

Has the challenge of militant Islam postponed the end of history?

Fukuyama:

The strongest resistance to the process of modernisation is being thrown up by Islamic societies. They represent a series of very radical movements that reject Western values and institutions — particularly when it applies to the Western separation of politics and religion. It is a fundamental challenge. But how powerful is that challenge? Is the Cold War world going to be replaced by one that is about conflict between Western liberal democracies and radical Islamism?

Now, my own observation is that radical Islam's challenge is a much weaker challenge than socialism. Some of the most educated people who lived in Western societies believed in socialism. I'm told this is not characteristic of Sydney but it was characteristic of Melbourne. Certainly places such as Berkeley, California, and Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Paris and London — these were places where people believed that socialism was an

Renowned US foreign policy thinkers **Francis Fukuyama** and **Daniel Pipes** clashed at a Centre for Independent Studies forum in Sydney last week



appropriate model to their society. But very few non-Muslims would want to either convert or to live in a society organised according to those radical Islam principles. And in the Muslim world, Iranians and Afghans, who have lived in Islamic dictatorship, don't seem to like it very much. Consider the people in Kabul who were liberated from the Taliban.

In *The End of History* I had a chapter on the victory of the VCR, because I argued that modern consumerism is really what drew people around the

world into the modern world. Indeed, as soon as the Taliban were ejected from Kabul, what did people do? They started digging up the VCRs that they had buried. They started watching all these cheesy Indian soap operas once they were given the freedom to do so. Which indicates to me that a lot of these characteristics, these desires, are, in fact, universal ones.

So this is not a case for short-run pessimism but long-run optimism. There is a very powerful juggernaut out there called modernisation which is related to Westernisation but is not completely congruent with it. That is a very powerful challenge which provokes these desperate backlash movements such as al-Qa'ida, which correctly perceives the West to be this enormous threat to its cultural integrity. There's no doubt that

this is true. But in the long run, there's no question as to who's going to win that battle.

Pipes:

Militant Islam has emerged over the past 30 years as a similar kind of threat as Marxism-Leninism. It developed more slowly. It started in Egypt in the late 1920s but its cadres did not take over any governments until Iran in 1979. Then, militant Islam declared war on the US. "Death to America" was a premier slogan of the Iranian Revolution of 1979. But we really didn't notice the nature of the threat.

The importance of last September's atrocities was not that they began a war but that they brought the threat of militant Islam to our attention. Now it is recognised as the so-called war on terror. Which I would claim is, in fact, a

war on militant Islam — not a war on terror, not a war on Islam, but a war on a terroristic interpretation of Islam. War on terror is meaningless — it's a declaration of war on a tactic, like declaring war on trenches, submarines, weapons of mass destruction — it's a euphemism. We all know who the enemy is — not terrorists — it is those who subscribe to the totalitarian ideology.

The events of September made us aware of this threat. It is important to understand that the goals of this war must be to do to militant Islam what the prior wars did to the other totalitarian ideologies — to marginalise them, to destroy them, to render them no longer a rival to our own way of life. In that sense I disagree with Francis Fukuyama. Militant Islam *is* indeed a worthy adversary, a worthy successor to the prior ideologies. The end of history is not yet here. It might be when militant Islam has been disposed of and is no longer a threat.