

Signs of No Civilization

Introduction

No doubt, humanity has achieved a tremendous technological advancement in the current century. Man is able to travel from one half of the globe to the other half in few hours. He communicates with other planets in a fraction of a second. Man invented huge machines, airplanes, satellites, cellular phones and all kinds of electronics. Man wired the entire globe together with internet and phone lines. Man walked on the moon and is invading the space and other planets, tremendous materialistic accomplishments.

But all this is just one side of the reality. There is another dark side that we cannot ignore. This century has a tremendous disgrace, decline and degradation of humanity. Facts related to this decline of humanity during past century are brought from a book authored by Dr. Zbigniew Brezezinski, the former US national Security Advisor. The book called " Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the 21 Century ".

Brezezinski's book is an important document in this subject because:

- a. Because of his position as one of the top officials, a national security advisor, he was exposed to classified information, facts and numbers of victims in various wars.
- b. We want to evaluate the western civilization from a western point of view. Muslim writers are often accused of being prejudice against it. We Muslims are often suspicious about Orientalists and their writings, and so are westerners are suspicious about Occidentalism. It is fair to look at the western Civilization from a western point of view
- c. Dr. Brezezinski expertise as a political scientists

In his book, he talked about the decline and degradation of humanity during the 20 century. This degradation could be summarized under four main headlines:

I. The Century of Megadeath:

Megasomething means millions of this thing. Megadeath indicates the millions of innocent people killed in this century.

Of those killed in twentieth-century wars, approximately 33,000,000 were young men, mostly between the ages of eighteen and thirty, who were executed in the name of nationalism and/or ideology. World War I has consumed at least 8,500,000 while World War II has consumed at least 19,000,000 military lives, causing a massive biological depletion of talent, energy, and genetic inheritance in several key European nations. Other wars elsewhere in this century caused an additional 6,000,000 or so military fatalities.

That was the cost in military lives, how about Civilians. The practice of total wars, in which both civilians and militarists are killed, were initiated by Nazis and Japanese militarists and then the so-called democratic societies followed. The hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians killed in the fire bombing of Dresden and in the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki provide mute testimony to the moral corruption facilitated by advances in the technology of death. Other Civilian casualties are estimated to about 13,000,000 women, children, and older men during World War I and for about 20,000,000 during World War II. Add to that the estimated 15,000,000 civilian Chinese deaths in the Sino-Japanese war which started prior to World War II. In addition, probably no less than 6,000,000 civilians were killed in other conflicts. Among them, the Mexican wars of the early century, the Paraguay-Bolivia War of 1928-35, the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1936, the India-Pakistan partition of 1947 and the subsequent two wars, the Korean war of 1950-53, the Nigerian civil war of 1967, the Vietnam War of 1961-74, and the Iraq-Iran war of 1980-87.

The number of defenseless individuals deliberately put to death because of religious hatred and ethnic cleansing is beyond estimate. The Hindu-Muslim killings during the partition of India took the lives of about 3-4,000,000 people. Hitler caused the deliberate killing of 6,000,000 European Jews, more than 2,000,000 Poles, with special efforts made to kill the entire Polish intelligentsia, 6,000,000 Soviet, and at least 2-3,000,000 cold-bloodedly murdered elsewhere in Europe. In brief, Hitler only had about 17,000,000 human beings put to death.

That was not the record number. Hitler's number was outdone, by Stalin and Mao. Stalin inherited from Lenin an efficiently operating machinery for the mass destruction of political and social opponents, and he further improved on it. Lenin killed between 6-8,000,000 people. That number subsequently was more or less tripled by Stalin, who caused the deaths of no less than 25,000,000 people. Of that total, in the years 1937-38 alone, 1,000,000 were shot one by one and an additional 2,000,000 died in labor camps. An additional 1,000,000 were also executed during the preceding years, following Stalin's coming to power in the late 1920s. Add to that 7,000,000 victims of Stalin's destruction of the peasant society and that about 12,000,000 died in labor camps. To this must be added another 1,000,000 or so put to death during and after World War II and close to 1,000,000 POWs can be assumed to have died in Stalin's camps.

To this day, the former Soviet Union is dotted with enormous secret graveyards, usually located on the outskirts of big cities, in which the bodies of the executed victims were systematically (usually at night) buried. Just next to Minsk (a city of less than 1 million inhabitants in Stalin's time), a burial site containing some 200,000 executed victims was uncovered in the late 1980s. Subsequently, similar sites have been found throughout the entire land, next to every major city.

Throughout Eastern Europe, in every state, concentration or death camps were established, in which enemies of the new regimes were worked to death.

Accounting for the human losses in China during the most violent phases of the communist experiment gives the figure of up to 29,000,000 people as the human cost of the communist era. Add to that the price in human lives paid for the attempts to construct communism in Eastern Europe, North Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Cuba. It is a safe estimate that these consumed at least 3,000,000 victims. In brief, the failed effort to build communism in the twentieth century consumed the lives of almost 60,000,000 human beings, making communism the most costly human failure in all of history. It lived only for 70 years, which are the age of a man not a nation.

To sum up, the total killed deliberately during this century is no less than 175,000,000 lives that were deliberately killed due to politically motivated genocides. That is the

approximate equivalent of the total population of France, Italy, and Great Britain; or over two-thirds of the total current population of the United States. This is more than the total killed in all previous wars, civil conflicts, and religious persecutions throughout human history. Indeed, it is the century of megadeath.

This is attributed to the organized political insanity coupled with advanced technologies of destruction. One that justifiably stamps the twentieth century as the century of megadeath. To this day nowhere has anyone been brought to justice for these extraordinary crimes.

And we Muslims say, the above summary registers the human toll of the massive moral failures of the 20th century due to the fall of Muslim Omah

II. Who Controls the Technology of death

Existing Mass destruction weapons that we have today is enough to destroy the entire earth several times. But the question is, who controls the buttons of these mass destruction weapons.

Politicians are the ones who control these weapons. Politicians that are driven by materialistic gains and strategic interests. Those who lie every time they move their lips. Capitalism is based on materialism and greed. The politician in a capitalistic society will be driven by materialism not by idealism.

There are two ways to make decisions. We can base our decisions and foreign policies on materialism and strategic interests, or we can base them on idealism or moral values, such as wish for others what we wish for ourselves, justice and freedom for all. Unfortunately, capitalistic societies are driven by materialism. And based on this materialism we decide to kill. We kill for an oil pipe line or political control or strategic interests. And the decision of using or not using mass destruction weapons are based on the same thing.

Dr. Brezezinski says "Man have misused technology to destroy and kill. Now airplanes that travel with a speed faster than the speed of sound can go every where loaded with bombs that weigh thousands of pounds, as well as smart missiles, to destroy houses, entire cities and villages.

Westerners have lost the balance between power and manners. They did not keep the equilibrium between religion and science. Power and science are growing while manners and religion are declining. Materialism is growing while spiritualities are declining.

A very good example of the loss of balance between science and manners is the scientist who invented the atomic bomb. No doubt he is smart and knowledgeable in the area of nuclear physics, but his lack of spiritual control lead him to inventing such a bomb that took the lives of millions of people instead of employing the technology to improve the quality of the lives of people.

In the old days, war was man against man. Now it is man against machine. Nowadays, the pilot is setting in an air-conditioned airplane killing with buttons as though he is playing a video game. It is so easy now to kill millions with a click of a button. We are a generation that was able to leap on the moon yet crawling and limping on earth

III. The Giant of Global Inequality:

There are many forms of inequality that we are witnessing today. The first form of inequality is the political injustice. The concentration of power in few hands. The oppression and disregard of civil and human rights in many area of the world. Even in democracies, we see the neglect of basic rights and civil freedoms in the name of national security and patriotism, interesting enough, the same excuses used by dictators in the third world. We are hearing things nowadays that are foreign to our democracy; things like love it or leave it, or you are either with us or with the terrorists.

We also see injustices in democracies where certain small powerful intersect groups, very powerful lobbies are working hard for their own selfish benefit and even to serve countries other than their own.

On the international level, we see injustices in the form of double standard when dealing with world affairs. I will give you quick high lightening examples of double standards:

- a. The United Nations and the International Security Council were founded to promote justice and peace!!!. What is the difference between Kwait and Bosnia. Kwait dialed

911 and Bosnia dialed 911. The response to the call of Kuwait was very different from Bosnia.

- b. Difference between elections in Haiti and elections in Algeria.
- c. Human rights, many people joke and say human rights have blue eyes and blond hair
- d. Democracy is restricted to certain countries. Democracy in the middle east is not allowed and is called blind democracy because it brings Islam to government and it will be against the interest of Israel

The second form of inequality is inequality in the distribution of wealth both on the level of one country and on the international level. We witness today the accumulation of wealth in the hands of few. In one of the third world countries, 98% of the population is consuming 20% of the national income where only 2% of the population are consuming 80% of the national income. Even in the first world, we see pockets of third world within the boundaries of first world.

On the international level, we see the obscene luxury that small segment of humanity are living on the expense of millions of poor and needy who are starving to death. We also see the exploitation of the powerful of the weak. The rich is exploiting the poor. The attempt to dominate and control resources and markets in the name of globalizations. And as a result, we see things like US is consuming 60% of the world resources even though we constitute 5% of the world population.

Dr. Brezinski says "Distribution of wealth in the globe is highly uneven. Economic growth is also highly unevenly distributed, it favors the richer portion of man kind and making the gap wider. The situation is getting worse as the population of the world grows much more in poor states. The population of the world is expected to be near 8.5 billions by the year 2025. Of that total, as many as 6.5 billions are expected to be living in the poorer states of mankind. Even worse, approximately two-thirds of these will be concentrated in the urban slums of the less developed world, making them highly susceptible to radical political mobilization. The portion of the populations of the rich countries who are over the age of 65 is increasing much more rapidly than the

corresponding age bracket in the poorer countries, while their number under the age of fifteen is shrinking more rapidly.

Negative demographic trends are reinforced by negative economic trends. According to the United Nations Human Development Report for 1992, in the 1960s the richer countries were thirty times wealthier than the poorer ones, but by the 1990s the gap had widened to the point that the income of the richer countries had become 150 times higher.

IV. The destructive screen:

Killing machines are not the only destructive technology. Other destructive devices exist that destroys the mind. Interesting enough Dr. Brezezinski introduces Television as one of the most mind destroying technology.

Dr. Brezezinski said that television is playing a vital role in destroying the minds of children and teenagers. Ether waves travel everywhere and enters every house to teach kids sex, violence and infidelity through TVs and radios by means of adult movies, date shows, rated R movies, ...etc.

Today, for much of the world and especially for the young, television is the most important instrument both for socialization and education. In that respect, it is rapidly replacing the roles traditionally played by the family, by the religion and by the school. Television gives the young viewer the first look to the outside world. It first defines the meaning of the good life. It sets the standards of what is to be considered achievement, fulfillment, good taste, and proper conduct. It conditions desires, defines aspirations and expectations, and draws the line between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. With audiences around the world increasingly glued to television sets, there is nothing comparable to the cultural and philosophical conditioning that television exercises on the viewers.

It is a staggering fact that, according to data from Nielsen Media Services, an American housewife spends twenty-eight hours and thirteen minutes per week (about one-quarter of her waking hours) watching television, and that American teenagers do so for about twenty hours a week. Even worse are the data accumulated by the Educational Testing Service. It indicates that the proportion of children aged thirteen who watch television for

five hours or more per day (thirty-five hours per week) is over 20 percent in America, and somewhere in the range of over 10 percent for both Western and some developing countries. These numbers underline the importance of television in shaping perceptions and values.

But who is controlling television. Who is shaping the minds of people and setting standards to them through television. Listen to this: more than 50 percent of the worldwide film viewing involves American-made productions. No nation comes even remotely close to the United States in the distribution of television programming abroad. (In recent years, the UK and France have been in second place, but their respective sales have amounted to less than 15 percent of the total American export hours.) Every continent is thereby affected (or infected) by the images and values which American TV projects. Driven by profiteers who exploit the hunger for vulgarity, pornography, and even barbarism.

Thus, Hollywood is teaching humanity through TV. Hollywood normalizes violence and brutality. Hollywood encourages sexual relationships through examples and stimulated pressures. For example advertisements for condoms addressed to American teenagers and children describe potential customers as sexually "active" with the obvious negative inference that the others are "inactive", and this way, they make business from the worst public instinct resulting in the loss of control over social behavior. This is especially applicable to the widely viewed global exports of American television and of the American film industry. "Dallas" and "Dynasty". They have been shown in more than one hundred countries, and the image that they present of American values tells us what is the message that America has to offer to the world. Compare this to what would Muslims broadcast to the world if we are in Hollywood place.

American movies in recent years have come to be dominated by brutish violence and physical and sexual animalhood, with growing box-office rewards for each overdose of profanity, sex and violence. It is no exaggeration to say that Hollywood movie and TV producers have become cultural polluters and have been propagating a self-destructive social ethic.

As a direct product of this we have in America:

- a. The widespread of crimes and violence resulting directly from TV. What also made it worse is the extraordinarily easy access to lethal weaponry, with more guns in private hands, and even criminal hands, than in most armies around the world.
- b. With a TV and film culture that extols violence, all of this produces the highest rate of homicide of any civilized country in the world
- c. The spread of a massive drug culture, in part as a form of psychological escape and in part as an alternative way to become rich quickly, with earnings from drugs estimated to yield more than \$100 billion a year.
- d. Discontinuity of the transfer of traditions and values from one generation to the other.