U.S. Liberals in a Realist World

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Abstract
United States Foreign Policy Moods, researched by Klingberg (1952) and Holmes (1985 and 2011), speculate the likely return to American introversion in the next few years after almost three decades of extroversion.

Through the analysis of American business liberal and reform liberal thinking during the extrovert phases from 1798-1967, this research will present realist suggestions for the long-term. While each phase of introversion or extroversion is unique, past patterns remain relevant. After upcoming introversion has run its course, transition to extroversion is likely as it happened in 1940 and 1989.

At the present time the U.S. is involved in various regions of the world as a dominant power and transitioning to introversion could restrict U.S. options. The rising power of other nations and uncertain skills of future presidents could make it difficult to return to a dominant position in the extrovert phase of the cycle starting a few decades later.

To date, the authors have evidence that breaking the introvert/extrovert cycle would be the best. Without making policy changes, the U.S. will not be able to promote optimum long-term national interests. In order to gain support for consistency with the changing world order, the U.S. has to increasingly put effort into dealing with both domestic as well as international issues. This paper brings attention to how U.S. needs to deal with the changing dynamics of political and military strength. Focused attention on security, and environment is needed during a time of increasing globalization challenged by asymmetric forces. At the same time threats facing the U.S. need to be contained. If that is not possible, the past can help identify ways to manage future choices. The long-term analysis in this paper is a valuable supplement to short-term analysis.

Objectives
• To identify measures and policies that can be done during introvert phases to avoid policy extremes during introvert and extrovert phases.

Limitations
• Our research is qualitative and it is difficult to put events in general and recent events in particular into long term perspective. Furthermore we experienced difficulty finding quantitative measures over a 200 year period for events other than war.

Conclusions
• Liberal Idealism as reflected in mood is likely to win out over conservative realism as reflected in interests.
• Absent any special circumstances, this pattern is likely to continue.
• The biggest problem involved is that, with the possible exception of China, there are simply no viable candidates to assume the U.S. role in the world in the next half century.
• Challenges to the existing order involved the last dominant world power, the UK, in two world wars.
• A possibility of peaceful resolution exists in so far as the existing order has many elements of a liberal order, in part due to U.S. power.
• If an optimum solution is not feasible, perhaps the U.S. can resort to damage limitation by at least considering long term aspects of short term changes.

Implications
• Frequently during introvert phases the US misses emerging international trends. This research indicates that both long term and short term analysis is necessary.

METHODS
• To use a traditional source, Tomas Baily’s Diplomatic History of the United States (Tenth Edition 1980) as well as Herring’s more contemporary (2011) From Colony to Superpower: US Foreign Relations since 1776 (Oxford Edition) to Qualitatively examine these events.

THE FOREIGN POLICY MOOD CYCLE, 1776–PRESENT

1776–97: First Introvert period (Revolution, establishment of government)
1798–1823: First Extrovert period (undecided French naval war, Louisiana Purchase, War of 1812)
1824–44: Second Introvert period (Nullification Crisis, Texas question)
1845–70: Second Extrovert period (Texas and Oregon annexations, Mexican War, Civil War)
1871–90: Third Introvert period (Internal Growth, External Caution)
1891–1918: Third Extrovert period (Spanish-American War, World War I)
1940–67: Fourth Extrovert period (World War II, Cold War, Korean, and Vietnam Wars)
1968–88: Fifth Introvert period (Vietnamization, détente, weakening of Soviet Union)
1989–present: Fifth Extrovert period (Post–Cold War assertion, Gulf War, War on Terror)

Conclusions
Each extrovert phase averaging 27 years started with a need for the U.S. to make up for inaction during the preceding introvert phase. In the middle of each extrovert phase, the U.S. policy was generally in accord with interests as defined by the realities of international relations. By the end of each extrovert phase, U.S. policy encompassed a plan that the U.S. was doing too much. The cause of the problem was that liberal idealism as reflected in mood was not ever conservative realism as reflected in interests.

Absent any special circumstances, this pattern is likely to continue. To get to an introvert extreme of inaction, the U.S. must first pass through the first two-thirds of an introvert phase averaging 21 years which could start at any time. It might have already started with the second Obama administration in 2014 which would only be two years earlier than average. The difficulty that the Obama administration has experienced in executing change is no unlike the difficulties facing other early introvert administrations as they worked to reduce the U.S. policy-world order role in the world. It is entirely feasible that the second stage of this introvert phase will see U.S. policies align with interest and that a third stage will move even further some dangerous inaction.

The biggest problem involved is that, with the possible exception of China, there are simply no viable candidates to assume the U.S. role in the world in the next half century. Rather a lot of powers will be in a position to improve their position, but not become a power with the ability to maintain world order. That order might be maintained by fortunate circumstances. However, it might also degenerate into a free for all featuring a lot of challenges to the existing order to include some that do not control a nation state.

Three challenges to the existing order involved the last dominant world power, the United Kingdom, in two world wars prior to the U.S. assuming the dominant world power. The view of U.S. policy during these circumstances would be to revert to realism and start by determining what is important to U.S. interests and what is not important. That would require a calculation of liberal moods in favor more of a realist dedication to world order. The prospects for this do not seem likely for a country of business liberals and reform liberals addicted to short term solutions. A possibility of peaceful resolution exists in so far as the existing order has many elements of a liberal order, in part due to U.S. power.

If an optimum solution is not feasible, perhaps the U.S. can resort to damage limitation by at least considering long term aspects of short term changes. The implications of international policy changes tend to be long time to become apparent. Formations of a think tank to consolidate studies of long term trends in a unified manner might be a good use of private research funds. Perhaps it could be the U.S. Institute for Peace.

On the United States’ Response to the International Arena
As a Liberal Power on the international Arena, The United States often experiences difficulty responding to the realist nature of politics within the international arena. Because of this difficulty the United States tends to, as history shows, miss emerging international political trends and in many cases; if the United States is in a period of introversion, it can miss out on key chances to pursue its interests in the international arena. This research aims to help illustrate ways in which the US can moderate its extremes of introversion and extroversion and therefore become a more effective participant in the international arena.

U.S. Interests from Mood/Interest Theory
• Freedom of Seas
• Territorial Integrity
• Dominant Outside Power in Latin America
• Prevent One Nation Dominance of Europe
• Prevent One Nation dominance of East Asia
• Access to and Promoting Peace in Rest of the World

The Importance of the Mood Interest Theory
It would seem widely agreed upon that there are patterns in history which are repeated. Empires expand, buckle under their own weight and fall, learning fuels expansion and inequality fuels unrest. These patters exist as well in the discipline of Political Science. In the field of electoral politics, we define candidates for office often by describing them with the names of other politicians, he’s a Reagan we might say or he’s a Clinton; the field of political science often relies heavily on the past to categorize the future. With His Mood Interest Theory, Dr. Jack Holmes provided a method of categorizing foreign policy moods from a historical context. Since knowledge of the definition as well as a brief overview of past American Foreign Policy moods is essential to the comprehension of our research, we have included a brief overview American Foreign Policy moods going back to the founding elsewhere on this poster. The Mood/Interest Theory divides United States’ foreign policy mood into periods of introversion and extroversion.

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