

Muslim Response to Huntington's Theory of Clash of Civilizations

- Nazar-ul-Islam Wani

Abstract

Muslim response to theory of clash of civilizations has been a constructive and instrumental response to some of the propositions claimed by Huntington whose clash theory perceives religion as a major element of conflict in the post- cold war cartography of International Relations. Islam, in particular is seen in bellicosity with other religions, and cultures and civilizations in the theory. This Paper is an effort to study theory of clash of civilizations and Muslim response to theory.

Key words: Conflict, Islam ad Clash of civilizations

Introduction

The background of the Huntington's paradigm can be understood through *the Foreign Affairs* magazine. It is a magazine on International relations developed after the World War II. This magazine provides an insight into the articles published mainly for the America and Europe's long term relationship with the world. Eleven US secretaries have written articles in this magazine. Even George .F. Keenan's *x-article* which is known by the name *long telegram* has produced the *doctrine of containment* in which he produced the plans to curb communism and eventually succeed the capitalism, a strategy to rationalize America and stall the process of communism. Huntington also published an article in 1993 in the same magazine with the interrogatively-titled "The Clash of Civilizations?" an extremely influential, oft-cited article published in *Foreign Affairs* magazine¹

What is Huntington's Theory of Clash of Civilizations?

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order is the book developed after the lots of debates generated over the 'Clash of Civilizations?' article. This book is according to the Henry A. Kissinger *one of the most important books to have emerged since the end of cold war*. It was actually a question posed by Huntington in *Foreign Affairs* whether conflicts among the civilizations would dominate the future of world politics.

Nazar-ul-Islam Wani is Assistant Professor, Department of Higher Education, Pulwama. (Jammu & Kashmir)

Email ID: waninazar13@gmail.com

¹Samuel. P Huntington, *the Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster, 1996.

The answer was given in this book, predicting that the central and dangerous dimension of the emerging global politics would be the conflict between the groups from differing Civilizations. The world, no longer, will fight on the lines of capitalism or communism but religion, culture or in broader sense Civilizations. This statement struck a nerve in the corners of every civilization.

In his paradigm, Huntington attempts to elaborate, refine and develop many new ideas. It includes the concept of civilizations; the question of universal civilization; the relation between power and culture; the shifting balance of power; conflicts generated by Western societies, Muslim militancy, Chinese assertion and the balancing responses to the rise of Chinese power; and the future of the West and a world of civilizations. The central theme of Huntington's paradigm is that culture and cultural identities which at the broadest level are Civilizational identities, are shaping the ways for collaboration, disintegration and clash in the post- cold war world. Huntington breaks the world into seven separate Civilizations: Western, Sinic, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, Latin American and possibility of African Civilization as well. Hence he presumes the conflict among these seven or eight Civilizations. Throughout the book a provocative care and bias of author is found for the western civilization which according to him is sure to decline except for some counter measures, which surprisingly includes the rejecting ties with Asia and multiculturalism.

Major Propositions of Huntington's Theory of Clash of Civilizations.

1. A World of Civilizations.

In this proposition "Huntington's theory of Clash of Civilizations" argues that the global politics has become both multipolar and multi Civilizational. This is because in the beginning human existence experienced negligible interactions among the Civilizations. The renaissance in Western part of the world resulted in more interactions and wars among the western nation states. The World Wars created the cold war in which global politics became bipolar- USA and USSR. The post-coldwar had a different nature of global politics which Huntington names as multipolar or multicivilizational. He proves his paradigm of multipolar or multicivilizational global politics by declaring the failure of strategies made by earlier Historians. Franklin Roosevelt's sophisticated strategy, in which he declared that World War I was the end of wars but it resulted in Fascism and Communism. Roosevelt also predicted on

World War II that it will end the chaos and progress towards a Universal Civilization but resulted in cold war. Then the post –cold war propositions or corollaries started to come; Francis Fukuyama had mentioned in his highly discussed phrase *End of History* because he found miracle in liberal democracy. Looking at the new era of politics this phrase is highly challenged particularly in Muslim world. So, says Huntington, it's neither the ideologies nor the power of USSR and USA which dominates the world politics but cultural or Civilizational unity which people are searching, researching and exploring in this new era of politics. Culture and cultural identities which at the broadest level are Civilizational identities, are shaping the ways for collaboration, disintegration and clash in the post- cold war world².

2. The Shifting Balance of Civilizations

This proposition of “Huntington’s theory of Clash of Civilizations” argues the emergence of non-western powers and gradual decline of western power. He elaborates this view of shifting balance of power by quoting Joseph Nye, who goes on to say that, Hard Power, which includes the hard work to increase the military and economic capacities, is persistent in non-western countries. Joseph Nye also comments on the soft power, which signifies the power of attraction of culture and ideology. According to Huntington west is losing both hard power and soft power and eventually Islamic and East-Asian countries are no more attracted towards the western style. Huntington considers religion as a force to unite the people in non-western countries. Huntington says that the process of finding one’s own self-identity in Muslim and east-Asian countries has lead to the rejuvenation of religion. The religion gives them the best answers regarding their identity like, who am I? The Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism are all busy reformative religions. In non-western countries the rejection of west and injection of modernity has shrewdly escalated their military and economic strength. Since west is lacking the identity answers, so it is losing the grip which it has spurred in non- western countries³.

3. Islamic Rejuvenation

“Huntington’s theory of Clash of Civilizations” argues that the Asia and Muslims are a future challenge to Western Civilizations. By Asia he means the- Sinic, Japanese, china,

²Samuel. P Huntington, *the Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster, 1996, p31-37, 41.

³Samuel. P Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster, 1996, p81-120

Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines. India and Vietnam; and four more tigers Honkong, Taiwan, south Korea and Singapore which according to Huntington are going to make some four of the five largest and seven of the ten largest economies of the world by 2020 AD. The process of indigenization in Muslim countries can be better understood through the term “Islamic Resurgence”. According to him Muslims search the only solution in Islam. He says Muslims make effort in intellectual, cultural, social and political dimensions of Islam. He quotes Ali .E Hilal Dessoki, who sees the resurgence as an effort to reinstitute Islamic law in place of western law. He also quotes the Gilles Kepels phrase *La Revanche de Diesu* (The revenge of God) which explains globalization of religion in post- cold war world. He explains his statement of resurgence by seeing the establishment of Islamic schools, Quranic centers, Islamic organizations and Muslim brotherhood during the odd times by the Muslim countries. He says that the young generation, which according to many decides the future of a nation, in Muslim lands is more in search of fundamentals of Islam. This all is leading towards the rejuvenation of different set of ideas and culture which is quite different from the western thought and hence no western ideals to be worshipped in future times but one’s own mores and norms which people are continuously searching for⁴.

4. Structure of Civilizations

“Huntington’s theory of Clash of Civilizations” argues that in Post- cold war countries in Civilizations are identified as core states, lone countries, cleft countries and torn countries. He goes on to say that the Civilizations are identified by a member state like; the Egypt is identified as Arab- Islamic and Italy as European-western Civilization. Civilizations have one or more places where they are identified by its members as the origin of the civilization’s culture. This is explored by setting the examples of some core states of different Civilizations. Like China for Sinic and India for Hindu Civilization, provide them the basic amenities to meet at the common place from where they can decide their own culture, language, history and religion. According to the Huntington Islamic states are lacking the core state which has put them in problem. The west according to him has several core states- United states, Franco-German and Britain. The structure of Civilizations depict that the core state has the potential to provide leadership to other states of that very Civilization. It also shows that the Lone countries like Ethiopia and Japan can share nothing with other societies

⁴Ibid. p109.

and they themselves act as a core states for maintaining the cultural unity. Huntington is afraid that the deep divisions may occur in cleft countries, which contain the large groups from different Civilizations. This is illustrated by the examples of Muslims, Sinhalese and Hindus who have attempted to do it in India, Srilanka and Malaysia. Sudan, Nigeria and Tanzania but suffer the same fate says Huntington⁵.

5. Clash of Cultures.

“Huntington’s theory of Clash of Civilizations” argues that the western universalism is losing the edge over non-western countries. The non-western countries no more accept the western worth because of the love of their own culture, due to which this world is witnessing a division at a large level- west and rest. Huntington sees the future clashes among the Civilizations, the bone of contention of which is western arrogance, Islamic intolerance and Sinic assertiveness. He describes the idea of liberal democracy, Human rights and Capitalism vigorless ideologies to attract non-western nations. Huntington takes us back to the de-colonization period of Muslim countries where things have dramatically changed. They are looking for the indigenization of their own social, political and economic dimensions while countering the western system.

Huntington also speaks also about the most discussed ‘Weapons Proliferation’. Again he sees non-western countries gaining military strength which for him challenges the western military strength. The countries like China, Japan, and other Asian countries – Muslim countries are in a rush to indigenize the arms production. The presence of Nuclear weapons will create a sense of dominance over other countries.. Huntington interests the readers by saying that had Saddam delayed the invasion of Kuwait until Iraq had nuclear weapons, he could have done Kuwait. He says that the lesson world learned from the Gulf war” Don’t fight the United States unless you have nuclear weapons”. This danger of making nuclear weapons is a reaction to the dangerous of west’s possession of nuclear weapons. Russia, India, Pakistan are increasing their nuclear weapons. He lime lights the Confucian-Islamic connection in playing the role of promoting the nuclear weapons to many nations.

6. Islam and the West

Huntington's clashing civilizations are perhaps best illustrated by the renewed conflict between Islam and the West. Much of the Islamic world perceives an all-out assault on the

⁵Samuel. P Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, p.135-139.

religion of Mohammed by western culture, led by the United States and Europe. This perception has been reinforced by consistent western support for Israel (a western-made state in the midst of the lands of Islam), international demands for Iran to cease its nuclear program (led by nations that already possess nuclear technology) and the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as part of a global war on terrorism that focuses virtually exclusively on Islamic fundamentalists. Huntington quotes Bill Clinton's statement that the west has no problem with Islam but only with violent Islamist extremists. He says that this statement is against the fourteen hundred years history which says otherwise. He quotes Jhon Esposito who says that the "two communities has always been in competition and locked at times in deadly combat...." The time of attack on Byzantine Empire and the siege of Vienna in 1529 both times the Europe was under the constant threat from Islamic Civilization, says Bernard Lewis. Huntington says that Islam is the only Civilization which has put the survival of west in doubt twice in the history⁶.

7. Kin Country Syndrome

"Huntington's theory of Clash of Civilizations" argues that there are countries which are within the same Civilization (Kin Countries). He identifies what he calls "Kin Country Syndrome". Huntington points to the Persian Gulf War as an example of the syndrome. During this conflict, Saddam Hussein attempted to frame the war as a battle of Civilizations, Islam versus the west. Huntington asserts that the [political coalition of Muslim states that supported the Americans soon fell apart after the war due to the kin country syndrome. He even claims during the war most Muslim elites supported Saddam Hussein, even if that support was manifested through the 'private cheering'. Further he says that during the cold war people joined either of the blocks (USA and USSR) due to their security interests and ideological preferences. But in the post-cold war people choose the cultural identity to decide which side they are and which side they are not. Many countries have already started the debate of national identity like, Algeria, Canada, China, South Africa, Germany, Great Britain, Turkey, Ukraine, Tunisia and United States. Huntington says that all the Muslim countries have yielded extremists because of the Kin country rallying behind these extremists. He gives the example of Kashmir which is backed by Islamic Pakistan and then by Islamic world. Sudan, Arab-Israel conflict, Chechen- Russia conflict, Tajikistan conflict,

⁶Ibid, p.209.

Bosnia conflict have supplanted Islamic extremists in place of moderate Muslims by the backing of Muslim Kin countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt etc⁷.

8. Fault Line Wars.

“Huntington’s theory of Clash of Civilizations” argues that the reasons for the change in relationship among the Civilizations can be a change in wars or conflicts from *transitional to Fault line wars*. By transitional wars he means the wars within Civilizations and by fault line wars, among Civilizations. Huntington says that the *Gulf War* and Afghanistan war was Civilizational between Soviet Union and Islam in Afghanistan; and America and Islam in Gulf countries. He quotes, Safar al Hawali, the dean of Islamia College in Mecca who says that the Americas war is not the war against Iraq but against Islam. He clarifies and explores the fault line wars by saying that the transitional wars between P.L.O and HAMAS are very less in future but fault line wars between Islam and West are highly concentrated. Exploring the concept of fault line wars, Huntington gives some features of these wars. According to him these wars are communal, violent, and ethnic and in addition they are between Muslims and Non- Muslims .Huntington explore the concept of fault line wars by saying that these wars increase, intensify, expand etc. He says Fault line wars take the shape of Communal wars or identity wars when they grow older and older. “Theory of Clash of Civilizations” argues that the “Fault line wars” are the wars between Civilizations and “Transitional wars” are the wars within Civilizations. The clashes within Civilizations are in Somalia and clashes between the Civilizational are in Balkans.

The Balkan Peninsula is what Huntington might call a series of interconnected fault lines between several Civilizations which he labels western Christian, Eastern orthodox and Islam. All three are pushed together in a smaller area than anywhere else on the planet and all there lay claim to the same territory, guaranteeing armed conflict⁸.

9. Islam has bloody borders

“Huntington’s theory of Clash of Civilizations” argues that Islam has bloody borders and Islamic Civilization is prone to conflict. In support to his thesis, Huntington has cited six examples where Islamic Countries are involved in Civilizational clashes. These were the Afghan war, the Gulf war, Serbs and Albanians, Turkey and Greece, Azerbaijan and

⁷Samuel. P Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, p.268-272.

⁸ibid, p.246-259.

Armenia. No other community has the record of being involved in so many fault line clashes. . Huntington makes a statement that Muslims have problems living peaceably with their neighbors. *Islam has bloody borders*. This is explored through examples in the middle-east conflict between Arabs and Jews resulted in four wars. In Lebanon, Maronite Christians have fought against Muslims. In Ethiopia, the Orthodox Amharas have suppressed Muslims historically. The bloodiest Muslim Christian war has been in Sudan, which has produced thousands of casualties. Nigerian politics has been dominated by the conflict between the Muslim Fulani-Husa in the north and Christian tribes in the south. In Chad, Tanzania, and Kenya comparable struggles have occurred between Muslims and Christians⁹.

10. The Future of west

The last chapter titled the 'future of civilizations' is dedicated to the future of the western civilization with all love by Huntington. He advises to the West that as a dominant Civilization it should not be arrogant to consider itself as universal and immortal because Civilizations in history declined out of arrogance. He admits that the western civilization is unique as it brought modernization in the world but that it must use this uniqueness to renew itself and overcome its decline. He also goes on to discuss the need for core states not to intervene in the other's sphere of influence in order to maintain peace.

Huntington begins the chapter with an admonition to the western Civilization. He suggests that history ends at least once and occasionally more often in the time-line of every society. As a Civilization's universal state emerges, its people become blinded by what Toynbee once called "the mirage of immortality" convinced that theirs is the final form of human development. So it was with the Roman Empire, the Abbasid Caliphate, the Mughal Empire and the Ottoman Empire. The same was true at the peak of the Pax Britannica. For the English middle class in 1897, "history for them was over... And they had every reason to congratulate themselves on the permanent state of felicity which this ending of history had conferred on them. Societies that assume their own history is the very goal of human ideals, however, are usually societies whose history is about to decline.

Huntington further threatens the western Civilizations that if it has to maintain, America must exist, otherwise this whole Civilization will remain a Eurasian Peninsula. Europe will become a miniscule and will decline. He says that the future of US and West depends on

⁹Ibid.

Americas reaffirming to western Civilization. Domestically, this means rejecting multiculturalism or intentionally it means rejecting elusive and illusory calls to identify US with Asia. Because when America looks for their cultural roots, they find them in Europe¹⁰.

Response to Huntington's Theory of Clash of Civilizations'

The intellectual community reacted to the 'Clash theory' expeditiously by presenting different paradigms to understand the global politics. Scholars came up with sharp responses to rebut the 'Theory of Clash of Civilizations', which according to many of them has created conflict at international level among the different cultures. Stephen Walt, Jonathan Fox, Fawaz Gerges, Noam Chomsky, Edward Said and Fouad Ajami reacted to the theory with strong arguments. There has been a response from the religious scholars as well because most part of the theory is an effort to prove religion as an element of conflict building in the global politics of the world. This is why we see Buddhist responses, Chinese response, Hindu response and Muslim response to this theory.

We feel desirable to highlight the glimpses of the response which came in the Foreign Affairs Magazine in the big debate. At first, Jonathan Fox, for example, says that globally the amount of the Civilizational based conflicts during cold-war and Post-cold war has changed very little. During both the times 38 percent of the ethnic conflicts were Civilizational. Fox conducted a research which shows that of all the ethnic conflicts in the world only 14.6 percent were between Islam and west during cold war, and after cold war it was 18.3 percent. This according to the Fox is not a large difference. His rebuttal to the Huntington's proposition is quantitative¹¹. Stephen Walt responded with more clarity when debated his argument in the Foreign Affairs magazine. Foreign Affairs became a platform for the great debate of 'Clash of Civilizations'. Stephen Walt says that the theory doesn't explain why conflicts will happen between the Civilizations and not within them. Walt demonstrates that the cultural differences between Civilizations do not necessarily lead to conflict, 'just as cultural similarities do not guarantee harmony'. Walt concludes that the present coalition of the international relations is not the Clash of Civilizations but a continuation of the pattern of nation-state conflict that has characterized modern international relations¹².

¹⁰Ibid, p. 301-318.

¹¹Jonathan Fox, "Two Civilisations and Ethnic Conflict": Islam and The West", *Journal of Peace research* 38 (2001), p.459

¹²Stephen M Walt, "Building Up New Bogeyman", review of "clash of Civilizations?" by S.P. Huntington, *Foreign Policy* 106, 1997, p.183.

The theory actually demanded Muslim response besides politically strategic responses from the men like Walt and Fox. It is because most of the proposition and arguments of the theory speak volumes against the Muslim and Islam. The propositions like ‘Islam and West’, ‘Islam has bloody borders’, ‘Bellicosity of Muslims’, ‘Fault line wars’, ‘Islamic Rejuvenation’ etc are directed towards Muslim world. Every argument is prone to create conflict among the Muslims and Non-Muslims. The essence of the theory can be summed up that Huntington has shouldered the work of joining the whole Muslim world against Non-Muslims and vice-versa.

Unfortunately there is not a very good response to the theory from the Muslims. Very few intellectuals from the Muslim world have reacted and responded to the theory. However, Muhammad Khatami and M. Fatehullah Gullen have diverted a good attention towards the theory and have come up with the positive response. Muslim response to this theory has always been with the “Dialogue theory”.

Muslim Response to the theory of clash of civilizations.

The major responses to the Huntington’s Theory of Clash of Civilizations by the Muslim Scholars are:

1. Fouad Ajami’s response:

Professor Fouad Ajami of the school for advanced and International studies at the John Hopkins University, responded to the publication of the “Clash of Civilizations?” with a critique in the next issue of the *Foreign Affairs*. The central thesis of Ajami’s response is that clash of civilizations dismisses the role of state in the international conflict, a role that has been the central to the international relational relations since 100 years. Ajami believes that the states will not act according to the Civilizational identity at any point in the near future.

Ajami thinks that the “Clash of Civilizations?” was influenced by certain indicators that should have been viewed more skeptically. States he argues, act in their self- interest, but the leaders of these states will often argue otherwise. He offers the example of Persian Gulf War, which he believes is not a god example of the Civilizational based conflict. Ajami is mystified with the interpretation of Gulf war as a Civilizational war. He says that the Saddam had declared the war as a war of Islam versus the west. He stressed Kingship to frame the war

as Civilizational war to get Islamic states to fight with Iraq. Saddam certainly did not know it but he was certainly testing the Huntington's 'Kin Countries' theory.

Ajami also believes that the violence in Balkans was not a 'Clash of Civilizations' along a Civilizational fault line, as argued, but rather that the various factions fighting in the former Yugoslavia were engaged in conflict only to increase their local power. He thinks that the leaders like Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman were able to frame "their bids for power into grand Civilizational undertakings-- the ramparts of the Enlightenment defended against Islam or, in Tudjman's case, against the heirs of the Slavic-Orthodox faith." Ajami says that the leaders of the factions were attempting to justify their aggressions and brutality by citing the broader historical and cultural explanations that camouflaged the realpolitik of narrow self-interest¹³.

2. Syed Muhammad Khatami:

Syed Muhammad Khatami, is an Iranian scholar, Philosopher, Shiite theologian and Reformist politician and importantly the fifth president of Iran. He is known for his proposal of *Dialogue Among Civilizations*. According to him there is no *clash of Civilizations* instead he favored *dialogue among Civilizations*. He says there are two groups of Civilizations- one which perceives diversity as a threat and another which perceives it as an integral part of development. His words struck the General Assembly and hence the year 2001 was named as *United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations*. His mission is promoting and facilitating the peaceful resolutions of conflicts and disputes. He also gives the strategy for reconciling the tensions between cultures, religions and countries which is absolutely against the theory of Huntington who only highlights the American well being. At international level this theory has some weight and value as compared to Huntington's theory so far as dialogue in this world is understood¹⁴.

We have mentioned in the beginning of the the importance of 'Dialogue among Civilizations'. However, to understand the nature of dialogue is very important. This idea would remain politically incorrect if we do not find the thinkers upon whom the dialogue would be entrusted. Philosophers, artists, poets, scientists, state agencies, NGO's, non-state actors and universities, churches, mosques etc. must come together and encourage this 'Dialogue among Civilizations'. Khatami's rejection of 'Clash of Civilizations' paradigm is

¹³Foud Ajami, "The Summoning", *Foreign Affairs* 72, no.4, 1993.p.2-3.

¹⁴www.wikipedia.org/wiki/dialogue_among_Civilizations

the rejection of power politics and immoral politics with the hope of establishing the dignity of human being as a necessity in maintaining the just world order¹⁵.

The dialogue is always a search for truth and it does not hide the differences of the participants in the dialogue. In Khatami's words:

Dialogue is an effort to reach the truth and mutual understanding. This is why dialogue has nothing to do with skeptics and dialogue is not the property of those who think that they are sole proprietors of truth. It rather reveals its beautiful but covered face only to those wayfarers who are bound on their journey of discovery hand in hand with other human beings¹⁶.

Khatami's starting point is that "today's world is searching for a new basis on which to regulate human and social relations". According to the Khatami the worthiest achievements of this century are the acceptance of necessity and significance of dialogue and rejection of monopoly of power, promotion of understanding in all dimensions of society, and strengthening of the foundations of liberty, justice and Human rights¹⁷. Khatami in his famous interview on the CNN called for "American policy to abandon its instrumental rationality and stop considering others as objects and instead respect the rights of others and adopt an approach based on communicative rationality"¹⁸.

'Dialogue among Civilizations' is a critique of power politics and in particular of 'Clash of Civilizations Theory'. It is actually a paradigm or a third political reaction of Post-cold war world. It adds one more idea to the jargon of International Relations where morality has a prominent role. This paradigm requires that we shun all the ideas of will-to-power and instead appeal to empathy and compassion. The ultimate goal of the Dialogue among Civilizations is not the dialogue itself, but the will to attain empathy and compassion¹⁹. This paradigm strikes us intellectually and I think this deserves to be named as best political reaction of the modern International Relations.

3. M Fethullah Gulen

M Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish Islamic theologian, sees threat in the Huntington's theory of clash of civilization. Gulen does not mince words. He fears that such talk about a

¹⁵Muhammad Khatami, address to 'Dialogue among Civilizations', conference at the UN, 5 September, 2000. Available at [www.on.int/iran/dialog05]

¹⁶Muhammad Khatami, Speech at the European University Institute, Fiesole, Florence, 15 March, 1999.

¹⁷Muhammad Khatami, speech at United Nations General Assembly, 21 September, 1998.

¹⁸Muhammad Khatami, Interview by Christian Amanpour, CNN, 7 January, 1998. [www.persian.ag/Khatami/s_khatami06.html]

¹⁹Ibid.

clash of civilizations might become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Gulen notes that as a consequence of such a claim readers may form expectations in the very same way they expect an answer to prayer. By arguing that the future will involve a clash of civilizations, Huntington converts such an expectation into a purposeful goal. Gulen fears that with such a goal in mind, various policies and strategies will then be marshaled to reach and attain such a goal.

Gulen's positive response to the clash of civilizations thesis consists of three parts encapsulated in the words, tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and compassionate love. The term, tolerance, appears about sixty times in Gulen's book, *Love & Tolerance*, not to mention the many times it appears in Gulen's cover as a whole. Gulen finds the notion of tolerance and forgiveness deeply rooted in the Qur'an and *sunnah* or the customs/traditions of Muhammad (Qur'an 25:63; 25:72; 28:55). The servants of God say nothing unbecoming when they have ugly words thrown in their face. They also know how to ignore ugly or bad behavior. They take the high road bypassing negativity by acting with dignity. Gulen calls such people "heroes of tolerance." Their characteristic marks are tolerance, gentleness, and consideration for others. Gulen point out that when God sent Moses and Aaron, to the Pharaoh who claimed to be a divinity, God ordered them to speak softly and behave tolerantly (Qur'an 20:44). Mohammad, may his name be blessed, was tolerant toward Abu Sufyan, who persecuted the Prophet throughout his lifetime²⁰.

In contradistinction to the Huntington, Gulen notes that no religion has ever been based on conflict. The Islamic religion and Christian religion has been based on peace, world harmony and security. Jihad, an Arabic term according him has a bigger meaning of struggling against the ones own being, moving towards an objective with all power and resisting all the difficulties of life. Islam believes in Jihad as a right to self defense only in exceptional cases, just as a human body attempts to fight against the germs that have attacked it. Gulen notes that Islam has breathed goodness and peace and has considered war a secondary event. Such statements of Gulen try to show Islam as a religion which is not prone to conflict. Religion as a whole is bent to make mankind peaceful, which is quite contradictory to "clash of civilizations theory".

It is a fact that Huntington's theory became renowned in the academic circles only after the attack of September 11. Clash between Islam and West is more focused on this event

²⁰"M Fethullah Gulen's Response to the Clash of Civilizations Thesis" by Richard Penaskovic, available at www.gulenconference.org.uk

in post-modern world. Gulen remarks that men like Al-Qaeda hijack the Quran for their vested interests. One ought to seek Islam through its own sources and through its own true representatives throughout the history not through the actions of small minority that distort it.

Gulen argues that the very nature of religion demands a dialogue between all major world religions. This dialogue has particular urgency between three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Muslims according to Gulen are reluctant to enter into the dialogue with Christianity due to historical reasons. Western powers have killed more Muslims in the last century alone than all the Christians killed by the Muslims in the history of world. Today even liberal and educated Muslims feel that Western policies are designed to weak Muslims. But for interfaith dialogue to succeed we must forget the past, ignore polemics and focus on common points²¹.

Huntington in turn focuses too much on dichotomies and considers Islam and West two separate entities. But for Gulen culture and Civilizations donot make rigid boxes. Every civilization, every culture, every language and every religion has the potential to interact with the other civilizations, cultures, languages and religions. Gulen certainly has a different take on the future. He sees future more bright than Huntington.

4. Asghar Ali Engineer

Asghar Ali Engineer, a critic of ‘Huntington’s theory of clash of Civilizations’ asks for an argument in his article *Civilizations-Clash or Dialogue* that why Professor of Harvard University, Huntington was dumped on the garbage heap of history so soon? Why his death was unnoticed throughout the world? Why was messiah of Post-cold war left untouched? This is because Huntington’s book not hailed any merit but it was the need for western powers and US in particular who felt for his propositions. According to him the book was written on the order from white house. Asghar Ali baffles us by saying that Huntington discovered an enemy for US which they badly needed after Cold War. The main reason for searching this enemy is the bad press Islam faces, Jewish lobby in US and finally 9/11 supplemented for this theory.

²¹Muslim world in Transition-Contribution of the Gulen Movement,Ed.byDr.IhsanYilmaz, Tughra Books,26 Worlds Fair Dr. Unit C, Somerset, New Jersey,08873,USA.

Asghar Ali Engineer argues that:

How can then civilizations clash. If they clash they cannot qualify to be Civilization at all. The western countries have accepted democracy and even multi-culturalism of late. And multi-culturalism demands acceptance of other cultures and Civilizations. After the 2nd World War lot of people from former colonies migrated to their former colonizing nations and hence today west has millions of people from former colonies and that is why it accepted multi-culturalism as these people from former colonies had different cultural backgrounds. Thus if they accepted multi-culturalism as state policy where is the question of clash of Civilizations?

And knowing this well the theory of clash of Civilizations was enthusiastically endorsed by western powers. Thus there is gross contradiction in theory and practice. But fact is that this theory of clash of Civilizations was accepted for reasons other than its soundness. Its acceptance provided legitimacy to war policy of USA and to serve its own interests. After collapse of communism there was no enemy left against whom NATO powers could be united and also at home people could be rallied behind government policies. Wars were needed for many reasons and specially forgo reasons: to control Middle East oil and to run wheels of military industrial complex²².

However, Asghar Ali at the end of the article feels for desperate need of inter-Civilizational dialogue. He recommends that all the peace activists, government agencies and intellectuals must shoulder the dialogue for the maintenance of global peace and world order.

5. Benazir Bhutto

Benazir Bhutto who was the Prime Minister of Pakistan from 1988-1990 and from 1993-96 in her book *Reconciliation: Islam Democracy and West* demolishes the theory of *clash of Civilizations* by Huntington and argues that the real clash is not between Islam and West but within Islam. She says that the conflict is between Modernism and regression; reformists and traditionalists; freedom and oppression; education and ignorance etc in the Muslim lands. She stresses that the goal of dialogue can be achieved if Democracy is implemented in Muslim world. She also argues that a substantial work is to be done in the Islamic World, were the argument should be made with strength that Islam is more friendly to modernism and civil society, This is the answer to the argument of the Huntington that Muslims have problems living with their neighbors “Huntington’s theory of Clash of

²²Asghar Ali Engineer, *Civilizations-Clash or Dialogue*, available at www.csss-islam.com.

Civilizations” argues that the failure of democracy has its source at least in part in the inhospitable nature of Islamic culture. According to the Benazir Bhutto” there will not be clash of Civilizations between Islam and West if democracy is institutionalized in Islamic world. According to her democracy would flourish in Islamic state²³.

Benazir Bhutto refutes the ‘Clash of Civilization theory’ in the fifth chapter of her book *Reconciliation; Islam, Democracy and West*. She expands the debate on the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ by tracing the development of this concept from early twentieth century until the present. She provides a comprehensive review of this discussion from Oswald Spengler’s *Decline of West*(1918), to Samuel Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* (1993). She adds her criticism on all these hypothesis of conflicts and confrontations among different civilizations of the world. She divides contemporary commentators of civilizational conflict into two groups: ‘the Clashers’ who believe that clash of civilizations is evitable, and the ‘Reconciliations’, who believe contrary. She places herself in the ‘Reconciliations’ category and criticizes the ‘clashers’ eloquently. She divided Clashers into further sub-groups: ‘Intellectual Clashers’ like Huntington and ‘Radical Clashers’ like Robert Spenser and Hizbul-Tahrir. Abu Ala Maududi and Syed Qutb are put in the category of intellectual Clashers²⁴.

Throughout the book she is more concerned about the establishment of democracy in her homeland Pakistan. She provides some concrete steps towards toleration and brotherhood and even commitment towards democracy by reconciling between the different faiths. However, her last sentence of the book is a compelling one: ‘There has been enough pain. It is time for Reconciliation’.

6. Feza Azami

Feza Azami, a great poet, narrates in the experience of ‘theory of clash of Civilizations’ in the verse as:

The clash of Civilizations is on. It started on 9/11. It is running its course through Iraq, to Afghanistan, to Lebanon, to Iran, to Pakistan and on and on. Mr. Huntington scripted it, Mr. Brzezinski endorsed it, Mr. Kissinger hyped it and Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair implemented it. The world of Islam is stunned, paralyzed and impotent. In the ensuing

²³Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*, Simon and Schuster, Great Britain, 2008, p.265.

²⁴Ibid. p.233.

*vacuum the suicide killer, the Islamic fascist, the fundamentalist, the 'Jihadist' by whatever name west chooses to call him has picked up the gauntlet-a scenario perfectly scripted by Mr. Huntington and the sleuths....*²⁵

FezaAzami dedicated a long poem to the 'Huntington's theory of clash of Civilizations'. He verses reflect his grievances with the Huntington's approach. He through his emotional exuberance calls for a dialogue between the cross and crescent. FezaAzami firmly believes that it is the bounden duty of every citizen of the world to stand up and be counted. Nobody must think himself to be counted insignificant to keep quite. According to him all the religions profess boundless love, tolerance, friendship and kindness. He stresses to condemn the aggression and oppression done in the name of religion. Islam according to Feza has a sound base for establishing the values for the whole universe and anyone who studies the history of Islam without bias will praise its guiding principles.

He says that the scriptures revealed to the Prophets are the priceless treasures for human kind because of the brotherly message they contain. The revealed message of God sets forth the criteria fo dialogue among human beings on this earth. But unfortunately the revealed messages are seen through the prism of bias, due to which they led to conflict. Islam has a great deal of affinity with Judaism and Christianity. Prophet Muhammad preached continuously the worship of one Supreme Being, which is the crux of all the religions. It is a kind of belief which all the religions share. All these religions believe that we are the progeny of Adam, believe in the day of judgment and share many common values upon which they can have a strong foundation of dialogue²⁶.

According to the Feza beyond the world of Clash and confrontation their lie the gardens of peace, where flowers bloom and blossom with a message of peaceful co-existence. This should be the destination of all the followers of religion. This must be the man's desired goal in this world. This is the real paradise promised on earth for every soul. We must think beyond clash because beyond clash is peace. He advises to the denizens of west that cross and Crescent are one in their message. They must shun the war of history and think about the

²⁵FezaAzami, From the *Graveyard of Civilizations-A Muslim rejoinder to the Huntington's Clash of Civilizations*, Translated into English by Farzana Ahmad, Trafford publications, Canada,2007, p.1

²⁶Ibid. p217.

salvation which only lies in their harmonious ties. They should tread a new path beyond confrontation²⁷.

Conclusion

In the end I would like to say that the decisions made by the powerful people may prove a gospel truth. They may mussel the ordinary people, intellectually by giving conflict prone theories and politically by exploiting your weakness. The people challenge the politics of the super power countries-at whatever stage and level of violence. There are ordinary people working to address it, to end violence, injustice, conflict or clash. The people around the world defend Human Rights, build understanding and exorcise the past: from Gujarat to Bradford, from Georgia to the Philippines, from Burma to Columbia and from Bosnia to Rawand. Civil Society is on the move. This movement needs a lot of impetus. The decision of peace making is not an easy task. It needs a lot of training from visionaries of peace-the prophets and strategists, philosophers and politicians, and act to transform relationships and build peace in our own communities²⁸.

We must encourage a new form of history, writing about the past and present from the point of view of those which have seemed to have no power, so that we recognize that we are all part of history and its making. We must create some unbiased theories which appeal to ever one relatively.

To create the sense of hope that there should be no clash or conflict can be a utopia because the terms and conditions to establish it are long and complex. This is also because human beings have accepted the conflict in their lives and to de-condition them form this needs intense psychological training. No one of us can work everything but every one of us can. We cannot end the clash neither I am here to end it because there needs a shift in political thinking from war to peace. I think due the hard work of ordinary people at micro level this shift has begun to take place.

Regardless of the fact whether the learned professor wrote the book “Clash of Civilisation and making of the New World Order” at the behest of what Asghar Ali Engineer says ‘a submission from White House to Huntington’ or purely as a an academic project. When I read it, it appeared to me that the book has been written with ulterior motive, one may even conclude with malafide intent. The way it has been promoted by media and even by

²⁷ Ibid. p226.

²⁸Dianna Francis, *Rethinking War and Peace*, Pluto Press, London, 2004, p.158.

some sections of academia it becomes reasonably evident that its sole reason and purpose is to provoke a clash between the West and Islam. The book is full of misrepresentations, and fallacious logic and tendentious arguments. Whatever academic pretensions it might have, it propounds a dangerous somewhat pernicious theory with the purpose of bringing about a catastrophic confrontation in the world. To put it bluntly the book seems to be a product of fascist *guilty mind*. The American and British volatile belligerence in post 9/11 incident and the way it has been projected are proof positive that Huntington has succeeded in sowing the seeds of clash and that the clash has already begun.. I believe that it is the bounden duty of all right minded and peace-loving citizens of the world to do whatever they can to rebut this doctrine and stand on the side of sanity in an otherwise deranged environment. Nobody must think himself to be too small or insignificant to be counted in this noble and critical task. We are no doubt at its receiving end and it is we who have to take up the cudgels first against this projected regime of highhandedness.

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