American Foreign Policy After the 2008 Elections

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Broad Tendency to Cycle

• Isolationist: 18th/19th Centuries (Washington)
• Internationalist: League of Nations (Wilson)
• Isolationist: between WWI and WWII (Hoover)
• Internationalist: United Nations then Cold War (FDR, Truman)
• Isolationist: after Vietnam (Carter)
• Internationalist: under Reagan, Bush I and Clinton
• Nationalist/ Unilateralist: under first term Bush II
• Internationalist: under second term Bush II
• After Bush II? More Modesty/ Pull Back?
Traditions in American Foreign Policy

• Limited Ambitions (primarily defense)
  – Nationalist (Jackson, Bush II)
  – Realist – Two Kinds
    • Defensive (Alliances: Hamilton, Nixon)
    • Offensive (Imperialism: TR)

• Greater Ambitions (spreading democracy)
  – Neo-Conservatives (Reagan)
  – Liberal Internationalists (Wilson, FDR, Clinton)
Nationalist Tradition

• Main Tenets
  – Limit defense to western hemisphere (missile defense). Expect others to defend themselves (no need for allies)
  – Skeptical of UN, trade, nation-building and even allies
  – React fiercely/unilaterally to attack and insist on military victory
  – But then return home to wait for next attack – no emphasis on broader diplomacy or nation-building

• Standard Bearers Today
  – Ron Paul, Pat Buchanan, Huckabee?
  – CATO Institute
Defensive Realist Tradition

• Main Tenets
  – More aggressive defense posture – prevent hegemons in other hemispheres
  – Balance power by alliances and containment (Iraq, now Iran)
  – Expect counterbalancing – China, Russia, etc.
  – Seek stability and world order through great power concert (UN Security Council), not democracy or regime change

• Standard Bearers Today
  – Scowcroft, Bush I, Powell, Huntington, Richardson? McCain?
  – Nixon Center, Stimson Center
Offensive Realist Tradition

• Main Tenets
  – Imperialist defense policy – seek hegemony for US, not just prevent others from gaining it
  – After CW US is hegemon. Preempt challengers. Power not democracy is key. Lead but don’t depend on allies (coalitions of willing).
  – Two options
    • Forward strategy – land bases worldwide (Iraq)
    • Off shore strategy – strong navy and air force (Persian Gulf)

• Standard Bearers Today
  – Pentagon
  – Cheney, Rumsfeld, Mearsheimer
  – Giuliani?
Neo-Conservative Tradition

• Main Tenets
  – Spread democracy (noble purpose) not just seek stability or hegemony.
  – Use military force to oppose oppression (axis of evil) and support freedom. Substitute for diplomacy which risks surrender
  – Rely on key democracies (Britain) not alliances (NATO) or great power concert (UN)
  – Local leaders will do nation-building

• Standard Bearers Today
  – Kristol-Kagan, Weekly Standard
  – Wall Street Journal
  – American Enterprise Institute
  – Romney? McCain?
Liberal International Tradition

• Main Tenets
  – Spread democracy by collective security and reducing the role of military power
  – Accept equality of all countries even if they are not free
  – Build international institutions to resolve disputes diplomatically
  – Talk especially to enemies and compromise

• Standard Bearers Today
  – Clinton (Bill and Hillary)? Obama? Edwards?
  – Brookings Institution, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
  – Washington Post, NY Times
Current Debate

• Neo-Cons Out (especially if terrorist threat recedes, as with success of military surge in Iraq)
  – Democracy is a “bridge too far”
  – Use of force only increases terrorism
  – Exaggerate terrorist threat (Iraq)
  – Unilateralist and arrogant – destroys US credibility

• Realists (R) and Liberal Internationalists (LI) In
  – Security (R) or diplomacy (LI) first, not democracy
  – Act multilaterally through alliances (R) or IOs (LI)
  – Reduce or reposition (over the horizon) US military presence abroad
  – Call upon allies to do more (R and LI)
Analyzing Bush II

- Bush Made Nationalist and Neo-Con Mistakes
  - Reacted too fiercely to attack – “bring ‘em on” (rejected NATO Article V)
  - No follow-up to victory when strongest. “Mission Accomplished”? Assumed force substituted for diplomacy, international and domestic

- But Use of Force Was Not a Mistake. Avoided Realist and Liberal Internationalist Mistakes
  - Realist use of force obsolete – can’t deter terrorism by containment
  - LI reluctance to use force dangerous (done in 1990s)
How To Avoid Cycling: A Conservative Internationalist Tradition

• Maintain aggressive use of force (expand armed forces) but step up diplomacy when power at peak (ME peace initiative, NK 6 Party Talks, Iran, etc.). Sustains domestic support.

• Pursue democracy at borders of, not beyond, free world (ink blot approach, not bridges too far). Sustains international support.
  – Turkey more important than Iraq
  – Pakistan more important than Afghanistan
  – South Korea and Taiwan more important than China
  – Ukraine more important than Russia
Which Candidate is the Conservative Internationalist (CI)?

**Democrats**
- Is Hillary tougher than Bill on terrorists?
- Is Obama, who opposed the Iraq war, as tough as Hillary?
- Is Edwards an economic nationalist?

**Republicans**
- Is McCain, strong on military force and democracy (League of Democracies), the true CI candidate?
- Is Giuliani a one issue (terrorism) candidate?
- Is Huckabee too nationalist?
- Is Romney too LI?