The Clash of Interests: An Explanation of the World [Dis]order

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Abstract: *The paper is a critical re-examination of the Post-Cold War theories —especially Fukuyama's "End of History" and Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations"—and aims to provide an alternative explanation for the global political crisis and instabilities during this era. It is argued that the end of the Cold War strategic balance based on bipolarity has created sensitive regions on a large geopolitical and geoeconomic zone, because there is a vacuum of power to control the strategic capabilities of the geopolitical core areas as well as the vast resource-production-trade capabilities of international political economy. The revival of cultural and civilizational identities after the collapse of the ideological identities of the bipolar Cold War era has been exploited to justify the intra-civilizational strategic competition among the systemic power centers in order to control these sensitive geopolitical and geoeconomic zones. The Eurasian component of the Muslim world, which became the intersectional arena of these two phenomena, civilizational revival and strategic competition, appears as the focal point in international relations.*

The Post-cold War Theories

As the parameters of the Cold War era fade, a new link has been established between the political decision-making process of the power centers of the international system and political theories. This is reflected in the recent theses of Fukuyama's *End of History*[1] and Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations."[2] Despite some terminological and substantial differences, these two theses share the same status quo oriented ideo-

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logical formulation in justifying foreign policy measures and maneuvers.

Fukuyama wrote the first versions of his thesis in an extremely optimistic atmosphere during the collapse of the socialist regimes symbolised by the pulling down of the Berlin Wall. He declared the ultimate victory of liberal democracy and argued that it "may constitute the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the final form of human government and as such constitute the end of history."[3] The ultimate fossilization of other cultures and civilizations as a counterpart to the end of history is inevitable, according to this theory, because "culture—in the form of resistance to the transformation of certain traditional values to those of democracy—can constitute an obstacle to democratization."[4] This approach became the intellectual vanguard and secular baptismal creed of the universal democratic crusade in the name of New World Order. It was found convenient by US foreign policy makers because it provided them, during the Gulf War, with the necessary political rhetoric needed to mobilize the whole world for the achievement of their own strategic planning in the Gulf War. The "Free World" as the slogan of the Cold-War era has been replaced with the "International Community" in the Post-Cold War era. The notions of globalization and technological advancement have been used—or misused—for this strategic planning.

Fukuyama's thesis, which glorifies the universalization of the political values and structures of Western civilization, furnished the principal perspective in evaluating the political affairs in the post-Soviet and pre-Bosnian era. The Bosnian crisis became the end of "the end of history;" it revealed the imbalances of western civilization and also the deformities of the existing world order. This new situation necessitated a new analytical framework. Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* undertakes to provide this framework.

Huntington starts with a different assumption than Fukuyama's. He does not refer to a universal set of values or an international order. Instead he tries to analyze the existing political disorder with a view to identifying the areas of conflict. Where Fukuyama emphasized the unavoidable and irresistible universalization of western values, Huntington attempts to explain the alternative civilizational processes which mobilize the masses into political action and confrontation. The ambitious and idealistic rhetoric of Fukuyama makes way for Huntington's realistic and cautious one. The changed rhetoric reflects the changes which have occured in the international political arena during the last two years which have shown that declaration of the "end of history" was premature.

Where Fukuyama refers to Hegelian philosophy to reinforce his argumentation, Huntington refers to the history of civilization, though both use the same selective methodology when citing philosophy and history. This selective approach, it seems, does not represent methodological error. Rather it is due to a theoretical preference which is directly associated with the mission behind the thesis. Huntington ignores the hegemonic character of western civilization in the formation of the global intellectual/philosophical trends, socio-cultural codes of behavior, and the international order. This is the reason why he blames non-western civilizations for the existing crises and conflicts. He neglects the fact that the *Lebensraum* of these civilizations was effectively marginalized by the hegemonic paradigm of western civilization.

Huntington also neglects the fact that the most destructive global wars of human history were the intra-civilizational wars among the systemic forces of the Eurocentric western civilization which were "wars fought to decide who will provide systemic leadership, whose rules will govern, whose policies will shape systemic allocation processes, and whose sense or vision of order will prevail."[5] Thompson, using the data provided by J. Levy,[6] states that global wars—those having more than 280,000 battle dead each—among the systemic forces, have been responsible for nearly four-fifths of battle casualties in the wars between the western great powers. The overemphasis on the inter-civilizational regional clashes may keep from view some very important factors behind these clashes originating from competition among the intra-systemic power centers.

These two contradicting approaches related to the role of the civilizations in political affairs—the one Fukuyama's, which in identifying Western civilization with the fate of the human race or human history, overemphasizes the role of this civilization, the other Huntington's, which absolves Western civilization from generating conflicts and crises—are actually parts of the same picture. Huntington completes the picture drawn by Fukuyama by providing the hegemonic powers with a theoretical justification for the overall political and military strategies required to control and reshape the international system: Western values and political structures have an intrinsic and irresistible universality (Fukuyama), and it is the other civilizations which are responsible for the political crisis and clashes (Huntington). Huntington's "the West versus the rest" polarization is the political reflection of this picture. "The rest," it is presumed, will always need the West's guidance to reach the end of history and overcome the disorder due to geocultural clashes. This, to be sure, is a recrudescence of the spirit of Rudyard Kipling's fundamentalist colonialism, expressed in terms of the "white man's burden" and is a

natural corollary of what Arnold Toynbee described as "egocentric illusion."

The existence of such an illusion is noticeable in the connection Huntington establishes between his theoretical analysis of civilizational clash and his strategic recommendations to western policy-makers. His reference to civilization-consciousness[7] in analyzing political and military confrontations is a correct but partial explanation. No doubt, the collapse of the Soviet system dissolved pseudo-identities as well as the pseudo-political fronts of the bipolar international system. However, this vacuum has been filled with historical/cultural identities which have become the core factor of political mobilization and inter-civilizational clash. This fact should not lead us to disregard other factors such as intra-civilizational strategic competition among the western powers, the geopolitical prioritization, the trade war to control international political economy, etc.

The basic components of an alternative analysis of the political instabilities in the post-Cold War era are the following: (i) the end of strategic stability; (ii) geopolitical and geoeconomic vacuum of power in international relations and international political economy; (iii) the emergence of authentic identities after the dissolution of the pseudo-fronts of the bipolarity; and (iv) intra-civilizational and intra-systemic competition.

Geopolitics and the Ecology of the Global Political System

There has been a continuous change in the power structure of the international system, excepting its global geopolitical parameters. As Bismarck rightly said, the only constant in foreign policy is geography. The correlation between the ecology of the global political system and inter-state relations is a fact. Geopolitics had a dual role in international relations as a fundamental cause for international crises and wars and as a decisive factor in the re-adjustment of the international system. The prewar geopolitical factors which led to the war have been used by the winners in the postwar era to readjust the new world order. This was the case in the First and Second World Wars and also in the periods before and after the Cold War. As Cohen correctly observes, "this world is organized politically in rational, not random fashion."[8] A brief analysis of the geopolitical theories would support this argument.

Since there is a correlation between the ecology of the global political system and inter-state relations, a consistent and compatible relationship between the geopolitical theories and strategies of the hegemonic powers

has always existed. Therefore geopolitics is a basic factor and indication of a power shift in global politics, especially during the critical turning points of modern history.

The geopolitical observations and geostrategic suggestions of Admiral Mahan[9] at the turn of the present century became the foundational principles used by the Anglo-American (Atlantic) sea-powers to control the strategic locations for global hegemony. The following suggestions of Mahan made to Theodore Roosvelt's administration (1901-1909) became the cornerstone of US foreign policy in this century: (i) the occupation of Hawaii, (ii) control of the Caribbean, (iii) building a canal to link the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, (iv) keeping wars away from US shores, (v) developing alliances for containment. The first three suggestions have been put into effect while the latter two remain as the permanent geostrategic principles of US foreign policy. Some of Mahan's other predictions, like those concerning the struggle between Russian land power (Eurasia) and British sea power (Atlantic), the significance of Singapore as a major naval base and the common interest of the US, the UK, Germany, and Japan in containing Russia and controlling China also came true.

Mackinder's theory of the "Heartland" was an attempt at refomulating British foreign policy tradition in order to enable it to overcome the strategic challenges of Germany which aimed to control the Eurasian Pivot Area. According to his theory of land-geopolitics, this Eurasian Pivot Area, as the core of the Eurasian continent and being inaccessible to a naval power, could shelter a land power that might come to dominate the world from its continental fortress. This pivot area is surrounded by an inner crescent in mainland Europe and Asia and an outer crescent in the islands and continents beyond Eurasia. Mackinder enlarged the heartland to Central Asia in 1919 and moved it east of the Yenisei river in 1943 naming it Lenaland.[10]

His famous geopolitical formula for domination in the global politics; "who rules East Europe commands the Heartland, who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island, who rules the World-Island commands the World" was very influential in shaping the map of Europe after the First World War. The winning allies created buffer states to separate Germany and Russia, to keep Germany away from the heartland and East Europe and to prevent the unification of East Europe and the heartland in the hands of one of these continental powers. His prediction made in 1924[11] that the potential of the Heartland could be balanced in the future by Western Europe and North America (North Atlantic/Midland Ocean) might be regarded as the first inspiration of Cold War

geopolitics.

World War II was a war of geopolitics. K. Haushoffer's theory of a Transcontinental Bloc as an alliance formed by Germany, Russia and Japan was the most comprehensive continental alliance of land powers against the coalition of sea-powers based on Anglo-American naval supremacy. This Eurasian geostrategy was the theoretical background of the German-Soviet alliance in 1939. Haushoffer was ultimately proposing a pan-regional coalition between German Eurasia and the Japanese Indo-Pacific region. Despite the failure of Haushoffer's idea of a Transcontinental Bloc, especially after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, his anticipation of the pan-regional division of three separate power zones, in terms of geopolitics and political economy—each with its own core: Europe, Japan and Anglo-America; and periphery: Africa and India, East and South-east Asia, and Latin America respectively— remains quite valid in current geopolitics and international political economy.

The geopolitical reason for Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 was his ambition to obtain sole control of the Heartland and Eurasia. His geostrategic plan was to reach the Persian Gulf across the Caucasus and India through Central Asia and Afghanistan. This would materialize the historic 7B-link of German geostrategy (Berlin, Budapest, Bucharest, Belgrade, Bosphorus, Baghdad and Bombay) against colonial sea-powers. Such an ambitious plan could be prevented through a coalition between the main global sea power (USA) and the land-power of the Heartland (USSR) with geopolitical realities overriding ideological differences.

The same geopolitical realities created, however, a bipolar international system justified by ideological differences. Spykman's modified version of Mackinder's theory about the Heartland became the geopolitical foundation of the American containment policy which was the permanent geostrategic concern of policy-makers in Washington. Spykman argued that the real power potential of Eurasia lay in what Mackinder called the Inner or Marginal Crescent, not in the Heartland. He called this area of power potential Rimland and produced another formula: Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world.[12]

The containment policy of the US aimed to control this Rimland so as to neutralize the power of the Heartland which was then under the control of the USSR. This policy was based on a series of alliances: NATO (from Norway to Turkey), CENTO (from Turkey to Pakistan),

SEATO (from Pakistan to Philippines in the East and New Zealand in the South). The USSR's attempts to break this containment of Rimland and the US's attempts to arrest the USSR in its Heartland led to many inter-state and intra-state wars throughout the Cold War era. The two countries nonetheless tried to avoid direct military confrontation. The failure of the USSR's last attempt in Afghanistan to control the most significant passes (Khyber, Gomal and Khojak) from the Heartland to the Rimland became the geopolitical declaration of the collapse of Soviet system.

Nuclear deterrence was another alternative to counterbalance the superior strategic position of the USSR in Eurasia. US policy makers utilized this theory to justify the development of nuclear projects. The conventional parameters of strategic competition continued to be important factors due to the fact that the equally balanced nuclear deterrence created a balance of terror which, on one hand, prevented nuclear war between the super powers and, on the other, escalated regional conventional wars without much risk of confrontation between the super powers. The increase of the US's LICs (Low Intensity Conflicts) during this period is an important indication of the continuing impact of conventional strategic competition despite the existence of global nuclear deterrence. The distribution of fifty LICs in the post-War era reflects the geopolitical priorities of the US: 60% of these LICs were over the disputes related to the Rimland of Eurasia (24% in the Middle East, 30% in East Asia and 6% in Eastern Europe); 32% of them were in American hinterland (12% in Central America; 8% in South America and 12% in Caribbean); and 8% of them were in Africa, especially in North Africa, which is the zone closest to the Rimland of Eurasia.[13]

The End of Strategic Stability

There was a geopolitical rationality behind the Cold-war bipolarity which created a geo-strategic balance between the "Trade-Dependent Maritime World" and the "Eurasian Continental Power."[14] Despite the existence of an inter-super power tension, this balance brought about a strategic stability which allowed no premium to be attached to the initiation of an offense. This stability provided a rational control mechanism over the areas strategically most sensitive. The inter-super power relations resulted in direct confrontational relations only if this strategic stability was threatened by one of the super powers in its attempt to control geopolitical choke points. The Cuban missile crisis (refer to Mahan's suggestion to control the Caribbean Sea), Korean and Vietnamese Wars,

and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (refer to Spykman's Rimland theory) are some examples of these confrontational relations in the Cold-War era.

The immediate consequence of the end of this strategic balance was a strategic monopoly under US leadership which tried to re-adjust the control mechanism by invoking the binding principles of the United Nations. The Gulf War was the first major event in this process of re-adjustment of the geopolitical status quo. The same principles, however, failed in Bosnia. The United Nations did not defend the territorial integrity of a member state, nor did it recognize that state's right of self-defense. The intra-systemic conflict between the US and Europe and the lack of consensus among European powers over Bosnia became the end of the premature slogan of the "New World Order." The basic principles of international law have been defeated in Bosnia by a wanton pragmatism and by the medieval prejudices of Europe.

This consequence of the Bosnian crisis coincided with two important developments at the intersection of geopolitics and international political economy. First, the US administration observed that strategic monopoly does not necessarily mean full control over the international political economy which determines the economic profit and share of the competing systemic forces. The cost of being at the forefront was that the strategic monopoly did not prevent the relative decline of the American share in the global political economy in comparison with Europe and Japan. This created a reluctance in the US administration to play the role of policeman in the New World Order. The withdrawal of US forces from Somalia is another consequence of this reluctance. The current period is one of transition between bipolar strategic stability and the multipolar balance-of-power structure.

Secondly, many regional powers tried to utilize the ambiguity of this transitionary period to act for their political and strategic interests. The increase of regional clashes in the post-Bosnian era is a natural consequence of this geopolitical and geoeconomic vacuum.

Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Vacuum of Power

One of the most important factors of instability in the post-Cold War era is this geopolitical and geostrategic vacuum. The end of bipolarity in the system of alliances has diminished inter-super power tension, but brought about a huge vacuum on the geostrategically very important zone where the Heartland and Rimland intersect.[15] The vast percentage of the military and political crises in the Post-Cold War era are in this zone

where the passes from the Heartland to the Rimland (e.g., the Balkans, Caucusus, and Central Asia) and choke points of the coasts of the Rimland (e.g., the Persian Gulf and Bab al-Mandeb/Red Sea) are located.

The strategic adjustments and control mechanisms of the Cold War bipolarity became invalid without any better replacement. The pre-Cold War strategic flashpoints which originated from the balance of power struggles came into the picture in the absence of an international political will. The strategic passages from the Asian steppes to Europe and access roads/choke points to the Mediterranean and Baltic sea became the focal areas of conflict. The Drava-Sava axis between Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia, the Morava-Vardar axis between Serbia, Kosovo and Macedonia; the Carpathians and Transylvania between Rumania and Hungary; Bessarabia between Moldavia; Russia and Rumania; and the access to Baltic Sea over the Baltic countries are the basic problematic strategic areas in East Europe and Balkans. The same areas had strategic priority in the intra-systemic competition of great powers in the 19th century and during the Second World War.

A similar geopolitical vacuum emerged in Caucasia, another important passage from the Heartland to the Rimland and warm seas. This region is strategically linked to Eastern Turkey, Northern Iran, Iraq and the Persian Gulf. This strategic link was cut off by the strategic balance during the bipolar conditions of the Cold War era. Transcaucasia was controlled by the Soviet Union while Eastern Turkey and Northern Iran (until the Iranian revolution) was under the sphere of influence of the western bloc, preventing Eurasian continental power from reaching the geoeconomic resources of the Middle East and the geopolitical potential of Rimland. NATO's plan regarding the Turkish barrier formed the defense of its southern flank. Iraq, then an ally of the Soviets, played an important role in counterbalancing this western bloc.

Two important political events radically influenced the Cold War balance in this strategic link. The first blow to the bipolar strategic parameters of this region was the Iranian revolution in 1979, with the first Gulf War between Iraq and Iran being a strategic reaction to this new development. The rival powers of the Cold War era supported Iraq in preventing any change in the strategic status quo of this region and succeeded in restraining the military and diplomatic capacity of Iran.

The second blow was the collapse of the Soviet system as the balancing pole of strategic bipolarity. This new strategic position gave an opportunity to the regional powers to fill the vacuum. Iraq, which was

militarily supported by the systemic powers in the first Gulf War, tried
to create a new strategic core with its military capacity. The systemic
powers used this ambition of Saddam to restate the status quo under
western leadership, effectively consolidating all regional powers against
Iraq. This created a second Gulf War which resulted in unipolar US
strategic control over the Gulf. The Second Gulf War, however, brought
about more ambiguities rather than a clear order, despite the slogan of
the New World Order.

The region from Northern Caucasia in the north to Kuwait in the
south is full of inconsistencies between internationally recognized
territories and *de facto* realities. Divided Iraq is in a chaotic situation.
Iraq's territorial integrity has not been guaranteed, nor has the Kurdish
autonomous republic been recognized. The Kurdish question is becoming
a chronic crisis without a solution. One-fifth of Azeri territories are
under Armenian invasion and the autonomous republics of Abkhazia and
Chechnya are seeking international recognition. There is no international
mechanism or will to find a comprehensive solution, due to the fact that
each great power has another vision related to the future of this highly
sensitive and rich region. This region is not only the strategic backbone
of Eurasia but a geoeconomic resource area as well. The oil potential of
Azerbayjan; the water resources of Eastern Turkey; and the oilfields of
Kirkuk in Northern Iraq, Iran and Kuwait are all strategically interlinked
to each other and are essential for regional and global attempts at
domination.

This is the reason why the chaotic atmosphere in this region was
intensified after the emergence of a geopolitical and geoeconomic
vacuum. The purported cultural and civilizational clashes are very minor
reasons for this chaotic atmosphere because this region is an integral part
of the same civilization, namely the Islamic civilization, with the excep-
tions of Armenia and the Christian parts of Georgia. The issue of
Karabakh and the invasion of Azeri lands by Armenian forces is the only
real cultural/civilizational clash in this region.

The third geopolitical vacuum has emerged in the southern flank of
Central Asia, which has been one of the most important confrontational
areas between the Eurasian Continental Power and the trade-dependent
Maritime Power, as well as among the regional powers such as China,
India, and Pakistan. The passes and corridors from the Central Asian
Heartland to the surrounding Rimland have been the lines of demarcation
for the global struggle for domination, starting with the 19th century
Anglo-Russian struggle for hegemony over this significant geopolitical

belt. Afghanistan with its passes (Khojak, Gomal, Khyber) and corridor (Wakhan) from Central Asia to the Indus lowlands has been the buffer area in this struggle. This route, which was also used by Alexander the Great, continued to play a significant role in the Great Game of the 19th century and the Cold War of this century. The Soviet attack in 1979 to this buffer zone became a turning point of the Cold War strategic balance and its failure led to the fall of the Soviet strategic pillar in Asia.

After the collapse of Soviet Union, Russia is trying to strengthen the previous line of demarcation in Tajikistan. Therefore, Russia intervened in the civil war in Tajikistan and at the same time she declared that the Afghan-Tajik border is a border of Russia. This cannot be a valid argument according to internally recognized territories; however, it shows the validity and prevailing impact of geopolitical factors despite changes in the international territories. Russia does not want to leave the geopolitical sphere of influence which was gained in the 19th century. Sino-Indian and Indo-Pakistani territorial disputes also reflect the significance of this region. China, which is presently controlling the Mintaka pass, wants to use the Karakarom highway as the main strategic route in this region, while India aims to intensify control over the disputed Kashmir region. The continuing civil wars in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, and the increasing tension and oppression in Kashmir and Xinjiang are consequences of this geopolitical vacuum in this extremely important zone for the future of the Eurasian power struggle. The spreading competition among the great and regional powers in order to have a share of the geoeconomic resources of Central Asia complicates the chaotic situation in the region and is reflected in international relations as civil wars, regional tensions, and tactical maneuvers to reshape strategic positions in the region.

All these flashpoints prove that the end of the Cold War strategic balance based on bipolarity has created a huge geopolitical and geo-economic vacuum in the zone where the North-South passes intersect with the East-West belt of the Rimland. This is the real factor of the political crises and instabilities in the Post Cold War era. Cultural differences and historical prejudices which were revived after the collapse of the ideological identities of the bipolar Cold War era are being used to justify this strategic competition. The Muslim world, which became the intersectional arena of these two phenomena, civilizational revival and strategic competition, becomes the focal point in international relations.

Muslim World: Anti-Systemic Threat
or Victim of the Geopolitical Clash?

Another common characteristic of the theories in the post Cold-War era is their presentation of Islam as the fundamental challenge to the new era. Fukuyama sees Islam as a grave threat to the universal values of liberalism:

> It is true that Islam constitutes a systematic and coherent ideology, just like liberalism and communism, with its own code of morality and doctrine of political and social justice. The appeal of Islam is potentially universal, reaching out to all men as men, and not just to members of a particular ethnic or national group. And Islam has indeed defeated liberal democracy in many parts of the Islamic world, posing a grave threat to liberal practices even in countries where it has not achieved political power directly. The end of the Cold War in Europe was followed immediately by a challenge to the West from Iraq, in which Islam was arguably a factor.[16]

Similarly, Huntington presents Islam as the civilization mainly responsible for the clashes along the great historical fault lines on one hand and the partner of a challenging coalition against the West on the other.

> In Eurasia the great historic fault lines between civilizations are once more aflame. This is particularly true along the boundaries of the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc of nations from the bulge of Africa to Central Asia. Violence also occurs between Muslims, on the one hand, and Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Jews in Israel, Hindus in India, Buddhists in Burma and Catholics in the Philippines. Islam has bloody borders.[17]

> A Confucian-Islamic military connection has thus come into being, designed to promote acquisition by its members of the weapons and weapons technologies needed to counter the military power of the West....A new form of arms competition is thus occuring between Islamic-Confucian states and the West.[18]

These observations and existing political realities necessitate a re-evaluation of the strategic position of the Muslim world in the post-Cold War era. First of all, we have to search for the veiled factors and reasons which lead policy-makers of the systemic great powers to intensify military and strategic operations in the Muslim world and which lead political theoreticians to present Islam as a threat to the world

system.' Does the Muslim World really possess the political, economic and military capacity to develop an independent strategy, or do some power centers want to create a new enemy-pole for the justification of their strategic and tactical operations?[19]

Within the limits of the given parameters of the international system, it is very difficult to argue that the Muslim world can develop an independent global strategy as an anti-systemic force which enjoys some sort of power of choice in its involvement in the world system. Muslim states, in general, rank close to the bottom in the pecking order of the world system. Using different categorizations, we can say only hegemonic/global/core powers can have some luxury of choice in the process of prioritization of strategic planning. Muslim countries are part of either non-hegemonic or periphery categories which necessarily specify the strategic and tactical steps within the limitations given by the strategies of the hegemonic powers. The Muslim countries which have better status in this ranking are those which are candidates for becoming regional powers. Although these regional powers do have more flexibility, especially in tactical planning, they also have to consider strategic parameters given by the super and great powers.

Then why do some strategists try to formulate a strategy based on the assumption of a Muslim threat to the international order? The basic reason for declaring the Muslim world as a threat is the geopolitical, geoeconomic, and geostrategic potentialities of the Muslim world and the need for ideological justification for strategic and tactic operations in order to have a control over these potentialities. We have to compare the global post-Cold War conditions with these potentialities to find out why there are areas of intensified conflict in the Muslim lands.

The first and most important characteristic of the geopolitics of the Muslim world is the fact that it is composed of the most strategic parts of the Rimland and the Heartland. This characteristic brought about many strategic advantages and potentialities, as well as strategic risks to the Muslim World. First of all it provides the Muslim world with a geographical location which is very suitable to the development of a continental and maritime strategy at the same time. The basic weakness of the hegemonic powers in the last two centuries was in having only such geographical capacity as allowed the development of either a continental or maritime strategy. For example, Britain and the US applied basically a maritime strategy while Germany and Russia had to concentrate on a continental strategy based on land power. This fact created a geostrategic balance and internal conflict among the hegemonic powers over the Muslim lands.

Spykman insisted on the geostrategic supremacy of Rimland because this area is vulnerable to both land and sea power and hence must operate in both modes. Therefore he advocated that the Allied forces should establish a postwar strategy in preventing any consolidation of the Rimland.[20] Moreover, he recommended the basic land and sea powers (US and USSR) to cooperate for the control of unruly Rimland countries due to the potential of these countries to develop multidimensional strategies. Therefore the undeclared cooperation against Iran during the Iran-Iraq war and the declared coalition against Iraq in the Gulf War is not surprising. Both of the super powers militarily supported Iraq to prevent Iran from consolidating the Rimland by a wave of revolutions. Then they cooperatively destroyed the Iraqi military capacity which provided Iraq with a superior strategic position from the geopolitical and geoeconomic perspectives in the core of the Rimland.

What would consolidation in the Rimland, which is so dangerous for the classical hegemonic land and maritime powers, mean? It practically means strategic control over, or strategic cooperation with, the Muslim countries because the Muslim countries fully control the central core of the Rimland from east to west as well as the passes from north to south, from the Heartland to the warm seas through Caucasia to the southern belt of Central Asia and Afghanistan. In addition to this, the Muslim countries are either fully (Anatolia and the Arabian Peninsula), or partially (the Indian subcontinent and Indochina), in control of the important semi-islands and islands (Cyprus, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Mindanao) which surround the access points of the Eurasian heartland to the oceans.

This geographical location brought about a great advantage to the Muslim world enabling it to control the choke points which divide the warm seas of the world, while also bringing an extensive risk of attracting intra-systemic competition. Eight out of the sixteen strategically most important choke points—the Suez Canal, Bab el-Mandeb (the exit from the Red Sea), the Strait of Hormuz (the exit from the Persian Gulf), the Strait of Malacca, the Sunda Strait (between Sumatra and Java), the Lombok Strait (between Bali and Mataram), and the Bosphorus and Dardanelles (exits from the Black Sea)—are under full control of the Muslim countries while one of them (the Strait of Gibraltar) separates a Muslim state (Morocco) and a European state (Spain). This fact means that almost all choke points in Eurasia (except the English Channel and the Danish Straits) as the keys of the Rimland are under the control of the Muslim countries. The rest—the Cape of Good Hope, the Torres and Tasmanian Straits (the straits to the north

and south of Australia), the Strait of Magellan, the Panama Canal, and
the exits from the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean—are located too far
from the Heartland and the Rimland to play a decisive role in the
ultimate geopolitical supremacy in the Eurasian mainland.

These geopolitical advantages are supported by geoeconomic
resources. For example, the estimated oil reserves of the world (in
billions of barrels) are as follows:[21] Middle East 397.5, Latin America
84.3, Former Soviet Union 81.4, Africa 56.2, USA 35.6, W.Europe
26.4, Australasia 18.8, Canada 7.4. When we add the oil reserves of the
Muslim-majority republics of the former Soviet Union, the Muslim world
has control over at least two-thirds of total oil reserves. The Muslim
control over some other strategic minerals and energy resources, such
as chrome, gold, natural gas, and uranium, creates a concentrated
intersection of geopolitics and geoeconomics which attracts great power
attentions for their struggle in an era of re-shaping the parameters of
global domination.

The collapse of the Soviet system has strengthened this strategic
position of the Muslim World from the following perspectives:

(i) the core and southern part of the Heartland (Central Asia)
consisting of Muslim majority states became independent;

(ii) the control and influence of the Muslim World over the passes
from the Heartland to the coasts of the Rimland increased
(especially through the Caucasus and Afghanistan);

(iii) the geographical link of Muslim communities in the Balkans
(Bosnia-Albania-Kosova-Macedonia-Western Thrace) became a
significant regional access for Muslims to reach Europe;

(iv) the geoeconomics of the Muslim World has been strengthened
by the resources of the new Muslim independent states. These
include oil, cobalt, iron pyrite (Azerbayjan); oil, coal, non-
ferrous metals, cadmium, bismuth, thallium, zinc, copper and
natural gas (Kazakhstan[22]); coal, oil, non-ferrous and rare metal
ores (Tajikistan); oil, gas, coal, sulphur, potassium, barite,
magnesium, bromine, iodine (Turkmenistan); non-ferrous
metals, gold, coal and gas (Uzbekistan); mercury, antimony, tin
and zinc (Kyrgyzstan). Mackinder declared in his geopolitical
theory that the Heartland contained land and minerals equal to
those of North America and suggested that these regions would
combine against Germany; and

(v) an independent Muslim country (Kazakhstan) has nuclear
capacity and power.

These geopolitical and geoeconomic elements of the post-Soviet era have consolidated the multidimensional capacity of the Muslim World and attracted intra-systemic competition over these geopolitically core regions. The analysis of the current political crisis accounts for the role of these strategic factors in the political and military confrontations which provoke civilizational differences in order to create instabilities and clashes. The instable international position of the Muslim world as the victim of this strategic competition is an illuminating example of this argument. The bloody borders of Islam are not merely due to historical hostilities or civilizational clashes; otherwise, it would have been impossible to explain the Gulf War or the crisis of Somalia where the most intensive military deployment of the post-Cold War era happened. Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations is at best a partial explanation which neglects the intra-systemic conflicts among the hegemonic powers—the most decisive factor in current international relations.

Such a presentation of the Muslim world as a potential enemy has resulted in three phenomena related to the Muslim world. These are, in fact, attempts at ex post facto rationalizations. First, it encouraged oppressive political tendencies in the Muslim countries. Western powers which promote democratic values and mechanisms in other parts of the world supported undemocratic regimes in the Muslim world. The rationalization was simple: a democratic system in the Muslim world may create Islamic regimes with anti-western sentiments. Such a rationalization clearly shows that the basic motive behind this presentation is their political interest rather than democratic values. The corrupt military/political elite in some Muslim countries exploited this fear and cooperated with the global systemic forces of the democratic West in order to destroy democratic processes in the Muslim world.

Some recent political developments has vindicated the suspicions that the West has a different set of values for different parts of the 'rest.' This fact may be exemplified through the Algeria-Haiti paradox. A military intervention against the democratic political process in Algeria was supported by western power centers while a similar intervention in Haiti created a strong reaction in the form of international sanctions and UN intervention. The ideal of the restoration of the democratic process which became the justification for international intervention in Haiti did not have any value in Algeria. The vague demarcation between national sovereignty and international intervention is one of the most critical area where values and interests intersect. The Algeria-Haiti paradox has proven the fact that what matters is the strategic interest, not universal

values. Western strategic interests in preserving undemocratic political systems have caused a deterioration of political legitimacy in the Muslim World. The polarization in the Muslim countries between secular elites and Muslim masses created political instability and provided the hegemonic powers with a golden opportunity to manipulate these internal conflicts for their own strategic aims.

Secondly, the tedious oppressions of Muslim minorities has been tolerated as mere internal affairs of those countries. Muslim minorities in Kashmir, Sandzak, Kosova, etc., are exempted from enjoying the universality of democratic values after this prejudicial atmosphere against Islam. This attitude even extends to a level whereby the Serbian brigands justified their killing of Muslim women and children on the grounds that otherwise two million Bosnian Muslims would invade all of Europe; and were able to further argue that they were fulfilling a historical mission by defending Europe from Islamic fundamentalism.

Thirdly, some international coalitions have been developed against a possible Islamic threat. A US Senator and member of President Bush's Republican Party, Larry Pressler, insisted in his visit to India in early 1992 that a nuclear-armed Islamic confederation of as many as nine countries could emerge in Central and South Asia to threaten India and world stability. Strategic analysts are still trying to prove that the belt of Muslim countries stretching from Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan across five former Soviet Republics might turn to fundamentalism. It is interesting that the same Islamic belt was encouraged by the US during the Cold War era as a guarantee for US strategic interests against the expansion of the USSR.

Parallel to this phenomenon, Serbia is asking for extensive cooperation from Greece in the Balkans while Armenia is trying to provoke the religious feelings of the Christian great powers in order to gain support for their military expansionism against Azerbayjan. At the same time Israel is giving support to India against mass movements in Kashmir and the Punjab. Recently, Vladimir Zhirinovsky declared a pan-Slavic "Holy Crusade" against Muslim countries in the southern belt of Russia, across the Balkans, Caucasia, and Central Asia. Thus the comprehensive prejudice against the Muslim world, which is supported by an over-simplified concept of fundamentalism, veils a clear anti-Islam fundamen-talism provoking neighboring countries of the Muslim world from Morocco to Indonesia, from Bosnia to Central Asia. This anti-Islam fundamentalism is the basic reason why the European community failed to be pluralistic and tolerant enough to fulfill its 20-year old promise to accept Turkey (a torn country in Huntington's analysis) as a member state.

Strategic Adventurism or a Just Global Order

The most critical areas of political disorder in contemporary international relations are geopolitics and international political economy. When we analyze the flashpoints of world politics   and the areas of military confrontation, we can see an intensification in those regions which is significant from these two perspectives. The areas where these two factors intersect are the most sensitive areas for the emergence and provocation of conflicts. The end of bipolarity has created sensitive regions where there is a vacuum of power needed to control the strategic capabilities of the geopolitical core areas as well as the vast resource production trade capabilities of the international political economy. The competition among the intra-systemic hegemonic powers to control these areas is the main cause of the military/political clashes and conflicts which occur on that strategically sensitive zone which is vulnerable to global domination.

Therefore Huntington, who starts his article with a historical and civilizational analysis, concludes it with a set of strategic suggestions to western political leaders. He does not aim to find out peaceful ways of resolving inter-civilizational clashes. On the contrary, he suggests western policy-makers should manipulate, and sometimes provoke, these clashes in order to secure the strategic interests of the western civilization: "In the short term it is clearly in the interest of the West to promote greater cooperation and unity within its own civilization... to moderate the reduction of western military capabilities and maintain military superiority in East and Southwest Asia; to exploit differences and conflicts along Confucian and Islamic states..."

In fact, this strategic pragmatism is the major factor for the emergence of the political and military clashes. The history of civilizations is not composed only of clashes. We have many examples of dynamic and peaceful cooperation and interaction among the civilizations. A pluralistic civilizational coexistence was achieved in Spain, Eastern Europe and India throughout the centuries until the western strategic interests started to function. A clash is not the only inter-civilizational mode of relationship. A clash starts when this civilizational difference is being utilized for a strategic objective.

This strategic exploitation of the civilizational clashes creates a real challenge to the international system. The US has a key role in overcoming this problem. The ambiguity of the global strategy of the US during the post-Cold War era, however, created new power vacuums which resulted in the escalation of regional crises.

The US has three options in the development of a global strategy in the post-Cold War era. The first option is to restructure the collective security system to give it a consistent approach which aims to redefine the axiomatic principles of a just international order. Such an attempt necessitates a global consensus on the axiological framework of this international order which is shared by different cultures and civilizations. A western consensus which intends to exclude Islamic civilization, with one-quarter of the world population on the strategically most important belt of the globe; Chinese civilization, with one-quarter of the world population concentrated on the economically most dynamic region; Japanese civilization, with a huge economic share controlling the financial arterial system of the international political economy; and traditional civilizations, spreading all over the continents; cannot achieve a real global order and peace. A comprehensive civilizational dialogue, rather than a strategic pragmatism exploiting the civilizational clash, is needed for a globally legitimate international political order. The end of the post-Cold War era created a golden opportunity for such a global attempt. This opportunity, however, has been missed because of the intra-systemic crisis.

The second option is to preserve the existing leadership role together with a strategic pragmatism based on prioritization of national interests in order to minimize strategic risks and maximize economic interests. This option can be implemented through the intra-systemic adjustments in order to counterbalance the basic systemic challengers of the international political and economic power structure. This would mean the revival of the conventional balance of power politics, a strategically linked political and economic process of negotiation and competition, and a dynamic and flexible foreign policy to respond to short-term fluctuations and regional instabilities. This option will lead US foreign policy makers to implement an effective policy of alliances in order to readjust the power structure according to the changing international atmosphere instead of a fixed alliance system of the Cold War era.

The third option is the revival of the neo-isolationist policy which assumes a defensive military strategy in the conventionally protected American continent, a protectionist economic policy supported by a huge market, and a low profile foreign policy in Eurasia in order to avert unwanted, but probably unavoidable, strategic confrontations. This would practically mean the end of the post war international political and economic order which was based on the assumption of the leadership of the Atlantic alliance and the US.

The US, as the leading political power of the dominant civilization in

modern age, has not been successful in developing a consistent strategy during this chaotic situation. Three different stages might be mentioned in analyzing American policy in the post-Cold War era. The first stage, from the fall of Berlin wall (November 1989) untill the Gulf War (January 1991), was based on a rhetoric of the "New World Order" as the symbol of the first option. This rhetoric, however, has not been supported by the necessary steps needed to accelerate the process of re-systematization of the global order. The second stage was a transitionary period from the Gulf War (January 1991) till the Bosnian crisis (April 1992). There was a shift in using the concept of "New World Order" during this transitionary period. It was used as a means of justifying strategic maneuvers rather than as a foundation for a humanistic re-systematization of the global order. So the first option has been replaced by the second option during this transitionary period. This shift became apparent during the third stage which might be called the post-Bosnian era. The failure of the very basic principles of the collective security system in defending the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Hercegovina as a member state was a consequence of this shift towards strategic pragmatism of power politics. The reluctance of the US to interfere in European affairs, in spite of continuing aggression and genocide, created the most ambiguous situation since the Second World War and one which has shaken the principles of the international order. This reluctance has been accounted for as an indication of another shift from power politics to isolationism, especially in European affairs. The exceptional status of Europe in implementing the principles of the UN might be considered as the end of the leading role of the US in the postwar collective security system. The future of Bosnia-Hercegovina will not only be the destiny of a nation-state. It will be, rather, a litmus test for the new power centers of the international system in the post-Cold War era.

The utmost question for US strategy in an indefinite future will continue to be the preservation of its existing status as the main player of a collective security system. This objective necessitates the achievement of two conditions: (i) the development of a set of values in the international system which will be shared by all nations of the globe despite their different cultures and civilizations; (ii) the ease and manipulation of the tensions caused by intra-systemic competition over the critical zones of geopolitics and international economy.

The first and the most important prerequisite of the first condition is the recognition of the right of the survival of several different civilizational identities in an atmosphere of coexistence. The existing

civilizational crisis could only be overcome by a civilizational dialogue and a free exchange of values. Unicultural monopolism has been the main dilemma of modern western civilization and has led to the destruction of traditional civilizations. The current revival of traditional civilizations is a reaction against this unicultural monopolism. The US with its two wings— one in the Atlantic with a Euro-American heritage and the other one in the Pacific with an Asian-American synthesis— should prefer to promote a real civilizational dialogue instead of being merely the supporter of a Eurocentric western crusade of colonialism against traditional civilizations. The latter alternative may even create domestic instability due to a crisis of American identity as America finds itself rapidly becoming more and more a multi-cultural society, e.g., Muslims are now becoming the second biggest religious group in the US while Asian people with a Confucianist background are further increasing their role in American society.

The confrontational categorizations based on the provocations of the civilizational differences such as West vs. Islam, West vs. Rest, can neither contribute anything to global peace and security nor to the process of re-adjustment of the international system. Strategic miscalculations based on these confrontational categorizations will continue to be the main obstacle to global peace. The colonial ambitions and anti-colonial sentiments of the last century may again arise out of this strategic misuse of civilizational differences and ultimately this will be against the interest of the West in general and the US in particular.

American hegemony in the post-World War II era legitimized itself through the international management of the post-colonial period, this being formulated by the Wilsonian principles and actualized by the UN Charter. The revival of these colonial categorizations would be a severe blow to American hegemony which was based on the management of global domination through international organizations such as the UN. This in turn assumed the participation albeit undemocratic and unequal, of the colonizers and colonized countries of the colonial era. The first indication of this blow may be the dismemberment of a sovereign state recognized by the UN in Bosnia which practically would mean the collapse of the very principle of this international management.

The second objective can be achieved only if the existing collective security is revised in order to formulate a just and well-defined mechanism for minimizing global strategic adventurism and conflict among the intra-systemic forces. The end of the Cold War strategic balance has been followed by regionally limited strategic adventurism such as in the case of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq for a bigger Iraq

and the ethnic cleansing by the Serbian aggressors in Bosnia for a bigger Serbia. This low-scale strategic adventurism can easily escalate to a global level if this tendency were to be followed by one of the great powers having a large military capacity. The inability of the collective security system in preventing ethnic cleansing in Bosnia has highlighted the inability of the US and UN in acting in order to protect the basic principles of international law against a Europe-centered strategic adventurism.

The intra-systemic conflict among great powers has prevented any collective or individual action in Bosnia to protect human dignity, a characteristic respected by all human civilizations. The revival of the geopolitical global war cannot be prevented if a militarily capable power is encouraged by this weakness. The US may have to cooperate with non-western countries—especially with the Muslim and Confucian states which presently control the sensitive geopolitical zone of the Rimland—against the ultranationalist trends in Europe and Russia which have the strategic ambition of a Eurasian continental bloc. It should be noted that this has been the cause of two world wars in this century alone. An isolated US under nuclear protection in American continent cannot be secure if such new strategic adventurism starts in Eurasia, as has been indicated in Vladimir Zhirinovosky's personality and statements.

Notes

1. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

2. Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (Summer 1993):22-49.

3. Fukuyama, *End of History*, xi.

4. Ibid., 215.

5. William Thompson, *On Global War: Historical-Structural Approaches to World Politics* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 7.

6. Jack S. Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495-1975* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 96.

7. Huntington, "Clash of Civilizations," 26.

8. Saul B. Cohen, *Geography and Politics in a World Divided* (N.Y.:Oxford University Press, 1973), iv.

9. See Martin Ira Glassner, *Political Geography* (New York: John Wiley, 1993), 225.

10. Halford J. Mackinder, "The Round World and the Winning of the Peace," *Foreign Affairs*, 21, (1943), 593-605.

11. Halford J. Mackinder, *The Nations of the Modern World* (London: George Philip& Sons, 1924), 251.

12. Nicholas Spykman, *The Geography of Peace* (New York, 1944), 43.

13. (i) Thirty out of these LICs were in Euroasian Rimland: Twelve in the Middle East (USSR 1946, Palestine 1948, Iran 1951-53, Lebanon 1958, Jordan 1970, Iraq 1972-75, OPEC 1974-75, Iran 1979, Syria 1979, Afghanistan 1980, Lebanon 1982-84, Persian Gulf 1987-88); Fifteen in East Asia (Philippines, 1942-45, 1946-55, 1984, 1985-86, Burma 1945, China 1945-49, 1953-79, Indochina 1946-54, North Korea 1953, Vietnam 1955-65, Laos 1955-65, Thailand 1965-85, Mayaguez 1975, Cambodia 1975); Three were in Eastern Europe and Mediterranean (Greece 1946-49, USSR. 1948, 1956, 1961,1968 and Cyprus 1974)

(ii) Sixteen out of of these fifty LICs were in the American hinterland: six in Central America (Guatemala 1953-54, Guatemala 1965-74, Nicaragua 1978-79, El Salvador 1979, Nicaragua 1981-90 and Panama 1987-90), Six in Caribbean (Cuba 1960, Dominican Republic 1960-62, U.S.S.R. 1962, Dominican Republic 1965-66, Grenada 1983, Haiti 1985-66) and 4 in South America (Brazil 1961-64, Chile 1970-73, Bolivia 1980-86, Falkland Island 1982)

(iii) Four out of these LICs were in Africa (South Africa 1960, Zaire 1960-64, Libya 1970 and Angola 1986)

The details of these LICs might be found in John M. Collins, *America's Small Wars* (Washington: Brasseys, 1991).

14. I borrowed these two concepts from Cohen, *Geography and Politics*. In his definition, the Trade-Dependent Maritime World comprised the whole of the Americas, all of Western Europe, all of Africa except for the northeastern corner, and all of offshore Asia and Oceania; and the Eurasian Continental Power comprised all the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and Eastern and Inner Asia.

15. CIS is a geopolitical sphere of influence rather than a real political entity. Therefore Russian military authorities declared that Russian borders start with the Afgan-Tajik border.

16. Fukuyama, *End of History,* 45-6

17. Huntington, "Clash of Civilizations," 35

18. Ibid., 47

19. The formation of the enemy-pole in in the Cold War era leads us to think seriously on the second option. Wallerstein's following observation is very interesting from this perspective: "We all presume too blithely that there was a

shift in US policy towards the USSR from the accommodation of Roosvelt to the Cold War hostility of Truman and his successors. I disagree. It seems to me that the US policy was a continuous one, behind the change in rhetoric. The US wanted a Stalinist USSR with a mini-empire, provided it remained essentially within the 1945-48 borders. Stalinists served the US as ideological justification of and cement for its hegemony in the world system." See Immanuel Wallerstein, "Marx, Marxism-Leninism and Social Experiences in the Modern World-System," *Thesis Eleven*, vol., 27, 46.

20. Spykman, *Geography of Peace*, 43; Martin Glassner & Harm J. de Blij, *Systematic Political Geography* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1989), 228.

21. Hugh Faringdon, *Strategic Geography*, (London: Routledge, 1989), 8.

22. Bismuth, cadimum and thallium are used in electronics, nuclear power engineering, and rocket making.