

## Prof. Zaher Wahab

# Dialogue, Not Clash, of Civilizations

*This is the edited transcript of the keynote presentation of Zaher Wahab to Panel 4, “Classical Culture and the Dialogue of Civilizations,” of the Schiller Institute’s June 18–19 Conference, “There Can Be No Peace Without the Bankruptcy Reorganization of the Dying Trans-Atlantic Financial System.” Dr. Wahab is a former senior advisor to the Minister of Higher Education in Afghanistan (2002–2008). He is a former Professor of Education at the Lewis & Clark Graduate School (1982–2012), and is now Professor Emeritus. He taught at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF), 2013–2020.*



Schiller Institute

Prof. Zaher Wahab

supportive structures like “law and order,” the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the WTO, even the UN itself, and exchange converting most currencies into dollars.

But if we look closely, we will see that the paradigm is clearly disintegrating. It’s discredited, it’s demystified, it’s exposed, and it’s collapsing. It is for these reasons that I think the collapsing, decaying paradigm could do a lot of damage. It could cause a calamity throughout the planet. We desperately need a

new dialogue, a new language, if you will, and a New Paradigm. We must reject Samuel Huntington’s idea of the Clash of Civilizations and the so-called End of History.

I submit that history is alive and well, and moving. History has not ended. What history of the future will tell us about these times, remains to be seen. In opposition to Samuel Huntington, we need to listen to the words of former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, who urged a dialogue of civilizations. We must think, talk, and practice pluralism of ideas, pluralism of cultures, multi-culturalism, new constructions, different religions, and different political systems. We need to promote and practice this new dialogue of civilizations, and we need to emphasize humanism, pluralism, cultural cross-fertilization, and mutual respect and cooperation. In short, we need to promote, discuss, and practice a new design for living.

The U.S. and Western imperialism must accept responsibility for the damage it has done since the opening of the Suez Canal, the beginning of the new imperialism. The U.S. and the West must accept the collapse of the imperialist Western paradigm, and it must end American exceptionalism, Euro-centrism, and racism. It must engage other countries with respect, compassion, care, cooperation, and mutuality. We must commit to the emerging dialogue of common culture, common civilization, and common approach to problems. We must move away from the unipolar world to a multi-polar world. We need a new design and architec-

Greetings from Portland, Oregon! First, I’d like to thank the Schiller Institute for convening this conference, and also for giving me an opportunity to share a few thoughts and ideas with you. Also, I’d like to thank the Schiller Institute for its commitment to creating a better world, and for keeping Afghanistan in the news.

We are indeed facing an existential crisis. I am deeply pained by the misconduct of my adopted country, the United States, which has been causing trouble all over the planet for years and years. And I’m also pained by my country of origin, Afghanistan. Needless to point out, my adopted country pretty much ruined my country of origin.

If you look around, you will see that our world is riddled with hunger, poverty, inequality, oppression, degradation, pain, suffering, insecurity, and overall under-development. I think that Afghanistan and the United States are textbook examples of these phenomena. Epidemics, an energy crisis, mass migration, conventional wars, conflict, violence, and we seem to be on the brink of a nuclear war. It’s a world of domination, exploitation, unilateral decision-making, and misuse and abuse of power by the powerful. The existing paradigm has created its own narrative, such as “civilization,” “free-market,” “human rights,” etc.; and it has created its own narrative like “freedom,” “democracy,” “the good life.” The existing paradigm also has its own

ture for peace, development, and security.

It isn't just the powerful imperial West that needs resources, security, peace, and development. All countries, all people everywhere throughout the world need peace, development, justice, democracy, and security. This must be taken into account. Under the New Paradigm, we must support countries, we must support regionalism, we must support new currencies, and new organizations like the BRICS, and we must also support and join the China Belt and Road Initiative.

More specifically, the new dialogue would, in part, consist of demanding that the North, the colonial, imperial powers, must pay just reparations to the South for the centuries of plunder and pillage. The North must cease all forms of direct and indirect military, economic, political, and other forms of aggression. The U.S. must close all of its military bases throughout the world. The U.S. must release all of the currencies which

it holds hostage from other countries—in particular, Afghanistan. And, the U.S. and the West must return all those national thieves from around the world who escaped with tons and tons of money from their old countries and are living in luxury in the West. The U.S. must terminate monopolies on COVID vaccines. The U.S. and the North must pay a fair price for all of the raw materials, the goods, services, and labor of the developing nations. And, the U.S. must stop behaving like an empire. The era of empire and the current decaying paradigm seems to be over. The U.S. and the developed North must live like other nations in the community of nations, and stop behaving like empires.

In short, the old paradigm has been discredited, and the New Paradigm is emerging. It should be flourishing. We need a new form of dialogue from the grass roots that can talk about all of these issues.

Thank you very much.

George Koo

## U.S.-China Cultural Relations Are Critical To Prevent War

*This is the edited transcript of the presentation by George Koo to Panel 4, "Classical Culture and the Dialogue of Civilizations," of the Schiller Institute's June 18–19 Conference, "There Can Be No Peace Without the Bankruptcy Reorganization of the Dying Trans-Atlantic Financial System." Mr. Koo is a retired business consultant specializing in U.S.-China trade and is currently Chairman of the Burlingame Foundation.*



Schiller Institute

George Koo

Thank you for the invitation to participate in this international conference.

I'm honored and delighted to address the subject of the rivalry between the United States and China. This is a particularly befuddling rivalry full of contradictions. The U.S. has been the world's hegemon and openly proclaims its desire to continue to maintain that position in being the world's only superpower.

China has always recognized the U.S. as the only superpower and has expressed no desire to compete or dislodge the American perch on top of the hill. Yet,

every other utterance by the Biden team accuses China of wanting to take over as the world hegemon.

I say "every other utterance" because the spokesperson, whether from State or Defense, or advisor to President Biden, or even Biden himself, always starts by saying the U.S. only wishes to compete and cooperate with China, then from the other side of the mouth, declares China as America's hostile enemy.

American accusations of China cover a wide range of "unacceptable" behavior. Such as China having the temerity to complain about U.S. naval ships patrolling the South China Seas. Such as drafting a national development plan that threatens to surpass the U.S. in certain technology sectors. Such as using semiconductor technology to make gadgets that the American consumer wants to buy. Such as developing factory automation to produce low-cost appliances for American households.

If those accusations are not sufficiently hostile, the Biden White House has conjured up others. Such as alleging human rights abuse in Xinjiang that the visiting