

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND RISE OF RADICAL ISLAM IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ

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***Abstract:** Since 9/11, the controversial thesis of Clash of civilizations by Samuel P. Huntington has been central to the debate to narrate the conflict between Islamic World and America. The conservative political academic has identified culture and religion as a primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War era. In his thesis, he identified two threats to the United States of America in 21st century: Islam and China. The identified threats have been based on civilizational fault lines lacking to consider *raison d'état*, interest of the state. This article will look at the interests of American as a global hegemon in the Islamic World whether they are geographical, political, economic, or military in nature since the Cold War; and how the pursuit of these interests has led to a clash based on interests. To secure national interests, American foreign policy has been aimed at war on terror, regime change and supporting authoritarian, undemocratic, and repressive regimes leading to a new threat – the rise of Radical Islam. The essay will evaluate the rise of radical Islam as a result of American Foreign policy and its geopolitical interests after 9/11 in the Islamic World.*

Keywords: US Foreign Policy, radical Islam, clash of civilizations, new world order, Afghanistan, Iraq.

Introduction

The fall of Berlin Wall started a new chapter in global politics, leaving academics to question whether conflict was obsolete after the Cold War. Many academics took different approaches to the future of international relations depending on their school of thought varying from the classical theories of realism to liberalism branching out to the International Society such as the English School and renewed interest in the field of international

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political economy. According to Francis Fukuyama, an American political scientist, it was triumph of liberalism as it became the end of history: political democracy and economic capitalism had brought peace.¹ A successful model had been achieved in Europe after the 2nd World War based on liberal democracy, showcased the rarity of militarized interstate disputes occurring between democratic states in several studies, an underlying element of the democratic peace theory.

The most extreme approach to the future of international politics came from the conservative political academic Samuel P. Huntington, who argued that conflict is not obsolete. In his book, the *Clash of Civilizations and the New World Order*, he predicted the conflict will be based on culture and cultural identities triggering cohesion, disintegration, and conflict,² therefore dismissing the debate of international structure, relationship between states, and the pursuit of power.³ The world of civilizations was divided by Huntington into 8 parts: Western, Latin American, African, Islam, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist, and Japanese.⁴ Furthermore, Huntington identified two civilizations as a threat to the New World Order created by America in the post-Cold War era: Islam and China, after acknowledging the decline of western power giving way to a multi polar international society.

The new chapter of global politics materialized in the form of the horrific attack on American soil on 9/11 by a radical Islamic group, Al Qaeda. The unprecedented attack on American soil posed a threat to US national security, therefore, identifying Islam as a threat to America demonstrating the contention of clash between civilizations. Further events following 9/11 triggered the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by America and the bombings in Madrid,

¹ Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History and the Last Man," *The American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (1992).

² Samuel P. Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Haryana: Penguin Books India, 1996), 20.

³ Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000).

⁴ Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 26.

London, Bali, and Kenya by Al Qaeda. The events following 9/11 further validate the narrative of clash of civilizations. However, many academics have questioned the validity of the theory: the events since 9/11 demonstrating factors other than civilizations to understand military conflicts and questioning the bloody borders of Islam which are more prone to conflict internally or with their neighboring states.⁵ The research carried out by Andrej Tuscicisny finds lack of correlation between different civilizations and conflict in the post-Cold War era.⁶ A recent research highlights the lack of evidence to substantiate any increase in inter-civilization terrorist attacks carried after Cold War, and therefore, rejecting the link between the number of terrorist attacks committed by Islamic groups against other civilizations.⁷ Hence, there is no clear evidence to draw a link between the narrative of clash of civilizations between Islam and America based on cultural fault lines. In contrast, the argument of state to maximize its power for its survival leading to a conflict is much more relevant, exemplified during Cold War and contemporary geopolitics in 21st century.

The aim of this essay is to re-evaluate the debate of the clash between Islam and America in the post-Cold War era. The first part, *Clash: Ideologies, Civilizations or Interests*, shall look at the contention of clash to ascertain the reasons for conflict since Cold War. The ideological war is over according to Huntington and the great division among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural (1993: 22);⁸ however, this part of paper will redefine the debate of clash based on *raison d'état*, that is interest of the state, and how conflict is inevitable as a result of pursuit of national interests in the international system. The second part,

⁵ Bruce M. Russett, John R. Oneal, and Michaelene Cox, "Clash of Civilization, or Realism and Liberalism Deja Vu? Some Evidences," *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 5 (2000).

⁶ Andrej Tuscicisny, "Civilizational Conflicts: More Frequent, Longer, and Bloodier?" *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 4 (2004).

⁷ Eric Neumayer and Thomas Plümper, "International Terrorism and the Clash of Civilizations," *British Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 4 (2009).

⁸ Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 22.

America and its interest in the Islamic World, will look at the national interest of the global hegemony in the region. In particular, a case study based on the events leading to the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq will be analyzed and the nature of American pragmatic foreign policy. The third part, *American Foreign Policy and the rise of Radical Islam*, will look at the impact of American foreign policy in the Islamic World leading to the rise of radical Islam. This part will examine the outcome of American foreign intervention based on *raison d'état* for regime change based on rogue state doctrine and support of undemocratic, authoritarian, and repressive regimes in Egypt, Iraq, Somalia, Lebanon, Iran, and Afghanistan leading to the formation of radical groups in the Islamic World. Furthermore, this part will analyze the aim of the radical groups and how the pursuit of Pan-Islamism and rise of the Islamic Caliphate will destabilize the Westphalian state system posing a threat to the interest of the global hegemony in the post 9/11 era.

Methodology

The central argument of this essay will be based on two case studies: the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. To substantiate the argument, secondary data sources will be used including books, journal articles, reports, speeches, official documents, historical documents, and press releases for qualitative analysis. The books and journal articles will provide the theoretical framework for the analysis. Furthermore, the use of reports, official documents, speeches, historical documents, and press releases will be used to identify series of events leading to the invasion.

Clash: Ideologies, Civilizations, or Interests?

In the Cold War era, the world was divided into two ideological blocs, liberalism and communism. On one hand, the liberal West was headed by America with a group of mostly wealthy colonial nations such as Great Britain, France, Italy, and Portugal who expanded, conquered, colonized, and decisively influenced and drew the map of the world to secure their interests.⁹ On the other

⁹ Ibid., 33.

hand, the group of weaker communist nations led by the former Soviet Union helped balance the power in the bipolar international system. In the clash of civilizations, Huntington underlined this conflict between the US and Soviet bloc on the basis of ideology although he did accept that the idea of state as an actor is important.¹⁰ The early Cold War was realist in nature as there was contestation for power and influence in the international system between America and former Soviet Union to secure their interests whether they were geographical, political, economic, or military in nature by promoting their dominant values within their blocs.¹¹ Although, the Cold War era was an ideological race, the *raison d'état* – interests of the state – were central to shape the international system.

The interstate and intrastate conflict between democracies continued throughout the Cold War including Arab Israeli Conflict in 1948, Pakistan and India in 1965, Nigerian Civil War in 1967, and the Iraq Iran War in 1980, based on national interests. Incongruously, the interstate and intrastate conflict erupted in the years after the decolonization leading to a power struggle both at domestic and interstate level in the newly formed fragile states.¹² The clash of ideology was useful for America and former Soviet Union to create a balance of power as they supported each side to pursue their interests. For instance, the conflict between Pakistan and India in 1965 was over the State of Jammu and Kashmir helped by America and former Soviet Union respectively to strengthen their geopolitical interests in South Asia.¹³ Similarly, the intrastate conflict of Nigerian Civil War after the decolonization was based on religious divide, part of the legacy of the British colonialism. The Muslim majority north was under indirect rule of Emir with understanding with the British Administration in comparison to the

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War."

¹² Edmond J. Keller, "Decolonization, Independence, and the Failure of Politics," *Phyllis Martin and Patrick O'Meara* (1995).

¹³ "The India-Pakistan War of 1965," Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, United States Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/india-pakistan-war>.

direct rule in the south. Furthermore, Christianity and comprehensive system of Western education was promoted in the south resulting in Christian minority initiating development of popular nationalism against the majority Islamic North.¹⁴ In essence, many conflicts took place during the Cold War however these conflicts did not have any ideological raison d'état as the states pursued their own interest for their survival.

September 11, 2001, the terrorist attack by Al Qaeda shifted the paradigm pivoting the American foreign policy towards Middle East. Following 9/11, the subsequent invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq reinforced the clash of civilizations identifying Islam as a threat to American national interests. The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq was securitized under the pretense of rogue state doctrine, eradication of terrorism, and promotion of democratic values; however, none of the perpetrators of 9/11 originate from Afghanistan or Iraq. The linguistic analysis according to the political discourse analysis (PDA) of the 62 speeches given by George W. Bush following the 9/11 used rhetoric of 'crusade' highlighted the contention of the Clash of Civilizations sowing seeds of hatred and mistrust between the two largest religions of the World. Historically, the term crusade was used by Christians to return to the holy land and reclaim the territory from the native Muslim armies during 1095 to 1291 igniting the 'clash of civilizations' in contemporary politics.¹⁵

The attack on 9/11 was carried out by Al Qaeda, formed by Osama Bin Laden, a Saudi Billionaire. More so, 15 of the 19 perpetrators of the terrorist attack were Saudi nationals.¹⁶ Many academics identify Saudi Arabia as the origin, promotion, and contributing factors of Islamic radicalism in Afghanistan, Pakistan,

¹⁴ Ingvar Svanberg and David Westerlund *Islam Outside the Arab World* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2012).

¹⁵ Thomas Asbridge, "The Crusades: the thrill of a priceless manuscript," *BBC TV* (blog), January 24, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/tv/2012/01/the-crusades.shtml>.

¹⁶ A. Rabasa, *The Muslim World after 9/11* (RAND, 2004).

Yemen, and recently the rebels in Syria.¹⁷ Furthermore, according to a recent American State Department report on human rights, Saudi Arabia lacks democracy leading to disappearances, violence against women, physical abuse and torture, political prisoners, restriction on civil liberties including freedom of speech and public assembly, and lack of transparency by the government.¹⁸ Saudi Arabia clearly shows two of the four symptoms of a rogue state including state sponsored terrorism and suppression of basic human rights; however, being an ally of America the rogue state doctrine does not apply to Saudi Arabia as it does not pose a threat to American interests in the region.¹⁹

There is lack of evidence to identify a Clash between Saudi Arabia and America despite being an Islamic state with authoritarian, undemocratic, and repressive regime. According to Mohammed al-Khilewi, a defected Saudi Diplomat for highlighting lack of human rights in the country, “When it comes to the Saudi-American relationship, the White House should be called the White Tent” for supporting authoritarian regimes spreading global extremism.²⁰ Saudi Arabia is an ally of the United States of America within Middle East as both states benefit from the relationship based on their national interests in the region. Furthermore, the recent speech by President Obama further emphasizes that United States is not at war with Islam, hence rejecting the narrative of the clash of civilization.²¹ Therefore, the narrative of clash is neither based on ideologies in the Cold War era nor is it based on civilizations in the post-Cold War era.

¹⁷ S. N. Stern, *Saudi Arabia and the Global Islamic Terrorist Network: America and the West's Fatal Embrace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 135.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ A. Miles, *Us Foreign Policy and the Rogue State Doctrine* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

²⁰ Stern, *Islamic Terrorist Network*, 11.

²¹ Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President at the National Defense University,” White House, May 05, 2013, accessed July 26, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/23/remarks-president-national-defense-university>.

According to Hans J. Morgenthau, a leading figure in the study of international politics:

International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of the international politics, power is always the immediate aim. Statesmen and people may ultimately seek freedom, security, prosperity, or power itself. They may define their goals in terms of religious, philosophic, economic, or social ideas... But whatever they strive to realize their goals by means of international politics, they are striving for power.²²

The goal to pursue power in the international system is underlined by the *raison d'état*, the interest of the state. Therefore, the goal of statesmen is to preserve the health and strength of the state based on the pursuit of power and its interests in the international system.²³ Lord Palmerston, a key figure in British Politics, rightly described the interest of a state stating, "We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and interests it is our duty to follow."²⁴ Therefore, national interests supersede all other interests for the survival of the state in the international system.

The American foreign policy is based on the fundamental principle of the national interests. As a global hegemon, the American national interests in the post-Cold War era range from geographical, political, economic, and security interests. American foreign policy aims to exercise power, whether it is soft power or hard power to secure its interests. America waged war against

²² Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison D'état and Its Place in Modern History* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 1.

²³ B. Harrison and T. Dye, *Power and Society: An Introduction to the Social Sciences* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2007).

²⁴ "Morality: Does National Interest Always Come First in Foreign Affairs?" BBC News, accessed July 25, 2013, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/uk_politics/2001/open_politics/foreign_policy/morality.stm.

several Muslim countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and recent intervention in Syria under the pretext of war against terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, rogue state doctrine, and to promote democratic values and human rights to rationalize the war to its allies around the world. The invasion and occupation of Afghanistan was securitized under the pretense of war on terror; however, Afghanistan a decade earlier was the ally of America against the threat of spreading communism in the region. Similarly, the invasion and occupation of Iraq was under the facade of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the spread of democracy to give freedom to the Iraqi people; however, Iraq was an ally of America during the Iran-Iraq war despite genocide against Kurds in Halabja killing over 3000 to 5000 people.²⁵ In the same way, Iran was an ally of America before the Iranian revolution; however, the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979, when an angry mob of young Islamic revolutionaries attacked the US Embassy in Tehran and took 60 American hostages releasing after 444 days later, change the American foreign policy against Iran.²⁶ Therefore American foreign policy is based on the national interests of the global hegemony and pursuit of power in the international system.

America as a global hegemon has practiced the principles of *raison d'état*, interest of the state, to secure its geographical, political, economic, and security interest to preserve the health and strength of the state.²⁷ The validity of clash of civilizations is questionable when you consider the change in the relationships with Muslim countries including Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq based on American interests in the region. Furthermore, American-Saudi relationship defies the narrative of clash of civilizations despite

²⁵ "1988: Thousands Die in Halabja Gas Attack," BBC News, accessed July 25, 2014, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/16/newsid_4304000/4304853.stm.

²⁶ "The Iranian Hostage Crisis," PBS.org, accessed July 25, 2014, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/carter-hostage-crisis/>.

²⁷ J. Baylis, S. Smith, and P. Owens, *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (London: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Saudi Arabia attributing the spread of radical Islam, authoritarianism, lack of democracy, and track record of repressive behavior against its citizens.

American, *Raison d'état* and the Islamic World

Energy security is a crucial part of American and its national interests. America is the highest global consumer of world oil and gas today consuming over 18.5 million barrels and 37Tcf of oil and gas respectively each day.²⁸ The scarce resources have driven both commerce and conflict since time immemorial – and still do today; therefore, the availability and affordability is essential to the American economic strength at home, which is the foundation of American leadership in the World.²⁹ According to the US Energy Information Administration, 79.5% proven oil reserves are in the Muslim World including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Libya, Qatar, Algeria, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Oman, Indonesia, Yemen, Egypt, Malaysia, and Syria.³⁰ The natural resource rich Middle East region has been prioritized as being ‘vital interest’ to American foreign policy since Regan era during Cold War.³¹ Further increase in strategic importance came after the American oil production peaked in 1970’s and the OPEC crisis leading to reliance of imported oil predominately from Middle East.³² Therefore, Middle East region, predominately Muslim, has been important to American interest during the Cold War and post-Cold War era. The energy security interests overlap with regional

²⁸ “Oil Consumption,” U.S. Energy Information Administration, accessed July 25, 2014, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/index.cfm?view=production>.

²⁹ Obama, “National Defense University.”

³⁰ For details of US foreign policy and oil and gas interests, see Muhammad Usman Amin Siddiqi, “US War on Terror in Afghanistan: Evaluating the Oil Cliché,” *Journal of Political Science* XXXI (2013): 13–17.

³¹ R. Lifset, *American Energy Policy in the 1970s* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).

³² K. S. Deffeyes, *Hubbert’s Peak: The Impending World Oil Shortage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

interests, political interests, economic interests, and security interests of the global hegemony. Therefore, this part of the paper will evaluate American foreign policy in the Islamic World to strengthen the argument of *raison d'état*, not clash between civilizations; therefore, war in Afghanistan and Iraq will be the focus of the debate.

Afghanistan

During the Cold War, rise of socialism in Afghanistan was a threat to American interests in the region. The political threat was based on the rise and spread of communism to neighboring countries such as Iran and the Persian Gulf, both areas rich in natural resources vital to the energy security of American. Therefore, Afghanistan was crucial for the containment of rising communism in the region in the form of proxy war which resulted in the defeat of the former Soviet Empire. In 1978, the socialist Saur Revolution led to the overthrow of Mohammed Daoud Khan, and Nur Muhammed Taraki, the socialist leader, to come into power.³³ The social revolution was a triumph for the communist leaders in the former Soviet Union and a threat to American regional, political, and economic interests. Although it was triumph for communism, the socialism and its reforms to land ownership, promotion of women to remove veil to take part in a conservative society was damaging the fabric of Islamic society and traditions, a threat to the religious leaders.³⁴ The religious leaders led a revolution against the influence of communism by assimilating an army in the name of Allah (God) for Jihad, a holy war. The spiraling security situation led to the invasion of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union to support the communist government in 1979.³⁵ The Soviet invasion led to the rise of Jihad in contemporary Muslim politics, a religious war to defend the sovereignty of Muslim lands against foreign intervention.

³³ D. B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2002).

³⁴ P. Marsden, *The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan* (London: Zed Books, 2002).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

The situation in Afghanistan led to American support for the Islamist revolution to fight the Soviets and containment of communism. America deployed proxy war tactics to overcome the communist threat in Afghanistan already tested in Angola, Somalia, and Ethiopia.³⁶ This led to a revival of American love for Islamism already used in Egypt against Nasser by supporting the Muslim Brotherhood.³⁷ Therefore, a large Muslim population was ideal to fight against communism and its influence, a true marriage of convenience for America. American funded and supported the Mujahidin, the soldiers of God for jihad, to fight a holy war against communism.³⁸ The overwhelming American support to fund the holy war accounted to nearly \$4 billion in arms and financial support through partnership with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.³⁹ Although, the proxy war in Afghanistan served as nail in the coffin for the former Soviet Union and a payback for Vietnam, Afghanistan was the largest recipient of personal weapons during this era, more weapons than India – militarizing the nation and creating a threat discussed in the next section.⁴⁰

In the period following the fall of former Soviet Union, the war torn Afghanistan faced yet another power struggle not between different ideologies but sectarian factions among the Mujahedin dividing the Afghanistan into different parts. The Taliban emerged as the most powerful group taking over 90% of Afghanistan under their rule and renaming Afghanistan as the Islamic Emirates of

³⁶ V. K. Fouskas, *Politics of Conflict: A Survey* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2010).

³⁷ M. Usman A. Siddiqi, “Pak-US Relations: A Roller Coaster Ride,” *The Journal of Political Science* XXVII (2009): 48. Also see, Devin R. Springer, *Islamic Radicalism and Global Jihad* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009).

³⁸ John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (Sterling: Pluto Press, 2002).

³⁹ For a detailed package offered to Pakistan, see Siddiqi, “Roller Coaster Ride,” 48. Also see Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: The Power of Militant Islam in Afghanistan and Beyond* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).

⁴⁰ B. R. Rubin, *Afghanistan in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 80.

Afghanistan in 1996.⁴¹ The Taliban interpreted the orthodox Islamic interpretations according to *Wahabism* for implementation of *Shriah*, an Islamic form of governance influenced from Saudi Arabia to rule Afghanistan.⁴² The Taliban's authoritarian, undemocratic, and repressive regime was overlooked by America in the post-Cold War era for economic interest. The economic interests was based on oil/gas pipeline from the Caspian Sea basin to the Persian Gulf by the American oil giant UNOCAL.⁴³ The pipeline deal fell in the late 1990's due to heightening opposition against American stance against Taliban in Congress by Madeline Albright and destruction of UNOCAL facilities by firing 80 missiles.⁴⁴

However, the 9/11 attacks on American soil and the subsequent campaign on the war on terror including an invasion of Afghanistan highlights the changing paradigm of American foreign policy based on interest. The presence of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan posed a direct threat to American national security and political stability of the region. Further to the Al Qaeda threat of international terrorism, Taliban pursued power within the region, reminiscence of the Afghan Empire (1823-1926) to create an Islamic Caliphate.⁴⁵ The Taliban changed the name of Afghanistan from Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan and pursued a caliphate within the Muslim World to form an Islamic

⁴¹ A. S. van Linschoten and F. Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of the Taliban-Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁴² J. Gohari, *The Taliban: Ascent to Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁴³ Brian Glyn Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified: A Guide to America's Longest War* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc., 2011). Also see Muhammad Usman Amin Siddiqi, "Pak-US Hookup in Afghanistan: A Blame Game to End the Game?" *The Journal of Political Science* XXX (2012): 41–68.

⁴⁴ "Us Attack Closes Us Project," BBC News, accessed July 25, 2014, news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/207183.stm.

⁴⁵ J. Stewart, *On Afghanistan's Plains: The Story of Britain's Afghan Wars* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

Union inspired by Jamal ud-Din Afghani.⁴⁶ Therefore, the American invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11 was based on political, economic, and security interests and not clash between civilizations. However, America has failed to achieve its security objectives and to deliver democratic values in Afghanistan. A recent study of the corruption index has rated Afghanistan 175th, next to Somalia and North Korea.⁴⁷ The weak democracy with corruption infected institutions have been a key winner for Taliban in Afghanistan especially as they fight back to take control with a recent attack in Logar, 47 miles from Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the recent revision of the *Leyeha*, Taliban code of conduct is aimed to win the hearts and minds of the Afghans; therefore, the threat is not contained.⁴⁹

Iraq

Similarly, America became an ally of Iraq during the first Gulf War against Iran to ensure balance of power against a growing threat of Iran after the Iranian revolution posing a threat to American interest in the region. Retrospectively, American relationship with Iraq had been severely affected since the 1967 war; however in 1982, United States government supported Iraq against Iran in the war by removing Iraq from the US Government's list of "states supporting terrorism" to boost the relationship.⁵⁰ Furthermore, America supported Iraq in the form of military intelligence and

⁴⁶ Gohari, *Taliban*.

⁴⁷ "Corruption Perceptions Index 2013," Transparency International, accessed July 2014, 2014, <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2013/results/>.

⁴⁸ Sneha Shankar, "Logar in Afghanistan Attacked by More Than 700 Taliban Fighters," *International Business Times*, August 19, 2014, accessed August 25, 2014.

⁴⁹ Thomas H. Johnson and Matthew C. DuPee, "Analysing the New Taliban Code of Conduct (Layeha): An Assessment of Changing Perspectives and Strategies of the Afghan Taliban," *Central Asian Survey* 31, no. 1 (2012).

⁵⁰ W. Frederic, "Conclusion: Managing the Aftershocks of Iraq and Seizing Opportunities," in *The Middle East after the Iraq War* eds. Wehrey et al. (Washington: RAND, 2010), 17–28.

credits for food and agricultural equipment worth \$345 million in 1984, \$675million in 1987, and \$1 billion credit in the fiscal year of 1988. In 1987, Iraq destroyed an American naval vessel called the US Destroyer, USS Stark killing 37 soldiers; however there was no action taken against the American ally at the time due to vested interests.⁵¹ The Iraqi triumph in the war against Iran with American support led to Iraq becoming a regional hegemon: the pursuit for survival and power led to a security dilemma for America and its allies in the region.

After the war, Iraq acquired military equipment adding to the military arsenal from Soviet and French deal worth \$2 billion and \$5.6 billion respectively.⁵² After this acquisition, Iraq had the fourth largest army (American army was 3rd largest) and the sixth largest air force in the World.⁵³ A report published by the United States Army War College in 1990 examined the increase of Iraqi military expenditure and its implications on American interests and highlighted a threat to the American status quo in the region.⁵⁴ The conclusion of this report explained the subsequent attack on Kuwait in the late 1990, materializing the regional ambition of Iraq to pursue power as a regional hegemon. The attack on Kuwait implied two challenges to America: First, a security threat in the oil rich region which is vital to American interest since Cold War. Second, a threat to American allies in the region, including security arrangement with Israel and Saudi Arabia and allies including United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman.

America used soft power and hard power to contain the Iraqi power in the region. The soft power was used in the form of sanctions and trade embargoes against Iraq under UN Security Council resolution 661, banning exports and import of food and

⁵¹ E. Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 42.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ K. L. Shimko, *The Iraq Wars and America's Military Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁵⁴ N. Ashton and B. Gibson, *The Iran-Iraq War: New International Perspectives* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2013).

weapons.⁵⁵ Furthermore, to help the security situation in the region, American militarized its allies in the Arab Gulf accounting to \$20 billion of arms transfer to Saudi Arabia, Israel, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait by the US Secretary of State and Defense Secretary between 1988 and 2006 escalating the arms race in the region.⁵⁶ Furthermore, during this period, there was a threat of Iraq developing nuclear weapons further increasing the security dilemma which led to weapons inspection by UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from April 1991 to December 1998 according the Congressional Research Service. In the period after 9/11, Bush securitized Iraq as a threat in his “axis of evil” speech in 2002 deifying as a deadly enemy leading the invasion of Iraq in 2003.⁵⁷ Therefore American foreign policy is based on national interests rather than clash of civilization as demonstrated in Iraq.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have been deemed “failure” on several fronts including intelligence, improving security, and transfer of democratic values to the institutions affecting the political and economic structures. This has led to increase in poverty, terrorism, human trafficking, and human rights abuse and marginalization of majority population ruled by minority in Iraq. The lack of democracy in Afghanistan is a testimony to the failure of American foreign policy. Furthermore, the report by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) referred by Bush Administration identified Iraq as an imminent threat for developing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to American national security interests did not exist; therefore the invasion was based on the interest of America and its allies in the region which led to the

⁵⁵ “Resolution 661,” UN Security Council, accessed July 26, 2014, <http://i.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/SC661.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Hasan Askari, A. Mohseni, and S. Daneshvar, *The Militarization of the Persian Gulf: An Economic Analysis* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc, 2010), 107.

⁵⁷ George W. Bush, “President Delivers State of the Union Address,” White House Archives, accessed August 10, 2014, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>.

destabilization of Iraq.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the invasion of Afghanistan has led the Al Qaeda to disperse into the region creating a bigger threat to America by increasing instability within the region. The Taliban have further increased resistance against the American operation with troop withdrawal from Afghanistan scheduled at the end of 2014.⁵⁹

Thus it is clear from the two case studies that American foreign policy is based on *raison d'état*. The American pursuit of geographical, political, economic, and security interests have been clearly demonstrated in Afghanistan and Iraq; therefore, rejecting the narrative of the clash based on civilizations. In Iraq, many academics have identified the war to secure energy security interests, hence calling it a “resource war” according to David King, UK governments former chief scientific advisor;⁶⁰ however, there is strong evidence that political and economic stability of the region have been vital to American interests since Regan era. The war on terrorism, promotion of democracy, and American stance on authoritarian regimes are simply a euphemism for extending US control in the world, whether it is by projecting force through its carriers or building new military bases in Central Asia.⁶¹ Therefore, the pursuit of the World Order including the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq has contributed to the instability of the state, its institutions and damaging the fabric of society creating a new threat to American interests in the region, the rise of radical Islam.

American Foreign Policy and the Rise of Radical Islam

The American foreign policy objectives have been aimed at securing its political, economic, and security interests, which have

⁵⁸ M. Cardaras, *Fear, Power, and Politics: The Recipe for War in Iraq after 9/11* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013).

⁵⁹ “The Way Forward in Afghanistan,” The White House, accessed July 26, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/defense/afghanistan>.

⁶⁰ “David King: Iraq Was the First ‘Resource War’ of the Century,” *Guardian*, February 12, 2009.

⁶¹ R. Singh, *Governing America: The Politics of a Divided Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

been perceived by many in the Islamic World as a stark reminder of the relics of colonial past, leading to ‘bloody borders’ of Islam today.⁶² The American policy based on *raison d’état* leading to the foreign intervention including Afghanistan, Lebanon, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Egypt, Pakistan, and the recent regime change initiative by the White House to remove Assad in Syria has contributed to increasing instability in the region.⁶³ The foreign intervention led to the creation of many radical groups with the likes of Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Hezbollah, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Muslim Brotherhood, Taliban, and the recent rise of Islamic State (IS). The radical groups assimilate on the basis of religion to fight against foreign intervention in the Islamic World.⁶⁴ Many in the West believe that the violence and holy war is inherent in Islam; however, the reality of Jihad is a recent phenomenon in contemporary international politics. The Jihad, the holy war, was used against imperialism in the Islamic World, secularism in Egypt, and communist political reforms in Afghanistan; however, the increase in radical Islam is the advent of Soviet War.⁶⁵

Many of the radical groups take their inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood leader, Hassan Al Banna who believed that the deviation of Islamic societies worldwide stemmed from the deviation of ‘true’ Islam, and he called for the leadership in the Muslim world to align to the early Muslim rulers.⁶⁶ The earlier leadership was based on a Caliphate following the principles of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH); therefore, the radical groups in the Islamic World have two objectives: First, to impose *shariah*, an Islamic system of governance on state level to ensure the Islamic obligations are achieved. Second, the pursuit of Caliphate to pursue

⁶² John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1999).

⁶³ Obama, “National Defense University.”

⁶⁴ American Foreign Policy Council, *World Almanac of Islamism 2014* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Incorporated, 2014).

⁶⁵ W. Blum, *Rogue State: A Guide to the World’s Only Superpower* (London: Zed Books, 2006).

⁶⁶ Saeed Rahnema, “Radical Islamism and Failed Developmentalism,” *Third world quarterly* 29, no. 3 (2008).

power in the global system by formation of an Islam Union by institutionalization based on Islamic principles. This has been demonstrated in Afghanistan where Taliban created the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan, Al Shabab in Somalia, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Lashkar-e-Taiba in Pakistan, Muslims Brotherhood now a political party in Egypt, Boko Haram in Nigeria and the recent rise and exponential growth of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (IS).

The Radical groups pose a threat to American hegemony and its national interests in the Islamic World. There is a threat to American allies in the region as the Caliphate challenges the Westphalian state system and breakdown of the state institutions replaced by Islamic government. The rise of Islam as a global power poses a challenge to the balance of power in world affairs leading to a security dilemma. To eliminate this security dilemma, America has invaded and attacked several Muslim countries, which has resulted in a snowball effect escalating the political situation in these countries and the wider region. The invasion of Afghanistan and use of hard power has not improved the level of democracy or eliminated Taliban after 13 years of occupation which has led to a deal between America and Taliban offering an office in Qatar and financial support package.⁶⁷ The deal fell through in 2013 with the closure of Taliban office in Qatar and a recent attack on Logar. Furthermore, the Al Qaeda has fragmented and dispersed in the region increasing the likelihood of increased terrorist activity in other parts of the Islamic World.

The recent rise of Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and Syria after the end of American occupation in 2010 demonstrate how different radical factions gathered to build a Caliphate in the Islamic World. According to a BBC report, the Islamic State (IS) grew out of the ruins of al-Qaeda in Iraq and neighboring countries, Jabat al-Nusra in Syria, and other small groups fighting against Asad regime, part of the Free Syrian Army.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the American foreign policy aimed at supporting authoritarian, undemocratic, and

⁶⁷ “Muslim Brotherhood’s Mursi Declared Egypt President,” BBC News, accessed July 25, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-18571580>.

⁶⁸ W. Phares, *Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies against the West* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2006).

repressive regimes includes Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Zine El Adidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, and Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen has led to a revolution against the dictators in the form of the Arab Spring. The political vacuum has led to a power struggle between Islamists and secularists. The recent coupe d'état of the Islamic government by Muslim Brotherhood and American support for General Sisi highlights the American policy initiative based on its interests.

Conclusion

Is the clash of civilizations a reality or a myth? The narrative given by Huntington indicates that clash between America and the Islamic World is based on cultural fault lines due to bloody borders of Islam; however, he fails to comprehend the nature of the state and its relationship with power in the international system. The state uses the fundamental principle of *raison d'état*, interest of the state, for its survival as without state, there are no statesmen. Therefore, there is strong link suggesting the eternity of interests over allies highlighted by Lord Palmerston.⁶⁹ This demonstrates that foreign policy is based on the national interests for survival and power maximization in the international system.

The American foreign policy has been based on *raison d'état* since Cold War as it continues to secure its political, economic, and military interests in the resource rich Islamic World. The oil and gas have been vital to American national interests since 2nd World War. The American rogue state doctrine for regime change and the support of authoritarian, undemocratic, and repressive regimes to further its interest has led to the rise of radical Islam posing a threat to American interests. The failure of foreign intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Lebanon, and recent pursuit for regime change in Syria has led to destabilize the region.

In conclusion, the fundamental principle behind any conflict is interest leading to a clash, in contrast to the narrative of clash based on fault lines between civilizations. Although international relations theories recognize state actors and their competition for

⁶⁹ "National Interest Always Come First?"

survival; however, these theories are restricted to a time period such as realism in the Cold War or neo liberalism in the successful union of Europe. Whereas, *raison d'état* is not time constricted; therefore, American foreign policy is based on national interest supporting authoritarian, undemocratic, and repressive regimes and foreign intervention to overcome the security dilemmas leading to a snow ball effect. This has led to the rise of radical Islam across the Islamic World threatening the interest of America globally. Furthermore, the rise of radical Islam will remain a threat to American interests; and therefore, the conflict between Islam and America is inevitable.