

# REVISITING THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS AND THE QUEST FOR A NEW WORLD ORDER

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## ABSTRACT

The following treatment deals with the topics “clash of civilizations” and “world order”. It intends to be a revisiting of the topics and issue that occupied the academic world and the larger open public. Three books, turned out to be New York Times bestsellers namely, Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1997), and Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (2014). Although the books ran under the academic rubric as political science and international studies, no doubt, on a deeper level these works can be understood as treatments in the philosophy of history. Thus, accordingly, we will deal with the works and the topics and issues on the level of philosophies of history. Of course, it is not an accident that these books claimed high recognition level since the three authors had been connected to high places in the United States in government and Harvard University. However, the real reason why these works had such an impact is simply they appeared at the right time. In the years 1989 and 1990 we find the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany, as well as the implosion of the Soviet Union, and not to forget, the inauguration of the Internet age in 1991. The claim that with the end of the Cold War a “peace dividend” had been secured supported a sort of euphoria, especially in Washington D.C. ; the so-called “end of history” meant the world has, at last, found its final form of government, representative parliamentary democracy. Hegel was, at least, rescued in this sort of reformulation of his *Weltgeist* (world spirit) and freedom accomplished its mission. Perhaps it was somewhat exaggerated but the future looked bright for the global world, at large. After some sober reflection and the dramatic event of 9/11/2001, Huntington promoted the idea that instead of the nation state it was now civilizations that were ready to combat themselves. Deep seated animosities, from the olden days, reappeared in the Balkans and the Middle East: the fault line between Islamic civilization and the West were delineated in the Mediterranean. At the same time, there was a process of a remaking of the world order in which the West had to take a back seat and watch as the East, especially China, wanted to take over the driver seat of world history, globalization. Needless to say, Kissinger’s subtle reflection on world order supplemented these topics that are dealt with since the millennium. The present essay revisits some of the relevant argument and reflects on the current state (2017) of world order in flux.

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During the summer of 1989 Washington D.C. was in bliss: the Cold War was basically over (apparently won by the United States over the Soviet Union) and the Berlin Wall was about to fall. In 1990 eastern and western Germany were reunified and the Soviet Union imploded, surviving as the Russian Federation. There was no East Bloc and Eastern Europe, in the near future, was to join the European Union. The western world apparently was on its way to provide freedom, democracy, and perpetual peace, under the aegis of Pax Americana, for the rest of the world. There was talk, in America's capitol, of "peace dividend", meaning, money that was needed for defense and military projects, during the Cold War, could be diverted to promote peace around the world. This was the idea: The Washington Post, in its July 30, 1989 edition, had the headline, "The End of History" with a reproduction of the famous lithograph depicting the philosopher Hegel. By September 27 of the same year, the headline had it, "The End. Or is it?" with a photo of Francis Fukuyama. Some skeptical tones had been registered, but the speculation about the apparent end of history remained for some time in the public realm. These were the last days of the Gutenberg Galaxy, the Internet age was about to go public in 1991. Thus, the newspaper and traditional television still commanded a sizable audience.

Francis Fukuyama delivered lectures on the topic "The End of History" during the fall semester 1988/89 at the invitation of Allen Bloom at the University of Chicago. Bloom was a student of Leo Strauss and in turn, became an academic celebrity with his work on the closing of the American mind. The problem, according to Bloom: America's 68' generation had adapted the pessimistic philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and turned away from the classic American ideals of freedom, individuality, and democracy. In short, during his lecture in Chicago Fukuyama resurrected the topic and issues promoted by German philosophical tradition, from Kant to Hegel, to Marx and Nietzsche, that the world ran a progressive linear mode of history, on the way would get rid of old ways of thinking, especially oriental attitudes of despotism, ending in the emancipation of oriental despotism, ushering into the global freedom of the *Weltgeist* (World Spirit). In the meantime Nietzsche already had proclaimed the "death of God" and the destruction of Christianity in the West. These were world historical topics, dynamic suggestions, full of contradictions, and full of wishful thinking, but effective, among the generation of young students who revolted against the establishment in 1968. Fukuyama placed his controversial thesis in a well-known journal during the summer of 1989; while The Washington Post and Washington's elite politicians as well as New York's intellectual voice, lend credence to his topic. Finally, the whole theme was published as a book with the title, *The End of History and the Last Man*, a New York Times bestseller in 1992. Following Fukuyama's

heels, Samuel P. Huntington published an article in the influential journal *Foreign Affairs* with the title "The Clash of Civilizations?" in 1993. This too, captured the attention of the American political and intellectual establishment, while the book form by Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of the World Order* became an international bestseller, in 1996. Thus, topics worthy of philosophy of history constituted reflection on the eve of the millennium: there was much speculation in the air about the oncoming 21<sup>st</sup> century. There was hope, but also some skepticism. And surprisingly an international public, still focusing on newspapers and mainstream television stations, turn philosophical for a short period of time.

Reactions to the end of history did not wait too long: this writer participated in three conferences along dealing with Fukuyama and Huntington theses. In the meantime there was talk of the dialogue amongst civilizations; thus the conferences dealt with the whole spectrum as to how civilizations would benefit each other by investing in dialogue and not in hostile reactions and clashes. In April 25, 1994, in Ankara, Turkey, there was a pioneering debate about the nature of civilization and what sort of dialogues should be promoted; at the Safir Hotel, Cairo, Egypt, the Association of Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Conference (AAPSO) held an impressive conference entitled "Clash of Civilizations or Dialogue of Cultures?", during March 10-12, 1997, and in London, The Islamic Center of England promoted a conference as "Dialogue Among Civilizations" during the days of October 27/28, 2000. In the subsequent year the United Nations proclaimed 2001 as the year of Dialogue of Civilization!

As reality set in there was a shift to a discussion on the new world order. Especially the former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, was leading the debate as a promoter of the classic model of a balance of power among the states, in terms of Realpolitik. His reflections on the topic, over decades, where published as *World Order* in 2014, and turned out to be the right topic at the right time, becoming an international bestseller. Since the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a certain sense of reality started to set in, but also dramatic events took place, unforeseen by many: the communication revolution, the Internet Age started to include millions of people on a global level, then 9/11, terrorism, climate change, the danger of nuclear waste exemplified in Russia and Japan, failed states, the financial meltdown of Wall Street in 2007 and its disastrous global consequences, the negative demographic development in the West and especially the Middle East and Asia; and not the least the so-called "Arab Spring" of 2011, then massive migration from South to North America, and from Eastern Europe and Middle East to the European Union: the result by 2017, fear of the stranger and the unknown commanded the emotions of America's and Europe's mainstream, with the Brexit and political populism as a

consequence. Add the crisis climate change issue, the refugee issue, and nuclear proliferation it is clear that the development of globalization is heading towards a highway with potholes by 2020.

Underneath this current is a tendency by states and mainstream in West and East of a zero-sum game winner get all, capital of the new century seems to dictates the actions of states and peoples. Yet, let us take a few steps back and see the philosophical underpinnings of the topics and have dictated the headlines within the last thirty years: the end of history, clash of civilizations, dialogue amongst civilizations, world order, and not the least the rise and fall of empires. Of course these topics should not come as a surprise for the deal precisely with the events as they unfolded bridging one century into the next, from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In order to gain a broader perspective let us see who the godfathers are from which the current authors got their inspiration. Again, despite the official connotation of political science or international studies, there is no doubt, Fukuyama, Huntington, Kissinger, and others, are thinking philosophy of history.

A careful perusal of the numerous footnotes, supporting the respective works by Fukuyama, Huntington, and Kissinger, finds, not surprisingly, classical philosophic references spread over the chapters that discuss Kant, Hegel, Marx, Spengler, and Max Weber. This is not surprise since their basic visions have guided the modern works and bestsellers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An additional interest should be the work by an exiled-philosopher who returned to Heidelberg University with great influence and impact not only in America but also in post-war Germany: Karl Loewith's book, published in 1949 by the University of Chicago Press as, *Meaning in History*, in which the thesis is promoted, "... the moderns elaborate a philosophy of history by secularizing theological principles and applying them to an ever increasing number of empirical facts." (Loewith, 1949: 19). No doubt the young Henry Kissinger at Harvard must have known this work and elaborated upon it and reiterated on the respective theme. In the very last footnote, 374, of his World Order book we find the note, "The Meaning of History": Henry A. Kissinger, Reflections on Spengler, Toynbee and Kant (Undergraduate thesis, Department of Government, Harvard University, 1950). Again, it is no surprise that in post-war Europe philosophical and existential reflections took place in order to understand the issue of war and peace, from a historical perspective.

In Fukuyama and Huntington we find, especially, many references to Arnold Toynbee's, *A Study of History*, a project of elaborating on the course of world history conducted between 1934 and 1961. In that voluminous work of six volumes Toynbee defined his understanding of

"civilization": "If the argument of this chapter is accepted it will be agreed that the intelligible unit of historical study is neither a nation state nor (at the other end of the scale) mankind as a whole but a certain grouping of humanity which we have called a society." (Toynbee, 1965:26) Indeed, Toynbee comes up with twenty-one societies in world history, of which he considers species that may be classified as "civilizations". More precisely, he speaks of 'in process of civilizations', since not all societies qualify as being civilized; in fact, the consideration is that most societies are to be classified as "primitive" in comparison to those who achieved a civilized state. No doubt, Toynbee had a great influence, especially among Anglo-American historians, sociologists, anthropologist, and philosophers. Particularly his model of "challenge and response" fit in nicely with the prevalent empirical psychology in the 1950s: "A society, we may say, is confronted in the course of its life by a succession of problems which each member has to solve for itself as best as it may. The presentation of each problem is a challenge to undergo an ordeal, and through this series of ordeals the members of the society progressively differentiate themselves from one another." (Toynbee, 1965:18) Thus, societies are foremost organizations as to how groups of humans organize themselves in order to respond to specific challenges they face; whether in the course of events that society evolves into a civilization is a matter of historical judgment. Clearly, not all groups achieved that status, according to Toynbee.

Shortening this extensive introduce we must add that a prominent contemporary British historian, Niall Ferguson, has added several works (*Empire*, 2003; *Civilization*, 2012) that takes Toynbee in account, especially a philosopher-historian that has been neglected, but celebrates a rebirth, namely R.G. Collingwood. Collingwood as professional archeologist, historian, and philosopher, had a great input into philosophy of history, underpinned by Hegelian themes that enmesh in contemporary works of reflecting upon the course of world history. Of course, in our revisit we can't go into details and must, at times, oversee others, like Hans Blumenberg (*Legitimacy of Modern Times*, 1962) or Reinhart Koselleck (*Critique and Crisis*, 1959; *Levels of Time*, 2003) whose contribution in the philosophy of history is paramount. At this point we want to highlight simply some themes that have alarmed the global public to a reflection and commentary as to the state of modern globalization, in which we find ourselves. Again, the major topics and issues: the end of history, the clash of civilizations, Dialogue amongst Civilizations, World Order, and not the least, the rise and fall of empires, will be inspected in more detail in the subsequent pages.

## I. ENTER SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON

In the early 1990s Samuel P. Huntington (1927-2008) started a controversy among the global public with the thesis, “... my argument that the central and most dangerous dimension of the emerging global politics would be conflict between groups from different civilizations.” (Huntington, 1996: Preface) His treatment was not meant to be social science, but the development of global political events after the Cold War. In addition, it is clear that he aimed at a critique of Henry Kissinger’s idea of the paradigm of balance of power; indeed, nothing stays the same, in the long run. However, a general overview of his work reveals clearly that Huntington was steeped in the history and philosophy of old Europe. It became clear that the new battlefield, post-Cold War was between the West and Islamic civilization. This may be somewhat simple in formulation, but it was the gist of the work. More important was Huntington’s reasons: “The central theme of this book is that culture and cultural identities, which are the broadest level are civilizations identities, are shaping the pattern of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world; The balance of power among civilizations is shifting: the West is declining in relative influence; Asian civilizations are expanding their economic, military, and political strength; Islam is exploding demographically with destabilizing consequences for Muslim countries and their neighbors; and non-Western civilizations generally are reaffirming the value of their own cultures.” (Huntington, 1996: 20) There is talk, especially of “fault line wars”, in which various groups of peoples clash. While Toynbee still counted twenty-one societies that are relevant till late 1950, the slow demise of the British Empire, Huntington counts nine civilizations in the post-1990 world: Western, Latin American, African, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist, and Japanese. Yet, the forms of power struggle between the West (North Atlantic Community) and the Soviet Union, transformed into a new form of global struggle between the West, Islamic civilization, and Sinic civilization, mainly China. It seems that the great theatre of events in present-day world history (2017) deals with fault line conflicts and proxy wars that involve the United States, as former world police, Communist China, and Islamic groups whose understanding of Islam is considered “fundamentalist”, mainly Wahabi, such as Saudi Arabia. At the end, Huntington holds that the world is becoming more modern and not, necessarily, more western.

Underlying the clashes of civilization theme is actually, why did the West become so prominent in world history? Was the historical course of the West unique, compared to the

rest of the world? In fact, that English (although French was considered the language of the elite in Europe for some time) was adopted by the global community, that modernity entered into mainstream of many non-western civilization, and that the communication revolution, call it Internet Age, had its sources in the West, is a fact. However, the question is, how does the rest of the world relate to the West and modernization? These, so it seems are the underlying themes that had been addressed by thinkers such as Hegel, Marx, Spengler, and Toynbee. The focus was really the western world, Europe, specifically northern Europe, then the United States and Canada. Why was their history so different from the rest? That seems to be the core question. Huntington identifies a triangular completion or struggle for the driver seat of global history: the United States and its allies, the Islamic world, and the Asian world. Indeed, the global news, on mainstream television and social media report about the West, Middle East, and Asia, as being the primary actors on the world stage. Whether we can talk about “the clash of civilization” is somewhat vague, since people and their interest clash, as well as clashes flare up about the necessities of life, food, hunger, poverty, over population, basically we are talking about the survival of peoples. In Toynbee’s language, it seems that “primitive societies” are at war for the necessities of life sustaining conditions; in addition, it seems that the cultural identities issue is a matter for the well to do and middle classes who have enough to eat and have luxury to meditate as to who they are. After all school means luxury of time; only a people have sufficient amount of time to think about their identity if the necessities of life are secured. This is the reason why morality is universal, meaning, every community and societies of peoples develop a morality, habits that secure the well-being of the group. It is survival of the group that is the most important agenda and in order to organize such a survival morality in terms of habits and mores and habituated in form of institutions. Needless to say, if a society finds that their way of doing things, habits and morality, do not seem to be adequate, or antiquated due to modernity creeping into their society, adjustments have to be made, in order to survive in modernity. In that sense the Arab thinker from Al-Andalusia Ibn Khaldun should have been considered in which he voices the importance of “asabiya”, the blood relations and the group feeling of a community. This is basic and has not been outdated, ironically, the basis of much revolt against certain forms of modern life, via the “Arab Spring”.

It should not be forgotten that the Internet age came had its inauguration in the 1990s in which global communication was made possible for anyone to communicate with anyone in the world. This, indeed, was the real revolution and affected states, societies, families, and individuals, still in progress. No one really has an idea what the subsequent consequences

will be within a life cycle of a generation. Already we feel that many more voices are being heard, many more and diverse opinion and estimates, are being proliferated, compared to the Gutenberg galaxy, in which only the book literate were able to raise their voice and opinions. Huntington speaks of a shifting balance in the power structure of the globe among societies: indeed, Islamic and Asian societies are much more in forefront in the news media than they had been half a century ago. In fact, there are proxy wars fought in the Middle East and in Asia, in the name of various ideologies who claim that they fight in the name of religion, or ethnic identity. A serious issue is brain washing: it is not accident that it is the young, mainly hopeless, and those who suffer from dysfunctional emotional issues who are on the fault line ready scarify life as an emotional response. Nothing new under the sun, the losers are the neglected of societies and the poor who see no alternative in this brave new Internet age then to sell their life to the highest offer. Poverty and illiteracy not to mention hopelessness and no future in site are the real reason why many young people, in East and West, are ready to sell their life to anyone who makes an offer.

Huntington speaks of the affirmation of Asian civilization, foremost mainland China, Korea and Japan, and the resurgence of the Islamic world. Already in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century we saw Meiji Japan adopting, western methods and techniques; especially Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II turned out to be the referent point for Japanese civilization. It is no accident that Japan and Germany should turn out to be allies during the Second World War. Then we see the boxer rebellion in China and the revolt against western colonialism; the opium war, then Mao's revolution of the little Red Book. Of course, we should not forget that it was Marx who provided the ideological tools for a Chinese communist society to format a specific type of neo-socialist capitalism. China is in flux and the outcome uncertain, especially, if the so-called middle class increases in millions; it is well known, the children of the middle class have no sense of ideological discipline or a sense of scarify for higher things in life, they want to life live in the present and not worry about old stories told by their grandparents. In fact, the basic puzzle and paradox that contemporary China has to solve is not necessarily, America and Europe, but the internal contradiction of the consequences of capitalism and the ideological program of a political elite that still wants to present a gift in form of an oversized statue of Marx to his birthplace in Germany, Trier in 2017, yet, holds on the basic economic formation of 19<sup>th</sup> century capitalism especially in the country side. Millions of Chinese laborers are being exploited by the current Chinese political elite, while, the cityscapes of major Chinese cities envelope themselves in extreme pollution as to cause serious health hazards to millions

of Chinese city dwellers. These are internal contradictions of a society, or challenges in Toynbee's language that have to be solved. Basically, it seems that Max Weber was on the right track in which he focused on the morality of Confucius as being the primary referent for Chinese people, despite Marx and Mao. The thrift of the Chinese workers and entrepreneur certainly has a Confucian spirit to it and the equivalent of the so-called Protestant Ethos of protestant western societies find their equivalent in the discipline and work ethos promoted by Confucian creed.

Islamic civilization is somewhat more complex in its relation to the West. Islam as a religion encompasses about one and half billion peoples stretching from the Atlantic to the Red Sea to the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean ending up with Indonesia. Needless to say, the African inland, from Sub-Sahara to Mali, to Sudan is predominately Muslim. The classic Middle East along the southern Mediterranean, including the former Holy Land and Egypt, are more complex in constitution; mainly Christian and Jewish communities make up the Middle Easter and their integration in the Muslim majority societies at least temporarily contested. Not to forget Turkey's own Sonderweg since the demise of the Ottoman Empire. Fundamental issue and themes were addressed at the Paris Conference of 1919, however, many statesman from Europe still manifested a 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial mentality, that postponed serious problem solving for the communities of the Middle East, or, at that time Near East. Many chances of solving some problems were not taken serious; the result is, in the post-Cold War world the global community has to deal with problems created by the First World War, and, due to ignorance or simply egomania, the serious problems left unresolved. The encounter of the Islamic world with the West, aside the Crusade years, Napoleon in Egypt, the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the resurgence out of the ashes of that Empire into a Turkish Republic by Ataturk, provided some hope of reformulating new frontiers for Turkish speaking peoples. The paradoxical situation for a modern world is, promote democracy and representative government, alongside private property rights, and the right of public opinion, should set the world in the East straight: the ironic result is that peoples of the East don't vote for those issues, in simply language, many "free elections" in the Middle East turn out to vote for the wrong elites (at least from a western view). Needless to say, this problem is more complex than meets the eye. Strong held believes for centuries, emotional bonding with a religion, habits century old and working for the indigenous population, blood ties and group feeling in the sense of Ibn Khaldun, are not easily pushed aside by the modernity machine. All peoples in the Middle East appreciate Internet, appreciate mobile phones, appreciate refrigerators,

appreciate tourism, anticipate the future for children and the family. Sociologically, as this writer has witnessed over years in Turkey, Egypt, and Malaysia, and other Eastern societies: things are moving on the educational front, the gender front, and an appreciation of the modern world. Yet, habits and morality that have grown over centuries can't be forgotten or thrown overboard too soon since people psychology need adjustment in order to learn new ways to handle the new economic, political, and geographic conditions of the place. It is not sufficient simply to draw a line in the sand, as the Sykes-Picot treaty, manifested the realms of influence between France and Great Britain. And, what happened to the Arab peoples? Egypt was somewhat lucky since the Nile and the Pyramids provided stability of identity, despite the negative headlines, Egyptian Coptic Christians and Egyptian Muslims live side by side, share many Egyptian traditions like Sham El Nessim, and understand the glorious Egyptian civilization of the Pharaohs.

If we can speak of a clash of civilization it may be the current massive migration flow from Africa and Middle East to mainland Europe. However, if we consider who the people are who migrate, aside refugees, they are on the move for economic reasons, as where the poor European of the 19<sup>th</sup> century sailing for the new world called America. Again, the time reference is important, not to mention the instantaneous communications possibilities; the old fashioned institutions of the nation states, especially in Europe have not been constructed for such an massive onslaught of peoples, very often poor, in bad health, with a religion, not Christian. No doubt there are serious communication problems on a personal level. However, those with money and educational background do not seem to have a problem integrating into the mainstream society, or, at least, into the upper classes of the host countries. In fact, it makes a difference if someone shows up as a guest with money, or a refugee, or homeless person. It seems, it is less of a civilization problem than a socio-economic problem. We see this in the world of European football: many players do not look like classic Germans, or Englishman, like that was the case, still, in the 1950s, the football fans seem to accept these "non-natives" as long as they perform well on the pitch, not to mention, the salaries way above the ordinary fan in the stands.

At one point Huntington makes the following statement: "Civilizations are the ultimate human tribes, and the clash of civilizations is tribal conflict on a global scale ... The post-Cold War, multipolar, multicivilizational world lacks an overwhelmingly dominant cleavage such as existed in the Cold War. So long as the Muslim demographic and Asian economic surges continue, however, the conflicts between the West and the challenger civilization will

be more central to global politics than other lines of cleavage." (Huntington, 1996:207/238) The first part of this statement offers some definitional problems: if Huntington would have read some Ibn Khaldun text he would have noticed, immediately, that differentiated between tribe and city life. To simply call civilization tribal seems to be risky; the Roman Empire had tribes in various provinces, like the Germanic tribes, but there was a life-style called Roman civilization with institutions and a general understanding of Roman law and modes of conducting political life. The British historian Edward Gibbon would not have had a theme by identifying the Christians causing the downfall of Rome, to put it in simply terms. In every civilization there are tribal issues, but they can't be confused with civilizational warfare, perhaps civil war, and that is very often an issue of socio-economic class differences and not tribal. In Huntington's world the two enemies are made out, the demographics of Muslim countries, and the Asian push onto the world stage. Of course, these matters are somewhat more complex; the fact that the rest of the world attains a level of consciousness as to their situation, in addition, start developing a historical consciousness as to their own identity on the world stage with the help of Internet and social media makes a difference. A tribe is not in need of historical consciousness, since the tribe, as we can read in Ibn Khaldun's sophisticated analysis of tribal community, takes morality and its institutions and its habits for granted. It is part of the survival strategy, say, in terms of a hostile desert environment. Reading and writing, in short, literacy is an important component of the historical consciousness, the rest is storytelling, oral transmission of folklore and myths, and does not lead to a historical conscience. Tribes don't need a museum. Changes are, the more a civilizational consciousness is developed, the more museum a society needs, in order to stand back and ask questions as to their historical situation. It is no surprise that Europe has most of the museums in the world, and the middle class, not to mention the elite that provided the funds, attend and visit museum as though they go to religious services. On the contrary, the ordinary American has very little need of museums, aside the one's we find in New York City (usually supported by exiled Europeans like the famous MOMA) or the Smithsonian in Washington DC, many painting and art work acquired from affluent individuals and families.

A last point, in Huntington we do find a sort of Toynbee model of challenge and response. He sees Asia, especially present-day China as the main challenger of the West, in particularly the United States, especially on a military level and consumer production. "Made in China" in the post-Cold War era is almost as famous as used to be the "Made in Germany": both leading export nations in 2017. We should not forget, and this is common sense, that after the Second



World War the United States was the big winner in almost everything, including talented exiles from Europe, not to mention the majority of consumer production. That the rest of the world would, gradually, pick up and rejuvenate, such as Germany and Japan, and now, China, should not come as a surprise. The fact that the Middle East has always become a world historical problem has something to do with oil that the rest of the world still needs, although alternatives energies, solar and electric, are on the horizon. The demographic situation of the Middle East is only a part of the problem, much large in context, is the historical problem as to how the Middle East, after the First World War, the Near East was carved up by the western powers, especially Britain and France, whose leader still operated in colonial and last 19<sup>th</sup> century models of world politics. In the post-Cold War these issue have come back home to roost, unresolved problems within societies, like Syria, multi-ethnic with religious sectarianism, that never found a reasonable solutions, aside oppression and force by dictatorial forms of rule. On that score the world is screaming for a more just world order in which participants on a global scale challenge the established order of the post-Second World War constituted in the United Nations Security Council.

At this point we want to focus on the concept of world order. A topic that was masterfully handled for many decades by the former United States Secretary of State and Harvard professor for International Studies, as well as chief advisor to the American President Richard Nixon, whose foresight of opening up a dialogue with China, had far reaching consequences. The fact that the chief advisor of Mao was Chou Enlai, who earned a PHD in philosophy from Tuebingen University in Germany, with the title “On Hegel’s Concept of Labor”, was to be the chief dialogue partner of Henry Kissinger, himself, aside ascribing to Bismarck’s Realpolitik, is at heart a philosopher of history. It is from that dialogue, that the Chinese-American relationship is still very much impressed, although he main actors have gone, yet, Kissinger recently has released another book on contemporary China and, thereby, keep the flame of that dialogue going, in his advanced age of ninety-three.

## II. ENTER HENRY KISSINGER

Henry Kissinger not only followed the pattern of classical European patterns of confrontations dealing with nation states, but also, learned from Kant, classical historian, more so from his own biography as a refugee from Nazi Germany. His father, a German high school teacher imbued the young Heinz (his German name later changed to Henry), with a sense of German humanistic education and sense of European history. The young Kissinger, in the critical years of the 1930s in Germany, sensed the atmosphere of danger, especially as a minority in German society, and what it meant to be classified as an outsider. No doubt, his understanding of Realpolitik (associated with the German chancellor Bismarck) had something to do with these experiences in his youth, but also, his “observation” of the world stage and his keen sense of historical consciousness. It is no surprise that he should complete several hundred pages thesis on “The Meaning of History” at Harvard University in 1950, at the height of the Cold War, the Red Scare in the United States, and the Korean War looming, refereeing to Spengler and Toynbee. Both historians deal with a decline of the West. The specific measurement was still classical Greece and the Europe of the Enlightenment. In addition, they dealt with the question as to why the West became the supreme leader, such as the British Empire. Both presupposed that the rise of western civilization was unique and remained unique compared to the rest of the world. This is not to be considered naïve or simple minded jingoism, but a serious reflection on why the western world, especially Europe and the United States, became the world leaders of a global world that adopted the English language as a universal tool of communications and, to some extent, the life-style of consumer society. Aside that, Kissinger follows the question as to the proto-paradigm of the modern world order, focusing on paradigmatic model of the balance of power inaugurating the world order initiated by The Peace of Westphalia in the university town of Muenster, Germany, in 1648.

I remember well, my first day at Muenster/Westphalia, starting my academic career, I found myself near the town center, known as Prinzipalmarkt: I noticed a school class and teachers, speaking Dutch, visiting the city hall of Muenster. I wondered why? Suddenly it struck me: this was their Independence Hall, that is to say, it was at this location that the over two hundred delegates signed the Peace Treaty was ended the Thirty Years’ War from 1618 to 1648 and thereby the independence of the Dutch provinces from Spanish Catholic Habsburg, becoming the United Republic of the Netherlands, a protestant civilization with leanings

toward Calvinism. In 2017 Germany celebrates the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's Theses inaugurating the Reformation, the protestant rebellion against the Papacy in Rome. This rebellion was to lead to the pre-Thirty Year War, known as the Peace of Augsburg of 1555, that concluded a compromise between the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities, in a nutshell known in European history as, "cuius region, eius religio", that is, "whose realm, his religion". In other world, Central Europe, after years of ideological confrontation arrived at a compromise that spelled out the formula that the religion of the local ruler also determines the religion of the ruled. This was the beginning of a complex situation in Central Europe that was to promote a world order on earth. The "peace" didn't last a disastrous religious war was to ensue, known as the Thirty Years' War, that killed half of Germany's population. After a war of attrition the two opponents, the rebellious Protestants and the Roman Catholics, signed a Treaty in Muenster, located in the region known as Westphalia, thus Peace of Westphalia that was to turn out to be a paradigmatic model for the balance of power for Europe. The young Henry Kissinger, during his German school days, read and heard about these events, as all European children are subjected to this topic. Needless to say, he was to remember his school lessons well and transformed this basic historical knowledge onto a level of historical consciousness as a tool for Realpolitik of the balance of power. From a European perspective this is not simply a matter of religion, more than that: it recapitulates some basic premises of Christianity such as the equation, "give to Caesar that belongs to Caesar, give to God that belongs to him", in short, the city of god and the city of the world were born, secularism. This, of course, is a short cut explanation of a complex historical process but will do the exemplary purposes of this article. Later, as a visiting professor in the Belgian university town of Leuven (known in French as Louvain), I learned the more detailed historical aspects of this Dutch revolt against the Spanish Catholic Habsburg. Belgium became an independent state in 1830, but culturally divided between the Flemish speaking peoples, particularly Flanders, and the French speaking people of the southern part in the region of Liege. The point, the northern Belgian, Flemish speaking and writing in Dutch, are actually the brothers and sisters of the Netherlands people. The basic difference the "Belgian Dutch" are Roman Catholic, remained with the Spanish Habsburg, and the northern Dutch became protestant, with Calvinist leanings. Subsequently, the Netherlands turned into a world power with the center in Amsterdam, who inaugurated the first stock market and international spice trade. It should be added, as a curiosity, that the philosophers such as Descartes and Locke were exiles in Amsterdam, while Spinoza was active in his hometown, later Rijnsburg. In comparative

settings the Dutch Republic was the most liberal society in Europe, with limitations, of course, considering that Spinoza was excommunicated from his Jewish community. Be that as it may, certainly Henry Kissinger learned these stories and developed a mature Real-political policy that is embedded deeply in the European experience of a philosophy of history.

In terms of his Word Order book, Kissinger says this: "No book can hope to address every historic approach to international order or every country now active in shaping world affairs. This volume attempts to deal with the regions whose concepts of order have most shaped the evolution of the modern era. The balance between legitimacy and power is extremely complex; the smaller the geographic area to which it applies and the more coherent the cultural convictions within it, the easier it is to distill a workable consensus. But in the modern world the need is for a global world order. An array of entities unrelated to each other by history of values (except at arm's length), and defining themselves essentially by the limit of their capabilities, is likely to generate conflict, not order. (Kissinger, 2014:9/10) He continues and comes to a preliminary conclusion: "In our time, the quest for world order will require relating the perceptions of societies whose realities have largely been self-contained. The mystery to be overcome is one all peoples share – how divergent historical experiences and values can be shaped into a common order." (Kissinger, 2014:10) This, of course, is a tall order. Kissinger is pointing out that in our contemporary world historical experiences do not match they collide, because for the first time, due to the communication revolution on a global level, societies can compare, but encounter a problem of a historical time framework. To put it in simple words: how can we align the historical experience of Egypt, with its river Nile and the Pyramids, with the former British colony, North America, or the ups-and-downs of German history? No doubt, the 21<sup>st</sup> century may turn out to be an intermediary century for the future to be established aligned with Kissinger's hope of a common order.

Again, to be historically more specific, we read Kissinger's text: "The Peace of Westphalia became a turning point in the history of nations because the elements it set in place were as uncomplicated as they were sweeping. The state, not the empire, dynasty, or religious confession, was affirmed as the building block of European order. The concept of state sovereignty was established. The right of each signatory to choose its own domestic structure and religious orientation free from intervention as affirmed, while novel clauses ensured that minority sects could practice their faith in peace and be free from the prospect of forced conversion. Beyond the immediate demands of the moment, the principles of a system of "international relations" were taking shape, motivated by the common desire to avoid a recurrence of total war on the



Continent.” (Kissinger, 2014: 26/27) This was the essential idea that the adult Kissinger learned from his boyhood days in Germany. The development of the nation state as aligned, as we saw, and how Central Europe experienced its history did not deal only with political matters, but foremost with religious theological affairs. Europe, during the course of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century emancipated itself from the singular dictum that the real salvation was to be gained beyond this earth, in paradise. We should recall that the overseas expansion by the colonial powers, Portugal, Spain, France, England, inaugurated a sort of globalization whose goal was clearly exploitation and economic promises. This is natural, China, Japan did the same. We can presuppose, in this world there will always be someone who is predestined to lead the pack, depending on economic, political, demographic, and other detailed circumstances. There is no innocent nation, for society, or religion that does not want to expand its power base; this is based on human experience. However, the historical experience of various peoples are quite different and they do tend to collide in a cyber space that is unregulated, in which “anything goes”, specifically in anonymity. Of course, these matters will sort itself out, in the long run, but until we find a common ground for order, collision, clashes, not to mention warfare, may be a preliminary to a “eternal peace”, as Kant put it.

### III. THE QUEST FOR A NEW WORLD ORDER

We have noted three books by Fukuyama, Huntington, and Kissinger that have been headlines and provided a base for conferences, in Ankara, Istanbul, or London, in which there were hot discussions as to the meaning of “clashes of civilizations”. In fact, the discussion and dialogue is continuing on different levels with various actors. With a preliminary conclusion we would like to address the topic of the “Rise and Fall of Civilizations”, which I had address in the 2000 Conference held in London. I had pointed out the “Rise and Fall” paradigm could be useful to understand why and how Empires rise and fall. Needless to say, everyone thinks of the United States and China. It is too early to tell how this game will be played out. Yet one thing is certain, it was logical that other nations and societies would pick up speed to catch on the America, after the Second World War. This is only natural; the question at stake is, does the United behave in the same way as any classic empire we encountered in world history? We should remind ourselves that the United States is the first immigration society that achieved this status, although it is reluctant to think of itself as Empire since the moralistic underpinning

promoted by its Founding Fathers seems contrary to Empire building. The British Empire, beside the ancient Roman Empire, provides ample historical material for a detailed study as to how Empires rise and fall.

In the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, no doubt, the world is in search of a new world order. At present we witness various critical aspects in world politics and world events that indicate a fierce competition for world leadership. Terrorism is, in fact, only a sideshow and a collateral result of proxy wars that are engaged by various actors in such a way that we do not find ourselves in a Third World War. Ironically, clashes of civilizations have taken place already during the First and Second World War; European civilization fought itself without realizing the enormous negative consequences.

In fact, world historical events and their ensuring historical experiences registered by peoples and individuals are much more complex, as Kissinger pointed out, that meets the eye. Karl Loewith, in his *Meaning in History* had formulated, in a nutshell, modern historical consciousness: “... the moderns elaborate a philosophy of history by secularizing theological principles and applying them to an ever increasing number of empirical facts. It seems as if the two great conceptions of antiquity and Christianity, cyclic motion and eschatological direction, have exhausted the basic approaches to the understanding of history.” (Loewith, 1949:19) It should be added that the work of Hans Blumenberg, inaugurated with well-known volume, *Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (1962), promoted Loewith’s thesis in a more detailed and full blown fashion. The subtle relationship between modernity and theological presuppositions, have not yet been played out in full. Especially, the historical experiences of societies that have been, in modern historical scholarship, on the side line must be reconsidered.

During the London Conference of 2000 on the Dialogue amongst Civilizations, I had introduced “The Relevance of the Rise and Fall Paradigm for the Dialogue of Civilizations” (Safavi, 2003:242ff.); the following is a quote with extensive revision: “The Rise and Fall of Civilizations is a classic theme in European historiography, ever since Edward Gibbon published his famous *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788). Gibbon’s “Decline and Fall”, turned into a paradigmatic scheme to be followed by many historians and philosophers of history. The idea of a dialogue of civilizations would have been too vague, since civilizations were considered to be classical, that is to say, excellent, leading ideals, but dead, or only one civilization would be considered the one which is alive and ruling empire; in that sense dialogue was never possible for the simple reason that civilizations were not considered to be equal to the Empire, perhaps compared to savages and so-called primitive societies.

To conduct a dialogue it takes two who recognized themselves in respect and as equal; that situation is a novelty in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and hard at work in the new quest for world order of the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The acknowledgement is that there are varieties of civilizations, old and new, and emerging, those who got their own style, historical experience, and their respective quality to offer. There seems to be a rejuvenation of the philosophy of history in new forms; a new focus on ancient Egypt, classical Greece, Rome, Ottoman, Persian, not the least Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, to say the least, Islamic Civilization. The dialogue is in flux, in progress, and along with it a new quest for world order. In addition, the discourse between civilizations is conducted in such a way that the respective cultural ramification and historical experience of each particular civilization is taken into account, scrutinized on equal basis, but with qualitative difference. We should reassess momentous works by Spengler, Ortega Y Gasset, and Toynbee, steeped in classical historiography and Gibbon, in order to see to what extent the treatment of “Rise and Fall” of civilizations had influenced the general mentality of the educated public in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as influencing the decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We should add thinkers of the first order, such as Ibn Khaldun, from whom, especially in the West, we can learn details as to the subtleties of tribal societies and Arab and Berber history. We find ourselves in a transitional phase in which we compare our historical experience and try to make sense of them in view of finding some sort of common ground on which we can come to an agreement, or, at least to some sort of compromise, in the Spirit of the Peace of Westphalia.”

## PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

We have seen, in the post-Cold War era, with the revolution in communication, moving from the so-called Gutenberg Galaxy to the Internet age, that turbulence was to be expected. It was simply a matter of catching up with reality. Many more players on the world stage appeared, some by accident, others by design. It is logical that someone would want to challenge those who are in the driver seat, or, at least want to sit next to him. This is human nature; the fact, that we deal with nuclear weapons, that we deal directly with nature, in terms of global warming, that we also are confronted with an explosive demographic development, especially by those who can least afford the demographic expansion, needs to be addressed. There is at present an asymmetric war going on, in form of various terrorisms, the classic tactics of the

underdog, in that sense there is nothing new under the sun. The issue, however, is that peoples become aware of the unequal distribution of the goods of this earth, the unequal treatment of minorities, of peoples from various geographical areas that have never been considered by the West, except as colonies. There must be some sort of re-education, acknowledging the old, without misrepresenting what actually happened, or is (in the spirit of Max Weber), and promote a general will toward education every child. It is education, in the general sense of the word that can be a solution to the worlds’ ills. A human being is not born educated, it is helpless and needs to be nourished is common sense to anyone who has the experience of being a parent. Thus, two objectives can be achieved through education, that is to say, respect and appreciation for “Life” as such, and becoming civilized. Of course, much needs to be invested in the structure of human organization in order to promote civilized life, that is, only possible with a certain level of education, in the modern world. The basic task is, to reconcile historical experience of various peoples, who, perhaps, achieve for the first time a historical consciousness, an elevated level of “asabiya” in Ibn Khaldun’s sense. Former world history can’t be undone, it must be acknowledged in the good as well as in the evil; yet, in order to come to terms with the future history of the modern globe, we must reconcile difference onto the level of knowledge, from which the next generation can benefit. It is the duty of the present generation to make clear to the kids, what is the value of real knowledge, in the first place, how it can be real investment for a productive future life, and make clear, there may still remain many mysteries, that may never be solved. Imagine living in a perfect world: for the human being, very boring, and dangerous. There must be adventure of discovery beyond our stellar system, and, perhaps, the landing on Mars is the first little step. We can be sure that in the future we need to think about stellar order to supplement world order, but this is still some centuries in the near future.

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