Chapter 4

IMPACT OF HUNTINGTON’S THEORY

4.1 Introduction

One of the most generous appreciations of Huntington’s work has been by A.J. Bacevich. He has said “The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order is a work touched by genius. Huntington has written a brilliant, riveting, and utterly original book, masterful in presentation and brimming with insight, its disturbing conclusions corroborated by an impressive array of data and well-chosen quotations. How Huntington makes his case is no less impressive than the argument itself. The author’s style is precise, pithy, plainspoken, and coolly analytical. He eschews jargon. Crisp, declarative sentences array themselves in tightly organized paragraphs. Aphorisms abound. The result is vivid yet nuanced, elegant yet accessible. It is also enormously provocative”(1) But the same A.J. Bacevich also uttered that “To readers baffled by developments following in the wake of the abruptly terminated Cold War, The Clash of Civilizations offers a radically different prism through which to view world politics. As such, the policy implications of the book loom large. For this reason, Professor Huntington’s book may also be the most significant and potentially mischievous volume to appear in recent memory”. (1a) The laudatory and cautionary epithets apart, Huntington’s work has had a tremendous impact since its first publication in 1993. It would be a worthwhile effort to take stock of the impact of Huntington’s influential and provocative effort.

4.2 Usage of ‘Clash’ Terminology by Scholars

Huntington’s thesis gave currency to the ‘Clash” terminology all over the world and since 1993 several writings, using this terminology have appeared, particularly in the field of international politics. Notable examples, from a

4.3 Usage of ‘Clash’ Terminology by Political Leaders

The ‘Clash’ and ‘Clash of Civilisations’ terminology has also found its way into political discourses and discussions, involving elites and masses, leaders and groups. World leaders, including those like US President George W. Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and many others, have time and again made public statements referring, directly or indirectly, to the theory of ‘clash of civilisations’, and have generally and publicly denounced the idea. Leaders across the globe have been referring to the terminology of ‘clash’ and ‘clash of civilisations’ and this has led scholars like Edward Said to comment “international luminaries from former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi have pontificated about Islam's troubles, and in the latter's case have used Huntington's ideas to rant on about the West's superiority” (2)
The vocabulary of 'clash of civilizations seems to have entered the lexicon of the political leaders especially in the post 9/11 period. For instance Indonesia's President Abdurrahman Wahid used this phrase in the post 9/11 period (3) Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has also spoken similar language by stating “What the Christians and the Jews are now saying: we were determined to crush Communism and the West must now crush Islam and Confucianism... we hope to see a confrontation between China that heads the Confucianist camp and America that heads the Christian crusader camp.” (4)

Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has said “Civilizations have always been enriched, and not weakened, by the exchange of knowledge and arts, the freer and more peaceable the better. In the relations between nations, it is rather the lack, of education, and the dearth of knowledge which is a chief source of dispute and conflict. Never the opposite”. (5) Kofi Annan again has said “The United Nations — at its best — can be the true home of the dialogue among civilizations; the forum where such dialogue can flourish and bear fruit in every field of human endeavour. Without this dialogue taking place every day among all nations — within and between civilizations, cultures and groups — no peace can be lasting and no prosperity can be secure. That is the lesson of the United Nations' first half-century. It is a lesson that we ignore at our peril” (6) On another occasion he said "The misconceptions and stereotypes underlying the idea of a clash of civilisation have come to be more and more widely shared. Insensitivity towards other people's beliefs or sacred symbols – intentional or otherwise— is seized on by those who seem eager to foment a new war of religion, this time on a global scale," (7)

On the occasion of the international conference on “Dialogue Among Civilizations” held in New Delhi the then Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee also alluded to the thesis and called for a “culture of dialogue” (7a.)
India's ex-president, Dr. K.R. Narayanan, in response to the thesis of Huntington, said that 'Civilizations don't clash, it is barbarisms which clash'. Pakistani Foreign Minister Kasuri has said "Religious extremism and militancy have risen because of the deep sense of injustice and impotence in the Arab and Islamic world. There is a widespread feeling in the Muslim world that Islam is being unfairly targeted. Unfortunately theories projecting a "clash of civilization" have reinforced this feeling".

Shabtai Shavit a former As politically incorrect as it might be to say, let's face it. This is a clash of civilizations. Or, as some euphemize it, a fight between the forces of order and disorder".

The year 2006 in particular has seen allusion of the thesis by some of the most well known world leaders. Tony Blair, Prime Minister of United Kingdom has said "This is not a clash between civilizations. It is a clash about civilisation." George W. Bush has referred to the clash of civilization thesis by saying "This struggle has been called a clash of civilizations. In truth, it is a struggle for civilization. We are fighting to maintain the way of life enjoyed by free nations."

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a Shia Muslim and earlier a commander in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, has some of the most extremist views in the Muslim world. He said "Have no doubt... Allah willing, Islam will conquer what? It will conquer all the mountain tops of the world." Taheri, has pointed out how as President, he has boasted that the Imam Mahdi gave him the Presidency for singular task: of provoking a "clash of civilizations" in which the Muslim world, led by Iran, will take on the "infidel" West, led by the United States, and defeats it in a slow but prolonged contest. Even the elusive and reclusive Islamic leader Bin Laden has said "While your planes and tanks are destroying houses in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Pakistan, you
smile at our faces and tell us that you do not aggress Islam but the Terrorists and
that you call for peaceful coexistence and dialogue instead of the clash of
civilization” (13)

Much earlier writer Arundhati Roy had written, “Bush and Bin Laden have
even begun to borrow each other’s rhetoric. Each refers to the other as ‘the head of
the snake.’ Both invoke God and use the loose millenarian currency of good and
evil as their terms of reference.” (14) Now both are referring to the clash of
civilisations in their war rhetoric. Another writer has aptly stated “Evidence that
Huntington’s sensationalistic theory has complemented and integrated with
already existing prejudices is apparent in the highly polarized face of international
relations. The fear and paranoia has even crept into the lexicon of leaders in both,
civilizations” (15)

Former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is also seen to operate
within ‘The Clash’ discourse of Huntington when she says “.In the long term, the
future of the Middle East may well be determined by those in the region dedicated
to the hard work of building democracy. I certainly hope so. But hope is not a
policy. In the short term, we must recognize that the region will be shaped
primarily by fairly ruthless power politics in which the clash between good and
evil will be swamped by differences between Sunni and Shiite, Arab and Persian,
Arab and Kurd, Kurd and Turk, Hashemite and Saudi, secular and religious and,
of course, Arab and Jew. This is the world, the president pledges in his National
Security Strategy, that "America must continue to lead." Actually, it is the world
he must begin to address — before it is too late.” (16)

Ashgar Ali Engineer has put it rather well “The Italian Prime Minister
Berlusconi even went on to say that the attack on World Trade Centre in New
York has proved that the Western civilisation is superior and that Islam has failed
to come to terms with modernity. The problem is, there is high degree of prejudice
among western rulers as well as academics against Islam. It is not an academic like Huntington alone or politician like the Italian Prime Minister who hold such views. The kind of applaud Huntington's dubious hypothesis like clash of civilizations got in the western world shows widespread prejudice against Islam in the western world since the period of crusades. Even Mr. Bush used the word 'crusade' when talking of revenge against the Laden's act of terror. The otherwise sober British weekly The Economist quotes Huntington with approval in its issue of September 22-28" (17) Thus polity has also experienced a robust impact of Huntington's thesis

4.4 Usage of 'Clash' Terminology by Religious Leaders

Huntington's thesis has also formed part of discourse by religious leaders of various religions. Pope John Paul II has said "Without renouncing the affirmation of the force of the evangelical message, it is an important to work in the torn world of today, that Christians be men of dialogue and work against that clash of civilizations that at times seems inevitable." (18) Following the same discourse Pope John Paul II on his 25th Anniversary as the Pontiff released a document in which he criticized the use of religion to commit violence and referred to fundamentalism as the "constant enemy of dialogue and peace" (19)

The present Pontiff German-born Pope Benedict XVI, earlier known as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has also used civilisational language in Cologne where he said "any country [that] claims not to respect other religions is not worthy of the name civilization." (20) He also said "Indeed it is these spiritual values that make possible mutual comprehension between individuals and peoples, between different cultures and civilizations." (21)

Rabbi Moshe Reiss says "Samuel Huntington's thesis is often believed to confirm that Islam is a threat to the West. Is that true? The main event that made
that appear to be true is the Iranian revolution. The violent conflict is not directly between the West and Islam. The conflict is between Islam and the Islamists terrorists. They are determined to beleaguer us, destroy our domestic tranquility, disrupt our economy, and make our lives untenable. They cannot defeat the West. Even with globalized criminality and cyberterrorism” (22) South Africa’s Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu said “There are tensions, there are even hostilities but they are not caused by religion, by culture or by civilizations” (23)

Hence, Huntington's thesis has seeped into the discourses and speeches of religious leaders.

4.5 Usage of ‘Clash’ Terminology in Media

The post 9/11 period saw an avalanche of writings about the ‘clash of civilizations in India as in other parts of the world. However, most of it came as newspaper articles and most of these pieces were by prominent writers, experts, commentators or columnists in some of the most well known publications in the world and in India. Writings in media referring to Huntington’s thesis saw a sudden spurt after the 9/11 attack. A quick look at some of these writings would be helpful to understand the impact of the thesis in the Indian media for instance.

Ajoy Bagchi, in Future is here, discussed whether Huntington’s "Clash of Civilisations" is becoming a reality with the attack by America on Taliban Afghanistan. (24) Subsequently, Ajoy Bagchi, in yet another article ‘On civilisational identity’ discussed Huntington’s "Clash of Civilisations" hypothesis and probed whether the terrorist attacks on America awas a result of a clash of civilisation. (25) Syed Ali Mehdi in ‘Civilisational angst a worry ‘ worried about the rise of terrorism and looked at it from the civilisational point of view. (26), Asghar Ali Engineer in ‘Clash of terrors: America and Osama bin Laden’ explored alternatives to war in fighting terrorism. (27) In yet another article titled ‘Clash of
terrors? Nation and the World' Asghar Ali Engineer examined the animosity and prejudice by the West against the Muslims and sought to analyse the US attack on Afghanistan (28) Indrajit Roy in his article 'Clash of civilisations and (Un-) making of the new world order' focused on the terrible consequences, especially socio-cultural consequences of the terrorist attacks in United States and its possible fallout. (29) Balraj Puri in ‘Can India avert clash of civilizations?’ examined how India can avert dangerous religious polarization leading to clash of civilizations in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in United States. (30) M.J.Akbar in ‘Clash of Confusions’ looked at the bombing of Afghanistan by the US after the 9/11 attacks. (31) In ‘Crash of human civilisation’ N.A. Karim attempted to analyse US strategic and diplomatic policy immediately after the terrorist attacks. (32) In ‘Clash of terrors?’ Swami Aghivesh, Thampu and Valson took up the fight by United States against terrorists. (33) A.J. Philip in an article ‘Clash of terrors : Not just planes, religion itself has been hijacked’ analysed the US war against terrorist in the light of attacks on America on 9/11. (34) Muzaffar Assadi in ‘Western amnesia’ looked at the war against Afghanistan and pondered whether war against Afghanistan was a clash of civilisations. (35)

Many others in India have written with the same frame of reference and within the clash discourse and include M.J.Akbar’s Proflict in America (36) (AN Ram’s Clear and present danger (37) Salman Rushdie’s Let’s get back to life (38), Shameem Faizee’s Design behind the war hysteria (39) Chinmaya R Gharekhan’s Relating to the new paradigm (40) Brinda Karat’s New war against old foes (41) Rajmohan Gandhi’s Responding to the terror (42) K.P.S. Gill’s Terrifying means to terrible ends (43) Jasjit Singh’s War against terrorism : Get the basics right (44) Pritish Nandy’s Puppet politics (45) Pratap Bhanu Mehta’s Anti-Americanism as an ideology (46) K Natwar Singh’s Terrorist attack on WTC is most reprehensible. (47) Mushirul Hasan’s Wrestling with shadows : US anger is justified but a blind reaction is no answer and Osama is just the mascot. (48)
Muzamil Jaleel’s (49) Chandra Shekhar’s Sekhar *War of the world in the offing* (50) Amulya Ganguli’s *Target of terror* (51) and many more subsequently.

The Western media as well as media in other parts of the world such as Middle East and South East Asia also witnessed a similar trend. A well-established British weekly, *The Economist*, in the issue immediately following the 9/11 attacks, praised Huntington for his “cruel and sweeping, but nonetheless acute” observation about the West-Islam divide. Similarly in the aftermath of Danish cartoon issue many media sections throughout Europe and America again began to allude to Huntington’s thesis. Arnaud de Borchgrave, an editor at large of The Washington Times and of United Press International, for instance asked “Could the Netherlands be a curtain-raiser for a wider clash of civilizations in the old Continent?” (52) It is beyond the scope of this study to catalog all media articles, especially those outside of India, alluding to Huntington’s thesis, but some can be cited.

For example, Charles Krauthammer has also spoken in starkly civilisational clash terms in an article in Washington Post. However the impact upon him came more probably from Bernard Lewis than Huntington. He says: “It should now be clear that we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations—a perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.” (53)

Ismael Hossein-zadeh has aptly stated “Media analysis and political punditry have likewise been dominated by the dubious theory of “the clash of civilizations” that has been proposed by Samuel Huntington and his co-thinkers since the early 1990s” (54)
4.6 Impact on Internet and Citations

Huntington’s thesis has been one of the most widely cited theories of international politics on the internet. The discussions and debates over Huntington’s clash of civilisations have swamped the internet with hundreds of articles, endorsing, supporting, deprecating or critiquing it. Hundreds of blogsites and websites have been regularly discussing it. The discussions and debates about the ‘clash of civilisations’ have been witnessed on thousands of websites, blogs and chatrooms, when major conflagrations, conflicts or terrorist strikes have occurred in the world, during the last decade. This was particularly evident in the aftermath of the 2001 terror attacks on America and during the American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Websites either dedicated to propagating or refuting Huntington’s thesis have continued to mushroom since 1993. And since the outbreak of the latest Middle East crisis about Iran and US confrontation over the nuclear issue once again the internet is abuzz with the clash of civilizations talks and discussions. Clearly, all this is an indication that the ‘clash’ theory has had not only a profound impact on the academia and polity but also on the cyberworld and the netizens. A Google search of “clash of civilizations,” in January 2007 produced around 3 million hits.

Citation Indexes maintained by internet websites such as Google Scholar, SSCI, etc, have shown that Huntington’s article and book about the ‘clash of civilisations’ has been profusely cited in hundreds of writings, works, studies and reports world-wide. Google Scholar, for instance, till end of December 2006 has reported that the article ‘Clash of Civilisations?’ (1993) has been cited in 157 works and the book ‘Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order’ (1996) has been cited in 1136 works. Internet searches for Huntington’s book on ‘clash of civilisations’ alone shows over 4550 results. And the citation has
continued to expand during the first quarter of 2007 due to several conferences and surveys being conducted with reference to Huntington’s thesis.

Internet is said to be a tool of the current, though it also serves as a data base for old records. Obsolescence is rapid on the net and hits determine the rate of obsolescence. Topics and issues appear and disappear frequently and most cannot remain active for long as the hits go down due to waning of interest in the topic. In academia and society too certain topics and issues persist for long and other dissipate soon. This very much applies to theories as well. Many theories come to be formulated on regular basis but only few get recognised and even fewer get accepted. The theories generally remain confined to the discussion and debate in the intellectual circles of the concerned disciplines. They have a life or period of existence and like radioactive materials degrade and reduce in importance with time. This is called as half life of theories. Some theories such as evolutionary theory, relativity theory, quantum theory in science have been around for quite a long time and are said to have long half life. Social Sciences have also witnessed theories with long half lives and include theories like psychoanalytical theory, power theory, theory of diminishing returns. Huntington’s theory has been a persistent theory both in academia and in the cyberspace and is so far proving to be a theory with a long half life. The theory does not seem to be on the way out and is certainly like to live beyond the life of its maker.

Another very interesting impact of Huntington’s thesis on the internet has been the designing of web games titled ‘Clash of Civilisations’. The web has seen several versions of this game which came to be offered as demonstrations of design concepts. Though this game has not become a complete version due to bugs and other problems, but the design of the game has been evolving with every new version, and its makers have been continuously testing out ideas to see if they work. The designers of the game have sought comments on this game which has
been made available in various Demo designs versions such as Demo v5, Demo 8.1 and so on Clash of Civilizations. The game is discussed at the Clash Forum at Apolyton. (http://clash.apolyton.net/demo8)

4.7 Polarisation among Scholars

"You’re with us or you’re with them" said George Bush. (55) This epitomizes not only the polarization in post 9/11 world but also its Huntingtonian underpinnings. The most serious consequence of painting 9/11 attacks as a clash of civilizations has been that of encouraging dangerous polarisation between Westerners and Muslims, Westerners and Non-Westerners and Muslims and Non-Muslims. Many people’s belief that Huntington was prophetic increased after Al Qaeda terrorists attacks of September 11 terrorist on America and, the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and of Iraq in 2003, followed by the Cartoon War of 2006, fuelled the belief that the world was witnessing Huntington’s Clash of Civilisations between the West and Islam. The European Union expansions of 1995 and 2004, excluding much of the orthodox Eastern Europe were also considered as reinforcers of the belief among some, that the EU expansion was an evidence of polarisation of Europe along civilisational lines, between Western Christianity and Eastern Orthodoxy. Thus, Huntington’s thesis served as a political propaganda tool for many scholars, political fanatics and leaders on one hand and evoked panic among people on the other. This in turn led to many scholars deprecating and criticising Huntington’s thesis. Scholars themselves became divided and expressed contradictory views leading to polarization of views within the academic and intellectual circles. Most scholars severely criticized Huntington’s theory and outright rejected it. But a large number of authors also endorsed Huntington’s thesis. A sampling of the views supporting Huntington’s views is considered here but the critiques have been covered extensively in a subsequent section.
Scholars like Henry E. Mattox writing in the aftermath of the US campaign in Afghanistan, in its war on terrorism, have continued to ask whether this conflict, although confined thus far to one country, should be considered as possibly the beginning of a clash between civilizations, as portrayed by Professor Samuel L. Huntington? He asks “Will the war against terrorism soon entail warfare between whole cultures?” He then goes on to state that “We see, however, as a welcome albeit negative development, that such a wider clash shows no signs of developing. Opposition to and criticism of U. S. policies have surfaced as a consequence of the Afghan campaign, but nothing serious or sustained, nothing remotely like a forerunner of a collision between Islam with its more than a billion adherents on the one hand and the West led by the United States on the other.” He then adds that “Perhaps this absence of widespread confrontation has been because the Islamic world is no more monolithic than the Western world and because the Quran does not, as bin Laden would have one believe, hold with terrorist violence.” (56)

Mattox opines that “Whether or not simplistic as some commentators have held, the Huntington "clash of civilizations" thesis is indeed intriguing and suggestive. Does it have validity in explaining conflict in the post-Cold War world? Are there other instances of clashes underway or developing between other of Huntington’s groupings? In both cases, perhaps. But the thesis does not seem to hold in America’s war on terrorism.” He then adds “Not yet anyway. This negative conclusion begs a second question, however, one of complexity and no less latent danger. Is it more a question of potential over time for a clash of civilizations, a potential not yet realized?” (57) He then says that “An opinion poll conducted by the Pew Trusts Global Attitudes Project reflects the views as of December 19, 2001, on America’s war on terrorism. The Project questioned 275 opinion leaders in twenty-four countries. The results, are interesting but, in a word, inconclusive.” (58) Mattox takes the line that U. S. policies were the principal
cause of the attack, as is believed by most people and says that time will tell the truth. Mattox is not sure whether a clash of civilizations will ensue but certainly has come under the influence of the clash of the civilisation perspective.

Huntington’s views are reflected by many others such as Lal Goel who says “It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in the new world will be between radical Islam and greater part of the rest of humanity. Radical Islam is at war with every other religious sect and culture. Militant Islamic anger is directed against Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Slavs and animists” (59) He then says “I do not foresee a war of civilizations as described by Huntington. I do see a challenge to civilization from religious extremism”. (60)

He goes on further to endorse Huntington’s views “It is obvious that this theology of a single God, a single prophet, a single revelation, a single church or ummah, a single life and a single judgment, leads to intolerance. Islamic intolerance is built into Islamic theology. More important is the doctrine of Mohammad as the Final and the Most Perfect messenger of God and woe to him who questions his legitimacy. A person who criticizes Mohammad is at risk of losing his or her life on charges of heresy. Ba Khuda Diwana Bash, wa Ba Mohammad Hoshiyar critic of Allah may be excused for being a fool, but beware of criticizing the Prophet. Salman Rushdie made the mistake of criticizing Mohammad in a fictional account, The Satanic Verses. The Iranian Islamic regime issued a Fatwa on his life and Rushdie has spent most of the last twenty-five years in hiding.” (61)

The post 9/11 period, as stated earlier, saw greater polarisation effect in polity as well as academia. Many continued to endorse Huntington’s thesis, but most of these have not been the mainstream writers or scholars and are generally those who subscribe to American or Western domination over the Islamic world in particular. For instance, Andrew Young endorsing the clash of civilizations thesis
says that "Huntington offers many persuasive arguments to defend his thesis. Differences between civilizations, he says, are basic and fundamental. For example, differences in political ideology can be resolved; this is not often the case regarding differences in religion and culture, two important characteristics that differentiate civilizations. This argument helps explain America’s problems installing democracy in Iraq. Western civilization emphasizes secularism and political democracy. Many Muslims, however, do not believe in separation of church and state and want to live under Islamic law. We can view this conflict, therefore, as one between civilizations." (62)

He further states that "America’s occupation (of Iraq) has failed because American leaders have failed to understand the fact that fundamental differences between civilizations exist. Islamic civilization and Western civilization differ drastically in their views on the relationship between church and state, men and women, freedom, and authority. In his conclusion, Huntington calls for Western leaders to "develop a more profound understanding of the basic religious and philosophical assumptions underlying other civilizations..." American Iraqi policy has largely ignored this advice, and continuing the occupation and/or invading Iran could provoke a catastrophic clash of civilizations that would kill thousands. To avert this, America must withdraw from the Middle East and allow Arab governments to run their own affairs." (63)

Chandra Muzaffar, highlighted the polarisation taking place in the world thus “In the wake of ‘September 11’, the subsequent assault on Afghanistan, and Washington’s occupation of Iraq, the idea of a ‘clash of civilisations’ — between the West and Islam — has been resurrected in some circles. A handful of politicians, Christian evangelists and media commentators in the West, for instance, view Muslims and their faith as ‘inclined towards violence’ and therefore bent on destroying their ‘civilised way of life’. Within the Muslim world there are
groups that are convinced that the West — specifically the United States — has made Islam and its people its principal target and will not rest until they are totally subjugated.” (64)

More recently, endorsing Huntington’s thesis William Montgomery says “In 1993 Samuel Huntington wrote a prescient article entitled “The Clash of Civilizations.” While there are many different civilizations around the world, three stand out: the Western, the Islamic, and the Chinese. Their interaction over the coming decades will to a significant degree determine the course of world history. It already offers the most plausible explanation for the terrorist attacks of Sept 11, 2001 and the resulting warfare in both Afghanistan and Iraq.” (65). He then adds “After centuries of Western domination, we are now entering a time when there will be a multi-polar world in terms of civilizations. No longer will one model be dominant. The sooner that our political leaders grasp this concept, and its profound implications to how we will have to approach these civilizations the better off we will all be. But it will require an acceptance that our basic principles are not in fact, universal truths which must be put in place everywhere in the world” (66)

Somali-born former Dutch MP, Ayaan Hirsi Ali has argued that “Islam is incompatible with democracy, women's rights and modernity.” (67) Through her recent writings (68) She has expressed her open criticism of Islam and hence has been touted by many in the West as approving and upholding Huntington’s thesis of clash of civilizations.

Wafa Sultan, an Arab-American psychologist also echoes the clash discourse when she says “The clash we are witnessing around the world is not a clash of religions, or a clash of civilizations. It is a clash between two opposites, between two eras. It is a clash between a mentality that belongs to the Middle Ages and another mentality that belongs to the 21st century. It is a clash between civilization and backwardness, between the civilized and the primitive, between barbarity and rationality. It is a clash between freedom and oppression, between
democracy and dictatorship. It is a clash between human rights, on the one hand, and the violation of these rights, on other hand. It is a clash between those who treat women like beasts, and those who treat them like human beings. What we see today is not a clash of civilizations. Civilizations do not clash, but compete.” (69) She further says that “The Muslims are the ones who began using this expression. The Muslims are the ones who began the clash of civilizations. The Prophet of Islam said: "I was ordered to fight the people until they believe in Allah and His Messenger. When the Muslims divided the people into Muslims and non-Muslims, and called to fight the others until they believe in what they themselves believe, they started this clash, and began this war. In order to start this war, they must reexamine their Islamic books and curricula, which are full of calls for takfir and fighting the infidels” (70)

Moshe Reiss says “Huntington wrote his thesis eight years before 9/11. If we ignore Huntington’s theses about conflict between civilizations and concentrate on his views about the conflict between the West and Islam, certainly after 9/11, Huntington’s thesis may appear to have some truth” (71)

Jenkins, like Huntington speaks of religious alliances forming and conflicts spreading as Christians and Muslims come to the aid of their coreligionist particularly in African where clash could be sparked off between Islamic Nigeria and a Christian alliance of Uganda and Congo and also foresees a war between the Catholic Philippines and Muslim Indonesia. (72) Lal Goel has said “I agree with much of what Huntington says. The world conflict today appears to be civilizational in nature and scope.” (73)

David Frawley (Pandit Yamadeva Shastri) in his work ‘Hinduism and the Clash of Civilizations’ (74) has linked Huntington’s theory of the clash of civilizations to Hinduism by using a Vedantic perspective. He follows the civilisational narrative and makes a case for a new ‘Indic’ civilization, which he
considers as inherently pluralistic. About his work he says "Hinduism and the Clash of Civilizations continues the line of thought introduced in my earlier books. Arise Arjuna: Hinduism and the Modern World (1995) articulated the need for Hindus to stand up and project their tradition in order to face the current cultural and religious challenges assaulting them on every side. My subsequent book, Awaken Bharata: A Call for India’s Rebirth (1998), emphasized the need for a new intelligentsia, an ‘intellectual kshatriya’ or intellectual warrior class to handle these challenges in a systematic way.” (75)

Frawley asserts "Over time it became clear that such an intellectual movement requires a school of thought, a world-view as its proper foundation. Naturally, an intellectual kshatriya should be trained in a Vedic or dharmic school of thought. Therefore, the present volume arose to articulate the greater Hindu world-view – the perspective of the Hindu mind on the current civilizational challenge, which is not only a cultural assault on India but a churning within all cultures throughout the world. Today as a species we stand at a critical juncture, before either a new age of global harmony and world spirituality or a possible global catastrophe from a voracious materialistic civilization out of harmony with nature.” (76) He explains the rationale behind his work "The wisdom of the Hindu tradition, rooted in universal consciousness, can be a great aid in helping us move in the right direction, but it is seldom brought into the picture even in India. Hinduism is now a global force as the third largest religion in the world, the largest non-biblical belief, and the largest of the Pagan, native or indigenous religious. Therefore, a Hindu voice not only on spiritual but also on cultural issues is necessary to provide a balanced view on the global situation today.” He very confidently states "Hindu or Indic ideas are now present in most countries in the world today, generally in a dynamic way through Yoga, Vedanta or Vedic sciences like Ayurveda. However, there is little recognition of the overall civilizational perspective behind them. Most of the focus is on the spiritual side of
these traditions and the broader civilizational concerns are ignored. While Christian, Islamic and Western secular points of view are readily available on most issues, the Hindu view is seldom recognized and does not have corresponding spokespersons or information outlets in the world forum. Hence the need of the present volume to encourage the projection of such a Hindu perspective. He seeks to make a case for Hindu civilization "Hinduism must project its entire dharmic view, its unique vision of the universe, God and humanity, rather than simply respond to side issues framed by the Western mind. It must articulate its own critique of civilization, including that of Western civilization. Hence my emphasis on the need for a 'New Indic School of Thought', specifically on the need for new 'Vedic schools', developing and articulating the older dharmic traditions of India to meet the new circumstances today." (77) Hence Frawley's criticism is not against Huntington's thesis but against Western civilisation and thus has a civilisational frame of reference.

On the Hindutva website in a piece titled 'This is no Clash of Civilisations' the following is posted "We agree with George Bush, Tony Blair, Noam Chomsky when they say for different reasons that; "This is no Clash of Civilizations". Yes indeed, this is no clash of civilizations, on the contrary it is a clash between Civilization and Barbarism. There is no such thing as Islamic Civilization. The phrase "Islamic Civilization" is a contradiction in terms, an oxymoron. Since one can either be Islamic or be civilized. And howsoever one may try to hide the fact, it remains that the present conflict is between Islam and the rest. In other words, between barbarism and Civilization. So we reject the description "A Clash of Civilizations for the ongoing war". We hope that sooner rather than later; the global media develops enough frankness to call a spade a spade. Only then can they admit their understanding of the nature of the war as; "A Clash between Civilization and Barbarism". We know that today due to political compulsions, not many would be ready to be so candid, honest and open. But after the conclusion of
this war a quarter century from now, when chroniclers write the annals of history, they would be under no duress to call this "The final struggle between Civilization and Barbarism". It is then that in retrospect that we shall admit the truth. The time for the admission of this dangerous truth has not yet arrived!" (78). The Hindutva position is that not only is Islam not a civilization but that it is an antithesis of civilization. Clearly polarization of the most blatant type is evident in such statements and has acquired very perverse dimensions.

Steven Simon, a Hasib J. Sabbagh Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies who testified before the US House International Relations Committee’s Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia’s hearing on Islam, Democracy, and U.S. policy toward the Middle East on September 14, 2006, though not directly mentioning the clash of civilisations but focusing more on the Islam-West divide, though the underlying discourse is that of a civilisational paradigm, has stated “What can be safely said is that the majority, to judge from web sites, religious opinions, statements of leaders, see themselves in a defensive war against a predatory power. Islam as a civilization is under attack and its historic domains are occupied or under the threat of conquest.” (79)

Similarly on the same day September 14, 2006, Soner Cagaptay a senior fellow at The Washington Institute and chair of the Turkey Program at the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute also testified before the House International Relations Committee Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia’s hearing on Islam, Democracy, and U.S. policy toward the Middle East. In his presentation “Is There a Clash of Civilizations? Islam, Democracy, and U.S.-Middle East Policy” Cagaptay said “In the post September 11 world, as a secular democracy deeply entrenched in Western institutions, Turkey emerged as a pivotal country in debunking the argument of a clash of civilizations. Yet, my recent observations lead me to believe that Turkey’s unique position as a country anchored in the Western world is being challenged. The rise of the Islamist Justice
and Development Party (AKP) government in November 2002 is a milestone in this process.” He then goes on to analyse how Turkey is gradually joining the bandwagon of Islamic countries and distancing itself from the secular West. He says “The AKP’s foreign policy is scratching away the Turks’ sense of national identity, while infusing Turkish society with a strong sense of Muslim nationalism. In the rift between the West and the Muslim world, Turkey is fast approaching the tipping point at which “the cat will not walk back.” (80) Once again the discourse is clearly ‘clash of civilisations’. Despite attempts by these scholars to deny and denounce the idea of clash of civilization they invariably tread the same ground of clash of civilization discourse. Such has been the impact of Huntington’s thesis thirteen years after the expounding of his thesis. And this caused some to say “It seems Huntington’s theory has become part of popular culture in both civilisations.” (81)

Lee Harris’ statement conveys best the polarisation arising out of Huntingtonian discourse. He says “In order for there to be a clash of civilizations, it is necessary for there to be two civilizations, both of which are prepared to defend their deepest cultural values. Those in the Islamic world who are violently protesting the Danish cartoons clearly represent a civilization that is keen on maintaining its own deeply held traditions and convictions, as the Muslim rioters are prepared to do, even to the point of bloodshed. The Danish cartoons are an affront to their own religion and culture, and it is pointless for those in the West to wish that Muslims could learn to be less fanatic in their approach to their faith: What we call fanaticism is an essential element of their faith, and it is one of the reasons that Islam is still a living religion in a world where so many others are moribund. But, again, to have a clash of civilizations, it is not enough simply to have one civilization that is prepared to fight tooth and nail to defend its own ethos; there must, in addition, be another civilization that is also prepared to defend, with the same depth of conviction, its own ethical principles. The
evidence, unfortunately, is that the West is not even remotely interested in mounting a defence of its values in the face of Muslim fanaticism. Worse, there are signs that the West is even prepared to sacrifice some of its core values in order to appease those who have always despised these values — values such as the freedom of individual expression and the right of every man to hold views that others find offensive and even downright blasphemous. The behavior of the Danish government does not suggest that we are in the midst of a clash of civilizations, but, rather, that we are watching a civilization that has lost its sense of purpose capitulating before a civilization that continues to believe, and to believe fanatically, in its own mission. A civilization that no longer believes in itself, and in its values and traditions, is no longer in a position to defend itself from the onslaught of a civilization that does. It is only in a position to appease.

Hugh Fitzgerald says "The phrase "clash of civilizations," made famous by Samuel Huntington, is misleading. There are the Sinic, the Orthodox, the Hindu, the Islamic, the Western, and so on. And these are all potentially clashing. But this is nonsense. There is only one clash that counts: that of Islam with all of non-Islam." (83) Fitzgerald then adds "It is interesting to note, meanwhile, that Arab and Muslim analysts around the world tend to prefer the phrase "clash of civilizations" -- because it avoids the truthful description of the conflict as one motivated by a belief-system, the belief-system of Islam. And it also gives the impression that America or "the West" or Western Christian or Western post-Christian civilization are the enemy, while in reality the global Islamic jihad is as much directed at Hindus and Buddhists, and the Eastern Orthodox Christians in the Balkans, and the non-Muslim black Africans, as it is against the much more powerful, and therefore more dangerous, United States of America." (84) Throughout the talk is based on a civilisational discourse.
Ahmet Karamustafa in *Islam: A Civilizational Project in Progress* has looked at Islam as a religion, a culture, and a civilization, and has argued that Islam is best understood as a civilization. The discourse of Clash of Civilisations has even permeated the Eastern Europe and Russia. For instance, Andrei Tsygankov(85) is clearly guided by the clash of the civilisations discourse when he says “Implications of the "war of civilizations" for Russia's well-being are fundamental. For a country with 20 million to 25 million Muslims, an involvement in such a war would mean inviting fire to its own home. Russia's domestic intercultural ties are far from balanced. A growing influence of radical Islamist ideologies, rising immigration from Muslim ex-Soviet republics, and poorly conceived actions of some of Russia's local authorities in failing to build ties with Muslims create politically an explosive environment. Although the situation in Chechnya is much more stable today, Islamic radicals are succeeding in spreading violence and extremist ideology across the larger North Caucasus” (86)

He further states that “Russia's perception of the US role in the region as destructive corresponds with perceptions by many Muslims across the world, who view the US "war on terror" as a war on them. What began as a counter-terrorist operation in Afghanistan with relatively broad international support is increasingly turning into a "war of civilizations", or America's crusade against Muslims and their style of living.” (87)

He says “It is in this context that one should try to make sense of Russia's Eastern initiatives. They are not anti-Western and do not signal the Kremlin's return to the rhetoric of Eurasianist multipolarity and containment of the West. However, these initiatives do indicate appreciation that the "war of civilizations" between Western nations and Islam is intensifying, as well as understanding that Russia has no business participating in that war”. (88)

He further states “Those losing sleep over Russia's new turn to the East should relax. Russia remains a European nation albeit with strong roots outside the West. This does not mean, however, that Samuel Huntington-inspired hopes of
Russia joining the "civilized" West against the Eastern "barbarians" have any foundations to them (Huntington, a political scientist, wrote *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*). Russians are more likely to side with voices advocating a dialogue of civilizations. Politicians such as Mikhail Gorbachev and Mohammed Khatami attempted to articulate humanistic and culturally pluralistic perspectives, but failed to muster support from the "only superpower". Today calls for an "inter-civilizational alliance" and "compromise" are heard again, as Russia, Turkey and Spain try to formulate an alternative to an inter-civilizational war. Until such calls are heard, strengthening a dialogue across cultures remains possible” (89)

Eric McGlinchey has aptly pointed out “HT’s clash of civilisations ideas are mirrored in much of the current Western literature on political Islam. Bernard Lewis, both a scholar of Middle Eastern history but also an adviser to the current Bush administration, thus writes in his 1990 article, “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” that political Islam is “perhaps [an] irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.” Lewis’s thesis, echoed in Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington’s widely read *Clash of Civilisations* has found... support among scholars working in Central Asia.” (90)

Daniel Pipes, known for his Islam bashing has recently, at a day-long conference "A World Civilization or Clash of Civilizations" in London said “The problem faced by Western civilization in the wake of Islamist terrorism is not a "clash of civilizations," but, rather, a clash between civilization and barbarism”. (It’s Not a Clash of Civilizations, It’s a Clash between the Civilized World and Barbarians Daniel Pipes Statement Reported by Susan L. Rosenbluth on *Jewish Voice and Opinion* February 2007) He considers Islam as barbaric and has called for end to appeasement of the Muslims. He has said “The solution, is not to adopt the left-wing policies of discussion and appeasement, which he said were useless
against this barbaric foe, but, rather, to defeat it and promote the emergence of an Islam that is modern, moderate, democratic, humane, liberal, good neighborly, and respectful of women, homosexuals, atheists, and whoever else. One that grants non-Muslims equal rights with Muslims." (91)

Daniel Pipes criticizes Huntington’s thesis by saying “I am for world civilization, and I reject the ‘clash of civilization’ argument. The problem is not so much a clash of civilizations, but a clash of civilization and barbarism. My response is that civilization is useful as a cultural concept but not as a political one. There are three problems with seeing civilizations as actors in the way that Huntington suggests. It can’t account for tensions within a single civilization, it can’t account for agreement across civilizations, and it doesn’t account for change over time. Let me give you three quick examples. I’ll take them from the area that I have studied, which is the Muslim world. First, it cannot account for Muslim-on-Muslim violence, of which there is a great deal: We have the civil war in Lebanon, the Iraq-Iran war, the Islamist insurgency in Algeria, the Sunnis vs. Shi’is in Iraq at present, the near civil war in the Palestinian Authority, the Sudanese government against the people of Darfur. This cannot be accounted for in civilizational terms. Second, it ignores the agreement across civilizations. I’d like to take a UK-based example, namely the edict of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 against Salman Rushdie, who at that time was living in London. It appeared, at first glance, to be a question of Muslims on one side and Westerners on the other. Muslims were burning The Satanic Verses novel, there was violence in India, etc. But a closer look showed that in fact it was quite something different, it was far more complex. There were plenty of Westerners who were against Rushdie and plenty of Muslims who supported him. Third point, Huntington in his analysis can’t account for change over time.” (92)

He further states that “What Huntington did was to take an incident of the moment and turn them into something civilizational and it didn’t work. In short
the clash of civilization idea fails, it does not fit the facts, it is not a good way to understand the world. What about then a world civilization? Can it exist? If one defines it as Huntington does, as a culture, basically then, no, it can't. As he puts it, correctly, "for the relevant future there will be no universal civilization but instead a world of different civilizations, each of which will have to learn to coexist with the others." I don't think there is anyone who would dispute that. But yes, there can be a world civilization if one defines it differently. Civilization can be the opposite of barbarism. And civilization in this sense has a long history."

(93)

He modifies Huntington's civilisational discourse to fit his own requirement "It can, in so far as those who are civilized confront those who are not civilized. The world civilization exists of civilized elements in every culture banding together to protect ethics, liberty and mutual respect. The real clash is between them and the barbarians. Now what do I mean by barbarians? I do not mean people who are of lower economic stature. What I mean by barbarians - and I think all of us mean by barbarians in the past two centuries - are ideological barbarians. This is what emerged in the French revolution in the late 18th century. And the great examples of ideological barbarism are fascism and Marxist-Leninism - they, in their course of their histories have killed tens of millions of people. But today it's a third, a third totalitarian movement, a third barbarian movement, namely that of radical Islam. It is an extremist utopian version of Islam. I am not speaking of Islam the religion, I am speaking of a very unusual and modern reading of Islam. It has inflicted misery (as I mentioned Algeria and Darfur, before), there is suicide terrorism, tyrannical and brutal governments, there is the oppression of women, and non-Muslims. It threatens the whole world: Morocco, Turkey, Palestinian Authority, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, you name it, Afghanistan, Tunisia, and not just the traditional Muslim world, but also Russia, France, Sweden, and I dare say, the United Kingdom." (94) In criticizing Huntington's version of civilisational framework Pipes creates an even
more rabid civilization versus barbarism framework in which Islam is still the enemy to be hunted down.

Huntington's thesis has led to not simply polarization but also to confusion in trying to understand the conflict between the West and Islam. Moshe Reiss has asked a very pertinent question: "Is the Clash of Civilizations a Geo-Political (including Oil) conflict or a Religious conflict? Is it a Judeo-Christian conflict versus Islam or the Geo-Political West versus the Rest?" (95) And Toni Morrison, the Nobel Prize Winner in Literature during an interview has put it well "There is a big danger in being clutched by the past, and there is a big danger in escaping it". (96)

On the flipside Huntington's thesis has been severely criticized by scholars like Fouad Ajami, Edward Said, Khaled El Fadl, Akbar Ahmed, Tariq Ali, Gilbert Achcar, Liu Binyan, Kishore Mahbubani, Robert Bartley, Liu Binyan, Albert L. Weeks, and Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick, Asghar Ali Engineer, Said Shirazi, John Esposito, Noam Chomsky, Engin Erdem and many others and these have been taken up later in the study. Thus, since the publication of Huntington's article and particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the clash of civilizations thesis has not only caught the imagination of the scholars, leaders and the masses but has also caused deep rifts and led to quite an amount of polarization in the academic and political world and this is one of the most dangerous impacts of Huntington's thesis.

4.8 The Preventive Endeavours

Another consequence of Huntington's thesis has been attempts to talk about civilisations in a positive and conciliatory manner in order to neutralise or reverse the possibility of clash of civilisations. Several scholars and leaders, either accepting the logic of clash of civilisations or rejecting it, have undertaken efforts to prevent the real clash of civilisations from taking place. Important
developments in this regard have been several writings such as Jack Miles’ *Theology And The Clash Of Civilizations*, R. Stemplowski’s *Towards a Coalition of Cultures*, J Cockayne’s *Islam and International Law: From a Clash to a Conversation between Civilisations* and so on.

Jack Miles (97), having accepted Huntington’s thesis, states that the "The Clash of Civilizations" was ferociously criticized when it appeared, and events have not entirely confirmed it. Thus, though relations between China and the West remain strained, many informed observers now predict that the aging leadership of the People’s Republic will soon be succeeded by a generation open to the West politically as well as economically. The Beijing Olympics may yet become the symbol of this rapprochement. A week after the World Trade Center was destroyed, China was admitted to the World Trade Organization”.(98) When it comes to Islam he has taken a different line. He says that “the *umma* — an ancient Arabic term that has come to denote the totality of Muslims in the world at any given time — the House of Islam must surely seem a civilization under siege.” and asserts that “Only the *umma* matches the international community in internal variety, geographical dispersion, and potentially global ambition”. (99)

According to him “The clash-of-civilizations question, from the Muslim side, is whether the *umma* can join the international community or whether it must incorporate the international community into itself. From the Western side, the clash-of-civilizations question, though essentially the same question inverted, must begin with the perhaps grudging recognition that there exist, in the first place, two bona fide international communities separated by a genuine cultural border along which for a long while now there has been more war than peace.” (100) He of course, having acknowledged and accepted the civilisational perspective takes a different route to find solution to the problem which is essentially theological.
He argues that “Just as militant communism could not be militarily defeated in the last clash of civilizations, so militant Islam cannot be militarily defeated in the new one. Decapitation does not deal a death blow when the enemy has many heads. Peace will come not when any one terrorist and his network of secret agents have been "surgically" excised but when an authentic alternative vision has emerged within the House of Islam that makes the vision of victory-by-terrorism irrelevant and unwelcome. The development of such an alternative vision, however, will require a major paradigm shift in Western diplomacy.” (101)

He states that “One can no more discuss that topic without discussing theology than one can discuss communism without discussing ideology. Theology is the ideological element in religion, and nothing at this moment could be more tragically evident than that we have ignored it to our peril.” (102) Thus Miles seeks a way to thwart the clash of the civilizations.

Hans Kung, having expressed his rejection of Huntington’s thesis, tries to find a solution to prevent the clash of civilization, thus becoming a hostage to the clash of civilisation discourse. He poses many questions, (103) (103a) (104) (105)

Many other scholars writing about or criticising clash of civilisations thesis have expressed their desire to prevent such an occurrence through dialogue. Ram Puniyani has said “Nothing short of a genuine dialogue amongst people of different faiths can overcome the obstacles created by the political forces misusing the religious identity for their political goals.” (106)

Many political leaders, individually, have taken up clear stand to support dialogue. For instance, Alija Izetbegovic, President of Bosnia said “Islam is the best, but we Muslims are not the best. The West is neither corrupted nor degenerate. It is strong, well-educated, and organized. Their schools are better than ours. Their cities are cleaner than ours. The level of respect for human rights in the West is higher, and the care for the poor and less capable is better organized.
Westerners are usually responsible and accurate in their words. Instead of hating the West, let us proclaim cooperation instead of confrontation.” (107)

The most positive outcome in recent years has been the enunciation of the theories of ‘Dialogue Among Civilisations’ and ‘Alliance of Civilisations’ which have been advocated to neutralise Huntington's theory of ‘Clash of Civilizations’. These ideas were initiated by political leaders from diverse countries. The concept of ‘Dialogue Among Civilisations’ was first mooted by Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, and which the United Nations General Assembly and UNESCO's General Conference endorsed in 1998 and 1999, resulting in the designation of 2001 as United Nations Year for the Dialogue Among Civilizations. It was launched on the eve of the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000 in New York and it became the basis for UN's resolution declaring the year 2001 as the ‘Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations’

Spanish President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero first introduced the concept of an Alliance of Civilizations in 2004, saying the group—which includes Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan—seeks to "stop all sources of extremism" and "win the battle of ideas and principles." Consequently, in the year 2005, the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan launched a global initiative called ‘Alliance of Civilizations’ for forging closer and friendly relations among the civilisations. This initiative for an Alliance of Civilization was co-sponsored by Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey in August 2005. The Report submitted in November 2006 rejected the Huntington’s thesis but also recommended ways to prevent such an eventuality.

Akbar Ahmed, in a World Bank initiative brought together prominent international public personalities to debate the credibility of Huntington's thesis and to suggest ways to achieve dialogue. He says “We wanted to see if these brilliant minds agreed with Huntington’s “Clash” or if they were in support of
dialogue. To our delight, the response was overwhelming, as you can see by the roster of essayists. This book has a collection of essays by some of the most remarkable figures in our world today. The main theme is a challenge to the idea of “Clash of Civilizations”. We have a lineup that includes major world figures like the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom Jonathan Sacks, the former Archbishop of Canterbuty Lord Carey, Kofi Annan and Jim Wolfensohn, former World Bank President. All of them are clearly, unequivocally, challenging the idea of the clash of civilizations. I would like to urge everyone here to join us in the dialogue. This is a crucial time in the world and we cannot afford to have a “Clash”. We are encouraged by the support that we have received for this book and I thank you for coming here to launch “After Terror” (108).

Huntington’s pessimistic vision of future and ignorance of other civilizations and dangerous potential of his thesis of clash of civilizations has led to attempts at forging cooperation and dialogue among civilizations. Several conferences on civilizational dialogue have been organized particularly under the UN aegis during last few years to ensure that the ‘clash of civilizations’ does not occur.

UNESCO, during the 1980s and 1990s was involved in encouraging inter-cultural dialogue and international debate, but after the publication of the ‘Clash of Civilizations’, from the mid-1990s onwards it focused on the Dialogue among Civilizations. The primary objective of the Dialogue among Civilizations was to bridge the gap in knowledge in the world about other civilizations, cultures and societies, through various actions and activities. UNESCO organized or co-organized a series of conferences, symposia, and international meetings, such as two UNESCO-EPHE Conferences on “Civilizations in the Eye of the Other”, in Paris, France in December 2001 and January 2003; the UNESCO/UNU, ‘International Conference on the Dialogue Among Civilizations’, at Kyoto, Japan,

An ‘International Conference on Dialogue of Civilizations’(110), was held in London from October 27-28 2000. The ‘International Conference on Dialogue of Civilizations: A New peace Agenda for a New Millennium’ was held at Okinawa, Japan in February 11-13, 2000 and resulted in the Okinawa Declaration, (111) An OIC-EU Joint Forum was held in Istanbul on February 12-13, 2002 (112) A Conference “Beyond September 11: Role of Muslims in the West”, was organised in London on September 15, 2002 where 8500 Muslims met to debate the role of Muslims in the West since the declaration of the "war on terror" and address the clash between Islam and the West. The conference was organised by the Muslim political party Hizb ut-Tahrir and was said to be the largest gathering of Muslims since 11 September 2001(113)

Several international conferences have been held on the theme of dialogue among civilization by individual countries and other groups. For example IGNCA hosted the first International Conference on 'Asian Civilizational Dialogue' on
March 9, 10 and 11, 2004, in New Delhi. Representatives from almost all the countries in Asia participated in this conference. The President of India, Shri A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and the Director General of UNESCO Shri Kochio Mastusura showed keen interest in this conference and sent their messages. The International Conference on “Environment, Peace, and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures” was held on May 9, 2005, at the Pardisan Eco Park in Tehran, Iran. This Conference saw the involvement of former Iranian President Seyed Mohammad Khatami and Massoumeh Ebtekar, then Vice-President of Iran, and Klaus Toepfer, UNEP Executive Director. The main focus of this conference was on environment and conflict.

Recently, one day international conference on ‘The World Civilisation Or a Clash of Civilisations?’ was held in London at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre on January 20, 2007 and was attended by campaigners, academics, scholars, religious leaders and ordinary people. Those attending wanted to understand the so-called "clash of civilisations" issues in the context of globalisation and the "war on terror." Some of the prominent participants were American conservatives Daniel Pipes and Douglas Murray, Venezuelan government official Andres Izarra, anti-racism campaigner Denis Fernando, London Mayor Ken Livingston and many others. Daniel Pipes said that the world faces a "clash between civilisation and barbarism." But London Mayor Livingstone said: "we are witnessing the emergence of a global civilisation" (114). This conference debated the ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis where, while some argued that the world is going into an era of conflict and war driven by a 'clash of civilisations' others argued for the exact opposite idea — that the multiculturality is part of creating a new concept of world civilisation that corresponds to a globalised world. Other speakers and participants were: Doudou Diéne, UN Special Rapporteur on Racism and Xenophobia Professor Danny Dorling, specialist in Human Geography Tariq Ali, Writer Antony Lerman, Executive Director, Institute for Jewish Policy Research Alistair Crooke, Director, Conflicts
Initiatives for dialogue are visible in the words and statements of many religious leaders. The former Archbishop of Canterbury Dr George Carey has asked why Islam was "associated with violence throughout the world. Is extremism so ineluctably bound up with its faith that we are at last seeing its true character? Or could it be that a fight for the soul of Islam is going on that requires another great faith, Christianity, to support and encourage the vast majority of Muslims who resist this identification of their faith with terrorism?" The various initiatives mentioned herein are only a part of a much larger effort to neutralise the effects and impact of Huntington's thesis.

Conclusion

Khaled Abou El-Fadl has explained the impact of Huntington's thesis thus, "Closer to the issue of the clash of civilisations, the Bush administration appears to have entered into a symbiotic relationship with so-called experts on the "Islamic threat". The culture of these experts evinces a clear suspicion of any manifestations of an active socio-political Islam. It also tends to be uncritically supportive of any party that might be ideologically opposed to the Islamists, such as Israel. The writings of these experts are plagued by anxieties about such things as a Muslim "fifth column" in the West, sleeping Muslim terrorist cells, and a volatile, yet at times dormant, system of belief that they call political Islam. After 11 September, these so-called experts have suddenly been propelled into
prominence, where they repeatedly address Senate hearings, attend White House meetings, and appear on virtually every major television or radio programme. Their tracts fill the chambers of senators and representatives, and the offices of the intelligence community in the United States.” (115) Ram Puniyani has stated “The worst part of this Clash thesis is that by propagating that cultures are set on collision course, it helps in turning the negotiable disputes into seemingly intractable, identity based conflicts and this is what has taken control of popular imagination.” (116)

And yet in spite of everything, Huntington’s self approbation at his master stroke at putting forward the thesis, which for many is a motivated effort, is evident in his boast “I’m delighted it struck such a nerve. I was rather surprised that it did when it was published. But in looking back at the things I’ve written and things other people have written, I think the extent to which something has an impact depends, in part, upon the logic of its argument and the evidence it presents; but it also depends overwhelmingly on timing. You’ve got to set that argument forth at the right time. If you set it forth five years too early, or five years too late, nobody pays attention to it.” (117)

Evidently, Huntington’s thesis has had a profound impact at the academic, social, political and cyberworld levels. The clash of civilizations discourse has attained universal currency with the UN itself conceding the need to bring about an alliance of civilizations and feeling a strong urge to promote a dialogue between civilizations. Huntington has undoubted succeeded in setting the agenda for the world and thereby promoting and perpetuating the dominance of the socially constructed Western reality that seeks to view the world in civilisational terms and clash of civilizations perspective. “It has spawned countless critiques, both in favour and against, and continues to feature prominently in most discussions of contemporary global politics, especially as they relate to the
Muslim world. The essay was intended to present a perspective on international relations that considers the role of culture and religion as a source of cooperation or conflict. For better or worse, the essay became much more than a perspective”. (118) The developments since the publication of Huntington’s thesis sadly indicate an implicit acceptance of the fear and possibility of a clash of civilisations in the world in future, thereby only giving a further boost, credence and currency to the civilisational clash perspective put forth by Huntington. A significant impact indeed!
III

A CRITIQUE OF HUNTINGTON’S POSITION