Clash of Civilizations Thesis: Mega Narratives Versus Local Narratives and Current Arab Turmoil

Dr. Fazzur Rahman Siddiqui

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Indian Council of World Affairs
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road,
New Delhi-110 001, India
Tel. : +91-11-23317242, Fax: +91-11-23322710
www.icwa.in

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No paradigm is good forever. The Cold War paradigm model of world politics was useful and relevant for forty years but became obsolete in the late 1980s, and at some point the civilizational paradigm will suffer a similar fate.

–Samuel Huntington in the preface of his book.[1]

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- *Civilization, Religion and Culture: A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy*
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- *Refugee, Religion and the Clash of Civilizations*
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Abstract

The global intellectual and strategic spheres in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War were exceptionally dominated by two major discourses contravening each other. Those were well captured in the idea of the end of history and clash of civilizations theory. These two pioneering ideas were propounded by Francis Fukuyama and Samuel P. Huntington in 1989 and 1993 respectively.

Francis Fukuyama in his book 'End of history and the last man' predicted the end of an era of ideological evolution and subsequent contention between Western capitalism and primarily eastern communism, though communism had a strong influence in Western Europe as well; like France and Italy had a strong communist parties which were quite active in the national political speheres. After the down fall of communism, he declared the eternal triumph of Western values marked by liberal democracy and the free economy. While Samuel P. Huntington in his much-cited and equally controversial thesis argued that post-Cold War politics would not be determined by ideological and economic underpinnings of the past but it would be more characterized by conflict based on civilizational and cultural differences and antagonism among multiple civilizations.

If Francis declared that after the end of the Cold War, liberal democracy had won over all other ideologies and ultimately put an end to history, he did no justice to history by reducing history to merely an ideological clash between capitalism and communism because history is much older than this confrontation. There are other elements and aspects which have determined and shaped the destiny of mankind. On his part, Huntington in his, 'Clash of Civilizations and Making of New World Order' (focus of the present paper) articulated that clashes among different world civilizations and the most lethal one between Islam and West are in the offing where cultural and religious conflict will be the defining feature of the future politics.

According to his prophecy, the conflict will occur between groups and the nations belonging to different civilizations. It has been

almost a quarter century since Huntington floated the idea in a lecture in 1992, which later in 1993 was published as an article "The Clash of Civilizations?" in 'Foreign Affairs'. The article generated more controversy than any other which 'Foreign Affairs' had published since 1940. Finally, the article grew into a book, "The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order" in 1996, and since then it has earned both admiration as well as condemnation.

Many have tried to analyze the successive global wars and conflicts in the light of Huntington's civilizational paradigm. Many have rejected this paradigm, and also accused him of not only opting for an essentialist civilizational approach, but also ignoring other numerous local and minute factors which are equally catalysts in determining and shaping the trajectory of global politics in the last quarter century. In the light of the above brief, this paper will try to examine the extent of truth in the claim of Huntington by revisiting the ongoing entangled and multi- layered conflict in the Arab world. Meanwhile it will also scan the divergent responses of the Western world vis-à-vis the current turmoil to understand whether it is really propelled and determined by the civilizational paradigm propounded by Huntington or it is merely a reflective of western gambit. The paper is not intended to offer a critique of Huntington's theory as such, but in the course of the narrative it will endeavor to analyze if ideology and economy as factors in the present day global politics have really vanished and scrutinize whether all other paradigms of the present-day conflict (national, geostrategic, sectarian, ethnic, tribal, political, economic) have been glossed over or taken over by one mega paradigm: the civilizational one.

Introduction

Amidst numerous strategic advocacies and ideological preaching in the Cold War era, perhaps the paradigm postulated by George Kennan[2] was the most significant in shaping and determining the policy and attitudes of US administration vis-a-vis the erstwhile USSR. Mr. Kennan, a believer in US hegemony in global affairs, in his highly influential article, "Source of Soviet Conduct",

published in Foreign Affairs in 1947,[3] had strongly favored the containment of the Soviet Union by forging an anti-Soviet alliance and constantly called for Western superiority in international affairs. After the end of the Cold War, it was first Bernard Lewis and later Samuel P. Huntington who offered a new paradigm because of the changing objective realities following the demise of US's ideological rival.

Mr. Bernard Lewis, a British American, advisor to the US policy establishment and one of the most prominent voices on Islam and the Muslim affairs, wrote an article in 1990 in 'The Atlantic' titled "The Roots of Muslim Rage". The article talked about the hostility and resistance of Muslims against the West in general and America in particular. Perhaps Bernard Lewis was the first one who interpreted global politics in the realm of culture and laid the foundation of 'Cultural Talk'.[4] According to him there has been a rising tide of rebellion against Western paramountcy and subsequent attempt on the part of Muslims to reassert their past political and cultural greatness and he finally said that what is happening today is nothing less than a 'Clash of Civilization'.[5] (Henceforth CS)

Mr. Lewis's text on cultural talk and his formulation on clash of civilizations provided an inspiration to another renowned US political scientist, Samuel P. Huntington whose association with US policy makers was well known. While Lewis's thesis was confined to the rivalry between Islam and Christianity, Huntington expanded the notion of Mr. Lewis to include the whole world and his reach was more ambitious and penetrating. Huntington not only rejected the views of another equally renowned post-Cold War ideologue and his disciple, Fukuyama who had predicted the convergence of world civilization under the umbrella of triumphant Western values as a result of the end of the Cold War, but claimed that that war and conflict in post-Cold War era would be dominated by people's identification with their respective civilizations and his theoretical formulation had no place for the *Davos culture*.

He viewed civilization as an ultimate human tribes and further regarded it as the broadest cultural entity which finally reflects

a way of life. He believed that the major confrontations in past centuries occurred among different powers of the Western civilization leading up to 19th century and then came the 20th century which was dominated by Cold War politics. After the demise of the USSR, a major shift in global politics was witnessed as ideological underpinnings and conflicts of the past were replaced by conflict inspired more by civilizational, religious and cultural distinctions. The loyalty towards people of same culture, religion and civilization was noticed and this particular trend was more visible on the Arab streets.

In his article of 1993, Huntington declared that, "It is my hypothesis that fundamental sources of conflict in the new world will not be primarily ideological or economic. The great division among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural to be ignited by religious differences. He proposed that new global politics will not be determined by one's ideological association or by the old dictum, "what ideology to pursue" but instead by 'who you are'.[6]

His argument was built around the idea that 'iron curtain of ideology' has been replaced by 'velvet curtain of culture' and that velvet curtain has been drawn across the bloody border of Islam.[7] He also stated that Nation-States, despite their potency would be losing their power and control over ideas and people and conflict will occur among people of different civilizations".[8] He envisaged three types of civilizational conflict: those between the dominant states of different civilizations; international fault line conflict; and, domestic fault line conflict.[9] This theory of Huntington gained huge credibility after the 9/11 as the attack seemed to affirm the beginning of the clash. A poll in the UK suggested a substantial increase in the hostile attitude towards Islam after September 11. This single act offered a new political trajectory where Islam was perceived as an assertive and overarching ideology in global politics. The new face of Islam accepted as a justification of Huntington's proposition by many and subsequent evolution of new strategic reconfiguration and alliance called for revisiting Islam as a theology, culture, civilization, politics and ideology.

Huntington identified nine major contemporary civilizations: Western, Orthodox, Sinic, Hindu, Islamic, Japanese, Buddhist, African and Latin American.[10] Further he grouped these civilizations into six poles: Western one built upon Catholic and Protestant culture (Western Europe and North America), the civilization built upon Orthodox Church (Russia and Eastern Europe), the Islamic civilization, the Hindu civilization, the Chinese civilization and Japanese civilization. He offered further categorization and argued that there are only five civilizations which are represented by core states and they are: Western Europe and North America, Chinese, Hindu civilization of India, Japanese, and Orthodox Russia and rest like Latina America, Islam and Africa have no core states and that they are represented by a cluster of nations. For him Latin America and Sub-Sahara Africa exist as a potential candidate to join the league of world civilizations.[11]

The most provocative and instigating part of his thesis was Islam was the most conflict-prone civilization and that the borders of Islamic civilization, "Islamic bloody border"[12] were filled with the wars and conflicts. When he talks of Islamic bloody border, perhaps he thinks of its traditional clash with the western world but fails to mention about intra-Muslim fight in the past where the Sunnis and Shiites have fought many wars and the fact that the relationship between the Ottoman and Arabs for many decades remained strained. Civilizations according to him are defined both by objective elements involving language, history, religion, institutions and by the subjective self-identification of the people.[13] His idea of 'Muslim Bloody Border' emanates from the Muslim's propensity towards war as he declared that; (1) Islam happens to be a religion of the sword and it has trampled several continents with a missionary zeal of converting people to the religion of Islam through swords and militancy (2) Islam has always pursued the culture of conquest and the more it followed the policy of conquest , the more it generated rift with the people who came in direct contact with the followers of Islam and the outcome was deep religious difference. (3) The indigestibility of Muslims vis-à-vis the followers of other religions and cultures is the continuing

feature of religion of Islam[14]. Meanwhile he not only blamed the religion of Islam for the ensuing conflict but equally held the surge in the Muslim demography responsible, which according to him, would grow as potential to spark the conflict.

According to him, the advancement of communication technology has lessened the distance among different religious groups leading to the phenomenon of religious relativism and subjectivity. Subsequently, new relativism would replace all other marks of past identities and religion would emerge as a single reference point for what Oliver Roy termed as the emergence of 'new intellectuals' who claim to be the religious leaders of the community.[15]

In his volume exceeding three hundred pages, Huntington has not merely offered a portrayal of pre-Cold War global politics and ensuing civilizational politics but has drawn a wide picture of future state system, ensuing nature of regional and global alliances and overall categorization of people. He addressed so many fronts of the global politics (details will follow during the course of the paper) but what captured the global attention most was his prediction of future conflict between Islam and the West in the absence of ideological and economic battle of the past.

There were many others who not only subscribed to his notion but further enlarged Huntington's vision. Regis Debray defined the post-Cold War politics under the garb of 'Green Peril', a color presumably stands for religion of Islam.[16] The cultural debate in the global politics unleashed a fierce intellectual contestation where many argued that use of civilization as methodology is not practical and not unsustainable on empirical ground because the civilizations are internally heterogonous and interpenetrating. Others found major contradictions and deciphered major problems with Huntington's civilization-based thinking which, according to them, magnifies the voices of religious and divisive authority. Several other historians pointed out that Huntington's underlying premise was reminiscent of 19th century social Darwinism- especially the fear of The Other, of 'Barbarian at the Gate' and non-European hordes threatening the West.[17] These counter narratives point out the narrow and reductionist reading

of civilization as a concept by Huntington and conceiving of civilization as a homogenous entity perhaps overlooking various divisive elements in a civilization. This becomes more cogent when Huntington is trying to locate the civilizational paradigm in the arena of global politics for right or wrong reasons.

Many critics of Huntington's civilizational paradigm have also criticized him for overlooking the heterogeneity within the civilization to validate his hypothetical and theoretical utility or worthiness. For his critics; the crudeness of civilizational classification is not merely misleading but politically dangerous. Civilizational scale of analysis blurs the intra-civilizational division and other equally impotent ingredient like different ancestry, language, religion, history, values, customs and institution which act as a divisive instrument and does not let the civilization remain as a single monolithic entity.

Today the world is witnessing more and more conflict and each conflict differs from another in terms of nature, intensity, and dynamics. Further theses conflicts are primarily marked by involvement of a series of cultural, national, strategic, economic, linguistic, racial, religious, tribal, geographical, sectarian, regional, and ethnic actors where not one but multiple *identitarian* factors are deepening or fuelling the fault line. Given the nature of today's global conflict, Huntington's CS thesis seems to have become more and more vulnerable and losing its early appeal and approval. How one can see the civilizational paradigm in the Sudanese conflict (North-South and later within South itself), Congo, and Central African Republic? How will the believers in CS theory explain the Western support to Bosnian Muslims being at par with the support of the Muslim nations like Turkey, Pakistan which has been most frequently invoked by Huntington to justify his notion of CS. Similar is the case with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The involvement of Russian (an Orthodox civilization) in Ukraine, Crimea, Georgia also needs a review to ascertain practicality and rationality of Huntington's civilizational factor in the global politics. The old Mediterranean and Scandinavian divide within

Europe and the case of Brexit (Huntington had seen the emergence of a new identity in the EU itself), raging multi-dimensional conflict in the Arab world (Islamic civilization) and subsequent sectarian and strategic split among NATO members on the eve of US's invasion of Iraq (2003)[18] need a revisit of his thesis.

A substantial part of his civilizational thesis is devoted to his anticipation of ensuing conflict between Islam and the West while the issue of clash with other world civilization or reading of other world civilizations has failed to capture his attention in his thesis and his prophesy of civilizational clash is more portrayed as a clash between the west and the Islam. The same would constitute the present paper. I have chosen this part of Huntington's thesis intentionally because today many see the prophesy of Huntington coming true in the rise of the ISIS amidst the Arab turmoil, European response to the immigration crisis and the US putting a ban on Muslim migrants but they tend to overlook the emerging divide within Europe (read Rrexit), variant European response to the immigration crisis and the new slogan of "America First" or "British Exceptionalism" which apparently proves the falsity of Huntington's claim portraying the West as a monolithic civilizational and political entity that is facing a threat from another monolithic civilizational and political entity: Islam.

As we move further during discussion of the subject, the paper will try to situate the CS theory in present context of the Arab politics.

Civilizations, Religions and Cultures: A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

After conducting a brief survey of Huntington's accounts of the CS, one may form an opinion that his narrative is more about 'civilizations' and less about 'clash'. Before I proceed further to examine Huntington's cultural, civilizational and religious premise of world politics, I will briefly scan his views of Western civilizations itself, his absolutist views of *Europe-America monoculture*, his growing worry and fear of the demise of Western civilization and its cultural heritage which have largely

determined his paradigm or his imagined prism called 'Clash of Civilizations. This section will also interrogate his inconsiderate remarks about c*ivilization*, *religion* and *culture* interchangeably and, moreover, how indiscreetly he has divided civilization into core, cleft and torn civilization. The case of Indian civilization is more pertinent because Indian civilization by no means is Hindu civilization. This section will also conduct a cursory examination of the border zone of Islamic civilization and will see if the local events and dynamics really qualify his thesis on CS.

Referring to specificity of the Western civilization, he invokes Mr. Melko who saw Western civilization as a class by itself which is incomparably different from all other civilizations that have ever existed.[19] Huntington too claimed that Western civilization introduced modernization and industrialization and others are trying to catch up with it. He declared that Western civilization is the equivalent of a universal empire in the form of complex federations, confederations, regimes and other types of cooperative institutions. His civilizational complex is committed to democratic and *pluralistic* politics. For him, the American national identity is reflective of Western civilization in terms of culture and its political identity is primarily inspired by the American creed.

Huntington does not shy away from harboring hatred against multiculturalism because, according to him, it will ruin the cultural heritage of the US. According to him, multiculturalism in America will lead to turning America into a schizophrenic torn state.[20] He argued that multiculturalism at home threatens the United States and Western universalism abroad threatens the West and the world as both deny the uniqueness of Western culture. American multiculturalists want to make the America like the world and global multiculturalists want to make the world like America. He is critical of a series of US policies of encouragement of diversity which he found to be violation of the will of the founding fathers of America. He cautions that multiculturalism is a divisive siren and US can be identified with none except itself despite all its global economic relationship. His fear of destruction of American culture is well reflected in the paranoia over immigration and

demography; and, he feels that multiculturalism can destroy American culture.

He quotes Japanese philosopher Takeshi who had once warned that the breakup of the Soviet Union is only the precursor to the collapse of Western liberalism-the main current of the modernity. Carrying his views further, Huntington preached a kind of cultural interpretation of mankind where he saw no place for a society without its cultural core. America, according to him, cannot be defined only by political creed which for him is a fickle base; but, one does not know when the political base of a nation like the US becomes a fickle entity.

He talked about the creation of an Atlantic community and called for a defensive mechanism against the rest of the world. The notion of a joint US-Europe entity and its relevance as an Atlantic community can be inferred from the statement of US former defense secretary when he said, "If one looks down from outer space on earth, you find a couple of handful of countries that are generally like in their thinking and they tend to be Western Europe and North America.[21] This is a hypothesis which has proved an inducement to his clash of civilization thesis. He put forward an idea of Euro-America integration on the basis of their cultural commonality and mutual economic interest which is suggestive of his ignorance of historical, ideological and political differences between the US and the Europe. On the other hand his longing for uniting two political and economic blocks (North America and Europe) to confront another civilization (Islam) is apparently indicative of a pre-determined notion of a clash between two civilizations.

He warns against the growing challenge to universal relevance of Western culture due to rising cultural and civilizational diversity as a result of globalization. Perhaps he ignored the point that cultural diversity was always there and his fear implies that one can enter into a clash merely to rescue the core of once own civilization. He firmly believes in US cultural purity and exclusivity and urges its protection when he mentions that universalization of the US culture will destroy it. His cultural fixation, belief in binarity,

exclusivity and purity of the US culture seems to be emanating from a particular frame determined more by cultural phobia.

One also cannot see any truth in his claim that the West must accept the fact that non-Western nations are getting united in the name of culture against the West. On the one hand he accepts the fact about fundamental difference between Islam and orthodox Christian in the east and again perceives that they are getting united. He further assumes that imperialism is the indispensable consequence of universalism and the West has no demographic or economic power to impose its will on other societies .[22] He also argues that Western universalism is not too pleasant an affair for the world because it could lead to an inter-civilizational war between the core states and it is dangerous for another reason: because it could lead to the defeat of the West. But he does not take these factors into account while formulating his civilizational thesis and simply declares that a civilization is fighting another civilization. Huntington himself says, "There can be no true friend without true enemies. Unless we hate what we are not, we cannot love what we are"[23]

Now I will in some detail see how he has postulated his ideas of civilization, religion and culture. His definition of civilization is based on the Arnold Toynbee interpretation of the term which inextricably linked it to religion and cosmological outlook.[24] He picks two of the most populous religions and cultural identities (China and Islam) and projects them as a new challenge to the West after the demise of communism. At first glance, his civilizational supposition seems to have been motivated by his strategic outlook and the engineering involved in the architecture of CS seems to be the part of his grand political plank.

The most criticized part of Huntington's thesis is his interchangeable use of civilization, religion and culture and he fails to distinguish between these three variables. He seems to have treated civilization in a very reductionist manner as if it is religion only which constitutes the core of a civilization. Civilization of specific geographical landscape encompasses many things such as myth, art and literature, language, architecture, norms and

cultural, institution, belief, mountain, literature, music, records of knowledge and range of socio-economic activities.[25] Moreover religion is an angelic and transcendental part of a civilization while the rest is an outcome of human (bottom-top) contribution to its advancement. Civilization is something evolved from below while religion is a celestial entity and it has never been an important component of every civilization. In Chinese, Latin American and African civilizations religion has a very nominal place. His religious basis of the civilizational conflict has also been criticized by many scholars. According to one of them, there are three different ways of accounting for the role of religion in politics: (1) Religion as a primordialist entity, generating power of religious difference and irreconcilable understanding and religious differences and similarities, will be the primary cause of future conflict. (2) Religion as an instrumentalist entity which believes that conflict emanates not from religious difference but from a structural inequality of all kinds where religions are an easy ploy for mobilization of the deprived masses. (3) It is a constructivist entity where it is received as a source of inspiration that equip the actors with a value-laden conception that has the potential to affect the strategic choice as well.[26]

Culture and religion itself are internally divergent entities with numerous offshoots, and contradictions not allowing its emergence as a twin but unified force. He overlooks the fact that a single civilization in itself incorporates different ideologies, religions, geographies, beliefs and other characteristic that differentiate the civilization internally too. There are many theological, ideological and cultural divisions within the religion of Islam. The religion of Islam in the Islamic civilization is itself marked by multiple levels of tribal, ethnic and sectarian and juridical cleavages represented in Sunni-Shiites, Kurdish-non-Kurdish, Wahabi-Bareli, Sufis-Islamist, and the preacher-pacifist divide. The religious and sectarian differences have helped many alliances and counter-alliances in the past where two arch strategic enemies have been found cooperating with each other like Iran-US workable understanding against Taliban and Shiite-Sunni civil war in Lebanon, Syria and Yemen in the past and present.

In the words of Amartya Sen, "The single dimensional categorization of human being and an increasing tendency to overlook the many identities that any human being has, trying to classify individuals according to a single preeminent religious identity is an intellectual confusion that can animate dangerous divisiveness; that is why his theory has been called reductionist, over simplistic and one-sided.[27] He had a vague notion of civilization as something static and impermeable and made the civilization into what it is not: shut down and sealed-off entities.[28] There is an element of danger in viewing culture as an immutable and static entity and his basis of taxonomy of civilization merely on religion and ignoring other elements of civilization is too simplistic. He himself says that people identify themselves in term of things most dear to them which means ancestry, language, tribe, history, values, ethnic groups, customs, institution and religion, but why so much stress only on the religious aspect of the civilization?

The policies of the various states within one civilization are seen as pursuing state interest rather than being swayed by abstract ideas of civilizational linkages or religious association. No state within Islamic civilization has worked in concurrence with each other in the name of Islamic solidarity or Pan-Islamism. In Lebanese civil war, Muslims supported Christians against other Sunni groups as a sign of national unity and Maronites were supported by Israel. Egypt deployed huge forces in Yemen against Saudi Arabia in civil war of Yemen (1962-70). More importantly, Huntington does not take into account the role of the state agency in seeking or instigating the role of culture or civilization in pursuit of certain specific policies against others. Fuad Ajami dismissed Huntington as curious and wrong on the ground that civilizations do not control state, state controls civilization.[29]

Huntington seems to have reduced civilization to religion and for him clash of civilization is a clash of religion. He does not see religion to be the part of civilization but he locates both in a binary frame. He seems to be so obsessed with his abstract idea of civilizational war that he fails to look at other reasons of the conflict. Many scholars like Sayyid and Thomas traces the rise

or sharpening of cultural and religious identities in the design of Imperialist intervention of the West and selective promotion of democracy. The case of Iraq and Afghanistan are living examples. Today's conflict is also a search for non-Western authenticity and it is also reflective of non-Western resistance.[30] Another scholar like Mohammad Ayyub attributes the current clash between the two to the Western support to the Arab autocrats who have failed to establish legitimacy and that later delegitimized the supposedly Western value of democracy and liberty.[31]

While focusing merely on religion and culture as a factor of conflict, he ignores the other spectrum of the potential motivation for conflict- economic issues, imperial ambition, leaders' personal rivalries, and vendetta, scarce resources, competition for power and influence and genuine humanitarian intervention.[32] The real clash lies not between the civilizations but between divergent social and political values. Many of the closed societies lack the core political values which represent democracy, separation of religion and politics, protection of individual rights and rule of law and accountability. Moreover, viewing all conflict as an outcome of cultural difference exonerates those warmongers – terrorists, separatists and militants. Moreover the theory of clash of civilization seems to be a reflection of *Islamophobia* where Huntington attempts to fit everything into the intellectual straitjacket of his narrow views of civilization.

Instead of looking at the post-Cold War world through the prism of clash of civilizations, it can be seen as a clash between multiple institutions belonging to yet-to-be-industrialized or industrializing society where liberal democracy and free economy have not taken deep root. It can also be seen as a conflict between states which are pursuing the model of Western industrialization but have failed to offer a vibrant economic or political model. The difference between already industrialized and semi- industrialized society is not a clash based on civilization but it is friction for the sake of human rights and democracy (China). The visible flare-up of least developed nations against developed nations cannot be taken as a clash between two civilizations. For instance Malaysia and Indonesia, relatively industrialized societies, do not seem to

show signs of anti-Western feeling.[33] No doubt civilization has been used as a rallying cry but the fundamental cause of the conflict has remained either political or economic. When Iranian spiritual leader Khomeini after the Islamic revolution called for war against *Westoxication*, it was more inspired by a feeling of resistance to US imperialist policy in the region rather than hostility vis-à-vis the entire West. In a few cases, the rallying cry was set in civilizational terms but empirical investigation showed that economy and politics were the main instigating and driving forces. If his war of civilization is a religious war, then it is nothing new in the history of mankind and both Western and eastern history is laden with these religious wars. The Crusades and past Catholic-Protestant wars are the evidences.

Moreover Mr. Huntington rules out the possibility of mutual learning among different civilizations, and Chinese civilization and its Confucianism as an orthodox learning could not have been possible without the impact of Buddhism and Indian culture.

What makes the thesis more unrealistic and impractical is his assumption that immediately after the end of the Cold War, people who were not long ago embroiled in an ideological and economic conflict will suddenly emerge as a cultural entity and this entity will be wholly inclined or swayed towards conflict. Cultural characteristics cannot be altered as easily as ideology or class or other factors. He also ignores the fact that sharing of cultural traits may also lead to alliances and harmony in future. The hypothesis of clash of civilization seems to be based on a partial reading of world politics which tend to be more driven by his preconceived notion of civilization-based conflict.

Further, his arbitrary categorization of civilizations seems to be lacking many other variables and elements of a core civilization. Particularly, the categorization of India as a Hindu civilization does not hold true because no civilization can be woven on the basis of religion alone (as he calls India a Hindu civilization). As mentioned earlier, like strategy, civilization cannot be straitjacketed. One cannot imagine Indian civilization without the contribution of Jainism, Buddhism, Islam, Zoroastrian,

Persian and it is neither a torn nation nor a hanging civilization as propounded by Huntington. Huntington claims that Indian is a hanging civilization and it is for the West to integrate it into its own fold. But how it will be possible when he himself observes in the same thesis that in a civilizational world, alignment cannot change so easily and deep cultural changes are needed to realign itself with other civilizations and Mexico, Russia and Turkey tried in the past but failed.[34]

He puts both Iran and Turkey under the umbrella of Islamic civilization but he fails to read the claim of both nations to be among the world's greatest civilizations (Turan and Iran). The apprehension of Arabs vis-à-vis Turkey was well evident in the aftermath of the Arab uprising when Turkey was substantially discussed as an alternative model for the potential emergence of democracy in the Arab world. One can also mention the old-age sectarian divide between Iran and the Arab world which has almost transcended the confines of their common religious ancestry. Huntington fails to take into account the history of the Sunni-Shia divide while defining Islamic civilization as a single entity.

The multi-layered deep divide between Shia and Sunni (having common religious ancestry) is not a secret. The Sunnis and Shias have been fighting since the 7th century and it has been the hallmark of Muslim power politics. The current Sunni-Shia divide is traced back to the political development taking place immediately after the death of the Prophet in 632 AD when the issue of succession came to the fore. Many wanted succession for Ali who was very close to the Prophet and was his nephew and son-in-law as well. The descendent of those who fought and supported Ali are termed as Shite and those who were not particular about the succession issue or were on the other sides of the camp are called Sunni. The Sunnis, particularly Salafist and Wahabist, accuse the Shias of falsification and heretic acts while Shiites accuse the Sunni of betraying the Prophet and his family members.[35] None of this group is monolithic and there are numerous sub-groups within them. What has remained the most interesting aspect of today's Shiite-Sunni divide is that its origin lies in the political difference

which gradually and at different historical phases morphed into a deep theological, doctrinal, ritual and religious difference and, today, these deep-rooted theological, doctrinal and religious differences are shaping the political course of two nations. The divide is so deep. The conquest of Iran and subsequent conversion of its Zoroastrians, Jews and Christian populace in the first century of Islam was seen by many as a wounding of their old civilization. Iran, unlike other African and European geographical landscapes, has not been an easy taker of Islamic expansion in their country; they have always maintained their cultural, linguistic and social distinctiveness and never saw the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula as a community beyond the confines of the savage and ill-cultured Bedouins. The Shiite-Sunni divide immediately after the Islamic revolution of Iran became an instrument of foreign policy pursuit by both Saudi Arabia and Iran (respectively hubs of Sunni and Shiite creed) and, in the current turmoil, it has become instrument of foreign policy and the regional policies, and this is no more a secret.

While reflecting on civilization, Huntington completely ignores the sociological and anthropological approaches which are understandably more a determinant rather than the prism of power politics or conflict. He argues that Western civilization is distinct in its Christianity, plurality, individualism and rule of law – a hallmark of modernity - which is European idea and not Asian, African, or Middle Eastern except by imitation. But he overlooks the fact that these multi-dimensional achievements of the West are more a product of the industrialization process and not the civilization itself. One can also argue that the birth and origin of Western democracy was in Greek and not in European-American civilizations. For that matter, in many non-Western countries women were enfranchised much earlier than in the Western countries. This argument becomes more pertinent when the issue of democracy and political institutions are taken as major demarcating lines between Islam and the West.

As far as the boundaries of civilizational war are concerned, Huntington detected the first sign of civilizational war in the Afghan war of 1980s but one wonders how an ideological war

between two global ideologies (communism and capitalism) suddenly morphed into a war between two civilizations. No doubt thousands of youths from different Muslim nations flocked to the battlefield of Afghanistan to defeat an ideological rival of US but one cannot ignore the fact that they had fought the American war and not the war of the Islamic civilization. He forgets to mention the support Muslims got from the future rival of Islam: the US.

The next mark of civilizational antagonism on the part of Islam against the West for Huntington was the global reactions of Muslim against the US-led war to liberate Kuwait in 1991. It was a global cry against intervention in the internal affairs of the Arab world. He himself remarked that Muslims around the world saw it as another display of Western imperialism.[36] One can argue here that a war cannot be both an imperial war and civilizational war at the same time. Moreover, how can a war be imperial and the reactions could be civilizational? He does not take into account the dynamics involved in supporting or opposing the war when he claims that the Gulf war began first between Iraq and Kuwait, then it became a war between Iraq and the West, then between Islam and the West and finally between the East and the West [37]. Here it seems to be an unnecessary imposition of his imagined paradigm because the cry against the Gulf war was not a new phenomenon and there has been opposition at different levels wherever the war has taken place. He also overlooked the fact that two states of the same civilization first entered into the war which he called an anomaly and also declared that one or two anomalies cannot defeat the whole of the paradigm. For an observer of Arab politics, the US intervention in Kuwait could be more a fulfillment of its past security commitment towards the GCC nations. One would also like to know if the US would have pursued the same hasty move had the attacked nation been in Central Asia or any other part of the world.

His thesis of the fault line conflict revolves around the dictum that a civilizational war is fought far from the ideological and political concerns, and identity becomes the fundamental issue. According to him, fault line wars are fought between states or groups from different civilizations and it also occurs between non-

governmental groups. This conflict within the states may involve groups concentrated in distinct geographical area and may aspire for secession or may involve groups who live in geographically mixed areas like Muslim in India and Muslim and Chinese in Malaysia. He cites the examples of fault line wars referring to conflicts in the Sudan, Bosnia-Serbia-Croatia in former Yugoslavia, and between Buddhists and Hindus in Sri Lanka, Muslims and Russians in Tajikistan, and Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir. Fault line wars or civilizational wars occur mostly on the basis of ethnicity, religion language and race but the principle determinant feature is religion and is always between people of different religions.[38]

He claims that most of the fault lines wars have taken place between Islam and the others at the micro level, while at the macro level, it is between the West and the rest. The most prominent war in 20th century was characterized by his thesis of fault line conflict and he has invoked the war in Bosnia the most. The Muslims of Bosnia fought Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croatians. Albanian Muslims in Kosovo revolted against the Serbian rule. Albanian and Greek Orthodox and Muslim Turkey were active at different levels to protect and sympathize with the people of respective religions. In the Caucasus region, Turkey, Iran and Armenia were at loggerheads to protect their religious and cultural minorities in the region of Nagorno- Karabakh. To him, other examples of fault lines were Chinese Muslims' protest against the Sinification of Xinjiang region, Pak-India conflict over Kashmir; Muslim's protest against the Chinese domination in Malaysian and Indonesian economies, the conflict between Orthodox Amharic and Muslims Oromo's in Ethiopia, the war between Catholic East Timor and Indonesian government, the Israel-Palestine conflict and the war in Ukraine and Chechnya.

Can we lump all these conflicts in the category of fault line or civilizational war without considering the past history, colonial encounter, geo-strategic maneuvering and the role of the nation-building process? He believes that the relationship of Muslims in these places has been antagonistic but he fails to mention the

Israel-Palestine conflict and its instrumentality in generating the Muslim-centric global conflict.

He argues that Muslims constitute merely one fifth of the world population but account for more conflict than their population and geographical proportion. He attributes the reason for this charged and volatile nature of Muslims to the growing weaponization of the Muslim states. One fails to comprehend this notion that the growing procurement of arms by certain Muslim states may increase the propensity of a specific group toward conflict. He also talks about politics, history and the Muslim demography (he calls the war in Bosnia and Kosovo a demographic war) for present fear and insecurity. He does not see the role of imperialist forces in the growing resentment of Muslims which he surprisingly terms as limited and temporary factors[39] when the world is still debating the impact and legacy of colonialism in the Arab world.

In the case of the Sri Lankan conflict, he talks of 'children's army' and 'under-age war'[40] but overlooks the larger picture of political marginalization and discrimination. Similarly while dealing with the war in Ukraine and Chechnya, he simply paints these as a sign of civilizational and cultural war. The crisis in Ukraine cannot be merely seen through the civilizational or cultural prism alone because Russia has other interests there. He totally ignores the nature of economic stakes Russia has in the preservation of the unity of Ukraine. If one delves deeper, he will also realize that Ukraine's geostrategic situation also serves the interest of Russia – a buffer state between Russia and the EU. The same holds true for the Chechen war which is largely the product of Stalin's policy of mass transportation and change in demography. Huntington's work seems to exhibit the characteristic of premeditated spinning to give specific orientation to the historic causation. He also seems to manipulate the facts to reach his desired conclusion.

Arab Conflict, Fault Line Dynamics, Geo-Strategy and Huntington

I will begin with a brief snapshot of the uprising in the Arab world in 2010 and see to what extent Samuel Huntington's claim about

the political culture of the Arab world and the Muslim's political behavior is true or justified amidst the current turmoil. This section will also throw light on the trajectory of the conflict that within a very short span of time engulfed the region and would see if it follows the trajectory or the model prescribed by Huntington when the region or the nation is tormented by a prolonged fault line conflict.

Among many of Huntington's assumptions about Islam and the Muslim, one assumption that dominates his discourse is that the core of the clash between the Islam and the West emanates from the lack or absence of acceptance or more precisely enthusiasm vis-à-vis democracy as a value system. But I will argue that the cultural gulf separating Islam from the West involves Eros far more than the Demos.[41] Huntington has overlooked the real differences between the status of men and women in Muslim society on account of late industrialization which was a driving force for social transformation. There are many scholars who have argued that deep-seated cultural divisions between Islam and the West will revolve more around social matters rather than the political one. The clash of civilization thesis makes three central claims: Culture writ large in the civilization, the sharp differences in core political values between the West and the Islamic world and, lastly, difference in political values that emanate from a particular religion and culture defining the politics of the future. I will briefly deal with the second and third parts.

His declaration of the Muslim's detachment from the nation-state at the cost of much deeper association with their religion and culture and further aversion to democracy was subjected to a deeper inquiry following the Arab Uprising. Arab uprising not only removed many long serving rulers but also exhibited people's hunger and desire for democracy, contrary to what Huntington had described about Muslims being unreceptive to Western values like pluralism, individualism and representative politics. The biggest defiance to his prophecy came in the form of Arab Spring when people stood up against autocracy. Though he had foreseen the weakening of the Arab regimes internally, he never predicted that their downfall would finally lead to demands for Western

democracy or Arab nations would desire a Western democratic system. The Arab uprising has proved that any situation or development is determined by the context in the Arab region; the existing context was shaped by the legacy of colonial power, the autocratic nature of the regimes and the lingering socio-economic crises. The rise of millions across the region against their regimes expressing their grievances in a nationalist tone proved people's patriotism which Huntington had repeatedly negated. It was the rule of fear which suppressed their patriotism or their demands for individual and political rights and democracy. The absence of political passivity which was encouraged by the regimes was immediately followed by the emergence of energies fuelled by political and economic aspirations.[42]

One can argue here that the Muslims who were identified by Mr. Huntington as a horde that is unreceptive to Western liberal values went with the same zeal to the mosque and the polling booths. In the early days of protest, one could have seen the inclusive political protest against the regime on the streets of Cairo when both Muslims and Coptics together were demanding the ouster of the regime. It was the acceptance of universal political values (democracy and plurality) which was very much evident across the region. For a moment, the whole population of Arabs seemed to have jettisoned their past distinctive cultural and religious identities and there was a common cry for liberty and a collective call to respect the will of the people. Cultural underpinning was overshadowed by the urge for a transparent political system, which they had been deprived of by the ruling elites. In the Arab uprising, things did not move in a linear way as projected by Huntington, but the tumult immediately captured the imagination of all. Following the Arab uprising, one could have seen how the Islamist forces were seeking space for democracy and freedom which they had been dispossessed of by the collaboration of the rulers with their Western allies.[43]

What further proved Huntington wrong was the participation of people in many elections and referendums held following the uprising across the Arab world. The participation of the people in a political process is the first step towards being part of the decision-

making process and a hall mark of any democracy. Not only were elections fair and genuine, but they were followed by a smooth transfer of power in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco. It is worth mentioning here that the democratic ethos among the Arabs was not experienced only after the Arab uprising. Political participation and the practice of representative politics has remained a practice provided the regime of the day allowed conducive environment and did not act obstructionist. There have been no universal ideological challenges to liberal democracy, and even the most illiberal states adopt an element of democracy. There were several surveys in the past which have proved overwhelming support for democracy on the part of Muslims and there is a similar liking for democratic practices in other parts of the world too. Many surveys have shown that people in East Europe and Latin America have lesser support for democracy than people of the Muslim world.[44] One can also argue that when much of Europe was still ruled by monarchies in the late 19th century and the democratic government was a fledging infant, the Young Ottoman movement had sought to bring about a constitutional reform within the then Ottoman Empire in Turkey.[45]

But, once again, contrary to Huntington's thinking, the Arab world of today is internally caught up in the vortex of the worst sort of internal violence rather than an external one. The Muslim world is drenched in the blood of their children and the horrors of largely a Muslim-against- Muslim conflict. The conflict of today is based on the Arab's own political and cultural legacy laden with differences between people of numerous political persuasions, including between the secularist and religious groups.[46] One can see here that Huntington's 'bloody border of Islam' hypothesis has turned into 'blood bath' within the Islamic world itself which he never predicted and, surely not of the nature and dynamics that are involved today. What we are seeing today is a more distinct and more visible split, in all forms, in Islamic civilization. Today's Islamic world is divided like never before which itself rebuts the claim of Huntington's notion of civilizational unity of Islam. Today's Arab world is divided on the basis of ethnicity, culture, strategy, religion, sect, region, tribe and all these have become

the real mark of identity refuting Huntington's claim of unity of Islamic civilization in the name of common culture and religion.

But unlike his partial reading of state of democracy in the Arab world and his overemphasis on the civilizational unity of Islam, his prophecy and impression about the nature, model, dynamics and trajectory of fault line conflict fully qualifies in case of today's conflicts raging in the Arab world. One finds an amazing parallel between his prescription and what is happening in the region today.

He argues that fault lines war goes through processes of intensification, expansion, containment, interruption and there is no early solution.[47] Fault line war for him is action-reaction process and the primary focus of the conflict becomes to harm the people of opposite identity which turns into'us against them' and gradually multiple identities of an individual wears away and is replaced by single religious identity. He further argues that a fault lines wars may have its origin in family, clans, tribe and sect and as the conflict progressed, it may appeal exceptionally to the religion of warring sides. In the communal and fault line conflict, civilizational groups might expect help from groups of same civilization like African Muslims and a Christian tribe had sought help from the Christian and Muslim world. Bosnian Muslims were extended all help by the major Muslim powers like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan irrespective of their strategic differences. Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan supported the Islamist forces of Tajikistan against the pro-Russian forces in the Tajik war between 1992 and 1995. The Sudanese government was funded and armed with missiles by Iran against the rebel Christians in early 1990 and Sudanese Christians who were funded by Ethiopia.

His idea of different levels of involvement of different states and groups validates his theory about fault lines and it is visible in today's conflict. At the primarily level are those states or groups which are directly parties to the conflict. The conflict may involve secondary level participants, who are directly related to primarily level actors in the conflict and, at the same time, there are third level participants who may constitute the core membership of

primary actors and may help the party through weapons and money even if they live as Diaspora. The role of Diasporas in the conflict of Palestine, Kashmir, Sri Lanka and Armenia is well known and the same is happening in the case of Syria and Iraq. The Chechen Diaspora settled in Jordan and Turkey extended substantial support to the Chechen war and same is true of the Armenian war, which was supported by the Armenian Diaspora in the US and Canada.

When one sees the nature of the conflict in Syria, one will find that it is exactly pursuing the trajectory prescribed by Huntington. It is an intensified and expanded conflict where different levels of actors are involved. Iran having a common sectarian origin and strategic stakes and interest is involved as a second-level actor in the Syrian crisis like Turkey and Iran (Muslim nations) and Germany and Russia (of the Christian world) were involved in the Bosnian war in the last decade of previous century. Today in Syria, Hezbollah and Russia can be said to be involved as the third level actors. Russia has lately also acquired the status of second-level actor, too, after it joined the war in Syria militarily.

Russian involvement on the side of Serbia (Yugoslavia war) could have been counted as third-level actors when it sided with Serbia and vetoed many resolutions at the UN which were advanced by Muslim states against Serbia; and, Russia is doing the same in Syria but the reason is strategic – identity versus strategy. The US had sided with the Bosnian Muslims as the third level actor to contain, according to Huntington, the growing influence of radical nations like Iran and in the case of Syria; Russia is pursuing the same logic today to combat the Wahabist ideology of Saudi Arabia and the ISIS.

The current conflict in Syria completely fits into Huntington's scheme as we see that all other identities in Syria have faded and merely sectarian identity has been shaping the political acts and discourse and the mark of *'self'* has become the sect .For instance, Saudi Arabia and Turkey are reported to be helping those rebel forces in Syria who share their sectarian identity and to some extent strategic requirement, but at the same time they are divided

on the issue of MBH. While the former extended all support to El-Sisi in ousting the MBH from power, the latter's support to MBH became a source of diplomatic spat between Egypt and Turkey.

Pro and anti-Assad forces in Syria are seeking support from their respective constituency of partisanship, and many powers in the region are involved in supporting one at the cost of other. For instance, anti-Assad forces are calling Turkey and Saudi Arabia (Sunni identity) to help them, and their demands are largely based on their sectarian proximity to the said nations. The same was true when the Bosnians asked the Muslims across the world to help stop their genocide and their demands, too, were based on their religious commonality with those nations extending support or intending to support the Bosnians. In the post-Soviet war of Central Asia, Turkey had supported the fighters of Azerbaijan on the basis of its ethnic-linguistic affiliation with the Azeri and one Turkish official had then said, "It is impossible not to be affected when your kin are killed".[48]

As Huntington mentions, in fault line conflict each side demonizes other human beings and one must recall here what President Yeltsin had said about the Chechens: "These mad dogs should be killed and these ill-bred have to be shot"[49]. Today's fighters of Syria are addressed as a bunch of terrorists and a replica of past fascist forces and they are everything but genuine dissenting voices.

Huntington also argues that most dominant supports come to the primary level country from those who strongly identify with the kin (primary actor) and they become more Catholic than the Pope. We can see the same in Syria where Iran and Iraq are the most active players and we often hear about the involvement of IRCG members in Syria. Sometime the roles of second-level and third-level players are much more complicated; and, at other times, even if they do not support their kin country, their role is suspected and this one can see in the role of Iran in Yemen during the early days of the clash.

According to Huntington, the role of kin nation or second and third-level actor is not confined merely to instigating, accentuating

and escalating the conflict but they gradually become instrumental in containing, constraining and mediating the agreement or the ceasefire. He is more than correct in the case of Syria, when one sees how initially Saudi Arabia and Iran were at the forefront of initiating the negotiation and later the role was taken over by Russia and Turkey. The third level actors are also constituted by different organizations which provide diplomatic and strategic support to their respective allies. In the case of Syria, Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and Arab League initially acted as third-level actors. Some of the Muslims had joined the war on the side of Bosnia (members of the Iranian Republican Guard) and they did not go back to their home country even after the ceasefire. Later they were accorded citizenship of Bosnia and the same is reportedly happening in Syria when Iranians apart from Lebanese and Iraqis are being offered citizenship of Syria and they are getting settled.[50] Iranians have been buying up lands and properties in Damascus city and other provinces and the regime in Iran too is conducting a major real estate transaction.[51]

Huntington was very correct when he had argued that fault line conflict is poised to sharpen the sectarian and religious identities. In former Yugoslavia, there were no signs of religiosity among the Muslims of Bosnia and Croatia, and they rarely went to the religious places. But as the conflict escalated, they suddenly turned into hordes of devout Muslims. Same is true in the case of Syria and Iraq. Both Shiites and Sunnis have completely erased the memory of their past harmonious relationship and, today, they have become devout Shiite and Sunni as far as their political behavior and attitude are concerned. Even their political participation and mode of activism reflect their sectarian proclivity. The kin states or second-level actors also tend to exert pressure on the primary actors and they want the primary country to turn into its long term strategic ally and determine the contours of its future politics and policies. We have seen how Bosnia, a Switzerland of Balkan tuned into a hub of different Islamic ideologies preached by nations like Iran and Saudi Arabia. We see the same happening in Syria and Iraq where Wahabist literature are in abundance and it has become part of the curriculum in the areas controlled by the Saudi-supported rebel forces.

One can also notice Huntington's idea on regional and sectarian conflict coming true when he had claimed that in the absence of an early solution, the conflict can be hijacked by the radical forces who would determine its trajectory and contours according to their own narrow and exclusive ideology and political dictum. He cites the example of a Tajik Islamic leader when he had said, "I am shooting the language of diplomacy".[52] Same was witnessed in the Chechen war and, similarly, the war in Syria has been hijacked by the radical forces like the *Nusrah* front, the ISIS and many other divisive offshoots and factions after the early political initiative failed to reach the agreement with the regime. The moderates conceded ground to the radical forces who are poised to thwart all endeavors to achieve peace. In today's conflict, model and trajectory prescribed by Huntington are same but variables are different as civilizational and religious factors have been replaced by sectarian, tribal and other factors which make it an intra-civilizational war rather than inter-civilizational one.

As far as the transformation or evolution of Arab Spring into today's quagmire and bloodshed is concerned, one can see the partial validation of Huntington's prophecy about the region. What really ruined the Arab Spring is the violence, cruelty and strife instigated and driven by the ethnic, cultural, religious and sectarian divide which Huntington had predicted to be one of the defining features of Afro-Asian politics in the post-Cold war era. What is happening in the region from Libya to Syria is an outcome of deep-rooted identity divide among the Muslims. Sunni-Shia divide claimed not only thousands of fatalities but has sunk to the nadir of Muslim-Muslim discords.[53] Muslims seem to have franchised the violence (from Al-Qaeda to Boko Haram to Salafist Jihadist) in the wake of the Arab uprising and the core of appropriating violence is the divide emanating from differences in cultural, political ,ethnic and sectarian persuasion, which was one an important part of Huntington's hypothesis.

Another major highlight of his thesis about the Muslim world was the absence of stability, and he attributed this instability largely to the nonexistence of a core state in Muslim civilization unlike in the case of China or India. According to him, a more persuasive

factor for explaining the intra and extra-Islamic conflict is the absence of one or more core state in Islam.[54] His argument holds absolutely true in case of the post-Arab uprising era as we can see that many Muslim nations like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt are aspiring to be the leader of not only Islamic religion but the Islamic world as well. None of them is able to mediate in the conflict within the Islamic world and, if one tries, the other tends to ruin it or cast doubts.

Now I will turn to the geostrategic part of global politics in the post-Cold War era which Huntington has completely ignored while formulating his thesis of cultural and religious war. One cannot deny the fact that the scourge of geopolitics is still alive and remains the central theme in global politics. The intra-civilizational or inter-civilizational conflict is nothing but the reflection of the catalytic role of geo strategy in global politics. His cultural argument of the global politics blurs the fact about the commonality of interest among different civilizations and conflicting nature of strategic ploys within the same civilization. The fight against the ISIS and concern for climate change can bring many civilizations on one platform while the Kurdish issue in the Arab world may create a rift between Syria, Iran and Turkey of the same civilization.

Islam has been portrayed as only embracing autocracy and as being meant to hate the West but this is a dubious assumption. The geostrategic aspect is ignored by Huntington and he does not explain the rationale for the deep strategic and economic Saudi Arabia-US relationship despite the dominant assumption of the Saudi's involvement in the 9/11 attack. Was propping up of the Hamas or Taliban by Israel and the West part of civilizational clash?

If China and Pakistan echo similar rhetoric on some of the pressing global issues , it is not because of any kind of religious or cultural union or affiliation but it is more a reflection of geostrategic posturing and a sign of political realism. Growing primacy of geo-strategy in today's global politics has proved that little has changed as far as the nature and dynamics of post-Cold

War politics and international relations are concerned which are even today defined largely by geo-strategic concerns and not by civilizational considerations.

How come Russia, an orthodox state is closely allied with an ideological state of Iran, how come Turkey and other states of similar civilization are divided on Syria and how come the ouster of the Libyan ruler had the full support of the Arab League and further there was no hue and cry when he was finally killed in an operation with the full military support of NATO. Huntington had also predicted that inter-state competition within civilization will occur and the regional block in South East Asia will emerge on the civilizational line under the leadership of Confucianism in south East Asia. But we can see how the other states in the region are apprehensive of the growing hegemony of China, and the rest are not hesitant in seeking help from three different civilizations – India, Japan and the US.[55]

Inter-state war in post-Cold War era is defined by geopolitics. Fawaz Gerges argued that politics continued to be shaped by clash of interests and not by culture.[56] Some may argue that Western intervention in the region was part of civilizational war but one cannot ignore that, at times, West intervened only at the request of the nations concerned like Kuwait and Bosnia in the past and the Iraq and the Libya at present. More over no Western operation has been endorsed by all the nations of the West. Iran's nuclear deal is another example of intra-civilizational differences where nations like Saudi Arabia and the UAE expressed all their opposition to the deal given its strategic implication in the region (another example of his ignorance of deep sectarian differences among Muslims). Western camp too was divided and some of the nations were vehement supporters of the deal for economic and strategic reasons while a few European nations were at the fore front of mediating the deal where Russia and Venezuela too played their role in securing the deal. The post-Cold War conflict has been within the same civilization because people communicate more within own society and the more you interact, as Rousseau said, more you enter into competition and that interaction and inter-dependence form the basis of the conflict.[57] Huntington seems

to fail to distinguish between ideological propensity and strategic choice in the world politics and here one finds his definition of civilization as blunt, static and arbitrary.

One cannot ignore the role of economic interdependence in today's globalized world which might subdue the culture instrumentality of international politics. If civilization can keep the nations apart or create a bridge, the economy can bring them closer. Huntington says that economic regionalism is causing civilization unanimity and cultural unity but today the economic self-interest has substantially trampled the cultural consideration. Economic condition is always important in world affairs which encourage peace over war, and urge for commerce and trade diminishes the prospect of war in today's world. It is the economic and political plight which encourages the civil strife and violent overthrow of the government and not the cultural and religious persuasions. The argument that cultural and religious wars occur when there is an absence of economic ideology does not explain the global economic order of today. The idea that future war is explained by racial and religious differences seems to ignore the fact that economics and trade also propel the war and we can see how imposition of certain economic model and policies by IMF and other financial institutions are creating domestic unrest in developing world. China is the largest US trade partner despite civilizational differences with the US. It means economic and geostrategic considerations can overshadow the civilizational paradigm of Huntington. If war is an extension of politics and politics is an extension of economics - it is economics that will fuel the agenda and alliance in future politics.[58] Instead of disharmony on the basis of civilizational difference (civilizational boxes), all world civilizations are united via mercantile interest and as stakeholders in the global market. Capitalism is the quasi-religion across boundaries of theist religion, history and geography.[59]

Similarly the role of technology and communication was overlooked by Huntington which is playing a decisive role in bringing people from across the world together and helps understanding each other's culture, religion and norms and remove the various false notions.

Refugee, Religion and the Clash of Civilization

Samuel P. Huntington in his thesis had also dealt extensively with the cultural convergence that is occurring in the West. He blames the surge of immigrants for the cultural convergence which, according to him, is damaging the true instinct of Western civilization.

Most of the immigrants in the US are from the Latin American, Central American and Caribbean region who are fuelling the spread of drug culture, engendering the growth of drug-related terrorism. He argues that acceptance of immigration increases anti-social behavior like violence, looting and rape. According to him, the future health of the West and its influence on other societies depend largely on its ability and the success to cope with the trend of immigration. Western culture is challenged by different acts and groups and one such challenge comes from the immigration from other civilizations that reject assimilation and continue to adhere to their ancestral heritage and propagate the values and customs of their home countries alone.[60] He is making a case for maintaining cultural purity of Western countries and restricting immigration. His projected percentage of population is sufficient to provoke hysterical paranoia among the racial purists when he remarked that one is not sure if America of tomorrow would be dominated by Asians or Black or Hispanics.[61]

He also envisaged that if assimilation failed, the US will become a cleft nation (one of his three categories of nation) witnessing all decadence and internal strife which Europe is facing today. He expresses his fear of the growing creed of multiculturalism due to the presence of outsiders which is posing a danger to the American national identity that has been defined culturally as heritage of Western civilization. He views that multiculturalism leads to a torn / schizophrenic nation.[62] He also observed that multiculturalism in US would deprive it of the national cultural heritage and multi-cultural US will not allow the US to remain the US but it will be the United Nations.

The discourse on immigration and the subsequent debates of assimilation and integration were triggered afresh after the world

witnessed the worst kind of refugee crises in the aftermath of the Arab uprising when millions started fleeing the war zone of Syria and other places due to increasing hunger, carnage and massacre. Most of the Syrian refugees and refugees from other nations first turned towards less volatile Arab nations and then to Western nations in search of peace and stability. If Huntington's fault lines prescription finds substantial resonance in the current conflict of the Arab world, it is equally reflected in the refugee crisis when we see it through the prism of clash of civilizations. The early discourse on immigration was completely securitized which was devoid of any humanitarian concern and there was no sign of solidarity with fellow human beings. The issue was instrumentalised in terms of religion which neglected the material and social needs of the refugees. For Huntington too, immigration was a cultural and economic issue which must be surmounted, discounting the valuable contribution of the migrant community in the economic and technological advancement of the US. Today the West is faced with the same fear invoked by Huntington while confronting the migration crisis. A few nations are predicting the ruin of the European value system and cultural purity due to swamping of their land by non-westerners. While for others, it would trigger an economic collapse and thwart its commitment to the well-being of their people.

The Arab migration crisis in its early days only witnessed the process of *'selfing'* and '*othering'* as Westerners viewed themselves as an embodiment of the rational and modern unlike Arabs who are representative of the irrationality contained in Islam. Essentialization occurred in public discourse amidst the refugee crisis with the identification of Muslims as a proponent of violence–a narrative that cut across good religion and bad religion. It was another reflection of othering the others of another civilization when religion was fixed as a factor in the human crisis. The violent nature of Islam was selectively picked up in political discourse surrounding the refugee crisis to justify the exclusion of the Muslims. The evolution of refugee crisis was entwined with the process of constructing the identity of refugees in terms of Islam and the rest.

Lines were completely blurred in identifying the refugees, terrorists and the Muslims. A few European nations like Germany, Austria and Sweden were more generous in welcoming these refugees. But countries in Eastern Europe, like Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic refused to accept their status as refugees. Czech President Zeman said that the refugee wave was an organised invasion and compared the Muslim refugees with Trojan horse. He also described the European culture of hospitality as naive and warned in a Christmas message that refugees might bring terrorism and infectious diseases to Europe.[63] Hungary's Prime Minister stated that overwhelming migrants in Europe are not refugees, but they are here to seek better lives.[64] Europe failed to affirm its centuries-old project of multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and notion of international citizenship.[65] Their refugee policy was marked by a very exclusionary attitude. Mahmood Mamdani's post-9/11 framework of 'Good Muslim-Bad Muslim' was also tested in the case of refugees and we saw the categorization of refuges into good and bad as well.

While announcing in early 2015 to host 20,000 refugees in the span of five years,[66] UK said that it will take the most vulnerable ones like the raped women, disabled children and male victims of violence. They were put under the category of good refugees and bad refugee. The bad refugees included those who engage in proactive livelihood and survival strategies and they were also called queue jumpers and bogus asylum seekers.[67] Bad Muslim refugees are perceived as an embodiment of inferior species that threatens the survival and well being of the "civilized one". The 'bad refugee' in a bio-political narrative is told that when immigrants drown in thousands in the Mediterranean, it is ultimately their fault because, they should not have come to take the resources that we needed for our "own people" in the time of austerity.

Former Australian Prime Minster Julia Gillard adopted measures to reduce the numbers of refugees drowning at sea in an attempt to reach Australia. Ms. Julia Gillard justified the harsh immigration regime and highlighted it as a measure to stop the Jihadist boats.[68]

Australia adopted a mandatory detention policy and there was only one reality about the refugees: that they were Muslims and only Muslims. A deep sense of relationship and association among religion, refugees, and Islam were highlighted by host nations and today religion and faith are important factors that define the nature of relationship with the refugees.

Muslim demonization was very visible and a binary stance was adopted, both at policy and polemic level, vis-à-vis the immigrants. Several Eastern European nations like Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic saw in the Muslim refugee a potential threat to their civilization. Huntington's twenty-five-year-old prediction of threat to Western civilization due to immigration is still resonating in many parts of the world. Amidst the crisis, there was deep European division and some nations like Germany and Sweden welcomed the refugees and many other opposed on many grounds and the most prominent reason cited was indicative of the hostility to the religious belief of the new comers.

At the height of the election campaign in the US, several Republican leaders called for religious screening of the refugees and expressed resentment against Syrian asylum seekers.[69] One of the senators introduced legislation banning Syrian Muslims from entering the US. The same senator called not to bar Christians from seeking asylum because, according to him, there is no meaningful risk of Christians committing acts of terror. Mr. Jeb Bush suggested that focus should be on Christians who lost everything in Syria and the media giant Murdoch tweeted that while banning the refugees, special privilege should be given to Christians.[70] The refugee crisis dominated the election campaign in the US as Mr. Ted Cruz; presidential candidate accused the democrats of ignoring the religious aspect of the mass invasion.

President Trump himself had called for complete ban on Muslims and also condemned the deciosn of Germany to welcome more than one million refugees and termed it as disaster.[71] According to one survey, around 60 % of the Republicans supported President Trump proposal.[72] The supporters of the bans argued that it would help to stop those who are perpetuating conflict across the world and US could avoid the Paris-like attack. President

Obama on the other hand termed the Republican's anti-Muslim stance a shameful act while Hillary tweeted it as a new low in US politics. The tendency has grown to attribute violence to the believers of a particular religion. American perception of Islam has gone negative and today 56% say that religion of Islam is not friendly towards the US. Seventy seven % Tea party members subscribe to the notion that Islam is at odd with the US and the Muslims are violent, radical and intolerant.[73] Europe has already started bearing the brunt of immigration in the job market. Many jobs in Germany are being given to the immigrant in a drive to assimilate and integrate them in the cultural spheres of Germany, the most generous nation among all Europe towards the Arab immigrants. A few have welcomed the immigrants due to lack of labor force, but they, due to lack of skill and qualification, cannot be accommodated. According to the Pew survey, around 82 % of Hungarians and 75 % of Polish find that refugees are burden on their national economy.[74]

Huntington had argued that immigrants would carry along with them the drug culture and antisocial behavior to the host nations and today the same fear is being expressed in the West vis-a-vis the Arab immigrants. According to the Pew survey, many people in Europe like in Hungary (76 %) Poland (71 %), Holland (61%) , Germany (61%) have expressed their fear that refugees in their countries will increase the likelihood of terrorism.[75] The Europeans are equally convinced that immigrants would be involved in terror and other criminal activities. Huntington's argument bout assimilation and integration is also proving true in case of today's Arab immigrants. Huntington had expressed his apprehension that immigrants would always carry the cultural baggage of their ancestry which would obstruct their assimilation. Something alike is being witnessed in the case of Arab immigrants. Many Europeans have similar grievances against the Arab immigrants and complain that they always assert their distinctive culture which hinders their assimilation. According to latest survey conducted by Pew, most people in Greece (78%), Hungry (76%) and Spain (78%) think that Muslims want to be seen as a distinct community in their host countries.[76]

9/11, ISIS and Rational for Civilizational War

When the intellectual and strategic communities were still engaged in discussing the correctness and validity of Huntington's thesis, an event of unprecedented scale shook the world both strategically and politically and many saw it as an omen of a global disaster. History remembers this event as 9/11 when the most powerful nation on the surface of the earth was attacked by a terror group, 'Al-Qaeda'. It was a series of coordinated attacks on the United States which rendered around three thousand dead and innumerable injured.

A large part of the Western media and members of the academia and policy makers found the echoes of 'Clash of civilization' resonating in the act and interpreted the attack as the maiden and visible march of the "Clash of Civilizations" and saw it as a 'civilizational war' in action. The New York Times wrote in an article that it is about Islam and in a series of articles and commentaries, it further called the event by many names like, 'Jihad 101', 'Dictates of Faith', 'Dreams of holy war', 'Divine inspiration'[77] and many other typologies were assigned to the epochal event not to prove Huntington correct only but to declare that the civilizational paradigm is the only existing paradigm to define the post-9/11 world politics. Huntington himself in an interview said that Bin Laden had hastened the clash.[78] Sixty prominent academics including Fukuyama headed by Huntington signed the petition endorsing the war on terror on the ground that it defended the American values, way of life and the civilization.[79]

I will not delve into the intricacies and conspiratorial elements of 9/11, but I will very briefly analyze if the event is empirically qualified to be seen as a war between two civilizations. One may question the perception about the attack itself as a sign of clash because how can Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization with certain political and militaristic ideology and confined to not-so-substantial geographical unit of the huge geographical landscape, represent a civilization. The conclusion about 9/11 as a war of two civilizations could be only fuelled by pre existing assumption of the views about the present world order while the act in reality

was a reflection of transnational terror. Both the Taliban and Al-Qaeda have not emanated from the main stream of Islamic political thoughts and accepting their acts or attacks as the justification for CS would be just like accepting that the 1995 Oklahoma bombing was reflection and representative of entire Christian philosophy and religion.

Can an Islamic civilization, well spread from Morocco to Indonesia and from Sudan to Central Asia with numerous historical, cultural, political and theological fault lines be represented by a group of fanatics with no declared support even from a tiny Muslim–dominated nation? While commenting over the 9/11 attack and its sinner, one cannot over look the trajectory of the Islamists/terrorists, overt and covert involvement of Western powers in general and the US in particular in nurturing these groups and more importantly the roles of regimes, political alliances, culture of political protégés in the Arab world and non-resolution of many Arab crises where complacency and instrumentality of the West could not be denied.

Of course, these issues cannot and must not justify the act but I am articulating that any attack of any magnitude, claimed or imposed on any terror or radical group cannot be clubbed under the rubric of clash of civilization or global clash. But no doubt the existing milieu provided a potential ground and sympathetic environment to charge the political psyche and alter the political behavior and attitude of a very miniscule minority of a confessional group whose total population exceeds 1.3 billion and found in every continent of the planet. Most of us who define the act in the light of justification of Huntington do not discuss the real politics of a civilization which has been declared to be at war with the West. Throughout the clash narrative of Huntington, one word (P) has been prominently missing and one cannot afford to overlook the role of the Palestinian crisis in shaping and determining the political disposition of those who inhabit the land which has never experienced an uninterrupted peace. It is no wonder that the Arab world has been the origin and the flash point of radicalism, not to mention the fact that the sinners of 9/11 were all Arabs alone.

Within hours of the collapse of the twin towers, Robert Fisk wrote in the *Independent*,

> "So it has come to this. The entire history of modern Middle East, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Balfour declaration, Lawrence of Arabia's lies, the Arab revolt, the foundation of the state of Israel, four Arab –Israel wars, 34 years of Israeli brutal occupation of the Arab land-Some of us warned of the explosion to come . But we never dreamt of this nightmare".[80]

Anyone who follows the region or has acquired a minimum level of understanding of the regional politics can easily see the hands of the Western imperial actors either to execute their strategic design or to help the Arab rulers in their political objectives in all the above mentioned contours. How justifiable is the statement on the part of some US scholars like Reverend Franklin who declared that, "We are not attacking Islam but Islam is attacking us and the God of Islam is not the same God and He is not the son of God of Christians".[81] The West is seen as an invader, stealer of the Arab's oil, and as a power which is not merely sustaining the puppet Arab regimes against people's wishes but prompting them to scuttle democratic voices of the streets.

Fred Halliday argued in the *Guardian* that the crisis of 9/11 should be explained by political tension, especially over Palestine, rather than by nonsense talk of Clash of Civilizations.[82] Huntington's taxonomy of civilization on the basis of religion is too simplistic to describe any conflict.

Huntington himself had advocated that the conflict involving two civilizations will lead to escalation of higher level but one has seen that after the 9/11 much larger number of attacks have taken place in non-Western nations and most prominently the Arab world. No doubt the perpetuator of the crime attacked the Western forces but the reason could be traced or attributed to their imperialist and occupation policies of their lands from Afghanistan to Iraq. The political elites equally remained the focus of their target because of their consent to the Western intervention. Does the civilizational paradigm fit into the post 9/11 war on terror as the

largest victims belong to the same religion? Some have accused the Muslim nations of a lukewarm response to the war on terror and their apparent reluctance for them became a justifiable ground to see it as sign of civilizational divide. But one can also not ignore the divide within Europe, a heritage of American civilization for Huntington, over the war on terror and their not only reluctance but rejection to join the Iraq war (a part of the war on terror). One is well reminded of erstwhile US Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's statement when he had said that France and Germany represent the old Europe.[83]

The 9/11 attack was more driven by resentment against the past policies of the US across the Muslim world and it is difficult to imagine that act was based on the long and bitter memory of the past, a core of civilizational thesis. If the past and long memory had determined the outlook of the sinners, they would have preferably attacked the European territories whose hostility towards Muslims and Islam is well reflected in the history of past Crusades. The clubbing of the 9/11 and war on terror under the rubric of CS is a media construct and reflective of the constructivist approach which primarily focuses on the language where the discourse and image of an act is constructed through discursive process.[84] The nomenclature of the clash of civilization is a social construct too which by all accounts lacks the realities of the fact and it serves the interest of the two warring groups.

The imagery of an Islamic coalition uniting against Western crusade resembles nothing more than a Jihadist reading of Huntington's text.[85] Islamic terrorist and other radical acts are determined more by the geopolitical and economic predicament rather than any religious hatred or deep civilizational animosity. One can also refer to the 1997 US project of New American Century[86] which had already contained some design to assert the cultural and military supremacy in the ensuing century. The 9/11 attack came as blessing in disguise for the US to work on the project and implement its project of the New American Century.

Identifying the war on terror as a civilizational war is an effort to offer a binary image of the world order and an approach

encouraging the act of securitization represented by Copenhagen school of the International Relations. It is a powerful actor which uses the language of security to address a particular constituency and frighten them about the existential nature of threat. The securitization of 9/11 has helped US to pursue its strategic goal which helped it to impose the ethnocentric views of political organization and liberal democracy on the other and impose exceptional legal measures and restriction as well. According to the neo-conservative, the survival of the occident will depend on the American will and capacity to assert Western identity based on European legacy.[87]

The same holds true for the ISIS which was seen by many as another challenge to Western civilization and as the dawn of another level of civilizational war between Islam and the West. Like the Al-Qaeda, the origin and evolution of the ISIS should be seen purely in the context of the Arab politics of last two decades in general and of the last five years in particular. The ISIS emerged in the backdrop of the regional political fragility entwined with the deepening divisive politics of Western interventionist forces. The failing of a series of states from Afghanistan to Iraq to Syria, to Libya to Yemen and the subsequent reign of sectarian forces and the politics of negligence at the cost of an inclusive and accommodative polity propelled the rise of the ISIS.

Many started seeing in the rise of the ISIS another wave of war of civilization but it holds no ground. In the case of the ISIS, the argumentation of civilizational paradigm is doomed to fail because they have killed much larger number of their own people rather than people of another faith. They seem to be more sect-centric contrary to Al-Qaeda's religious centricity and their sect-centricity has not allowed them to emerge as a civilizational challenge to the West. They are more inward rather than outward looking. More over, they have been able to capture large swathes of territories unlike Al-Qaeda not because of any well-organized, long term and comprehensive blue print but because of the complete absence of state machinery in the large parts of the region. What has further helped their horizontal and vertical reach are the rampant usage of social media and advanced techniques of communication.

Communication and transportation have created international fault lines and that can be seen in the rise of the ISIS

When it comes to defining or looking at the ISIS as civilizational threat or a civilizational contender, one will argue that ISIS is not a civilization but it is an ideological grouping while civilization is known to be a cultural grouping. Moreover it shot to fame not by posing a major challenge to the West but by exploiting the vulnerability of the state when it declared the Islamic Caliphate in Iraq in June 2014. How can an entity like the ISIS which arose out of the deepening social and political divide and prolonged lingering uncertainty in every sphere of life and social insecurity among the youth be counted as civilizational threat or posing a long term challenge to the West.

What applies to the Al-Qaeda, applies to the ISIS. One can say that its rise is propelled by the existing immediate context of the Arab politics and the ISIS and its actions are not swayed by the long historic memory of the crusade era which would determine its present. Many scholars like Rubio saw the content of civilizational paradigm and claimed that what happened in Paris was a clash of civilization[88]. If the ISIS had hatred for any values of France or the West, they would have attacked any peaceful university and not the selected media houses and killed the editor of Charlie Hebdo only who, according to them, committed an act of blasphemy. Similarly if it had been the case, they would not be targeting and beheading the members of the hostile sect. If the ISIS or any Islamist for that matter had any deep-rooted hatred towards the liberal values and democracy of the West, how could they have spent years in fighting the autocracy of Assad and other rulers? I still harbor doubts over whether the Islamist knocking at the gates of Europe or assaulting it from within are the bearer of the whole of Islamic civilization.

The ISIS is not a civilization but it is an unrecognized state while a civilization constitutes a cultural grouping. They are a group of hardcore, Wahabist fanatics of a narrow and exclusive sectarian Islamic persuasion who have been able to exploit the political and social vulnerability of the disillusioned youth. But they cannot

be accounted as a major civilizational force or contender for a position in today's political or cultural discourse. At most, the ISIS can be imagined as an entity fighting the war with a sense of power within the Muslim world alone and want an ideological control of the Muslim world.

ISIS is a living counter example to Huntington's hypotheses which is evidenced by strife within the religious groups rather than a fight between the Muslim world and rest. The current political and strategic conflict between Europe and Russia over Ukraine could not be cited as an example of war between two civilizations, and so the actions of the ISIS by no stretch of imagination can be conceived as the fulfillment of Huntington's paradigm. There should be an alternate method of understanding the post-9/11 politics and it is not clash between two distinct civilizations but between two powerful structures (imperialist forces and resurgent branch of Islam) where the former has established its authority and later is aspiring to be seen as an equally important force. Anyone looking at Islamic fundamentalism as a sign of clash of civilizations will be grist to the mill of Islamist forces.[89] Further the West itself is against Islamic fundamentalism only and not against the entire Muslim world.

President Donald Trump and Re-reading Huntington

In his inaugural address after taking oath as the 45th President of the United States, President Donald Trump stated very candidly that it is his vow to save the civilized world from Islamic terrorism.[90] What was missing from his address was the idiom 'free world'- a word that has hitherto dominated the diplomatic lexicon of most of his predecessors and he used instead the term 'civilized world. It was not merely the replacement of the phrase but there was an additional phrase in his address, 'Islamic terrorism'. He made it clear that the ensuing foreign policy plank of the US would be to fight not an ideology like communism in the past but a religion and a civilization. One is also reminded of the advocacy by many in the US, after the demise of the USSR, to turn against the green peril (Islam) after the elimination of the red peril (USSR).

It was the first sign of the civilizational war the US would be launching under the administration of President Trump. He is not alone in his mission but many in his cabinet have called for combating a religion to the finish which is almost a replica of 20th century fascism. Mike Flynn, former security advisor of President Donald Trump was more than candid in claiming that fear of Muslims is genuine[91]. Mr. Flynn further remarked in his much-cited book, 'The field of fight' that, "We are in a world war against a messianic mass movement of evil people, most of them inspired by a totalitarian ideology.[92] It is a new attribute of US political discourse which undoubtedly seems to have been influenced by the thesis of clash of civilizations. Identifying the religion of Islam as something intimidating or adversary to the values of the West is complete reflection of overwhelming influence of the ideas and views propounded by Samuel P. Huntington. The tern 'violent extremism' has been replaced with focus on Islamist terrorist groups.[93] No doubt Islam has occupied a prominent place in the US foreign policy discourse for decades but its imagination as a unified monolithic and as a hostile and evil opponent of the West which represents liberty, freedom, rule of law and accountability is something unprecedented.

President Trump's chief strategist, Mr. Brannon had long back said that Judeo-Christian civilization is in the very beginning stage of a brutal and bloody conflict with Jihadist-Islamist fascism.[94] Looking at the universe in a binary civilizational frame is nothing but vindication and the endorsement of Huntington's prophecy of the ensuing major civilizational war.

Though it has been merely hundred days since Mr. Trump has entered the White House, he and his team have given enough indications of the ensuing nature of the engagement with Islam and the rest of the world. During his political campaign, President Trump in a speech before the Centre for National Interest had echoed the same sentiment expressed by Huntington about Western universal values and its exposition to the world. He had said, "Instead of trying to spread universal values that not everybody wants, we should understand and strengthen the Western

civilization".[95] What an amazing similarity with what Huntington mentioned in his book when he had remarked that multiculturalism at home threatens the United States and Western universalism abroad threatens the West. In the same address, President termed the ideas of making Western democracy workable in the countries that had no experience, as a dangerous one. According to him, liberal intervention and championing democratic change around the world have led to a dangerous outcome.[96]

Apart from projection of Islam as a major threat to the West, there are other reflections of Huntington in the new administration's policies. Huntington's another insight that had provoked the readers was the issue of immigration which he, a quarter century ago, had named another threat to the West in general and the US in particular. Huntington's ideas of unchecked immigration and its dangers seem to have deep influence on President Trump's current policies. Amidst his campaign, he had echoed his anti-immigration sentiment and had promised to ban those from Latin America who according to him spread the drug culture and other crimes which no doubt was the sentiment of Huntington too. He promised to build a wall between Mexico and the US to stop the invasion of immigrants who were not eating into American jobs alone but polluting the culture of the United States as well.

What really created uproar across the globe was his order banning the entry of Muslims from the seven Muslim-dominated nations (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia and Sudan). For many, the decision came as an omen of the 'Clash of Civilizations in Actions'. The move was seen as an attempt to stigmatize the Muslims. The anti-Muslim move on the part of the new US administration had many supporters and travel ban was an example of this. His anti-immigrant or anti- refugee views seem to have been reminiscent of 'Protestant, Anglo-Saxon Identity'- the core of Huntington's dictum, "Who are we".[97] He is the one who has harped about the threat of Muslins, refugee, Mexicans immigrants and Asian Economy. President called the German Chancellor, Ms. Merkel a traitor to Western values for showing generosity towards Muslim refugees in her country.

The thesis of Huntington seems to have been permeating down to the strategic and intellectual landscape of the new administration. One can mention here Huntington's prophecy of an ensuing war between the West and the rest. The same fear has been expressed by President Trump's security advisor Mr. Flynn who in his latest book talked of an anti-Western alliance represented by Russia, China, Syria Iran, and Venezuela and moreover according to him, it would also include, Hezbollah, ISIS and Al-Qaeda.[98] President Trump's concern of the weakening American stature and losing respect due to its declining economy is further resonance of the same thesis.

His ideas are also indicative of his firm belief in American protectionism and American exceptionalism which is the central theme in Huntington's argument. His foreign policy does not seem to be an embodiment of faith in globalism when he himself remarked that, "I am not going to surrender America to globalism".[99] His policy is more of new protectionism of US in the name of American exceptionalism which the 'clash thesis' was finally meant to convey.

American world view under the stewardship of President Trump seems to be more guided by Neo-Conservatives who have always believed in the dialectic of civilization which served as a generic for Mr. Huntington's thesis. The apparent intention of the disengagement on the part of the current US administration cannot be merely attributed to its inability to overcome the crisis in Iraq and Afghanistan but it is also intended towards reasserting its belief in American exceptionalism.

There is a lot of evidence that his foreign policy team is filled with prospective Neocons or enthusiasts of the Clash of civilization theory who want to double down on a moral crusade against Islam and the Islamism. Similarly Trump's anti-Islamic sentiment is finding great echo in Europe which is seeking a mega alliance against the Islam. The presidential candidate in the French election, Ms. Le Pen shared the same resentment against the Islam and immigrants. She proposed that the US, France and Russia should form an alliance against the Islamic fundamentalism. Far

right parties with Trumpist views are prospering in Europe where the immigration issue has become a major political plank.

As I mentioned earlier there have always been structural and geostrategic constraints in global politics which does not allow any state or nation to be completely swayed by a civilizational paradigm or completely guided by the framework of enemy-friend or true-false and black-white. Because diplomacy and strategy – the two hallmarks of international relations - are always conducted in a grey zone. Similarly I also mentioned the argument of Fuad Ajami who says that it is the state which controls the civilization and not the vice versa. Here too I will briefly try to summarize how the policies and programmes of the new US President are constrained by geo-strategic underpinning and the American legacy of political and cultural liberalism, despite having full faith in a civilizational paradigm, which did not allow the new political dispensation to be blinded by the prescription of Huntington.

Despite all his anti-Islamic venom and identifying the Islam as a monolithic, cruel and feared religion, he could not afford to break ties with the traditional US allies in the Muslim world like Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. In his address to the US Congress, he said, "We are going to work with our allies and friends from the Islamic world to eradicate the Islamic terrorism".[100] After coming to power, he not merely praised President El-Sisi of Egypt but promised to extend all support to his anti-terror operation during the former's recent visit to the United States. Perhaps, he knows well the strategic relevance of Egypt for stability of the region and he also understands that any political instability in Egypt would harm the interests of Israel which for any US President would be a cause of major concern.

Despite all the global hue and cry over the covert and overt roles of Saudi Wahabist ideology in the perpetuation of global terrorism, there seems to be no change in the bilateral ties between the two old partners. New US Secretary of States, Rex Tillerson has already paid a visit to Saudi Arabia to attend the Saudi-USA CEO Summit where Mr. Tillerson praised the role of Saudi Arabia in achieving shared economic and strategic goals.[101] I think only pragmatism

and geo strategic indispensability can define President Trump's landing in Saudi Arabia as his first foreign destination in May 2017 and signing a billion-dollar arms deal with the regime. Not only this, he also choose the occasion to address the Arab-Islamic leaders from across the world. In his address, he not only avoided the anti-Islamic rhetoric of the past when he had constantly called upon to eliminate 'radical Islamic terrorism' inviting a lot wrath. But in his address to the Muslim leaders at Riyadh, he instead termed the fight against terrorism a battle between 'good and evil'. Nothing except geostrategic obligation can justify his decision to choose Saudi Arabia as his first foreign destination. Before his visit to Saudi Arabia, he had stated, "I would begin my historic foreign tour as the President of the United State by landing in Saudi Arabia and I am looking forward to meet the spiritual and religious leaders of the Islamic world there". He further said that his visit would create new bases of support and cooperation among all the Muslim states to fight extremism, terrorism and the violence.[102]

The King of Jordan has already met President Trump and both promised support to each other in the global fight against Islamic terrorism. No doubt the issue of radicalism and terrorism are defining features of American policy at the moment and a lot of pragmatism has been observed in this regard. Earlier, for President Trump, the removal of Assad was not a priority because, according to him, he was fighting a war against terrorism. But he took no time in launching a surprise attack against the Syrian military bases after President Assad's regime was apparently found to be involved in chemical gas attacks against civilians which killed many.

His association and positive gesture towards President Putin of Russia is also evidence of the fact that in globalised world, no nation can afford to be guided by a single consideration in the sphere of foreign policy. Speaking on China and Russia, President Trump said in a lecture at the Centre for National Interest that, "we desire to live peacefully and friendly with both Russia and China. We should seek common ground based on shared interest. He said that Russia has also seen the horror of Islamic terrorism; I believe

in easing the tension and improved relationship with Russia from a position of strength.[103]

If the President's cultural and religious appeal is likely to remain hostage to national geostrategic and political obligation in the future, the same was proved true in the case of his decision to ban Muslims. The vibrancy of American political culture and well accepted norms of political dissent came in his way and his decision was not only quashed but brought thousands out on the streets of the different states in the US to protest the ban. Within hours, the decision of President Trump was quashed by a federal court judge Donnelly in an emergency hearing.[104] The ban against Muslim travelers witnessed a series of protests in different cities across the US. One of the protest marches was attended by the daughter of defeated democrat candidate, Ms. Hillary Clinton.[105]

Sects, ethnicities, tribes, ideologies and strategies: Where is the Islamic Civilization?

After having witnessed the political and strategic trajectories of the Arab world fraught with multiple level of raging conflict and perpetual alliance and counter alliance among different regional, religious and even civilizational groups, one can affirm that Huntington's thesis has both failed and passed if measured against the present context. He had not merely forecast the clash between civilizations but he had foreseen the ethnic and tribal conflict within the single civilization and this is what the region is witnessing today.

When it comes to sectarian crisis, two hard core Islamist rivals are determining the trajectory of the region. Iran and Saudi Arabia are not fighting directly but are abetting respective regimes and non-state actors to achieve their objectives. The geostrategic map of the region is being determined by a sectarian agenda where other sectarian groups too like Hezbollah of Lebanon and Houthis of Yemen and Nusrah Front and the ISIS in Iraq and Syria are equally involved in the regional conflict.

It is not merely sectarianism which is arousing the conflict in the Arab world but ethnicity as a factor too is proving to be a

catalyst. The role of Kurdish forces in Iraq and Syria and its abetment by other regional actors are driving the regional polity. How Turkey is fighting the Syrian Kurds who are being abetted by Syria against Turkey and anti-ISIS fight in Iraq is consolidating the Kurds, which is a source of concern for Turkey for historical and strategic reasons. Kurdish forces are focusing more on their ethno-nationalist identity than their Islamic Sunni creed. Tribal divide is further deepening in the region and the Islam as a mega narrative in Huntington's thesis seems to hold no water today. One can see the tribal divide in Yemen and in Libya which are the biggest impediments, in addition to other economic and strategic factors, to the lasting peace.

What Huntington has predicted about the civilizational paradigm of politics failed to be borne out in the case of Islamist parties too. The struggle for the place of religion in the politics divided the Muslims instead of uniting them. The division is more between the different streams of Islamists rather than within the secular forces and many refuse to recognize even the Muslim-ness of the other groups. The Muslim Brotherhood (MBH) and Hamas of Palestine enjoy a good rapport with Iran, and the support of Qatar (a GCC member) to both has become one of the sources of its strained ties with Saudi Arabia despite the fact that Saudi Arabia is itself a bastion of Islam. Saudi Arabia's support to Iyad Allawi's party in Iraq, himself a Shia by birth but leader of secular front in the election of 2005 and 2010 is well known.[106] The Baathist secular regime of Syria could not have been to the liking of an ideological Iran but the common enemy in the form of Iraq and Israel cemented the close ties between them.

It is not merely Saudi-Iran rivalry that is animating the current politics in the region where another actor is Turkey. A decade before the Arab uprising, Turkey had placed itself in the region as a viable power and Turkey's strategic ambition was well visible after the departure of President Saddam when it directed its regional policy towards containing the growing Iranian influence in the region. Amidst the transition, Turkey's treatment of the region as a zone of interest has transformed it into a zone of influence.[107] The erstwhile Prime Minster Erdogan was the first to visit Egypt,

Tunisia and Libya after the revolution and express sympathy for the Islamist wave there. Turkey was the most vehement critic of the army's coup in Egypt in 2013 and Mr. Erdogan had said that those who cannot call coup a coup are supporters of the coup.[108]

It is worth mentioning how the fight against the ISIS is divided and different nations are dealing with it strategically, which itself is thwarting regional unity against the menace. The growing Turkey-Iran estrangement due to the increased proximity between Turkey and Russia and deepening antipathy between Egypt and Turkey due to Islamic-oriented foreign policy of Turkey are a few examples which does not allow one to approve the civilizational or Islamist paradigm of world politics advocated by Huntington.

One can also see how barren is the perpetual effort of some nations in the Arab world to create a bloc for name's sake and, further, the strategic inconsistency or changeability is nowhere more pronounced than in the recent strategic and diplomatic shift pursued by Egypt. Egypt voted twice along with Russia on Syria which antagonized Saudi Arabia - a nation which almost rescued Egypt economically not long ago.[109] The ambivalent attitude of Egypt to the current war in Yemen has also created a rift between the two and, moreover, the Egyptian position on Syria seems to serve the interest of Russia and Iran more than that of Saudi Arabia.

In the last six years, the tumult in the region is characterized by strategic, diplomatic and political inconsistencies among stakeholders and proxies. These political and strategic maneuverings are well marked by formation of alliances and counter alliances, intra and inter-ideological and sectarian wars and the shifting web of interplay among different regional players.

Huntington's political and cultural wisdom preached the belief that Islam is a monolithic religion and its hostility to the West is innate because of its wounded pride and sense of inadequacy. But he failed to see the heterogonous nature of the Islam. He had also set forth the claim that Islam was an expansionist entity but, in given circumstances, how it would expand when the religion is itself under the siege and encumbered with deep internal rift

where one theological or ideological school is challenging the other one.

How could Muslim Brotherhood (MBH) in Egypt expand when the army has scuttled its political activities and subsequently ensured its complete absence from the political sphere? Other Islamist blocs are either retreating or making ideological compromises. Tunisia has almost abandoned its legacy of political Islam. The extremist and radical Islamic forces are confronted with the international alliance against terror and they have never been a civilizational entity. The antipathy of Iranian Shiite Islam towards Saudi Wahabist Islam and vice-versa is not latent.

Huntington treated Islam as a unified religion and perhaps failed to read a divided or torn history of Islam both in terms of politics and theology. While dealing with the religion and its role in the conflict, he had averred that frequency and intensity of wars are enhanced by belief in different gods.[110] But in today's Arab world, the dynamics and tendencies in the conflict are more determined by sectarian, ethnic, tribal, regional and strategic persuasions. The Shia-Sunni conflict in Iraq and Syria fails to fit in with Huntington's civilizational paradigm. In the same way, the attack on Christians in Iraq and other places is more a reflection of anger against the US policy and the Western powers' animosity towards Muslim world.

One can hardly see an element of civilization-based unity as the Arab world is devouring itself because of the deep differences within. Moreover, one difference is propelling another level of difference (sectarianism determining strategy) and, meanwhile, Islam, Muslims and the Arabs have emerged as different entities. Of course Islam is a threat but not from the point of Huntington's prescription but from the Islamic point of view itself. The prescription of Islam in the light of Huntington's worldwide perspective has failed as he had an overarching frame of reference when thinking of world politics.

The notion of a single Islamic culture is an erroneous notion because the whole of Islamic history in all contexts is marred by multiple contradictions. Multifold differences within the Muslim world are

not marked merely by theological or religious difference but also determined by difference in history, economic, ethnicity, culture and sects. The level of economic development and disparity and the role and power of religious fundamentalists make little sense for them to be lumped together in the single entity of "Islamic civilization". Huntington seems to have overestimated the capability and coherence among the Islamic nations. The Islamic world will be further divided given the new-found political rift in the region.

Brexit, ASEAN, Pan-Africanism and Civilizational Paradigm of Huntington

I have stated earlier about Huntington's imagination of creation of an Atlantic community consisting of Western Europe and North America. Further, the notion of a joint US-Europe entity and its relevance is well reflected in the imagination of a US former defense secretary when he said, "If one looks down from outer space on earth, you find a couple of handful of countries that are generally like thinking and they tend to be Western Europe and North America.[111] Huntington put forward the idea of Euro-American integration on the basis of their cultural commonality but his idea of cultural commonality is suggestive of his obliviousness to historical, ideological and political differences between the US and Europe. Meanwhile, his longing for uniting two political and economic blocs (North America and Europe) to confront another civilization (Islam) is an example of his pre-determined notion of clash between two civilizations

The divide between the Mediterranean and the Scandinavian within Europe, the strategic and political divide among NATO members on various occasions (invasion of Iraq in 2003, for example) and the ongoing sectarian conflict in the Arab world have already questioned the civilizational complacency in civilizational paradigm of Huntington. The most recent example of failing the test of civilizational commonality and reinforcement of strategic and economic determinants in world politics is the exit of Britain from the European Union (Brexit) in 2016. In a national referendum on 23 June, 2016, people in large numbers

voted to come out of the EU and that was major blow to the Great European Project and to the dictum that existence of EU itself was an indication of geographical historical, cultural and religious unity of the European landscape. Brexit was the strongest decision in the post-War era. It was about domestic economy, national sovereignty, immigration and strategic and political space for UK in an increasingly globalised world. Brexit has shown how generation and class division are bringing new identities[112] and completely challenged the civilizational predetermination. Polls have indicated that lines across Britain are largely drawn around age, education, and social class. University educated professionals preferably voted for Remain while the Brexit voters were from the old generation, the less educated and the working class. [113] The EU sought to create a political, economic and social model where one could be born in London, educated in France and reside in Germany but Brexit has declared that being British could not be defined by being European alone, thereby reflecting a toxic cocktail middle class economic discontent, nationalism and xenophobia.

Contrary to his idea of new European identity, Huntington would have never imagined the exit of UK from the European integration process. It is also a fact that Brittan unlike other EU members had always an awkward relationship with it and there were always dual views about its integration with the EU. The UK's awkward relationship with the EU can be traced back to its sense of historical, cultural, political and economic and military supremacy and, moreover, its animosity towards nations of old Europe like France and Germany. Here one can be reminded of the statement of the former US defense secretary, Mr. Rumsfeld when he, during Iraq's war, had termed France and Germany as Old Europe.[114] Brexit has proved that economic or political integration cannot undermine deep-rooted cultural and political differences of the past within a single civilization. Like many cases in other parts of the world, it was political and economic factors and compulsion of domestic national politics that determine political attitude, and nothing was guided by civilizational pre-fixation. The Brexit vote has produced a new political allegiance based on the Leave-Remain divide. Today, nearly three-fourths of the people think that they are either for Leave or Remain.

In the political sphere, it was a search for a new political identity or revival of an old identity representing its cultural and political core which perhaps led to the exit of UK. Likewise, in the economic sphere, it was a downturn in the EU's economy which raised doubts about the viability of the EU's economic future. Brexit was a call to reclaim its economic sovereignty and come out of the clutches of the Brussels Bureaucracy.[115] The Brexit vote was against the economic model that has been in existence for more than three decades but failed to cater the need of the masses. Most of the Britain were paranoid of the migration from other nations of Europe particularly Eastern Europe which has threatened their job prospects, and raised fears of lowering of the standard of living and public services. The Britons do not like Eastern Europeans working for less, and those migrants are also perceived to be a threat to their old national identity.

UK's exit from the EU also marks the resurgence of the nation-state and step back in the force of globalization. The exit of UK was not merely suggestive of a search for a separate and new political identity or economic protectionism but it was a sign of the changing strategic scenario within the EU itself. The growing economic clout of Germany after the coming to power of Chancellor Merkel has made it an indispensible power. The rise of Germany as an economic power perhaps hurt UK indirectly because once the UK was the strongest power of Europe and growing economic value of Germany might have made Britain feel that it has been marginalized. The words of Churchill bear testimony to Europe of today when once he had asked, what is Europe? And, he replied that, "Europe was a rubble heap, charnel house, a breeding ground for pestilence and hate."[116]

Immediately after the result was announced, there were reports that the city of London saw racially motivated expressions against Polish Cultural and Social Association and their buildings was defaced with the graffiti "Go home". Pamphlets were distributed calling Britain to leave the EU which also read, "No more Polish vermin".[117] Brexit itself and the post-Brexit attitude demolished the notion of the EU as representative of a pan-European identity and collective future of the continent. Earlier it was seen as a

golden standard of supra-national governance and proof of an international cooperation transcending the boundaries of narrow national interest but these incidents of hatred are indicative of the fact that Europe is entering into an era of new national cultural warfare and isolationism, and that cultural warfare may be under guise of economic and political grievances.

Today's Europe is witnessing a new trend of political, economic and cultural othering of members of its own civilization. In the wake of the immigration crisis, growing animosity between Germany and Hungary is an obvious example. The Hungarian Prime Minster condemned Germany on nationalism and said that Germany has no right to teach Hungary the philosophy of nationalism because Hungary is a much older nation and Germany never existed before 1871.[118] The nations of Eastern Europe are rejecting the centrality of Brussels. Nations like Poland and Hungary have started defining their own values: the fatherland, the Christian, and the family.[119] Similar movements are rising in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and they are revolting against the multiculturalism of Western Europe. Members of Eastern European nations have launched a counter-cultural movement against the values of Western Europe. The East–West divide has become a part of the new politics in Europe and it has become an issue of integration on both sides of the continent. Conservatives in the West say they are so different and conservatives in the East too echo they are so different.[120] The gap between the East and the West in the socio-economic spheres, equality, social security, economic efficiency, political culture, institution building and family and other social values perhaps has not allowed the emergence of a Europe as a single homogonous civilizational entity. Europe has started experiencing bitter ground there and many of the nations in Europe today are slowly reflecting their disdain for the very idea of Europe. There are several explicit and implicit divisions within the EU itself. The division can be seen in terms of old member states and new member states, core EU countries and the rest, big and small countries, rich and poor, NATO and non-NATO members and spheres of influence[121] and these are the political and strategic factors which do not accord legitimacy or rationality to civilizational concept of unity.

The idea of Europe is being redefined in Eastern Europe. Today's shift towards the far right in Eastern European politics proves that Huntington's fixation of a civilizational paradigm has limited appeal. Undoubtedly the changing political and strategic scenario and drive for cultural and economic protectionism among nations of a single civilization can simply undermine the myth of civilizational unity and pit one nation against another belonging to the same civilization.

It is important to note that Huntington neglects to account for another historical framework in global affairs that encourages conflict and he abstained from noticing the role of historically rooted ethnicity, social inequality and political economy that have shaped substantial number of modern day conflicts. Here I would like to examine the cases in the continent of Africa. While explaining African civilization, he has no final view about Africa as a civilization and himself used the term 'possibly'[122] while categorizing Africa as a civilization. He argues that the northern part of Africa is an Islamic divination while Ethiopia has its own core civilization and rest of the continent has western elements because of their colonial past.[123]

What is absent from Huntington's thesis is the issue of ethnic and racial minorities which does not fit into any civilizational category and they are well spread across the world. They vary from other indigenous groups in racial, cultural and religious terms but their common historical experience makes them more similar than any of Huntington's civilization. The conflict with these groups does not fit in to inter-civilizational conflict or intra-civilizational conflict but comes under third category. Afghanistan is completely engulfed in an ethnic war for more than three decades despite the fact the nation is part of greater Islamic civilization.

Like in the case of the Arab world and other regional conflicts, he neglects to accurately portray the level in which the sociology of ethnicity, tribalism and racism has abetted the modern conflict which is well pronounced in many of the conflicts in Africa. Fault lines are not solely a manifestation of civilizational or cultural divide but it is agitated occasionally by the absence of state

neutrality or surface as an expression of economic and cultural grievances of particular groups. Huntington talks about those nations which find difficulty with cultural identification like Turkey, Mexico and Russia but he excludes those nations which have no cultural linkage like the nations of the African continent. The most horrendous conflict in Rwanda of the last century comes to mind in this regard which lacks a paradigm between two opposing civilizations. It was a tribal and ethnic dispute in Rwanda which provided the catalyst for genocide which would kill around 800, 000 people in Rwanda in April-May 1994.[124] In Rwanda a minority ethnic group (Tutsis) were massacred by another ethnic militia, Hutu who had infiltrated the police and military services of the government and enjoyed full support of the government of the day .What is more ironical about these ethnic groups is that they speak the same language, follow the same tradition, practice the same religions and inhabit the same geographical landscape. But what was absent in the clash and genocide of Rwanda was the cultural, religious or civilizational paradigm which Huntington in his theory perceived to be the core of all ensuing conflict. The Rwandan genocide was more about economic inequality and a product of colonial polices of promoting the Tutsi at the cost of the Hutu and it was an outburst of a marginalized group. When the Belgium colonial master reached there, they distributed ethnic identity cards and the minority Tutsi enjoyed better job and other educational opportunities[125] under colonial rule which paved the way for deepening differences. For that matter, the crisis in Somalia is not an exclusive case of a religious war but a case of clan conflict and clan and tribe as a factor remained lacking in Huntington discourse. Clan loyalty is more pronounced than religious or tribal identity in today's Somalia.

The genocide in Rwanda or crisis in Somalia is not only one such case where he fails to acknowledge the complexity of actors, but it is also reflective of his ignorance of other historical frameworks of any conflict. There are many other issues in current politics which are equally far far away from the prophecy of Huntington. What we are witnessing in Libya today is another reflection of tribal-centric movement of national politics. Tribal and regional divide have

remained an embedded feature of the political evolution of the country and this divide did not allow it to subdue the multi-layered identity for the sake of uniform religious solidarity. Immediately after the revolution in Libya, multiple, deep rooted, tribal, ethnic and regional divides became visible. The advent of the civil war intertwined with increasing sense of tribal and regional identity led to militarization of different tribal factions both in the east and the west which seemed contrary to the religious and civilizational paradigm of Huntington. The Fezzan region in south also started practicing self-de-facto- autonomy immediately after the ouster of Gaddafi. It was almost an era of claiming what has been described by Mr. Lisa Anderson as "regional triumphalism"[126]. In Fezzan, the Tuareg militia of Ghat (a district in Fezzan region) is the most prominent ethnic militia demanding more rights for the Fezzan region following ouster of Gaddafi. Sometimes they used the Berber flag seeking complete independence from the central authority. The Tuareg along with Tebu are the two most dominant tribes in the Fezzan region and hence most of the tribal fighting here took place between them only for the political supremacy.[127] Apart from tribal and separatist groups, the presence of large number of radical and extremist Islamist groups both in the east and the west questioned the legitimacy of Islamic unanimity and cultural solidarity. Similarly the conflict in Southern Sudan is another reflection of Huntington's indifference towards other tribal and ethnic framework of conflict which perpetuates modern day conflict.

Moreover Huntington's definition of civilization on the basis of religion raises questions about black African Muslims who have been an indissoluble part of African. Are African Muslims parts of African civilization or Islamic civilization? For instance, black Africans of Zanzibar claim exclusively Islamic ancestry. In addition, is Libya Arab or African Arab because late Gaddafi sometime took the Arab side of Libya and meanwhile boasted of African identity of his nation. Former Egyptian President Nasser used to mention three circles of Egyptian identity: African circle, Arab circle and Islamic circle. Sudan and Mauritania are torn between Islamic and African identities together. Where is the

civilizational or religious and cultural paradigm in Africa and what is guiding them and their politics and the conflict largely is the identity based on clan and tribes and regional continental identity where people of different religions and cultures are residing.

Here I will also briefly deal with the philosophy of Pan-Africanism, to examine how the civilizational paradigm was overshadowed by continental identity, which evolved as a continental resistance movement to the colonial occupation of the black continent. Its origin lies in pre independence Africa. It was a movement for a region wide economic and political integration which passed through many phases: The early phase lasted from 1900 to 1945 that later morphed into the Organization of African Unity in 1963 and finally it became African Union in 2002. The rise of Pan-Africanism stifled other religious or cultural identities (the core of Huntington's paradigm) and African unity became the pioneering slogan. Pan-Africanism was more about convergence because of the common historical experience and colonial legacy despite the fact that it has many ethnic, racial, and religious differences. To quote Mburumba Kerin, a leading advocate of Pan-Africanism, "The African leaders should use and welcome ideological contribution in the same way as they did materialistic contribution. They must seek ideological confirmation of their fight everywhere they could: in the social and economic teaching of Islam and the Christianity, in Karl Marx's economic analysis, in the experience of China, Soviet Union and Cuba".[128] Pan-Africanism movement grew despite the fact that the continent belongs to many races, languages and world religions apart from many local religions. In the case of African civilizational paradigm what counts is not the religion or culture but the Africanism or sense of Africanness. It was a reflection of black conscious and Black Nationalism. Further one can also infer how religious identity was overshadowed by a continental identity from a statement of Gaddafi when he had said long back, "The black Africans were the true owner of Libya long before the Arab incursion of North Africa and Libyan people should pay tribute to their ancient African root".[129] The very core of Pan-Africanism lies in the slogan of African solution for African problem. The deepening sense of regional and continental

consciousness has diminished the authenticity of a civilizational paradigm.

I would also deal here briefly with the story of ASEAN to examine the applicability and practicality of cultural and civilizational paradigm preached by Huntington. We have seen in the earlier section of the paper how the contradiction and friction among people has been reduced to differences in race, religion and culture/civilization. This reductionist cultural and civilizational approach to world politics and conflict has been applied to present a divided world view of "We-Self and They-Other". But after examining five decades of evolution of ASEAN, one finds that there are other much more compelling factors which can bring people belonging to different races, cultures, civilizations and divergent historical past together and create a composite and unified bloc transcending age-old religious and cultural differences. ASEAN is one such example of Asian values transcending the narrow religious and cultural confines.

ASEAN was founded in 1967 at the initiative of five South-East Asian nations (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Singapore) and today it has ten members. Its creation came at a time when these nations were driven by security and geopolitical concerns under the shadow of cold war politics.[130] ASEAN represents a landscape where various kinds of people, cultures and religions come together. South East Asia is a region of diversity in terms of culture, religion, ethnicity, languages and historical experiences and the region is regarded as an epitome of Asia-Pacific. The region is exposed to external influences and impact, and today it is an amalgamation of mixed Chinese, Indian and Islamic influences with a sizable population of world major religions. There are four faiths -Islam, Buddhism, Christian and Shintoism- living together with a long history of cultural embedded-ness. It is Asian values which keep them together despite the fact that different waves of cultural influence (India, China, Islam and West) have shaped the region.

Around the 2nd century AD, South East Asia accepted Indian and partly Chinese civilization, in the 13th century it came under the

influence of Islam and later, in the beginning of the 16th century, it became colonies of western power.[131] Today the ASEAN represents an example of varied culture living and thriving together and has become a true embodiment of Asian identity and values. On the matter of ASEAN identity, its charter (2007), the ASEAN declaration on Cultural Heritage (2000) and other blueprints in later years specifies, "The *Asean* identity is the basis of South East Asia's regional interest. It is our collective personality, norms, values and beliefs as well as aspirations as one Asean Community….. The strategic objective is to create a sense of belonging, consolidate unity in diversity and enhance deeper mutual understanding among Asean members countries about their culture, history, religion and civilization".[132] Further the motto of the ASEAN charter calls for one vision, one identity and one community.[133]

Despite its colonial past and its complicated history, the nations of ASEAN have fought no war in last five decades and even if we take the war in Vietnam , it was more an externally-imposed war than the internal one. Even the occasional ethnic conflict between Chinese Malaysian and ethnic Malaya is more because of the country's economic policies and less because of any deep rooted animosity between the two. It is noteworthy here that the most complex and diverse ASEAN is the most active in Asia in making efforts to coordinate and cooperate together. ASEAN member states have already passed a resolution and are working on creation of an ASEAN community by 2020. They have also defined the three pillars of ASEAN: economic, security and socio-cultural. One can ask where is the scope and space for cultural and civilizational conflict and ASEAN is another manifestation of how strategic imperatives and economic necessity failed the civilizational paradigm of global politics in today's time.

One cannot deny its role in establishing peace, prosperity and stability in the region and beyond the region too. The progress in economic and political sphere within the ASEAN is a counter narrative to the pessimistic view of world politics defined under the rubric of clash of civilizations. One can say here after witnessing the evolution of ASEAN over five decades that Huntington has a

bird's-eye view and an earthworm's approach towards the study of civilizations.

Conclusion

One could see in the preceding sections how Mr. Huntington passionately and unreasonably divided the world not only into nine different civilizations but also accorded religious and cultural preeminence to different civilizations. He further advocated that these indissoluble religious and cultural elements in civilizations would cause an unprecedented scale of global conflict in the post-Cold War era.

He has named many civilizations but the centrality of his argument revolve merely around the ensuing clash between Islam and the West because of indigestibility of Islam of other religions and its aversion to liberal values preached by the West and the history of the past encounter between the two. But, unfortunately, he does neither find space nor scope to talk about the colonial and political encounter between the West and the Islamic world and to identify its impact on the political outlook of the Muslim world. For him, Palestine is not even worth mentioning and if colonialism has any role to play, it is for him 'of very limited and temporary nature'.

His civilizational argument completely overlooks the fact that geostrategic and economic indispensability not only act as driving forces in only today's world politics but they are the major determinant of international affairs. This is not the religion or culture that is interrupting the regional and global alliance but it is geostrategic and economic necessities which are propelling both animosity and friendship in current world politics. How one can explain President Trump's antipathy against Germany for unfavorable trade balance (for Huntington, Europe is the heritage of American culture) and not only sympathy for Saudi Arabia but choosing of Saudi Arabia as the first foreign destination after he became President, despite all the lambasting of Islam and pervasive Islamophobia in America? Is it not strategy or economy when the Arab League (Islam) and NATO (Christianity) allied with each other to overthrow the Libyan ruler?

Economic self-interest will trample the cultural consideration and sooner or later will thwart the assumption of Huntington that economic regionalism is also fuelling cultural consciousness. Moreover, overemphasis on religious classification might miss other aspects of humanity which equally determine the contours of humanity. It is not merely geostrategic or economic obligation which overshadows the civilizational antagonism as there are several other issues like global terrorism, global warming and climate change which might and is forcing collaboration among followers of different faiths. The end of the cold war is not the end of ideological rift, but for what is needed is to adapt to the situation instead of straitjacketing. Huntington was correct when he had anticipated that the US, Europe, Russia and India could come together to fight Islam and the rise of China and Japan.[134]

Huntington's thesis seemingly does not fit into today's pursuit of realpolitik and the reality of today's geopolitics is consciously or unconsciously undoing Huntington. Despite all his vocal claims and prophecy, no civilizational pattern in the global conflict has been witnessed in the post-Cold War era. But he has passed the test of his prophecy and forecast accurately when one comes across the unprecedented level of raging ethnic and tribal conflict in the Afro-Asian continent which he had foreseen a quarter century ago. Today, the whole of the Arab world is engulfed in different types and dynamics of tribal, ethnic, regional, and sectarian wars and, similarly, we can see the same happening in the continent of Africa where people are slitting each other's throats for the simple reason that 'the assailants are not what the victims are' or to convey the message 'You are not what I am'. But again this intra-civilizational conflict fails to qualify his divination of inter-civilizational conflict and the more the conflict deepens, the more it lessens the prospect of a unified civilization to confront its adversary.

The failure of capitalism and communism, the rise of a free market, national fault lines, the Palestinian crisis, the IMF and new economic policies have also made people turn towards religions for spiritual comfort. It is not only civilization that instills religiosity among the people. The demise of the USSR boosted the

ascendency of Islamist forces and, moreover, its defeat injected a belief that if a superpower like the USSR could be destroyed by the Islamists, then why not others.

But one finds complete authenticity and wisdom in his civilizational paradigm and his prophecy about the pattern of conflict when we see the patterns and models of the Arab conflict which involves three levels of actors and each has its own respective role in instigating or moderating the conflict. There is a true parallel between what happened in former Yugoslavia and what is happening today in the Arab world and, no doubt, Yugoslavia was an experimental model for Huntington. His concern for the rising immigrant culture in the West was very true if we see what is happening today. After the refugee crisis struck the West, European and American leaders have started echoing the same sentiments what he had warned of long ago. The debate and discourse on refugees are utterly consumed by the issue of religion, Islam, terrorism, culture, fear, violence and Islamophobia all of which are the hallmarks of Huntington's clash theory.

The identification of terror attacks and sporadic violence by fanatic groups as the 'clash of civilizations' amounts to subscribing to the axiom of Bin Laden and his messianic rhetoric calling for an open war against the West. Similarly, identifying the war on terror as a reflection of the CS would serve the purpose of those who want it to be seen in the same frame. When one journalist asked Bin Laden if he believes in the Huntington thesis, he said yes. Clash of civilizations finds resonance in the Al-Qaeda philosophy which claims that the West is on the march to destroy them. The thesis is benefitting the Muslim fundamentalist who failed to mobilize the Muslims in the name of religious and cultural unity. The doomsday cults are spreading in the Muslim world just because of the thesis propounded by Huntington. Moreover Al-Qaeda or the ISIS has a set of distinct goals and their acts are not simply driven by hatred of America or the West. For example, the earlier stated goal of Al-Qaeda was to get crusaders and Zionists out of Saudi Arabia and other Islamic territories. There are many who tend to terrorize the international civil society for attainment of additional

space and they are merely a united herd of illiberal and fanatics and not representative of whole of the civilization.

The thesis is misleading because its approach is very reductionist while dealing the cause of violence, the motivation of actors, and the prospect for peace. It completely neglects other important factors. The Huntington thesis offers a dogmatic and demeaned portrayal of the "Other", entwined with malicious design and strategic orientation which is a poor guide to our complex world. He, without mentioning the geo-strategic element in his thesis, seems to have offered a geostrategic design for the US.

One cannot determine easily if the work should be counted as an intellectual work or a policy guideline based on the imagination of Western supremacy and an effort to contain the rise of other civilizations. He himself accepts the fact that the real clash is between multiculturalists and defenders of Western culture and that the future of the West depends on the US and the US need to reaffirms its commitment to Western civilization.[135]

As far as democracy is concerned which Huntington cites as a reason for the Muslim's current political predicament, one should not forget that democracy has never been an alien or an unknown entity to Muslims. The radical forces have understood well after the Arab uprising that they would have to choose between violence and political participation. One knows well whoever has tried to change the system by violence has become part of history. They have been empowered only by the power of values, freedom and political norms.

Lastly, the thesis of Huntington, as I have mentioned earlier too, fails to provide any evidence or any premise explaining how and who will finally instigate the clash. One fails to understand who would be the real authority to determine the contours of religion or culture because some are of the belief that states control the civilization and not vice-versa. The people's march against the ban in the US leaves the question unanswered. One does not know if people have faith in cultural unity, and how and to what extent the states have the potential to turn the tide. The theory itself is not useless but it has a limited use in specific circumstances.

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