

**IB Extended Essay 2007**

**“To what extent was Francis Fukuyama’s ‘The End of History?’ premature?”**

**Session:** May 2007  
**Candidate Name:** Daire MacFadden  
**Session Candidate Number:**  
**IB Subject of Essay:** Politics  
**Supervisor Name:**  
**Word Count:** 3,998

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

**Abstract:**

'The End of History?' was a seminal thesis written by Francis Fukuyama. Published in the Summer 1989 issue of *The National Interest*, it was a welcoming of the post-Cold War era and a celebration of Western triumph. To both controversy and acclaim, Fukuyama advocated the emergence of the Western liberal democracy as the only working form of human government, the superior ideology. **The research question being investigated is: "To what extent was Francis Fukuyama's 'The End of History?' premature?"**

The **scope of my investigation** is narrowed to look at the responses in two self-prescribed year spans. The investigation draws from articles, commentaries, books, interviews published in the years 1989-2001 (hereafter defined as the initial responses), and 2001-to the present. The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 are treated as a turning point in the responses. Analysis and comparison of the validity of the responses allows for the question to be answered on a theoretical level. Cross-referencing of the theory with an examination of what has actually happened, considering how the thesis has been changed by an ever-fluctuating political climate, allows for a measurement of the theories validity (assumed to be a standard).

The **conclusion** reached is that in short, the end of History was premature. Fukuyama's prophet like prediction of Communism's collapse deserves to be commended. Despite the numerous critical responses, 'The End of History' held its ground for much more than its "fifteen minutes of fame", but the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, and the effect the resulting change had on the thesis could not have been anticipated. It is possible for the thesis to be given new weight in a post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world, but the reality is that it was not written to explain such events.

word count: 286

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

**Table of Contents**

1. Introduction	4
2. To what extent do the initial (1989-2001) responses to 'The End of History' invalidate Fukuyama's thesis?	5
2.1 To what extent might 'The Clash of Civilisations' stimulate new interpretations of events and foreign policies?	9
3. To what extent has 'The End of History' been affected by the events occurring on and following September 11 <sup>th</sup> 2001?	11
3.1 To what extent does the Islamic fundamentalist ideology undermine 'The End of History'?	12
5. Conclusion	14
6. Bibliography	16
7. Acknowledgements	18

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

## 1. Introduction

In 1989, international affairs journal *The National Interest* published an article by Francis Fukuyama entitled *The End of History?* Fukuyama was at the time a US State Department official and a former consultant for the RAND Corporation. The article has its origins in a lecture Fukuyama delivered at The University of Chicago's Olin Center for Inquiry into the Theory and Practice of Democracy earlier that year<sup>1</sup>. The National Interest encouraged Fukuyama to develop the lecture into what became the article, and later, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992). Fukuyama first piqued my interest with an article he wrote on the rifts within neoconservatism and his reasoning for abandoning the ideology. Further readings led me to 'The End of History', and I began to question the correlation it shares with neoconservatism, and what implications his split with neoconservatism has had on his early writing. I will be examining the responses and replies to 'The End of History' as means to conclude whether Fukuyama's writing is in fact rendered premature by alternative opinions of the time. In holding Fukuyama's thesis accountable, I will primarily draw upon ideas contained in the initial essay, however for the purposes of looking at his 'The End of History' writing holistically, the essay and its succeeding book will be treated as one and the same.

Fukuyama's use of the term History has been the source of much misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Rather than referring to history by the dictionary definition, Fukuyama referred to "mankind's ideological evolution", the "end of History" therefore being simplified as "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution."<sup>2</sup> This for Fukuyama meant the triumph of the Western liberal democratic model of government, and the bold suggestion that liberal democracies will no longer face challenges from systematic alternatives. Written with the Cold War ending and the West emerging triumphant in the foreground, Fukuyama draws on the unfolding events for empirical evidence. Upon print, the article was considered highly controversial, receiving criticism from both left and right wing political pundits seeking to disprove it. Nonetheless, it has also received widespread acclaim.

Fukuyama's thesis borrowed, modified, and popularised concepts of German philosopher Georg W.F. Hegel<sup>3</sup> through the lens of his 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian-French interpreter, Alexandre Kojève. Fukuyama is among a long list of predominantly Western philosophers and academics to have addressed this aspect of Hegel's work, in spite of this, few did so to the popularity of Karl Marx. Fukuyama labels Marx's interpretation, the interpretation with which we are most familiar,

<sup>1</sup> The Decline of the West? Lecture Series Homepage. <http://olincenter.uchicago.edu/declinewest.html> (accessed on October 26, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. "The End of History?" *The National Interest*, Summer 1989. Pg. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, Pg. 1.

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

a distortion and consequently, "our misfortune"<sup>4</sup>. Fukuyama's authority to make this accusation is brought into question, having he himself been criticised for misconstruing Hegel<sup>5</sup>. Though the substratum of Fukuyama's article may serve to address notions of what is fundamentally political philosophy, or more specifically liberal theory, I am aiming to assess the validity of responses to the article, defining them in two categories: post-Cold War and post-September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. The need for an undisputed paradigm to explain world politics cannot be denied. Fukuyama's argument has at times appeared ambivalent; as one reviewer wrote, "it may be because he does not know what he really believes"<sup>6</sup>, but in the seventeen years since publication, he has taken several opportunities to reiterate his conviction and rectify the weak points of his argument. Will the End of History paradigm still be around in fifty years? I therefore take the approach of a sceptic and seek to answer the following question: **To what extent was Francis Fukuyama's 'The End of History?' premature?**

## **2. To what extent do the initial (1989-2001) responses to 'The End of History' invalidate Fukuyama's thesis?**

As the demise of the Soviet Union became inevitable, Western academics rushed to spill their ink on the pages of such journals as *Foreign Affairs* and *The National Interest* in the race to coin the theory of what was to become of U.S. foreign policy, and of international relations in the post-Cold War era. *The End of History?* was among the most popular of theories, and was therefore susceptible to a high volume of debate. Some responses of course emerged more compelling and more competitive than others; nevertheless some critics had clearly not adopted the Hegelian definition of History and consequently misunderstood the entire thesis.<sup>7</sup> Such misconceptions will therefore not be treated as a worthy challenge to Fukuyama's thesis. Fukuyama was quick to respond to his critics in the Fall 1989 issue of *The National Interest*, dismissing all the objections that had thus far been raised as indecisive.<sup>8</sup> With Hegel also having been criticised for declaring the end of History prematurely, Fukuyama was in good company, though Hegel's declaration deserves another study altogether. A number of the responses to Fukuyama have their foundations in empirical counter-arguments, for Fukuyama these were among the easiest to refute.

---

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, Pg. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ryan, Alan. "Professor Hegel Goes to Washington". *The New York Review of Books*, March 26 1992. Pg. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *op. cit.*, Ryan, Alan. Pg. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. "A Reply to My Critics." *The National Interest*, Fall 1989. Pg. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

Alongside 'The End of History?' The National Interest published 'Responses to Fukuyama', a lengthy article consisting of reactions from his colleagues. Allan Bloom's sentiment of "liberalism has won, but it may be decisively unsatisfactory"<sup>9</sup> was shared by several of the contributors. A significant word count was devoted to addressing the final pages of Fukuyama's article, where he addresses the problems that may still pervade those liberal democracies which are incomplete in their implementation. Such are the empirical counter-arguments, the social problems. While antagonising Fukuyama's thesis by suggesting that the basic principles of the liberal democratic state can be improved upon, these arguments are fundamentally linked in the belief that the liberal democracy is planting the seeds for its own instability. Stephen Sestanovich is at the vanguard of these thoughts<sup>10</sup> that are echoed throughout the responses. What Sestanovich says is synonymous with a commentator's applications of the term 'incomplete' as label for a flawed liberal democracy. While he does provoke these very responses, it is to Fukuyama's gain that he pre-empts them by writing of the United States, aided by its liberal democracy, as having overcome the "class issue".<sup>11</sup> Pierre Hassner indirectly defends Fukuyama by asking, "Are not the homeless refuge and the homeless drug addict the inseparable companions of the materialistic consumers?"<sup>12</sup> However, he does believe such failures might prompt rebirth of alternative ideologies. For Hassner and several others, a primitive form of fascism seems plausible.<sup>13</sup> To summarise Fukuyama's stance, the social problems occurring in a liberal democracy will in most cases be caused by incomplete implementation, this is incomplete liberalism, and does not pose a significant threat to the end of History. Leon Wieseltier writes about such liberalism as being an invitation to "the war of ideas."<sup>14</sup> With the perspective one has of the world today, Fukuyama seems premature in asserting this. Fareed Zakaria gained much attention when in 1997 he wrote that the social problems, the failure to completely implement the ideology, the hegemonic foreign policy of the United States would lead

<sup>9</sup> Bloom, Alan, et al. "Responses to Fukuyama." The National Interest, Summer 1989. Pg. 3.

<sup>10</sup> "...the problem liberalism is least effective at handling is that of establishing itself in the first place. ... A liberal program, ..., may only prepare the ground for an illiberal outcome." – *ibid.* Pg. 15.

<sup>11</sup> "...the root causes of economic inequality do not have to do with the underlying legal and social structure of our society, which remains fundamentally egalitarian and moderately redistributionist, so much as with the cultural and social characteristics of the groups that make it up, which are in turn the historical legacy of premodern conditions. Thus black poverty in the United States is not the inherent product of liberalism, but is rather the "legacy of slavery and racism" which persisted long after the formal abolition of slavery." – *op. cit.* Fukuyama. "The End of History?" Pg. 6.

<sup>12</sup> *op. cit.*, Bloom, et al. "Responses to Fukuyama." Pg. 5.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>14</sup> Wieseltier, Leon. "Spoilers at the Party." The National Interest, Fall 1989. Pg. 2.

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

to a breeding ground and growth spurt for illiberal democracies.<sup>15</sup> Illiberal democracies would contain flaws destabilising the presumed side effects of a majority liberal democratic world, the "democratic peace theory"<sup>16</sup> of international relations might not hold true.

Several commentators found refuge in the fact that Fukuyama was writing as the Soviet Union's steps towards political and economic liberalism were far from complete, allowing them to misconstrue the extent to which the thesis was dependent on the dismantling of the Soviet Union. When world events continued to unfold – many as Fukuyama had accurately predicted, and the pages of *Foreign Affairs* continued to be filled with commentaries on international relations, the end of History gained credence. While on the other hand, the validity of Bloom's aforementioned sentiments and their substitutes' soundness still survived.

Kishore Mahbubani, a Singaporean diplomat, wrote one of the few Asian responses to the end of History. Fukuyama's book deals with what the end of History means in relation to East Asian economies of Japan and the so-called "Four Tigers". Mahbubani challenges Fukuyama's interpretation, affirming that the end of History has not and will not apply to the modernised Asian economies, and, in terminology of this study, is premature. In Mahbubani's response, he simplifies Fukuyama's assertion.<sup>17</sup> While Mahbubani captures the essence of Fukuyama's article, he has failed to capture the attention of Fukuyama as a viable contender. Mahbubani represents Singapore, a political economy which at first glance contradicts Fukuyama's thesis. The Singaporean has been guided through rapid modernisation since independence, ignoring any calls for democratization. Fukuyama labels Singapore an authoritarian state and takes note of its founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's defence<sup>18</sup>. According to Alan Ryan, Lee has called the Singapore system "East Asian Confucian capitalism"<sup>19</sup>. Li Xianglu, a former Chinese government official, suggests that because of Asian countries different core values, it is too early to dismiss

<sup>15</sup> Discussion of Zakaria's "The Rise of The Illiberal Democracy" is continued in section 2.1 of this essay.

<sup>16</sup> "[The hypothesis] that democracies do not go to war with each other. It proposes that this does not happen because of shared economic, cultural and political norms (Miriam, pg. 443) which all contribute to create a set of shared liberal values that foster peace."

<http://research.rutgers.edu/~deymious/docs/polsci323-demoPorP.pdf> (accessed on December 22, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> "...The rest of the world, if it is to free itself from the "mire" of history, will have to adjust and accommodate to the ways of the West. Having already got things basically right and facing no imminent threat, the West has no need to make major adjustments of its own." – Mahbubani, Kishore. "Can Asians Think?" Pg. 49.

<sup>18</sup> "democracy would be an obstacle to Singapore's spectacular economic success." – Fukuyama, Francis. "The End of History and The Last Man." New York, 2006. Pg. 134.

<sup>19</sup> *op. cit.*, Ryan. Pg. 3.

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

them.<sup>20</sup> The political and economic of values in which Singapore's ideology is rooted, might become compelling opponents to the Western liberal democracy, the same applies to any of the "Asian tigers", China being no exception. Much of China's current growth can be attributed as benefits of its customised authoritarian political system. Fukuyama does speak of the Chinese trend<sup>21</sup>, it is just one instant in which 'The End of History' comes out as a containing a contradiction. Hassner presents it well in a hyperbolically<sup>22</sup>, but his interpretation was not unforeseen. Fukuyama had stated that the call for democratisation comes as a result of modernisation<sup>23</sup>, this seems to be an exception for the time being. Nowhere in Fukuyama's writings on China can a definitive answer be found on whether he believes the ideal of the liberal democracy will govern the material world of China "in the long run." Still there is scepticism about it being a system superior to liberal democracy<sup>24</sup>. Mahbubani comes to advocate "what the rest can teach the West"<sup>25</sup>. Fukuyama doubts that their systems would be exportable to cultures that do not share Asia's Confucian values.<sup>26</sup> Wieseltier is one of the few to give an accurate and well-founded understanding of the Asian economic and political ideologies<sup>27</sup>. The published viewpoints have here been outlined. Although "The Responses to Fukuyama" article was filled with praise and support, the political climate in which these were written is noteworthy, Reagan had branded the Soviet Union an "evil empire"<sup>28</sup> and Communism (an ideology on the opposite end of their reason spectrum) had been a serious competitor. At the time of publication, the liberal democracy was not a universal ideology. Case studies show that though Democratic Peace Theory explains a lack of war between democracies, it doesn't imply that relations between a liberal and a non-liberal state will be any more harmonious.

<sup>20</sup> "...He says of Singapore that "its core values are not Western liberalism or individualism and it may yet evolve into a system posing a challenge to the West. China is likely to follow this alternative path." – *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> "China has a tradition of meritocracy – a tradition that is also carried on in Korean and Japan. All of them have a sense of 'stateness' where public servants are expected to look to long-term interests of the state and are rewarded by the system for doing so." – *op. cit.*, Fukuyama. "The End of History and The Last Man."

<sup>22</sup> "he does not really believe either in history or in its end." – *op. cit.*, Bloom, et al. "Responses to Fukuyama." Pg. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Vine, Jeremy. *Newsnight: End of History*. (Fukuyama interviewed). Broadcast on May 24, 2002. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/archive/2002165.stm> (accessed on October 10, 2006).

<sup>24</sup> *op. cit.*, Fukuyama. "The End of History and The Last Man." Pg. 241.

<sup>25</sup> *op. cit.*, Mahbubani.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, Pg. 243.

<sup>27</sup> "[Asian societies] are not societies in which liberalism has roots" – *op. cit.*, Wieseltier. Pg. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Transcript of Ronald Reagan's Speech to the House of Commons, June 8, 1982.

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1982reagan1.html> (accessed on December 23, 2006).

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

## 2.1 To what extent might 'The Clash of Civilisations' stimulate new interpretations of events and foreign policies?

Samuel Huntington, Fukuyama's former professor, wasn't convinced of History's end. Huntington's ideas found their way into the pages of *Foreign Affairs*, a rival publication of *The National Interest*, in 1993. As with 'The End of History?', '*The Clash of Civilisations?*' was later expanded into a book<sup>29</sup>. The preface mentions that not since the 1940s had a *Foreign Affairs* article been so debated. Huntington did not aim to discredit the liberal democracy as a superior ideology<sup>30</sup>. Huntington questions the effect it will have on world politics, whether it will actually be cause for change. In opposition to Fukuyama's liberalist views, Huntington conveys views in line with that of a Realist<sup>31</sup>. Both Huntington and Fukuyama try to devise a paradigm that will explain the primary force in world politics, both accrediting much of their theories to the idea of modernisation, but for Huntington, cultural groups must be central.

Depending on the reader's interpretation of world events, Huntington's thesis is valid, and there is tangible support. Though many developing nations may desire a liberal democracy it is becoming more clear that the liberal democracy doesn't work in every context. Apparently, the West's successful leap into modernisation is in large part due to their values system's compatibility with the universe today, leaving Asian societies in a state of limbo<sup>32</sup>, if correct, the consequences on African nations will be even more dire. More progressive commentators are slowly withdrawing the Western yardstick as a measure in non-Western contexts.

When imposing Western values systems on "the rest", known in the journals as "liberalisation", hasn't worked, the West grow wary of Huntington's "fault lines". They

<sup>29</sup> "The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order."

<sup>30</sup> "It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future." – Huntington, Samuel P. "The Clash of Civilisations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993. Pg. 1.

<sup>31</sup> "nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs." – *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> "Western minds have a clear advantage over Asian minds, as they are convinced that their successful leap into modernity was to a large extent a result of the compatibility of their values system with the modern universe. Indeed many Western minds believe (consciously or subconsciously) that without Western value systems no society can truly enter the modern universe." – *op. cit.*, Mahubani. Pg. 36.

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

are seeking to form a Western cultural alliance to maintain a foothold in their influence on world affairs. Gradual surrendering of sovereignty to international institutions is becoming familiar. Perhaps Mahubani and Huntington would agree that the current discourse suggests that to modernise is to Westernise, and this is not yet a notion "the rest" have come to accept. Wieseltier points out that they have their own traditions that modernisation is likely decimate, against their will<sup>33</sup>.

Theoretically, the end of History will see a decrease in the sovereignty of the nations; Europe through its progress with the European Union embodies the end of History more so than the US. In spite of this, the EU still has a long way to go before truly unifying Europe. Turkey's accession to the EU mounts an on-going obstacle, it has always been "at the end of the queue"<sup>34</sup> for membership. The EU is a cultural alliance, a "Christian club"<sup>35</sup>, their common religious heritage attributable for their stable liberal democracies. Turkey's social problems intimidate the rest of the EU; European officials have spoken off record on this.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, the country that once abolished the caliphate, aware that to become a full member of the EU they need to advance towards a stable secular political system, is split between its Muslim heritage, historical clashes, and desire for modernity. Political and economic instability has caused Turkey's chances of EU membership to fluctuate. The country has often seen Islamic resurgences, one radical Islamic group, Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), touted to "trigger a true clash of civilisations"<sup>37</sup>, considers Turkey one of its three "key battleground[s]"<sup>38</sup> and argues that EU membership will cost Turkey its Islamic identity. While Turkey grows more needy of the EU, the EU grows needy of Turkey, but the both have cultural values and issues that they are unwilling to compromise on<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> "...They have moral and social traditions of their own, ..., living traditions, and they are more and more coming to the conclusion that modernisation must not mean the immolation of those traditions." – *op. cit.*, Wieseltier. Pg. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. "The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order." New York, 1996. Pg. 145.

<sup>35</sup> Baran, Zeyno. "Fighting the War of Ideas." *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2005. Pg. 6.

<sup>36</sup> "Turkey is too poor, too populous, too Muslim, too harsh, too culturally different, too everything." *op. cit.*, Huntington. "The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order." Pg. 146.

<sup>37</sup> *op. cit.*, Pg. 1.

<sup>38</sup> *op. cit.*, Baran. "Fighting the War of Ideas." Pg. 6.

<sup>39</sup> "Editorial: Turkey gives its EU ambitions a chance." *The Financial Times Online*, December 8, 2006. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/3e34a776-8661-11db-86d5-0000779e2340.html> (accessed on December 24, 2006)

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

Fareed Zakaria, also a former student of Huntington, believes that the problems the ideology renders itself incapable of resolving, is leading to *The Rise of the Illiberal Democracy*.<sup>40</sup> Zakaria argues that the West is too content with imposing democracy on the non-democratic states, however, by ignoring the constitutional prerequisites, they destabilise political and economic systems even further, governments robbing citizens of their freedom is becoming all too common<sup>41</sup>. The West being conditioned to democracy and liberalism going hand in hand, are failing to notice the "coming apart [of the two]..."<sup>42</sup>. This contradicts Fukuyama's argument and this is obviously Zakaria's intention when he states: "Western liberal democracy might prove to be not the final destination on the democratic road, but just one of many possible exits."<sup>43</sup> He further attacks Fukuyama's declaration of the liberal democracy as superior ideology with "To have a democracy mean, subjectively "a good government" renders it analytically useless."<sup>44</sup> Zakaria reaffirms the factors most commonly linked to a liberal democracy, and it would seem that Fukuyama has already dug himself a hole by saying that the liberal democracy has overcome those factors. The most alarming problem with illiberal democracies is the racists, fascists, and nationalists they are capable of putting in power. Nationalism is, and will be, a definite hindrance to the "steady as she goes" course, the ensuing ethnic conflict would indisputably be classified as a clash of civilisations.

As a result of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, Zakaria's warnings came to appear remarkably accurate, and Huntington's thesis has been augmented. With their ideas moving towards centre stage, is there still space for the ambiguity of 'The End of History'? And more crucially, does this mean that the Western liberal democracy does not have universal appeal (thus undermining the thesis' long-term materialisation)?

### **3. To what extent has 'The End of History' been affected by the events occurring on and following September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001?**

In the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, critics, now rearmed, took to their pens breathing new life into the 'end of History' discussion. Some certain they could now falsify the 'end of History'

<sup>40</sup> Zakaria, Fareed. "The Rise of the Illiberal Democracy." *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1997.

<sup>41</sup> "Democratically elected regimes, often ones that have been re-elected or reaffirmed through referenda, are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms." – *ibid.*, Pg. 1.

<sup>42</sup> "...in the rest of the world. Democracy is flourishing, constitutional liberalism is not." – *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

paradigm, however Fukuyama wasn't prepared to sit idly by as this happened. On a note of levity, George Will suggested that "History" had returned from its holidays, while Zakaria asserted that the events signalled the end of the end History. On the surface, the paradigm is upheld as long as we remind ourselves of Fukuyama's definition of history, mankind's progress toward modernity. The perpetrators of September 11<sup>th</sup>, Fukuyama argues, are of an ideology, fundamentalist Islamism, resisting modernity – the liberal democracy and capitalism. The threat they feel is characterized by their violent actions. In an October 2001 editorial, Fukuyama endeavours to push Huntington out of the picture by establishing his belief that aspects of Western culture appeals to non-Western societies, and the millions of immigrants entering Western societies every year is proof that the "liberal democracy will inevitably prevail"<sup>45</sup>. Holding that the end of History has been the most ample explanation of post-Cold War events up to this point, and believing that "this point" can be explained by the thesis, then we are obliged to state the significance of September 11<sup>th</sup>. From the sideline of endism's supporters, September 11<sup>th</sup> must be either further support for the original premise, or an event stipulating the expansion of the theory, but it is no exception. Some cynics asserted that "History" was restarting. For a while Fukuyama played with the idea of September 11<sup>th</sup> acting a catalyst for the election of a new central force in world politics, meaning it was time for modernisation to step aside<sup>46</sup>. After a number of lectures and several articles, he concluded that modernisation would remain the most important factor, but History was at risk if the West does not make it through the short-term problems of "war on terrorism".<sup>47</sup>

### 3.1 To what extent does the Islamic fundamentalist ideology undermine 'The End of History'?

(Espousing Egyptian intellectual Sayyid Qutb's definition of Islamic fundamentalism<sup>48</sup>) It is possible to treat September 11<sup>th</sup> as radical Islam's launch on to the global ideological playing field, without submitting to the notion of it contradicting the

<sup>45</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. "History Is Still Going Our Way." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 5, 2001.

<sup>46</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. "Has History Restarted Since September 11?" (A lecture delivered on August 8, 2002 in Melbourne, Australia.) <http://www.cis.org.au/Events/JBL/JBL02.htm> (accessed on October 29, 2006)

<sup>47</sup> Fukuyama, Francis. *Has History Started Again?* Policy, Winter 2002. Pg. 7.

<sup>48</sup> "[it is a religious ideology] rooted in an essentialist world view whereby innate qualities and attributes apply to individuals and human societies, irrespective of time, historical change or political circumstances. Hence, an immutable substance governs human existence and determines its outward movement." – Choueiri, Youssef. <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/rep/H007> (accessed on December 22, 2006)

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

end of History. However, it is just that decisive treatment that no commentator has been poised to give. Mahubani puts it:

"Were the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> an earthquake or merely a tremor, i.e., has all the damage been done and we can now proceed to rebuild after that; or was it an indication of what is going to come in the world tomorrow?"<sup>49</sup>

The implications of the latter scenario are grave; the idea of fundamental Islamism undermining the liberal democracy would constitute that latter scenario. For Islamic fundamentalism to contradict the end of History, it needs global appeal, and Fukuyama says: "it goes without saying that, unlike communism, radical Islam has virtually no appeal in the contemporary world apart from those are culturally Islamic to begin with."<sup>50</sup> "Radical Islamism" Fukuyama says "should be seen in the context of modern identity politics."<sup>51</sup> The question that then comes forth is one of how much appeal does the ideology have to Muslims themselves, and, the more relevant to this study, how much of a challenge will the liberal democracy face in capturing the preferences of Muslims?

When one thinks of Islamic fundamentalist organisations, the militant al-Qaeda dominates thought, with stated aims of combating foreign influence in Muslim societies, such groups are easily suppressed by the label of "terrorists". In fact, al-Qaeda is not the only such group, and some, due to a non-militant approach, are able operate free of intervention. In order to be seen as fully upholding the values of their ideology, liberal democratic governments are somewhat compelled to permit these radical groups to exist in their societies. Sunni radicals, Hizb ut-Tahrir, for example, plays an important radicalising young Muslims. In 2005, Imran Waheed, the UK spokesman for HT stated the organisations purpose as a direct challenge to the thesis<sup>52</sup>. No matter what Fukuyama has said of the threat from radical Islam, "HT can take pride in the growing feeling among Muslims that their primary identity stems from, and their primary loyalty is owed

<sup>49</sup> Mahubani, Kishore & Meyers, Joanne J. "Can Asians Think? Understanding the Divide Between East and West." Carnegie Council Website, January 24, 2002.

<http://www.cceia.org/resources/transcripts/123.html> (accessed on December 24, 2006)

<sup>50</sup> *op. cit.*, Fukuyama. "History Is Still Going Our Way."

<sup>51</sup> *op. cit.*, Fukuyama. "The End of History and The Last Man." Pg. 348.

<sup>52</sup> "Fukuyama says we have reached the end of History because there's a lack of viable alternative ideology to capitalism and Western civilisations. We view our work as a direct challenge to that statement: we have to prove him wrong." – *op. cit.*, Baran. "Fighting the War of Ideas." Pg. 8.

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

to, their religion rather than their race, ethnicity, or nationality."<sup>53</sup> Fukuyama has yet to provide a concise response to this, and they are on track towards their goal. In the wake of the July 7, 2005 London bombings, the British government is looking to outlaw HT, but for now, the case against them is not strong enough. The population of the West now comprises of approximately 10% of the world population<sup>54</sup>, suddenly the fundamentalist's objective<sup>55</sup> does not seem so improbable. The "war on terror" and the counteracting Jihad delays the end of History. For more substantiation, the current situation in Iraq, the youngest democracy in the world is among the most volatile in the world – an occurrence Zakaria would have been able to predict.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

As a definitive response to the research question "**To what extent was Francis Fukuyama's 'The End of History' premature?**" I would now answer "yes", *The End of History* was premature. Though the research presented here compels me to lean more favourably towards "maybe", (perhaps due to the thesis' philosophical links, the answer to this question is very much so a subjective one). Current world trends, and the number of responses (though not necessarily alternative paradigms) imply that Fukuyama was premature. However taking into account his insurance statement that minor setbacks will not hinder the prevalence of the liberal democracy in the long term, we are suddenly not so sure of ourselves. Looking at the thesis in a larger context, one must remember that the people to whom such a paradigm is relevant, are influenced by more than the soundness of the theory itself. Echoing the sentiments of Hassner that the end of History thesis as a whole requires optimism that, it seems to me, only Fukuyama has been able to sustain. If only I could suggest a paradigm of more promise, *The Clash of Civilisations* perhaps, but having not studied any with equal scrutiny, doing so would be premature. What is really required, and what I do not hold the authority to give, is an answer to the question Kishore Mahbubani raised, of whether September 11<sup>th</sup> was an earthquake or a tremor. Once an answer to this question is established, the answer to this essay will be shred of its ambivalence.

Since the publication of *The End of History*, Fukuyama has used his writing to venture into what often seem to be subjects far removed from the end of History, but his conclusions will always address how one affects the other. In *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the*

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *op. cit.*, Mahbubani, Meyers. "Can Asians Think? Understanding the Divide Between East and West."

<sup>55</sup> "a new caliphate – that is, a global Islamic state" – *op. cit.*, Baran. "Fighting the War of Ideas." Pg. 1.

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

*Biotechnology Revolution* he writes about the rate at which biotechnology is developing and the possibility that may revive social engineering, and depending on who the "engineer" is, this could dramatically reduce the time frame in which we will reach the end of History. Social engineering is a euphemism for the abovementioned "liberalisation", the implanting of democracies. At the time of this writing, Fukuyama's latest, *After the Neocons: America at the Crossroads*, chronicling his movement away from neoconservatism, remains on bestseller lists. This rift is in large part due to the events leading up to the Iraq war, and he criticises the faith his colleagues have in social engineering. The media have enjoyed speculating about the relationship between neoconservatives and the George W. Bush administration, there have even been suggestions that the original "Bush doctrine"<sup>56</sup> was peppered with ideas from the end of History. The naivety with which the "Operation Iraqi Freedom" was launched would suggest it was.

"History" has not ended. Its end may be looming, but when it was written, the challenges modernisation would face in post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world were unprecedented. I quote the words of Mahbubani one final time,

"[the] biggest question that will determine the course of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, even though we are in the immediate aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, it will not be the whole question of the West and Islam. If China succeeds, which looks likely, the amount of displacement that it will cause in the current global power structures will be enormous, and the adjustments required equally enormous."<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> The Bush doctrine being the name given to the distinctive foreign policy developed in the months after September 11<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> *op. cit.*, Mahbubani, Meyers. "Can Asians Think? Understanding the Divide Between East and West."

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

**6. Bibliography****Books**

Fukuyama, Francis. *After The Neocons: America at the Crossroads*. London, England: Profile Books, 2006.

Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and The Last Man*. New York, New York: Free Press, Simon & Schuster, 2006.

Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilisation and the Remaking of World Order*. New York, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Kristol, Irving. *Neoconservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea*. Chicago: Elephant Paperback, 1999.

Mahbubani, Kishore. *Can Asians Think?* Singapore: Times Editions, 2004.

**Newspaper, Magazine and Journal Articles**

Baran, Zeyno. *Fighting The War of Ideas*. Foreign Affairs, November/December 2005.

Bloom, Allan, Pierre Hassner, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Irving Kristol, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Stephen Sestanovich. *Responses to Fukuyama*. The National Interest, Summer 1989.

Fukuyama, Francis. *After Neoconservatism*. The New York Times Magazine, February 19, 2006.

Fukuyama, Francis. *A Reply to My Critics*. The National Interest, Fall 1989.

Fukuyama, Francis. *Has History Started Again?* Policy, Winter 2002.

Fukuyama, Francis. *History Is Still Going Our Way*. (Editorial) The Wall Street Journal, October 5, 2001.

Fukuyama, Francis. *Second Thoughts: The Last Man in a Bottle – Socialism and the End of Human Economy*. The National Interest, Summer 1999.

Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History?* The National Interest, Summer 1989.

Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilisation?* Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993.

Huntington, Samuel P. *If Not Civilisations, What?* Foreign Affairs, November/December 1993.

Huntington, Samuel P. *No Exit*. The National Interest, Fall 1989.

Kakutani, Michiko. *Supporter's Voice Now Turns on Bush*. New York Times, March 14, 2006.

Ryan, Alan. *Professor Hegel Goes to Washington*. The New York Review of Books, March 26, 1992.

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

Wieseltier, Leon. *Spoilers at the Party*. The National Interest, Fall 1989.Zakaria, Fareed. *The Rise of The Illiberal Democracy*. Foreign Affairs, Winter 1997.**Online Information**

Choueiri, Youssef. *Islamic fundamentalism*, interpretations of Qutb's writing.  
<http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/rep/H007> (December 22, 2006)

*Democracy's Century – A Survey of Global Political Change in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Freedom House. Accessed at:  
<http://web.archive.org/web/20050307102714/http://www.freedomhouse.org/reports/century.html>  
 (October 6, 2006)

The Financial Times. *Editorial: Turkey gives its EU ambitions a chance*.  
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/3e34a776-8661-11db-86d5-0000779e2340.html> (December 24, 2006)

Fukuyama, Francis. "Has History Restarted Since September 11?" (lecture)  
<http://www.cis.org.au/Events/JBL/JBL02.htm> (October 29, 2006)

Jenkins, Simon, *On Second Thoughts* (Review of *After The Neocons: Where the Right Went Wrong*). The Times Online, March 26, 2006. Available at:  
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2102-2097307,00.html> (October 6, 2006)

Mahbubani, Kishore, Meyers, Joanne J. *Can Asians Think? Understanding the Divide Between East and West*. Carnegie Council, January 24, 2002.  
<http://www.cceia.org/resources/transcripts/123.html> (December 23, 2006)

Transcript of Ronald Reagan's Speech to the House of Commons, June 8, 1982.  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1982reagan1.html> (December 23, 2006)

**Others (Radio interviews, Documentaries, etc.)**

Curtis, Adam. *The Power of Nightmares: The Rise of the Politics of Fear*. BBC Productions, 2005. (DVD Documentary)

Grace, Carrie. Interview with Francis Fukuyama for the BBC World Service. March 25, 2006. Available at:  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/programmes/newshour/news/story/2006/03/060327\\_fukyama.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/programmes/newshour/news/story/2006/03/060327_fukyama.shtml) (October 7, 2006)

Taylor, Laurie. *Thinking Allowed: How Can We Build Strong States?* (Fukuyama interviewed). BBC Radio 4, July 28, 2004. Available at:  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/factual/thinkingallowed\\_20040728.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/factual/thinkingallowed_20040728.shtml) (October 7, 2006)

Vine, Jeremy. *Newsnight: End of History*. (Fukuyama interviewed). Broadcast on May 24, 2002. Transcript available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/archive/2002165.stm> (October 10, 2006)

May 2007

Daire MacFadden

## 7. Acknowledgements

- Anthony Skillicorn for the time that he gave supervising this ambitious essay, his extensive patience and careful guidance has been invaluable.
- Kishore Mahbubani for setting aside time in his hectic schedule for me to meet with him and discuss the argument of my essay and his opinions on Fukuyama's article.
- The Republic of Singapore for investing public funds in the National Library and creating a study lounge space.
- "In lieu of conventional thanks to a typist for helping to prepare the manuscript,"<sup>58</sup> the designers of the Apple PowerBook for saving me countless hours, with regard to both the operating system's stability and allowing me to work with a greater efficiency than the hand can provide.

---

<sup>58</sup> *op. cit.*, Fukuyama. "The End of History and The Last Man." Pg. ix (Acknowledgements).