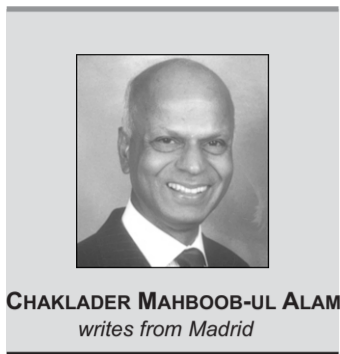


# Another monster is now haunting Huntington



CHAKLADER MAHBOOB-UL ALAM writes from Madrid

PROFESSOR Samuel P. Huntington, the president of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies is widely respected in some conservative circles of the United States as a prophet and a scholar. But in many other parts of the world he is considered as a racist and a paranoid fanatic, who sees imaginary monsters, in the shape of "the other" behind every tree and every bush. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, when another American ideologue called Francis Fukuyama, triumphantly proclaimed "the end of history", Huntington quickly found a new enemy, a new "other". In his book *The Clash of Civilisations*, published in 1993, our American crusader warned the West of the dangers emanating from Islam. Echoing the voice of another xenophobic bigot called Oriana Fallaci, he warned that Islam was bent on destroying the so-called Western civilisation. Inspired by this idea, Bush and his neo-conservative advisers soon developed the doctrine of preventive wars.

This is not the place to critically examine the arguments put forward by Prof. Huntington to justify his theory on the supposed clash of civilisations. Now that Bush's preventive war on the Islamic world is in full swing (American military is deployed in hundreds of bases all over the world -- many of them in predominantly Muslim countries), the old professor has identified a new threat to America -- a threat from within its own borders. In his article, *El reto Hispano a EE UU* (The Hispanic Challenge to the United States), published in the current issue of the Spanish edition of the prestigious American journal

Foreign Policy, he identifies the Hispanics (the Spanish-speaking Americans) and in particular, the Mexican-Americans as the new "other". (I wonder whether he feels the same way about the thousands of Hispanics who are fighting in Iraq as part of the American occupation force including their supreme commander in Iraq, General Ricardo Sanchez, who is a Mexican-American).

Why does Huntington consider

the United States, Huntington believes that they have a hidden agenda for doing so, i.e., to reclaim the territories lost to the United States in the Mexican-American War (1846-48). He feels that illegal immigration together with the high fertility of the Hispanic women (Currently the Hispanics constitute only 12.6% of the total US population. But according to the Census Board, by 2050, it may reach 24%) will pose a threat to the cultural and

their eyes to the vast tracts of land held by France, Spain and later Mexico.

The doctrine of Manifest Destiny was the ideological foundation of this relentless expansionist policy. Like Huntington's latest theory, Manifest Destiny was essentially a racist idea. According to Prof. Ronald Takaki of the University of California, it "embraced a belief in American Anglo-Saxon superiority". In the words of Prof. Ramon

States. There are Spanish-speaking people, whose ancestors settled in these territories more than four hundred years ago. There are hundreds of thousands (maybe millions) of illegal immigrants, who came to the United States in search of work. They have hardly any political inclinations. Their maximum ambition in life is to be able to work legally and eventually to become American citizens. Like most illegal immigrants, they are loyal, law-abiding citizens. They are caught up in the struggle for survival. They perform menial tasks, which ordinary Americans do not want to perform. It has been pointed out by Prof. John Kenneth Galbraith that if all these illegal immigrants were expelled from the United States, its impact on the American economy would be disastrous. Agriculture, as an economic activity in Florida, Texas and California would virtually come to a standstill.

Therefore, instead of exploiting the wealth of the country, they certainly contribute to the well-being of the United States economy. Again, as Prof. Gregory Rodriguez of the University of Pepperdine points out, the Hispanics have proven to be so hardworking that their purchasing power as an ethnic group has increased by 65 per cent since 1990, which currently moves a four hundred thousand million dollar economy in the United States. (This is larger than the GDP of many medium-sized countries of the world)

Huntington is worried about "the defeat of the English language" because of the spread of Spanish in the United States. This is true that many Hispanics speak Spanish in the first generation. In the second and third generations Spanish is usually replaced by English as their first language, not only because it is the official language of the country but also because at present English is the most important international language of the world. This is nothing extraordinary. In the first generation, the Jewish immigrants to the United States spoke Yiddish, the Italians spoke Italian, the Poles spoke Polish, the Russians spoke Russian etc. In Britain, in the fifties and sixties, the immigrants from South Asia, spoke their native languages. But their children learnt English. This is true that because of the growing Hispanic population in the United States, many Hispanics speak not only English but also Spanish. When I visited the South and the South West, I was impressed by the ease with which the people switched from one language to the other. Everywhere in the world, knowledge of more than one language is considered as an asset. Yet, it seems, in the paranoid world of Huntington, where he is haunted by imaginary monsters and non-existent demons, it is tantamount to subversion. In my opinion, most Hispanics consider themselves as loyal citizens of the United States. I am afraid, Prof. Huntington has to look for his monsters elsewhere.

## LETTER FROM EUROPE

Huntington is worried about "the defeat of the English language" because of the spread of Spanish in the United States. This is true that many Hispanics speak Spanish in the first generation. In the second and third generations Spanish is usually replaced by English as their first language, not only because it is the official language of the country but also because at present English is the most important international language of the world...Most Hispanics consider themselves as loyal citizens of the United States. I am afraid, Prof. Huntington has to look for his monsters elsewhere.

the Hispanics as a potential threat to the United States? Because they are different. They are darker (a mixed race of American-Indian and Spanish peoples), speak Spanish and practise Catholicism. Huntington thinks that they do not appreciate the value of education and easily resign themselves to living in poverty (in other words, they are lazy). Thus according to Huntington both ethnically and culturally they are different. The members of the dominant group in the US are "pure white" (pink-coloured), of Anglo-Saxon origin, speak English and practise Protestantism. (Huntington, of course, belongs to this group.) Huntington thinks that there is a silent invasion underway in the form of massive illegal immigration across the Mexican border. The Mexican-Americans are not like the huddled masses of European stock, who entered the United States through the Ellis Island to work and build the nation.

According to Huntington, they, the Mexican-Americans do not come to the United States to work but to exploit the wealth of the nation. Since many of them live and work in the South Western parts of

economic integrity of the US. Eventually they will undermine the status of English language in these areas and will form a solid cultural and economic bloc independent of the rest of the United States. Prof. Huntington expresses his racist fears about the Hispanics but he does not explain, how, most of them, in the first place, became Americans.

Hunger for more and more land had been the driving force that guided the Anglo-Saxon adventurers ever since they landed on the shores of the New World in the seventeenth century. After the establishment and consolidation of the original thirteen colonies, the settlers looked towards the South and the West. "The native Indian had no place in their scheme of things." He and his race had to be destroyed to satisfy the need (or greed) for more land. "Nearly all Englishmen -- Puritans, Quakers or Anglicans -- visualised the conquest and settlement of the New World in terms of the exclusive possession of the soil. All new lands conquered were for the immediate benefit of the new arrivals (from Europe)." Once the Indians had been mercilessly dealt with, the Americans turned

Eduardo Ruiz of the University of California, "pervasive was the belief that what Americans upheld was right and good, that Providence had designated them the chosen people. In a political framework, Manifest Destiny stood for democracy as Americans conceived it; to spread democracy and freedom was the goal." (Some readers have, no doubt, identified the same rhetoric in President Bush's recent policy statements.) This was a clear case of "self-serving idealism with an undercurrent of racism".

Again, according to Prof. Ruiz, "Manifest Destiny had no place for the assimilation of strange and exotic peoples. Freedom for the Americans -- this was the cry, regardless of what befell the conquered natives". As a result of Manifest Destiny's claims to these lands, the United States expanded in an unprecedented manner. Louisiana was purchased from France in 1803. Florida was acquired in 1819. Mexican Texas, which included parts of present-day Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico as well as all of Texas was conquered by American Anglo-Saxon settlers in 1836 (remember, El Alamo) and finally annexed in 1845. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, which ended the Mexican-American War (1846-48) gave California and New Mexico (including present-day Nevada, Utah and Arizona) to the United States. "Mexico emerged from the Peace of Guadalupe Hidalgo bereft of half of its territory." Another chunk of present-day New Mexico was ceded by Mexico to the United States in 1853.

All this happened more than one hundred and fifty years ago. What is the current attitude of the ordinary Spanish-speaking people who live in the Southern and South Western parts of the United States?

I have had the privilege of travelling through most of these states where Spanish is widely spoken and I have not found any desire on their part to secede from the United

# The British raj and the princely states

## TALKING BOOKS

There were as many as 562 of these princely states scattered all over India, ruled by Rajas and Maharajas, a Nizam, a Jam, a Maharawal, a Mehtar, an Ackond, a Wali and scores of Raos and Ranas. If it was British policy to isolate the princes and thus discourage them from joining forces, it also prevented them from squabbling amongst themselves.

YASMEEN MURSHED

I seem to recall certain books that I read as a young adult with amazing clarity as I am sure do most of my generation -- a sure sign of advancing years! One of the more memorable books I read sometime in the late sixties was THE PRINCES by Manohar Malgonkar (pub: Viking Books, 1963).

It begins with such style, "The map was red and yellow. The red was for British India; the yellow for the India of the princes: the Rajas and the Maharajas, the Ranis and Maharanis, the Nawabs, the Rawals and the Jams." For a South Asian history buff and an incorrigible romantic this is an irresistible lure and Malgonkar does not disappoint. He writes, "The characters in this novel are intended to personify the thoughts and ideas of a somewhat tightly-knit social group: the one-time ruling princes of India. Over six hundred Princely States were integrated into the Indian Union within a matter of months....."

The story of the struggle for independence and the birth of three sovereign nation states on the sub-continent, is the most important theme in the history of the twentieth century in South Asia but it has become fashionable to ignore and disregard one part of it, which is the story of the Princely States. The Indian rulers of the states which survived after the breakup of the Mughal Empire, because they were only loosely a part of the Mughal confederacy, and those which had never come under direct Mughal rule, were nevertheless soon to be brought under the sway of the Raj either directly or as puppets controlled by the Sahebs. These princes and rulers of India were treated treacherously and very shabbily by the British and later totally betrayed by the new government of India.

"The British in India" is not a particularly edifying tale but then, I suppose, all stories of colonisation and subjugation are the same. From the fifteenth century onwards the British kept arriving in India as explorers, adventurers and traders eventually becoming rulers with India as the principal Jewel in their crown of Empire. Like all the other

invaders who periodically forayed into India the British also came to make money, not by plunder but by commerce -- they were merchants not soldiers -- at least to begin with. They stayed in order to make enough money to leave.

It was only when they came up against the French who had also arrived to establish their control over this rich trading area that they began to colonise and rule. In 1765 the British defeated the French and the independent ruler of Bengal and seized control of the "Diwani" the administrative power of the Bengal treasury. This was the turning point in their relationship because from then on control and rule of the territory became vital to the London stockholders of John Company, so the idea of empire took root and began to grow.

Thus began an era of plunder which is summed up best in the words of Edmund Burke the great Tory leader speaking to the House of Commons in 1783, who said, "It is our government that destroys India. Animated with all the advance of the age with appetites continually renewing they roll in one after another. Every rupee of profit made by an Englishman is lost forever to India."

The richest plunder of all was to be found in the Princely States where the old style rulers kept sumptuous courts and owned fabulous treasures - enough to put a gleam into the eyes of every aspiring "nabob" as the rich John Company men came to be called. No wonder then that they turned their avaricious eyes to these courts and palaces and the rest, as they say, is history.

The princes and other rulers on their part, helped the Raj to encroach upon and later abduct their power because they did little to protect themselves. Although there were definitely some who were enlightened, caring and humane the bulk of the states could boast of no such quality among their rulers. As Malgonkar wrote elsewhere, "The winds of change did not penetrate their realms and power without responsibility bred indolence and fattened egos to grotesque proportions. The present held no challenge; the future no threat so they

tended to hover close to their time of creation.

Many of them had laid claims to divinity or celestial descent from one of the deities of the Hindu pantheon. The Maharaja of Alwar, who could present an authenticated genealogy to establish that he was descended from the god Rama, had objected to shaking hands with George V on the grounds that to touch the hand of an infidel would damage the purity of his line. It was only by threats of dire consequences that he did finally shake George V's hand at the Delhi Durbar.

Processions, military parades, durbars and other forms of pagentry left little time or money for hospitals or road building and the industrial revolution was kept at bay as something alien, an imposition from the west. The elephant trainer and court jester ranked higher than the state engineer and the keeper of the harem far more important than the prime minister. A good citizen was one who accepted unquestioningly not only his master's absolute right to be his master, but also that divinity was involved somewhere.

There were as many as 562 of these princely states scattered all over India, ruled by Rajas and Maharajas, a Nizam, a Jam, a Maharawal, a Mehtar, an Ackond, a Wali and scores of Raos and Ranas. If it was British policy to isolate the princes and thus discourage them from joining forces, it also prevented them from squabbling amongst themselves. Centuries old feuds and jealousies manifested themselves in triviality; the number of race horses kept, or mistresses or Rolls Royces; in the lavishness of entertainment, in the measurements of tigers shot and, above all, of the titles and honours accorded by the British.

Today all these seem to be archaic anomalies for us in South Asia because the Raj and its creation, the princely states, have both long vanished from the scene. It is only in fiction that we catch glimpses of their world and in reading make then come to life again.

Yasmeen Murshed is a full-time bookworm and a part-time educationist. She is also the founder of Scholastica School.



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