

Book Review

Review Article

International Politics in the Last Decade of the 20th Century: Kennedy and Huntington Revisited

The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000 by Paul Kennedy, London: Fontona Press, 1989. Pp. 898. ISBN: 0006860524.

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order by Samuel P. Huntington, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. Pp. 367. ISBN 0-684-811542.

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Our contemporary world at the end of the 20th century is not the same as it was when this century began. Germany's bid for a great power status resulted in two world wars in the 20th century. In the WW II Germany and other Axis powers were decisively defeated. After the WW II, when the dust settled, there emerged a bipolar world with the US and the USSR being the two super powers. These two super powers were engaged in a cold war against each other, which was punctuated with a number of intermittent proxy wars around the globe. Eventually the USSR collapsed and at the moment we live in a unipolar world. At the dawn of the 21st century it may not be out of place to investigate the issues pertaining to the emergence, rise and fall of great powers and its implications for civilizations. In this regard, here we would look into these two important works of the last two decades of the 20th century; namely: *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* by Paul Kennedy and *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* by Samuel P. Huntington.

The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers by Paul Kennedy is no ordinary work. In its length, breadth, depth and implications it is a pioneering contribution. The detailed footnotes, rich references and comprehensive bibliography are only a partial indicator of the author's

labour, not to mention analysis, formulation and articulation of ideas, the quality of which makes it a masterpiece and a seminal work for researchers, students and scholars, and a bible for policy makers of great powers or the policy makers of nations aspiring to be great powers.

To say that it is a book of history will be a gross understatement as it also involves the understanding of economics, politics, military strategy and international relations, etc. The way the author knits the ideas, develops the concepts and applies the tools and criteria of various social sciences, shows his interdisciplinary command of knowledge.

In order to do justice to both the book and the author, it will be appropriate that before we even discuss the book we focus on its methodology which enables it to fill a big vacuum not only in understanding the events of 1500-2000; but to also discover some of the crucial missing links in the existing literature on the rise and fall of big powers and civilizations, hence, making a contribution to the philosophy of history as well. The term philosophy of history was coined by Voltaire when he was developing a new approach to history in the 1740s for his friend, Mme du Chatelet who was disgusted by reading the then existing histories because of their useless details. To Voltaire, the philosopher of history seeks something "useful" in a jungle of useless obscurities.¹

However, one may ask a fundamental question as to what is "useful" in history. The answer is not simple, as it will involve debates spread over centuries; but to keep the matter simple, we will give that answer which started the whole debate on the philosophy of history during the enlightenment. It was G. B. Vico who in 1725 in his book *New Science* attempted a formulation of history as a process. This attempt was inspired by the spirit of "Scientific Revolution" of the 18th century, which was pioneered by Isaac Newton (1642-1727). In *New Science* Vico argued that reconstruction of the past required "... that the rational and empirical—the philosophy which gives us the true, and the history which gives us the certain—must be fused into one science."² This approach to the reconstruction of the past was the precursor of what later came to be known as speculative philosophy of history. Vico, impressed by the progress of natural sciences, the certainty of their laws and predictability; was in search of laws governing history. He argued that historical events were also subject to laws.³ It is these laws which (according to Voltaire) comprise the "useful" part of history out of its vast details and need to be sorted out.

These laws can be used by the societies in the conduct of affairs to influence the events and get the (desired) results. Although the debate on the philosophy of history has continued ever since, and great minds like Comte, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Spencer, Spengler, Toynbee, to name only a few, have made their invaluable contributions to this debate, the above introductory concepts of Vico and Voltaire remain, in principle, a good point of reference for our discussion on the methodology of the work under review.

With the understanding that the philosopher of history looks for the useful part of history, i.e. laws hidden behind the historical events and their details, we may now focus our attention on *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* to see if this work is only a narration of events and statement of facts or goes beyond that and contributes to the philosophy of history by unravelling the laws of history as well.

At the outset of the book the author, in setting the scope of the study, informs us that it is a study "... about national and international power in the 'modern'—that is, post-Renaissance period" (p. xv). The book focuses on the period starting with the year 1500 until approximately the first half of the decade of the 1980s. The author says that as most of the scholars generally take the year 1500 to be the dividing line between modern and pre-modern worlds, he also prefers it for this study. If we look at this date in the context of world order we find that actually this date does draw a line. By the end of the 15th century the relative power structure had really changed not only in Europe but around the world, e.g. in 1453 Constantinople fell to the Turks, then two important events occurred in 1492: first Islamic Spain fell to Christendom and then in the same year Columbus discovered the "New World" which later came to be known as the United States of America. In 1526 Babur established the Mogul empire in India, which was successfully consolidated by his grandson Akbar (1556-1605).

The first chapter of the book presents an overall view in the world power structure by examining all the major world powers in 1500, namely: Ming China, the Ottoman Empire, the Mogul Empire in India, Muscovy and Tokugawa Japan, and the states in western Europe. This review shows the strengths and weaknesses of these powers at the beginning of 16th century but finds no factor indicating that in the near future Europe will rise rapidly over and above all the other regions.

The study is mainly concerned with the investigation of the factors that determine the greatness of a world power and its ability to sustain

this greatness over time. It is pertinent to remind ourselves of the subtitle of the book which reads: *Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. This subtitle actually determines the context and focus of this study, i.e. the relationship between the greatness of a power and change in its economic strength in the context of a prolonged military conflict. At this stage it is useful for us to remember this narrow and exclusive focus and context of the study, as certainly there are other important variables which also play a crucial role in the making or breaking of a great power, e.g. culture, values, ideology, religion, etc. The study probes the following two simple questions:

Question I: *How do great powers sustain their greatness if they are challenged and attacked?*

Question II: *How do great powers sustain their greatness if their interests are threatened?*

Answer: *They would do anything to defend and maintain their greatness and interests, if it takes a war to do so, they would go to war.*

The author does not manufacture the answer to the said questions; rather, it is obvious from the world events of the last 500 years as discussed in this book. However the true "usefulness" of history is *not* in this answer, but in the critical analysis of the events of last 500 years to determine that once great powers get involved in a military conflict then who wins at the end, and whether the winner is able to sustain its greatness in the post war era. Are there any characteristics that are common across the board among the winners of such conflicts, identification of which will allow us to predict that if great powers do go to war, all else being equal, which specific power will at the end emerge as victorious and be able to maintain its greatness? The author's findings show that greatness is not just a function of war and military might; rather it requires a strong economy and a sound economic base as well. The discovery that besides military might, a strong economy is also essential, can be further strategically understood in terms of the following principles developed by the author on the basis of the critical analysis of the military conflicts during the last five centuries:

1. The triumph or defeat of a great power in a prolonged military conflict will depend, in addition to its military capability, on the efficiency with which it uses its resources, i.e. the performance of its economy.

2. Mere high economic growth rates in absolute terms are not enough to ensure military victory. What matters is the growth rate of the economy relative to the growth rates of rival great powers involved in the conflict. The power with the highest economic growth, vis-à-vis its rivals in the decades preceding the military conflict, is more likely to win and maintain its greatness.
3. In order for the above two rules to work, the peace time decades prior to military conflict are crucial—because it is during these decades when a great power can steadily alter its relative economic strength, vis-à-vis other rival powers, and turn the balance of economic power in its favour, hence positioning itself for a sustained sound performance if and when a military conflict arises in the future.

For nearly 150 years (1660-1815) serious major power struggles took place in Europe, and seven major Anglo-French wars were fought between 1689-1815. During these wars both Britain and France had allies, making these wars "Great Powers' Coalition Wars." Being coalition wars, they lasted long enough and eventually turned out to be struggles of endurance. France was bigger than Britain in terms of its economy due to its sheer geographical size, population and volume of agricultural production. "This was an age in which France, first under Louis XIV and later under Napoleon, came closer to controlling Europe than at anytime before or since; but its endeavours were always held in check, in the last resort at least, by a combination of the other Great Powers" (p. xviii). In this struggle, in the final analysis, the victory went to the side with stronger economic base, i.e. with the greater capacity to raise credit and maintain supplies. In this respect Britain, which had successfully created a good financial system during the preceding decades, was ahead of France. The British taxes were lower than the French, hence the British government could raise loans by selling bonds, repayment of which was guaranteed by the parliament which had the power to raise taxes. Britain's banking and credit institutions were far more efficient in mobilizing resources both for the economy's productive needs and for the war efforts. This was due to the financial revolution in preceding decades of peace, which had strengthened the British economy in ways that the French economy was lacking to sustain the prolonged wars. Thus during this period the French efforts were always severely constrained by the limits of her economy while the British economy was able to sustain the pressures of war and eventually turn the tide of history against a rival which was bigger in many respects.

After 1815, for almost a century, there were no lengthy coalition

wars and all the countries were preoccupied with their domestic affairs. This period of peace was strategically decisive in the big power struggle in Europe. It was during this period that Britain was able to combine the financial revolution of the seventeenth century with the industrial revolution, which started in the 18th century. The British empire expanded rapidly; the resources and markets of colonies were exploited by British producers. "The United Kingdom was responsible for around 'two thirds' of Europe's industrial growth of output and its share of world manufacturing production leaped from 1.9 to 9.5 percent; in the next thirty years, British industrial expansion pushed that figure to 19.9 percent, despite the spread of the new technology to other countries in the West" (p.193). Thus we see Britain using the decades of peace productively to strengthen its economy by employing growth in finance, advancement in science and technology and the exploitation of colonies to its service.

If we were to summarize the spirit and meaning of the above rules and findings of this great work of Paul Kennedy in one sentence, we would sum it up all in the following principle: *It is the outcome of the decades of peace preceding the war that decides the outcome of war.*

As Kennedy convincingly shows, from a number of examples of various great powers at different points of time in history during the last five hundred years, whenever a great power could not maintain a growth rate higher than all its rivals and its economy fell behind during peace times, it turned out to be a sure loser in a later military conflict with its rivals. It is not just the peacetime high growth rate in absolute terms, but the highest in relative terms (vis-à-vis all its rivals) that would decide its fate in a military conflict. *Thus, economic relativism is the order behind the world order.* Kennedy's finding that economic relativism is a pivotal factor in the international relations is the further extension of Einstein's principle of relativity that has given new and fresh understanding of morality, arts, culture, politics, race, and gender relations in the 20th century. Economic relativism means that as during peace time economic growth rates among nations are uneven, relative strength of the leading nations in world affairs never remains constant. Especially technological and organizational breakthroughs may bring more advantage to one over the others, hence altering the relative economic strength of rivals, which inevitably affects their relative military potential correspondingly. The study cites numerous instances in this regard, e.g. the development of long-range gun with sailing ships, the rise of Atlantic trade, the development of steam powered ships and coal and steam resources—all these did not

turn out to be equally beneficial to all the states of Europe. These kind of developments boosted some more than others, hence the uneven impact on their respective economies which influenced their military capability and economic potential to sustain a prolonged military conflict.

War imposes all kinds of costs on warring parties and stretches their resources to the limit. Hence, countries whose productive capacity was enhanced during peacetime would generally find it easier to sustain the burden of paying for large scale production of armaments, training and maintenance of large numbers of professional troops and fleets, and funding R & D in areas such as strategic defense related weapons systems, and high tech, which have no direct immediate commercial applications.

Kennedy recognizes the mercantilist circular nature of his findings, which imply that wealth is usually needed to sustain military power; and military power is usually required to acquire and protect wealth. Pursuing this line of argument, the author cautions against raising taxes too high or diverting disproportionately higher amount of resources for military purposes during the peace time, as it may affect the relative economic growth adversely—hence becoming self defeating. When ringing this warning bell, Paul Kennedy (unknowingly) discovers Ibn Khaldun who in the 14th century had, in principle, identified the same danger of over expansion of government spending and higher burden of taxes which may ultimately lead to the collapse of the economic system, hence contributing to the fall of a great power.

After having shown that military might alone is not sufficient for a country to maintain its great power status; because such an endeavour will also require a sound economic base and a relatively stronger economy vis-à-vis its rivals; Kennedy then raises the next probing question as follows:

Question III: Can a great power whose military might and economy both are superior as compared to her rivals, maintain this position over time?

We learn from this work that despite the strong positive relationship between economic strength and military might, firmly established by Kennedy's critical analysis, one should not hasten to reply to the above question in the affirmative. When responding to this question, Kennedy uses those of his strengths, which he has in common with Toynbee and Spencer. Toynbee is known for rich data while in Spencer's methodology of the study of rise and fall of civilizations,

culture, societies and values are the main variables. Focusing his attention on the ways societies do things, Kennedy develops his response. His response is that even if military might is supported by a relatively stronger economy, it is not a guarantee that the said great power will be able to maintain her (great power) status if her decision making power rests in *one centralized authority* (e.g., a dynasty or a dictatorship or one party rule that behaves like a dictatorship). The damaging role of the centralized authority is demonstrated by him using the abundant data from some of those powers which were standing tall in 1500 but failed to maintain this position later, e.g. Ming China, the Ottomans and the Moguls, etc. The central authority of these powers made decisions based on narrowly defined interests without taking a full view of the entire situation and its long term challenges. These miscalculated decisions affected their economic base, technological edge and therefore military readiness. For example, the Chinese emperor, concerned about the invasion of Mongols from land routes, built a wall around the country and gave priority to defence on land. This large-scale land defence demanded enormous resources. Under these circumstances, the idea of putting large amount of resources in a huge and strong naval battle fleet seemed like a luxury. Hence, both the merchant and naval battle ships were withdrawn and the construction of new and strong naval fleets was stopped. The resulting loss of exports and trade due to merchant ship withdrawal hurt the economy and the total absence of a good naval battle force later caused disasters on the naval fronts, eventually resulting in China's fall from a great power status. Added to this was the conservatism of the Chinese bureaucracy, which discouraged new ideas in business, production and commerce. Innovation was prevented even in agriculture and farming. The productivity fell sharply and the Chinese, who had invented printing and paper currency, slowly gave up the use of paper currency as the very dynamism of the economy which had necessitated the use of paper currency, slowly died down. The Ottoman Empire was vast. The maintenance of this vast empire required a large military presence in far off places and a continuous technological edge in military and naval hardware, training and weapons systems. All this required either significant economic growth or transfer of resources from the territories under the Ottoman control. There was neither significantly high economic growth (i.e. higher than the rival European economies) nor was the central authority willing to exploit territories. They did not change the design of the naval ships to face the newer, larger and technologically more advanced European battle ships that had quick manoeuvrability; instead the Ottomans

preferred the ships constructed in the old design, which had won naval battles in the past. This military weakness was further perpetuated by the economic mess that followed in the form of higher taxes and more powers for bureaucracy. Abuse of these powers led to corruption, causing uncertainty and deterioration of the economy which weakened the might of the Ottomans further. The Mogul empire, despite some of its brilliant achievements was stuck in the quagmire of a poor economy plagued by low productivity and social customs and traditions that were not conducive for progress. On top of that, high taxes on agriculture irrespective of the performance of crops always kept the economy in chaos. This inherently weak and shaky economic base made "... the Ming dynasty appears benign, almost progressive, by comparison. Technically, the Mogul empire was to decline because it became increasingly difficult to maintain itself once the military conflicts arose, e.g. the Marathas in the south, Afghanis in the north and finally the onslaught of the East India Company. In reality, the causes of its decay were much more internal than external" (p.16). Thus, it was the poor economy and numerous mistakes of the centralized authority that brought the Ottomans and Moguls ultimately down. Hitler, Mussolini and imperial Japan in WWII suffered from overstretching their armies on a relatively thin (economic) base. The problems of overstretching were further compounded by the central decision making mechanism of these countries, where decisions were made by a few. That is why despite their impressive initial victories, the Axis powers got stuck in the quagmire of inefficiency, lack of resources and mismanagement by the central authority. Allies on the other hand, especially the US and the USSR had an enormous resource base, coupled with big industrial potential. That is why despite initial reversals they prevailed at the end; especially the arrival of the US on the war front after the Pearl Harbour bombing was a major shift in the balance of economic power in a prolonged war.

This book was first published in 1988 and in this study Kennedy is worried about the ability of the US to maintain its position as a great power because he feels that the US has overstretched itself and will not be able to maintain the desired balance between its economic base and military expansion. On the other hand he is not so much concerned about the USSR. In actuality it turned out to be quite the opposite as the USSR fell. This does not prove Kennedy to be wrong, rather it underscores the validity of the both of his principles.⁴ No doubt the US was over-stretching herself, but in relative terms the USSR was more overstretched than the US; that is why it fell. The USSR economy could not sustain its military adventure in prolonged military

involvement in Afghanistan and an exhaustive arms race in which the US, especially the Reagan administration, had engaged it. Secondly, the principle of mismanagement under centralised decision-making also took its toll, as Kennedy had predicted. In the Soviet system decision-making was centralised and hence all the inefficiencies of such a system finally led to its collapse once it was overstretched. Kennedy also shows concerns about Japan's ability to maintain high growth rates—and it turns out, as seen in the Asian economic crisis of the mid 1990s that in this regard he was right. Kennedy has positive forecasts about the Pacific region, and despite the present crisis, the long term expectations about this region remain in line with his forecast.

This book is a landmark in many ways and will be appreciated by different readers for different reasons. In my view, the principles and findings of Kennedy as developed in this book will continue to influence economic and military policies of the great powers (or the nations aspiring to be great powers), the world economic system and global power structure for a long time in the next millennium. The finding that big powers of the past which could not maintain their leading position in world trade and eventually lost out in the big power game, has further strengthened the US resolve to promote free trade around the world. Free trade will stimulate growth in overall world economy and those who are more efficient and technologically more advanced will grow faster than the rest; and technology is the area where the US has the edge. Kennedy's impact on the US policy is again clear from the military strategy adopted by the US in the two major military conflicts. The 1991 Kuwait-Iraq conflict, and the 1999 Kosovo conflict; in both of these cases the US did not enter the conflict alone, she rallied all the allies and took a joint military action; and once the military action started the goal was to make it speedy and reach the desired conclusion as soon as possible. This strategy followed Kennedy's prescription; firstly when all the allies were involved all the costs were not borne by the US alone, rather they were shared by the allies, hence there was no pressure on the US to stretch its resources to the limit. Secondly, making the military action precise, fast and efficient; meant that the war would end soon (in favour of the allies) and its costs (to each ally) would be minimal, hence not causing serious adverse effects on the economy of any member of the alliance.

Kennedy's findings and analysis have influenced contemporary thought in the philosophy of history as well. His idea that economic power is one of the crucial factors of world power status for a country

is not new. In 1979, Ezra F. Vogel wrote the famous book, *Japan as Number One* to this effect. However, Kennedy has refined this idea and shown its full dynamics in a global and universal sense. Prior to him, it was Toynbee who in his *A Study of History* had advocated the idea of a universal state in the context of the rise and fall of civilizations. Kennedy articulates the contribution of the US during the WWII as a great power which played the role of the saviour of Western (liberal democratic) civilization. Then in the post World War II period, the role of the US in rebuilding the Western Europe through the Marshall Plan and containing the Soviet threat by taking a leadership role in NATO, turned out to be pivotal. It is this role of the US as a great power (underscored by Kennedy) which saves, protects and defends the members of its civilization against foreign military threat, supports them in times of economic crises and also plays the role of arbitrator and mediator in intra-civilizational disputes among member nations, that has prompted Huntington to refine this idea further and develop the concept of a *core state* within a civilization.⁵ Huntington argues that France and Germany are the core states of EU (Huntington: p. 157) while Russia is a core state in the Orthodox civilization. It is not necessary to agree with Huntington's idea of the "clash of civilizations" to see some merits of a core state within a civilization.

In order to fully appreciate the concerns of, and the spirit behind Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, it will be useful to remember that the author wrote this book only a few years after the end of the cold war. The cold war was a period in which the bipolar world was constantly engaged in preparations for a major global military conflict between the two super powers and the challenge of proxy wars was always there. All of this called for permanent military readiness, and a non-stop arms race. This required huge military spending by the two super powers, their allies, satellites and some of the major so called 'non-aligned countries' most of which were, in fact, towing the line of one super power or the other. This situation kept the political future of cultural supremacists, religious fundamentalists, advocates of hardcore capitalism, military hawks and that of defence industry bright in the West. However, with the fall of Berlin wall and the prospects of a new era of global peace, these groups were afraid that if the West is left without an enemy, they might face extinction. The situation was desperate for them. Even though the West had no real enemy ... one needed to be invented—and soon.

There were many communities and regions in Central Asia and Eastern Europe that were chained together (by force) behind the 'iron curtain' and an illusion of unity was created. After the fall of the Soviet Union all of them were struggling with the question of identity. This question had many dimensions, e.g. culture, religion, language, etc. All of these issues deserved serious attention, and Huntington took the initiative and developed an inter-civilizational framework to study these issues. Methodologically speaking this work is built on a combination of principles of analysis developed by Kennedy and Marx. Huntington borrows the 'Relative Decline of Economic Power' principle from Kennedy and puts it in the Marxian dialectics of conflict; but he replaces the term 'conflict' with 'clash'. However, he chooses to ignore the implications of Kennedy's *Centralization of Power Principle* in his analysis.

Huntington's basic argument is that although Western civilization is at present dominant, it is in relative decline vis-à-vis other civilizations, especially in comparison with the emerging Chinese civilization. In support of this assertion he delivers the following list of indicators that measure the power resources of the Western civilization:

The West's control of these resources peaked in the 1920s and has since been declining irregularly but significantly. In the 2020s, a hundred years after that peak, the West will probably control about 24 percent of the world's territory (down from a peak of 49 percent), 10 percent of the total world population (down from 48 percent) and perhaps 15-20 percent of the socially mobilized population, about 30 percent of the world's economic products (down from a peak of 70 percent), perhaps 25 percent of manufacturing output (down from a peak of 84 percent), and less than 10 percent of global military manpower (down from 45 percent). (Huntington: p. 91)

Given the above declining trend he argues that the West has become complacent in its military readiness in the post-Cold War era. In this regard he makes the following statement :

... the precipitous reduction in Russian military capabilities stimulated a slower but significant decline in Western military spending, forces and capabilities. Under the plans of Bush and Clinton administrations, U.S. military spending was due to drop by 35 percent from \$342.5 billion (1994 dollars) in 1990 to \$223.3 in 1998. The force structure that year would be half to two thirds what it was at the end of Cold War. Total military personnel would go down from 2.1 million to 1.4 million. Many major weapons programs have been and are being cancelled. Between 1985 and 1995 annual purchases of major weapons went down from 29 to 6 ships,

943 to 127 aircraft, 720 to 0 tanks, and 48 to 18 strategic missiles. Beginning in the late 1980s, Britain, Germany, and to a lesser degree France went through similar reduction in defence spending and military capabilities. (Huntington: p.89)

As mentioned above, the existence of a certified enemy in the form of the godless Soviet Union which had earned the title of the "evil empire" was a bonanza for many groups in the West, especially the Western defence industry which had its heyday under the blessings of the evil empire. Now the sudden disappearance of communism was threatening the existence of all of them. Thus there was a dire need to invent an enemy of the West instantly; but such an invention needed a justification. Huntington did both the jobs in one stroke. He painted the following scenario of the weakening of the Western hegemony:

The successors of Reagan, Thatcher, Mitterand and Kohl will be rivalled by those of Deng Xiaoping, Nakasone, Indira Ghandi, Yeltsin, Khomeini, and Suharto. The age of Western dominance will be over. In the meantime the fading of the West and the rise of other power centres is promoting the global process of indigenization and the resurgence of non-Western cultures. (Huntington: p. 91)

This scenario, when analysed by Huntington in the Marxian framework of conflict and judged on Kennedy's criteria of "relative decline" was enough to scare the policy makers in Washington, London, Paris and other capitals of the Western World. The mystery of who should be the invented enemy, needed to be solved urgently. As the defence dollars were drying up, there was no time for scientific rigour, one could resurrect the ghosts from the distant past and bring them back to haunt the future—Islam could fit the frame well, as a number of communities facing the problem of a new equilibrium in Central Asia and Eastern Europe were Muslim. It will be against the Western tradition of reason and professional rigour to just declare Islam as the enemy of the West out of nowhere. There was a need to construct a methodological framework to reach that conclusion through reasoning and logic. For this purpose Huntington adopts syllogism. Using deductive reasoning he first presents the following major premise:

In the modern world, religion is a central, perhaps *the* central, force that motivates and mobilizes people. It is sheer hubris to think that because Soviet Communism has collapsed, the West has won the world for all times and that Muslims, Chinese, Indians, and others are going to rush to embrace the Western liberalism as the only alternative. (Huntington, p. 66)

After putting the religion as a major force that resists Western

liberalism now he needed to identify a religion against which the hatred of the West could be easily directed. Although due to the collapse of the Soviet empire Christian communities (e.g. Croats, Serbs, Georgians, Ukrainians etc.) like the Muslim communities (e.g. Uzbeks, Tajiks, etc.) were looking to establish themselves on the basis of their historical religio-cultural heritage, Huntington identifies only the Islamic civilization as a problematic one. For this purpose he acknowledges the use of Marxian methodology of conflict by quoting Lenin as follows:

The causes of the renewed conflict between Islam and the West thus lie in fundamental questions of power and culture. *Kto? Kovo?* Who is to rule? Who is to be ruled? The central issue of politics defined by Lenin is the root of the contest between Islam and the West. (Huntington : p. 212)

He further underscores this conflict by saying:

So long as Islam remains Islam (which it will) and the West remains the West (which is more dubious), this fundamental conflict between two great civilizations and ways of life will continue to define their relations in the future even as it has defined them for the past fourteen centuries. (Huntington : p. 212)

This propagation of conflict with Islam on the part of Huntington reflects his reasoning and analysis, and gives the reader a glimpse of his vision—of which his entire analysis is a by product. It is no historical coincidence that this anti-Islamic rhetoric reminds one of Peter the Hermit. In 1095, when Pope Urban declared crusades, his battle cry was taken up by a French preacher called Peter the Hermit who travelled through towns and villages and made fiery speeches to arouse hatred among the masses and leaders alike, and urged them to join the army and invade the Muslims. It was these kinds of preachers who preached and promoted crusades at all levels of society resulting in the first crusade in 1096. Interestingly, Huntington's book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* was also published in 1996, exactly 900 years after the first crusade preached by Peter.⁶ In 1093 Peter is said to have made a pilgrimage to Palestine, and in 1993 (exactly 900 years later) Huntington wrote his short article "Clash of Civilizations?" in the summer, 1993 issue of the journal *Foreign Affairs*. As Peter the Hermit was campaigning for the crusades, he was also setting the agenda of action by the Western civilization for the second millennium. It is no coincidence that *The Clash of Civilizations*, is a repeat of Peter, both in letter and spirit, and attempts to revive the same Peterian approach to the third millennium. Given that the same kind of vision and mentality is the driving force

behind this book, Huntington's analysis and the resulting bashing of the 'rest' falls short of being either scientific or objective. This work unmasks Peterian reasoning and mentality in the garb of a mastery of facts and figures, and command of modern techniques of analysis. In essence, this book supports the cause of Western cultural supremacists, military hawks and the defence industry, all of whom were facing a bleak future without the identification of an enemy of the West. The underlying love of hawks for the war industry sometimes overtakes the scholarly pretensions and one can see the real agenda behind this book; namely the cultivation of war mentality. This is evident from the author's violent language of war:

In a world where culture counts, the platoons are tribes and ethnic groups, the regiments are nations, and the armies are civilizations. (Huntington : p. 128)

This kind of language by a scholar with the agenda of identifying a certain civilization as the enemy of the West is very dangerous and has the potential to play the same dirty and damaging role as the hate speech.

An evaluation of this book reveals a number of gross factual manipulations in his analysis, making it an effort which is less than scientific. From the point of view of the art of historiography the author demonstrates subjectivity rather than objectivity. For example, in support of his argument that the 'rest' are ungrateful to the 'West' he mentions that some of the first generation Asian leaders who were western educated and benefited in their outlook from their exposure to and experience of the Western values, culture and work ethics, once they became successful in their societies, they denied their Western exposure and instead indulged in the process of indegenization. In this regard he lists three notable cases: namely: Mohammad Ali Jinnah (of Pakistan), Harry Lee (of Singapore), and Solomon Bandarnaike (of Sri Lanka). He says that to lead their nations they denied their own Western background, and instead, all of them indegenized themselves. Harry Lee became Lee Kuan Yew. The Christian Bandarnaike converted to Buddhism while Mohammad Ali Jinnah became Pakistan's Quaid-e-Azam. (Huntington: p. 93). Although Christian Bandarnaike changed his religion and Harry Lee changed his name, Jinnah did not change any of these things. He remained unchanged. As far as the term *Quaid-e-Azam* is concerned, it is a title given to him by the nation and it means "The Great Leader."

Talking of indegenization, Huntington chooses to conveniently forget a great indigenizer: M. K. Gandhi of India, who was Western

educated too. Gandhi not only taught the people to boycott the Western products and use indigenous ones, but also strongly condemned the modern Western civilization. His condemnation of the modern Western civilization requires another study, however its glimpse can be seen as follows:

Gandhi's standpoint as a political moralist was expressed early in life in *Hind Swaraj*, in which he spoke out strongly against modern civilization. He saw a contradiction between our deepest moral values as individual and the materialistic criteria by which we tend to judge our institutions and our collective progress. He thought that the "sickness" of modern civilization is reflected in our "soulless" politics, owing to a segregation between religion and the prevalent doctrine of double standards.⁷

Being a Western historiographer, Huntington proves Gandhi correct by committing the crime of using double standards. He is out there to ignite the anti-Islamic emotions of the Westerners at every possible moment, but whenever he finds India going against the Western interests either he ignores it totally, or (when this is not possible) he tries to show the Indian opposition to the West as very minimal by using mild words. In the case of indigenization, he never mentions that after successful military intervention to the break up Pakistan in 1971, India developed such a complex of being a big power that she demanded that 'Coca-cola' surrender its formula to Indians, so that it could be manufactured indigenously in India. When Coke refused, it was kicked out of India. This nature of the Indian mind-set is quite telling. If ever in the future India gets the upper hand, this is the way she will treat the West, but Huntington, following his double standards wants to identify only the Muslim countries as being anti-West. Huntington's anti-Pakistan fervour forces him to be kind to India, even when India is actively involved in the anti-Western camp. Following is one of the specimens of his subjectivism in regard to India:

The countries were against the "Free World"... included all the orthodox countries except Greece, several countries that were historically Western, Vietnam, Cuba, *to a lesser extent* India, and at time one or more African countries. (Huntington, p. 157). (In the above, the emphasis in italics is ours).

This favourable treatment of India which actively supported the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, while attempting to sow the seeds of permanent doubt against the good relationship of the Muslim countries with the West, (especially when the West was fully supported by the majority of the Muslim countries during the Cold War), demonstrates that Huntington has neither been scientific nor objective and his

historiography is less than credible too.

At the very least his historicism has the semblance of "Fundamentalist Historicism." His entire argument of 'Remaking of World Order' is based on Kennedy's rule of relativism of power. He argues that the power of the West, vis-à-vis the "rest", is falling. On page 91 of the book he lists a number of indicators to support this assertion. For example, he shows that in 1920 the West controlled about 49 percent of the world's territory and by 2020 this would fall to about 24 percent. Everybody knows that the control of nearly half of the world's territory by the West was due to colonization. As he mourns the end of colonization and equates it with the decline of the West, it helps one see his true face and determine the objectivity of his analysis and credibility of his method. The data of the reduction in the area under Western control is utterly misleading as it totally ignores the control of the moon and the outer space by the West. The influence on and control of the earth by the West plus their exclusive access to the moon and the outer space makes contemporary Western civilization the most powerful one in the entire human history. No other civilization has ever had the control of two celestial bodies in the entire history. So Huntington's argument that the power of the West is in decline is far from any rational assessment. Another indicator used by him is the West's share in the total manufacturing output of the world, which has fallen from a peak of 84 percent in 1920 to 25 percent. Again, true as this figure is, the conclusion that the author draws is totally illogical i.e. the economic power of the West is seriously declining. Actually the facts are quite the opposite. Manufacturing is labour intensive; it does not require a highly skilled labour at every stage of production, and above all it pollutes the environment. The fact of the matter is that the Western manufacturers have moved their production plants to the developing countries, which have cheap and less skilled labour and are willing to accept the pollution of their environment, whereas the educated and skilled labour of the west is moving into the service sector and knowledge based industrial sector. These are not only the high growth sectors of today but are the ultimate resources of tomorrow's world economy. The West produces the lion's share of these sectors. Huntington conveniently chooses to ignore this scientific fact as it actually contradicts his entire argument of the declining economic power of the West. An objective analysis of these indicators shows that facts given by the author are true but he tells only half the truth about them, and then jumps to an emotional conclusion to support the agenda hidden behind this scholarly exercise. He is too eager to sell the hypothesis that as China emerges as a big

power in the next century, there is a possibility of an Islamic-Confucian alliance against the West. He never realizes that India, in the 50 years of her independence has been an ally of the enemies of the Free World for more than 40 years, whereas Turkey, Pakistan, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and a vast number of Muslim countries have been allies of the West all along.

Huntington is the first one to use Kennedy's thesis on the study of contemporary civilizations and to predict the future. However, his method has many flaws, and some of them have been identified above. One major flaw is that he gets stuck in the quagmire of a relative power scenario. His analysis becomes static the moment he says that since Western power is in relative decline, this will give way to a conflict between the West and the rest. The essence of his message is that, among the rest, the Confucian and Islamic civilizations are our enemies because they don't agree with the things we (i.e. the western cultural supremacists) want to impose upon them. This conflict is due to their beliefs, so let the West be *ready* for an inter-civilization war against them. Thus he creates a scenario simulating such a war (Huntington: p. 312-318). In his zeal to create a clash of civilizations he totally ignores the second principle of Kennedy; namely the *mismanagement by central authority* principle. Had he applied this principle to his own model, his analysis would at least become dynamic despite being far from objectivity. According to this principle, if power is concentrated in the hands of the minority and there is no check on it, then there is a danger of abuse, narrow vision and corruption—all of which will end up destroying the great power itself. In the contemporary world there are many civilizations, e.g. Christian West, Christian Orthodox, Hindu, Judaic, Islamic, Buddhist, Confucian, African, etc. However, in the inter-civilizational context, the power is concentrated in the hands of the Christian West. If the dominant Western civilization (which is Christian) is influenced by those elements who preach and practice fundamentalist historicism, and fails to create an opportunity and mechanism to replace inter-civilizational tensions and suspicions, by promoting mutual understanding, and creating an infrastructure for peaceful co-existence of the entire humanity (irrespective of cultural and religious differences), this will be a gross *mismanagement* of enormous civilizational proportions by the powerful West in whose hands the power is centralised. It will be an irony, in the likely event of the actualisation of the simulated war models, no one will be left on the planet to even regret. Huntington, inspired by the Peterian instinct, has turned Marx upside down. He retains Marxian dialectics, but replaces

Marx's economic interpretation of history with the Peterian brand of religious interpretation of history. When the reality is moving in the direction of better understanding and harmony between Islam and the West, Peterian historians cannot accept it, and hasten to forecast doom. This is obvious from Huntington's criticism of Bush and Clinton administrations when they attempted to reach out to the Muslim world. (Huntington, p. 209).

One cannot ignore the emotional appeal of Huntington's Peterian interpretation of history for some of the important groups in the West, e.g. the cultural supremacists, religious fundamentalists, political hawks and military-industrial complex lobby, notwithstanding the extremist and militant elements in the Muslim world. Actually, after the fall of the Berlin wall, these groups were facing extinction, and liberalism, multiculturalism and humanitarianism were on the march in the West. Their survival depended on the existence of an enemy. Since there was none, Huntington had to invent one for them; and this he did in this work. Although Huntington's fundamentalist historicism has no scientific basis, ironically it is the very lack of it that makes it extremely dangerous for the entire humanity. This is because in any moment of internal crisis or economic hardship in the Western civilization—a small incident anywhere on the globe can be exploited by the Western military hawks, inspired by the belief in Armageddon, as an excuse to make the prophecy of Armageddon self-fulfilling. Given these circumstances it is essential that Islamic civilization promotes education, rational thinking, democracy, economic growth and full employment within all its component nations, and eliminates poverty and corruption to eradicate fundamentalism and militancy.

The principles drawn by Kennedy from the study of the rise and fall of the great powers during the last five centuries are very powerful and relevant for policy making. The policy makers, using these rules as a guide will be able to exert their influence on the world. Huntington, on the other hand, shows that the same rules when abused by powerful policy makers of a dominant civilization, either with misunderstanding of facts or with a hidden agenda of racial, cultural, religious or military supremacy, can even destroy the all of humanity in this modern age. Actually, if we study the new trends consciously we will realize that rapid globalisation, spread of Information Technology, increasing economic interdependence and the constructive role of the West in Bosnia and Kosovo, all offer a window of opportunity to realize greater inter-civilizational cooperation and construct a genuine humane civilization. It is this awareness to get consciously involved

and use these principles to influence the world events to promote inter civilizational understanding and dialogue, and global multiculturalism which makes these two books great works of the final two decades of the twentieth century. The criteria that with a good understanding of history, man can consciously influence the world events, was laid down by the great historian E. H. Carr when he wrote; "History begins when men begin to think of the passage of time in terms not of natural processes—the cycle of the seasons, the human life-span—but a series of specific events in which men are consciously involved and which they can consciously influence."⁸

Notes

1. Bruce Mazlish, *The Riddle of History: The Grand Speculators From Vico to Freud* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 59-60.
2. *Ibid.*, 17.
3. *Dictionary of Philosophy* (Totowa: Littlefield Adams & Co., 1981), 127-128.
4. Arthur Herman, *The Idea of Decline in the Western History* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 2-3.
5. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 155-179.
6. Retrieved from *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia 96, World English Edition [CD-ROM]* s.v. "Peter the Hermit." See also: Esmond Wright, *History of the World: Prehistory and Renaissance* (Middlesex: Bonanza Books, 1985), 393-408.
7. Ronald Turner (ed), *Thinkers of the Twentieth Century*, (Chicago: St. James Press, 1987), 274-279.
8. E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 134.

Book Reviews

Islamization: Concept and Controversy

Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas: An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization by Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud. Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1998. Pp. 505. ISBN 983937909-7.

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