Research in Progress Seminar
Department of International Relations
University of Sussex
18 February

Dialogue of Civilisations as an Alternative Model for World Order

Fabio Petito
Department of International Relations
University of Sussex
F.Petito@sussex.ac.uk
DRAFT NOT TO BE CIRCULATED

On the 4 November 1998, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted a resolution proposed by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Khatami and designated the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of the 'Dialogue among Civilisations'. In the very same year, on the 11 September 2001, the shadow of a future clash of civilisations came hammering down on the world with incredible velocity and brought a growing atmosphere of fear, mistrust and war into which we have been rapidly drawn since those terrible terrorist attacks. At the dawn of the third millennium, this coincidence seems increasingly like a sign of the times, a symbolic indication of the historical period we are entering.

More than fifteen years after the end of the Cold War, the overwhelming political and ideological dominance of a US-centred Western and Liberal world seems to have been established but the promises of a peaceful 'New World Order' have clearly not been fulfilled. On the contrary, the international society has been drawn into a *crescendo* of instability, wars and political violence. In this respect, the post 9/11 developments have simply made more visible a deeper crisis of order that had been looming on the horizon after the collapse of the old bipolar system but that arguably had been incubating throughout the twentieth century in a longer-term process of dissolution of the forms and rules of international coexistence.[1]

It is in the context of the post-1989 widespread public debate on the future of the world order that the call for a 'dialogue of civilisations' has been emerging as a set of ideas, often generic but increasingly perceived as a political necessity all over the world. These have been intended to contribute somehow to the construction of a more peaceful and just world order. Since then, the idea of dialogue of civilisations has been made the object of a plethora of public conferences and international meetings but very little attention has been devoted by international relations and political theorists to clarifying and articulating its possible meaning as a framework for the future of world order.

[1]See Carl Scmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*, trans. Gary L. Ulmen, (New York: Telos Press, [1950] 2003).

This is even more regretful when one notes that Khatami had explicitly put forward this vision with this precise aim in mind.[2]

Against this background of academic indifference, I will take the suggestion of Khatami seriously and attempt to articulate an argument for the normative structure of contemporary multicultural and globalised international society inspired by the political discourse of dialogue of civilisations, what I call 'dialogue of civilisations as international political theory'. In the same way that modern political theory did not emerge from (and in) a vacuum but in response to the political problems and inquiries of the day (think of the key founding texts of the modern theory of the state), the great issues of today's politics, arguably *in primis* its global predicament of a crisis of order combined with a growing worldwide political manifestation of cultural pluralism, are calling for an adequate international political theory of world order, i.e., a theory for the normative structure of a multicultural and globalised international society.

Dialogue of Civilisations as a Global Political Discourse: Against the Background of the 'End of History' and the 'Clash of Civilisations'

As I have argued somewhere else, the idea of dialogue of civilisations emerged in the 1990s as a global political discourse against the background of the two competing and powerful discourses, the 'Clash of Civilisations' and the 'Globalisation of Liberalism/End of History'.[3] Therefore I take the idea of dialogue of civilisations as being a third political reaction to the end of the Cold War that, while not a synthesis of the two first ones, could not be set and framed, I would contend, except against the background of these two intellectually and politically powerful theses. A first crucial distinction can, however, be underlined from the outset: the political discourse of dialogue of civilisations has yet to be conceptualised in the realm of the theoretical reflection on international relations, very broadly conceived, in the way that the 'end of history' and the 'clash of civilisations' have been. As a first step in this direction, a preliminary analysis of dialogue of civilisations as global political discourse may well explore more in details the comparisons and contrasts with

[2] The lack of academic attention to the issues, problems, and challenges that the idea of dialogue of civilisations poses for the future of international relations and world order is not the focus of this paper. It seems to me, however, that this dismissive intellectual attitude reveals something of the deeply-entrenched Enlightenment (liberal but not exclusively so) assumptions and Western-centric matrix of our academic discourses on international relations and politics. Both the issue of civilisations and the idea of a genuine mutually-enriching dialogue with non-western traditions seem to strike a sensitive point and activate a kind of almost instinctive defensive reflex among international relations and political theorists in the West. See my *Dialogue of Civilisations as International Political Theory*, PhD thesis, LSE, 2007.

[3] For the two most well-know academic articulations of these discourses see respectively, Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilisations?", *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (1993): 22-49 and *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1996); Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History", *The National Interest*, 16 (1989): 3-16 and *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992). For this argument with specific reference to the visions of a global dialogue put forward by Khatami and Havel, see Fabio Petito, "The Global Political Discourse of Dialogue among Civilizations: Mohammad Khatami and Vaclav Havel", *Global Change, Peace & Security* 19, no. 2 (2007): 103-25.

the abovementioned two theses.[4] In a simplified and schematic way familiar to IR mainstream scholarship – that this paper aims to criticise – it can be argued that dialogue of civilisations shares *analytically* some essential assumptions with the thesis of the clash of civilisations while *normatively* is closer to the approach endorsed by the end of history.

In fact, in contrast to the analytical and empirical argument about the globalisation of liberalism being the last stage of the modernisation and secularisation of the world, dialogue of civilisations stresses the global resurgence of cultural and religious pluralism in world politics and identifies in the quest for cultural authenticity the main present political issue in the relationship between the Western and non-Western world. But where Huntington sees the clash of civilisations scenario mainly as a social-scientific *prediction* grounded in a *primordialist* worldview of politics, the political discourse of dialogue of civilisations sees it as a dangerous *possibility* (or political construction) produced by wrong policies that need to be opposed.[5]

On the normative side, it is self-evident that the proposal for a dialogue of civilisations is formulated as a reaction to the clash of civilisations thesis. In simple terms, the former is first of all designed to prevent the latter. The reason that explains why, from rather convergent empirical considerations and analyses, the political discourse of dialogue of civilisations reaches very different conclusions from Huntington has to do, I would argue, with the different notions of (international) politics that these two positions assume: where Huntington subscribes to a *realist* political framework, the dialogue strategy is committed to a more *idealist* framework closer to the notion of politics implicit in the end of history thesis. In the first case, struggle for power is perceived to be the unavoidable necessity of politics and this condemns international politics to be the realm of conflict *recurrence and repetition* that can only be partially mitigated by a *consequentialist* ethics of statecraft based on non-interference. In the second case, both an idealist commitment to politics as a search for *justice as fairness* and a liberal emphasis on cooperation and non-military issues prevail, and as a consequence, international politics is perceived as a realm where *progress*, however difficult, is nonetheless possible on the base of an ethics of *ends*.

These two distinctions – normative/analytical and realist/idealist – essential to mainstream approaches in IR, are however from my perspective part of the theoretical problems that a fully-fledge international political theory of dialogue of civilisations will have to confront – and at a later stage in this paper I will

[4] For a comparison of Huntington and Fukuyama, see Stanley Kurtz, "The Future of History", *Policy Review*, no. 112 (2002): 43-58.

[5] Here I am drawing on Hasenclever and Rittberger's categorisation, within the context of Peace Studies, of three theoretical perspectives on the impact of faith on political conflict, namely, primordialism (with which they associate Huntington), instrumentalism (with which they associate the rational-actor approach minimising the role of identity) and what they call moderate constructivism (with which they associate various dialogue strategies for conflict resolution). See Andreas Hasenclever and Volker Rittberger, "Does Religion Make a Difference? Theoretical Approaches to the Impact of Faith on Political Conflict" in *Religion in International Relations*, eds. Petito and Hatzopoulos, 107-45.

attempt to do this. What is more important for the time being, is to stress that this preliminary comparative reading does not want to suggest that dialogue civilisations as international political theory, i.e., as an argument for the normative basis of contemporary international society, can be interpreted as a *via media* theoretical position between 'the clash of civilisations' and 'the end of history'; rather it is my argument that if attention is shifted from theory to practice, the radical distance of dialogue of civilisations from the other two theses becomes apparent. In particular, while the two envision respectively a 'thin' or 'thick'[6] – but essentially Western-centric and mainly liberal – international society, the political discourse of dialogue of civilisations points towards and calls for the reopening and re-discussion of the core Western-centric and liberal assumptions upon which the normative structure of the contemporary international society is based.

From this perspective, the idea of a dialogue of civilisations as an argument for a normative structure of a multicultural and globalised international society represents a powerful normative challenge to the contemporary political orthodoxy implicit in both the above-mentioned political discourses. In other words, as Etzioni has convincingly argued: "both the end-of-history and the clash-of–civilisations arguments approach the non-Western parts of the world as if they have little, if anything, to offer to the conception of a good society – at least to its political and economic design – or to the evolving new global architecture".[7] Within this horizon, three major theoretical and political lines of argument emerge as necessary ingredients to be included in any forward-looking reflection on the normative structure of contemporary international society that wishes to be sensitive to the call for a dialogue of civilisations.[8]

Firstly, if the normative structure – the global ethos – of future global coexistence is to be genuinely universal, it cannot only be liberal and Western-centric. Genuine universality requires a sharp awareness of the presence of different cultures and civilisations in world affairs; in many ways it must also spring from there. A fundamental void looms when this global ethos reflects the tenets of cosmopolitan liberalism, a political tradition that forecloses the centrality of cultural and religious identity in the everyday practices of 'really existing communities'.[9]

Secondly, any reflection on a principled world order based on dialogue of civilisations must acknowledge something like a fundamental ethical and political crisis linked to the present liberal Western civilisation and its expansion and recognise that dialogue civilisations seems to enshrine the promise of an answer, or rather to chart a path towards an answer as, in Khatami's words, every dialogue, based on a presumption of worth of the

[6] I have borrowed the 'thick' and 'thin' distinction from Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).
[7] Amitai Etzioni, *From Empire to Community: A New Approach to International Relations* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 26.
[8] See Petito, "The Global Political Discourse of Dialogue among Civilizations".
[9] Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Really Existing Communities", *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 1 (1999): 141-46.

Other, "provides grounds for human creativity to flourish".[10] And, as the Indian post-colonial theorist Ashis Nandy has interestingly argued, such an opening also call for a re-engagement with the disowned or repressed traditions that make up the European experience for "any alternative form of dialogue between cultures cannot but attempt to rediscover the subjugated West and make it an ally".[11]

Finally, the present international situation places on all of us a moral obligation to pursue an active politics of inter-civilisational understanding and engage in a concrete practice of cross-cultural dialogue. It cannot be ignored that since on September 11 2001, in the very year designated by the United Nations as the 'Year of Dialogue of Civilisations', the shadow of a future 'clash of civilisations' came hammering down on the world with incredible velocity and brought a growing atmosphere of fear and war into which we have been rapidly drawn since those terrible terrorist attacks. Not only that: the search for a new global ethos, that is unity in diversity, is needed today even more to defend the plurality of world politics against any imperial temptation; for in the words of Gadamer "the hegemony or unchallengeable power of any one single nation…is dangerous for humanity. It would go against human freedom".[12] With this context in mind, a politics of understanding would already be a great achievement. But to effectively face this challenge at its roots we need to imagine a way out of this strict grid of choices imposed by the contemporary Western-centric and liberal global order and move towards the construction of a multicultural and peaceful world order.

Dialogue of Civilisations as a New Political Realism

The international political theory of dialogue of civilisations articulates an intellectual strategy that problematises the contemporary predominant cosmopolitan preference predicated on the idea of 'world unity' – visible in Fukuyama's thesis but also in other streams of post-89 international theorising[13] – and gives a renewed centrality to the issue of cultural and political pluralism. Integral to this theoretical re-centring is also a critique of the 'wishful thinking' approach and its underlying philosophy of history with its absolute faith in progress and in the unlimited perfectibility of human nature typical of cosmopolitan-liberal political theorising. This conclusion brings into question what, in IR theory, is normally referred to as Idealism - associated with the birth

[10] Mohammad Khatami, speech at the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 21 September 1998.
[11] Ashis Nandy, "A New Cosmopolitanism: Towards a Dialogue of Asian Civilizations", in *Trajectories: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, ed. Kuan-Hsing Chen (London: Routledge, 1998), 146.
[12] Pantham, "Some Dimensions of Universality of Philosophical Hermeneutics: A Conversation with Hans–Georg Gadamer", 132.
[13] This includes, for example, also Wendt's constructivism. See Alex Wendt, "Why a World State is Inevitable", *European Journal of International Relations* 9, no. 4 (2003): 491-542 and Fabio Petito, "Against World Unity: Carl Schmitt and the Western-centric and Liberal Global Order" in *The International Political Thought of Carl Schmitt: Terror, liberal war and the crisis of global order*, ed. Louiza Odysseos and Fabio Petito (London: Routledge, 2007), 166-83.

of IR as discipline in the post-WWI context - with its emphasis on the idea of world government and its commitment to anthropological optimism and a philosophy of history.[14] From this perspective, the international political theory of dialogue of civilisations would clearly be anti-idealist.

This would be a paradoxical conclusion, however, since one of the major arguments of the supporters of the idea of dialogue of civilisations is a normative (idealist-like) critique of the Realist discourse of power politics. This criticism is unsurprisingly mirrored by the Realist accusation made against the idea of dialogue of civilisations and concerning the idealist and wishful thinking nature of its discourse. The argument goes that it might well be normatively worthwhile as well as conceptually possible, but it ultimately remains an unrealistic utopia (or worse, a rhetorical *escamotage* in the hands of dangerous illiberal politicians) when it is brought into the realm of concrete real-world politics where the issues of power and interest are sovereign. This argument reproduces, of course, the classical realist critique to the idealist worldview of international politics according to which any attempt to construct a world order based on ethical and normative considerations is doomed miserably to fail, as it does not engage with the 'real nature' of international relations as power politics.[15] From this perspective, the international political theory of dialogue of civilisations could not but be located in the anti-realist camp.

This apparent contradiction could arguably be reflected in the two main theoretical sources that I intend to draw on in the articulation of the international political theory of dialogue of civilisations: the 'idealist' dialogical theory inspired by Gadamerian hermeneutics and the 'realist' theory of global order inspired by Schmitt. Here the issue that cannot be avoided is the impression of a strident dissonance: isn't the Schmittian conception of politics as the realm of the friend/enemy distinction diametrically opposed to the idea of a political dialogue of cultures? Isn't actually Huntington's scenario of the clash of civilisations *de facto* based on the Schmittian friend/enemy distinction? And wasn't Schmitt's conception of politics specifically developed to contrast what he perceived as the endless and indecisive 'politics of conversation' predicated by political liberalism? In other words, how would one make the 'idealist' politics of dialogue compatible with the Schmittian 'realist' notion of politics?

In what follows I want to address this apparent contradiction. As I have already anticipated, the Realist/Idealist opposition, essential to mainstream approaches in International Relations is in fact part of the theoretical problem that a fully-fledge international political theory of dialogue of civilisations has to confront. Rejecting the usefulness of the Realist/Idealist distinction as well as correcting

[14] For the classical English School discussion of the three approaches in International Relations (Realism, Idealism and Rationalism) see Wight, *International Theory*; for an historiography of the discipline see Brian C. Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

[15] Here the *locus classicus* for the so-called realist critique of idealism is Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. For a critical overview of the traditions and approaches to the issue of ethics and international relations see Terry Nardin and David Mapel, eds., *Traditions of International Ethics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

the wrong – and common among IR scholars[16] – interpretation of Schmitt's understanding of politics, I will argue that the theory of dialogue of civilisations needs to be grounded in a 'new political realism'. Drawing on Schmitt's concrete-order thinking, I will try to qualify the nature of this new political realism by rejecting both the predominant realist reductionism according to which international politics is mainly about the 'materialist dimension' of the power struggle among sovereign states and the idealist over-emphasis on the normative dimension of politics which does not confront the issues of power and interest in international relations.

Having established the non-contradictory nature of my overall theoretical framework and located the international political theory of dialogue of civilisations within the horizons of a new political realism, I will try to delineate more clearly the contours of dialogue of civilisations as an argument for the contemporary normative structure of a peaceful and multicultural global order around the ideas of a multipolar spatial ordering, a cross-cultural *jus gentium* and a comprehensive idea(l) of peace.

A New Political Realism: Beyond the Realism/Idealism Divide and the Concrete-Order Thinking

Both the approaches of the English School (the theory of the international society) and of Carl Schmitt (the theory of the *nomos* of the earth) try to steer a course between what could be broadly defines as a Realist and an Idealist understanding of international politics. As a consequence, these two approaches focus on the dense institutional and legal dimensions of modern international relations as they developed from early modern Europe to the contemporary universal society. If this is a quite uncontroversial point for the English School tradition which was constitutively located by its very founding father, Martin Wight, as a *via media* position between Realism and Idealism, and has since then, in confirmation of this median nature, also been referred to as the Rationalist or Groatian tradition, this has not been at all the case for Schmitt's international thought.

Schmitt's 'international' destiny has been sealed in fact by his largely quoted definition of the political as the domain of the friend/enemy distinction which seems to place his thought, beyond any doubt, in the Realist camp, even as an almost synthetically perfect exemplification of the nature of international relations as power politics. As is now acknowledged by some of the major specialists of Schmitt's thought, however, the main focus of his entire corpus, from his Weimar juridical writings to his masterwork *Der Nomos der Erde*, was not enmity or conflict but rather the search for the essence of legal order in face of what Carlo Galli has called "the tragedy of modernity", that is, "the fact that on the one hand, after the collapse of medieval Christian unity, an ultimate and

[16] For example, arguments have been made that Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction is the inspiration for President Bush's division of the international system between civilisation and barbarism. See for example, Lon Troyer, "Counterterrorism, Sovereignty, Law, Subjectivity", *Critical Asian Studies*, no. 35(2003): 259-76.

uncontested foundation for legitimacy is no longer possible and that, on the other, such a legitimacy is unavoidable for any order".[17]

As Schmitt had written at the beginning of his academic career – taking a position that distances him clearly from the contemporary Realist theory predominant in International Relations – and maintained throughout his entire intellectual journey:

> The political does not signify here the manipulation and domination of certain elements of power, both social and international, as the Machiavellian concept maintains, which, by taking a single aspect out of context, reduces political life to a simple technique […]. No political system can survive, even for one generation, by solely relying on a technique of power conservation. Inherent in the political is *the idea*, since there is no politics without authority and there is no authority without an *ethos* of conviction.[18]

As Gary Ulmen has pointed out, for Schmitt, the key to the concept of the political is "not enmity but the *distinction* itself".[19] In other words, the political is based on the reality of difference and plurality and on the possibility of its politicisation, which for Schmitt can take several different forms from cultural, to social, moral, religious and economic features – this, *inter alia*, makes even more clear the distance of Schmitt's thought from Huntington's theory of the clash of civilisations, which is based on a primordialist cultural reductionism of politics, according to which conflicts are ultimately linked to objective differences in cultures and religions, something that Schmitt would have clearly dismissed. This is why politics for Schmitt is first of all about ideas or, as he says in the above-mentioned quote, about a plurality of *ethos* of conviction.

From his perspective, therefore, the essence of the problem of legal order, domestically and internationally, is about the creation of a convergence between the pluriverse of the political and the universal drive of the juridical. Schmitt revised his earlier decisionist theory of order in a later work, *On the Three Types of Juristic Thought*, in which he distinguishes three approaches, decisionism, normativism and concrete-order thinking. The concrete-order approach describes the essence of the problem of legal order and laid the

---

[17] See, Carlo Galli, *Genealogia della politica. Carl Schmitt e la crisi del pensiero politico moderno* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996). For an in-depth discussion on the centrality of the issue of order in Schmitt's thought see Thalin Zarmanian, "Carl Schmitt and the Problem of Legal Order: From Domestic to International", *Leiden Journal of International Law*, no. 19 (2006): 41-67. The quote is from Ibid., 48. As Galli points out, Schmitt himself recognised this on several occasions, commenting on the reactions to *The Concept of the Political* that many misunderstandings about his thought, as in the case of the friend/enemy distinction, derive from his excess of synthesis.

[18] Carl Schmitt, *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form* (München-Leipzig: Theatiner-Verl, 1923). Quote from the Italian translation, *Cattolicesimo romano e forma politica* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1986), 45, my emphasis.

[19] Gary L. Ulmen, "Return of the Foe", *Telos: A Quarterly of Critical Thought*, no. 72 (Summer 1987): 189.

ground for his theory of the *nomos* as a structuring combination of order (*Ordnung*) and spatial orientation (*Ortung*).[20] According to his concrete-order thinking, legal order is neither 'decisionist' (based on the pure exercise of power) nor 'normativist' (based on universal and objective positivist law): a legal order as concrete-order has to be based on the pre-existent concrete social order and is legitimate "to the extent that it brings a pre-existent asset of power and interest to a concrete order through *a creative action* which is able to neutralize conflicts as they arise".[21] In the domestic sphere, it is the sovereign power, which creates the legal order by neutralising conflicts among units, that is, rendering conflicts capable of non-violent adjudication and intervening with a decision in the critical case (the exception); but it is the international realm, with its absence of a common sovereign power, the well-known condition of 'international anarchy', that posed the archetypical problem of how to construct a legitimate pluralistic (legal) global order.

As argued in the previous chapter with reference to the idea of 'world unity', from a Schmittian-inspired perspective the contemporary problem of global order, the search for a new *nomos* of the earth, cannot be solved either by a liberal-cosmopolitan law based on the normativism of a spaceless universalism, or by an 'international politics of permanent exception' of a worldwide imperial power.[22] Both solutions fail to take seriously the irreducible plural nature (the pluriverse) of the political and are incapable of constructing a creative political synthesis between the pluriverse of the political and the universal drive of the juridical. This failure is arguably first of all visible in the contemporary incapacity to neutralise conflicts both from a 'UN normativist perspective' and a 'US decisionist one'. Not only that: both approaches seem to favour this liberal process of displacement of the political from international affairs and its replacement with a discourse of morals and virtue, good and evil, that Schmitt in one of his late writings described as the "tyrannies of values" which turns the enemy into the absolute negative-valued enemy, the foe, which must be destroyed and leads inexorably to a situation of 'global civil war'.[23]

From the perspective of a concrete-order thinking, Schmitt knew well that any future new *nomos* of the earth, capable of renewing the rational construction of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*, would have to express a 'true pluralism' and, as I have discussed in the previous chapter, tried to detect through the cracks of the

---

[20] Carl Schmitt, *On the Three Types of Juristic Thought*, trans. Joseph W. Benderesky (Westport: Praeger, 2004 [1934]).

[21] Zarmanian, "Carl Schmitt and the Problem of Legal Order", 53. My emphasis.

[22] For the 'international politics of exception' and 'the state of permanent exception' in the context of post-9/11 US policy see Jef Huysmans, "International Politics of Exception", paper presented at the Fifth Pan-European International Relations Conference, The Hague, 9-11 September 2004 and Alain de Benoist, "Global Terrorism and the State of Permanent Exception: The Significance of Carl Schmitt's Thought Today", in eds. Odysseos and Petito, *The International Political Thought of Carl Schmitt*.

[23] Carl Schmitt, *The Tyranny of Values*, trans. Simona Draghici (Washington: Plutarch Press, 1996 [1979]). The idea of a 'global civil war' has been re-discussed with specific reference to Schmitt's analysis and the contemporary post-9/11 situation by Giorgio Agamben in his *State of Exception*, trans. by Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). For the liberal displacement of the political see, Bishai and Behnke, "War, Violence and the Displacement of the Political". in eds. Odysseos and Petito, *The International Political Thought of Carl Schmitt*.

Cold War bipolar system the possibility of the emergence of a pluriverse of *Großräume* responding, on the one hand, to the end of the state's monopoly on politics and, on the other, to the need for a new *jus gentium*, spatially grounded in relatively internally homogenous and meaningfully differentiated 'greater spaces'. This is where Schmitt's reflections on the future of world order stopped and where the divergence with my international political theory of dialogue of civilisations becomes clear.

As a fundamentally and self-confessed Eurocentric thinker living at the heart of what Eric Hobsbawn as effectively called the 'short twentieth century' (1914-1991) and others, the era of the 'European civil war', Schmitt did not understand the far-reaching implications of the 'revolt against the West', which have become clearer after the end of the Cold War. For example, he continued to look at the decolonisation process as nothing more that a corollary to the end of the centrality of Europe.[24] His concrete-order thinking applied to what constitutes a global legal order, however, provides a good starting point for a new political realism, which steers a course between the 'normativism' of Idealism and the 'decisionism' of Realism. What is most needed is to recover a form of international political theorising as creative action guided by an *ethos* of conviction whose supreme aim is to bring a pre-existent asset of power and interest to a concrete order which is able to neutralize conflicts as they arise. This new political realism, in other words, has to aim at a synthesis between particularism and universalism by creatively bringing to convergence the pre-existing pluriverse of the political and the universal u-topia of the juridical.

The international political theory of dialogue of civilisations is located within the horizon of this new political realism as it wants to articulate the idea of new *nomos* – as a structuring combination of normative order and spatial orientation – adequate for the future of a peaceful multicultural and globalised international society. The contemporary preference in international theorising for a liberal-cosmopolitan Idealism, the critique of dialogue of civilisations as idealist and wishful thinking, the need to start with concrete cultural-social orders and pre-existing sets of interest and power, can explain my choice of the expression 'new political realism', which could perhaps also be thought of, arguably, as a kind of 'concrete' Idealism.

What is more important is finally to show how dialogue of civilisations represents this new creative idea for a new global order as a structuring combination of normative order and spatial orientation: I want to argue that dialogue of civilisations envisages multipolarity as its spatial orientation and a new cross-cultural *jus gentium* as its normative order. Its driving idea, its *ethos* of conviction is a comprehensive idea(l) of peace. To the discussion of these three dimensions, I want now to turn.

Multipolarity as the Spatial Orientation of Dialogue of Civilisations

[24] Eric Hobsbawn, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1994). For the twentieth century as the era of European civil war, see for example J. M. Roberts, *A History of Europe* (New York: Allen Lane, 1996).

The political discourse of dialogue of civilisations, I have argued, represents a radical critique of the overwhelming political and ideological dominance of a US-centred Western and Liberal world. In the view of the supporters of this political discourse, one finds a clear normative resistance against the idea of a unipolar world order often accompanied by the conviction that we are gradually but ineluctably moving towards a multipolar world. The question which is therefore posed is the following: does the international political theory of dialogue of civilisations endorse the idea of a multipolar world order?

This is an awkward question, as the idea of the polarity is clearly associated with a Realist (and Neo-realist) approach in IR, which conceptualises the international arena as a system of forces to be brought into equilibrium (the stability of the system) by the well known mechanism of the balance of power.[25] The emphasis here is overwhelmingly on material sources and great power status, the rest (the ideational/normative dimension) being fundamentally irrelevant. It is interesting, however, to note that there has been a widespread debate since the end of the Cold War on whether the end of the bipolar international system would lead to unipolaraty or multipolarity. While there have been different positions on the nature of the post-89 international system in terms of distribution of power – and the predictive assessments of the evolution of the polarity of the system have been even more diverging – it is fair to say that today the view that we are living in a 'unipolar era' is definitively less popular than it was at the beginning of 1990s and that the predictions that the twenty-first century will see the emergence of a genuine multipolar structure are increasingly common.[26] This view is arguably the result of the recent security and political developments and in particular the 'quagmire' of the war in Iraq, but it is also based on less contingent medium/long term economic evidence and estimations which suggest the fast progression of the (relative) economic decline of America particularly in favour of the new Asian fast-growing economies of China and India.[27]

---

[25] For the classical realist and neo-realist view see respectively Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations* and Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

[26] This debate has mainly taken place in some of the leading mainstream US journals such as *International Security*, *Foreign Policy* and *The National Interest* as a sort of 'analytical' controversy, moulded in the social-scientific and positivist language of American IR. In this context, the different prescriptive views take normally the form of concluding policy implications for American Grand Strategy and the positions vary from a primacy stance (hard unilateralism) to a liberal-internationalist multilateralism. For arguments focussing on unipolarity see Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment", *Foreign Affairs*, no. 1(1991): 23-33 and William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security,* 24, no. 1 (1999): 5-41; while for multipolarity see Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (1993): 5-51 and Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War", *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 5-41. For the debate on America decline or hegemonic status see for example Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987).

[27] If the US at the end of WWII accounted for half of the world economic output, it today accounts for less than 1/3 and by 2020 estimations, on current projections, the size of its economy compared to the world output will be about 20%. See, for example, Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* (Paris: OECD Development Centre Studies, 2003). This does not necessarily imply that the US economy will cease to be the main engine of world economic growth. I owe this point to Jason Abbot.

My point here is that the increasing consensus on the empirical trend of worldwide decentralisation of power away from what Huntington has defined the "lonely superpower"[28] towards other major regional powers (China, India, EU, Japan, Russia, Brazil, Iran, etc…) may well represent a "pre-existent asset of power and interest" more conducive to the emergence of a pluralistic world order but it does not make, from the perspective of the concrete-order approach that we have adopted, a form of global order in itself as a structuring combination of legal order and spatial orientation. I want to contend, however, that multipolarity can represent a decisive spatial orientation if it is read in the context of the new spatial revolution of globalisation.

For Schmitt the first *nomos* of the earth, the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*, was based on a clear Eurocentric spatial orientation that had been the product of the great land-appropriation of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Its crisis in fact coincided with the end of the centrality of Europe. In the second part of the twentieth century, however, the nature of appropriation, Schmitt observed, had changed and become a matter of industrial development and markets.[29] Furthermore, as I have argued, the present era of globalisation brought to completion that spatial revolution – a radical change in the images and concepts of space that embraces all the aspects of human existence – which Schmitt had started sensing in the final pages of *Land and Sea*.[30] In other words, against the background of the epoch-making spatial revolution of globalisation, the growing multipolar nature of the international (economic-political) system, which is in Schmittian language a 'global re-appropriation of markets', represents in my view a solid enough spatial orientation for dialogue of civilisations as the future *nomos* of the earth. But the emergence of such an order would require other important conditions to be met: first of all, the identification of a new adequate bearer for this global order that could play a comparable role to the one that the state had in the context of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum* and secondly, and perhaps even more importantly, a new international law, a new *jus gentium*.[31] For Schmitt the bearer of a truly pluralistic future order could have been the *Großraum* (greater space) responding, on the one hand, to the end of the state's monopoly on politics and, on the other, to the need for a new *jus gentium*, spatially grounded in relatively internally homogenous and meaningfully differentiated 'greater spaces'.[32]

Chantal Mouffe and Danilo Zolo have recently expanded on this idea of balance of *Großräume* and argued for a multipolar world order in the context of their

[28] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower", *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 2, (1999): 35-49.
[29] Carl Schmitt, "The Legal World Revolution", trans. Gary L. Ulmen, *Telos: A Quarterly of Critical Thought*, 72 (1987[1978]): 73-89.
[30] Carl Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, trans. S. Draghici (Corvallis, OR: Plutarch Press, 1997 [1942]).
[31] For a very insightful analysis, see the section entitled 'The state as the adequate bearer of the European order' in Alessandro Colombo, "Challenging the State", in eds. Odysseos and Petito, *The International Political Thought of Carl Schmitt*.
[32] See fn, 12, ch. IV of this thesis.

critique of the American unipolar/imperial project.[33] Using Schmitt's insights, Mouffe has argued that the central problem that our current unipolar world, under the unchallenged hegemony of the United States, is facing is the impossibility for antagonisms to find legitimate forms of expression. Under such conditions, antagonisms, when they do emerge, tend to take extreme forms. In order to create the channels for the legitimate expression of dissent we need to envisage, Mouffe suggests, a pluralistic multipolar world order constructed around a certain number of 'greater spaces' and genuine cultural poles. Along similar lines, Zolo has argued that against the United States' dangerous imperial tendencies, "the project of a peaceful world needs a neo-regionalist revival of the idea of *Großraum*, together with a reinforcement of multilateral negotiation between states as a normative source and a democratic legitimisation of the processes of regional integration".[34]

These arguments for a multipolar world order, however, require a degree of caution for as Zolo has correctly sensed in the conclusion of the above mentioned analysis, "before this kind of order can be achieved complex economic, technological, cultural and religious conditions must be met that make a dialogue between the world's major civilisations possible".[35] The risk is that without a process of dialogue of civilisations at different levels as an overarching framework of reference, this multicivilisational world order would look very much like the model of multipolar multicivilisational order put forward by Huntington as the antidote to what he sees as the greatest threat to world peace, the clashes of civilisations.[36] This is an important point as this part of Huntington's argument, absent in the original *Foreign Affairs*' article, has gone largely unnoticed, the reason also being that it is sketched in the last few pages of a book of more than 300 pages (an unbalance which arguably confirms the impression that the book is really about the clash rather than how to avoid it).

Huntington argues that the only way to avoid the clash of civilisations is to envisage a multipolar multicivilisational order organised around what he calls "the core states of civilisations [which would be the] sources of order within civilizations and, through negotiations with other core states, between civilisations".[37] He then adds that "a world in which core states play a leading or dominating role is a sphere-of-influence world" and that "a core state can perform its ordering function because member states perceive it a cultural kin".[38] This framework seems to me extremely similar to both Schmitt's idea of a pluriverse of *Großräume* – whose analytical conceptualisation resembles closely the idea of the core states of civilisations of Huntington – and its re-actualisation by Mouffe and Zolo. The idea here is the construction of a

[33] Mouffe, "Schmitt's Vision of a Multipolar World Order" and Zolo, "The Contemporary Use of the Notion of 'Empire'" in eds. Odysseos and Petito, *The International Political Thought of Carl Schmitt*.
[34] Zolo, "The Contemporary Use of the Notion of 'Empire'", 7.
[35] Ibid., 13.
[36] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*.
[37] Ibid., 156.
[38] Ibid.

planetary balance of power around macro-regions defined along civilisational lines.

The problem with such a model of order is its being constructed only on the grounds of a material structure of power, which might well represent the spatial orientation, the *Ortung*, of the global order but does not make for the normative structure (*Ordnung*) and their creative structuring combination. It is true that Huntington sketches very briefly (in less than one page in total) three rules of a possible normative structure of his multipolar multicivilisational order: the *abstention* rule (core states should abstain from intervention in conflicts in other civilisations), the *joint mediation* rule (core states should negotiate with each other to contain or to halt fault-line wars among states or groups from their civilisations) and, finally, the *commonalities* rule (peoples in all civilisations should search for and attempt to expand the values, institutions and practices they have in common with peoples of other civilisations).[39] These rules, however, reveal even more neatly the 'IR realist' assumptions of the model as they in essence amount to nothing but a minimalist ethics of non-interference – the commonalities rule pointing perhaps to some 'thin' minimal communal denominator of universal morality, but in fact being the perfect exemplification of that rhetorical technique I have mentioned in the Introduction of this paper which consists in vaguely referring to some kind of undefined normative necessity of an opposite aspiration to the clash. The result of the Huntingtonian construction is, therefore, a worrying system of forces, of civilisational macro-regional great powers ready for collision – the clash of civilisations – and the only possible hope is to make the stability of the system attainable through the mechanism of the balance of power. But the 'IR realist' emphasis shared by Huntington on the centrality of fear, insecurity and threats in an anarchic environment would seem simply to make the clash of civilisations at some point unavoidable, as merely a matter of time.

This is why Zolo is right in his cautious remarks about the apparent self-evident force of this multipolar model and correctly points to the necessity of immersing it in a broader and real process of dialogue between the world's major civilisations. I will add some further comments on this aspect in the final section of this paper. However, it leads me to the need for what I have called an active politics of dialogue of civilisations – practically entering into this inter-civilisational dialogical encounter - to create, in Gadamer's words, these "new normative and common solidarities that let practical reason speak again" in a way that is appropriate to the new global predicament.[40] It is my argument that in the same way that practical reason 'spoke' in the intellectual construction of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*, which Schmitt regarded (perhaps over-emphatically, but with plenty of valid arguments) as the greatest achievement of European jurisprudence and civilisation, it should speak again today in the form of a new cross-cultural *jus gentium* providing the normative structure

[39] Ibid., 316 and 320.
[40] Thomas Pantham, "Some Dimensions of Universality of Philosophical Hermeneutics: A Conversation with Hans–Georg Gadamer", *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research* 9 (1992): 132.

(*Ordnung*) appropriate to the contemporary multicultural and globalised international society.

A New Cross-Cultural *Jus Gentium* as the Normative Order of Dialogue of Civilisations

As Hedley Bull has argued, the emergence of a 'multicultural international society' imperatively requires a *new normative structure* since "we have… to recognise that the nascent cosmopolitan culture of today, like the international society which it helps to sustain, is weighted in favour of the dominant cultures of the West".[41] The political discourse of dialogue of civilisations calls for the reopening and re-defining of the core Western-centric and liberal assumptions upon which the normative structure of the contemporary international society is based.

The line of argument that I have pursued is that it is the growing multicultural nature of contemporary international society – emerging as a part of the process of the search for cultural authenticity and understood as a growing demand for cultural recognition – which is in need of what I have referred to as 'an international politics of recognition' or that could also called a form of 'global multiculturalism'.[42] But if the background is indeed the struggle against the 'Orientalist mindset' or, following Frantz Fanon, the imposition by the dominant group of its own image, an image of inferiority, upon the subjugated, then the international politics of recognition[43] - or the form of multiculturalism that we need on global scale – should not be based on a postmodern form subjectivism or a form of radical cultural/moral relativism but needs to be accompanied by a commitment to an active politics of dialogue of civilisations: primarily a dialogue among the great cultural and religious social traditions of the world. More specifically, what is needed is a politics based on a 'presumption of worth' and shaped by a Gadamerian dialogical model as fusion of horizons, as has been persuasively argued with the reference to the domestic debate on multiculturalism by Charles Taylor and Bhikhu Parekh.[44]

In other words, I want to argue that global multiculturalism and dialogue of civilisations are conceptually interlinked and are in a mutually constitutive relationship. In the same way that Parekh has argued, from the perspective of his domestic theory of multiculturalism, that "the good [multiculturally-constituted] society does not commit itself to a particular political doctrine…[but] its constant concern is to keep the dialogue going and nurture a climate in which it can proceed effectively, stretch boundaries of the prevailing forms of thought, and generate a body of collective acceptable principles, institutions and politicise"[45], I would contend that a commitment to an active

[41] Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 305.
[42] Here I am using the simple distinction used by Bhikhu Parekh between 'multicultural' which refers to the fact of cultural diversity and the term 'multiculturalism' which refers to a normative response to that fact. See his very insightful volume *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (London: MacMillan Press, 2000).
[43] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Books, 2001 [1961]).
[44]Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition" and Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*
[45] Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, 340.

politics of dialogue of civilisations – that is, a willingness practically to give life to this inter-civilisational dialogical encounter – is necessary for the emergence of this new normative structure in the form of a new cross-cultural *jus gentium*.

The discussion of *jus gentium* has recently been reinvigorated by John Rawls' last book *The Law of Peoples*. This is a welcomed development as it has contributed to advancing a debate on the philosophical basis of international law that has unfortunately been severely limited by the legal positivism predominant in the theory and practice of international law – something that Schmitt was already complaining about in *The Nomos of the Earth*. More importantly, as Fred Dallmayr has outlined "in times of historical change and upheaval, the law of peoples (*jus gentium*) has tended to serve as a go-between or mediating agent between local or city law and rational philosopher's law, an agent able to stretch the former's parochialism while harnessing the latter's aloofness. It is in this sense that…Vico speaks of 'natural law of peoples' (*jus naturale gentium*), distinguishing it from mere custom and philosophers' precepts."[46] The mediating role of the *jus* (*naturale*) *gentium* seems to me to confirm the usefulness of reinvigorating a discussion of this concept as a response to the crisis of global order whose solution, I would argue, revolves precisely around the dilemma between universalism and pluralism.

Commenting in the same chapter on the "quasi-Kantian tenor" of Rawls' argument, Dallmayr suggests that his approach should be "integrated and 'sublated' (*aufgehoben*) in a more densely textured cross-cultural *jus gentium*".[47] Interestingly this requires, he continues, a shift from the level of universal moral theorising predominant among liberal-cosmopolitan supporters to a political plane or what he calls a global political *praxis* which can address "the neglect of relevant differences among peoples and cultures and also the sidelining of motivational disposition which might foster moral conduct".[48] Such a point, echoing Václav Havel's critique of a technology of world order and the need for a genuine universality grounded in the social ethics and practices of 'really existing communities', reprises the first line of argument I identified as necessary in any forward-looking reflection on the normative structure of contemporary international society that wishes to be sensitive to the call for a dialogue of civilisations. From this perspective, what is at stake in this cross-cultural encounter is the very legitimacy and, as a consequence, legal effectiveness of a future *jus gentium* in a context whereby, on the one hand, international law is increasingly perceived – for reasons that are understandable and worrying at the same time – as the ideological component of new imperialist strategies and, on the other hand, as even Michael Walzer has argued, the legal positivist interpretations of the UN Charter "have constructed a paper world, which fails at crucial points to correspond to the world the rest of us still live in".[49]

---

[46] Dallmayr, *Peace Talks – Who will Listen?*, 47.
[47] Ibid., 59-60.
[48] Ibid., 15.
[49] Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust War: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2000), xix.

But, drawing on the second insight identified as essential for an international political theory of dialogue of civilisations, a dialogically-constituted cross-cultural *jus gentium* seems to enshrine the promise of not only a more genuine, but also of a 'better', common ground.[50] Whether in the empirically-grounded (though daring) statement of Parekh according to whom "since each culture is inherently limited, a dialogue between them is mutually beneficial"; or in Taylor's more cautious presumption of worth which involves in his own words "something like an act of faith" about a world where different cultures complement each other as in the case of Herder, who, as Taylor writes, "for instance, has a view of divine providence, according to which all this variety of culture was not mere accident but was meant to bring about a greater harmony", the argument here is that, in Khatami's words, every dialogue, based on a presumption of the worth of the Other, "provides grounds for human creativity to flourish".[51] This is particularly challenging for the 'Orientalist mindset' of superiority of the West but it also provides a hope for those Westerners perceiving a fundamental ethical and political crisis of their liberal societies.

Dialogue is an open-ended process, which frequently involves difficulties, and there is no guarantee that it can produce a cross-cultural consensus. With reference to the case of human rights, unquestionably an essential element of any future *jus gentium* and arguably a realm where the idea of a world dialogical consensus has been making way in recent times (see also the discussion of Havel in chapter 1), Taylor has asked, for example, how their conceptualisation might be transformed through an understanding of the Theravada Buddhist search for selflessness, for self-giving, and dana (generosity), or through the Hindu notion of nonviolence, or by resting on the Islamic themes of the mercy and compassion of God.[52] Similarly Etzioni has called for a 'new normative global synthesis' between the West's preoccupation with autonomy and the East's preoccupation with social order.[53] Perhaps the dialogical encounter with the cultural Other by stretching our imagination might bring about a cross-cultural human rights regime, on the one hand, more adequate to the multicultural nature of contemporary international society and, on the other, transformed and expanded in terms of its moral horizon beyond (and more profound than) the western emphasis on rights-talk with its implicit set of liberal assumptions on the nature of subjectivity.

In addition, the third dimension that I have emphasised as integral to any international political theory of dialogue of civilisations – peace through inter-civilisational mutual understanding – bears some implications for the idea of a new cross-cultural *jus gentium*, but I will dwell more extensively on this essential issue in the final section of this paper as it relates, as I see it, to the essential issue of the 'structuring combination' of multipolarity, as spatial orientation (*Ortung*), and a cross-cultural *jus gentium*, as legal order (*Ordnung*) and recapitulates the reflections on a new political realism, with which I started this paper. But before turning to that, I should add that the very logic of the

[50] See the final section of ch.1 of this thesis.
[51] Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, 337; Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", 66 and 73.
[52] Taylor, "Conditions for an Unforced Consensus on Human Rights".
[53] Etzioni, *From Empire to Community*.

argument I have been making for a cross-cultural *jus gentium* as a *praxis* of dialogue disqualifies me, in that context, from saying more on the content of this cross-cultural *jus gentium ă venir*. This remains the exclusive mission of the dialogue among scholars as well as practitioners who are personally engaged in this inter-cultural dialogue academically and in various public *fora*. Here, however, I would like to mention that there is a thriving and well-established field of comparative philosophical study as well as a growing set of works in the young and flourishing field of comparative political theory whose aim is precisely to contribute to this global political inter-cultural dialogue.[54]

Peace as the *Ethos* of Conviction of Dialogue of Civilisations

As I have already argued, the present international situation imposes on all of us a moral obligation to pursue a politics of inter-civilisational understanding: to engage in an inter-cultural dialogue is today crucial for peace as it cannot be ignored that since 9/11, in the very year designated by the United Nations as the 'Year of Dialogue of Civilisations', global political violence and conflicts have reached a critical new level both quantitatively and qualitatively and the shadow of a future clash of civilisations has been hammering down on the world (and in the collective psychologies of its peoples) bringing regrettably a growing atmosphere of misunderstandings, mistrust, fear and tensions among the different peoples and communities of the world.

This overall political context of growing cultural misunderstanding and mistrust, which prompted Edward Said to speak of a real danger of a clash of ignorance, should be opposed by creating the conditions for widespread processes of 'inter-civilisational mutual understanding' at multiple levels. In this respect, the link between civilisational dialogue, mutual understanding and peace is fortunately becoming more widely acknowledged. This ideal of 'building bridges of mutual understanding' in order to learn (or sometimes re-learn) how to live together among different cultural communities – what Andrea Riccardi has called in his last book the art of "con-vivere"[55] – is also critical for the global order I have been arguing for in a more specific sense: it provides the key for the 'structuring combination' of the spatial orientation of multipolarity (*Ortung*) and of the legal order of a cross-cultural *jus gentium* (*Ordnung*). To explain this point I want to return for a moment to the Huntingtonian model of multipolar multicivilisational order that I have discussed above.

The popularity of Huntington's thesis and of the global political discourse of the 'clash of civilisations' has no doubt to do with bringing to centre stage of the debate as to the nature of post-89 international relations, the political resurgence of culture and the emergence of a multicultural international society.

---

[54] See for example, Gerald James Larson and Eliot Deutsch, eds., *Interpreting Across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) and P.T. Raju, *Introduction to Comparative Philosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1997). For Comparative Political Theory, see the overview in Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory".

[55] Andrea Riccardi, *Convivere* (Bari: Edizioni Laterza, 2006). For an English translation (by Francesca Simmons) of the Introduction of this book, see <http://www.resetdoc.org/EN/Coexistence.php> accessed on 1/6/2007.

In other words, it could be said that Huntington has framed post-89 international politics as a multicultural fact. In this respect, its proposal of multipolar multicivilisational order is an acknowledgment of the centrality of the growing multicultural nature of international society but, and here lies the problem, it is based on the opposite logic to the dialogical multiculturalism that I have defended: the multicultural nature of the world has, on the one hand, internationally to be almost confined within a civilisational cage following the 'good fences make good neighbours' principle and, on the other hand, has domestically to be contrasted through strict immigration policy and a new integrationist approach, as Huntington has argued in his most recent book with reference to the growing presence of Latinos in the US and what, he argues, could be its weakening effect on American national identity.[56] In sum, his argument is not about building bridges of mutual understanding but rather walls of containment and separation.

The international political theory of dialogue of civilisations envisages 'bridges' not 'walls', to link, in a structuring combination, multipolarity with a cross-cultural *jus gentium*. In particular, here the emphasis is not on the geographical-territorial dimension of civilisations but rather on the normative one, that is, on civilisations as the great cultural and religious social traditions of the world. This implies, for example, that the neo-regionalist revival that Zolo and Mouffe favor as a way of constructing a multipolar spatial ordering does not need to take shape along civilisational-culturalist lines. Rather, I want to argue that it cannot be dismembered from reinforcing a politics of multiculturalism 'at home and abroad'.[57] To illustrate this point I shall refer to a case of great contemporary relevance for European regional integration and the relationship between Europe and the Muslim world: the hotly debated issue of the EU enlargement to Turkey.

From such a perspective, the framing of Turkey's EU-accession discursive strategy by the current Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan as a 'bridge' between Asia and Europe or as a new 'alliance of civilisations' is to be welcomed and supported.[58] My argument is, in fact, that multiculturally-constituted processes of regional integration are more conducive to a peaceful global order as they act as a sort of preventive antidote to the possible negative politicisation of cultural differences on a global scale. A similar additional point can be made to support the creation of multicultural forms of regional cooperation and integration, which are anyway arguably justifiable on functionalist grounds to respond to the common challenges brought about by the processes of globalisation: initiatives of regionalisation involving for example member-states from a plurality of existing regional political organisations can further contribute to the dilution of the risks of a

[56] Huntington, *Who Are We*.
[57] 'At home and abroad' stands for 'domestically and internationally' and is an exspression taken from the title of Michael Walzer's book *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*.
[58] For the UN Alliance of Civilizations initiative, see <http://unaoc.org/> and fn. 4 in the Introduction of this thesis.

multipolarisation along enclosed civilisational lines.[59] Regionalisation processes can be multiple and overlapping insofar as collective political identities and circumstances allow. For example, from such a perspective initiatives of Mediterranean regionalisation involving European and Arab countries are to be encouraged as a way of fostering bridges of communication and mutual understanding between the EU and the Arab League and can also constitute laboratories for the praxis of inter-civilisational dialogue necessary for the emergence of a new cross-cultural *jus gentium*. Finally, multiculturalism 'abroad' is likely to facilitate 'living together' at home and *vice versa*, a fact that cannot be overlooked in our era of global communication. I would for example anticipate a reciprocally beneficial relationship between the integration of the growing Muslim presence in Europe, arguably the greatest challenge facing the future identity of Europe, and a peaceful relationship between Europe and the Muslim world in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East.

An active politics of dialogue of civilisations may represent an essential mechanism of connection between the pluriverse of the political (multipolarity, in our case) and the universal drive of the juridical (a cross-cultural *jus gentium*), both as a way to mitigate the risk of a 'culturalist enclosure' in the former and to dialogically inscribe plurality in the latter. If this is so, however, the driving idea, the polar star of dialogue of civilisations as international political theory, its '*ethos* of conviction', is a comprehensive and politically realistic idea(l) of peace. I can only suggest a few lines of thought, with specific reference to this discussion on dialogue of civilisations as new political realism, to shed light on this comprehensive and realistic idea(l) of peace which I think should probably be the object of a separate study.[60]

[59] This is a sort of open-regionalism which could represent the base of a truly decentralized and multilateral structure of global governance. In this context, however, the system of global governance, to use an effective image of Zolo, should operate a transition "from the logic of the Leviathan to that of the thousands fragile chains of Lilliput", Zolo, *Cosmopolis*, 154.

[60] Regretfully the research on the concept and practice of peace has been generally neglected since the end of the Cold War, perhaps in concomitance with a certain liberal illusion that peace had become politically unproblematic. Some ideas which I have found interesting and could be further explored in a multidisciplinary way for a theoretical and practical re-conceptualisation of peace along what I would call a comprehensive and realistic notion can be found in: for IR and Security studies, Ole Wæver, "Peace and Security: Two Concepts and Their Relationship", in Stefano Guzzini and Dietrich Jung, eds., *Contemporary Security Analysis and Copenhagen Peace Research* (London: Routledge, 2004), 94-116 and Michael Howard, *The Invention of Peace: Reflections on War and International Order* (London: Profile Books, 2000); in the context of political theory and philosophy, Dallmayr, *Peace Talks* and Danilo Zolo, "Towards a Weak Pacifism" in *Cosmopolis*, ch. 5 and "Universalismo imperiale e pacifismo 'secessionista'", *La rivista del Manifesto*, no. 32, (2002): 47-52, also available online at <http://www.juragentium.unifi.it/it/surveys/wlgo/secpacif.htm> accessed on 2/6/2007; in the context of theology and religious studies, Volf, "Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Justice", Andrea Riccardi, *La pace preventiva. Speranze e ragioni in un mondo di conflitti* (Cinisello Balsamo, Edizioni San Paolo, 2004), Michael T. Seigel, "History, Memory, and the Dialogue of Civilisations", paper presented at the Conference 'The Politics of Empire and the Culture of Dialogue', La Trobe University, Melbourne, 4-6 December 2006 and a collection of John Paul II's speeches and writings on peace, John Paul II, *Non uccidere in nome di Dio*, ed. Natale Benazzi (Casale Monferrato: Edizioni Piemme, 2005).

The horizons of the new political realism that I have attempted to sketch include a realistic idea(l) of peace. In fact, the very *ethos* of conviction of this new political realism is a realistic peace which results from *a creative action* bringing to convergence the pluriverse of pre-existent interests and the universal (legal) utopia of peace. Wasn't this sort of realistic peace the very aspiration, which drove Robert Schuman (and Jean Monnet) to imagine the European integration process? In these words of the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950, which I want to quote at length as they are self-explanatory, is the paradigmatic example of a search for a realist peace whose topicality is today absolute:

> World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers, which threaten it… Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements, which first create a de facto solidarity. The coming together of the nations of Europe requires the elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany. Any action taken must in the first place concern these two countries…. It proposes that Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole be placed under a common High Authority, within the framework of an organization open to the participation of the other countries of Europe.[61]

The ideal of peace needs also to be comprehensive. Contrary to an abstract emphasis on legal-positivistic engineering of the cosmopolitan 'legal pacifism', which expands on the Kelsenian maxim of 'peace through law', and contrary to the ethnocentric and problematic emphasis by the so-called 'democratic peace theory' on the liberal-democratic model *as conditio sine qua non* for international peace;[62] a comprehensive re-conceptualisation of peace should explore more in depth the mutually constitutive and reinforcing relationships, at various concrete levels, among peace, justice and reconciliation, as the visionary words of John Paul II, 'there is no Peace without Justice and no Justice without Reconciliation' suggest and the remarkable concrete experience of the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' in South Africa proved.[63] It is my view that such a comprehensive re-conceptualisation might effectively

---

[61] Text presented by the French foreign minister Robert Schuman and which led to the creation of what is now the European Union, see Declaration of 9 May 1950, <http://www.robert-schuman.eu/declaration_9mai.php> accessed on 2/6/2007.

[62] For the approaches that Danilo Zolo critically label in his volume *Cosmopolis* as 'legal pacifism', see Noberto Bobbio, *Il problema della guerra e le vie della pace* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1979) and Hans Kelsen, *Peace Through Law* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944). For the democratic peace theory, see Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace (*New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

[63] See for example. Volf, "Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Justice". See also Pope John Paul II, 'There is No Peace without Justice and No Justice without Forgiveness', Message of for the celebration of the World Day for Peace, 1 January 2002, extracts in John Paul II, *Non uccidere in nome di Dio* and available online at <http://www.vatican.net/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20011211_xxxv-world-day-for-peace_en.html> accessed on 15/1/2007. For the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' in South Africa see, Desmond Tutu, *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

inform real-world bottom-up initiatives of conflict-resolution, prevention and post-conflict reconstruction and may indeed have greater chances of politically realistic success that the top-down abstract approach of proceduralism and liberal rule of law.

Dialogue of civilisations is at the very heart of such three-dimensional interplay and more cross-cultural work needs to be done to explore these relationships in theory and practice.[64] In this time when a great deal of thinking has been devoted to justifying and making sense of the doctrine of 'preventive war', I reunite with Andrea Riccardi in arguing that now is instead the time for a strategy of 'preventive peace'.[65] Such is the aim of dialogue of civilisations as a new political realism that I have argued for. *Ab integro nascitur ordo*: out of integrity order is born, Schmitt used to say and he ended the foreword to his masterpiece by recalling that "the earth has been promised to the peacemakers. The idea of a new *nomos* of the earth belongs only to them".[66]

Sketching Dialogue of Civilisations as an Alternative Model for World Order

This investigation began by suggesting that the global political discourse of dialogue of civilisations emerged in the post-Cold War era as an alternative political reaction to the end of the Cold War against the background of two competing and powerful discourses: the clash of civilisations (Huntington) and the globalisation of liberalism (Fukuyama). In the cases of both Khatami and Havel, an awareness of the inadequacies and problems of these two alternative visions of world order is accompanied by a moral *élan* for fostering universality while recognising and valuing plurality. The post-modern need for transcendence (Havel) and the Sufi-inspired mysticism of unity (Khatami) ground respectively what are indeed two impressive dialogical visions for the future of world order. But they also manifest the necessity for more work to be done by international and political theorists for a translation and accommodation of these visions into the language and concepts of international political theorising.

Moving from these reflections and insights, therefore, I have attempted to bring these visions into the realm of academic reflection on the nature of contemporary global politics and the future of world order. My question has been how to think of dialogue of civilisations as international political theory, that is, as an argument for the normative structure of contemporary multicultural and globalised international society. Schmitt's heterodox and neglected international thought and in particular his theory of the *nomos* (global order) as structuring combination of normative order (*Ordnung*) and spatial orientation (*Ortung*) have provided the framework in which to develop my answer. This choice is not neutral and I am aware that the image that I have

[64] For an interesting initial effort in this direction which addresses the overlooked role of historical memories and reconciliation see, Seigel, "History, Memory, and the Dialogue of Civilisations".
[65] Riccardi, *La pace preventiva*.
[66] Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth,* 39.

given of twentieth century international relations almost completely reverses the predominant liberal view and that, as a consequence, my reading of the disorderly contemporary state of affairs, as it is not based on contingent reasons, might be rather disquieting to some and perhaps rather bleak to many. However, in a time of global crisis of order, as would seem to be the present, it might be better to push problematic concepts to the extremes of their political consequences rather than be caught by the extreme political consequences of problematic concepts. In a way, using the famous words of Antonio Gramsci, it could be said that this work has entertained the 'pessimism of the intellect' but contrasted it with the 'optimism of the will', in this case, the *élan* of dialogue.[67]

Dialogue of civilisations as international political theory has been developed firstly in its *pars destruens*: a critique of the liberal-cosmopolitan preference for 'world unity', predominant in much contemporary international theorising, with its identification of territorial sovereignty as the dark side of politics, the *summum malum* to be eradicated, and its implicit philosophy of history aiming at a *summum bonum*. Building on Schmitt's reconstruction of the end of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*, I have warned against the dangers of this approach. Rather than opening the way to an eternal peace, the end of state sovereignty and the endorsement of a philosophy of history may well mark, as Schmitt has persuasively argued and the contemporary international situation seems tragically to prove, the end of the limitation and humanisation of war and the entrance into a dangerous era of limitless intensification of wars and global civil wars. There is something of the violent legacy of the Enlightenment Project, which is menacingly haunting the contemporary global situation. Here there spring to mind MacIntyre's disquieting suggestions on the state of our moral predicament:

> The notion of escaping from [particularity] into a realm of entirely universal maxims which belong to man as such, whether its eighteenth century Kantian form or in the presentation of some modern analytical moral philosophies, is an illusion and an illusion with painful consequences. When men and women identify what are their partial and particular causes too easily and too completely with the cause of some universal principle, they usually behave worse then they would otherwise do.[68]

The *pars destruens* set out what had to be avoided. From here, it followed almost as a neat logical consequence, that the *pars construens* of my international political theory of dialogue of civilisations had to articulate a *realist* and *pluralist* approach to world order. Its aim shouldn't have been to create a paradise on earth, but rather to prevent the earth becoming a hell. Drawing on Schmitt's concrete-order thinking and opposing the Realist/Idealist divide typical of mainstream International Relations theory, I have described this approach as a new political realism. This new political realism focuses on the idea of politics as a creative action and is guided by an *ethos* of conviction

[67] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971).
[68] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 221.

whose supreme aim is to bring a pre-existent asset of power and interest to a concrete legal order which is able to neutralize conflicts as they arise. This *realistic* peace, I have argued, is much closer to the empirical bottom-up logic of a comprehensive (peace-justice-reconciliation) idea(l) of peace than to the top-down abstract approach of legal pacifism.

In this respect, more work needs to be done to expand and deepen this set of intuitions into a fully-fledged new political realism. A new political realism, it seems to me, also requires the re-convening and creative re-interpretation of 'the other political realism', a rich tradition of political thought that has been forgotten, marginalised and distorted by the twentieth century Realist IR theory (mainly American and based on a rational-actor paradigm) and whose insights seem to be of great topicality for our contemporary global predicament.[69]

The alternative model of world order inspired by dialogue of civilisations that I have finally sketched out has multipolarity as its the spatial orientation, a new cross-cultural *jus gentium* as its normative order. An active politics of dialogue of civilisations represents the structuring combination mechanism of connection between the pluriverse of the political (multipolarity) and the universal drive of the juridical (a cross-cultural *jus gentium*), both as a way to mitigate the risk of a 'culturalist enclosure' in the former and to dialogically inscribe plurality in the latter. Concretely, this neo-regionalist, multipolar and cross-cultural model of greater spaces is different from the Huntingtonian model of multipolar multicivilisational order as: 1) it is not shaped by civilisational-culturalist lines but by a dialogical multiculturalism; 2) its conflicts are neutralised by a 'thick' dialogically-constituted normative order (a new cross-cultural *jus gentium*) based on a 'genuine' and 'enriched' universality; 3) it is committed to a widespread process of 'inter-civilisational mutual understanding' at multiple levels.

In this way the *pars destruens* has vindicated the political discourse of dialogue of civilisations against Fukuyama; the *pars construens* against Huntington. This outline of dialogue of civilisations as an alternative model for world order is of course still very general. Many other contextual conditions and considerations should be brought into the discussion to provide a more developed model responding to the present international situation. Here is not the place to deepen such a discussion.

---

[69] Here I am thinking of a European tradition of thougth which include thinkers such as Carl Schmitt, Raymon Aron and also Martin Wight and whose sources of inspirations should be traced and reaxamined – *in primis* the so-called and often misinterpreted 'Christian Realism'. For interesting initial attempts in this direction, see Zolo, *Cosmopolis*; Alessandro Colombo, "L'Europa e la società internazionale. Gli aspetti culturali e istituzionali della convivenza internazionale in Raymond Aron, Martin Wight e Carl Schmitt", *Quaderni di Scienza Politica*, no. 2, (1999): 251-301; Michael Loriaux, "The Realists and Saint Augustine: Skepticism, Psychology, and Moral Action in International Relations Thought," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (1992): 401-20; Scott Thomas, "Faith, History, and Martin Wight: The Role of Religion in the Historical Sociology of the English School of International Relations", *International Affairs* 77, no. 4 (2001): 905-29; and Lausten and Wæver, "In Defence of Religion".

More than five years after the designation of the UN Year of the Dialogue among Civilizations and the events of 9/11, in a time of great international tensions and political turmoil, critics have been increasingly labeling the idea of inter-civilisational dialogue as idealistic, abstract, rhetorical, and even politically dangerous. At the same time, there exists now a critical mass of activism and commitment – at different levels – to the idea and practice of dialogue of civilisations, cultures and religions. In other words, it seems to me that a critical juncture has been reached: the global political discourse of dialogue of civilisations needs to move beyond general and rhetorical statements and assume a more clear and concrete political agenda if it wants to be taken seriously and not be cursorily dismissed or relegated to the margins.

The idea of dialogue of civilizations as an alternative model for world order might provide this global movement with a more intelligible and effective political synthesis, which can contribute to the necessary conceptual and political upgrade. But perhaps more important than any mobilising device is today the need for new heterodox alliances: the promotion of common initiatives (cultural, social, communicative and political) to build new transversal practices of solidarity, cooperation and mobilisation, involving groups from different cultural backgrounds and religious affiliations acting together on the basis of common political aspirations. This practice of dialogue of civilisations carries the hope that we may learn how to live together in our increasingly multicultural and globalised international society. Dialogue of civilisations as international political theory hopes to be a small contribution to this great dream.