

The War on Gaza: A New Global Order in the Making?

Part XIII-A

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Theme: [History](#)

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“For the Romans I set no boundaries of time and space; I have granted them empire without end.” (Publius Vergilius Maro)[1]

1. In the Beginning Was Westphalia

In my abovementioned book, which I wrote in the wake of the 2014 Gaza war, also known as “Operation Protective Edge”, I posited that:

- The end of the Cold War had the effect of making two major international realities more evident: the consecration of the position of the United States of America as the dominant world power, due to its military, political, economic and technological weight; and the shift of the global economic and commercial center of gravity from the Old Continent to the Pacific region as a result, in particular, of the prodigious development achieved by the Chinese dragon. And despite its relative decline caused by the economic and financial crisis of 2007/2008, the United States, being precisely a nation that is both Atlantic and Indo-Pacific, will continue to play a leading role during the 21st century;
- The vicissitudes of the “Arab Spring”, the politico-military maneuvers in the East and South China Sea, and the developments of the Ukrainian crisis, far from constituting epiphenomena of turbulent current affairs, are in fact the most telling manifestations of a geostrategic upheaval, in a globalized world entering a phase of accelerated reconfiguration. Obviously, this development, which is gradually taking the form of a multipolar world, is not to the taste of those in favor of the perpetuation of Western domination of the world, more than ever symbolized by the power of the American leader;
- The history of the 21st century, particularly its first half, seems to revolve around two contradictory struggles. The first will consist of attempts by secondary powers to form coalitions to try to contain the hegemonism of the United States. The second will encompass preventive actions on the part of this country aimed at preventing the formation of such coalitions that could endanger its strategic interests in the world;
- Regardless of the real sponsors of September 11 attacks and their true motives, this historic event provided the United States with the opportunity to implement its strategy of domination over a Muslim world considered – despite its present state of asthenia – as a potential adversary that must be continually weakened, while exploiting its significant natural resources, especially energy. Since the

invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, a new “Sykes-Picot” seems to be taking shape in the region. But while the secret Franco-British agreements of 1916 aimed to “facilitate the creation of a State or a Confederation of Arab States”, the current process aims to dismantle existing States. This strategy of “mass disintegration” would allow the United States to achieve a triple objective: guaranteeing the preservation of its strategic interests in the region; strengthening the position of its Israeli ally, thereby ensuring its survival as a Jewish state; and redirecting most of U.S. efforts and resources toward the most important region of the world: the Pacific region.”

Since then, and fundamentally, the U.S. geostrategic vision has not changed one iota, as clearly evidenced by the October 2022 Biden-Harris Administration’s National Security Strategy.[2] Indeed, the document states that

“The Strategy is rooted in our national interests: to protect the security of the American people, to expand economic opportunity, and to realize and defend the democratic values at the heart of the American way of life. In pursuit of these objectives, we will: Invest in the underlying sources and tools of American power and influence; build the strongest possible coalition of nations to enhance our collective influence to shape the global strategic environment and to solve shared challenges; and modernize and strengthen our military so it is equipped for the era of strategic competition.”

It also stresses that

“The most pressing strategic challenges we face as we pursue a free, open, prosperous, and secure world are from powers that layer authoritarian governance with a revisionist foreign policy. We will effectively compete with the People’s Republic of China, which is the only competitor with both the intent and, increasingly, the capability to reshape the international order, while constraining a dangerous Russia.”

With regard to the Middle East region, the U.S. envisions “A more integrated Middle East that empowers our allies and partners” and advance “regional peace and prosperity, while reducing the resource demands the region makes on the United States over the long term.”

What has crucially changed, however, is the very world the U.S. has relentlessly strived to dominate since the end of WWII, and even more so after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which, as history will record, was only a temporary “freezing” of the Cold War.

The outbreak of the Ukraine War in 2022 and, to a greater degree, the ongoing round of the War on Gaza have brought Israel, Ukraine, and the West closer to each other[3], and by the same token have further distanced them from the rest of the world, all the while accelerating the transition to a multipolar global order.

At this point, it is both appropriate and warranted to emphasize, with John Ikenberry once again, that

“the world’s most powerful state has begun to sabotage the order it created. A hostile and revisionist power has indeed arrived on the scene, but it sits in the Oval Office, the beating heart of the Free world.”

The French Academy dictionary defines order as “an arrangement, a regular layout of things

in relation to one another; a necessary relationship which regulates the organization of a whole into its parts". In reality, the notions of order and disorder are part of a practical, ethical, political, even mythical and religious discourse. From a philosophical point of view, according to Professor Bertrand Pieltre[4], these two notions seem to be more normative than descriptive and have more value than reality. Thus, the term "order" is understood at least in two contradictory senses: either the order is thought of as finalized, as carrying out a purpose, pursuing a direction, thence making sense; disorder is then defined by the absence of an intelligent design. Or, the order is thought of as a stable or recurring structure and, thereby, recognizable and locatable, as a constant and necessary arrangement; but as such, it can appear totally devoid of finality and purpose. Disorder, then, is not thought of as what is devoid of a finality, but as what appears to be devoid of necessity. These two meanings, he further explains, refer to two philosophically different visions of the world: finalist or mechanist, and their combination, in a play of contingency and necessity, produces the diversity of the material and living world that we know.

In the realm of international relations, order is commonly understood to mean the set of rules and institutions that govern relations between the key players in the international environment. Such an order is distinguished from chaos, or random relationships, by a certain degree of stability in terms of structure and organization.

Perhaps, one of the best studies ever done on this topic is the one published by the Rand Corporation in 2016 under the title "Understanding the Current International Order." [5] The main aim of this study was to understand the workings of the existing international order, assess current challenges and threats to the order, and accordingly, recommend future policies deemed sound to U.S. decision-makers.

The report says that in the modern era the foundation of the international order was built on the bedrock principles of the Westphalian system, which reflected fairly conservative conceptions of order while relying on pure balance-of-power politics in order to uphold the sovereign equality and territorial inviolability of States.

This Westphalian system led to the development of the territorial integrity norm, considered to this day as a cardinal norm against outright aggression toward neighbors with the aim of seizing their lands, resources or citizens, which was once a common practice in world politics. Thus defined in its main elements, this system has continued to prevail, especially since the Concert of Europe, also known as the Vienna Congress system, which from 1815 to 1914 established a whole series of principles, rules and practices having greatly contributed, after the Napoleonic wars, to maintaining a balance between European powers and shielding the Old Continent from a new all-out conflict. It stood fast until the outbreak of World War I.

At the close of the horrific hostilities of the Great War, U.S. **President Woodrow Wilson** spent several months of 1919 in Europe, working closely with British **Prime Minister David Lloyd George**, French **Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau**, and other leaders to build a more peaceful postwar order. Together, they brought to life the League of Nations. Unfortunately, the League was dealt an early and deadly blow when the U.S. Senate rejected U.S. membership in it, refusing to participate in an international legal system that it deemed would encroach on the country's sovereignty. The League's failure to provide an effective response to the nationalism and militarism in Europe and Asia during the 1930s further damaged its credibility and precipitated its demise. Yet, this innovative burst of order-building left an important imprint on global affairs and was akin to a general dress

The RAND report indicates that since 1945, the United States, which was the greatest beneficiary of the restored peace, has pursued its global interests through the creation and maintenance of international economic institutions, bilateral and regional security organizations, and liberal political norms and standards. These ordering mechanisms are often collectively referred to as the “international order”. However, in recent years, rising powers have begun to challenge the sustainability and legitimacy of some aspects of this order, which is clearly seen by the U.S. as a major challenge to its global leadership and vital strategic interests. Three broad categories of potential risks and threats likely to jeopardize this order have thus been identified by the writers of the report:

- some leading states consider that many components of the existing order are designed to restrict their power and perpetuate American hegemony;
- volatility due to failed states or economic crises;
- shifting domestic politics at a time of slow growth and growing inequality.

Two years before the publication of this study, **Henry Kissinger**, the veteran of American diplomacy credited with having officially introduced “Realpolitik” (realistic foreign policy based on the calculation of forces and the national interest) in the White House while serving as Secretary of State under Richard Nixon’s administration, had further explored the theme of world order in a landmark book.[6]

From the outset, Mr. Kissinger asserts that no truly global “world order” has ever existed. The order as defined by our times was devised in Western Europe four centuries ago, on the occasion of a peace conference held in Westphalia “without the involvement or even the awareness of most other continents or civilizations”. This conference, it should be remembered, followed a century of sectarian conflict and political upheavals across Central Europe, which ended up provoking the “Thirty Years’ War” (1618-1648), an appalling and pointless “total war” where a quarter of the population of Central Europe died from combat, disease, and starvation.

Nevertheless, the negotiators of this peace of Westphalia did not think of laying the foundations of a system applicable to the whole world. How could they have thought so when then, as always before, every other civilization or geographic region, seeing itself as the center of the world and viewing its principles and values as universally relevant, defined its own conception of order? In the absence of possibilities for prolonged interaction and of any framework for measuring the respective power of the different regions, Henry Kissinger rightly observed, each of these regions viewed its own order as unique and defined the others as “barbarians” which were “governed in a manner incomprehensible to the established system, and irrelevant to its designs except as a threat”.

Subsequently, thanks to Western colonial expansion, the Westphalian system spread around the world and imposed the structure of a state-based international order, while failing, of course, to apply the concepts of sovereignty to colonies and colonized peoples. It is these same principles and other Westphalian ideas that were put forward when the colonized peoples began to demand their independence. Sovereign state, national independence, national interest, noninterference in domestic affairs and respect for international law and human rights have thus asserted themselves as effective arguments against the colonizers during armed or political struggles, both to regain independence and, afterwards, to protect the newly formed states in the 1950s and 1960s in particular.

At the end of his reflection combining historical analysis and geopolitical prospective,

Kissinger draws important conclusions about the current international order and asks essential questions about its future. The universal relevance of the Westphalian system, he said, derived from its procedural nature, that is value-neutral, which made its rules accessible to any country. Its weakness had been the flip side of its strength: designed by states exhausted from the bloodletting they inflicted on each other, it offered no sense of direction; it proposed methods of allocating and preserving power, without indicating how to generate legitimacy.

More fundamentally, Kissinger argued that in building a world order, a key question inevitably concerns the substance of its unifying principles, which represents a cardinal distinction between Western and non-Western approaches to order. Quite aptly, he pointed out that since the Renaissance, the West has widely adopted the idea that the real world is external to the observer, that knowledge consists in recording and classifying data with the greatest possible precision, and that the success of a foreign policy depends on the assessment of existing realities and trends. Therefore, the “Peace of Westphalia” embodied a judgment of reality and more particularly of realities of power and territory – in the form of a concept of secular order supplanting the demands of religion.



The historic town hall of Münster where the treaty was signed (Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0)

In contrast, other great contemporary civilizations conceived of reality as internal to the observer and defined by psychological, philosophical or religious convictions. Consequently, Kissinger was of the opinion that sooner or later, any international order must face the consequences of two trends that compromise its cohesion: either a redefinition of legitimacy or a significant shift in the balance of power. In such circumstances, upheavals could emerge, the essence of which being that “while they are usually underpinned by force, their overriding thrust is psychological. Those under assault are challenged to defend not only their territory, but the basic assumptions of their way of life, their moral right to exist and to act in a manner that until the challenge, had been treated as beyond question”.

Like many other thinkers, political scientists and strategists, especially Westerners, the American statesman considered that the multifaceted developments underway in the world

are fraught with threats and risks that could lead to a sharp rise in tensions, and chaos threatens “side by side with unprecedented interdependence: in the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the disintegration of states, the impact of environmental depredations, the persistence of genocidal practices, and the spread of new technologies threatening to drive conflict beyond human control or comprehension.”

This is the main reason why he thought that our age is insistently engaged in an obstinate search, sometimes almost desperately, of a concept of world order, not without expressing his concern, which takes on the appearance of a warning. In our time, he said, “a reconstruction of the international system is the ultimate challenge to government. And in the event of failure, the penalty will be not so much a major war between States (though in some regions this is not foreclosed) as an evolution into spheres of influence identified with particular domestic structures and forms of governance, for example the Westphalian model as against the radical Islamist version” with the risk that “at its edges each sphere would be tempted to test its strength against other entities of order deemed illegitimate.”

The major conclusion of this scholarly book which concerns us in the context of our theme is this:

“The mystery to be overcome is one all peoples share: how divergent historical experiences and values can be shaped into a common order”.

2. Worldviews and World Orders: The “Individual and Secular” Vs. the “Collective and Sacred”

All civilizations try to balance themselves between the individual and the collective, between the temporal and the spiritual, and between this-worldliness and otherworldliness. Shifts between the relative importance given to the one at the expense of the others is what gives the different civilizations their distinctive identity and coloring; and critical disjunctions in human history occur when the individual paradigm is overturned or tilted toward the collective, or vice versa.

In modern Western societies, especially within the Anglosphere, it is an indisputable fact that since the Renaissance, which was at the origin of the Enlightenment movement and thought, there has been a gradual and probably decisive and irreversible shift away from the collective and the sacred toward the individual and the secular.

This being the case, in the self-image of Western or Westernized societies, the individual is ennobled and endowed with the power and tools to determine, alone, the course of his personal development and fulfillment as well as those of society, through the idiom – which is then erected into absolute dogma – of rights and the practice of a democracy based on laws and rules. The primacy of the individual over collective rights thus gradually paved the way for the dismantling of the post-war welfare state, making the dividing line between the public and private domains increasingly blurred, and providing wide-open avenues to an unbridled individualism.

In the following paragraphs, I shall attempt to explain why and how the 500-year long global dominance of the “Western civilization” is coming to an end – a fate first and most significantly epitomized and signaled by the West’s self-immolation during the bloodbath of the two Western civil wars, also known as the two World Wars it ignited in a span of only 30 years and led to the loss of 100 million lives. One good way of doing so is by surveying the

writings of seven authors who have had a profound influence on Western Man's thinking, and seven other authors who have predicted and warned against an impending twilight of this Western predominance. Indeed, what we take to be the ethical, social, economic, and ideological bedrock of Western thought has, far and away, been laid down in seven landmark references put forward since the beginning of the European Renaissance and the Age of the Enlightenment.

Thus, in his 1513 book "The Prince", Italian Niccolò Machiavelli described methods – including through deliberate deceit, hypocrisy and perjury – that an aspiring prince can use to acquire the throne, or an existing prince can resort to in order to maintain his reign. English Pastor Thomas Robert Malthus claimed in his 1798 "Essay on the Principle of Population" that population tends to grow faster than the food supply. He also posited that the planet would be unable to support more than one billion inhabitants, and advocated therefore for a limitation on the number of poor people as a better controlling device. English Charles Darwin's 1859 seminal book "The Origins of Species" promoted a theory of evolution by natural selection through the notion of "survival of the fittest", thus so profoundly challenging Victorian-era ideas about the role of humans in the universe. English philosopher/sociologist Herbert Spencer's 1864 "Principles of Biology" transferred Darwin's theory from the realm of nature to society. He believed that the strongest or fittest would and should dominate the poor and the weak who should ultimately disappear. This meant that certain races – in particular European Protestants – individuals and nations were entitled to dominate others because of their "superiority" in the natural order. German Karl Marx's 1867 "Capital" is the foundational theoretical text in materialist philosophy, economics and politics. Belief in some of its teachings led to communism and caused millions of deaths in the hope (or utopia) of bringing about an egalitarian society. In his most celebrated book "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" (1883-1885) German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche elaborates on ideas like eternal recurrence of the same, death of God, and the prophecy of the "Übermensch" (Overman), that is the ideal superior man of the future who could rise above conventional Christian morality to create and impose his own values. Finally, Austrian Sigmund Freud's theories, although subject to a lot of criticism, were enormously influential. His best-known 1930 book "Civilization and Its Discontents", analyzes what he sees as the fundamental tensions between civilization and the individual. The primary friction, he asserts, stems from the fact that the immutable individual's quest for instinctive freedom (notably desires for sex) are at odds with what is best for society (civilization) as a whole, which is why laws are created to prohibit killing, rape, and adultery, and implement severe punishments if they are broken. The result is an ongoing feeling of discontent among the citizens of that civilization.

Beyond shadow of a doubt, Western Man's mindset, worldview, and behavior have been considerably influenced by the presuppositions of the "seven deadly sins" embodied in this literature. This led to such calamities for the world as materialism, individualism, scientism, unbridled pursuit of profit, nationalism, racial supremacy, excessive will to power, wars, colonization, imperialism, and eventually, nihilism[7], civilizational decadence and decline of the Western world.

As a result of this irreversible process, especially following the moral wreckage and colossal human and material cost of the Great War, prominent thinkers and philosophers started to voice their concern about the coming demise of the West. Chiefly among those are seven authors whose books argue that while it is true that the West is in decline, there's still time to mitigate it or even to reverse it and preserve it for posterity. Those books are: Oswald

Spengler's "The Decline of the West" (1926); Arnold Toynbee's "Civilization on Trial" (1958); Eric Voegelin's "Order and History" (1956-1987); Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History and the Last Man" (1992); Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" (1996); Niall Ferguson's "Civilization: The West and the Rest" (2012); and Michel Onfray's "Décadence: Vie et mort du judéo-christianisme"[8]. Emmanuel Todd's recently published book "La Défaite de l'Occident"[9] also deserves just as much to be added to this selective collection.

Another stated or implied common feature of these books is the belief that the "Western Christian civilization" has to be defended anew both from internal decay and threats arising externally, mainly Islam, or even worse, an alliance of "Islamic" and "Sinic (Chinese)" civilizations. This fear of Islam is by no means new; it's deep-rooted in the Western psyche. Today, however, it is being exacerbated to such an unprecedented extent that the debate on the resurgence of Islam has become, more often than not, inextricably intertwined with the talk about the decline of the Western civilization.

Back in 1940 already, when there was no question yet of the so-called Islamist or Islamic threat, and even less so of a "clash of civilizations" that are plaguing our current world, then French Colonel Charles de Gaulle - although on full combat against Nazi Germany's Wehrmacht - gave the following response to his chaplain who questioned him about the situation on the battlefield and rumors of an armistice:

"Mr. Chaplain, this war is only one episode in a clash of peoples and civilizations. It will be long. And when the clash with China, this very great people, arises (...) what will we be and what will we do? But I have confidence. The last word will be given to the highest and most disinterested civilization, ours, the Christian civilization (...) But the greatest and most immediate danger can come from the Muslim transversal, which ranges from Tangier to the Indies. If it were to come under Russian communist obedience, or what would be worse, Chinese, we are doomed. And believe me, Mr. Chaplain, there will no longer be a possible Battle of Poitiers."[10]

The same refrain was famously repeated by none other than Samuel Huntington in his no less celebrated book[11], written in response to his former student Francis Fukuyama's 1992 highly controversial best-seller[12] in which, following the collapse of communism leading to a metamorphosis of world politics, Fukuyama addressed a question that has for time immemorial engaged the minds of great philosophers and thinkers: Is there a direction to the history of mankind? And if it is directional, to what end is it moving?

Fukuyama argues that a remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of "liberal democracy" as a system of government has emerged throughout the world. Thus, liberal democracy may constitute the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution", and the "final form of government"; and as such constituted the "end of history". The other great question that follows then becomes: Can political and economic liberty and equality characterizing the state of affairs at the presumed "end of history" bring about a stable society in which man may be said to be, at last, completely satisfied? Or will the spiritual condition of this "last man" in history, "deprived of outlets for his striving for mastery", inevitably lead him to plunge himself and the world into the chaos and bloodshed of history?

With regard to Huntington, it is important, first of all, to clarify with Professor of History at the prestigious Columbia University Richard Bulliet[13] that the phrase "Clash of Civilizations" was not invented by Huntington; it was most probably coined, for the first

time, by Basil Mathews in his 1926 book titled “Young Islam on Trek: A Study in the Clash of Civilizations”.[14] Yet, by wielding the “clash of civilizations” phraseology at a propitious moment, the Harvard professor significantly, shrewdly but maliciously shifted the discourse of Middle East confrontation that had until then been dominated by nationalist and Cold War rhetoric since the days of Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1950s and 1960s. Bulliet rightly observed that this new formulation “took on almost cosmic proportions: the Islamic religion, or more precisely the world Muslim community that professes that religion, versus contemporary Western culture, with its Christian, Jewish, and secular humanist shadings.”[15]

Huntington also wrote that:

“Islam and China embody great cultural traditions very different from and in their eyes infinitely superior to that of the West. The power and assertiveness of both in relation to the West are increasing, and the conflicts between their values and interests and those of the West are multiplying and becoming more intense (...) Underlying the differences on specific issues is the fundamental question of the role these civilizations will play relative to the West in shaping the future of the world. Will the global institutions, the distribution of power, and the politics and economies of nations in the twenty-first century primarily reflect Western values and interests or will they be shaped primarily by those of Islam and China? (...) Islamic and Sinic societies which see the West as their antagonist thus have reason to cooperate with each other against the West (...) This cooperation occurs on a variety of issues, including human rights, economics, and most notably the efforts by societies in both civilizations to develop their military capabilities, particularly weapons of mass destruction and the missiles for delivering them, so as to counter the conventional military superiority of the West.”

More recently, in his latest book[16], French historian and Sinologist Emmanuel Lincot retraces the geopolitical stakes of Sino-Muslim relations. He believes that, at the dawn of the new century, China and the Muslim world intend to put an end to a world dominated by the West through the ghastly prospect of a multifaceted alliance between them. Such an alliance obviously encompasses the revitalization of the mythical and once greatest trade route in history - the Silk Road - that linked and mutually enriched the two civilizations for centuries, before it was eclipsed by the Western-dominated maritime trade. The Chinese “Belt and Road Initiative”, which aims to develop both land and maritime corridors, is the main means to achieve such a strategic objective.

On closer inspection, we may argue that throughout the Western colonial period, the Cold War and until after “*Les Trente Glorieuses*” (The Glorious Thirty)[17], the West was somewhat indifferent if not condescending to Islam as a religion. The overwrought fear of Islam has followed the demise of social democracy in the West, especially since the events of “May 68”, and the decay of progressive and socially-centered movements in the Third World. The Iranian revolution of 1979, itself begotten by this historical development, and the attacks of 11 September 2001 radically changed the geostrategic situation in the eyes of Western countries. Islam is increasingly at the center of their concerns today and a rampant Islamophobia has naturally, and dangerously, ensued.

As Mr. Allawi so rightly put it in his insightful book[18], Islam’s religion, cultures, civilization, nations and peoples have become the subject of meticulous scrutiny by a wide array of analysts, “from the most thoughtful to the most incendiary, from the most illustrious to the most obscure, from the most sympathetic to the most bigoted”.

If truth be said, for centuries the civilization of Islam has often been shaken by powerful opposing currents. The crusades, the Mongol invasion, Western colonization and imperialism, and today, the intense movement of globalization have been the most striking ones. It has just as often bent under their blows, but has never broken. Far from it; its contribution to universal civilization and to the construction of the “old” and “new” worlds is undeniable.

The chronicle of this role, especially during the period of the Ottoman Empire, has been the subject of a remarkable book written by Professor of history and Chair of the Department of History at American Yale University, Alan Mikhail.[19] In the introduction to his narrative presenting a new and holistic picture of the last five centuries and demonstrating Islam’s constituent role in the forming of some of the most fundamental aspects of the history of Europe, the Americas, and the United States, he declares that: “If we do not place Islam at the center of our grasp of world history, we will never understand why the Moor-slayers (Matamoros)[20] are memorialized on the Texas-Mexico border or, more generally, why we have blindly, and repeatedly, narrated histories that miss major features of our shared past.

Richard Bulliet, before Mikhail, made a similar observation, saying:

“The past and future of the West cannot be fully comprehended without appreciation of the twinned relationship it has had with Islam over some fourteen centuries. The same is true of the Islamic world.”

He went as far as to speak of an “Islam-Christian Civilization”, a term never used before he did so, and went on to make another fundamental remark: “The question confronting the United States is whether the tragedy of September 11 should be an occasion for indulging in the Islamophobia embodied in slogans like “Clash of Civilizations” or an occasion for affirming the principle of inclusion that represents the best in the American tradition” (...) “Clash of Civilizations” must be retired from public discourse before the people who like to use it actually begin to believe it”.

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Notes

[1] *Publius Vergilius Maro*, usually called *Virgil* or *Vergil* in English, was an ancient Roman poet of the Augustan period. He composed three of the most famous poems in Latin literature: the *Eclogues* (or *Bucolics*), the *Georgics*, and the epic *Aeneid*. The 12-book Latin poem tells the story of Aeneas, son of the goddess Venus, a royal refugee from war-torn Troy, and a legendary ancestor of the emperor, as he

is driven by fate to Italy, where he is to settle and where, centuries later, his descendant Romulus is to build Rome. The epigraph, where Jupiter addresses the Romans, is from the first book: Aeneid I, 278-9. of the poem.

[2] To read the document:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/10/12/fact-sheet-the-biden-harris-administrations-national-security-strategy/#:~:text=The%20Strategy%20is,of%20strategic%20competition.>

[3] Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has spoken strongly in favor of Israel after the surprise assault by Hamas on 7 October 2023. He called on world leaders to show solidarity and unity in supporting Israel and condemning the "terrorist attack". Zelensky, who is also Jewish, said that Israel had an unquestionable right to defend itself from attacks by Hamas and controversially compared it to Russia's invasion and occupation of Ukraine, saying Hamas and Moscow were "the same evil, and the only difference is that there is a terrorist organization that attacked Israel, and here is a terrorist state that attacked Ukraine". Israeli reports also said that Zelensky wanted to make a solidarity visit to Israel but was told "now is not the time".

[4] Bertrand Pièttre, "**Ordre et désordre : Le point de vue philosophique**" (Order and disorder: The philosophical point of view), 1995.

[5] RAND Corporation, "**Understanding the Current International Order**", 2016. This study was sponsored by the Office of the United States Secretary of Defense's Office of Net Assessment, and conducted within the International Security and Defense Policy Center of the RAND National Defense Research Institute.

[6] Henry Kissinger, "**World Order**", Penguin Press, New York, 2014.

[7] For more on this subject read Alan Pratt, "**Nihilism**", The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy; available at: [Nihilism | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

[8] Michel Onfray, "**Décadence: Vie et mort du judéo-christianisme**" (Decadence: Life and Death of Judeo-Christianity), Flammarion, 2017.

[9] Emmanuel Todd, "**La Défaite de l'Occident**", (The Defeat of the West), Gallimard, 2024.

[10] Quoted in Marc Ferro's book titled "**De Gaulle expliqué aujourd'hui**" (De Gaulle Explained Today), Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 2010. The Battle of Poitiers, also called the Battle of Tours, occurred in France on 10 October 732. It resulted in victory of the Frankish and Aquitanian forces led by Charles Martel over the Umayyad forces led by the governor of al-Andalus (Muslim-ruled Spain and Portugal) Abd al-Rahman al-Ghafiqi. The issue of the battle was a decisive factor in curtailing the spread of Islam in Western Europe.

[11] Samuel P. Huntington, "**The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order**", 1996.

[12] Francis Fukuyama, "**The End of History and the Last Man**", The Free Press, New York, 1992.

[13] Richard Bulliet, "**The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization**", Columbia University Press, New York, 2004.

[14] Basil Mathews, "**Young Islam on Trek: A Study in the Clash of Civilizations**", Friendship

Press, New York, 1926. Mathews was an American Protestant missionary. He worked as a secretary in the World's Alliance of YMCA's.

[15] Richard Bulliet, *op cit*.

[16] Emmanuel Lincot, "**Chine et Terres d'islam : un millénaire de géopolitique**" (China and the Lands of Islam : A Millennium of Geopolitics), Presses Universitaires de France, 2021.

[17] The Glorious Thirty is a term coined by French Jean Fourastié in his 1979 book "**Les Trente Glorieuses, ou la révolution invisible de 1946 a 1975**" (The Glorious Thirty, or the Invisible Revolution from 1946 to 1975) to characterize a thirty-year period of great economic growth in France (as well as in the West in general) following the end of WWII. This same period was also marked by a "Baby boom" in most of the world, particularly the United States and Canada in North America and France and Austria in Europe.

[18] Ali A. Allawi, "**The Crisis of Islamic Civilization**", Yale University Press, 2009.

[19] Alan Mikhail, "**God's Shadow: The Ottoman Sultan who shaped the modern world**", W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2020.

[20] "**Matamoros**" is the name of a city located in the northeastern Mexican state of Tamaulipas across the border from Brownsville, Texas, in the United States. It was coined by Catholic Spaniards for whom it was the duty of every Christian soldier to be a Moor-slayer.

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