

*Muhammad Ruhul Amin*

## A WORLD BEYOND CLASH?

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### Abstract

One of the much talked about issues in International Relations today is the clash of civilizations and the most challenging task ahead is to construct a world beyond clash. Two prominent theses – ‘the clash of civilizations’ and ‘the end of history’- have been popular to understand the issue. This paper holds a counter approach of these arguments. It studies future world from a different dimension and attempts to have a second look to above views. Huntington views that the post Cold War world is likely to clash on cultural and religious fault lines. Fukuyama, on the other hand, argues that History is over with the demise of communism and the preeminence of liberalism has been established with the triumphant victory of capitalism in its war with communism. This write-up does not agree with ‘the end of history’ thesis nor does it believe in the inevitability of ‘the clash of civilizations’. The author concludes that the likelihood of conflicts between different civilizations should not be blown out and the avoidance of such clash largely depends on understanding each other in this era of globalization. If the world leaders continue their efforts with sincerity in vision and integrity in mission, it is not impossible to construct a world without clash.

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## 1. Introduction and Hypothesis

One of the much talked about issues in International Relations today is the clash of civilizations and the most challenging task ahead is to construct a world beyond clash. A threadbare debate has been going on in the dictionary of international politics with regard to the issue. At least four analyses may be found in order to understand people, cultures, civilizations and their mutual relationships, to comprehend the inner dynamics of intercivilizational issues, to examine the correlations between clash and civilization, and to explain the pattern of the world conflicts.

One important view is that the end of the Cold War put an end to the world conflicts and the entire humankind was likely to embrace the ideals of liberal democracy as the ultimate solution of their socio-economic and politico-security issues.<sup>1</sup> A quite reverse position maintained by the second group holds the most debatable standpoint among these views is that the clash between competing civilizations is a must and the present century is the flashpoint of the drastic clash between and among different civilizations on the cultural and religious fault lines<sup>2</sup>. The third argument is related to the conventional wisdom that raised the issues of the fall of the United States and lamented an America in decline<sup>3</sup> and thereby the debacle of liberal ideals. The fourth one is the ‘rebirth of history’ thesis.

There may be some truth in these claims. However, this author challenges all these views and raises the fifth argument which constitutes the basis of the hypothesis of the present work. Despite massive moral degeneration, the US scaled the heights of unprecedented political and economic strengths, which refuse the argument of American decline. Again the preeminence of politico - security perspective of US does not indicate the triumph of liberal ideals that has put a permanent end to history. This author assumes that clash between competing ideologies and civilizations is a very

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1 Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” *The National Interest*, 1989.

2 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

3 Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World’s Only Superpower Can’t Go It Alone*, Oxford University Press, 2002.

usual process of history, which can be avoided by the farsightedness of world leaders. Thus this write-up does not agree on ‘the end of history’ thesis nor does it believe in the inevitability of the civilizational clash. It attempts to answer two principal questions that are central to the debate: is clash of civilizations inevitable? Can we avoid such clash? This author concludes that the mansion of human civilization is built on the bricks of beauties extracted from different cultures and civilizations and that the war, conflicts and rivalries are the handmaiden of the political leaders and need to be understood from the broader leadership perspective. Thus the bearers of a certain culture tend to clash, not the culture itself.

### 1.1. Scope and Organization of the Study

After the collapse of Communism and disintegration of the USSR, scholars have been talking about the features, patterns and characteristics of the emerging world. Two prominent views-‘the end of history’ and ‘the clash of civilizations’ stirred up debate among the academics, policy makers as well as laymen. Against this background, certain issues seem to remain unresolved. Are we moving to a more dreadful world than during the Cold War or any other time in human history? Why nations clash? Is it civilizational difference or what else that leads to world clash? What are the root causes of misunderstanding that instigates the clash of the world? What are the determinants of the clash between different civilizations? Will the future conflicts be based on the differences among the cultures, religions and civilizations? Is clash inevitable and if so how to avoid it? Can we imagine a world without clashes? The present discussion aims to respond to these questions.

The paper comprises of five sections. The first section introduces the views regarding the world clash and the researcher’s hypothesis, research questions and analytical road map. The second section highlights the contrasting views of the scholars and their arguments. Section three describes briefly the ‘clash of civilizations’ thesis propounded by Huntington. The fourth section is the core of this paper in which an attempt is made to examine whether a ‘World Beyond Clash’ can be created. Finally, the article closes with some recommendations necessary for remarking of a world beyond clash.

## 2. The Contrasting Views

The argument that has stimulated the strategic and security analysts as well as policy makers in particular and other people in general is related to the belief that the post Cold War world is likely to clash on cultural and religious fault lines and that the most drastic civilizational conflicts and fault line wars will occur between the Islamic and non-Islamic Western countries and their people.<sup>4</sup> Samuel P. Huntington is the main protagonist of this argument, which will be dealt with in detail in the following section. However, Huntington’s work is opposed to Fukuyama’s intellectual position of post history concept.

Francis Fukuyama is the pioneer of the ‘end of history’ thesis. His well-known article entitled “The End of History?” published in 1989 in the journal *The National Interest*, and his famous book entitled “*The End of History and the Last Man*” which is an expansion on his original themes, had sparked off an explosive debate about the future of the world in the post-Cold War era. He views that History, with its capital letter, is over with the demise of communism and disintegration of the USSR. He contends that the supremacy and preeminence of liberalism and markets has been established with the triumphant victory of capitalism in its war with communism and thus the present world seems to be dominated by the only omnipotent superpower– the United States.<sup>5</sup> Two metaphorical terms –“the first man” and “the last man” used by Fukuyama, symbolize the inauguration of the universality of liberalism, hence the first man, and the salvation of mankind in the universal acceptance of liberal doctrines, hence the last man.

Fukuyama’s thesis has been debated worldwide. No doubt, his book, “in the mastery and scope of its case, may be seen as the first contribution in the post-Marxist millennium-the first work fully to fathom the depth and range of the changes now sweeping through the world”.<sup>6</sup> Some viewed that “with clarity and an astonishing sweep of

<sup>4</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*, Summer, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, London: Penguin Books, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> George Gilder, “The Washington Post”, quoted in Samuel P. Huntington,

reflection and imagination...he tells us where we were, where we are, and most important, speculates about where we likely be".<sup>7</sup>

Despite these appreciations, Fukuyama's critics came up with lots of counterpoints. First, some of them hold the opinion that although on the surface, his argument may seem to be true in view of America's seemingly 'unsurpassed global military, economic, and cultural power';<sup>8</sup> however, in reality, the insurmountability of the American power is not without question. Second, the rising tendency of a multipolar world comprising a number of power centers, ethno-nationalist forces, countervailing political ideologies and competing socio-economic principles are sure to pose serious challenge to the unilateral US domination. Third, the idea of the universality of western civilization, which predicts that the non-western world would grasp the universal liberal values, is neither profound nor relevant, because, the critics in this line argue, the triumph of 'civilization in the singular' would lead to the end of 'the plurality of historic cultures' embodied for centuries in the world's great civilizations.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the tendency to reject the western ideals in different regions of the world is increasing day by day, which proves the myth of the universality of Westernization. Fourth, some critics state that like an updated de Tocqueville, Fukuyama is both fascinated and appalled by the extension of democratic egalitarianism...his writing is an expression of the sentiment of a great liberal cause...he has tried to rescue optimism by linking it with an elegiac nostalgia for aristocratic society...but there are also less narcissistic ways of expressing optimism, and they include being just relatively proud of where History has got Americans, rather than completely convinced that they are right.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, Fukuyama tried to trace the origin of liberalism and said: "Contemporary liberal democracies did not emerge out of the shadowy

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*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, op.cit. , backflap.*

<sup>7</sup> Allan Bloom, quoted in Samuel P. Huntington, *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., *op.cit.* p.ix.

<sup>9</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *op.cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Harold James, "The Times", in Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man, op.cit. p.* Front flap.

mists of tradition. Like communist societies, they were deliberately created by human beings at a definite point in time, on the basis of a certain theoretical understanding of man and of the appropriate political institutions...the principles underlying American democracy, codified in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, were based on the writings of Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, and the other American Founding fathers, who in turn derived many of their ideas from the English liberal tradition of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke".<sup>11</sup> However, a bunch of the literature on Political Science suggests that there is no founding father of liberalism.<sup>12</sup> They argue that the virtues, and the moral and ethical values flourished at all times in history cemented the concept of liberalism and liberal political thinking. They further their argument that although the germination of liberal ideals owes much to the contribution of Hobbes and Locke, the actual flowering of the concept is beyond that, and the scriptures and treatises of the earlier philosophers graced the contribution to the growth and development of this particular theory. Liberalism is thus of no particular community or society, nor is it West's as it is claimed. Liberalism provides a set of shared values and theories that is commonly possessed by the international community including all regions, all groups and all religions.

Fukuyama's argument is also challenged by the third extreme- the conventional wisdom, which raises the issue of declining American power. A number of boldly provocative and straight-talking analyses have been made on the topic. In his *Blowback*, Chalmers Johnson made a wake-up call for America. He argues that the halcyon days of American ascendancy cannot last long and that America's militarism, imperial pretensions, and the only super power complex are likely to bring her an inevitable crisis.<sup>13</sup> Best-seller lists during the late 1980s featured books that described the fall of America. The cover of a popular magazine depicted the Statue of Liberty with tear running down her cheek. Japan was eating Americans' lunch and would soon replace them as number one.<sup>14</sup> In his straightforward analysis in *The*

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<sup>11</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man, ibid.* p. 153.

<sup>12</sup> John Leiber, *Liberalism*, Oxford, 1985.

<sup>13</sup> Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., *op.cit.* p.xi.

*End of the American Era*, Kupchan explained the decline and downfall of America. He maintains that in the era of sophisticated and digital technologies, the false promises of democracy and globalization will serve as major backlash for America. Strongly refuting Fukuyama's proposition, he coined the term-"the rebirth of history" and marked that Fukuyama mistakes the end of history itself for what is only the end of a particular cycle of history...he therefore sees the onset of liberal democracy as marking a stable and peaceful end point rather than a historical phase...<sup>15</sup>

### 3. The 'Clash of Civilizations' Thesis

It is well known that Samuel P. Huntington expounded 'the clash of civilizations' thesis, but some scholars consider it as a contemporary elaboration of the American naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan's work in 1897. However, Huntington's initial idea was exposed in his famous article entitled "The Clash of Civilizations?" that was published in the journal *Foreign Affairs* in its summer 1993 issue. He argued, "the central and most dangerous dimension of the emerging global politics would be conflict between groups from different civilizations".<sup>16</sup> The article was, according to the journal's editor, debated much more than any other article published in *Foreign Affairs* since the 1940s. As the response to the readers' queries and answer to the question mark in the article title, his book "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" was written which is considered as a great contribution to understand the dynamics of civilizations and their implications for the study of intra and international conflicts, world politics and global security in the realm of international relations.

#### 3.1. Tour of the Book

Huntington raised a wide range of issues with regard to civilizational clash. He discussed the origin, growth and history of

<sup>15</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, *The End of the American Era*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, op.cit, p. 13.

civilizations, and explained the inner reason of conflicts among people of different civilizations. According to him, the most powerful determinant of civilization is religion and despite shared ethnicity or language, the difference of religion involves people in conflicts. Thus the source of clash, as he envisaged, emanates from religion.

After the end of the Cold War, the world hurtles into a new era of flags and cultural identity when religious symbols like cross, crescent, hizab occupy predominant position in world politics in the changed dimension. He tells us about *la revanche de Dieu*- the resurgence of non-western cultures in the context of the shifting balance of civilizations and the decline of the West. Today's 'second generation indigenization' phenomenon, which has been followed by the 'first generation indigenization' process initiated by people like Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Harry Lee, Solomon Bandaranaike etc. gives birth to cultural and religious resurgence creating challenger civilizations. This revival along with East Asia's economic growth and Muslim world's population rise poses threats to the universalization efforts of westernization. The continuous rejectionist attitudes in the non-West prove the myth of the universality of westernization.

Huntington maintains that any effort towards shift of identity must succumb to failure unless it fulfills three requirements- cultural commonalities, general acquiescence and the favour of political, economic and intellectual elites. Owing to the partial or full unavailability of these elements, the target countries instead of being westernized remained devastated and torn. The reawakening of identity in these torn countries provides the cultural reconfiguration of global politics. He foresees an emerging order of civilizations comprising eight major religions that revolve around core states and concentric circles. Major religions include Western Christianity, Orthodoxy, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism, Taoism and Judaism. China is a core state in East Asia, France and Germany are the European core while United States is the core of the Euro-American states. According to him, Islam attracted overwhelming consciousness but lacks cohesion and core state.

The clash of civilizations thesis suggests that intercivilizational issues originating from religious values will construct the base of fault line wars. Fault line conflicts at the micro-level will occur involving

core states and concentric circles. The picture of fault line wars at macro level that has been drawn by Huntington is more dangerous. He considers Islam-Confucian connection as a formidable challenge to the West and regards Islam as the fiercest enemy of the West. He introduces Islam's bloody borders and predicts that the most dangerous fault line wars will occur between Islam and the West. He identified war, violence, terrorism, militarism, indigestibility and extremism as the paramount features of Islam. To quote him: "...Islam has from the start been a religion of the sword ...it glorifies military virtues. Islam originated among warring Bedouin nomadic tribes and this violent origin is stamped in the foundation of Islam. Muhammad himself is remembered as a hard fighter and a skillful military commander...no one would say this about Christ or Buddha...The doctrines of Islam dictate war against unbelievers, ...The Koran and other statements of muslim beliefs contain few prohibitions on violence, and a concept of non-violence is absent from muslim doctrine and practice...muslim countries have problems with non-muslim minorities comparable to those which non-muslim countries have with muslim minorities...Confucians, Buddhists, Hindus, Western Christians, and Orthodox Christians have less difficulty adapting to and living with each other than any of them has in adapting to and living with muslims..."<sup>17</sup>

The rise of East Asia fueled by phenomenal economic growth and the resurgence of Islam fueled by spectacular population growth along with Asian values stemming from the shared commonalities of Asian religions contributed to Asian assertiveness and Asian awakening. Some powerful Asian countries are promoting the Asianization of Asia or re-Asianization. Huntington found the Asian challenge manifested in all Asian civilizations- Sinic, Japanese, Buddhist and Muslim and the sustained antagonistic relations between the Asian and Western civilizations are responsible for any fault line wars in the future world.

In the concluding chapter, he focused on the future of civilizations and suggested various things to avoid future clash. He pointed out that the West entered a 'golden age' of prosperity, industrialization, modernization, arts, science and unhindered leadership through its

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, P. 263-264

three phases: first, European phase; second, American phase; and third, Euroamerican phase. But political disunity, cultural suicide and moral degeneration including family decay, increased divorce, teenage pregnancy, single parent families also lead to its decline. Moreover, the multiculturalists' denial of a common American culture, American identity and central element of American creed produces a serious blow to the West. In order for survival of the western superiority, he recommends that the West strengthen NATO and EU, form alignment with Latin America, minimize gap with Japan, try accommodation with China, maintain western technological and military preeminence, and finally prevent the military power of Islamic and Sinic countries.

Although he did not claim inevitability of a civilizational war, he emphasized the likelihood of the occurrence of such wars.<sup>18</sup> In order to prevent the global conflicts, he emphasized the leadership role of core states. To quote the author: "Halting fault line wars and preventing their escalation into global wars depend primarily on the interests and actions of the core states of the world's major civilizations. Fault line wars bubble up from the below, fault line peaces trickle down from the above."<sup>19</sup> To that end, he put forward some important rules: (1) abstention rule that core states refrain from involving in civilizational conflicts; (2) joint mediation rule that core states negotiate with each other to prevent fault line wars; (3) commonalities rule that people of all civilizations share their common values and interests.

One important idea is related to the reorganizing the UN system, especially restructuring its Security Council. All major civilizations need to possess the Council membership with consolidating the British and French seats into a single EU seat. He recognizes the vacuousness of western universalism and the reality of global cultural diversity, and sets the importance of a new international system to be built on understanding and cooperation as the sustained strategy for conflict management. He writes: "In the emerging era, clashes of civilizations are the greatest threat to world peace, and an international order based on civilizations is the surest safeguard against world war."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, P.302

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 298

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 321

#### 4. Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Interests?

Clearly Huntington's analysis is an antithesis of the view that the end of Communism and Fascism is the end of history. Liberalism did not triumph, nor did it retain universal application despite its appeal among people of many parts of today's world. Both his book and journal article are well structured, cogently argued; amazing are their exquisite literary beauty and lucid language. The articulate description, logical sequence, coherent ideas and above all the persuasive approach helped him make such a splendid contribution. His writings are milestone in understanding the impact and implications of culture and civilizations for political discourse. By incorporating the elements of civilizations into the vocabulary of international relations, he filled in the vacuum. His recommendations with regard to the revised United Nations, a new global order, three rules for managing the multicultural and multicivilizational world are relevant for this day's international system.

Despite many strong points that constitute Huntington's hypothesis, some major missing links might be found in his argument. The following section attempts to highlight on that.

##### 4.1. Asian Rise: Boon or Bane?

Huntington's proposition regarding the declining West and rising Asia is understandable, but his consideration of East Asia's economic growth and Islamic resurgence as the challenger civilizations causing threat to world peace does not seem to be valid. The economic efficiency of Asia as well as Muslim awakening are likely to provide more efficient, potential and resourceful actors in international relations. The newly emerged Asia with economic solvency and the rising Muslims with the distinct awareness of self-help, self-reliance and identity may bring stability that will better participate in world life. A poor Asia along with rudderless Muslims may be engulfed in frustration contributing to instability, chaos and conflicts.

##### 4.2. Islam-Confucian Connection and Japan-China Alliance: Imaginary Threat?

If the clash of civilizations thesis is true, clash between Islam and Confucianism is a must and thus the Islam-Confucian connection is a

distant dream or remote possibility. Predicting such togetherness and considering it as the threat to world peace seems to be self-contradictory or at best a homemade cake made by the stepmother. Moreover, the discourse of Japan-China relations does not indicate any bright prospects for a Japan-China alliance. For example, Japan sent troops to join the combined force in Iraq to comply with the US foreign policy goals quite in opposition to China's role.

The pattern of bilateral relations between China and Japan needs to be considered to have a better understanding of any possibility of China-Japan alliance. The region's peace and security largely depends on how these two regional great powers interact with each other and how they maintain relations with outside powers especially with the US.

Some scholars compared the importance of Sino-Japanese relations in guiding Asian affairs to that of Franco-German relations in determining European relations.<sup>21</sup> The historical and cultural rivalry and mutual distrust that have for long dominated Sino-Japanese relations added an 'emotionalism' in forming bilateral relationship between Japan and China. The emotionalism very often refrains them from rational calculation of economic and political interests in their foreign policy contributing to political tensions and strained relationship. Thus their extensive economic cooperation that began in the 1980s was further complicated in the 1990s with China's resumption of a slight trade surplus.<sup>22</sup> However the future of Sino-Japanese relationship is likely to be governed by multifaceted politico-security and strategic tensions, their regional ambitions, revised Japan-US security guidelines, Japan's emerging "reAsianization" and Japan's relations with Taiwan. The emerging Japan-Taiwan relations that seem to move from economic focus to extended politico-security dimensions is very important to understand the regional security. Their previous relationship, which used to be characterized by the covert low-level contacts has turned to the overt higher-level engagement,

<sup>21</sup> Deng, Yong, "Chinese Relations with Japan: Implications for Asia Pacific Regionalism", *Pacific Affairs*, Fall 1997.

<sup>22</sup> Takagi, Seiichiro, "In Search of a Sustainable Equal Relationship: Japan-China relations in the Post-Cold War Era", *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Spring 1999, 17-37.

and created a source of heightened tension between China and Japan. Such developments in Japan-Taiwan relations may lead both China and Japan to engage in disputes.

#### 4.3. Cry Dooms Day: Tickling Sleeping Tiger?

Huntington identified civilizational clash as a historical reality, but he totally ignored the brilliant contribution of civilizations. The theme of almost all religions- the basis of civilizations nurtures values that are universal. Justice, freedom, human rights are the core of all cultures that constitute world civilizations. In chapter two of his "Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation?", Saikel tells us about the shared values of civilizations with particular reference to Islam-Christian relationship. He mentions that the history of Islam-Christianity has been peaceful until the inauguration of Crusade and imperialism.<sup>23</sup> Since crusade, the misunderstanding started to grow between them and the wrong handling of the situation by the world leaders further intensified their tense relations. Once efforts are made to minimize the gap between them by adopting possible measures and universally acceptable world order as Huntington suggests too, the prospect for adjustment is not bleak. Huntington's- cry 'dooms day' 'dooms day'- by overestimating religious conflicts and fault line wars, will likely to stimulate the sleeping tigers to wake up and eat out the opponents.

#### 4.4. Islam: The Clashing Sword?

Huntington's judgment about Islam and muslims is highly misleading. The scholars might feel uncomfortable with his misperception and misrepresentation of basic principles of Islam regarding war, violence and peace. His long reference list does not indicate that he had the access to the authentic sources and literatures on the topic of Islam including the holy Quran, holy Hadith or other authentic books on Islam. His knowledge about Islam is distorted and contrary to what Islam holds.

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<sup>23</sup> Amin Saikal, *Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation?*, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2003

Islam flourished by virtue of its beauties and glories, not with sword as Huntington claimed. It is a complete code of life, a guideline, a set of rules and laws directing all aspects of worldly life and hereafter. The term 'Islam' is derived from the word 'Silm' which implies peace, non-violence and security. Islam transformed a poor Bedouin war loving community into a prosperous and peace-loving nation and established a very strong state. The state of Medinah established by Muhammad (peace be upon him), the prophet of Islam, possessed all central principles of a modern, ideal and welfare state as framed by liberal democracy. The Medinah Charter- the agreement of peaceful coexistence signed between the muslims and non-muslims in the state of Medinah bears a glaring example of peace and non-violence.

Al-Quran-the religious scripture of Islam is opposed to violence and war unless and until a state's security and integrity is threatened. Al-Quran did not allow unjust wars though it encouraged just wars like war for defense, security, independence and integrity.<sup>24</sup> Islam holds pragmatist laws with regard to war, POWs, peace treaty, negotiation, diplomacy and international relations. All wars occurred during the lifetime of the holy Prophet (PBUH) were defensive in nature. Huntington's observation of muslims' indigestibility and problems of muslims with non-muslims is oversimplification and also contrary to the theoretical foundation of Islam, and perhaps empirical evidences too.

#### 4.5. Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Interests?

Although on the surface, it seems that competing civilizations clash on their religio- cultural differences, in reality conflicts are germinated in more complex issues that are beyond civilizational in nature. A close look at the pattern of world clashes at all times indicates that the clash in history, has always been caused by the human struggle for pursuits of individual, group, community or national interests. All major wars of global or quasi-global scale originated in Europe. For example, Thirty Years' War before the Treaty of Westphalia, Napoleonic wars before the Concert of Europe, World War I before the League of Nations, World War II before the

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<sup>24</sup> Al-Quran, *Sura Al- Tawbah, Sura Al-Anfal, Sura Al-Araf, Sura Al Baqarah.*

United Nations – all these Euro-centric wars were germinated in the West, planted and nurtured there and finally spread beyond Europe.

Conflicts at micro level started in Europe on individual or group interests of political and economic nature and these micro-level conflicts were escalated and transformed into macro-level wars only to survive the micro level interests in which the conflicts at micro-level first started. Two Great Wars are the handmaidens of the West; they were initiated at the micro-level to maintain the interests of the parties in conflicts and later times, these micro level conflicts were escalated into macro-level World War involving different actors in international arena in order to serve the same interest on which the micro-level conflicts first originated.

There is no denying the fact that the conflicts in our planet called world, from the time immemorial, has been deeply rooted in their untiring efforts for achieving political, territorial and economic goals and the clash of the future world is no exception. While explaining the root causes of world conflicts, Professor Sugita remarked that the recent world conflicts are centered on territorial, economic and racial issues. He picked the example of the greatest War in human history- World War II as the evidence in support of his argument and stated that Hitler's role and incessant attacks that started the great War were not civilizational, nor religious or cultural, rather economic and racial.<sup>25</sup>

Thus Huntington mistakes the clash thesis by oversimplifying and overestimating civilizational clash. The clash of interest, not clash of civilizations, is in the core of all major world conflicts. The Palestine-Israel conflict is not because the Palestine people are Muslims and the opposition are Jews, but because both want to uphold their own politico- security interests. The struggle of people in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Chechnya, Kashmir, Caucasus, Mindanao and many parts of the world are aimed at preserving their 'right of self determination'. Even the recent Iraqi war, as Welfield notes, has not been "about terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, or about democracy and human rights, or about cultural misunderstandings between the

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<sup>25</sup> Hiroya Sugita, *Lecture Series on "The Clash of Civilizations and Future World"*, International University of Japan, Spring 2003.

Christian and Islamic worlds...the conflict has had its origins in the evolution of the US global grand strategy...The events of September 11 acted as a catalyst, they were not a cause."<sup>26</sup>

Many scholars are of the opinion that the events of September 11 are not the result of cultural clash as it is widely circulated in CNN, BBC and other western media. They argue first, that the actual reason and real actors are yet to be known and second, even if it is assumed that the incident was the baby of religious discord, the plot was made as the reaction against injustice, and economic exploitation imposed on the attackers' community, group or countries by the dominant imperial and industrial powers.

#### 4.6. Clash or Competition?

The struggle of two brilliant students in a graduate school to vie each other in order to achieve better grade should be assumed as their competition other than clash. The rising civilizations and the West are striving hard for achieving preeminence and this competition instead of putting them at loggerheads, may provide them the opportunity to contribute to future world. World leaders need to guide them to that direction. Although clash comes from competition on many occasions, any such clash is not unavoidable.

#### 4.7. Current International System: Reservoir of Clash?

In order to recommend for molding up a world without clash, we need to understand the pattern of interaction among actors in current international system. The horrible bipolar system that existed in the post World War II world has been replaced by significant transformation with drastic complexities and uncertainties. Some people view that the world is now moving to a very dangerous future, and some other scholars see the whole world as a global village and some others even dream of a heaven. Despite their differences in approach, the central focus of the scholars has remained almost similar- the rise of a multipolar world.

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<sup>26</sup> John Welfield, "A Symphony of Hypocrisy: Some Thoughts on the American Invasion of Iraq and its Long Term Consequences", *New Sabah Times*, September 22, 2003



Both ‘the end of history’ and ‘the clash of civilizations’ theses identified the elements of multipolarism, multiculturalism and multilateralism with great emphasis on the interaction between two competing poles. Long before Fukuyama and Huntington, Alfred Thayer Mahan’s 1897 essay *A Twentieth Century Outlook* predicted the future emergence of the US as the leader of the West and the beginning of an apocalyptic struggle whose outcome would determine whether Eastern or Western civilization is to dominate throughout the earth and to control its future.<sup>27</sup> Fukuyama found the division of the post Cold War world between the liberal democracy and non-liberal democracy blocs with the predicted victory of former over the latter. Huntington talks about the clash between the West and non-West particularly Islamic non-West. While Fukuyama emphasized the ‘post-history age’ with no possible future clash between the ideologies of world affairs, Huntington depicted a multipolar world characterized by dangerous intercivilizational conflicts. While Fukuyama undermined and disregarded the power of Islam and other elements as the challenge to the West, Huntington overestimated the challenger civilizations as the threat to the West. Huntington found a world characterized by the clash of civilizations, where as Nye identified a world of multidimensional powers including US, Europe, Japan, China, Russia, and India and so on. As opposed to these writers, Welfield observes that the Cold War bipolar system is replaced by the post Cold War global equilibrium of two great constellations of states, centering on the United States, Great Britain, Australia and Japan on the one hand, and on France, Germany, Russia and China on the other.<sup>28</sup>

## 5. Conclusion: A World Beyond Clash?

At the very outset, this write-up holds a counter approach of ‘the end of history’, ‘the clash of civilizations’, ‘the decline of America’ and ‘the rebirth of history’ theses. It studies future world from a different dimension and attempts to have a second look to above views

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<sup>27</sup> John Welfield, *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> John Welfield, *Ibid.*

regarding the emerging global order, patterns of world conflicts centering on civilizations and religious-cultural fault line wars.

A close look at the history of the world civilizations, their roots, growth and evolutions might illustrate the fact that the scattered heterogeneous cultural extremes at the micro- regions construct the foundation of the macro-paradigm of the world civilization that has, over centuries, produced great contributions to the betterment of humankind. The maintenance of homogeneity via heterogeneity among the world cultures created a wonderful beauty in the coexistence of human race unless it has been damaged by human injustice. The clash of our world, as always, will be based on the pursuits of individual, group or national interests.

As already mentioned that Huntington, despite his sharp intellectual arguments, fails massively to address the significant source of world conflicts, lacks substantially to present both empirical and historical evidences and suffers woefully to offer adequate academic analysis by misrepresenting and misinterpreting some of the basic concepts and principles of Islam. Moreover he ignores the perennial beauties of major cultures and religions by severely undermining their contribution to the founding of the enshrined world civilizations and thereby seemingly stimulating communal abhorrence through an overestimation of intercivilizational clashes.

However, the likelihood of conflicts between multilateral elements should not be blown out and the avoidance of such clash largely depends on understanding each other in this era of globalization. If the world leaders continue their efforts with sincerity in vision and honesty in mission, it is not impossible to construct a world without clash. To that end, Huntington’s conclusion is great, recommendations are timely, and three rules are sure to meet the demand of the twenty first century. The UN system needs to be more strengthened by a massive overhaul and particularly the Security Council be restructured with incorporating the newly emerged and emerging powers or power blocs of the world. The Council needs to be restructured as an equal global representative body by offering membership to geographical distribution. One easy way of such distribution can possibly be done on the basis of regional organizational set up as follows: US-1, EU

(UK, France, Germany) – 1, Japan- 1, OIC –1, SAARC-1, ASEAN-1, OAU-1. Since understanding and cooperation is the key to success of a new peaceful world order, the leadership role of the United States is most important. The lack of the US interests and honest intention might spoil all initiatives to construct a new order and her strategic avoidance or isolation might endanger future world. Given the military and economic supremacy, worldwide political influence, accelerated technological power, history has bestowed on the United States the compulsions to shoulder the responsibility of future world. If she fails in tackling her leadership role, she might falter in her mission and endanger the world.

Huntington's observation of potential clash between Islam and the West may be the result of misunderstanding between the two. Western imperialism, colonialism and long domination of the muslim world by the West have created the lack of credibility and understanding between them. However, the reconcillation between them is not impossible, though difficult.

Unlike the West's relationship and interaction with Communist, Fascist and Nazi ideologies, there is a greater degree of compatibility between Islam and the West, which can directly contribute to curb their antagonistic attitudes. Politically, both believe in maintaining good governance through popular participatory government, people's mandate, freedom, human rights, consultation in parliament, consensus rule for decision-making, independence of the judiciary, freedom of expression, and administrative accountability. The first state of Islam that was inaugurated immediately after Muhammad's (PBUH) hizrah (arrival) from Mecca to Medinah possessed all four components of a modern state designed by Capitalism.<sup>29</sup> On economic front, both propagate almost the similar principles of individual ownership, rights to income and business, freedom of trade, significance of international trade, development cooperation and development assistance, equitable distribution of wealth, significance of market and so on. On political front, the fundamental difference is that although Capitalism advocates the separation between state and

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<sup>29</sup> Lukman Thaib, *Political System of Islam*, Kualalumpur: Penerbit Amal, 1994

church, it accords splendid respect to Christianity in state affairs. Max Weber explained how Christian religious ideals contributed to the founding of capitalism. Islam, on the other hand, integrates state and religion and encompasses under a divine guideline, all aspects of worldly life and the life hereafter. Economically, major distinction is related to the concept of the fixed interest. Capitalist economy moves around a fixed interest rate whereas Islamic system is centered on participatory economics based on sharing of profits or loss by both banks and customers.

The lack of knowledge about Islam contributes to the lack of understanding. In order to avoid clash, it is worthwhile to find ways and means to overcome this shortcoming. Difference of opinions in different systems instead of difficulty creates flexibility and broadness of thinking. In order to minimize this knowledge-gap, significance of in-depth study as well as greater interaction between both systems cannot be ignored and for that, specific courses need to be included in the syllabi and curricula of graduate schools everywhere in the world. Recognition of values, desires and freedom of different civilizations rather than refusal and restraint is of utmost importance in modern day free world. The road towards peaceful coexistence and cooperation between different ideologies, systems or civilizations is tortuous, but the prospect is bright, no doubt.