

Clash or Dialogue?



Toujours Amdur

A view from Val des Monts

Reuel S. Amdur
Clash of Civilizations. That is the title of the influential work by Samuel Huntington. In his book Huntington argued that cultural rather than ideological differences would be the trigger of future world conflict. To this view, Fred Reed says no, we need to look at interests as the basis of the clash and at ideological presuppositions as ways of defending those interests.

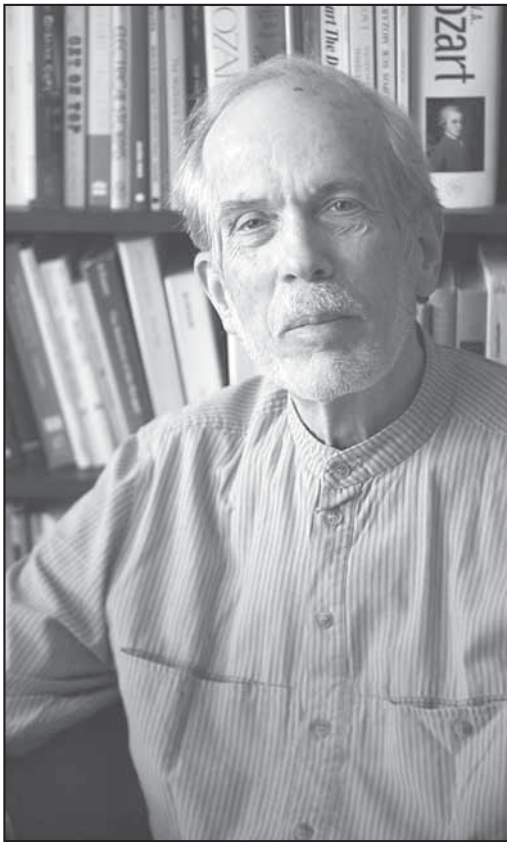
Reed, a journalist, author, and translator, was addressing an audience at the Gatineau Maison du Citoyen on October 20. He noted the full title of this book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, and noted Huntington's close ties to the American government. He was a State Department consultant and under Jimmy Carter he served as coordinator of security planning for the National Security Council.

Fred Reed traced the "clash" as conflict of interest with an ideological covering back to Pope Urban II, who in launching the First Crusade, proclaimed, "What shame it would be for us if this infidel race, so rightly despised, lacking human dignity, vile gate of the demon, were taking it [the Holy Land] from the elect of the all-powerful God." Says Reed, "This summing-up of the Other is written into the intellectual tradition of the West, surviving to our own time in the unchanging dichotomy East-West. Certainly, without the dichotomy there would be no clash."

Stating an alternative to the clash of civilizations, Iranian reformist president Sayyed Mohammad Khatami proposed in 2000 at the UN General Assembly, a dialogue of civilizations. Unfortunately,

of civilizations. So Khatami's call went nowhere. Then came George W. Bush's 2002 "Axis of Evil" speech.

According to Reed, Washington was wearing blinders fashioned by Huntington. Edward Saïd, a Palestinian-American analyst, wrote *Orientalism*, a book which describes a state of mind



where the East is mysterious and other, but also an Other that is inferior. The world is thus divided between Us and Them, the Other. "We are superior to them because we are more powerful." George W. Bush expressed it succinctly: "You are either with us or you are with

the terrorists."

Napoleon entered the Mosque of Cairo on horseback. And in 1910 Arthur Balfour told the British House of Commons that Egypt, which Britain had just occupied, needed, in fact demanded, the occupation.

Reed contends that the clash of civilizations is an aggressive doctrine imbedded in our own cultural tradition. We distance ourselves from dialogue. He charges, "To those who would justify these colonialist missions by identifying an unloved 'other' misconstrued as 'enemy', as 'menace' we can in any case

tell them: 'You are the menace.'"

His view is that the West has a caricatured view of Islam and the Orient more generally, with this division between Us and Them, with Them a enemy. As an alternative to the clash of civilizations he calls for a dialogue. That call entails an end to military adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan and to the injustices inflicted on the Palestinians. We should, he says, "Open ourselves to the other. Without superiority of attitude, without preconditions, equal to equal."

Centre de santé et de services sociaux de Papineau

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LOCATION	DATE	TIME
CLSC Vallée-de-la-Lièvre 578, Maclaren East Gatineau	November 5	1:00 - 4:30 PM & 6:00 - 9:00 PM
	November 6	8:00 - 11:30 AM & 1:00 - 4:00 PM
	November 7	8:00 - 11:30 AM & 1:00 - 4:00 PM
	November 12 November 13 November 14	1:00 - 4:30 PM & 6:00 - 9:00 PM 9:00 - Noon & 1:30 - 4:00 PM 9:00 - Noon & 1:30 - 4:00 PM
Val-des-Bois: Knights of Columbus Hall 121 chemin du Pont de Bois	November 17	9:00 - 11:30 AM & 1:00-3:00PM
Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette: de la Montagne School	November 18	9:00 - 11:30 AM
Poltimore: Old School	November 18	1:30 - 3:00 PM
Thurso: Community Hall 125 rue Bourget	November 23	9:00-Noon & 1:30- 4:00 PM
	November 24	9:00-Noon & 1:30- 4:00 PM

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