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## *Once Again on the Clash of Civilizations*

**The revolutionary moves made by Donald Trump continue to shake the modern world. His decision to raise tariffs in trade relations with as many as 86 countries has caused genuine turmoil.**

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Trump's innovations in both domestic and foreign policy are primarily leading to a fracture in American society and a broader split within Western civilization. Criticism of the U.S. president's actions is intensifying — not only in American media but also increasingly in the press of Western European allies. Meanwhile, there is a growing consolidation of globalists, both within the United States and abroad. It is notable that Americans have taken to the streets in many cities across the country to protest against Trump's policies in various areas — according to some media reports, more than 600,000 people participated, with demonstrations even occurring in a number of European cities.

Americans will miss globalization and being the world's policeman

One particular source of outrage among the current ruling circles in Western Europe is Trump's course toward normalizing relations with Russia and seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Ukraine. These same circles have also sharply criticized the tariff hikes announced by Trump in April of this year.

At the same time, some economists acknowledge the logic behind Trump's tariff policy — namely, increasing pressure on global economies in order to boost American exports, raise tax revenues, and support the domestic market by regulating demand for American-made goods over Chinese and Mexican ones. Supporters of Trump argue that the goal of his

reforms is to save the United States, which for years has been creating problems for itself, particularly by driving its national debt to astronomical levels — \$36.6 trillion.

The prominent American financier and billionaire Ray Dalio wrote on April 9 on the platform X (formerly Twitter) that one of the driving forces behind Trump's tariff policy is the excessive existing debt and the rapid pace at which new debt is accumulating. "The U.S. is addicted to using debt to finance excessive spending, while creditor countries like China are addicted to selling goods to debtor countries like the U.S.," Dalio noted. "There is a great need for these imbalances to be corrected."

Trump does not hide the fact that he views global trade as a battlefield where each participant seeks to maximize its own benefit at the expense of others. Although he is a product of the neoliberal era, he champions the ideas of deregulation and reducing the role of the state in the economy. The United States spends more than it saves, and this very factor predetermines its persistent trade deficit.

Trump has warned that the initial effects of his reforms may pose some difficulties for the U.S. — a decline in stock market values, slight increases in the prices of certain goods, and so on. Nevertheless, he maintains that the long-term benefits of his actions will be tangible.

His decisive shift in foreign policy has made the future of international relations increasingly unpredictable — Trump's tough demands are being met with open hostility by some Western leaders. The final outcomes of his reforms remain unclear. Most observers tend to believe that the U.S. president will manage to implement at least part of his agenda. However, many political analysts argue that "the U.S. has fallen into a spiral of decline: it is struggling with deepening social and political divisions, and an unforeseen crisis could plunge it into complete chaos." *The Jerusalem Post* wrote about this on April 3 of this year.

The renowned historian Niall Ferguson regarded Trump's tariffs as a harbinger of decline and America's retreat from the global stage: "Americans will miss globalization and being the world's policeman," he wrote recently. "They will belatedly realize there is no portal through which the United States can return to the 1950s — let alone the 1900s." Ferguson called this "the end of the American empire."

### **A Turn to Huntington's Theory of the Clash of Civilizations**

Some American scholars attempt to explain the ongoing transformation of international relations through Samuel Huntington's theory of the "Clash of Civilizations." In essence, this resonates in some ways with our concept of multipolarity.

American political scientist Michael Kimmage, writing in the April edition of *Foreign Affairs*, concludes that the current global transformation is increasingly taking the shape of a

confrontation among the world's strongest leaders. He identifies five major figures, starting with President Putin, who defends the idea that Russian civilization is autonomous. (Russia's role is particularly distinctive in that it is a Eurasian civilization, rooted not only in Orthodoxy as its predominant religion, but also in Islam.)

At the 2020 Republican National Convention, Trump was presented as “the bodyguard of Western civilization.”

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at the 2024 Democracy Summit, described democracy as “the lifeblood of Indian civilization.”

Chinese leader Xi Jinping, at a recent CPC Central Committee Plenum, called Chinese civilization “the only great continuous civilization that still exists in the form of a state.” (Indeed, the Chinese have every reason to be proud that they have been writing in hieroglyphs for 5,000 years.)

The American scholar adds to this list Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who declared in a 2020 speech: “Our civilization is a civilization of conquest.” (One of the hallmarks of Erdoğan's policy is his emphasis on promoting Turkish culture and history through the production of a vast number of television series, which have gained great popularity in the Arab world, several Asian countries, Russia, and Latin America. Turkey is also striving to strengthen ties with countries that were once under its rule, as well as with a number of former Soviet republics, leveraging shared linguistic roots.) Ankara's skillful diplomacy and effective use of soft power help explain Turkey's success in advancing its agenda in the Muslim world, in Africa, and in parts of Asia.

The objective weakening of Western civilization's role in global affairs largely accounts for the rise of other civilizational centers. A key manifestation of this shift has been the emergence of BRICS — an alliance that now includes all the major civilizations of the modern world: Russian, Chinese, Indian, Islamic, African, and Latin American.

It is evident that the further evolution of international dynamics will take place primarily under the influence of these six major centers of power in today's world.

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