

The West: Unique, not universal

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Abstract:

Many in the West believe the world is moving toward a single, global culture that is basically Western. This belief is arrogant, false, and dangerous. The spread of Western consumer goods is not the spread of Western culture. Drinking Coca-Cola makes a Russian no more Western than eating sushi makes an US citizen Japanese. As countries modernize, they may westernize in superficial ways, but not in the most important measures of culture - language, religion, values. In fact, as countries modernize, they seek refuge from the modern world in their traditional, parochial cultures and religions. Around the globe, education and democracy are leading to indigenization. As the power of the West ebbs, the rest will become more and more assertive. For the West to survive as a vibrant and powerful civilization, it must abandon the pretense of universality and close ranks. Its future depends on its unity. The people of the West must hang together, or they will hang separately.

MODERNITY IS NOT ENOUGH

IN RECENT years Westerners have reassured themselves and irritated others by expounding the notion that the culture of the West is and ought to be the culture of the world. This conceit takes two forms. One is the Coca-colonization thesis. Its proponents claim that Western, and more specifically American, popular culture is enveloping the world: American food, clothing, pop music, movies, and consumer goods are more and more enthusiastically embraced by people on every continent. The other has to do with modernization. It claims not only that the West has led the world to modern society, but that as people in other civilizations modernize they also westernize, abandoning their traditional values, institutions, and customs and adopting those that prevail in the West. Both theses project the image of an emerging homogeneous, universally Western world-and both are to varying degrees misguided, arrogant, false, and dangerous.

Advocates of the Coca-colonization thesis identify culture with the consumption of material goods. The heart of a culture, however, involves language, religion, values, traditions, and customs. Drinking Coca-Cola does not make Russians think like Americans any more than eating sushi makes Americans think like Japanese. Throughout human history, fads and material goods have spread from one society to another without significantly altering the basic culture of the recipient society. Enthusiasms for various items of Chinese, Hindu, and other cultures have periodically swept the Western world, with no discernible lasting spillover. The argument that the spread of pop culture and consumer goods around the world represents the triumph of Western civilization depreciates the strength of other cultures while trivializing Western culture by identifying it with fatty foods, faded pants, and fizzy drinks. The essence of Western culture is the Magna Carta, not the Magna Mac.

The modernization argument is intellectually more serious than the Coca-colonization thesis, but equally flawed. The tremendous expansion of scientific and engineering knowledge that occurred in the nineteenth century allowed humans to control and shape their environment in unprecedented ways. Modernization involves industrialization; urbanization; increasing levels of literacy, education, wealth, and social mobilization; and more complex and diverse occupational structures. It is a revolutionary process comparable to the shift from primitive to civilized societies that began in the valleys of the

Tigris and Euphrates, the Nile, and the Indus about 5000 B.c. The attitudes, values, knowledge, and culture of people in a modern society differ greatly from those in a traditional society. As the first civilization to modernize, the West is the first to have fully acquired the culture of modernity. As other societies take on similar patterns of education, work, wealth, and class structure, the modernization argument runs, this Western culture will become the universal culture of the world.

That there are significant differences between modern and traditional cultures is beyond dispute. A world in which some societies are highly modern and others still traditional will obviously be less homogeneous than a world in which all societies are comparably modern. It does not necessarily follow, however, that societies with modern cultures should be any more similar than are societies with traditional cultures. Only a few hundred years ago all societies were traditional. Was that world any less homogeneous than a future world of universal modernity is likely to be? Probably not. "Ming China . . . was assuredly closer to the France of the Valois," Fernand

Braudel observes, "than the China of Mao Tse-tung is to the France of the Fifth Republic." Modern societies have much in common, but they do not necessarily merge into homogeneity. The argument that they do rests on the assumption that modern society must approximate a single type, the Western type; that modern civilization is Western civilization, and Western civilization is modern civilization. This, however, is a false identification. Virtually all scholars of civilization agree that Western civilization emerged in the eighth and ninth centuries and developed its distinctive characteristics in the centuries that followed. It did not begin to modernize until the eighteenth century. The West, in short, was Western long before it was modern.

WHAT MAKES THE WEST WESTERN?

WHAT WERE the distinguishing characteristics of Western civilization during the hundreds of years before it modernized? The various scholars who have answered this question differ on some specifics but agree on a number of institutions, practices, and beliefs that may be legitimately identified as the core of Western civilization. They include:

The Classical legacy. As a third-generation civilization, the West inherited much from earlier civilizations, including most notably Classical civilization. Classical legacies in Western civilization are many, and include Greek philosophy and rationalism, Roman law, Latin, and Christianity. Islamic and Orthodox civilizations also inherited from Classical civilization, but to nowhere near the same degree as the West.

Western Christianity. Western Christianity, first Catholicism and then Protestantism, is the single most important historical characteristic of Western civilization. Indeed, during most of its first millennium, what is now known as Western civilization was called Western Christendom. There was a well-developed sense of community among Western Christian peoples, one that made them feel distinct from Turks, Moors, Byzantines, and others. When Westerners went out to conquer the world in the sixteenth century, they did so for God as well as gold. The Reformation and Counter Reformation and the division of Western Christendom into Protestantism and Catholicism and the political and intellectual consequences of that rift are also distinctive features of Western history, totally absent from Eastern Orthodoxy and removed from the Latin American experience.

European languages. Language is second only to religion as a factor distinguishing people of one culture from those of another. The West differs from most other civilizations in its multiplicity of languages. Japanese, Hindi, Mandarin, Russian, and even Arabic are recognized as the core languages of other civilizations. The West inherited Latin, but a variety of nations emerged in the West, and with them developed national languages grouped loosely into the broad categories of Romance and Germanic. By the sixteenth century these languages had generally assumed their contemporary forms. Latin gave way to French as a common international language for the West, and in the twentieth century French succumbed to English.

Separation of spiritual and temporal authority. Throughout Western history, first the Church and then many churches existed separate from the state. God and Caesar, church and state, spiritual authority and temporal authority had been a prevailing dualism in Western culture. Only in Hindu civilization were religion and politics as clearly separated. In Islam, God is Caesar; in China and Japan, Caesar is God; in

Orthodoxy, God is caesar's junior partner. The separation and recurrence between church and state that typify Western civilization have occurred in no other civilization. This division of authority contributed immeasurably to the development of freedom in the West.

Rule of law. The concept of the centrality of law to civilized existence was inherited from the Romans. Medieval thinkers elaborated the idea of natural law, according to which monarchs were supposed to exercise their power, and a common law tradition developed in England. During the phase of absolutism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the rule of law was observed more in the breach than in practice, but the idea of subordinating human power to some external restraint persisted: *Non sub homine sed sub Deo et lege*. The tradition of the rule of law laid the basis for constitutionalism and the protection of human rights, including property rights, against the arbitrary exercise of power. In other civilizations law has been a much less important factor in shaping thought and behavior. Social pluralism and civil society. Western society historically has been highly pluralistic. What is distinctive about the West, as Karl Deutsch noted, "is the rise and persistence of diverse autonomous groups not based on blood relationship or marriage."² Beginning in the sixth and seventh centuries these groups initially included monasteries, monastic orders, and guilds, but afterwards expanded in many areas of Europe to include a variety of other associations and societies. For more than a millennium, the West has had a civil society that distinguished it from other civilizations. Associational pluralism was supplemented by class pluralism. Most Western European societies included a relatively strong and autonomous aristocracy, a substantial peasantry, and a small but significant class of merchants and traders. The strength of the feudal aristocracy was particularly important in limiting absolutism's ability to take firm root in most European nations. This European pluralism contrasts sharply with the poverty of civil society, the weakness of the aristocracy, and the strength of the centralized bureaucratic empires that existed during the same time periods in Russia, China, the Ottoman lands, and other non-Western societies.

Representative bodies. Social pluralism gave rise at an early date to estates, parliaments, and other institutions that represented the interests of the aristocracy, clergy, merchants, and other groups. These bodies provided forms of representation that in the course of modernization evolved into the institutions of modern democracy. In some instances during the era of absolutism they were abolished or their powers greatly limited. But even when that happened, they could, as in France, be resurrected as a vehicle for expanded political participation. No other civilization today has a comparable heritage of representative bodies stretching back a millennium. Movements for self-government also developed at the local level, beginning in the ninth century in the cities of Italy and then spreading northward, wresting power from bishops and nobles and finally, in the thirteenth century, leading to such confederations of "strong and independent cities" as the Hanseatic League.³ Representation at the national level was thus supplemented by a measure of autonomy at the local level not seen in other regions of the world.

Individualism. Many of the above features of Western civilization contributed to the emergence of a sense of individualism and a tradition of individual rights and liberties unique among civilized societies. Individualism developed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and acceptance of the right of individual choice, which Deutsch terms "the Romeo and Juliet revolution," prevailed in the West by the seventeenth century. Even claims for equal rights for all—"the poorest he in England has a life to live as much as the richest he"—were articulated if not universally accepted. Individualism remains a distinguishing feature of the West in twentieth-century civilizations. In one analysis involving similar population groups from 50 countries, the 20 countries scoring highest on the individualism index included 19 of the 20 Western countries in the sample. Another cross-cultural survey of individualism and collectivism similarly highlighted the dominance of individualism in the West compared with the prevalence of collectivism elsewhere, concluding that "the values that are most important in the West are least important worldwide."⁴ Again and again both Westerners and non-Westerners point to individualism as the central distinguishing mark of the West. The above list is not an exhaustive enumeration of the distinctive characteristics of Western civilization. Nor is it meant to imply that those characteristics were always and everywhere present in Western society. They obviously were not: the many despots in Western history regularly ignored the rule of law and suspended representative bodies.

Nor is it meant to suggest that none of these characteristics have appeared in other civilizations. They obviously have: the Koran and the sharia constitute basic law for Islamic societies; Japan and India had class systems paralleling that of the West (and perhaps as a result are the only two major non-Western societies to sustain democratic governments for any length of time). Individually, almost none of these factors is unique to the West. But the combination of them is, and has given the West its distinctive quality. These concepts, practices, and institutions have been far more prevalent in the West than in other civilizations. They form the essential continuing core of Western civilization. They are what is Western, but not modern, about the West. They also generated the commitment to individual freedom that now distinguishes the West from other civilizations. Europe, as Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., has said, is "the source—the unique source" of the "ideas of individual liberty, political democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and cultural freedom. . . . These are European ideas, not Asian, nor African, nor Middle Eastern ideas, except by adoption...." ⁵ These concepts and characteristics are also in large part the factors that enabled the West to take the lead in modernizing itself and the world. They make Western civilization unique, and Western civilization is precious not because it is universal but because it is unique.

CAN THE REST COPY THE WEST?

To MODERNIZE, must non-Western societies abandon their own cultures and adopt the core elements of Western culture? From time to time leaders of such societies have thought it necessary. Peter the Great and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk were determined to modernize their countries and convinced that doing so meant adopting Western culture, even to the point of replacing traditional headgear with its Western equivalent. In the process, they created "torn" countries, unsure of their cultural identity. Nor did Western cultural imports significantly help them in their pursuit of modernization. More often, leaders of non-Western societies have pursued modernization and rejected westernization. Their goal is summed up in the phrases *ti-yong* (Chinese learning for the fundamental principles, Western learning for practical use) and *woken, yosei* (Japanese spirit, Western technique), articulated by Chinese and Japanese reformers of a century ago, and in Saudi Arabia's Prince Bandar bin Sultan's comment in 1994 that "'foreign imports' are nice as shiny or high-tech 'things.' But intangible social and political institutions imported from elsewhere can be deadly—ask the Shah of Iran . . . Islam is for us not just a religion but a way of life. We Saudis want to modernize but not necessarily westernize." Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, and, to a lesser degree, Iran have become modern societies without becoming Western societies. China is clearly modernizing, but certainly not westernizing.

Interaction and borrowing between civilizations have always taken place, and with modern means of transportation and communication they are much more extensive. Most of the world's great civilizations, however, have existed for at least one millennium and in some cases for several. These civilizations have a demonstrated record of borrowing from other civilizations in ways that enhance their own chances of survival. China's absorption of Buddhism from India, scholars agree, failed to produce the "Indianization" of China; it instead caused the Sinification of Buddhism. The Chinese adapted Buddhism to their purposes and needs. The Chinese have to date consistently defeated intense Western efforts to Christianize them. If at some point they do import Christianity, it is more than likely that it will be absorbed and adapted in such a manner as to strengthen the continuing core of Chinese culture.

Similarly, in past centuries Muslim Arabs received, valued, and used their "Hellenic inheritance for essentially utilitarian reasons. Being mostly interested in borrowing certain external forms or technical aspects, they knew how to disregard all elements in the Greek body of thought that would conflict with 'the truth' as established in their fundamental Koranic norms and precepts." Japan followed the same pattern. In the seventh century Japan imported Chinese culture and made the "transformation on its own initiative, free from economic and military pressures," to high civilization. "During the centuries that followed, periods of relative isolation from continental influences during which previous borrowings were sorted out and the useful ones assimilated would alternate with periods of renewed contact and cultural borrowing." In similar fashion, Japan and other non-Western societies today are absorbing selected elements of Western culture and using them to strengthen their own cultural identity. It would,

as Braudel argues, almost "be childish" to think that the "triumph of civilization in the singular" would lead to the end of the plurality of cultures embodied for centuries in the world's great civilizations.⁶

CULTURAL BACKLASH

MODERNIZATION and economic development neither require nor produce cultural westernization. To the contrary, they promote a resurgence of, and renewed commitment to, indigenous cultures. At the individual level, the movement of people into unfamiliar cities, social settings, and occupations breaks their traditional local bonds, generates feelings of alienation and anomie, and creates crises of identity to which religion frequently provides an answer. At the societal level, modernization enhances the economic wealth and military power of the country as a whole and encourages people to have confidence in their heritage and to become culturally assertive. As a result, many non-Western societies have seen a return to indigenous cultures. It often takes a religious form, and the global revival of religion is a direct consequence of modernization. In non-Western societies this revival almost necessarily assumes an anti-Western cast, in some cases rejecting Western culture because it is Christian and subversive, in others because it is secular and degenerate. The return to the indigenous is most marked in Muslim and Asian societies. The Islamic Resurgence has manifested itself in every Muslim country; in almost all it has become a major social, cultural, and intellectual movement, and in most it has had a deep impact on politics. In 1996 virtually every Muslim country except Iran was more Islamic and more Islamist in its outlook, practices, and institutions than it was 15 years earlier. In the countries where Islamist political forces do not shape the government, they invariably dominate and often monopolize the opposition to the government. Throughout the Muslim world people are reacting against the "Westoxification" of their societies. East Asian societies have gone through a parallel rediscovery of indigenous values and have increasingly drawn unflattering comparisons between their culture and Western culture. For several centuries they, along with other non-Western peoples, envied the economic prosperity, technological sophistication, military power, and political cohesion of Western societies. They sought the secret of this success in Western practices and customs, and when they identified what they thought might be the key they attempted to apply it in their own societies. Now, however, a fundamental change has occurred. Today East Asians attribute their dramatic economic development not to their import of Western culture but to their adherence to their own culture. They have succeeded, they argue, not because they became like the West, but because they have remained different from the West. In somewhat similar fashion, when non-Western societies felt weak in relation to the West, many of their leaders invoked Western values of self-determination, liberalism, democracy, and freedom to justify their opposition to Western global domination. Now that they are no longer weak but instead increasingly powerful, they denounce as "human rights imperialism" the same values they previously invoked to promote their interests. As Western power recedes, so too does the appeal of Western values and culture, and the West faces the need to accommodate itself to its declining ability to impose its values on non-Western societies. In fundamental ways, much of the world is becoming more modern and less Western.

One manifestation of this trend is what Ronald Dore has termed the "second-generation indigenization phenomenon." Both in former Western colonies and in continuously independent, non-Western countries, "the first 'modernizer' or 'post-independence' generation has often received its training in foreign (Western) universities in a Western cosmopolitan language. Partly because they first go abroad as impressionable teenagers, their absorption of Western values and lifestyles may well be profound." Most members of the much larger second generation, in contrast, receive their education at home in universities the first generation established, where the local language, rather than its colonial replacement, is used for instruction. These universities "provide a much more diluted contact with metropolitan world culture" and "knowledge is indigenized by means of translations-usually of limited range and of poor quality." Graduates of these universities resent the dominance of the earlier Western-trained generation and thus often "succumb to the appeals of nativist opposition movements."⁷ As Western influence recedes, young and aspiring leaders cannot look to the West to provide them with power and wealth. They have to find the means of success within their own society, and hence accommodate the values and culture of that society.

Indigenization is furthered by the democracy paradox: when non-Western societies adopt Western-style elections, democracy encourages and often brings to power nativist and anti-Western political movements. In the 1960s and 1970s westernized and pro-Western governments in developing countries were threatened by coups and revolutions; in the 1980s and 1990s they have been increasingly in danger of being ousted in elections. Democracy tends to make a society more parochial, not more cosmopolitan. Politicians in non-Western societies do not win elections by demonstrating how Western they are. Electoral competition stimulates them to fashion what they believe will be the most popular appeals, and those are usually ethnic, nationalist, and religious in character. The result is popular mobilization against Western-oriented elites and the West in general. This process, which began in Sri Lanka in the 1950s, has spread from country to country in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, and is manifest in the victories of religiously oriented parties in India, Turkey, Bosnia, and Israel in elections in 1995 and 1996. Democratization is thus at odds with westernization.

The powerful currents of indigenization at work in the world make a mockery of Western expectations that Western culture will become the world's culture. The two central elements of any culture are language and religion. English, it has been asserted, is becoming the world's language. It clearly has become the lingua franca for communication in multinational business, diplomacy, international institutions, tourism, and aviation. This use of English for intercultural communication, however, presupposes the existence of different cultures; like translation and interpretation, it is a way of coping with those differences, not eliminating them. In fact, the proportion of the world's population speaking English is small and declining. According to the most reliable data, compiled by Sidney S. Culbert, a professor at the University of Washington, in 1980 roughly 9.8 percent of human beings spoke English as a first or second language; in 1992, 7.6 percent did. A language foreign to 92 percent of the world's population is not the world's language. Similarly, in 1958, 24 percent of humans spoke one of the five major Western languages; in 1992, less than 21 percent did. The situation is similar for religion. Western Christians now make up perhaps 30 percent of the world's population, but the proportion is declining steadily, and at some point in the next decade or so the number of Muslims will exceed the number of Christians. With respect to the two central elements of culture, language and religion, the West is in retreat. As Michael Howard has observed, the "common Western assumption that cultural diversity is a historical curiosity being rapidly eroded by the growth of a common, Western-oriented, Anglophone world culture, shaping our basic values . . . is simply not true."⁸

As indigenization spreads and the appeal of Western culture fades, the central problem in relations between the West and the rest is the gap between the West's, particularly America's, efforts to promote Western culture as the universal culture and its declining ability to do so. The collapse of communism exacerbated this disparity by reinforcing the view in the West that its ideology of democratic liberalism had triumphed globally and was thus universally valid. The West—and especially the United States, which has always been a missionary nation—believes that the non-Western peoples should commit themselves to the Western values of democracy, free markets, limited government, separation of church and state, human rights, individualism, and the rule of law, and should embody these values in their institutions. Minorities in other civilizations embrace and promote these values, but the dominant attitudes toward them in non-Western cultures range from skepticism to intense opposition. What is universalism to the West is imperialism to the rest.

Non-Westerners do not hesitate to point to the gaps between Western principle and Western practice. Hypocrisy and double standards are the price of universalist pretensions. Democracy is promoted, but not if it brings Islamic fundamentalists to power; nonproliferation is preached for Iran and Iraq, but not for Israel; free trade is the elixir of economic growth, but not for agriculture; human rights are an issue with China, but not with Saudi Arabia; aggression against oil-owning Kuwaitis is repulsed with massive force, but not so aggression against oil-less Bosnians. The belief that non-Western peoples should adopt Western values, institutions, and culture is, if taken seriously, immoral in its implications. The almost universal reach of European power in the late nineteenth century and the global dominance of the United States in the latter half of the twentieth century spread many aspects of Western civilization across the world. But European globalism is no more, and American hegemony is receding, if only because it is no longer needed to protect the United States against a Cold War Soviet threat. Culture follows power. If

non-Western societies are once again shaped by Western culture, it will happen only as a result of the expansion and deployment of Western power. Imperialism is the necessary, logical consequence of universalism, yet few proponents of universalism support the militarization and brutal coercion that would be necessary to achieve their goal. Furthermore, as a maturing civilization, the West no longer has the economic or demographic dynamism required to impose its will on other societies. Any effort to do so also runs contrary to Western values of self-determination and democracy. This March, Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia told the assembled heads of European governments: "European values are European values; Asian values are universal values." As Asian and Muslim civilizations begin to assert the universal relevance of their cultures, Westerners will come to appreciate the connection between universalism and imperialism and to see the virtues of a pluralistic world.

SHORING UP THE WEST

THE TIME has come for the West to abandon the illusion of universality and to promote the strength, coherence, and vitality of its civilization in a world of civilizations. The interests of the West are not served by promiscuous intervention into the disputes of other peoples.

In the era that is dawning, primary responsibility for containing and resolving regional conflicts must rest with the leading states of the civilizations dominant in those regions. "All politics is local politics," Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, the former Speaker of the House, observed, and the corollary to that truth is "All power is local power." Neither the United Nations nor the United States can impose on local conflicts long-lasting solutions that deviate from the realities of local power. As anyone knowledgeable about crime knows, local law and order are best insured by a cop walking the beat, not by the potential appearance over the horizon of a squad of motorized police.

In a multipolar, multicivilizational world, the West's responsibility is to secure its own interests, not to promote those of other peoples nor to attempt to settle conflicts between other peoples when those conflicts are of little or no consequence to the West. The future of the West depends in large part on the unity of the West. Scholars of civilizations see them evolving through times of trouble and a period of warring states, eventually leading to a universal state for the civilization that may be either a source of renewal or a prelude to decay and disintegration. Western civilization has moved beyond its warring states phase and is heading toward its universal state phase. That phase is still incomplete with the nation-states of the West cohering into two semi-universal states in Europe and North America. These two entities and their constituent units are, however, bound together by an extraordinarily complex network of formal and informal institutional ties. The universal states of previous civilizations were empires. Since democracy is the political form of Western civilization, the emerging universal state of Western civilization is not an empire but rather a compound of federations, confederations, and international regimes.

The problem for the West, in this situation, is to maintain its dynamism and to promote its coherence.

Western unity depends more on events in the United States than on those in Europe. At present the United States is pulled in three directions. It is pulled south by the continuing immigration of Latin Americans and the growing size and power of its Hispanic population; by the incorporation of Mexico into the North American Free Trade Agreement and the possibility of extending NAFTA to other western hemisphere countries; and by the political, economic, and cultural changes in Latin America that make it more like the United States. At the same time, the United States is pulled westward by the increasing wealth and influence of East Asian societies; by the ongoing efforts to develop a Pacific community, epitomized in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum; and by migration from Asian societies. If democracy, free markets, the rule of law, civil society, individualism, and Protestantism take firm root in Latin America, that continent, whose culture has always been closely related to that of the West, will merge with the West and become the third pillar of Western civilization. No such convergence is possible with Asian societies. Asia is instead likely to pose continuing economic and political challenges to the United States specifically and the West more generally. The third pull, toward Europe, is the most important. Shared values, institutions, history, and culture dictate the continuing close association of the United States and Europe. Both necessary and desirable is the further development of institutional ties across the Atlantic, including negotiation of a European-American free

trade agreement and creation of a North Atlantic economic organization as a counterpart to NATO. The major current differences between Europe and America arise not from direct conflicts of interest with each other, but from their policies toward third parties. Among other questions, these include the provision of support to a Muslim-dominated Bosnia, the priority of Israeli security needs in Middle Eastern policy, U.S. efforts to penalize foreign companies that do business with Iran and Cuba, the maintenance of full economic sanctions against Iraq, and the part human rights and weapons proliferation concerns should play in dealing with China. Non-Western powers, especially China, have actively attempted to exploit these differences and play one Western country off against another. The differences themselves arise largely from different geopolitical perspectives and domestic political and economic interests. Maintaining the unity of the West, however, is essential to slowing the decline of Western influence in world affairs. Western peoples have far more in common with each other than they have with Asian, Middle Eastern, or African peoples. The leaders of Western countries have institutionalized patterns of trust and cooperation among themselves that, with rare exceptions, they do not have with the leaders of other societies. United, the West will remain a formidable presence on the international scene; divided, it will be prey to the efforts of non-Western states to exploit its internal differences by offering short-term gains to some Western countries at the price of long-term losses for all Western countries. The peoples of the West, in Benjamin Franklin's phrase, must hang together, or most assuredly they will hang separately. Promoting the coherence of the West means both preserving Western culture within the West and defining the limits of the West. The former requires, among other things, controlling immigration from non-Western societies, as every major European country has done and as the United States is beginning to do, and ensuring the assimilation into Western culture of the immigrants who are admitted. It also means recognizing that in the post-Cold War world, NATO is the security organization of Western civilization and that its primary purpose is to defend and preserve that civilization. Hence states that are Western in their history, religion, and culture should, if they desire, be able to join NATO. Practically speaking, NATO membership would be open to the Visegrad states, the Baltic states, Slovenia, and Croatia, but not countries that have historically been primarily Muslim or Orthodox. While recent debate has focused entirely on the expansion rather than the contraction of NATO, it is also necessary to recognize that as NATO'S mission changes, Turkish and Greek ties to NATO will weaken and their membership could either come to an end or become meaningless. Withdrawal from NATO is the declared goal of the Welfare Party in Turkey, and Greece is becoming as much an ally of Russia as it is a member of NATO.

The West went through a European phase of development and expansion that lasted several centuries and an American phase that has dominated this century. If North America and Europe renew their moral life, build on their cultural commonality, and develop closer forms of economic and political integration to supplement their security collaboration in NATO, they could generate a third Euroamerican phase of Western affluence and political influence. Meaningful political integration would in some measure counter the relative decline in the West's share of the world's people, economic product, and military capabilities and revive the West's power in the eyes of the leaders of other civilizations. The principal responsibility of Western leaders is not to attempt to reshape other civilizations in the image of the West—which is increasingly beyond their ability—but to preserve and renew the unique qualities of Western civilization. That responsibility falls overwhelmingly on the most powerful Western country, the United States of America. Neither globalism nor isolationism, neither multilateralism nor unilateralism will best serve American interests. Its interests will be most effectively advanced if the United States eschews those extremes and instead adopts an Atlanticist policy of close cooperation with its European partners, one that will protect and promote the interests, values, and culture of the precious and unique civilization they share.

[Footnote]

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