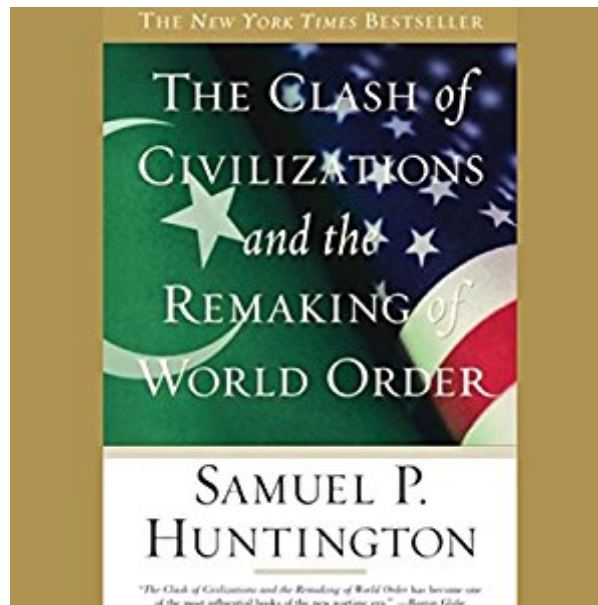


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The Clash Of Civilizations And The Remaking Of World Order



Synopsis

Samuel Huntington explains how clashes between civilizations are the greatest threat to world peace but also how an international order based on civilizations is the best safeguard against war. Events since the publication of the book have proved the wisdom of that analysis. The 9/11 attacks and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated the threat of civilizations but have also shown how vital international cross-civilization cooperation is to restoring peace. As ideological distinctions among nations have been replaced by cultural differences, world politics has been reconfigured. Across the globe, new conflicts and new cooperation have replaced the old order of the Cold War era. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

By 's count, mine is the 228th review of this book. That itself tells you something about the huge impact of Samuel Huntington's work and of its value in provoking thought and debate worldwide. The only reason I add my voice to earlier reviews is that: 1) any sane consumer at .com is only going to examine the last 20 reviews, not the last 200, so I might as well be among the latest who are actually read; and 2) I believe deeply in the value of this book, so I'd like to encourage you to consider it. The fact that the book's 228 ratings average only 3.5 stars reflects not on the brilliance of the book--which is beyond question--but on the ideological unpopularity in some quarters of its basic theses. And those theses are that: 1) with the end of the Cold War, political ideologies have given way to differing cultural and religious values (i.e.

Reading this 1996 publication after 9/11/2001, the onset of the War on Terror and the US experiment in "regime change" and "nation building," one cannot but be amazed at the accuracy of its prognostication and the degree to which its advice was not heeded. The basic thesis of the book is that it is impossible to impose Western political, religious and cultural values on non-Western countries. A most astonishing proof of this thesis is the first Gulf War of 1990, waged by the United States against Iraq. To Western eyes it was an entirely just war, backed up by a coalition of Arab states, which succeeded in stopping Saddam Hussein from invading a weaker sovereign state, Kuwait. But, as Huntington shows, it was roundly condemned by public opinion in the Middle East as an imperialist intervention in domestic affairs, a threatening show of military force and a war of the West against all Arabs and all Muslims. The good war, even altruistic war, backfired. Undertaken to protect the life and property of an Arab state, it provoked fear and hatred in the Arab world and empowered the defeated aggressor, whose prestige gained in neighboring states. On the basis of such examples, Huntington draws the painful conclusion that we (as Westerners) cannot universalize rights and principles that we hold dear and apply them to other peoples, governments and states that do not observe them. To do so, he warns, is false, immoral and dangerous. He asserts toward the close of his book: "Western intervention in the affairs of other civilizations is probably the single most dangerous source of instability and potential global conflict in a multicivilizational world." He advances an "abstention rule": that core states of one civilization abstain from intervening in the conflicts of other civilizations.

I remember noticing the essay on which this book was based, in an international newspaper several years ago. Though I knew nothing of the author at the time, I don't think it took me more than a paragraph or two to realize, first, "This is a major argument," second, "It has some validity," and third, "This is going to make a lot of people mad." The book is, of course, far more nuanced and detailed than the article. I do not agree with every point Professor Huntington makes, but it certainly carries through on the promise of those first few paragraphs. This book is one strong and rather iconoclastic model by which to understand international relations in the coming years. Even if you disagree with it, or find it offensive, this is definitely a book worth reading, or if you're a teaching, assigning your students to read and attack or defend. I do not think some attacks below (not all really arguments) on Huntington's approach to Islam were quite fair. I didn't see anything "pathological" or "paranoid" about his arguments, and he explicitly stated, time and time again, that Islam was not at all "monolithic." Actually, I think he is sometimes overly cautious and understated on the subject, in

effect making all kinds of excuses for the militant character of Islam, and holding out the hope that it will mellow. Anyone who knows how Islam is perceived by non-Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa, India, or China, or is aware of the military career of Mohammed, can only be amazed how prevalent p.c. attempts to deny the obvious seem to be. (A phenomena we have seen with other absolutist ideologies.

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