

Civilizations and Ethnic diversity: cultural wealth or political pressure lever

Tarana Dushturova

The end of XX century and beginning of XXI (late 1960s-until present) is remarkable with processes sui generis. Years of Détente (1969- late 1970s), later Post Cold-War/Post Soviet states or New World Order period and the present time appears to be an activation period of new moves on the Great Chess-desk for the sake of Power of Balance and superiority. The very article focuses on the background reasons of ongoing ethnic, national, civilizational confrontations as the pawn figures of this chess-play.

Key words: *Ethnic diversity, Civilizational conflicts, Power of Balance, Bipolarity and Multi-polarity, economic interests.*

INTRODUCTION

New cover for old interests: economic and geopolitical superiority claim inside the shell of civilizational clash: XX century that is left behind 10 years can be divided into 2 parts: 1st part- World Wars, 2nd part- Cold War. Termination of Cold War, collapse of Soviet Union and appearance of new subjects of international relations created new hot spots on the geopolitic and strategic map of the World. Changes became with the meltdown of Balance of Power (BoP) accompanied by the establishment of new antagonist unites and conflicts between states and nations. Beginning from the end of the XX century the most used term in the media, political debates and in the international relations arena, is the "civilizational clash" term. The term was coined by S. Huntington and he is sharing the starring role in revelation of the "Civilizational Clash theory" with Francis Fukuyama. The article named "Civilizational clash?" published in 1993 by S. Huntington was transformed into a book titled "Civilizational clash and the remarking of World Order" avoiding the question mark. Is the XXI century really an age of ethnic and cultural clashes? Is really creating new East and West counterpolars or has already been created? Are the new markets, influence circles and economic interests not the motives of conflicts any more? Is our century the age of cultural competition?

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilization. The clash of civilization will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future [7].

LAYOUT

The matter of "civilizational clash" is not a new notion according to its concept. Because, one can find civilizational element in any clash, conflict or war happened in past. Starting from Shumers till the Hun-China wars, as well as the World Wars breded with ideas about nazism (pure Aryan race) and world supermacy can be considered as civilizational clashes. But seems that history was more frank confessioned and called the invariable desire of mankind with its real names as "power competition, pretention to world supermacy, influence circle, economic interests". It even confessed that the real purpose of Crusads to East which were declared as Holy War by Pope, was to make Western countries benefit from the wealth of Eastern countries. History is a mirror that reflects future. Specially after known 9/11 events, a modern de-javu of Crusads is likely being lived. Just in more political and diplomatic shape [12].

Starting from 1990 World lost its bi-polar power balance and America enjoyed unipolarity being only superpower of the World for the certain period of time. But current period can not be considered as a uni-polar. In fact, it is a period of history that has its

peculiar Balance of Power. Whilst the relative superiority of America, it can't be considered the only Power of the World Order. There is an interesting dependence: America has a power to influence the whole world's policy, but, has no independence to take a risk to make a decision and realize it just on his own. On the spot, such an idea comes to human mind: doesn't America- that has established Western (capitalist) coalition against East (communist) and took central part in it untill 1990 assuming ideological defference as a basis- want to continue the same policy while intentionally creating a new idea for confontation as the old one is already liquidated? It is obvious that, the idea of civilizational clash has already been accepted as a logical opinion by the people, specially by the most of young and middle-aged generation who prefer to learn politics, history and international relations from the "words of mouth". On this spot, the role of media has to be stated especially. Mass media, which is based on the market intersts, can spread any information/disinformation which can make resonance without paying any attention to its further results that can cost. So, can occure such a hypothesis: America-that wanted to pave a favourable background for its future interests exported "XXI century -civilizational clash era" virus to make the crowd psychologically ready for this. A number of scholars and researchers (Hans Köhler, Paul Berman, Amartya Sen, Edward Said) have told that theory of S. Huntington has a "self-fulfillment" threat, thus the reason behind this self-fulfillment is more interesting [8, 1, 13, 14]. One of interesting points of the book is division of the civilizations into 8 groups which is mostly based on religious differences (and sometimes to geographical or language differences). Special standpoint is that the book states the possibility of Islam-Sinic union against West-Christian world. Such setting of classification arises a doubt in a person's mind: this theory aims to hit two birds with a single shoot by combining Islam (specially, if to take into consideration that most of energy deposits either for fortune or misfortune are located in the Islamic countries and most of Islam countries are situated in the Middle Asia, Minor Asia, Near and Middle East and for this attracts geostrategical interest) and Confusian Sinic (It is fact that China is getting to be the most real rival of America. American approach to Japan and supporting Japan's military expansion is obvious directions of anti China policy of America [2, 4, 11t]) in one group. To render its rival harmless, and to become the superpower of Unipolar system by strengthening its geopolitical influence circle and energy deposits is a long-term goal of America being the real candidate for it.

Huntington sees Islamic civilization as a potential ally to China both having more revisionist goals and sharing common conflicts with other civilizations, especially the West. Specifically, he identifies common Chinese and Islamic interests in the areas of weapons proliferation, human rights, and democracy that conflict with those of the West, and feels that these are areas in which the two civilizations will cooperate. Huntington argues that a "Sino-Islamic connection" is emerging in which China will cooperate more closely with Iran, Pakistan and other states to augment its international position.

This kind of grouping seems to be unfair from another side as well: It is not right to show the Islamic World (just for the religious bases) as a single civilization. Because among the countries where Islam religion covers majority there are peoples with historical, cultural, ethnic, lingual, traditional varieties, and just for this classifications a civilization can be distinguished [5]. Religion is not the sole indicator of civilization. Civilizations have been distinguished by their means of subsistence, types of livelihood, settlement patterns, forms of government, social stratification, economic systems, literacy and other cultural traits. As minimum, this fact is evident in the image of arabs and turks. Though Turkey being one of the states with turkish nationality and Islam majority has "Torn country" status (!) in the above mentioned book. By term "torn countries" Huntington refers to countries that are seeking to affiliate with another civilization. Turkey's history, culture, and traditions are derived from Islamic civilization but after 1920s it has systematically tried to be westernized both politically (is seeking to join the European Union, joined NATO) and

socially. Mexico, Russia and Australia (western civilizational heritage and Asian economic engagement) are also torn countries according to S. Huntington [7]

Ethnic diversities-Fault line conflicts? The ethnic groups which are more narrow circles of the civilizations gained more attention with the ending of Cold War. Ethnic diversity borders which are called as "fault lines" by S. Huntington are the hot points of nowadays. According to the database of MAR (Minorities at Risk) in 1945-89s 233, 1990-1998s 275 were and now 283 ethnic minority groups are carrying risk symptoms. The top 4 countries for the number of ethnic diversities are Russia, Iran, India and Kenya [10]. The changing numbers of ethnic groups according to years is mostly depend on collapse of Soviet Imperia: as the very result, after the end of the Cold War and the breakup of the USSR and other Warsaw Pact countries, many majorities became minorities and many minorities became majorities. For example, there are Russian minorities in many of the former Soviet republics which are now ruled by groups that were considered minorities in the Russian-ruled USSR [6]. At the same time new conflict areas were occurred. New clash lines were left as the inheritance of fell down Soviet imperia. These "fault lines" made obstacles to the sustainable development of re-newly founded states and successively gave the role of supervisor to Russia on ex-subjects of Soviet Union. Azerbaijan-Armenia, Georgia-Abkhaz, Ajar, Osteen, Uzbeks in Kirgizstan and Tajikistan are the samples of it.

S. Huntington states the possible reasons of ethnic conflicts as the followings:

"These conflicts may result from a number of causes, such as: relative influence or power (military or economic), discrimination against people from a different civilization, intervention to protect kinsmen in a different civilization, or different values and culture, particularly when one civilization attempts to impose its values on people of a different civilization [7]"

To my opinion, these situations sometimes can be reason and sometimes pretext of conflicts. It is clear from the path of history that, no imperia is everlasting, in some period of time the subjects of any imperia ideologically raise enough to stand for their rights. Ongoing conflicts with Chechen, Ingush, Lezgi, Tatar, Karachay-Cherkessia and other ethnic groups within the borders of Russia can be sample for this [10].

On the other hand, if to base on Brzezinski's "Great chess-desk" term, the actors of these clashes are pawns of the chess-game. Pawns always move the first, and the last goal is to protect King from chess-mate.

Each society is endowed with a set of wealth-creating assets, such as land and mineral resources. There is, therefore an incentive for greater states to form coalitions to wrest control of these assets from the rest of population. Once a coalition has own control over the country's richness, however it faces the task of enforcing the exclusion of non-members. Furthermore it now has to protect its ascendancy from contra-coalition. In particular, agents not belonging to the winning coalition will attempt to infiltrate it, so as to participate in the distribution of the spoils. For example, they will apply for land titles, or for government jobs and else. The internal ethnic diversity of the states can be a successful opportunity for making internal disorder [3]. The other attention-worth matter is that such kind of ethnic clashes are met within the borders of ex-subdued countries. For this reason the history of every imperia is rich with the facts about forced settlement policy, exile, and attempts to create an ethnic mixture between the subdued groups.

Each society is endowed with a set of wealth-creating assets, such as land and mineral resources. There is therefore an incentive for agents to form coalitions to wrest control of these assets from the rest of the population. Once a coalition has won control over the country's riches, however, it faces the task of enforcing the exclusion of non-members. In particular, agents not belonging to the winning coalition will attempt to infiltrate it, so as to participate in the distribution of the spoils. For example, they will apply for land titles, or for government jobs.

If to look through the places of ethnic conflicts it becomes easy to guess the reasons. Let's take some examples on current ethnic conflicts: the Caucasus is a region between the East and the West, and is a geopolitically strategic point for great powers. Besides, if to add the energy deposits of Azerbaijan, the region becomes an arena for power struggle. So becomes that, as the result of this rival Armenian pretention to Azerbaijan territories with the Russian support, Abkhaz, Ossetian, Ajar conflicts and Javakheti which is recently uprising conflict in the region are ill points. Specially, the Russian factor is obviously seen in the serious troubles of state stability of Georgia after the westernized policy of M. Saakashvili. Other sample is Mujahedin forces that were established with the material-military support of America as guerilla bands against Russians in Afghanistan during 1979-1989s. But today the Taliban is in the role of enemy of America that it gave a birth itself. Another is Turkish-Kurdish problem which came on during the WW I probably intentionally made by the Triple Entente to weaken the Ottoman Imperia which is still the problematic matter of Minor Asia. Furthermore, is Burundi that was colony of Belgium for many years. The emerging situation of Tutsi-Hutus clash which is considered to be one of the bloodiest conflicts of the XX century is interesting- the tribes lived together 5 centuries in peace and in 1959 Burundi's demand of independence from Belgium launched a sudden bloody fault line between Ruanda-Urundi. And the last events in China against ancient Uyghur ethnics (Turkish Muslims) really makes a man think about the ethnic clashes as a "self-fulfillment" or intentionally created disputes.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

To sum up, should be said that, the present ongoing events prove the need for promotion of mutual understanding, dialogue between civilizations and peaceful existence of ethnic, religious and cultural diversities. Once knowledge takes the place of pre-conceived opinions, stereotypes and prejudices about others, "otherness" will be perceived less as a threat than as enrichment in the sense of offering different outlooks on the world around us.

Acceptance and dialogue of civilizations refers to the act of listening to the beliefs, judgments, worries of people not only with a different cultural, ethnic, or religious background, but also with different political convictions, social positions and economic power. Civilizations, however, are abstract entities. The actors of a dialogue of civilizations will always be individuals, whose ways of thinking and values are influenced by their civilizational background, and who engage in a dialogue with other individuals, whose identities again are shaped by many influences, including her or his socio-cultural, ethnic, religious background. Mutual awareness can be the real solution on prevention of conflicts - on the international, national and local levels - by reducing misunderstandings and mistrust, and by laying the basis for a non-violent resolution of controversies [9]. It also has enormous potential to solve current and future economic, social and political problems by sharing experiences and through joint implementation of remedies. At its best, intercivilizational dialogue can result in a collective sense of shared goals, enabling us to address the most important issues of all: What kind of future world do we want to live in? How can we work together to solve the problems facing humankind today, and begin creating that future?

REFERENCES

- [1] Berman Paul, (2004) "Liberty and Terrorism", 240 pages, W.W Norton edition
- [2] Blumenthal Dan, (2005), "The Revival of the U.S-Japanese Alliance", HTML version www.aei.org/docLib/20050228_ao.pdf
- [3] Caselli Francesco and Wilbur John Coleman (March 2006), "Theory of Ethnic Conflicts", National Bureau for Economic Research, Cambridge, MA., USA

- [4] Christensen J. Thomas, (1999), "China, the U.S-Japan Alliance and the security: Dilemma in the East Asia", *International security* 23, No 4, 1999: 66
- [5] Childe, V., Gordon *What Happened in History* (Penguin, 1942) and *Man Makes Himself* (Harmondsworth, 1951)
- [6] Fox Jonathan, (2001) "Two Civilizations and Ethnic Conflicts: Islam and the West" *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol38 No 4, July 2001
- [7] Huntington Samuel, (1996). "Clash of civilizations and the remarking of World Order", New York, Simon and Schuster
- [8] Kohler, Hans (1997). *Philosophical foundations of civilizational dialogue. The hermeneutics of cultural self-comprehension versus the paradigm of civilizational conflict*. I.P.O Research Papers. Retrieved December 15,2006 from: <http://hanskoechler.com/civ-dial.htm>
- [10] Minorities at Risk (MAK) Project www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessments.
- [11] Przystup J. James (October, 2001), "China and the U.S-Japan Alliance", conference "First U.S-Japan Track", Tokyo, Japan
- [12] Russet, M. Bruce; John R. Oneal, Michaelene Cox (2000). "Clash of civilizations or Realism and Liberalism. Déjà vu? Some evidence" *Research* 37, pages: 583–608. [doi:10.1177/0022343300037005003](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343300037005003). <http://jpr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/37/5/583>. Retrieved on 2007-10-03.
- [13] Sen Amartya Kumar, (2006) "Identity and Violence: the illusion of destiny", 215 pages, the USA
- [14] Said W. Edward, (2001) "The clash of Ignorance", October 22, 2001 edition of "The Nation"
- [15] UN International Conference on the Dialogue of Civilizations, United Nations, from 31 July to 3 August 2001, at the University of Tokyo and Kyoto

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tarana Dushturova, PhD student of the Baku State University, department of International relations and contemporary integration processes, PhD researcher at Università della Tuscia, Italy. Phone: 0039 3488094984 (Italy) 00994 503802726 (Azerbaijan), E-mail: dushturova@yahoo.com

Докладът е рецензиран.