinic and Islam. He sees Islamic civilization as a potential ally to China, both having more revisionist goals and sharing common conflicts with other civilizations - especially the West. Their common interests are covers all from weapons proliferation to democracy.

Civilizational conflicts are "particularily prevalent between Muslims and non-Muslims", identifying the "Bloody Borders" between Islamic and non Islamic civilization. Thus in sweeping but dry style, he makes several vital points: modernization does not mean Westernization; economic progress has come with a revival of religion; post Cold War politics emphasize ethnic

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nationalism over ideology; the lack of leading “core states” hampers the growth of Latin America and the world of Islam. Most controversial will be Huntington’s tough minded view of Islam. Not only does he point out that Muslim countries are involved in far more inter group violence than others, he argues that the West should worry not about Islamic fundamentalism but about Islam itself, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power.

It 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.

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 civilization 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. This book 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 book 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. He further theorizes that 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. The definition, nomenclature and even the number of civilizations are somewhat ambiguous in Huntington’s works.
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Civilization may consist of states and social groups (such as ethnic and religious minorities) Predominant religion seems to be the main criterion of his classification, but in some cases geographical proximity and linguistic similarity are important as well. Major civilizations in his thesis are Western, World of Orthodox, Latin America, Muslim World, Hindu Civilization, Sinic, Sub Saharan Africa, and Japan. Huntington's book is an invaluable guide to understand the most bewildering game of new world order

REFERENCE

Huntington, Samuel. The clash of civilizations and the remaking of worked order. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1996.