

Is Civilization Yielding to Barbarism?

Back in 1996, all seemed wonderful. The world was peaceful, the Communists had collapsed, and the economy was booming. Yet during such peaceful times, Samuel Huntington published his famous book *The Clash of Civilizations*.

He concluded with these thoughts:

“On a worldwide basis Civilization seems in many respects to be yielding to barbarism, generating the image of an unprecedented phenomenon, a global Dark Ages, possibly descending on humanity.

In the 1950s Lester Pearson warned that humans were moving into ‘an age when different civilizations will have to learn to live side by side in peaceful interchange, learning from each other, studying each other’s history and ideals and art and culture, mutually enriching each others’ lives. The alternative, in this overcrowded little world, is misunderstanding, tension, clash, and catastrophe.’ The futures of both peace and Civilization depend upon understanding and cooperation among the political, spiritual, and intellectual leaders of the world’s major civilizations. In the clash of civilizations, Europe and America will hang together or hang separately. In the greater clash, the global ‘real clash,’ between Civilization and barbarism, the world’s great civilizations, with their rich accomplishments in religion, art, literature, philosophy, science, technology, morality, and compassion, will also hang together or hang separately. In the emerging era, clashes of civilizations are the greatest threat to world peace, and an international order based on civilizations is the surest safeguard against world war.”

Interesting. Twenty years later, do you think Huntington got it right?