

# On Huntington's Civilizational Paradigm: A Reappraisal

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*This article aims at a two-fold reappraisal of the civilizational paradigm in international studies proposed by Samuel Huntington. First comes a positive reappraisal of the Huntingtonian civilizational paradigm. Huntington recognizes the raison d'être of plural standards of civilizations, unlike Fukuyama's civilizational paradigm of monocentric diffusion, which has seemingly become an epistemic basis for the neoconservative foreign policy of the Bush administration. Civilizational coexistence is possible in Huntington's paradigm, whereas such coexistence seems to be impossible in Fukuyama's because the latter's paradigm of monocentric diffusion recognizes no standard of civilization other than the Western one.*

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*Second comes a negative reappraisal of the Huntingtonian civilizational paradigm, especially in the East Asian context. Huntington seems to be exaggerating in arguing that "Babelization prevails over universalization." Even though predictions of cultural homogenization were wrong, the centrifugal process has not at all tended toward a Tower of Babel, pure cultural anarchy. There have surely been gravitational forces restraining the centrifugal tendencies and organizing them. We have also some reservations about the accuracy of Huntington's paradigm regarding East Asia. Huntington seems to have drawn arbitrary civilizational fault lines through East Asian civilization. Huntington's simplification of the whole of East Asia (excluding Japan) as "Sinic" overlooks the strong resistance against the Sino-monocentric order. Huntington's logic in recognizing Japan as a civilization also raises many questions. This reappraisal of the Huntingtonian paradigm does not mean that Huntington is wholly wrong to apply civilizational theory toward analyzing international relations. Perhaps Huntington's hopeful appeal to "commonalities" between civilizations might find a basis in "thick" maximalist morality, not just in "thin" minimalist morality. However, this would need to be sought in a reasonableness beyond the rationality of a Newtonian "cosmopolis," to borrow a concept from Stephen Toulmin, and this has not been pursued yet by any leading country.*

**KEYWORDS:** Huntington; Fukuyama; civilization; East Asia; Confucianism; China; Korea; Japan.

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With the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the world of cultural and religious strife anticipated by Samuel Huntington has unquestionably arrived. Stanley Kurtz has even said, "This is Samuel P. Huntington's moment." Huntington's book often reads as if it had been written after September 11.<sup>1</sup> In the concluding sentence of his 1996 book, Huntington declares that we have entered a new era where "clashes of civilizations are the greatest threat to world peace, and [that] an international order based on civilizations is the surest safeguard against world war."<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, Huntington's thesis seems to have more foes

<sup>1</sup> Stanley Kurtz, "The Future of 'History': Francis Fukuyama vs. Samuel P. Huntington," *Policy Review*, no. 113 (June/July 2002): 43-44.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 321.

than friends among intellectuals in other civilizations.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps in part because he was borrowing Bernard Lewis' warning about a possible "clash of civilizations" between the Islamic world and the West, Huntington's views have gotten sucked into the maelstrom of debate over Orientalism. Edward Said himself dismissed Huntington's views as a "Clash of Ignorance."<sup>4</sup>

There is some irony to this critique given that Huntington rejects Western superiority and argues for cultural relativism of a sort that is surely multicultural in global terms and nearly postmodern in its rejection of the modern West's universal meta-narrative of progress toward the Enlightenment ideal of a fully rational society. Moreover, Huntington made some genuinely interesting points, reminding fellow students of international studies that history, culture, and religion do matter in international relations. Contrary to Francis Fukuyama's end-of-history thesis, Huntington argues that the defeat of Communism in the Cold War will lead not to the worldwide triumph of liberal democracy but to the renewal of civilizational conflict.<sup>5</sup>

This article thus aims at a two-fold reappraisal of Huntington. First, emphasizing the fact that Huntington recognizes the *raison d'être* of plural

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<sup>3</sup>According to one Russian scholar, Huntington's "clash of civilizations" vision met a highly critical reaction from the Russian intellectual audience. Both Globalists and Nationalists in Russia perceived Huntington's vision as destabilizing for both Eurasia and the world. See Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Whose World Order? Russia's Perception of American Ideas after the Cold War* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2004), 106. Not only among Russian intellectuals, but also among South Korean intellectuals, Huntington was not welcomed. See, for example, Joonhee Yang, "Samuel Huntington in Critical Perspective" (in Korean), *Korean Journal of International Studies* 42, no. 1 (2002): 29-50; and Jung In Kang, "Asian Values and American Liberalism: Focusing on Samuel Huntington" (in Korean), *Shin Asea* 7, no 1 (Spring 2000): 85-107. In particular, Yang Joonhee labeled the Huntingtonian paradigm as "snow in June," following the critique by Bruce Nussbaum in "Capital, Not Culture," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 2 (March/April 1997): 165.

<sup>4</sup>Huntington had already borrowed Lewis' expression in his article, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-28. See also Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage: Why So Many Muslims Deeply Resent the West, and Why Their Bitterness Will Not Easily Be Mollified," *The Atlantic Monthly* 266, no. 3 (September 1990): 47-60. Edward W. Said criticizes both Lewis and Huntington for their Orientalism in his "The Clash of Ignorance," *The Nation*, October 22, 2001.

<sup>5</sup>Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *National Interest*, no. 16 (Summer 1989): 3-18. See also Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

standards of civilizations, this article attempts to positively reappraise Huntington's civilizational paradigm compared to Fukuyama's. Second, the article aims to point out some inaccuracies in Huntington's civilizational paradigm, especially regarding East Asia. This does not mean that the paper is trying to prove the irrelevance of the Huntingtonian civilizational paradigm for international relations, rather that his theory requires more elaboration.

### **The End of the Cold War and Huntington's New Paradigm**

With the sudden collapse of the Cold War system, one question emerged: "How well did international relations theory carry out one of the important tasks it set for itself, which was forecasting the future of the Cold War?"<sup>6</sup> The abrupt end of the Cold War, an unanticipated hot war in the Persian Gulf, and the sudden disintegration of the Soviet Union astonished almost everyone—whether in government, the academy, the media, or the think tanks.<sup>7</sup> A rich research agenda was presented for historians, political scientists, sociologists, and scholars in many disciplines. It stimulated writers to adopt a truly "interdisciplinary" perspective for interpreting international relations. History and civilizations thus drew new attention.

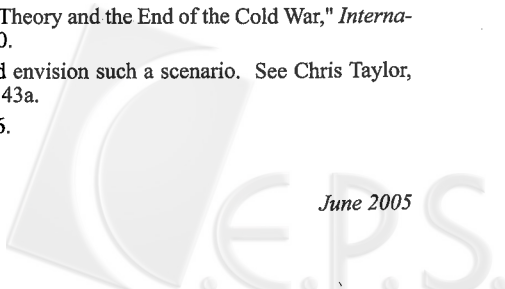
According to John Lewis Gaddis, the abrupt end of the Cold War presented an unusual opportunity to test "the power to detect patterns in the behavior of nations and the individuals who lead them" claimed by theorists of international relations.<sup>8</sup> Gaddis argued, reviewing three schools of international relations theory, which adopted respectively behavioral, structural, and evolutionary approaches, that "the efforts theorists have made to create a 'science' of politics that would forecast the future

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<sup>6</sup>John Lewis Gaddis, "International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War," *International Security* 17, no. 3 (Winter 1992/93): 10.

<sup>7</sup>Although the futurologist Peter Schwartz did envision such a scenario. See Chris Taylor, "The Futurologist," *Time*, October 25, 2004, 43a.

<sup>8</sup>Gaddis, "International Relations Theory," 5-6.



course of world events have produced strikingly unimpressive results."<sup>9</sup> Theories provide a way of packaging patterns from the past in such a way as to make them usable in the present as guides to the future. Without them, all attempts at forecasting and prediction would be reduced to random guessing.<sup>10</sup> However, to its detriment, international relations theory tended to allow no place for the comparative study of philosophies of war and could not accommodate cultural variance because it rejects culture (or civilization) as a relevant factor. Quoting Robert Conquest, Gaddis wrote, "If you are a student, switch from political science to history, [for only] insight derived from careful narration and thoughtful analogy—not from an excessive deference to a now outmoded scientific method—can illuminate even quite distant futures."<sup>11</sup>

This invitation to "careful narration and thoughtful analogy" had much appeal within the academic community of international studies. Many scholars criticized the tendency toward simplification and quantification, whose adverse consequence is that too many significant issues are neglected. Among these are the influence of emotions (e.g., pride, prestige, prejudice, moral outrage, and vengeance) on national will, the influence of religion on motives (e.g., "killing in obedience to spirits of the earth or living ancestors"), and the measure of human inclination or capacity to "inflict violence and sustain war-induced uncertainty, suffering, and death." Without addressing such issues, international relations theorists tend to assume that all people have the same history and culture.<sup>12</sup>

In particular, the concept of culture is refracted through the lens of universalism. It is well accepted that the leading schools of realist, neo-realist, and even idealist thought share a strong belief in the universally rational nature of human beings. Opposed to them are the primordialists,

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 55-58.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 55-58.

<sup>12</sup>Adda Bozeman, "War and the Clash of Ideas," in *Strategic Intelligence and Statecraft* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1992), 52-58. This essay was originally published in the spring 1976 edition of *Orbis*. See also John W. Jandora, "War and Culture: A Neglected Relation," *Armed Forces & Society* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1999): 543-44.

like Huntington, who consider culture as elemental and sometimes immutable, defining essential differences among ethnic or larger cultural groups.<sup>13</sup> In the same vein, the word "civilization" has two distinct meanings. On the one hand, "civilization" is a term with very positive connotations that by its logic is grammatically singular, denoting processes (and their results) that have made men more "civil," that is less "animal"-like or less "savage." When French colonialists in the late nineteenth century launched the slogan of "*la mission civilisatrice*," no one had any doubt about the uniqueness and therefore the universality of the civilization to which they referred. On the other hand, there is the plural usage, in which a civilization refers to a particular concatenation of world-view, customs, structures, and culture (both material culture and high culture) that forms some kind of historical whole and that coexists (if not always simultaneously) with other varieties of this phenomenon.<sup>14</sup>

Before Huntington, his Harvard colleague Joseph S. Nye, Jr. also drew attention to culture as soft power and proposed a new national strategy taking it into consideration.<sup>15</sup> In Huntington's thesis, civilization and culture are often considered to be synonymous. In broad terms, culture is a distinctive way of thinking and behaving that is manifested in the various human endeavors of a large-scale group in contradistinction to other such groups. Culture plays a determinant role in the process of identity formation. Humans require identity, and they acquire it, says Huntington, through the enemies they choose. With the collapse of Cold War enmities, Huntington predicted, new forms of identity would inevitably be constructed upon new patterns of hostility. Differences of religion and culture, says Huntington, will provide the needed template for the clashes to come.<sup>16</sup> Quoting the Venetian nationalist in Michael Dibdin's novel *Dead*

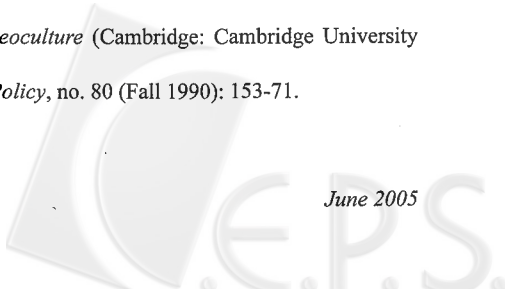
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<sup>13</sup>Michelle Lebaron and Jarle Crocker, "Why the 'Foreign' Matters in Foreign Affairs: Cultural Understanding in Policy Processes," *Harvard International Review* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 54.

<sup>14</sup>Immanuel Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and Geoculture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 215.

<sup>15</sup>Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy*, no. 80 (Fall 1990): 153-71.

<sup>16</sup>Kurtz, "The Future of 'History'," 44.



*Lagoon*, Huntington argues that "there can be no true friends without true enemies. Unless we hate what we are not, we cannot love what we are."<sup>17</sup> Huntington's civilizational paradigm reflects the intellectual invitation to return to careful narration and analogy, to history and culture. According to him, for peoples seeking identity and reinventing ethnicity, enemies are essential, and the potentially most dangerous enmities occur across the fault lines between the world's major civilizations.<sup>18</sup>

In the aftermath of the Cold War, civilizational discourses seemed to address the central issues that face international relations in the post-Cold War era in many regards. First, the disappearance of ideological standoff revived the old fault lines among civilizations. Second, during the Cold War, there had been a bandwagon effect that contributed to incorporating many countries into the modern international system. There is now scarcely any "*terra nullius*" or "influence-vacuumed periphery" where a civilization can expand itself without strong resistance.<sup>19</sup> Third, since World War II, the disasters caused by nation-states have raised serious questions about the validity of the Westphalian system, and this skeptical tendency has been strengthened by experience with supranational entities, such as the European Union which owes much to civilizational commonality (witness the continued exclusion of Turkey).

In particular, the United States needed an alternative national strategy to replace its former containment policy of the Cold War era. Huntington took up this mission, using the term "civilization" as a keyword. Huntington was already a well-known scholar of a modernization theory that was elaborated to be more responsive to change in order to overcome the stagnancy of system theory.<sup>20</sup> Also, he was known for his work in the

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<sup>17</sup>Michael Dibdin, *Dead Lagoon* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994), cited in Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 20.

<sup>18</sup>Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 20.

<sup>19</sup>These concepts quoted from Johan Galtung, "Big Powers and the World Feudal Structure," in *Peace and World Structure: Essays in Peace Research IV*, by Johan Galtung (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlertsen, 1980), 356.

<sup>20</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

Johnson administration as a counter-intelligence expert against Third World revolutions.<sup>21</sup> The ideas that eventually became his article of 1993 and his book of 1996 were, according to Huntington, first publicly expressed in a Bradley Lecture at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington in October 1992. They were then set forth in an occasional paper prepared for the Olin Institute's project on "The Clashing Security Environment and American National Interests," made possible by the Smith Richardson Foundation.<sup>22</sup> These early ideas, however, were also expressed in an article published in *Survival*.<sup>23</sup>

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has become, as Zbigniew Brzezinski argues, "the first, last, and only global superpower."<sup>24</sup> However, it is a uni-multipolar system rather than a unipolar world that has emerged. France, Russia, and China may well have common interests in challenging U.S. hegemony.<sup>25</sup> In particular, the underlying differences between China and the United States have reasserted themselves in such areas as human rights, trade, and weapons proliferation. These differences are unlikely to diminish. Many scholars have speculated that a "new Cold War" is under way between China and America, as Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平) also reportedly asserted. Under these circumstances, Huntington's article was produced as a result of project-based strategic studies. Huntington seems to have been deeply influenced by an article by Murray Weidenbaum. According to Weidenbaum, "Despite the current Japanese dominance of the region, the Chinese-based economy of Asia is rapidly emerging as a new epicenter for industry, commerce, and finance. If cultural commonality is a prerequisite for economic integration, the principal

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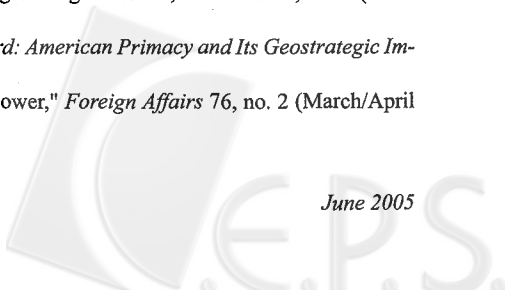
<sup>21</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *American Military Strategy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>22</sup>Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 14.

<sup>23</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, "America's Changing Strategic Interest," *Survival* 33, no. 1 (January/February 1991): 3-17.

<sup>24</sup>Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

<sup>25</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 2 (March/April 1999): 36, 46.





East Asian economic bloc of the future is likely to be centered on China."<sup>26</sup>

Also noteworthy is that Huntington's 1993 article on civilizational clash was presented in *Foreign Affairs*, which is published by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). The CFR has played a key role in redefining America's place in the world at every significant moment. It was established on July 29, 1921, as a sort of Atlantic epistemic community through a consensus between Lionel Curtis of the British Colonial Office and Louis Beer of the American Paris delegation for a sort of Atlantic epistemic community.<sup>27</sup> In the aftermath of World War II, the CFR played a key role in establishing American foreign policy. Through the good offices of the CFR, George Kennan published his article entitled "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" under the pen name of "X." This article was in the same vein as his famous "long telegram" and contributed definitively to the containment policy of the Cold War era. We might say that the Atlantic Alliance (NATO) was the incarnation of this epistemic atmosphere of the CFR.<sup>28</sup> As Kennan had become the leading American strategist under the auspices of the CFR after World War II, Huntington undertook a similar mission through the CFR in the aftermath of the Cold War. Huntington intended to supply Americans with an original thesis about a "new phase" in world politics. Moreover, his civilizational paradigm had much appeal within the U.S. national security community.

Huntington is not the first to propose a civilizational paradigm, and his approach shares characteristics with those of others. According to Stephen K. Sanderson, historical civilizationists were distinctive and per-

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<sup>26</sup> Murray Weidenbaum, "Greater China: The Next Economic Superpower?" Washington University Center for the Study of American Business, *Contemporary Issues*, no. 57 (February 1993).

<sup>27</sup> Michael Wala, *The Council on Foreign Relations and American Foreign Policy in the Early Cold War* (the title of the British version is *Winning the Peace*) (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1994), 93-139.

<sup>28</sup> X [George F. Kennan], "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25 (July 1947): 566-82. One of the original copies of Kennan's long telegram is held in the Harry S. Truman Library. It is reprinted in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1946*, vol. 6, and Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, eds., *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

haps unique in not only seeing patterns in historical change but also in conceptualizing these patterns as largely cyclical in nature. Among the most important of these historical civilizationists are Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, Pitirim Sorokin, and Carroll Quigley.<sup>29</sup> Arnold Toynbee implicitly seemed to conceive civilizations as "large-scale social groups that were larger (often much larger) than individual states and that shared common cultural characteristics, such as artistic, religious, philosophical, and linguistic styles or traits."<sup>30</sup>

Huntington also shares something in common with one of the most perceptive thinkers about civilization's role in international relations, the eighteenth century thinker-statesman Edmund Burke, who well deserves more of our attention. Burke was not a civilizational chauvinist, unlike most of his contemporaries. In his attempts to protect India from rapacious British imperial practices, Burke argued that Indian civilization was morally equivalent to European civilization. If Britain could not engage in commercial intercourse with India without destroying that civilization, then Britain ought to abandon its activities in India.<sup>31</sup>

For Burke, cultural similitude was the key force behind the law of nations and the foundation of international society. Burke argued:

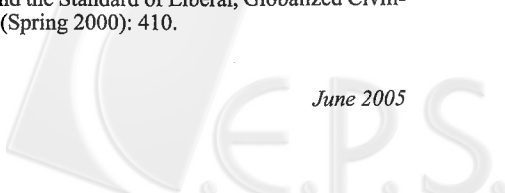
In the intercourse between nations, we are apt to rely too much on the instrumental part. We lay too much weight upon the formality of treaties and compacts. We do not act much more wisely when we trust to the interests of men as guarantee of their engagements. The interests frequently tear to pieces the engagements; and the passions trample upon both. Entirely to trust either, is to disregard our own safety, or not to know mankind. Men are not tied to one

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<sup>29</sup>Stephen K. Sanderson, "Civilizational Approaches to World-Historical Change," in *Civilizations and World Systems: Studying World-Historical Change*, ed. Stephen K. Sanderson (Walnut Creek/London/New Delhi: Altamira Press, 1995), 15.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>"If we are not able to contrive some method of governing India *well*, which will not of necessity become the means of governing Great Britain *ill*, a ground is laid for their eternal separation; but none for sacrificing the people of that country to our constitution." See Edmund Burke, *Speech on Fox's India Bill* (1783), in David P. Fidler and Jennifer M. Welsh eds., *Empire and Community: Edmund Burke's Writings and Speeches on International Relations*, I-67, cited in David P. Fidler, "A Kinder, Gentler System of Capitulations? International Law, Structural Adjustment Policies, and the Standard of Liberal, Globalized Civilization," *Texas International Law Journal* 35 (Spring 2000): 410.



another by papers and seals. They are led to associate by resemblances, by conformities, by sympathies. It is with nations as with individuals. Nothing is so strong a tie between nation and nation as correspondence in laws, customs, manners, and habits of life. They have more than the force of treaties in themselves. They are obligations written in the heart.<sup>32</sup>

The friction caused in international relations by cultural diversity is thus an issue to be paid more academic attention. In this regard, Huntington seems more an intellectual descendent of Burke, in contrast to Fukuyama, who owes much to Hegel.

### **Huntington versus Fukuyama: Some More Relevance**

The decade after the Cold War, like the shorter interval between World War II and the Cold War, created at times the illusion of "mission accomplished."<sup>33</sup> A sort of triumphalism permeated in the United States. An editorial in the *New York Times* declared that the end of the Cold War had come, and the *Wall Street Journal* shouted, "We won!" In an address delivered on May 12, 1989, President George Bush, Sr. proposed that it was time to pursue a new policy beyond containment.<sup>34</sup> According to John Gray, "Huntington's civilizational paradigm was a necessary corrective to this powerful triumphalism in thinking about international relations."<sup>35</sup>

In 1988, the Olin Center at the University of Chicago, which received US\$3.6 million per year in sponsorship from the Olin Foundation, invited an unknown official from the State Department to deliver a lecture. This lecturer was introduced as having obtained his Ph.D. from Harvard in Soviet Studies and having worked for the Rand Corporation as a policy

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Michael McFaul, "The Liberty Doctrine: Reclaiming the Purpose of American Power," *Policy Review*, no. 112 (April/May 2002): 6.

<sup>34</sup>*New York Times*, April 2, 1989; *Wall Street Journal*, May 24, 1989; and U.S. Government Printing Office, *Presidential Public Papers of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1989), 541.

<sup>35</sup>John Gray, "Global Utopias and Clashing Civilizations: Misunderstanding the Present," *International Affairs* 74, no. 1 (1998): 156.

analyst. Inspired by a Hegelian framework of historical dialectic, the official hyperbolically declared in his lecture that the end of history was nigh and that the victory of the West and liberalism was certain. The tone of the lecture was totally opposite to the pessimism expressed by one of the academic best-sellers of the 1980s, Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*.<sup>36</sup> The official's lecture was soon to appear in the *National Interest*, which also received US\$1 million per year of Olin Foundation sponsorship. Founded by Irving Kristol, this journal had among its advisors Henry Kissinger, Jean Kirkpatrick, and Charles Krauthammer. Also included in the same issue of the *National Interest* was a commentary by Samuel Huntington, who was then the chief of the Olin Center at Harvard. *Time*, the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times* competed in introducing this article to the general public. Soon, the unknown official of the State Department had become a world-renowned scholar.<sup>37</sup>

Like Marx, Francis Fukuyama considered traditional solidarities as "transitional" forms and dismissed them as false consciousness.<sup>38</sup> Simply put, scientific progress yields economic, technological, and especially military power. In order to harness that power and thereby avoid subjugation by other states, traditional societies have no choice but to modernize economically. Yet, economic modernization invariably disrupts social forms and, in time, creates a society of individuals—-independent subjects who are bound at some point to demand the equal forms of recognition embodied in democracy.<sup>39</sup> In the twilight of the Cold War system, Fukuyama recovered the pride of Americans and incarnated the triumphalism that was soon to be heightened by the collapse of the Soviet Union. This is a descendent of the classic triumphalism that believed that the triumph of civilization in the singular would lead to the end of the plurality of tradi-

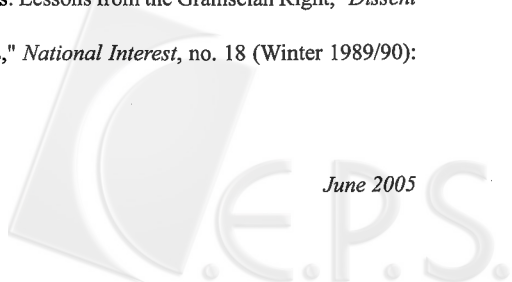
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<sup>36</sup>Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987).

<sup>37</sup>Susan George, "How to Win the War of Ideas: Lessons from the Gramscian Right," *Dissent* 44, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 47-53.

<sup>38</sup>Francis Fukuyama, "A Reply to My Critics," *National Interest*, no. 18 (Winter 1989/90): 21-28.

<sup>39</sup>Kurtz, "The Future of 'History'," 50-51.



tional cultures. This sort of universalism also became the cognitive basis of a new internationalism, according to which a nation can and must intervene against the sovereignty of any nation violating a universal value, such as human rights, a principle that historian Walter McDougall calls "Global Meliorism."<sup>40</sup> In this view, international law protects only the sovereignty of nations that deserve it. The intervention of NATO in Kosovo, with the participation of the German Bundeswehr, demonstrated this logic of the post-Cold War era.

However, as pointed out by Michael McFaul, for most of the past decade, the promoters of a muscular policy of spreading liberty were derided as either quixotic imperialists or international social workers.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, this new internationalism seemed to invoke a "pre-Westphalian" conflict where one fights against another in the name of one's own declared ultimate value. Huntington argues also that "what is universalism to the West is imperialism to the rest."<sup>42</sup> Even modernization does not necessarily mean Westernization. According to him, "Non-Western societies can modernize and have modernized without abandoning their own cultures and adopting wholesale Western values, institutions, and practices. Modernization, instead, strengthens those cultures and reduces the relative power of the West. In fundamental ways, the world is becoming more modern and less Western."<sup>43</sup> As we can see in the case of the Saudi Arabian royal family, which uses that nation's oil revenues to preserve many aspects of a traditional Islamic state (including, of course, the monarchy itself), the economic revenues of modernization can be poured into preserving traditional culture (as defined by Wahabism). As the world becomes more globalized, a traditional culture becomes more valuable, not only spiritually but also economically. Huntington is right to note that the individualist values embodied in Western understandings of liberal democracy do not

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<sup>40</sup> Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 172-98.

<sup>41</sup> See note 33 above.

<sup>42</sup> Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 184.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.



command universal assent. They express the ethical life of a relatively few, Western societies. They are not authoritative for all cultures. Foreign policies that presuppose an eventual global consensus on liberal values will be ineffectual. This is an incisive criticism of Fukuyama's neo-Wilsonian certainty that Western values are universal.<sup>44</sup> Whether the West's values are in principle universal or not, they certainly have no current universal assent, and over the long historical haul, foreign policies must recognize and accommodate this fact.

Since the publication of Huntington's book, Fukuyama has started to pay more attention to the fact that culture—religious beliefs, social habits, and longstanding traditions—is the last area of convergence, and also the weakest. It would be extremely naive to think that American popular culture, seductive as it is, will soon engulf the entire world. The spread of McDonald's and Hollywood around the world has provoked a considerable backlash against the very prospect of globalization.<sup>45</sup> However, Fukuyama maintains his view that with modernization, culture tends to be put in a box, separated from politics, and relegated to the realm of private life. The reason looks very simple to Fukuyama: "If politics is based on something like religion, there will never be any civil peace because people cannot agree on fundamental religious values.... The modern secular democratic state emerged out of the bloody religious conflict in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries in which different Christian groups slaughtered one another mercilessly."<sup>46</sup> His assumption seems to be that everyone the world over will reach this same rational conclusion.

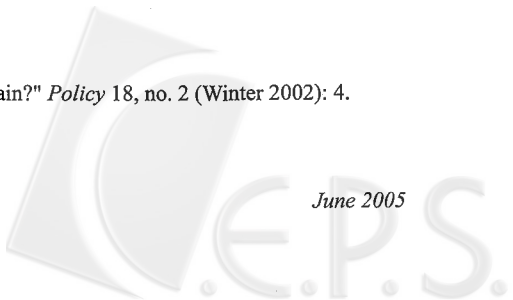
For Fukuyama, Islam is the one major world culture that arguably does have some very basic problems with modernity. However, the "struggle" between Western liberal democracy and Islamic integralism is not one between two equally viable cultural systems. Fukuyama is still optimistic about the prospect that Western institutions hold all the cards

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<sup>44</sup>Gray, "Global Utopias," 156.

<sup>45</sup>Francis Fukuyama, "Has History Started Again?" *Policy* 18, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 4.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.



and for that reason will continue to spread across the globe in the long run. To get to the long run, Fukuyama urges, "We must survive the short run." He demands "a determination to fight for the values that make modern democratic societies possible."<sup>47</sup> In this appeal to "fight for the values" upon which democratic societies depend, Fukuyama's view and Huntington's view converge even though their points of departure are radically different. On September 20, 2001, Fukuyama signed, together with William Kristol, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Richard Perle, Charles Krauthammer, and others, "An Open Letter to President George W. Bush from Members of Project for the New American Century (PNAC)." The letter urged Bush to "remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq," "even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the attack."<sup>48</sup> This was in contrast to Huntington who later opposed the Iraq War. However, more recently, Fukuyama has presented a Huntington-type critique of the neoconservative confidence that "the United States could transform Iraq into a Western-style democracy, and go on from there to democratize the broader Middle East."<sup>49</sup>

Huntington was right to deny the assumption that all people are at their core motivated by the same set of needs and desires. 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.<sup>50</sup> As pointed out earlier by Wallerstein: "The history of the world has been the very opposite of a trend towards cultural homogenization; it has rather been a trend towards cultural differentiation, or cultural elaboration, or cultural complexity."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>48</sup> Project for the New American Century, "Letter to President Bush on the War on Terrorism," September 20, 2001. <http://www.newamericancentury.org/Bushletter.htm>.

<sup>49</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "The Neoconservative Moment," *National Interest*, no. 76 (Summer 2004): 60.

<sup>50</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "If Not Civilizations, What?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 5 (November/December 1993): 192, 194.

<sup>51</sup> Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and Geoculture*, 189.

## Some Questions Unresolved in Huntington's Paradigm

Huntington's focus on cultural particularities was also criticized by Edward Said as "Orientalist"—that is, an approach emphasizing specifics of culture, history, and religion to the neglect of consideration of current strategic and politico-economic disparities.<sup>52</sup> Critics of Orientalism would fault so-called Orientalists for attempting to explain the weakness and vulnerability of the Islamic world relative to the West in terms of limitations of the Islamic world-view.<sup>53</sup> Huntington and his followers would best pay more attention to the fact that foreign policy dialogues may be more fruitful when one cultural group makes an effort to "speak the language" of another. In brief, civilizational differences need to be seen as an invitation for dialogue, not as an excuse for indifference or hostility.<sup>54</sup> Even though Huntington concluded his first article with the words that "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," he has not developed any convincing guidelines on how different civilizations might coexist, and his own suggestion that civilizations rely upon universal moral values contradicts the relativism that he otherwise assumes (as in the final chapter of *The Clash of Civilizations*).<sup>55</sup> However, Huntington seems to be exaggerating in arguing that "Babelization prevails over universalization."<sup>56</sup> Even though predictions of cultural homogenization were wrong, the centrifugal process has not at all, as Wallerstein notes, tended towards a Tower of Babel—pure cultural anarchy. There have surely been gravitational forces restraining the centrifugal tendencies and organizing them.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978).

<sup>53</sup>James G. Mellon, "Islam and International Politics: Examining Huntington's 'Civilizational Clash' Thesis," *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions* 2, no. 1 (Summer 2001): 75.

<sup>54</sup>Lebaron and Crocker, "Why the 'Foreign' Matters in Foreign Affairs," 59.

<sup>55</sup>Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" 49.

<sup>56</sup>Huntington, "If Not Civilizations, What?" 192, 194.

<sup>57</sup>Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and Geoculture*, 189.





David Fidler has rightly pointed out that Western civilization and its standards are "the offspring of cultural dissonance in the international system." They act like "gravitational forces" restraining the tendency of Babelization. According to Fidler, "One should note that neither the standard of civilization nor the standard of liberal, globalized civilization were inevitable in the course of human events." To believe otherwise would be to fall victim to what Philip Allott calls the "tyranny of the actual." Fidler argues that "Western states have implemented the reigning standard of civilization but only because they happened to gain hegemony in their relations with non-Western peoples. The fruit of that hegemony—civilizational harmonization on Western terms—has been eaten, and the world has been transformed in ways that cannot now be undone."<sup>58</sup>

Judging from the argument of Fidler, Huntington was right in stating that, contrary to some claims about the universal authority of current conceptions of human rights, no such consensus currently exists, nor should we expect one in the near future. However, Huntington's cure for the liberal illusion of universally accepted values can be even worse in its effects than the disease it aims to treat.<sup>59</sup> Huntington observes that "powerful societies are universalistic; weak societies are particularistic."<sup>60</sup> By contrast, the adoption of a universalistic approach makes an empire more powerful than does the adherence to a particularistic one because a universalistic one can be used to legitimize an expansionist policy. We would prefer to avoid that use of universal. Yet, the relativism, which tends to erect barriers between civilizations, also poses problems, considering that we are all swimming in the same waters, Westerners and Muslims and others alike. As noted by Said, the waters are part of the ocean of history, thus trying to plough or divide them with barriers is, ultimately, futile.<sup>61</sup>

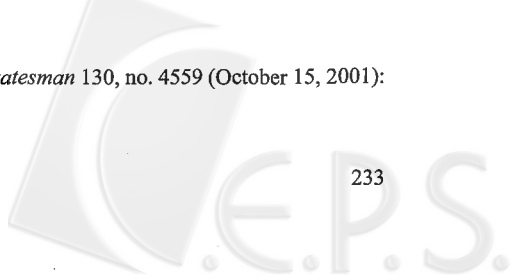
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<sup>58</sup>Fidler, "A Kinder, Gentler System of Capitulations?" 409, 412-13.

<sup>59</sup>Gray, "Global Utopias," 149-63.

<sup>60</sup>Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 109.

<sup>61</sup>Edward Said, "We All Swim Together," *New Statesman* 130, no. 4559 (October 15, 2001): 22.



After the publication of his article in 1993, Huntington was accused of overstating the influence of "civilizations," and understating that of states, as actors in world politics. In focusing on what he sees as "civilizational clash," Huntington emphasizes a particular subset of cultural differences in world politics, and the relations between "civilizations." However, Ajami has retorted: "Civilizations do not control states, states control civilizations. States avert their gaze from blood ties when they need to; they see brotherhood and faith and kin when it is in their interest to do so."<sup>62</sup> To this critique, Huntington answered that he had not ignored in his original article the importance of states. Actually, what Huntington argued in his 1993 article is that nation-states increasingly define their identity and their interests in civilizational terms.<sup>63</sup> The exact phrase in his original article was as follows: "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."<sup>64</sup>

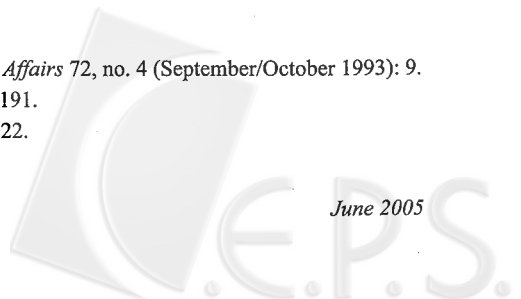
One of Huntington's main theses is that "states belonging to different civilizations are more likely to become involved in conflict with one another." To evaluate the empirical accuracy of this thesis, Henderson and Tucker examined the relationship between civilization membership and interstate war from 1816 to 1992. They found that "civilization membership was not significantly associated with the onset of interstate war during the Cold War era (1946-88)," which is consistent with one aspect of Huntington's thesis: ideology prevailed over civilization in the Cold War. However, Henderson and Tucker find also that "for the long period from Metternich's Concert of Europe to the onset of the Cold War (1816-1945), states of similar civilizations were more likely to fight each other than were those of different civilizations," which contradicts Huntington's main thesis. Most importantly, the analysis of Henderson and Tucker reveals that during the post-Cold War era (1989-92), the period in which Huntington contends that the clash of civilizations should be most ap-

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<sup>62</sup>Fouad Ajami, "The Summoning," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (September/October 1993): 9.

<sup>63</sup>Huntington, "If Not Civilizations, What?" 191.

<sup>64</sup>Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" 22.



parent, "civilization membership was not significantly associated with the probability of interstate war."<sup>65</sup>

Even if that correlation could be proven significant, Huntington neglected to provide a clear answer to one obvious question: "If other civilizations have been around for centuries, why are they posing a challenge only now?"<sup>66</sup> According to John Gray, "clashes of civilizations" have arisen from the conflicting interests and policies of states. Differing cultural traditions are indeed among the sources of international conflicts; however, they rarely lead to major conflicts between states. "It is their interactions with scarcities of resources, rival claims on territory, conflicting agendas on trade, and historic memories of ethnic or religious enmity that make cultural differences a source of war." Thus the Huntingtonian idea of international conflicts as clashes of civilizations involves, according to Gray, "a grand and potentially dangerous simplification of these complicated and often obscure interactions."<sup>67</sup> Some concrete "intra-civilizational" conflicts can be illustrated in the same vein with Gray's critique of Huntington. In the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, Iran threw in its lot with Christian Armenia, not with Islamic Azerbaijan. The kaleidoscope of shifting alliances in the Balkans tells a similar story. Furthermore, the genocide of Tutsis by Hutus occurred within what Huntington understands as a single civilization.<sup>68</sup>

In criticizing the universalist assumption that more interactions—greater communication and transportation—produce more common culture, Huntington argued that "wars occur most frequently between societies with high levels of interaction, and interaction frequently reinforces existing identities and produces resistance, reaction, and confrontation."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Errol A. Henderson and Richard Tucker, "Clear and Present Strangers: The Clash of Civilizations and International Conflict," *International Studies Quarterly* 45 (June 2001): 317-38.

<sup>66</sup>Kishore Mahbubani, "The Dangers of Decadence," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (September/October 1993): 14.

<sup>67</sup>Gray, "Global Utopias," 150-51.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, 156-57.

<sup>69</sup>Huntington, "If Not Civilizations, What?" 192.



Naturally, we can expect more interactions within a civilization than across civilizations. Thus, the thesis that wars occur between societies with high levels of interaction may be incompatible with the thesis that "the fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future."<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, cross-civilizational interactions can contribute more to prosperity than to conflict. According to Braudel's depiction of the traffic between Christendom and Islam across the Mediterranean in the sixteenth century: "Men passed to and fro, indifferent to frontiers, states, and creeds. They were more aware of the necessities for shipping and trade, the hazards of war and piracy, the opportunities for complicity or betrayal provided by circumstances."<sup>71</sup>

Let us look at East Asia as another test of the clash-of-civilizations thesis. Huntington used the term "Sinic" to describe "the common culture of China and the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia and elsewhere outside of China as well as the related cultures of Vietnam and Korea."<sup>72</sup> Huntington divides the world into about eight major civilizations divided by "fault lines."<sup>73</sup> His geopolitical metaphor implies that like the earth's tectonic plates, civilizations grind against each other over long periods, gradually increasing the intercivilizational pressures that periodically break into appallingly destructive, fault-line wars.

If we look at Huntington's world-of-civilizations map, Korea is currently just a part of Sinic civilization.<sup>74</sup> However, in both South (ROK) and North Korea (DPRK), many Koreans do not consider themselves to

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<sup>70</sup>Huntington, "If Not Civilizations, What?" 189; and Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" 22.

<sup>71</sup>Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 759; and Ajami, "The Summoning," 6.

<sup>72</sup>Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 45.

<sup>73</sup>Initially, he identifies nine: Western, Latin American, African, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist, and Japanese. See Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 26. Later, however, he doubts that Buddhism has served as the basis of a major civilization, and he hedges on distinguishing Latin American civilization from Western civilization. Thus, he reduces his initial nine to probably eight but possibly only seven. On fault lines, see Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 207-9 and chapters 10 and 11.

<sup>74</sup>Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 27. We say "currently" because the orthodox fault line is historically recent and has had little influence on Korean culture.



be a part of Sinic civilization, and understandably so since this is merely a polite euphemism for Chinese. Within the Chinese intellectual community, by contrast, there is some tendency toward considering Northeast Asia as a part of China.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, there is a possibility that Huntington's simplification of the whole of East Asia (excluding Japan) as "Sinic" might be ignoring the history of East Asia and evidence of strong resistance against a Sino-centric world order.

Huntington seems to have drawn arbitrary civilizational fault lines regarding East Asian civilization. His logic in recognizing Japan as a *distinct* civilization raises many questions, especially when we consider how the concept of "civilization" was used by Japanese imperialists in their launching of the "War of Greater East Asia" in recent history. Whether or not one follows Huntington in specifying Japan as a civilization radically distinct from the other sub-groups of Asian civilization, one can surely consider the possibility that there exists a geocultural area that could be called "Maritime East Asia" or "Oceanic East Asia." This group owes a great deal to Sinic civilization but has developed a unique if complex culture upon its religiously pluralistic background, having interwoven Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, and local traditional religious systems. Upon this common geographic background, an anti-hegemonic attitude has been engendered, at first against China and later against the Western powers and pseudo-Western Japan. Various countries in this region have long wanted a counterweight to a hegemonic regional order.

When Huntington said Toynbee listed twenty-one major civilizations, he probably meant the first chart published in the seventh volume of *A Study of History*. Here, however, it needs to be remembered that Toynbee merely distinguished "full-blown civilizations" from "abortive civilizations" and "arrested civilizations."<sup>76</sup> Regrettably, Huntington even failed

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<sup>75</sup>One Korean Sinologue also notes this tendency among Chinese intellectuals. See Young-Seo Baik, "Conceptualizing 'Asia' in Modern Chinese Mind: A Korean Perspective," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 3, no. 2 (August 2002): 277-86.

<sup>76</sup>Arnold Joseph Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1951 [1934]); Arnold Joseph Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 7 (London: Oxford

to mention the fact that Toynbee was later to revise his list. Before this revision of Toynbee, Philip Bagby insisted on the existence of peripheral or secondary civilizations and further shed as much light on Korean civilization as on Japanese civilization.<sup>77</sup> It is also to be considered that many parts of China have reintegrated into a modernizing "Maritime East Asia" or "Oceanic East Asia," aggravating the internal schism within mainland China. Ethnic and economic ties link wealthy Cantonese (廣東人), Shanghainese (上海人), and Fujianese (福建人) more closely with Taiwanese than with their political compatriots in Xinjiang (新疆), for instance. According to Dru Gladney, the self-awareness rising among the Cantonese parallels that of the Hakka (客家人), the southern Fujianese Min (閩南人), the Swatow (汕頭人), and many other southern peoples currently enjoying economic success but still bitter about age-old dominance by the North. These groups traditionally consider themselves not as Han (漢人) but as descendants of the Tang Dynasty (唐朝, 618-907).<sup>78</sup> Karl A. Wittfogel notes that this cultural division stems from ancient China, when the semi-arid North and the rice-growing South were already experiencing significant patterns of conflict. Although the Yangtze (長江) states developed early, perhaps under the influence of Southeast Asian rice culture, it was the semi-arid North that came to dominate as the long-term center of power.<sup>79</sup>

Initially, in his *Foreign Affairs* article, Huntington used "Confucian," rather than "Sinic," a label that many Koreans would undoubtedly prefer and probably even accept as largely accurate in identifying their civilizational heritage. Although considerably diluted, Confucian values continue

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University Press, 1954); and Arnold Joseph Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 1 (New York: Dell, 1965), 635-47.

<sup>77</sup> Philip Bagby, *Culture and History: Prolegomena to the Comparative Study of Civilizations* (London: Longmans, Green, 1958), 169-71. For this point, I owe much to Kim Yongkoo, "Ambiguity in 'The Clash of Civilizations'? A Korean View," *Korea Focus* 2, no. 1 (January-February 1994): 63.

<sup>78</sup> Dru C. Gladney, "China's Ethnic Divisions are Showing Up and Could Cause Trouble," *International Herald Tribune*, February 22, 1995, 4. For his more recent analysis, see "China's National Insecurity: Old Challenges at the Dawn of the New Millennium," <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/pacific2000/gladneypaper.htm>.

<sup>79</sup> Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 19-20.

to guide Korean behavior today. Thus, one might agree that Korea belongs to Confucian civilization. Such is also the view of a Russian scholar, who notes "Korea's indisputable belonging to Confucian cultural area" and cites a nineteenth-century Russian view that Korea "has made a radical reorganization of the government system and national life according to Chinese ... native establishments and customs" and is a "reduced copy from China." This would appear to identify Korea as Confucian and Sinic, thereby fitting either of Huntington's labels.<sup>80</sup>

However, much as the West has hardly been uniformly "Christian" since the Enlightenment, East Asia was never a solely Confucian society. Since antiquity, East Asia has been a much more complex cultural entity with various religions and ideologies. In particular, Buddhism has established a greater universality than is apparent in Huntington's map, by extending itself well into Huntington's Sinic or Confucian zone, including in Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam.<sup>81</sup>

Clearly, this logic of equating a large part of East Asia and the East Asian people with Confucianism itself has raised many questions. Even if we provisionally accept Huntington's "Confucian civilization," we should note the work of the American Sinologist Lionel M. Jensen, whose seminal work presents a different vision of intercivilizational relations.<sup>82</sup> Jensen investigates the interactions of Jesuit missionaries and Chinese in the late sixteenth century. In Jensen's view, "Confucius is a product fashioned over several centuries by many hands, ecclesiastical and lay, Western and

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<sup>80</sup>Alexander Zhebin, "The DPRK: Traditions and Modernity" (Presented at the First World Congress of Korean Studies, July 17-21, 2002 in the Academy of Korean Studies, South Korea).

<sup>81</sup>Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 26-27; and Wm. Theodore de Barry, *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China, and Japan* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), vii-viii.

<sup>82</sup>Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilizations* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997). For an earlier work on intercivilizational relations between China and Europe, see Raymond Dawson, *The Chinese Chameleon: An Analysis of European Conceptions of Chinese Civilization* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), which also contains an appendix presenting extracts from important authors who observed and wrote about China, from Marco Polo to the late twentieth century. See also Arthur F. Wright, ed., *Confucianism and Chinese Civilization* (New York: Atheneum, 1965).

Chinese."<sup>83</sup> If Confucianism is a joint construction of the West and China as Jensen suggested, Huntington's presentation of Confucian and Western civilizations as incommensurable is fundamentally flawed. Even if it were to be demonstrated that Jensen goes too far in arguing that Confucianism is a "joint invention," he does successfully show the extent to which Western and Confucian civilizations have entered into one another and thus that borders can be porous rather than bloody. Indeed, Jensen shows the irreducible ambiguity lying at the very heart of a civilization, which implies that civilizational identity always, in principle, opens itself to the possibility of reinterpretation.

This does not mean that Huntington is wrong to analyze international politics in terms of civilizations, nor does it mean that all civilizations are equally ambiguous at their core nor that they all have comparably porous borders, but Jensen's thesis does qualify Huntington's views on general civilizational incommensurability and the consequent tendency toward conflict. Confucian borders, for example, might not be so bloody as Islam's.<sup>84</sup> Or perhaps it suggests that Huntington's more hopeful appeal to "seek commonalities" between civilizations might find a basis in the "thick" maximalist morality of cultures, not just in the "thin" minimalist morality of an abstracted ethics.<sup>85</sup> If so, then Huntington's call for "peoples in all civilizations ... to expand the values, institutions, and practices that they have in common" should be interpreted as exhorting us to a hermeneutics of construction aimed at "limiting the clash of civilizations" and

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<sup>83</sup>Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 5.

<sup>84</sup>Huntington seems undecided about the militant tendency of Sinic/Confucian civilization. Although he sometimes expects an "Islamic-Confucian Connection," he also doubts its viability. See Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 185. Fukuyama suggests a fundamental difference: "Asian religions and ethical systems are remarkably tolerant in a way that monotheistic traditions like ... Islam historically have not been. Confucianism ... is a highly rational ethical system and does not have the obscurantist tendencies of, say, orthodox Shiism." If Fukuyama is correct, then we should not expect Confucianism's borders to be so bloody as Islam's. See Francis Fukuyama, "Asian Values and Civilization," Institute for Corean-American Studies Lecture, ICAS Fall Symposium, Asia's Challenges Ahead, University of Pennsylvania (September 29, 1998).

<sup>85</sup>Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 318; and Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 6.



strengthening "civilization in the singular."<sup>86</sup> Of course, even if our aim is true, we will sometimes find it thwarted by intransigent facts.

### **Conclusion**

Huntington's book of 1996 often reads as if it had been written after September 11, 2001. Nonetheless, Huntington's civilizational paradigm seems to have more foes than friends, especially among non-Western intellectuals. There is some irony to this critique given that Huntington rejects Western superiority, argues for cultural relativism, and adopts a nearly postmodernist perspective in his skepticism about progress toward a fully "rational" society.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, Huntington reminded fellow students of international studies that history, culture, and religion do matter in international relations. Contrary to Fukuyama's end-of-history thesis, Huntington argues that the defeat of Communism in the Cold War will lead not to the worldwide triumph of liberal democracy but to renewed civilizational conflict. These contributions made by Huntington's civilizational paradigm should be highly reappraised.

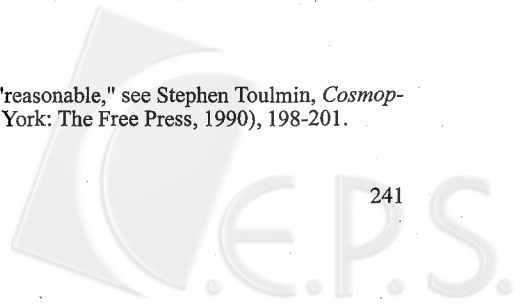
At the same time, however, we have some reservations about the relevance of Huntington's civilizational paradigm regarding East Asia. First, Huntington's logic in equating East Asia and the East Asian people with Confucianism itself raised many questions. Inasmuch as we cannot confine Western civilization to the category "Christian civilization," it is misleading to use the expression "Confucian society" or "Confucian civilization" for the entirety of East Asia.

Second, Huntington seems to have drawn arbitrary civilizational fault lines regarding East Asian civilization. According to Huntington's world-of-civilizations map in his 1996 book, Korea is a part of Sinic civilization. In both North and South Korea many Koreans consider Korea to be distinct

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 320.

<sup>87</sup> About the difference between "rational" and "reasonable," see Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 198-201.



from Sinic civilization even though they recognize its strong influence. Huntington's simplification of all East Asia as "Sinic" overlooks the strong resistance against a hegemonic dominance in maritime East Asia among such political entities as Taiwan, Okinawa, Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, and others. Furthermore, Huntington's logic in recognizing Japan as *a civilization* raises both questions *and* eyebrows, given its imperial aims during the "War of Greater East Asia." Instead of following Huntington's categorization of civilizations, subdividing Japanese civilization from the other sub-groups of Asian civilization, we suggest that there exists a geo-cultural area that could be called "Maritime East Asia" or "Oceanic East Asia" that is subject to both continental and maritime influence. This area owes a great deal to Sinic civilization but has developed a unique culture based upon its complex religious background of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, and local, traditional religious systems. Against this common background, an anti-hegemonic attitude has developed. Various countries in this region have long desired a counterweight to a Sino-centric world and Western imperialism.

This reappraisal of the Huntingtonian paradigm does not mean that Huntington is wholly wrong to apply civilizational theory in the analysis of international relations. Possibly, Confucian borders are just not as bloody as Islam's. Or perhaps Huntington's hopeful appeal to "commonalities" between civilizations might find a basis in "thick" maximalist morality, not just in "thin" minimalist morality. If so, then Huntington's call for "peoples in all civilizations ... to expand the values, institutions, and practices that they have in common" can lead us to a hermeneutics "limiting the clash of civilizations." His more recent book focusing just on American identity, however, tends to cast some doubt about the possibility of a "thick" maximalist morality.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004). This book confirms the main argument of this reappraisal of his clash-of-civilizations thesis. We can see more clearly than ever that Huntington differs from the neoconservatives. In terms of liberal vs. neoconservative vs. national views on foreign policy, he takes the third, which also fits with his views on civilizations. The problem with the former two, from Huntington's perspective, is that they ignore the

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the United States, as the repository of many of the greatest assets and achievements of human civilization, might well be urged to assume a "civilizationally correct burden." A reasonableness beyond the rationality of a Newtonian cosmopolis, to borrow the language of Stephen Toulmin, has perhaps not yet been sought by this leading country.<sup>89</sup> Huntington's civilizational relativism should not be used by the West's most powerful nation to duck its responsibility. One might call this responsibility a positive variant of Kipling's "white man's burden." One can perhaps acknowledge the equal status of different civilizational standards, in principle, but a dominant standard of civilization has already grown out of the clashes between civilizations historically generated by the expansion of a Europeanized international community. By virtue of its wealth, power, and status, the United States has a crucial international role to play. Sometimes, as in the Balkans, the United States may have to act with force to prevent genocide. Elsewhere, its wiser course as a hyperpower may be to work through the United Nations. Sometimes, Washington might need to work directly with other important nations in coalitions of the willing. Huntington's views, however, could serve to justify a revival of America's so-called 'isolationism,' a "fortress America," when what is direly needed is an America engaged with the world, and willing to listen to its allies, its friends, its more distant interlocutors, and even its enemies.<sup>90</sup> In the case of Northeast Asia, this is particularly the case.

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radically different civilizational values that prevent, for example, the grafting of democratic values onto Arabic countries. This is more evidence that Huntington was misunderstood by people like Said. Huntington is clearly not in favor of a clash of civilizations, though he is pessimistic about the likelihood of avoiding one.

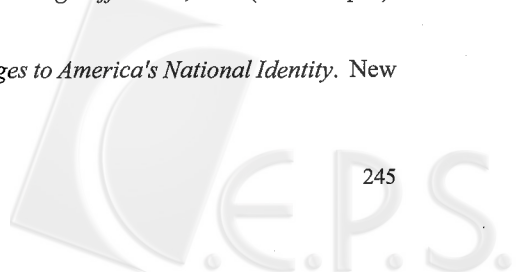
<sup>89</sup>See note 87 above.

<sup>90</sup>A better expression than "isolationism" might be "disengaged unilateralism." See McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, 39-56, for doubts that there ever was an American "isolationism" and a proposal of "unilateralism" as the proper label.

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