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ISLAM AND THE WEST
at the crossroads

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by

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If Samuel Huntington were a share, he would today be what market tipsters call a strong buy. That is bad news, because the clash of civilizations, which he predicted in his essay for *Foreign Affairs* in 1993, at the moment casts a gibbet's shadow over the prospects for liberal order around the world. Depressingly, witlessly, we have to a great extent shaped our own disaster-in-waiting. Some of the global problems that we shall face in this century – for example, whether China can make an accommodation between economic license and political authority – are matters for a circumscribed few, in this case a small cadre of bureaucratic politicians in Peking. Others – like "Day after Tomorrow" environmental disasters – have to some extent already been set in train by past greed and ecological pillage. But a clash between the world which likes to think of itself as being primarily made in the mould of the New Testament and the Islamic world of another Book is a catastrophe that we seem sedulously set on triggering through acts both of omission and commission. How can things have come to this?

Let me jog back for a moment to Huntington's thesis. Hot on the heels of liberalism's triumph – the breaching of the Berlin Wall, the fall of Europe's last empire, the opening of markets by technology and international agreement – Huntington warned against the easy assumption that we could now relax, a cold war won without the use of any of those engines of death stockpiled in silos from Utah to the Ukraine. Conflict was not after all a subject for the history books. "The most important conflicts of the future," he wrote, "will occur along the cultural fault lines separating... civilizations from each other." The differences between civilizations were more fundamental than those between political ideologies, and the more the world was shrunk by technology, the more we became aware of them. Globalization weakened local and national identities, and the gap was filled by religion with non-western civilizations returning to their roots, re-Islamizing for instance the Middle East. Moreover, cultural, or as he largely argues it, religious characteristics are less likely to change than those that are political or economic. "Conflict," he notes, "along the fault line between Western and Islamic civilizations has been going on for 1300 years" and "on both sides the interaction between Islam and the West is seen as a clash of civilizations." Popular in academic circles in the West, his theories are also extensively quoted on jihadist websites in the Arab world.

There were other civilizational clashes as well to which Huntington drew attention. But his arguments never convinced me. I spent a good deal of time during my years in Hong Kong pointing out that there was not some cultural divide between the so-called Confucian world ("so-called" usually by those who have never read Confucius and tend to confuse him with Lee Kuan Yew) and the West which strips Asians of civil liberties and denies them democracy. Sun Yat Sen had apparently never existed. Many of us argued that human rights were universally valid, and that democracy under the rule of law was the best system of government everywhere. And with the Asian financial crash and the discrediting of the Asian model of crony capitalism and authoritarian politics, the controversy seemed done and dusted. The clash of civilizations was the stuff of provocative academic seminars. Then the planes slammed in to the Twin Towers, and

the world changed.

Well, of course, it was not quite that simple. The pretexts, the causes, the narrative of atrocity began much earlier than 2001. And we had scholarly guides to point us down the right exploratory tracks. Oh, to have been the publisher of Professor Bernard Lewis, sage of Princeton. I admit to a personal debt to his scholarship. I have enjoyed, and I hope, learned from a number of his books.

But I have started to worry as I read on from *What Went Wrong?* to *The Crisis of Islam* that I am being carefully pointed in a particular direction, lined up before the fingerprints, the cosh, the swag bag and the rest of the evidence. "Most Muslims," he tells us in *The Crisis of Islam*, "are not fundamentalists, and most fundamentalists are not terrorists, but most present-day terrorists are Muslims and proudly identify themselves as such." Well, yes – and it's a sentence that resonates in parts of the policy-making community in Washington. But what if I had tried a similar formulation on some of these same policy makers just after the IRA bombed Harrods in London: "Most Catholics are not extremist Irish republicans, and most extreme republicans are not terrorists, but most terrorists in Britain today are Catholic and proudly identify themselves as such." I suspect that it is not a sentence that would have increased my circle of admirers in America, not because it is wrong but because it is so loaded with an agenda. Anyway, what we have been taught is that there is a rage in the Islamic world – in part the result of history and humiliation – which fuels hostility to America and to Europe too, home of past crusaders and present infidel feudatories of the Great Satan. Clash go the civilizations.

There are many ways of coming at this issue, but I wish myself to be rather prosaic. I will not therefore deal with the religious arguments, leaving them to retired archbishops and other distinguished theologians, only noting in doing so that according to a *Sunday Times* survey in January, more Muslims attend a place of worship in the UK each week than Anglicans. Nor do I want to penetrate deep into the debate about whether Europe and its very secular Union represent Christian civilization, a rather up-market exclusive club, ties for dinner – that sort of thing. There is a past and present to this discussion. Having been brought up on the medieval scholarship of Richard Southern who examined me when I came up to Oxford as a sixteen-year-old, perhaps I know a little more about the past, certainly enough to remember the doctor in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* who established his credentials by recalling the great names of medical science with which he was familiar – six were from Greece and Rome, three from the medieval Islamic world. And what of Thomas Aquinas? He read Latin versions of the Greek philosophers, courtesy of the scholars at the Muslim School of Translation in Toledo, to which we owe so much of our knowledge of the scientific, religious and philosophical works of the ancient world.

As for the present religious, ethnic or civilizational nature of our European club, there are probably about twelve million Muslims living in Western Europe, approaching four million in France, two-and-a-half million in Germany, one-and-three-quarter million here. Their religion is the fastest growing in the world. They practice it in Europe in a union of nation states formed out of the bloody wreckage of the 20th century. Our recent history of gas chambers and gulags, our Christian heritage of flagrant or more discreet anti-Semitism, do not entitle us to address the Islamic world as though we dwelt on a higher plane, custodians of a superior set of moral values. Our prejudices may be rock solid but our pulpits are made of straw.

What of this Islamic world which allegedly confronts our own civilization? It is sometimes forgotten that three-quarters of its 1.2 billion citizens live beyond the countries of the Arab League, in for example the democracies of Malaysia, Indonesia and India. Asian Muslim societies have their share of problems, not least dealing with pockets of extremism, but it is ludicrous to generalize about an Islamic anger engulfing countries from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific shores.

If we focus on a narrower range of Arab countries – the Magreb, the Mashreq, the Gulf, the countries in the cock-pit of current struggle and dissent – what do we find? In 2002, the Arab Thought Foundation commissioned a survey by Zogby International of attitudes in eight countries – Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. They questioned 3,800 people and their results confirmed other similar if not identical surveys, for example by the Pew Research Centre. What is pretty clear is that, like Americans or Europeans, Arabs are most concerned about matters of personal security, fulfillment and satisfaction. Perhaps it is a surprise that they do not appear to hate our Western values, and their cultural emanations – democracy, freedom, education, movies, television. Sad to say their favorite TV program is "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" Other survey evidence underlines this point about the most significant values. The Second Arab Human Development Report published in 2003 – I shall return to its predecessor later – quotes from the World Values Survey which shows that Arabs top the world in believing that democracy is the best form of government. They are way ahead of Europeans and Americans, and three times as likely to hold this view as East Asians.

There is not much sign of a clash of values here. The problem seems to be rather simpler. The Arab world does not mind American and European values, but it cannot stand American policies and by extension the same policies when embraced or tolerated by Europeans. So the Arab world holds very negative opinions of the United States and the United Kingdom (even while holding, according to the same survey, positive views about American freedom and democracy). Why is the UK in this pit of unpopularity? Partly I suppose because of what we are seen to do, and partly because of what we are silent about. I don't know how widely St. Thomas More is read in Arab lands but "*Qui tacet consentire videtur*" is true everywhere. Perhaps it cheers us to discover that

France comes best out of these surveys, scoring very positive ratings, as do Japan, Germany and Canada.

What sort of policies turn Arabs off? Today Iraq would certainly feature high on the list. But in 2002 the issue that stands out from the Zogby survey is, hardly surprisingly, the absence of peace in the Middle East. Let me quote what the survey's authors say; "...[A]fter more than three generations of conflicts, and the betrayal and denial of Palestinian rights, this issue appears to have become a defining one of general Arab concern. It is not a foreign policy issue... rather ... the situation of the Palestinians appears to have become a personal matter." As the recent work of, for example, Richard Perle and David Frum has shown, this apparently incontestable point is, for a particular school of American thought, a deliberate and alarming blind-spot.

The treatment of the Palestinians is one of four areas of policy where the approach we pursue in America and Europe could abate or exacerbate Arab hostility, and build rather than burn bridges between the West and the whole of the Islamic world. The other three that I want to examine are how we engage in the debate on reform in the Arab word; where we go from here in the dreadful situation in Iraq; and how we handle Turkey's aspirations for EU membership. But before I come to my main argument, let me take one short diversion to consider whether they could help us to overcome the terrorist threat that has given such a savage twist to these debates. To try to understand the reasons for terrorism, and where possible and appropriate to address them, is not to condone the wickedness of random murder for political ends.

Our history from Kenya to Israel to Ireland to South Africa is peppered with examples of terrorism which events have elided into politics. Terrorism sometimes has precise political causes and objectives – the Mau Mau, the Stern gang, the IRA the ANC.

Sometimes it has had less focused aims – for instance, Enrico Malatesta's "propaganda of the deed," which tried to draw attention to injustice and destroy the nerve of ruling elites by murdering presidents and princes, tsars and kings.

Today's terrorism by Islamic groups, able through the advance of technology to shatter civilized order through terrible acts of destruction, seems closer to the anarchists than to the gun-toting politicians, for instance the ones I myself know best who were notorious for their ability to carry both a ballot box and an Armalite. The ideas that sustain Usama Bin Laden and those who think like him, not all of them the members of a spectacularly sophisticated network of evil, but nonetheless fellow-believers in a loose confederation of dark prejudices, can hardly be dignified with the description of a sophisticated political manifesto. They do not travel far beyond the old graffiti, "Yankee, Go Home." But they do represent a form of political, social and cultural alienation, which we should seek to comprehend.

Joseph Conrad investigated these dark corners in *The Secret Agent*. Remember these lines:
"*He was no man of action; he was not even an orator of torrential eloquence, sweeping the masses along in the rushing noise and foam of a great enthusiasm. With a more subtle intention, he took the part of an insolent and venomous evoker of sinister impulses which lurk in the blind envy and misery of poverty, in all the hopeful and noble illusions of righteous anger, pity and revolt... The way of even the most justifiable revolutions is prepared by personal impulses disguised into creeds.*"

It is not normal for men and women to want to get up in the morning and strap bombs to themselves or to their children and set out to kill and maim. How does a sense of injustice, which so often inspires surrender to religious simplicity, come to trigger evil? Why does our own notion of the spread of freedom, capitalism and democracy look to others like licentiousness, greed and a new colonialism? We should surely try to fathom the answer to these questions, and understand that we can make them either more or less soluble. Is it really a surrender to organized evil to assert that there are some policies that would demobilize the recruiting sergeants of terrorism? I believe that all four of the hardly original issues I have raised fall into this category.

First, let me deal with some of the arguments aroused by the American proposal to launch a "Greater Middle East Initiative." *Time Magazine* cited the UNDP's Arab Human Development report as the most important publication of 2002. The report unleashed a tidal wave of debate across Arab countries about the reasons for the region's comparative backwardness and inadequate performance. Well over a million copies of the report were downloaded from the Internet, many in Arab countries. Why did a scholarly survey have such an impact?

The first reason is that its authorship caused surprise and endowed credibility. It was written by Arab scholars and policy makers, not well-meaning outsiders. Second, its analysis was captivatingly honest and politically bold. How could it be that in terms of economic performance in the last quarter of the 20th century, the only region that did worse than the Arab countries was sub-Saharan Africa? Why had personal incomes stagnated through these years?

Why had wealth per head in this region fallen from a fifth of the OECD level to a seventh? Why were productivity, investment efficiency and foreign direct investment so low? How could the combined GDP of all Arab countries be lower than that of a single European country, Spain?
The answer came in the prescription summarized by the UNDP's Arab regional director. Arab countries needed to embark on rebuilding their societies on the basis of:

1. Full respect for human rights and human freedoms as the cornerstones of good governance, leading to human development;
2. The complete empowerment of Arab women, taking advantage of all opportunities to build their capabilities and to enable them to exercise those capabilities to the full;
3. The consolidation of knowledge acquisition and its effective utilization.

Governance, gender, education – the Arab world's own formula for improvement and modernization, and a formula too which European partners on the other side of the Mediterranean have been trying gently – perhaps a little too gently – to promote through the Barcelona process for almost a decade. We have been attempting to establish a free trade area around our shared sea – the ambitious aim is to complete it by 2010, to encourage more trade between Arab countries, and to assist those (like Morocco and Jordan) who are themselves committed to modernization, democratic reform and the nurturing of a more lively civil society.
There is in my view a strong link between better government and better economic performance, and between the accomplishment of both those objectives and greater stability. Authoritarian governments are less likely to be good economic managers; they shelter corruption and suppress the sorts of pluralism – a free press, for instance – which bring transparency to economic governance. The result of authoritarianism is two-fold. First, lower economic growth fails to create the jobs that demographic pressures constantly demand in the Arab world. Young men without jobs, without the dignity of work and some money in their pockets, are easily attracted to other causes than the relatively innocent occupation of making money. Second, the denial of civil liberties itself causes resentment, driving debate off the street and out of the coffee shops into the cellars. Bad economic performance, especially when associated with large wealth and income differences, combine with the suppression of dissent to breed trouble.

How should the West, how should the Arab world's European neighbors, support a process of modernization which is so greatly in our own interest, lowering the pressures from illegal immigration, opening new and expanding markets, exporting stability to our near neighborhood? I do not for a moment accept that it is none of our business, since successful and stable neighbors are very much in our own interest. Nor do I buy the argument that encouraging democracy in the Arab world only creates trouble, with the risk that we will replace more or less compliant authoritarian friends with rabid fundamentalist regimes, established on the basis of one man, one vote, once. I have never been convinced by the argument that free politics is inherently more unstable than command politics.

On the other hand, there do seem to me to be some ground rules which outside well-wishers should follow. We are talking about other people's lives and countries, not our own.
"Better," as T. E. Lawrence argued, "to let them do it imperfectly than to do it perfectly yourself, for it is their country, their way and your time is short" (even if in other ways, he is not perhaps the perfect role model for the G8 as we approach these questions). It is imperative that the agenda of modernization – in education, in the rule of law, in participatory government, in opportunities for women, in nourishing civil society – should be owned by Arab countries themselves.

Recognition that this will all take time, and that you need to prepare for the long haul, is not code for procrastination. Developing democracy is not like making instant coffee. We also have

to be careful not to preach or offer – as we have in such grotesque profusion – evidence of double standards. We should expect the same of everyone regardless of how pliable some authoritarian countries may be when passing strategic interests throw up new short-term imperatives. If democratic modernization looks like a Western tactic for securing our own interests, we risk discrediting the ideas in which we believe and turning our Arab friends who share the same ideas into seeming stooges. Above all, you cannot impose a free society through invasion and military might, spreading democracy through the region in the tracks, as it were, of Jeffersonian tanks.

All this and more was set out plainly in the follow-up Human Development Report in 2003, which made it less congenial reading in parts of Washington (whether we must now add "in parts of London" too – is a worrying after-thought). We could, however, do little better than follow much of the advice of the Arab scholars who wrote it, engaging the modernizers on their strategic agenda as well as on our own, listening to their views of where we get things wrong, and providing more assistance (not least financial) for modernization programs. I favor a much greater emphasis on positive conditionality in our generous development programs in the region – spending more money to assist those who are genuinely committed to reform.

I suppose all this leads naturally, if gloomily, to my second theme, to what Winston Churchill called "the thankless deserts of Mesopotamia." I cannot help recalling also what he wrote in *My Early Life*:

"Never, never, never believe any war will be smooth and easy, or that anyone who embarks on the strange voyage can measure the tides and hurricanes he will encounter. The statesman who yields to war fever must realize that once the signal is given, he is no longer the master of policy but the slave of unforeseeable and uncontrollable events."

So here we are today, having in the prophetic words of the secretary-general of the Arab League "opened the gates of hell," struggling to close them, or in some disreputable cases to run away from them and hope they will close themselves. On this matter, at least, I agree with our Prime Minister: for Britain and America, to "cut and run," before there is a functioning and democratic Iraqi Government in place, is not an honorable option; it does not even secure our own short-term interests, let alone Iraq's; and we cannot salve our consciences by thinking we have dealt a blow for effective multilateralism by dumping Iraq in the lap of the UN before we bolt for home. The aim is as difficult as it is clear. To secure it will naturally require the authority of the UN. But it will also require the combined efforts of the international community, led by the United States which is only likely to be successful – an outcome in all our interests – if it recognizes explicitly that it is unwise of any big country, especially the world's only super-power, to behave as though it believed in Machiavelli's maxim, "It is better to be feared than loved."

In Iraq we have to endow local and autonomous governing institutions with as much political authority as possible, recognizing that until there have been elections legitimacy and power will inevitably be limited. January 2005 looks a long way off, and the intervening months will test us

with events difficult to control if not always to foresee.
Why do I say that? Because one eminently predictable development will be the attempt to discredit or murder the moderate leadership in each community – Kurd, Shia and Sunni. This will be the great test. Moderate leaders of these communities need to be able to appeal convincingly to their followers not to drift to the extremes. If that happens, the whole of this not-so-carefully stitched together country could fly apart, with dangerous regional implications.

There are so many lessons to learn from this wretched adventure. But for the time being, we do not have the luxury of picking over all the "I told-you-so's." America and Europe have to work together to try and end the whole affair in tolerable order. We will all be damaged if we fail.

Third, I return to that issue which as I said before, is not regarded as a matter of foreign policy by most Arabs – I guess even less so after the televising of the events in Rafah, last week: Palestine and Israel, two communities locked into a downward spiral of death and destruction, each seemingly intent on causing pain to the other. In my experience, even the most studious attempts at neutrality and even-handedness bring down accusations of bias and prejudice on one's head. I simply say in passing – enough I am sure to attract waves of criticism – that there seem to me to be two legitimate howls of rage, two story lines not one. All I wish to do today against a background of continuing mayhem – the plotting of revenge and the exacting of terrible retribution against the last act of revenge – is to take a cue from the story of the small boy and his naked monarch.

We know that there are ways of ending the bloodshed. We came close at Camp David four years ago and at Taba. The Mitchell Commission showed us what would be involved. The Quartet's Road Map provided a political gazetteer. The Geneva initiative demonstrated that there were still some courageous men and women in Israel and Palestine who could find the path to peace. We know what that peace will require if two states are to live harmoniously side by side in what, with shame if not irony, we still call the Holy Land. How to get there?

The international community's policy in the last few years has been based on three propositions: first, that Mr. Sharon and his government believe in the creation of a viable Palestinian state; second, Mr. Arafat and Palestinian political leaders will be able, and will have the will, to convince their community that that goal will only be achieved if they give up violence, even against what they see as an illegal and oppressive occupation of their own land; third, that Mr. Sharon and his government will take action – for example, the dismantling of settlements – which will help Mr. Arafat accomplish the persuasive tasks assigned to him. Do we still believe that those propositions are true?

If there is to be the sort of settlement that will bring a permanent peace, then they need to be true, and if we have any doubts that they are, this only strengthens the case for greater

engagement by the international community in pushing and shoving and harrying and cajoling both sides to move. The Europeans and the Arabs will need to be more assertive with the Palestinian leadership; but that will not work unless America is more prepared to act in the same way with Israel. It is, I am afraid, as crude as that.

Sequencing leads nowhere. Both sides need to be pressed to jump at the same time – a fundamental principle of the Road Map. Unless this happens, the bloodshed will continue, destroying the prospect of a better life for Palestinians and Israelis and poisoning relations between America, Britain and some other European countries and the Arab world.

I come last to what for many observers will be the main test of the European Union's commitment to a pluralist and inclusive approach to Islam: not its relations with an Arab country but its approach to the question of Turkish membership of our Union – a question which has been asked, and received halting, embarrassed and obfuscatory answers for more than thirty years. The question will be posed again at the end of this year, when the EU has to decide whether it will finally open negotiations with Turkey, having conceded that it was, after all, a candidate for membership five years previously, at the Helsinki European Council in December 1999.

The case that this is a pivotal moment in the EU's relationship with the Islamic world can be, and is, overstated. But our approach to Turkey does matter. It says a great deal about how we see ourselves, and want to be seen, in terms both of culture and of geopolitics.

Culture first, and perhaps most importantly. What does it take to be a member of the EU? According to the Treaties, membership is open to any European country that respects the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. That naturally raises two questions: first, is Turkey European? And secondly, does it respect the principles that we hold dear?

Is Turkey European? If aspiration is any guide, the answer would have to be a resounding yes. Turkey has resolutely steered a European course ever since Ataturk decreed the end of the Sultanate in 1922. The feeling runs deep, and is promoted with unrelenting vigor by successive Turkish governments. The legacy of Ataturk, born in Thessaloniki and convinced, despite the condescension of the European powers of the day, that his country's future lay to the west, is ever present. And his presence is sometimes more than metaphorical – any meeting in any Turkish government office takes place under the cool gaze of the Ghazi, immaculate in determinedly western suit and tie.

Does Turkey respect our principles? This is where the legacy of Ataturk turns negative. Along with his many more positive achievements, he was also the creator of the Deep State. He saw

ethnic and religious minorities as divisive. He established a key role for the military in politics. All of these were, and are, antithetical to the idea of Europe that we have been laboring to bring into existence since the Second World War. That was true in 1963, when we signed one of the then EEC's first ever Association Agreements, and it has remained true during times of often repressive military dictatorship ever since.

Walter Hallstein declared at the signature of that Association Agreement that "*La Turquie fait part de l'Europe. C'est la sens le plus profond de cette opération: elle apporte, dans la forme la plus appropriée à notre époque qui soit concevable, la confirmation d'une vérité, qui est plus que l'expression abrégée d'une réalité géographique ou d'une constatation historique qui vaut pour quelques siècles*".[1]

Many Turkish observers might be surprised if that were deemed to be less true now, under a government that has carried on and even redoubled a program of constitutional reform designed to entrench democracy, promote the protection of minorities and limit the role of the military in government.

In their eyes, Turkey has grappled with the existential question, against a background of economic uncertainty and terrorist activity, and has unequivocally chosen the European course. Why, they ask, is that not recognized?

The answers to those questions matter to our own geopolitical interests. How much interest should we take in the fate of our southern neighbor and ally, bordered by Iraq, Iran, Syria and the southern Caucusus? How welcoming should we be to a neighbor that has demonstrated the falsity of the case that Islam and democracy do not mix? When we do take an interest, should we recognize Turkey as a respected partner, or as a difficult pupil? These questions should preoccupy us all as the December European Council approaches, and we will no doubt come to different conclusions. I would submit, though, an example of what I think is almost exactly the wrong approach. In the aftermath of the conflict in Iraq, the American Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, flew to Ankara to chide the Turkish generals for not intervening more forcefully to overturn the decision of the Turkish Parliament that Turkish troops should not be sent to Iraq. Happily for all of us, and especially for the people of Turkey, the generals did not intervene, and the Parliamentary process was respected. The Turkish government acted creditably. Considering Iraq today, we can make our judgments as to whether they acted wisely. But what if they had done otherwise, would the U.S. still have pressed us to accept Turkey as an EU member? Military interventions in politics are not one of our democratic criteria in Europe. We are not simply an alliance but a Union in which democratic states share some of their sovereignty.

Turkey, then, lies on the cusp between the current EU and the Islamic world. Throughout its history Istanbul, Constantinople as was, has been a bridge between worlds. At one time, and particularly when Western Europe was a more savage place, Turkey and the Turks were the very incarnation of the threatening outsider. But that was when "Europe" and "Christendom" were synonyms. We've moved on from that, as I argued earlier. I should say in passing that the metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox church and the Patriarchs of the Armenian Orthodox church, amongst others, would be surprised to discover that they are outside the Christian club. The proposition that Europe can be defined by religion is a false one, not to say dangerous. In many ways, the European Union is a reaction against the idea that we can define ourselves by religion or ethnicity, and thus define others as beyond consideration.

To be fair, the counter-proposition, that saying "no" to Turkey for now would somehow turn the Arab world against us is also over-stated. Turkey is not Islam, nor is it (as I have said) an Arab state. However we cannot help but be conscious of the symbolism, at this time, of reaching out a hand to a country whose population is overwhelmingly Muslim. I look forward to the debate preceding the Commission's Opinion on the matter in the autumn. In making it, we will be conscious that we potentially pave the way for a very different EU – and that should be squarely and honestly confronted. It may well be politically difficult to envisage and administratively grueling to manage. But we need to open the debate, recognizing that the beginning of negotiations with Turkey, whatever the uncertainty of the outcome, would lead to a very different Turkey and very different relations between Europe and the Islamic world.

Provided we make the right policy choices in the four areas I have indicated, I believe we can avoid the clash between the West and Islam which some predict and a few pray and conspire for. The real clash is not between civilizations themselves, but between civilizations and barbarism – the enemy of us all.

That is the struggle we need to define and win, working in the West with the leadership of the United States whose military prowess we require for a peaceful world and whose moral leadership we need even more.

I opened a book critical of American foreign policy the other day – there is quite a cottage industry out there – which began with a stanza from a poem written by the authoress of "America the Beautiful," Katherine Lee Bates. Only an American could quote it, and I repeat it here not because I agree with it but because it contains an important sentiment: "*And what of thee, O Lincoln's Land? What gloom Is darkening above the Sunset Sea? Vowed Champion of Liberty, deplume Thy war crest, bow thy knee, Before God answer thee*."

Now there are three things that prevent me shouting "Hallelujah" at the end of that. First, I am averse to dragging God into discussions of foreign policy; second, it is massively arrogant to

demand humility of others; third, in a dangerous world we need America to don its war crest from time to time. Indeed, that makes it possible for us – a matter of shame for Europeans who still do too little for our own and the world's security – to be vauntingly sanctimonious. But I like the "Champion of Liberty" bit, and America has always been at its most convincing and effective when it has combined confident power with genial humility, as I seem to recall was once rightly said by a Presidential candidate.

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http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/04/256&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en - fnB1#fnB1[1] "Turkey is part of Europe. This is the deepest possible meaning of this operation which brings, in the most appropriate way conceivable in our time, the confirmation of a geographical reality as well as a historical truism that has been valid for several centuries."