

## Analyzing East/West Power Politics in Comparative Cultural Studies

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**Abstract:** In his article, "Analyzing East/West Power Politics in Comparative Cultural Studies," William H. Thornton acknowledges culture as a central force on the geopolitical map and undertakes at once to preserve the strategic potency of political realism and to move beyond the "billiard ball" externality of both neo- and traditional realisms. Although Huntington and Fukuyama are taken seriously on the question of East/West power politics, Thornton develops a world view by grounding balance-of-power politics in national and local (not just civilizational) social reality. Further, Thornton argues against external democratic teleologies both Huntington and Fukuyama have imposed on the cultural Other. The thrust of Thornton's argumentation goes beyond the monolithic fallacies of political modernism, namely, political realism on the one hand and today's "reverse domino" globalization on the other. Once political realism takes this postmodern turn, it confronts the agonistic realities that killed the New World Order in its infancy. Although Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* also confronted these grim realities, but did so in terms of a negative and retreatist realism. For Thornton, in the post-Cold War world that Huntington well describes but declines to fully engage, any effective realism must temper cultural agonistics with Bakhtinian cultural dialogics.

**William H. THORNTON**

### **Analyzing East/West Power Politics in Comparative Cultural Studies**

In the post-Cold War thought of Samuel Huntington, culture has supplanted ideology as the shaping force of global politics ("Erosion" 39). Unlike the postmodern culturalist, who celebrates "difference" as an unequivocal virtue, Huntington's cultural politics is marked by multipolar and multicivilizational strife (Huntington, *Clash* 21). Nevertheless he partakes in the cultural imperative that has become almost synonymous with postmodernism in foreign affairs: international relations, security studies, and international economics (Mazarr 177). Political realists find themselves in a bind, for it was on their watch that culture was strictly marginalized (Lapid 3).

Drawing on the realist wing of comparative cultural studies, this paper explores the place of culture in East/West power politics. It undertakes to preserve the strategic potency of political realism while putting culture back on Asia's geopolitical map. This requires that "classical" and "neo-" realism alike be revised in favor of a new "cultural realism": a post-Cold War melding of geopolitical strategy and geocultural negotiation, or what Joseph Nye has called "hard power" and "soft power" (181). As here employed, the term "cultural realism" carries a double meaning, tied at once to geopolitical and literary/cultural discourses. Its concern with the emic channels of local knowledge owes much to postmodern realism in cultural theory. The politics of postmodern realism -- as developed in my *Cultural Prosaics: The Second Postmodern Turn* and previous studies such as "Cultural Prosaics" and "Cross-Cultural" -- is congruent with Bakhtinian cultural dialogics rather than the epistemological anarchy of deconstructionist or Foucauldian theory (see Thornton *Cultural*, Chapter Six). The latter school of thought powerfully influenced Edward Said, but could not be sustained where Said turned his attention to the particulars of cultural politics. His *Covering Islam*, as Bryan Turner points out, is built upon a solidly realist epistemology (6).

On its geopolitical side, cultural realism is a manifestation of what Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil call, in their anthology of that title, *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (1996). The term "cultural realism" has been applied specifically to Chinese cultural politics by Alastair Johnston (1995), who argues that a tradition of realpolitik lies beneath China's cloak of Confucian-Mencian moderation. This inclines China to be much faster than most states to use force in territorial disputes. Johnston considers this cultural proclivity to be heightened by improvements in China's military capabilities. Here I broaden the application of "cultural realism" to the whole question of East/West geopolitics, qualifying rather than replacing the standard realist concern with balance of power relations. Johnston's insights, for example, lend cultural depth to the realist admonitions of Bernstein and Munro (1997) concerning China's destabilizing impact on the current Asian balance of power. Globalists tend to overlook the inertia of the bureaucratic and authoritarian tradition that traces to the Qin dynasty, and the isolationism that traces to the Ming (builders of the Great Wall). In this study, however, cultural realism is equally concerned with traditional and emerging relations between political cultures, e.g., the Chinese and the Vietnamese. It is thus the perfect medium for "soft power" analysis.

This "soft" realism offers a timely corrective to the cultural tunnel vision of both globalism and classical realism. The latter, according to Hans Morgenthau, has been distinguished by the subordination of all factors that lie outside a rational calculation of "interest defined in terms of power" (Morgenthau 5). This is supposed to render politics "autonomous" by purging realism of "irrational" elements such as religion and moral valuations. "Neo-" or "structural" realism, as developed by Kenneth Waltz (1979), begins with that same purgation but moves farther toward what is considered a scientific geopolitics, one in which the basic balancing act of realism operates systemically and without any necessary conscious intent (see Sheehan 194; Forde 142). Francis Fukuyama denigrates realism for treating "nation-states like billiard balls, whose internal contents, hidden by opaque shells, are irrelevant in predicting their behavior. ... International politics, then, is not about the interaction of complex and historically developing human societies, nor are wars about clashes of values. ... [Nonetheless the] earlier generation of realists like Morgenthau, Kennan, Niebuhr, and Kissinger allowed some consideration of the internal character of states to enter into their analyses, and could therefore give a better account of the reasons for international

conflict than the later academic school of "structural" realists. The former at least recognized that conflict had to be driven by a *human* desire for domination, rather than from the mechanical interaction of a system of billiard balls" (*End* 248 and 256).

In *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996), Huntington likewise points the way towards a revised realism where "internal contents" count as much or more than external mechanics. Thus Huntington implants culture or "civilization" in the very heart of realism -- if only negatively, by way of a sweeping cultural agonistics. The stress he gives to intractable conflict undermines the democratic trajectory of his previous book, *The Third Wave* (1991), where he granted the problem of a geopolitical rent between East and West, yet clung to his modernist optimism (310). As late as 1991, then, it could still be said that he broadly concurred with democratic optimists such as Fukuyama, Rueschemeyer, and Di Palma (see works cited) on the thrust of liberal democratic globalization. By 1995, however, Malcolm Waters should have qualified his linkage of Huntington with Fukuyama's liberal democratic teleology (Waters 118-19); for Huntington's *Foreign Affairs* article of 1993 had clearly marked his cultural turn. This shift is all the more dramatic because his previous work was so often the epitome of cultural myopia. Thirty years before, in *Political Order in Changing Societies*, he famously overlooked the moral and cultural weaknesses of Soviet modernism, viz., the destabilization that was sure to erupt in a system built on the hard politics of lies, militarism, and ethnic repression (see Lane).

Just as he had been too pessimistic regarding the staying power of the Soviet system, he was now too trusting of the new democratic teleology. That optimism, however, was nowhere to be found in his incendiary *Foreign Affairs* article, "The Clash of Civilizations?" His subsequent book, which dropped the question mark in the title, details the ethnic and civilizational factors that fracture nations even as they threaten to culturally fuse whole regions, such as East Asia, against the West. Although Huntington's credentials as a realist are a solid fixture of Cold War history, the germ of his cultural turn can be traced to his 1968 classic, *Political Order in Changing Societies*. There he argued that it was simply unrealistic to press developing countries to become instant democracies when they lacked any semblance of democratic traditions. Hence, given the grim realities of Third World cultural politics, strong central authority must first be established. Whatever its intent, *Political Order* was widely read as a case for the realist suspension of Wilsonian idealism in foreign affairs. Walden Bello points out that it quickly became the handbook for a whole generation of development-minded officials in organizations such as the State Department, the Agency for International Development, and the U.S. dominated World Bank (33). In *Clash*, Huntington easily disposes of the non-cultural competition within realism by noting that by their pristine logic Western Europe (either by classical realist design or neorealist structural reflex) would have coalesced with the Soviet Union against the U.S. in the late 1940s (24). Likewise, in the post-Cold War world, the core states of non-Western regions should logically unite against America and the West. This has been attempted, but its force is limited by the constant factionalism that stems from deep cultural/civilizational distrust (185).

One can credit the cultural turn of Huntington's realism while rejecting the fatalism of his "Atlanticist" retreat from Asian cultural politics (see Huntington, *Clash* 312) -- a retreat that would leave as little room for the art of diplomacy as does neorealism. By rejecting that retreat and neorealist positivism alike, this study keeps diplomacy in the geopolitical game and in that respect moves closer to classical realism. Where it profoundly differs is in its focus on culture as a vital element of political reality. In the tradition of Vico's verum-factum principle (whereby we know history or culture far better than nature, insofar as we create the former), cultural realism makes no apology for not being "scientific." The one element that will be salvaged from Huntington's cultural retreat is his recoil from any attempt to impose Western values and institutions as a blueprint for global development. Since most "globalism" -- here defined as the ideology of those who "are in the habit of *praising* the current process of globalization" (Salih 137; my emphasis) -- follows that Orientalist blueprint in all but name (see Waters 3), this study is in that sense anti-globalist. Especially it opposes what Huntington calls "Davos Culture": The convergent interests and values of the small global elite that controls virtually all of the world's dominant international institutions (Huntington, *Clash* 57). However, in place of Huntington's cultural agonistics, my

weapon of choice against Davos Globalism is a realism built on cultural dialogics. For me this involves a post-Bakhtinian commitment to crosscultural engagement, including political engagement. In such a dialogics, cultural identities take shape very much as do individual voices: "in response to and in anticipation of other voices" (Bialostosky 214). This makes for a fluid identity, but hardly a vacuous one. As Caryl Emerson convincingly argues, Bakhtin's dialogics kept the self intact, since it is only by asserting one's own uniqueness that one can hope to engage a unique Other dialogically (110). Thus the twin acts of taking a stand and interacting become integral to the twin processes of identity formation and political action. I therefore depart from Emerson, in *Cultural Prosaics* and elsewhere, by extracting from Bakhtin the ingredients of a political counterdiscourse that she would not countenance. This political grounding avoids the cultural relativist trap of holding that on all issues one cultural perspective is as good or just as another -- an attitude that has permitted such pressing global issues as human rights and the environment to be labeled "Western" and hence "imperialist." These agonistic labels are designed to block communication and freeze geopolitical discourse in an East/West or South/North mode. The dialogic reach of cultural realism equips it to cross those agonistic lines to deal with vital transnational issues that have no place in classical realism or neorealism.

One such issue is global environmentalism. The rise of environmental consciousness has given "Third World countries an important potential source of blackmail, with countries (not all of them very poor) demanding to be paid to carry out environmental measures which are actually in their own interest as well as everyone else's" (Beloff 5). Insofar as global ecology is a moral or in any case a transnational concern, neither classical realism nor neorealism is equipped to handle it; whereas cultural realism is perfectly suited to the task. As with all realism (Lentner 39), one of cultural realism's primary concerns is assuring security. But in an increasingly global age, security can no longer be restricted to "national interest" in the limited sense. And just as there is now a place for "green" issues within realism, so too there is a growing "realo" wing within Green parties. These groups recognize that although the state has often worked against the environment, its powers are "needed to match the scale of ecological problems. ... [and to] counter corporate power" (Dryzek 35-36). The environmental recklessness of international organizations like the World Bank and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is a matter of record. Between 1976 and 1986, for example, the World Bank funneled \$600 million into deforestation / resettlement programs in Indonesia alone. The result was massive erosion that "degraded the soil to the point where it could not sustain subsistence agriculture or even absorb water" (Bello 53). John Dryzek points out that in 1991 "a GATT committee declared that the United States' ban on imported tuna caught in ways that caused the deaths of large numbers of dolphins contravened the GATT. If a state wishes to guarantee by law or regulation that its food imports do not contain unsafe levels of pesticides, then that, too, will be a violation of free trade" (81).

Meanwhile, environmentalism has taken a postmodern turn in the direction of a new moral/cultural realism. Its goals are no longer tied so closely to an empirical and hence material frame of reference, exclusive of the moral and aesthetic concerns that are now embraced by "post-environmentalism" (Eder 214-15). The result of these various trends is a remarkable fit between the new (as opposed to "neo") realism and the new ecology, including the new literary eco-criticism. Clearly this is part of a broad postmodern shift from mere survival values to well-being values, and from achievement motivation to postmaterial motivation (see Inglehart 77). Once realism takes this postmodern turn, however, it confronts the agonistic realities that killed the "New World Order" in its infancy. At that point it faces a stark choice: Huntingtongesque retreat into cultural insularity or the development of a more "engaged" moral realism (as explored in my "Back to Basics"). What Huntington's *Clash* gives us is negative realism. In the post-Cold War world that *Clash* so well describes, but declines to fully engage, affirmative realism requires that cultural agonistics be tempered by cultural dialogics.

Cultural realism bypasses both sides of the East/West incommensurability argument, as propounded by Huntington on the Western side and Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew on the side of "Asian values." Fortunately there are dialogic alternatives to both. Elsewhere, as part of my case against East Asian exceptionalism, I have contrasted the "Singapore model" of authoritarianism

with the democratic voice of Kim Dae Jung, Korea's inveterate dissident-turned-president (see Thornton, "Korea"). The coexistence of economic and political development in Kim's "Korean model" would free American foreign policy from the burden of choosing between the false antipodes of stability and social justice. That blighted choice was thought necessary during the Cold War, when the West hesitated to advance its own values for fear of driving developing countries into Moscow's camp (Kausikan 27).

The always dubious rationale for treating oppressive regimes as full strategic partners died with the Cold War. With it died, also, the rationale for a virulent strain of realism that helped produce -- in terms of genocide, ethnocide, and environmental apocalypse (see Bello, Chapter 7) -- the most destructive century in recorded history. Many, unfortunately, did not get the message. On 9 March 1991, in the wake of the Gulf War, President Bush declared, "By God! We've kicked the Vietnam Syndrome once and for all. ... The specter of Vietnam has been forever buried in the desert sands of the Arabian peninsula" (qtd. in Long 397). By retreating from post-Cold War global imperatives, the "Vietnam syndrome" was indeed an invitation to trouble, and no realist should lament its passing. Unfortunately, the cultural sensitivity that attended that syndrome is also put at risk by the return of the old power politics. What is needed, in the absence of a new world order, is a *via media* between Fukuyama's dialogic liberalism and Huntington's undialogic realism. Huntington's agonistics stems from his still-modernist habit of treating whole cultures as reified systems. It must be granted that the agonistic worldviews of Hobbes and Huntington are in many ways closer to global reality, and especially Asian reality, than are dialogic alternatives such as the Grotian notion of a salutary society of nations (see Sheehan 11-12). Here my objective is simply to keep dialogics in the game by charting a course that is "in but not of" agonistics. The last effective metatheory of global peace -- based largely on a nuclear balance of terror -- could not survive the passing of the Cold War. Its heir apparent, Fukuyama's posthistorical vision of a New World Order, never materialized. History refused to go away. That is not to say that Fukuyama's liberal globalism is a feckless illusion. Rather, it is intertwined with its theoretical opposite, realism. Too often globalism turns out to be little more than a front for vested interests, while "realism" is but a euphemism for the purchase of stability or geopolitical advantage at any price. Theoretical distinctions between the two then evaporate. For example, the opposition one would expect between Clinton's manifest globalism and Kissinger's nominal realism all but vanishes where China is concerned.

The operative theory behind Clinton's China policy has been a market-obsessed economism that even Fukuyama could not endorse (see *Trust* 34). This vision of unproblematic economic growth rests on the expansion and empowerment of the middle classes, which are expected in turn to demand political reform. Proponents of such economic prioritization often point to the development patterns of South Korea and Taiwan. However, as Kanishka Jayasuriya counters, Singapore and Malaysia could just as well be spotlighted in support of the opposite case. Both sing the praises of authoritarian "Asian values," despite the fact that each is "dominated by a party with strong middle class support ... Hence, those who suggest that Asian middle classes will demand greater liberalization are likely to be sorely disappointed. The Asian values ideology serves only to provide a comfortable canopy for this middle class" (Jayasuriya 88).

The unilateral privileging of economic over political liberalization in the Singapore model differs from Japanese economism in that the Japanese people have clearly given their consent to these priorities. In that sense the authority behind the Japanese model could be called, if not quite bilateral, then at least top-down by consent. It is the more forceful removal or manipulation of consent which distinguishes the "Asian values" model from the Japanese. In Singapore's case this hegemonic turn had its debut in 1963 with the PAP (People's Action Party) Operation Cold Store: The arrest of one hundred opposition leaders. Since that time all Singaporeans have been subject to constant political surveillance (see Chua 16 and 44). But for the most part PAP has operated through the less direct means of intense media control and a unilateral scripting of tradition. If "other" Asian values have been politically dormant in Japan, they have been forcefully suppressed in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and virtually crushed in Myanmar and the People's Republic of China. Here the de facto motto might go beyond "growth first" to "growth

only." This dictum was spelled out by Deng Xiaoping, and its place in post-Deng CCP ideology is hardly less secure. By no means, however, does this development strategy stop at the boundary of "Asian values." It is a potent factor throughout the Third World, or what is increasingly -- metaphorically more than geographically -- called the South, where authoritarianism is primarily an instrument for suppressing the unrest that is bound to erupt from gross inequality in distribution. Speaking before the United Nations General Assembly in 1974, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger asserted that the "notion of the Northern rich and the Southern poor has been shattered" ("Common Response" 3). Indeed, many countries that fall under this "Southern" rubric did make impressive gains prior to the 1980s in terms of GDP per capita. Only on closer analysis, with attention shifted to the actual distribution of gains, does the "Southern" argument strike home. As the South Commission reported in 1990, inequalities "tended to widen as the economy grew and became more industrialized.... Increasingly, the rich and powerful in countries of the South were able to enjoy the life-style and consumption patterns of developed countries of the North. But large segments of the population experienced no significant improvement in their standard of living, while being able to see the growing affluence of the few" (qtd. in Thomas 5).

Consequently, the stage is set for what Jayasuriya -- generalizing a term that Jeffrey Herf applied to Nazi Germany -- calls "reactionary modernism" (82-84) -- a condition of radical divorce between economic and technical modernization, on the one hand, and political (liberal democratic) modernization on the other. Where cultural or civilizational friction reaches the proportions described by Huntington's *Clash*, we can expect reactionary modernism to be the rule rather than the exception in developing countries. In India, for example, Hindu fundamentalism is less a threat to material modernization than to the secular state and the whole democratic apparatus. Countries such as Algeria, Nigeria, and Sudan have reverted to military authoritarianism, while Egypt, Peru, and Russia have shifted to repressive state controls. Elsewhere, as in Guatemala, Argentina, Uruguay, and (until very recently) Chile, the ongoing veto power of the military has reduced democracy to a stage prop (Shaw and Quadir 49).

It is no accident that Clinton's development strategy -- built on the assumptions of vintage modernization theory -- bears remarkable resemblance to Kennedy's Alliance for Progress. Both lay stress on the cultivation of the middle classes as the alpha and omega of development. This class/ic error -- a naive faith in class alone as the engine of progress -- had its first incarnation in the Old Left notion of the proletariat's innate progressivism. After the German working class threw its support behind Nazism and the war, Frankfurt School critical theory laid that class/ic blunder to rest. Soon, however, it had a second, liberal incarnation in the American vision of the middle class as the "vital center" (as Arthur Schlesinger called it) not only of US-American political culture but of global development. Castro believed that insofar as Kennedy's Alliance for Progress rose above the vested interests of corporations, foreign regimes and the Pentagon, it was doomed to fail (Schlesinger 147). And Castro was right. At least Kennedy's naiveté can be defended on the grounds that -- apart from the experience of fascism, which could be dismissed as a twentieth-century aberration -- reactionary modernization had not yet made its full global debut. Clinton has no such excuse. Indeed, as Richard Rorty argues in *Achieving our Country* (1988), US-American society is itself being split into a cosmopolitan upper crust and a downwardly mobile remainder. America's own "vital center" is decomposing even as American foreign policy strives to create new "vital centers" around the world. This might be a harmlessly quixotic enterprise except that extant power elites are imagined to be the vanguard of these proto-democratic "centers." Likewise, growth of any kind is imagined to be progress. One of the chief architects of Clinton's China policy, Anthony Lake, a self-described "centrist," so closely equates U.S. interest with Chinese economic growth that he has pressed the U.S. not to expose Chinese exports of nuclear materials to Third World clients (see Heilbrunn <<http://www.tnr.com/textonly/032497/txttheilbrunn032497.html>> [inactive]).

Whether judged by a Wilsonian or realist standard, Kissinger's current stance on China is no less odious. In 1987 he was encouraged by China's ambassador to the U.S. to found the American China Society, through which he has become one of the Chinese government's most powerful defenders. He is credited with personally persuading former House Speaker Newt Gingrich to drop

his support for Taiwan independence, and for convincing the Clinton administration to disconnect the issues of trade and human rights (see Judis <<http://www.tnr.com/textonly/031097/txtjudis031097.html>>). Whatever argument might be made for these policies from a globalist perspective, there is no reconciling them with any form of realism -- not at a time when China is the paramount source of Asia's growing *imbalance of power* -- a fact that is only compounded by the prospect of Korea's reunification (see "Japan"). This raises the question of the purity of Kissinger's realist credentials even during the Cold War. Legend has it that his policies dislodged the illusion of monolithic communism from American foreign policy. In fact, Kissinger was inclined toward a highly ideological reading of world affairs. Daniel Patrick Moynihan points out that, as Secretary of State, Kissinger warned that America must "face the stark reality that the [Communist] challenge is unending" (qtd. in Moynihan 145). The context of this almost eschatological utterance was America's by then obvious failure in the Vietnam War. The domino theory, the most commonly stated rationale for escalating the war in the first place (Kolko 75), was being justly discredited by a new brand of culturalism, as in, for example, Walker Conner's case for the vital political role of ethnic heterogeneity in Asian political cultures (see Conner; and, specific to Vietnam, FitzGerald, *Fire in the Lake*). At this of all times, Kissinger blew second wind into America's Cold War ideology by naturalizing its communist adversary.

Nonetheless, Kissinger recognized the limits of the domino theory as applied to Vietnam (Kissinger, *Years* 82) and China, which he perceived as a nationalistic entity vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and North Vietnam alike. Kissinger was aware that China secretly condoned U.S. operations in Laos, despite (or even because of) its negative impact on North Vietnam (Kissinger, *Years* 58). He favorably cites André Malraux's belief that China's support of North Vietnam was an "imposture," for the historical animosities between China and North Vietnam ran too deep (Kissinger, *White House* 1052). In global balance of power terms, it was no secret that China feared the possibility of Vietnam becoming a Soviet satellite state, thus completing the encirclement of China (Kolko 419). If Kissinger's early China policy can be credited with promoting a global balance of power, it now lives on as an effete mockery of realism; for China is fast becoming the major agent of Asian instability. By any "realist" logic, the fall of the Soviet Union and the concomitant rise of China should have prompted an immediate shift in Kissinger's position on China. This naturally raises suspicions that his refusal to budge an inch in that direction is directly related to the operations of the firm he founded, Kissinger Associates, which assists corporate clients in setting up business ties in China. Thus Kissinger the arch-realist has become, in actual practice, a closet globalist.

Having served as president of Kissinger Associates, former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger now works for a law firm that likewise helps businesses to obtain contracts in China; and another president of Kissinger Associates, former National Security Advisor Brent Snowcroft, freely mixes public policy advice with private business connections via his consulting firm, the Snowcroft Group, which operates out of the same office complex as the nonprofit policy group he founded: The Forum for International Policy. In 1996 he helped Dean O'Hare, chairman of the Chubb insurance group, secure a meeting with Chinese Premier Li Peng. All the while, not surprisingly, he has defended China assiduously on issues such as MFN and Chinese sales of nuclear material to Pakistan, which he has publicly blamed -- through a bizarre twist of logic -- on U.S. non-proliferation legislation (see Judis), as if China did it to save face when confronted with evil imperialist pressures. Next to Kissinger himself, however, the most egregious China-card player is former Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Kissinger's aide during the opening of China. Haig has the distinction of having been the only prominent American to join the October 1989 celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the PRC -- i.e., to join Deng Xiaoping in Tiananmen Square just four months after the Tiananmen massacre. His continuing role in the defense of MFN and as a critic of anyone who defends Taiwan has earned him a good deal more than praise from the Chinese. Deng saluted his "courage," but what counts are the contracts: One of the major clients of his consulting group, Worldwide Associates, has hauled in billions of dollars in business deals with the Chinese (see Judis). Haig is not one to be concerned about theoretical contradictions, but more might be expected from his realist mentor, Kissinger.



With the end of the Cold War, the brutal amorality of Kissingeresque realism has lost whatever justification it could ever claim. So too, its cultural indifference renders it obsolete, for culture has emerged as a prime mover of world affairs (see Kahn x). Fukuyama has managed to keep his version of globalism in the game by taking a modest cultural turn, blurring the stock association of economism with rationality and culture with irrationality (see *Trust* 37-38). Perhaps it would be fair to call his position a cultural globalism, as far removed from unalloyed globalism as cultural realism is from traditional realism. Kissinger, however, holds fast to the tablets he brought down from the mountain. His hard line realism treats culture as local color, style, or sentiment rather than political substance. In his Washington years he perpetuated Cold War logic by putting containment in an older realist package: The classic balance of power that tries to reduce international relations to a cold calculation of interest. Moynihan wryly notes that Kissinger's "realism" put him out of touch with the inner substance of political reality (145-46). It certainly obscured the cultural and civilizational realities that suffuse Moynihan's *Pandaemonium* (1993) and Huntington's *Clash*. Where East Asia is concerned, responses to this cultural challenge range from globalist denial, on the one hand, to militant agonistics on the other. Huntington's thesis, for example, receives a concerted challenge from the collection of papers contained in *Techno-Security in an Age of Globalization: Perspectives from the Pacific Rim*, edited by Denis Simon (1997). One reviewer, Steven Rosefield, points out that these papers collectively comprise a national security paradigm consistent with "Lester Thurow's and Francis Fukuyama's notions about the global triumph of capitalism and the end of history. ... Traditional international security concerns, it is intimated, have become obsolete. Imperialism is dead, great nations are war averse, economic systems don't matter (because there is only capitalism), and Huntington's clash of civilizations is a mirage. What really matters today, the authors variously contend, are technological threats ... and other lower intensity quarrels" (751).

At the opposite pole there is the all-too-cogent realist manifesto of Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro (*The Coming Conflict with China*). In a recent *Foreign Affairs* article, Bernstein and Munro attempt to distinguish their approach from that of Huntington, on the ground that theirs is strictly geopolitical rather than cultural or civilizational ("Coming" 21). That distinction, however, runs aground on several points. First, it is granted that part of the reason for China's new assertiveness is its traditional view of itself as Asia's preeminent power (22). That is a deeply ingrained *cultural* viewpoint, entirely consistent with Huntington's thesis. Second, Bernstein and Munro's working assumption that China will not readily go the route of democracy, despite its rising affluence, is based on the absence of such key ingredients as a tradition of limited government, individual rights, independent judiciary, etc. (26-27). Are these absences not part of China's political *culture*? Notions such as the consent of the governed and the will of the majority are not just ideas, but deeply rooted cultural institutions. A thriving market economy can be conducive to the formation of such institutions. Perhaps it is a necessary but insufficient prerequisite for their development. The bottom line, as Bernstein and Munro point out, is that China treats opposition as treason. So far that *cultural* fact has not proved incompatible with China's new techno-nationalism. Bernstein and Munro, in any case, have the good fortune of not being the classical realists they imagine themselves to be.

One reason why their warning is not being heeded is likewise culture-related. Americans view Asia as a far more alien place than Europe. Even if they see China as a budding superpower, they are not inclined to see her regional power as posing so serious a threat to their culturally defined interests as would an equivalent military threat on the European side. This bias skews Americans' sense of shifting global priorities. As Fareed Zakaria argues, two simple facts define today's geopolitics: "Russian weakness and Chinese strength. ... Yet increasingly the Clinton Administration's foreign policy looks as if it were intended to meet precisely the opposite challenges. ... the Administration is spending vast amounts of time, energy, money and political capital to deter [Russia] from launching an invasion of Central Europe. China, on the other hand, is surging economically, bulking up its armed forces and becoming more assertive by the day" (Zakaria <<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/zakaria.htm>> [inactive]). Early in May, 1998 India shocked the world by conducting three nuclear tests. It was generally assumed that this

breach of nuclear nonproliferation was aimed almost exclusively at Pakistan; but for Henry Sokolski -- the Bush Defense Department's top official for nuclear nonproliferation issues -- it amounted to "an act of impatience with failed American efforts to stop China and North Korea from developing and spreading strategic weapons": Sokolski quotes *The Times of India's* comment that "by the time the Clinton Administration wakes up to the danger posed by the China-Pakistan-North Korean axis, it will be too late for India" (Sokolski <<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/sokolski.htm>>). This view gains credibility in the light of India's former conciliation towards Pakistan. Despite friction over Kashmir, the two antagonists had renewed ministerial contacts and, guided by Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral, were seeking more economic cooperation (*International Institute for Strategic Studies* 146). The U.S., however, was sluggish in revising policies formed when Pakistan was a Cold War ally and India a leader of "nonaligned" nations and a major recipient of Soviet economic and military aid (Kennedy 507). By the 1990s, if not before, that Cold War mindset was worse than obsolete. In combination with Clinton's China policy it contributed to renewed militarism in the region. Likewise, the perpetuation of a Cold War China policy is aggravating an already dangerous imbalance in Northeast Asian (NEA) geopolitics. Even as the Cold War abates between the two Koreas, new power configurations must be taken into account. By the early 1990s, thought was being given to an ASEAN-type NEA unity. Like AFTA in the south, one goal of this accord was a trade bloc that would exclude the U.S., Australia, and Canada.

From 1967 to 1989 ASEAN (the Association of South-East Asian Nations: Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand, plus Brunei in 1984 and Vietnam in 1995) was the only regional political organization in Asia (Godement 281). A first step toward a more globally attuned regionalism was taken by APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation), which was founded in 1989 under Western auspices. The U.S. and Australia sought to circumvent trade barriers by transforming APEC from a mere consultive group into a formal trading bloc. Asian governments immediately perceived this as an attempt to saddle them with a U.S. free-trade package. Indeed, a key figure in the U.S. strategy was Fred Bergsten, who by no accident had also been a lobbyist for GATT and NAFTA (North American Free Trade Area). ASEAN, which leaned heavily toward state-assisted capitalism rather than free trade, reacted to this Western initiative by shortening the timetable for their own AFTA (ASEAN Free Trade Area) trade bloc. Another anti-Western shock wave erupted when Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia's prime minister, proposed an East Asia Economic Group (EAEG) under the aegis of Japan, with China and Korea invited but with the U.S., Australia, and Canada strictly excluded. Still another shock came when the Philippines shut down the American naval base at Subic Bay, to the tune of an anti-Western diatribe from the Philippine Senate president, Jovito Salonga: "Today we have summoned the political will to stand up and end 470 years of foreign military presence in the Philippines" (Bello 3). Meanwhile the potential for a Northeast Asian (NEA) accord was being explored. The idea had obvious economic merit: Coupled with China's huge and affordable work force and Russia's abundant natural resources, the capital and technology of Japan and South Korea could be expected to turn the NEA region as a whole into an Asian "mega-tiger." By 1994, however, this dream had all but disintegrated (see Rozman 1, 4). Gilbert Rozman points out that the prospect of NEA regionalism "brought to the forefront true civilizational divides" (22).

Fearing that Japan would turn NEA cooperation into its own "flying-geese" cartel, China upgraded her diplomatic relations with Moscow, thus putting both Tokyo and Washington on edge. Increasingly, however, the U.S. took the brunt of Chinese invective (Rozman 20). Since NEA multilateralism tends to vary inversely with U.S. diplomatic strength in the region, it was not good news for the U.S. when, in the middle of Clinton's first term, China's Vice-Premier Zhu Rongji got a warm reception on his trip to Tokyo, when Japan's Hosokawa reciprocated with a visit to Beijing, or when President Kim Young Sam of Korea visited both ("Time" 19). An even worse omen was the April 1997 Moscow summit between Jiang Zemin and Boris Yeltsin, both of whom pledged support for a multilateral world order to block the hegemony of any state -- meaning, obviously, the U.S. (Wishnick 1049).

What kept the U.S. in the game was the enormous distrust that every NEA power feels towards every other. This same distrust makes the June 2000 summit between North Korea's Kim Jung Il and the South's Kim Dae Jung a dubious blessing so far as regional stability is concerned. Reunification would revive the centuries-old competition for hegemony over Korea (see "Japan"). Given the region's culturally ingrained distrust, the U.S. has a vital role to play as a counterbalance to resurgent Sino-centricism. This strategy, however, requires close attention to the minutia of cultural realism. To follow Huntington in his concentration on "civilizational" fault lines is already to miss those details: This would reproduce in cultural geopolitics the monolithic scale that encumbered domino theory logic, and with the same catastrophic results. Not only would it do a disservice to legitimate U.S. security concerns, but to the interests of all Asian nations under China's hegemonic shadow. Without outside support, weaker Rim countries will be pushed into a politics of accommodation where the center holds all too well, while stronger countries will be forced into a costly and perilous arms race.

By grounding balance-of-power politics in national and local (not just civilizational) social reality, the cultural realism of this article moves beyond Huntington and Fukuyama alike. It avoids the monolithic fallacies of political realism on the one hand and "reverse domino" globalization on the other. This affords a more effective realism, but, it must be granted, one which is still but a tool in a larger foreign policy schema. In terms of means and ends, it is still only a strategy -- a means in search of a suitable end (suitable, that is, to both poles of a given cultural dialogue). In forthcoming work I argue that the end most commensurate with cultural realism -- which I term "moral realism" -- gets past Huntington's negative, retreatist realism by re-engaging other political cultures on an ethical plane. In the spirit of post-Bakhtinian dialogics, rather than any neo-imperialism (including, most emphatically, that of corporate globalization), this cultural realism turns Huntington's cultural isolationism on its head.

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