

# Clash of Civilizations (Islam versus West)

## Outline:

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Harvard Professor Samuel P. Huntington caused intellectual explosion by publishing his article “Clash of Civilizations” in the American journal ‘Foreign Affairs’ in 1993. He asserts “Civilizations are the largest aggregates that command human loyalties and account for much of the bloodshed in the recorded human history. Cold war marked a brief departure from it but now old enemies could go to the past time, waging wars against each other.... The biggest threat to the west at present comes from China and Islam.” He argues that now the cold war had ended, future conflicts in the world politics would be less between states and more between civilizations or coalitions of culture. There is now a danger of hot war of religion to succeed the cold war of ideologies, the new trend between America and its allies, on the one hand, and Muslim countries such as Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Libya, Sudan, and Somalia, on the other hand. Both American capitalism and Russian Communism were born out of European culture.

## Present

## Gloomy

## Scenario:

The 9/11 attack was termed as beginning of clash of civilization, when Tony Blair exclaimed as, “They have attacked on our civilization.” President Bush declared war against Afghanistan as Crusades. The question arises whether the significance of September 11, 2001, the attacks on the US, the devastation of Afghanistan, the Israeli onslaught on the Palestinians homeland and Lebanon, the plans to divide Iraq and invade Iran Somalia, and Sudan, all add up to an unfolding conflict between the United States and its closest allies (Israel and UK) on the one hand, and more and more Muslim countries, on the other hand. The tumult caused by the publication of the caricature of the Holy Prophet in the Norwegian Newspaper. The growing phenomenon of linking fundamentalism to extremism and extremism to Islam and Islam to terrorism sent a shocking wave to Enlightened Muslims.

## Causes

of

## Clash

of

## Civilizations:

This thesis was an inspiration for the Jews. They have worked hard to convert

their war against Palestine into a US war against Islam, thus have successfully engaged their historic enemies- Islam and Christianity. The humiliation in crusades by Zangi and Ayubi are still a poignant reminder for the west, also 9/11 attack was labeled as 'Crusade' by President Bush. Still the westerns are embracing the religion of Islam, surprisingly 45,000 westerns after 9/11 accepted Islam. Thus Pope Benedict could not keep himself from speaking rough language against Islam and the Holy Prophet. The Muslims have been denied of their legitimate rights in their social(wearing of Hljab), political(execution of Sadam),geographical(Palestine and Kashmir)\_ and religious(blasphemous cartoons) and economic(capturing of Middle East oil) freedom

The west perceives that the Muslim world with its huge economic potential, demographic explosion, nuclear capability and a larger scale migration to its countries, may challenge its hegemony as an alternative system. Fear that Islamic wants to overcome the West. On the contrary, the Muslims perceive that the West is determined to uproot the Muslim Civilization.

Clashes of civilization are also wars of images and control of opinions through Media. The world is in the grip of War of Media, whose headlines are like 'Three Israelis Killed' but never a headline which says 'Hundreds of Palestinians feared killed by Israelis.' Johann Galtung, a distinguished journalist, maintains that media projects violence without analyzing its causes for unresolved issues, portrays one side as 'Evil' and the other as 'Liberator.' Kevin Doyle quotes the theory of 'Propaganda Model' and explains that the modern Media promotes the division within the global village which is enhancing insecurity. The US controlled western media, is blaming Islam and Muslims as terrorists. If some Muslims are terrorists, it does not prove over a billion Muslims are terrorists. Former President CBS News, Richard Salent reveals, "Our job is to give people not what they want, but we decide they ought to have." Taliban story of women oppression does not generate the positive Islamic images- that Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Turkey had a woman Head of State. That the streets of Muslim cities like Tehran, Cairo, and Riyadh are far safer from muggers and rapists than the streets of New York, and Washington. Some misguided and frustrated Muslims are equally responsible for creating this chaos in the name of Islam. For their vested interests, they take advantage of poverty stricken and illiterate Muslim youth in developing them as terrorists.

**Hidden Objectives under this Theory:**

A clash of culture did occur when President Bush used to Taliban, the Language of ultimatum over surrendering of Usam , "Just hand over Usama Bin Laden and his thugs. There is nothing to talk about." It shows he was trying to get the Taliban to say NO, so that Bush could embark on his long awaited military action to capture Afghanistan. The threat of weapons of mass destruction from North Korea is more real than that of Iraq, but till now 6,00,000 Iraqis have been butchered with their

President hanged. For 'Greater Israel' Hezbollah, Iran and Syria are on the hit list as their culture of 'Violence' in the words of Bush, "Put future threats to the security of America."

### **Pluralistic Dimensions of Islamic Civilization:**

Islam was not spread by sword, as misinterpreted by Pope, the living evidence is Arab Land itself where millions of Christian and the Jews are practicing their faith with complete liberty. Ruthless killing of innocent citizens committed by Napoleon, Chengiz Khan and observed in the world wars are much greater than by Saddam or any other Muslim Despot.

In the Muslim world, the women are awarded more dignity than in the west, far less prostitution than in the west, no beauty competitions. Sons in the Muslim world respect their mothers more than sons in the west. There was an ethnic cleansing which displaced thousands of Palestinians to make room for the Jews. An ideology was formed in which someone from the Ukraine who claims to have had a Jewish ancestor two thousand years ago had more rights under Israel's Law of Return than a Palestinian who ran away from Israeli borders in 1948. The Warrior US Presidents: George Washington, soldier turned Head of State, inspires every US President, who wants the experience of ordering at least one military action by American Forces.

### **Wrong Notions of Huntington's Thesis:**

Richard Nixon has dismissed the theory, "That nightmare scenario would never materialize. The Muslim world is too large and diverse." The Huntington's thesis failed to account many features of the Muslim world. It has no large differences with the Christian west unlike Communism. That was why many Muslim countries preferred to align with West during cold war. The Muslim world is in a process of acquiring scientific knowledge following western model of development, there may be political differences but by no means differences of civilization. Clash of Civilization is in fact clash of economic interest.

### **Suggestion to make this world a Heaven:**

The present ongoing clash is not a physical phenomenon and does not require use of force, which has proved a big failure, even after using Hi-Tech weapons. Rather it demands intellectual and collective effort by all responsible scholars, Heads of States, Soldiers and Politicians. Inter faith dialogue to create harmony because Islam gives high esteem to all other religions of book and their prophets. True Muslim scholars in collaboration with other Priests, can hold joint Seminars to generate harmony and shed clouds of ignorance and prejudice. The world body UN should fear the dreadful end of League of Nations, so it needs vitality and

firmness to implement its fair decisions, irrespective US influence which has divided the world. Media power can be used for bridging the gulf among biased nations and cultures.. Education system is a basic tool in polishing individuals with qualities of compassion and Humanism.

Finally the world finds engulf amongst fears of hunger, natural disasters, diseases, nuclear holocaust, population explosion and collapse of religious and moral values, it requires joint constructive strategy rather than bloody clashes.