**How far can this ideological war that harms both others and ourselves go?**

Another reflection on the "bloodbath in Paris"

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Core Tip: The Western "value war" is a set of value systems constructed for the benefit of the globalization of capital power. Judging friends and enemies based on value has completely trapped Western countries in a dilemma of not being able to distinguish between friends and enemies, and in a vicious cycle. Westerners will not automatically stop their "value war" strategy, but this strategy will lose its strategic significance and harm the West itself as its strength declines and the destructiveness it causes to the world.

【Abstract】 The Western "value war" is a set of value systems constructed for the benefit of the globalization of capital power. Judging friends and enemies based on values ​​has put Western countries in a dilemma of not being able to distinguish between friends and enemies, and in a vicious cycle. Westerners will not automatically stop their "value war" strategy, but this strategy will lose its strategic significance and harm the West itself as its power declines and the destructiveness it causes to the world.

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After the IS massacre in Paris, the whole world was reflecting on the tragedy. The views are roughly as follows: First, it is said that the cooperation between major powers is ineffective, which is obviously a superficial view; second, why IS has become so powerful, reflecting on the ineffective economic development, which is also "seeing the trees but not the forest"; third, exploring the external factors of national failure, that is, the failure of the United States' Greater Middle East policy. In fact, we should go deeper and ask what kind of policy has failed in the Middle East. My view is that the failure of the United States is the result of its replaying the religious wars of the Middle Ages.

**From the smokeless "Cold War" to the smokeless "Hot War"**

The "Cold War" was actually a religious ideological war. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, which was the end of the "Cold War", not only did not end the war, but instead intensified the "war of values" because Westerners believed more in the "end of history" and wanted to promote their "universal values" even more.

There are two differences here. First, although the enemy of the United States during the Cold War was also ideological, there was only one enemy, namely the socialist camp. Everything was done to deal with socialist countries or what they called communism. Therefore, the actual alliance policy pursued was to "unite all forces that can be united", which is what we call the united front. However, the enemies of the "value war" after the Cold War are vague or multiple. There is Russia, which they call a "dictatorship", terrorism fostered by Islamic fundamentalism, and some socialist countries that are regarded as their opponents. The second difference is that unlike the "war without gunpowder" waged by the West against socialist countries during the Cold War, the United States, which has no military opponents, now simply uses force to directly eliminate its ideological enemies. As a result, the "clash of civilizations" is not simply induced, but even manufactured. In this "clash of civilizations" caused by the "value war", the West killed 1,000 enemies but also lost 800 of its own. The European refugee crisis and the terrorist attacks that washed Paris are just a war drama of this "value war", and its harm to mankind, including the West itself, will become increasingly prominent.

First of all, we must realize that the Western "value war" is a new form of continuation of the history of Western modern civilization. A main theme of the history of modern Western civilization is constant expansion. It seems that the country is expanding, but in fact it is the expansion of capital power, that is, capital power drives the external expansion of state power, such as the "Opium War" against China.

The first stage of the expansion of capital power was the capitalization of domestic politics after the industrial revolution, that is, capital power dominated domestic political economy. This process was basically completed from the 18th century to the mid-19th century. The second stage of expansion is what Lenin called the imperialist stage and colonialism period, that is, Western capital power completed the division of the world in the 19th century. This naked aggression will inevitably lead to the overall resistance and liberation movement of latecomer countries, so we have the socialist revolution and national liberation movement we are familiar with. This game belongs to what Hungarian philosopher Polanyi called "two-way movement", that is, a two-way interaction between strong plunder and strong resistance. The naked plunder politics was ended by the resistance politics, and modern world politics entered the third period, namely the "Cold War". Unlike the rampant power politics in the first two periods, the Cold War as an ideological war is a "heart-breaking war". The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the change of flags in Eastern Europe are the victories of the Western "heart-breaking war". In this war without gunpowder, the ideological opponents of the United States were basically captured by its powerful discourse power, and they believed that they were wrong in theory and system. The United States is very familiar with Sun Tzu's Art of War, which says "conquer the enemy without fighting". In comparison, the war of ideas is indeed the best strategy. In the first stage of the expansion of capital power, the capital plunder during the primitive accumulation period caused many domestic conflicts and crises. In the second stage, naked imperialist policies were implemented, and the elites of the colonized countries united to resist foreign enemies. Most of the elites were nationalists, even Gandhi who was educated in the colonial country. However, the "value war" in the third stage made many people, especially many people in the elite class, think that their civilization is inferior to others, their thinking is disordered, and they think they are standing on the moral high ground even though they cannot digest foreign things. On the surface, the main body of the "value war" is the country, but behind it is still capital power. It is a kind of "cultural reproduction" supported by capital power, and a set of value systems constructed for the interests of the globalization of capital power. Only by understanding this point can we understand that the so-called "three major doctrines" in international relations theory (structural realism, liberal institutionalism, and constructivism) only touch the surface of world politics, do not see the nature of world politics at all or deliberately avoid it, and are circling around the periphery of world politics.

Western countries that have tasted the sweetness of the "value war" seem to have forgotten the nature of world politics, that is, national interests are ultimately the dominant issue of capital power. For this purpose, in order to defeat its most powerful and direct ideological opponent during the Cold War, the United States was able to deal with many "dictators" and even form alliances and form a united front. Park Chung-hee of South Korea and Pinochet of Chile were its staunch allies and even guests. In other words, during the Cold War, the United States had only one enemy, the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union. However, the third wave of democratization and the disintegration of the Soviet Union made it forget everything, thinking that history would end completely if its ideological opponents were eliminated. The Bush administration decided to launch a new religious ideological war, which he himself inadvertently called the "New Crusade". As a result, the United States, with its unrivaled war machine, first easily killed Saddam and then took Gaddafi's life. The result is what we see: the "Arab Spring" turned into the "Arab Winter", and the United States' "Greater Middle East Democracy Plan" led to the "Greater Middle East Chaos".

As we all know, the rise of the Islamic State is the product of the chaos in the Middle East. Originally, the United States hit the Afghan Taliban regime, which had close ties with Bin Laden, after 9/11. However, Bush, driven by his ideology, did not like Saddam and had to complete his father's unfinished work. As a result, Iraq was no longer a country, and many soldiers of the Republican Guard during Saddam's time became "wanderers" and wandered around northern Iraq. The "Arab Spring" disrupted its geopolitical enemy, Syria, and supported the opposition forces to overthrow the Assad regime. Just like the United States supported Bin Laden in Afghanistan to fight the Soviet Union, now the anti-Syrian government forces supported by the United States have all gone to the Islamic State. Among them, the French, who love "freedom" the most, are the most excited to shout verbally, and wantonly humiliate the natural emotions of other nations and other religions. It can be said that from the bloody incident of Charlie Hebdo to the bloodbath in Paris this time, they are all an episode and a play of this "war of civilizations", a product of a "two-way movement" that is not surprising.

**The “value war” has made the United States lose its way in distinguishing between friends and enemies**

The reason why the United States is indecisive about the "Islamic State" is because of the existence of the strategic rival supported by Russia, namely the Assad regime. That is to say, the United States has fallen into the paradox brought about by the "value war" against terrorism. As before, the enemies of the United States are diversified, terrorism and the "dictator" Assad regime are both its enemies, but because President Assad is backed by Russia, Russia is the biggest strategic enemy of the United States, so it claims that overthrowing the Assad regime is the first priority. Even after the bloodbath in Paris, it is still like this, which makes people on the earth feel stunned and unreasonable. Is the United States still a normal country? This is exactly the window of opportunity for the "Islamic State", and the ambiguity of the United States allows them to grow stronger.

The double standard of the United States in dealing with terrorism is also directly reflected in its treatment of the terrorist organization "World Uyghur Congress". The Chinese people are very kind. When Paris was bloodbathed, Shanghai lit up the "Oriental Pearl Tower" to commemorate it; the Chinese government immediately condemned the Boston Marathon bombing. However, when the Chinese people were deeply harmed by violent terrorism again and again, from the July 15 massacre in Urumqi to the bloody terrorist incident in Kunming Square, there was the background of the "World Uyghur Congress" behind them. The United States and even the entire Western countries did not directly admit that these were terrorist incidents, which hurt the feelings of the Chinese people. What is the reason? The United States is just using China's political enemies to oppose China, adhering to the low-level rule of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". The United States restricts China in this way not only because of the changes in the world pattern caused by China's rise, but also because of the opposition between the two countries in the principles of national values. One is the so-called liberal democracy, and the other is people's democracy. Once again, the so-called liberal democracy is actually capitalist democracy. In a sense, China is the largest territory that is not dominated by capital power. If China's people's democracy loses to capital democracy, world politics will be completely capitalist, which means that the United States will dominate the world once and for all. The intellectuals who always cheer for freedom and democracy can only make a living under the control of capital power, and will inevitably oppose capital democracy due to dissatisfaction. Such a story has happened before. Soviet intellectuals were the pioneers in deconstructing the legitimacy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. As a result, they could not stand the rule of capital democracy during the Yeltsin period and turned around to call for the "return of the king", demanding order instead of capital democracy.

The essence of world politics is still to distinguish between enemies and friends. Who is the enemy and who is the friend is the primary issue of politics. Before the Cold War, the criteria for distinguishing between enemies and friends were very clear, such as territorial security in the traditional sense of security, so the United States and the Soviet Union formed an alliance to defeat fascism. Traditional security is mostly material, with simple, transparent and predictable standards. Enemies and friends are distinguished, and alliance policies are easy to form. Even in the "value war" during the "Cold War", because it was the opposition between capitalism and socialism, each side had only one enemy. However, today, the enemies of the United States' "value war" are diversified, and it is difficult to distinguish between enemies and friends. Alliance policies are even more difficult, and uncertainty has suddenly increased. Because values ​​not only include liberalism, conservatism and socialism as modern ideologies, but also the oldest religious doctrines, nationalism and even populism that are indispensable to modern politics, and their own civilization forms that are difficult to change and rooted in historical and cultural traditions. In this way, the "value war" that advocates the "end of history" theory, that is, the unification of the world by liberal democracy, encounters not only its old rival, socialism, but also a new rival, Islamic nationalism, which is a mixture of religion and national sentiment. In a sense, liberalism and socialism are compatible. For example, both advocate freedom, equality and democracy, but one is individualistic and the other is holistic. Behind liberalism is Christian civilization, and behind Islamic nationalism is Islamic civilization. The differences between these two religions are far greater than the differences between liberalism and socialism. As a result, when the banner of liberal democracy was planted on the land of the Middle East, it did not bring peace and tranquility, but disorder, turmoil, anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism.

**The “value war” has directly endangered the security of Western countries**

The chaos in the Middle East has already endangered the national security of the United States and Europe at several levels. The first level is the legitimacy of liberal democracy that has been eroded by ineffective governance like Iraq, which is a reversal at the global psychological level. The West won the "Cold War" by relying on the invisible pusher of "liberal democracy", so after the Cold War, "liberal democracy" was promoted as a universal value and had many believers. However, the ineffective operation of the liberal democratic system in "liberated" countries like Iraq, and even the disorder caused by multi-party struggles, quickly disenchanted the myth of liberal democracy and dethroned the idol of democracy. The Iraq experiment tells people that liberal democracy is not just a beautiful concept, but a set of institutional arrangements, the core of which is achieved through competitive elections. Behind electoral politics are political parties, which are organized by different classes, races and sects. As a result, competitive elections naturally evolve into institutionalized sectarian disputes or ethnic conflicts.

The second level is endangering the regional security of the West, especially the United States. In the Greater Middle East, such as Palestine, North Africa, and Egypt, the regimes created by electoral democracy are anti-American, especially the victory of the Palestinian extremist forces in the election. This is probably what the designers of the "Greater Middle East Democracy Plan" or the creators of the ideological war never thought of. In fact, the most important feature of modern politics is the people-oriented or mass nature, and the masses can be the subject of nationalism, the subject of populism, or the subject of extreme religious forces. In other words, the regime created by electoral democracy may be a populist nationalist regime or a religious extremist regime. Is such a regime beneficial to the national security of the United States? At least this is not the case in the Greater Middle East, nor in South America. Even Turkey, a military ally of the United States, has become a pro-Islamist regime, and its support for IS, the common enemy of mankind, is well known. World politics is unprecedentedly weird. Turkey, which secretly supports IS, shot down the Russian fighter jet that attacked IS, and the benefit of the alliance forced the United States and NATO countries to stand up and support Turkey. For this reason, Turkey can further support IS, and IS will inevitably further harm Europe and even the United States. As a result, because of judging friends and enemies based on values, Western countries are completely trapped in the dilemma of not being able to distinguish between friend and foe, and are caught in a vicious cycle.

The third level of threat is the terrorist forces exported by failed states like Syria that can directly target Western countries, as we have seen in the bloody attack of the IS organization on Paris. In fact, the United States has long conducted such research that failed states will breed terrorism. However, in the past, terrorism mainly targeted failed states themselves or other countries, such as the threat of Chechen terrorist forces to Russia. History is a trick, and now the failed states created by the US "value war" directly threaten the security of the West.

In view of the above three levels of security threats, who should reflect on their own policies? The "value war" that they thought was invincible has hurt themselves and set a trap for themselves.

**The United States will not turn back and automatically stop the "value war"**

The United States should reflect on its "value war". The West, which once benefited from the "value war", has suffered from it. However, it is difficult for a country without its own history to respect the history and culture (i.e., values) of other countries. As Huntington said, the United States has never worried about founding a country, so it has never understood the difficulties of founding other countries. The founding plans for other countries are all about how to divide power, checks and balances, elections, competition, etc. As a result, one country after another has been messed up, leaving many late-developing countries with only electoral politics and no national governance capabilities. It should be noted that the founding of late-developing countries facing the growth of local armed forces first requires centralization.

In my opinion, the West will not cry until it sees the coffin, and will not turn back even if it hits the south wall. You know, this "value war" itself is also a part of its culture and politics. First of all, Christian civilization has always been a so-called "world-saving" civilization, advocating "universal values", so there were the Crusades in the Middle Ages and the endless bloody religious wars in Europe for hundreds of years. Europe did not have so-called religious tolerance until the 19th century, and this was all "tolerance" won by fighting. Secondly, the history of the West over the past three hundred years is a history of the continuous expansion of capital power wrapped in the cloak of Christian civilization of "universal values", and its powerful momentum can only be stopped when it encounters huge obstacles.

Unfortunately, when it stops, it will be the end of the West. Hans Morgenthau, the master of realism, said in "Politics among Nations" that the so-called universal values ​​are nothing more than the strong nations forcing their own civilization on other nations. Huntington, a great thinker who also does not recognize the existence of universal values, predicted this 20 years ago: "As the power of the West weakens, the West's ability to impose its concepts of human rights, liberalism and democracy on other civilizations has decreased, and the appeal of those values ​​to other civilizations has also decreased." Huntington's prediction is unfortunately becoming a reality. After the "Greater Middle East Democracy Plan" has led to rivers of blood, broken homes and national demise, and displacement, and when the "democratization" movement has torn Ukraine apart, how attractive is the liberal democracy, that is, capitalist democracy, which was once regarded as a "universal value"? Westerners will not automatically stop their "value war" strategy, but this strategy will lose its strategic significance and harm the West itself as its power declines and the destructiveness it causes to the world.

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【References】

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