

# TRANSFORMATIONAL POLITICS AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUE

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## **Antiterrorism and Anti-Americanism in U.S. Politics: An Introduction**

The ultimate measure of the recent Iraqi war may indeed be transformational. The U.S. policy to change the dysfunctional Middle-East mindset by the sword may also be the "end of the beginning" (as Churchill might say<sup>[1]</sup>) of the larger war on terrorism. Beyond the fog of war, however, lie several important collateral forces that may impact the future, including whether the foundation for a redefined U.S. foreign policy of preemptive self-defense has been launched; determining on which side of the line various nations and U.S. political leaders plan to stand; and, most importantly, which U.S. political party, if any, will take advantage of any voter shifts in a redefined political arena. Of course, the 2004 U.S. presidential election most likely will become the testing mechanism for the above potentialities.

The Democratic Party remains supremely divided over the Iraq war; the possibility for that anti-militarism resentment to "stay hot" (as it did during the anti-Vietnam McCarthy/McGovern/Kennedy era) looms large in the upcoming primaries. The GOP base vote is, on the other hand, solidified, which makes for a nice juxtaposition of variable voter intensity and polarized participation.

An opinion piece in the *Washington Post* summarized the political situation best when it reported "the combat in Iraq maybe over, but political combat at home threatens to swell. Bitterness is likely to thrive for the duration of the Bush Administration not only because of domestic policy differences between the right and left, but because of continuing anger on both sides stemming from their fight over the Iraq war (May 12, 2003, "The War Between the Left and Right Likely to Rage On" by Prof. Todd Gitlin of Columbia University.)

Compare two recent headlines: "Democrats Clash Over War in Early Campaign Debate" (Associated Press, 5/4/03) and "How Do Democrats Close Leadership Gap?" (David Broder, *The Washington Post*, 4/30/03). The thesis, simply put, is that if one of the two major parties is divided at its core strength, there is potential for the other party to shift the current balance of power as it did in the aftermaths of the 1968 and 1992 presidential elections. Whether that shift is a durable transformation of political allegiances is quite another issue of elusive proportions.

In terms of macro-political analysis, if the American people (over successive elections) believe that there remains an international threat to their personal safety and to the national security of their country on a par with the previous national threat of economic insecurity of the Great Depression years (1930s-1950s) and on a par with the Great Divide of cultural orthodoxy during the 1960s-1970s, both of which transformed political allegiances in the U.S., then a consideration of political party realignment would be in order. The intent of this paper is to not only revisit the scholarship on political realignment theories (which have been propounded and challenged greatly over the last two decades) but also to document any trends that could be precursors to a shift in the fragile coalition that makes up the "50-50 nation" that America has become of late. [2] Of particular interest is to investigate any notions of a "new age of patriotism" (i.e., a national security "divide") and any voter resentment of perceived anti-American and anti-military rhetoric that could shift the balance of power in future U.S. elections. Or is the national security issue simply another component of the package of cultural issues that have divided the U.S. electorate on a continuing basis since the 1960s?

Let's first analyze the loyal opposition to the Bush team and venture a tepid guess at how the Democratic Party will line up in the 2004 reelection game. The first fracture point of note occurred when Sen. Tom Daschle, the Minority Senate Leader, blamed Bush for the "train wreck at the U.N. Security Council," and took the side of the "French left" against the U.S. ♦ U.K. position on Resolution 1441. Soon afterwards, Sen. John Kerry called for a "regime change" in the U.S., which backfired badly. As we know, Dean, Rangel, and other Democrats made similar comments and, according to all press accounts, "were stunned to discover that vast numbers of people don't share their contempt for the president." (*Weekly Standard*, 4/21/03)

As early as February, pollsters were charting a widening chasm between the American left and the rest of the country. For example, two-thirds of all likely voters supported the war, but two-thirds of core Democrats opposed it. The *Weekly Standard* opined: "The left thinks that the U.N.'s Kofi Annan is a figure of moral authority, that Hans Blix did a super job, and is rooting for France and Germany to prevail in their diplomatic cold war with the U.S." (*Weekly Standard*, 4/21/03, "John Kerry's Hari-Kari")

Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times* stated similar concerns recently (5/4/03): "The war over the war still burns on, even though President Bush declared the war effectively over". Conservatives now want to use the victory in Iraq to defeat all liberal ideas, while liberals are still rooting for Bush to fail in his effort to make this war a model for America's relations with the world." Friedman went on to say that "if Democrats underestimate the importance of what has already been accomplished by Saddam's removal, and its huge potential, they are going to miss the opportunity to shape one of the most important turning points in U.S. foreign policy and the Middle East."

Sen. Joe Lieberman was more pointed in the recent South Carolina debate with other Democrat hopefuls: "No Democrat will be elected in 2004 who is not strong on defense and this war was a test of that. The U.S. did the right thing in fighting this fight." (5/4/03) However, other Democrats disagreed with Lieberman, believing America could have disarmed Hussein by working with the U.N. They focused on the costs of the war, saying they were going to "slap the donkey until the donkey kicks George Bush out of the White House."

There is a deeper problem for Democrats than the above superficialities as they prepare for 2004 ♦ the clash of their worldview with the balance of the country. This became more evident as their anti-war rhetoric was covered by the press. Daniel Patrick Moynihan first identified it in his recent book, *Miles to Go*, published before his death. He mused about the Democrat left's problem: "The great strength of the conservatives at this time is that they are open to the thought that matters are indeed complex. Liberals have gotten into a reflexive pattern denying this". If this (continues), current revival of liberalism will be brief and inconsequential." Friedman hit upon Moynihan's point in a commentary about the anti-war Democrats: "The left has a systematic misunderstanding which arises when one's worldview is so fundamentally and cynically different than that of others from the mainstream of American politics that it cannot be corrected by providing more information." (He might have had Hollywood leftist critics in mind here.) Defense Secretary Rumsfeld stated his dismissal of the anti-war Democrats when he paraphrased Churchill: "Never have so many been so wrong about so much." (Qatar post-war news conference.)

A second "deeper problem" for the loyal opposition to overcome in 2004 is the "leadership gap" that they have in comparison to Bush. In the last election, Bush was derisively criticized for his inexperience and lack of *gravitas*. Today, Sen. Ted Kennedy, who strenuously opposed the U.S. taking military action against Iraq, was quoted as to what he thought about the war now that Saddam had been routed: "I commend the president on his leadership." As David Broder noted, "No one, no even the most partisan of politicians, thinks it prudent to challenge the Bush team on their strong suit ♦ leadership." Democrats may challenge Bush on the issues, but it will be tough to topple him." (*The Washington Post*, 4/30/03) Political analyst Charles Cook reinforced the "2004 bottom line" on Bush's current leadership advantage: "If Bush can keep the emphasis on national security, he will be in a strong position" but if the voters' attention swings sharply to the economy, he is sure to hit turbulence." (*Houston Chronicle*, 5/9/03)

Last year, before the Iraq war but after the Afghanistan military incursion, two sympathetic Democratic Party political scientists wrote a well-received but blatantly biased treatise that imagined a new Democrat era, (*The Emerging Democratic Majority* by John Judis and Ruy Teixeira) dependent on the new demographics of Hispanics and a center-left pro-Green professional class. However, they forewarned Democrats that their formulation could "hinge on whether or not the Bush Administration successfully devolved the war on terrorism into an international police action with successive scored victories which would redound to the popularity of the Administration." They further stated that if the GOP became the "party of patriotism," the Democrats could be in for a defeat in 2004. (Pp. 157-161) It must be pointed out that the Bush team, in the 2002 State of the Union speech, preemptively advanced the "Axis of Evil" proposition so as to pursue a wider war on terrorism with a longer timeline.

As far as empirical results are concerned, Gallup polls have provided some intriguing data to project their implications to the 2004 elections.<sup>[3]</sup> One question had to do with the position in which the U.S. finds itself in the world today. Two out of three people in the U.S. are satisfied with the U.S. image, irrespective of all the open criticism and European defection. However, Democrats in the survey are 52% dissatisfied with their own country's position today and only 44% satisfied with the Iraq outcome. Thus, the two major parties are polarized on this aspect of foreign affairs. (GOP identifiers are expectedly at 86% satisfaction.)

Another measurement asked, "Do you think the war with Iraq has made the U.S. safer or less safe from terrorism?" Nationally, 58% said safer, 33% less safe, but Democrats felt less safe overall (43/46%), while Republicans felt the most safe now (74/18%). Other measurements demonstrating that the "Bush Nation" and the "Gore Nation" (Michael Barone's way of expressing his 50-50 analysis) see the world very differently were the following:

"Do you favor or oppose the U.S. war with Iraq?"

	<u>National</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Favor	71	54	89
Oppose	<u>26</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>8</u>
	+45	+11	+81

"Has the U.S. involvement in the war against Iraq had a positive or negative effect on you personally?"

	<u>National</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Positive	37	23	55
Negative	<u>16</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>7</u>
	+21	+0	+48

"Who do you think should be in charge of overseeing the transition to a new government in Iraq?"

	<u>National</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
USA only	41	28	55
United Nations	<u>52</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>38</u>
	+11	+39	-17

"Who do you think should be in charge of searching Iraq for evidence of weapons of mass destruction?"

	<u>National</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
USA only	51	38	64
United Nations	<u>42</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>30</u>
	-9	+17	-34

From the information in the above four tables, the Democrats who are supportive of the U.S./Bush team military policies appears to be about 30 to 40% of their core base. You are allowed to speculate that the Bush campaign will target these voters where identifiable, possibly even before the primaries next spring.

Overall, Gallup found that 60% of America felt that the war with Iraq had gone "very well" (emphasis added) and 67% thought the war was *not over*; 55% thought the war was a "victory," whatever the outcome of Saddam's life.

#### Overall Evaluation of the War

	<u>National</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
"very well"	60	44	79
"moderately well"	33	44	21
"badly"	7	12	0

One of the best journalistic evaluations of the total context of the war was written by Bill Kristol, entitled "Sept. 11, 2001 ♦ April 9, 2003" (*Weekly Standard* 4/28/03): "America was attacked a little over a year and a half ago. This assault was the product of two decades of American weakness in the face of terror and three decades of American fecklessness in the Middle East. "We came to be seen as a 'weak horse.' That characterization was Osama Bin Laden's, and he made it with reason. "But that era, in which the American stance was one of doubt, weakness, and retreat" came to an end on Sept. 11. The U.S. committed itself to defeating terror around the world. We committed ourselves to reshaping the Middle East, so the region would no longer be a hotbed of terrorism, extremism, anti-Americanism, and weapons of mass destruction. "We are only at the end of the beginning in the war on terror and terrorist states." [4]

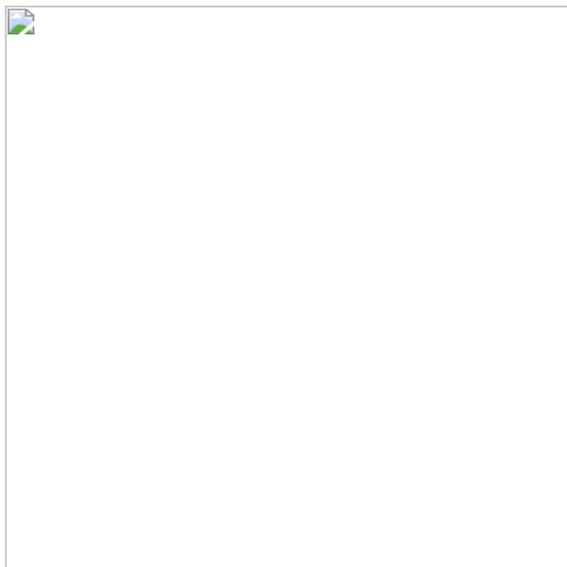
The question for history is to ponder whether Americans transformed only themselves after Sept. 11, and not the rest of the world, or whether they have reoriented the Middle East, and brought the rest of the reluctant world along with them. President Bush attempted to put his own version of the war with Iraq and its conclusions in his "flight-suit" speech while on the USS Abraham Lincoln (5/1/03): ""Operation Iraqi Freedom was carried out with a combination of precision, speed, and boldness the enemy did not expect, and the world had not seen before." Marines and soldiers charged to Baghdad across 350 miles of hostile ground in one of the swiftest advances of heavy arms in history. You have shown the world the skill and might of the American armed forces." The liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror." our war is proceeding according to principles that I have made clear to all: 1) any person involved in committing or planning terrorist attacks against the American people becomes an enemy of this country, 2) any person, organization, or government that supports, protects, or harbors terrorists is equally guilty of crimes, and 3) any outlaw regime that has ties to terrorists or possesses weapons of mass destruction" will be confronted."

Bush finished his moment in history by reminding the military "the war on terror is not over, yet it is not endless. We do not know the day of final victory, but we have seen the turning of the tide". All of you have taken up the highest calling of history. You are defending your country, and protecting the innocent from harm".. Thank you for serving our country and our cause." The table below, however, shows that the U.S. public is behind Bush, but not all the way yet.

◆ Gallup

Only a week after Bush's at-sea speech, the Group of Eight nations issued a statement from Paris that the al-Qaida terror network remains a serious threat with sleeper cells and agents. "Terrorism continues to present both a pervasive and global threat to our societies," ministers from the Group of Eight said in a released statement (Associated Press, 5/6/03). The ministers (from U.K., Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the U.S.) also said al-Qaida still appeared to have terrorists bases" and had set up new operational bases in the former Soviet Union in Central Asia. A few days later, on May 9, an Arabic magazine reported that al-Qaida has "completely reorganized and are planning an attack against the U.S. on the scale of Sept. 11, and quoted an al-Qaida spokesman saying they were "way ahead of the Americans' intelligence and that of its allies." (Associated Press, 5/9/03)

In summary, the on-going threat of international anti-American terrorism is real and appears to be an issue that will dominate U.S. politics and elections for some time to come. Secondly, the two major political parties in the U.S. appear to be at polar opposites on how to confront the threat. Thirdly, the American people believe that threat to national security is one issue about which they are not ambivalent. The following two Gallup graphs reinforce this political summary.





### The Theory of Realignment and Its Components

Scholars have long noticed that some elections have more important long-range consequences than others for the political system as a whole, and seem to "decide" substantive issues. [5] There has long been agreement that the fundamental turning points in U.S. political history were the elections of 1800, 1828, 1860, 1896, 1932, and now 1968. E.E. Schattschneider, in his seminal work, *Semi-Sovereign People* (1960), stated it best: "In the aftermath of realignment, not only voting behavior but institutional roles and policy outputs undergo substantial modification."

Walter Dean Burnham in 1970 attempted to develop the requisite quantification to the theory of critical elections in his widely recognized study, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics*. After he eliminates gradual secular realignments and other deviating elections as insignificant in the long term, he noticed the following statistically significant patterns to the U.S. election system:

- 1) Critical alignment is usually associated with a short burst of a very intense disruption of the traditional voting status quo: "Majority parties become minorities and large blocs of the active electorate, perhaps as much as 20% - shift their partisan allegiance."
- 2) A rise in intensity is associated with a considerable increase in ideological polarizations.
- 3) There has been a remarkably uniform periodicity to these critical elections (i.e., every 30 to 38 years).
- 4) The American party systems, as constituent issue aggregations, readjust in the broadest sense of the term; this arises from emergent tensions in society, escalate to a flashpoint which then leads to resolution adjustments in mass coalitional bases.
- 5) Major third-party campaigns are also often associated with realignments, emerge as a proto-realignment phenomenon, and usually reach a threshold of 5% or more (Wallace: 10% in 1968; Perot: 10% in 1992).

James Sundquist developed the theory further by searching for causal factors in the nature of issue concerns and considered realignment of the existing parties around *a new issue dimension* as well as the absorption of a third party by the existing parties (see *Dynamics of the Party System*, 1975). He first reduces the theory to three major historical shifts: "What should the government do about slavery? (1860) What should the government do about the hardships of the farmers and the income inequality among

regions and classes? (1896) What should the government do about the Great Depression? (1936)" Perhaps a fourth question could be added: What should the government do to defend itself and its citizens from unforeseen harm? (2004)

Sundquist argues that each of the realigning party systems produced a political issue of a force strong enough to shatter the system's characteristic inertia. This "mother of all issues" (occurring once in a typical generation of 30 to 40 years) is usually associated with a "sudden event" that pushes up new issues of such controversy that the party system has difficulty coping with the ensuing debate (e.g., the Patriot Act, U.N. Security Council resolutions, etc.)

Selected subsections of Sundquist's "new issue" dynamics to the theory of realignment (contemporary contexts invited) are the following:

- 1) The new issue must be one that cuts across the existing line of party cleavage (homeland security?).
- 2) The new issue must also be one powerful enough to dominate political debate and polarize the community. (Gallup has shown that the image of France has shifted dramatically from 80% favorable in 2002 to 64% *unfavorable* in March 2003.)
- 3) The new issue must be one on which major political groups take distinct and opposing policy positions that are easily dramatized and understood. (The Iraq war?)
- 4) Whether the new issue "takes" also depends on the extent to which older issues underlying the current party system have faded with time. (Budget deficit?)
- 5) A new issue fostering realignment is likely to have greater inherent appeal to the voters of one of the major parties and thus potentially be more disruptive to one party than the other. (The extreme Republican-Democratic differences on the war.)
- 6) Parties begin to be more concerned with ultimate new issue debate than their party's overall electoral success. (Howard Dean's candidacy?)
- 7) Usually a realignment crisis is precipitated when the centrists lose control of one of the political parties. (e.g. Nancy Pelosi, the "French left" of the Democratic Party?)
- 8) Polarization gives way to conciliation and the parties move from the poles toward the center and the distance narrows. (Hegel's thesis/anti-thesis/synthesis theory of history?)

The study of U.S. electoral realignments has always been, according to David Mayhew, "one of the most engaging and influential intellectual enterprises undertaken by political scientists over the last 50 years." The favorite question during every historical development like the Iraq war has always been, "Is an electoral realignment about to happen?" or, "Have we been witnessing an electoral realignment this year?" (See "The Classic Realignment Perspective" by Mayhew, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2000.) The conventional theory assumed the "sudden denominator" dynamic, yet others have believed there has been "a more quiet realignment" ever since the "cultural wars" of acid, abortion, and amnesty marked the 1972 election.

This nation has indeed shifted from overwhelming Democratic Party control of the U.S. Congress (the bedrock of the Democratic Party from 1936 to 1950) to one of split control (1952-2000) and then to a complete "take-away" by the Republicans, which started in the 1994 elections. Reagan had to contend with "divided government" in the 1980s. Clinton had the similar experience in the 1990s. Today, the government is "unified" with the GOP in control of all branches of government albeit in the 1-2% range. Does this signify slow but steady realignment, sometimes called "creeping realignment" as Republicans have

claimed? Or, as Democrats protest, have the last 30 years demonstrated only "de-alignment" with no party in complete control? Both are probably correct, but the 2004 presidential election could settle the question.

We can attempt to see an election before it happens (2004), but it is a rare occurrence to realize it this far in advance. There are several claims about realignment that need to be reviewed, as Mayhew has nicely done. To put all this into perspective, some of the necessary components of a cyclical theory are as follows:

- a) National elections can be sorted into
  - 1) Realigning ("both sharp and durable in the changes" that are fundamental turning points)
  - 2) Deviating (an episodic outcome with no durable change in the base constituencies, with the next election being a "reinstating" election)
  - 3) Maintaining (a play-out of the base vote in which one party continues to dominate "on plan")
- b) Realignments have appeared in patterns of periodicity, every 30 years or more (if so, there was a shift in political attitudes during the late 1960s and 1970s).
- c) There is usually a "flash point" after some decades of political tension in which a triggering event takes place.
- d) Turnout of the vote is usually high in realigning elections, which is an additional defining property. However, this dynamic has been called into question as the rates of voter participation since the 1960s have stagnated. (See Thomas Patterson's *The Vanishing Voter: Public Involvement in an Age of Uncertainty*, 2002.)
- e) A new dominant "Great Divide" between voters and interests replaces the old one. (The Culture Divide of the 1960s and 1970s replaced the worn-out FDR New Deal of economic "Haves versus Have-nots.")
- f) There is an unusual polarization between competing ideologies and a sense of "grave threat" among the established order.
- g) Realigning elections hinge on national issues, hinting at a new mandate and a new majority.

Let us now consider the most recent "divide" that has taken place in this generation.

### **The Great Cultural Divide and Realignment**

There have been six U.S. "critical elections" that all scholars agree upon that ushered in a new era of fundamental transformation in policy direction and institutional response. Overarching these, however, have been four "Great Divides," which can last a generation or more and force all of the various systems in society to redefine themselves. Conflict, rather than national consensus, is the norm. All produced realignments:

- ◆ The "inequality of slavery" divide, resulting in an actual war within the domestic boundaries of the U.S.;
- ◆ The "inequality of economic justice" divide, as the country unevenly shifted from an agrarian to an industrialized economy caused as the 20<sup>th</sup> century developed; and
- ◆ The "inequality of social justice" divide of the Great Depression era, which produced the great growth in the government bureaucracy and Keynesian public expenditures in an effort to reach group equality.

Many scholars additionally agree that there was a fourth Great Divide during the 1960s and 1970s in which the core cultural orthodoxy of the U.S. was challenged. It might some day be entitled the "inequality of personal rights" divide in which race, rights, and taxes produced a "chain reaction" toward conservative Republicanism and the secular realignment of the South.

Thomas Edsall of the *Washington Post*, no conservative himself, fashioned a well-respected history of the "Reagan Era," in which he documented the rise of the presidential wing of the Republican Party and how the new polarization of "rights" had replaced the traditional New Deal cleavages that had sustained the Democratic Party from 1932 to 1964.

Edsall believes that the overlapping issues of race and taxes permitted the Republicans to adapt the principles of conservatism to break the underlying class basis of the FDR coalition and build a reconfigured voting majority in presidential elections. (The GOP had won five of six presidential elections.) Two swing groups that bolted their Democratic Party allegiances to the GOP were: 1) white, ethnic/European Catholics in the North, and 2) white, lower-middle-class populists in the South. He further stated that the Democratic Party reforms of the 1970s served as the perfect foil for conservatives seeking to portray the Democratic Party as intent on imposing an elitist and liberal cultural agenda on the mass of American voters. (See *Chain Reaction* by Thomas Edsall, 1992.) Nixon started this counter-debate; Reagan flourished in it.

Sociologists have also pinpointed this fourth divide by calling it the "culture war" over civil rights for blacks, anti-war passions, and other confrontations along orthodox-progressive cultural battle lines. Some ventured to suggest the culture war was as deep as the Civil War was on slavery. And others have suggested that this era was actually "a great discontinuity" when the U.S. was no longer sure of its cultural foundations.<sup>[6]</sup> The reaction to this instability was swift with landslide elections in 1972 and 1984 and "braking" elections in 1976 and 1992. The result: religious traditionalists moved into the GOP base constituency and the Democratic Party became home to most moral and cultural progressives.

According to Geoffrey Layman (*The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in American Party Politics*, 2001), large numbers of voters rejected the new religious and cultural values of the 1960s, and these large numbers formed a backlash of traditionalists against the New Morality. Hence, the term "Reagan Democrats" epitomized the 1980s, as well as the term "The Religious Right."

James Campbell, in a recent article, "certified" this history of recent partisan shifts in the U.S. electorate: "The slim Republican congressional majorities resulting from the 2002 elections are consistent with the realignment that has produced polarized parties of nearly equal strength nationally. The staggered party realignment that developed from a switch in the parties' relative positions on (cultural) issues in the early 1960s generated a change in presidential voting (in the 1980s) and closed the party identification gap in the 1980s and in congressional elections from the 1990s to the present. (APSA, *PS*, April 2003)

In summary, "lifestyle" liberalism (feminism, school prayer, multiculturalism, gay rights, gun control, etc.) has enabled the Democratic Party to attract a growing number of secularists and to appeal to disaffected upper-status Republicans. However, it also alienated working-class Catholics in particular (the traditional core of the Democratic Party), and also Southerners in the fastest-growing region in the U.S. Additionally, party activists and the electoral coalitions became more polarized along religious and cultural lines with *both* party platforms taking increasingly uncompromising stands on these issues.<sup>[7]</sup> In effect, the "normal vote" in national elections went from approximately 55% Democratic to today's 51% Republican, a net shift of approximately 10million voters to the GOP. This took place over a twenty-year period of time (1964 to 1984).

Layman suggests that the two major parties in the U.S. have become participants in a new form of religious and cultural conflict, "for the soul of America," one might conjecture. Davidson Hunter (*Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*, 1991) has also postulated, "America is in the midst of a culture war that has had and will continue to have reverberations in public policy and the lives of ordinary Americans everywhere." To both these writers, the cultural progressivism of the 1960s and early 1970s

and the orthodox response in the late 1970s and 1980s drew the lines for a new form of American conflict that should reshape contemporary party politics for a long time to come along the traditionalist-modernist religious cleavage.

Layman interestingly has developed an eight-step "model" in his book for understanding partisan change along religious and cultural lines, which should be of interest to political scientists specializing in realignment theories and political party transformations. It is summarized as follows: Party politics always are associated with emotional issues (that can be used as "wedge" issues against your opponents), which leads to a cultural gap between the parties, ultimately restructuring the major party coalitions. The activist bases of each party take extreme positions, which changes the way the mass public views the two parties, which evolves into a change in the religious and cultural composition of the parties' electoral coalitions.

Perhaps now one can understand the depth and the emotion behind both parties' positions in the Clinton impeachment trials of the late 1990s and the recent anti-war sentiments. Both parties are working from fundamentally different assumptions about moral authority in today's society.

Recently, Gallup issued their annual survey of "Values and Beliefs" (May, 2003) which consisted of some 50 questions based upon a random sample size of N=1000. This survey demonstrated clearly that the "Great Divide" that erupted in the 1960s is still with us today and largely unresolved. When respondents were asked whether they were pro-choice or pro-life on the abortion issue, the results were fairly split: 48% pro-choice, 45% pro-life.

The choice of penalty for the crime of murder also showed a deep division between death and rehabilitation: 53% for the death penalty and 44% for life imprisonment. On the issue of homosexuality, 54% felt it was an acceptable lifestyle while 43% said not. Moreover, 49% favored allowing homosexual couples to legally form civil unions and exactly 49% were opposed.

This last question revealed that the "Great Divide" is deep enough to probably inhibit any large-scale swings in voter preferences over the next generation. This split was most prevalent among Democrats and Republicans, West/East Coast and the heartland, under or over 50 years of age, and among religious and secular persons. The following table illustrates the "institutional divide" on this New Morality question:

*Would you favor or oppose a law that would allow homosexual couples to legally form civil unions, giving them some of the legal rights of married couples?*

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>No Difference</u>
<u>National</u>	49	49	0
Republicans	35	63	-28
Democrats	62	37	+25
<u>Church Attendance</u>			
Weekly	29	68	-39
Nearly weekly	49	49	
Seldom/never	65	33	+32
<u>East Coast</u>	55	42	+13
West Coast	59	39	+20
Midwest	44	54	-10
South	40	58	-18
<u>Female/ under 50</u>	61	37	+24
Female/ over 50	41	56	-15

Party self-identification ("Do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, or what?") is generally the most powerful predictor of political behavior and is documented as one of the main filters governing a person's view of the world. It is noteworthy that The Gallup Organization last January, before the Iraq war, performed a secondary analysis of more than 27,000

interviews conducted state by state in 1993 and compared it to another data set (N=44,000, also state by state) a decade later (2002). Gallup found some startling shifts in party identification in some states, while other states remained the same.

What makes Gallup's study interesting is that they compare 1993, which was the start of the Clinton years, and perhaps also the year that closed out the "counter-reformation" of the Reagan era (1980-1992). Then, when compared to 2002, one can see changes in the Clintonian era, which includes the 1994 Congressional landslide, which started five straight GOP majorities at the U.S. House of Representatives level (a "first" for the GOP since the advent of the FDR Coalition of 1932). Because of these GOP House majorities (albeit tenuous), it is clear that a new political era had begun.

Here are some of the findings in the "last decade" analysis by Gallup  each of these analytical points have relevance to the 2004 Electoral College outcomes and demonstrates that any realignment nationally must likely will have to start with individual state cultures and work "upward" (as opposed to the "top down" presidential party realignment as a result of the Fourth Great Divide or culture war of the 1960s:

- 1) Twenty-eight states today identify more with the GOP, while only 20 states do so with the Democratic Party (+8 GOP); ten years ago, just 13 states tilted to the GOP and 35 states to the Democrats (-22 GOP). Even though not controlling for the most populous states, this 15-state shift is impressive.
- 2) Ohio, a top bellwether state over all major elections of the last century, has today shifted from a +10 Democrat identification (with 10% independents) to now an 8% GOP advantage (10% independent).

<u>ID</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>shift</u>
Democrat	50	41	-9
GOP	40	49	+9
Independent	10	10	0

- 3) Forty-one states have shown an increase in Republicanism, while only seven states showed a Democratic Party identification increase over the last decade. The direction here is undeniable, even if it is only percentage increases and not an assessment of majority outcomes.
- 4) The most populous states (and ones that are the most important to who wins the White House) do not reveal any uniform direction: Texas shifted decidedly Republican; [\[8\]](#) California and Illinois decidedly Democratic; New York (+12 Democratic), Pennsylvania (+5 Democratic) stayed about the same.
- 5) Florida, perhaps the premier bellwether state for the next generation, is at perfect party parity, similar to its 2000 outcome: 46% GOP, 46% Democrat. A decade ago, it was also "too close to call" (43% GOP, 45% Democrat). It should be no surprise that Florida remains one of the most evenly divided states in the U.S. and future election controversies remain highly probable.
- 6) The most Republican states generally are Western/Sunbelt states, while the most Democratic states are found in the Northeast.

Looking back over even a longer period of time, one can see that party identification (all independents, no assigned leans) has indeed been a positive indicator of a political realignment (albeit gradual), when tracked by Gallup from Nixon through the Reagan era:

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>net change</u>
Republican	27	33	33	+6
Democrat	46	38	40	-6
Independent	27	29	27	0

But when one compares the Reagan Era to contemporary times, we can see that Republicans have remained more or less in the same proportion of the electorate; it is the Democrats who have "decomposed" over time, as Independents have increased.

	<u>1989</u>	<u>2003 (April)</u>	<u>Shift</u>
Republican	33	35	+2
Democrat	40	30	-10
Independent	27	35	+8

Republican strength is equally competitive in a theoretical two-party election, when independents are asked to indicate which way they "lean" (since there is generally no "independent candidate"):

	<u>Party ID</u>	<u>with leans</u>	
Republican	35	48	+13
Democrat	30	45	+15
<u>Independent</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>-28</u>
Rep/Dem Net	+5	+3	

Two other measures of relative party positions and transformations are time series data on the aggregate U.S. House vote and the composition of the state legislatures. Both of these measures are intended to reflect "grass roots" relative support of the two major political parties.

The following table shows the "staggered party realignment" before and after the 1994 "earthquake" by using aggregate votes for U.S. Representative in each of the 435 districts:

Votes Cast for U.S. House of Representatives

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
All Republican candidates	37.1	27.6	43.8	43.9	32.3	47.0
All Democrat candidates	<u>43.7</u>	<u>32.6</u>	<u>48.9</u>	<u>43.6</u>	<u>31.5</u>	<u>46.5</u>
Difference (D)	+6.6	+5.0	+5.1	-.3	-.8	-.5

(Statistical Abstract of the U.S.)  
\*numbers are in the millions

Composition of State Legislatures by Party Affiliation  
lower houses only

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2003</u>
All Republicans	2,164	2,223	2,580	2,604	*
<u>All Democrats</u>	<u>3,294</u>	<u>3,186</u>	<u>2,903</u>	<u>2,809</u>	
Difference (D)	+1,130	+963	+323	+205	

\* Republicans, for the first time in 50 years, now have a majority as of the 2002 midterm elections. (*New York Times*, 5/25/03)

There are, I believe, two conclusions and only two conclusions that can be gleaned from the above data:

- ◆ "Wise Republicans remember false dawns of impending majority status after the elections of 1980 and, especially, 1994." (Adam Clymer, "Buoyed by Resurgence, GOP Strives for an Era of Dominance," *New York Times*, 5/25/03) and 2004 could be very similar.
- ◆ Professor John Pitney of Claremont was quoted in the same article: "In the past couple of years, I think we have seen a shift from rough party parity to a slight Republican advantage, which reflects a shift in public interest to national security, which Republicans own. If you think about bombs and rockets most of the time, you're probably going to vote Republican."

## The Aftermath of War and the 2004 Elections

George W. Bush entered the White House with a country divided evenly between the "Bush Nation" and the "Gore Nation" and with an economy headed for decline. From that starting point, Bush has now become more "legitimate" and "popular." The Republican Party in the midterm Congressional elections avoided the usual downturn and actually picked up seats in both Houses and took undisputed (but slim) control of Congress. The undeniable key to this turnaround was the 9/11 crisis and the country's response to it. The question is how the national defense "card" will be played in the future and which card ♦ the economic or the defense one ♦ will eventuate as the dominant theme.

The Gallup Organization said in late April: "It is too soon to gauge the long-term impact of the war in Iraq on Americans' fundamental views of life, the Bush Administration, the U.S. role in the world, or even the coming election" [and] the war's impact on any of these concerns may not end up being as significant as some observers think." They base their tentative conclusion on the fact that many Americans do not think the war is totally over yet, that the public assumed the U.S. would win, and "winning may not have been seen as anything more than a realization of prior expectations." (Gallup Poll "Insider's Update," 4/22/03)

The most recent indicator of whether the national defense card will play, of course, was the 2002 midterm elections. Bush's high approval ratings helped solidify a very shaky congressional House majority and brought the U.S. Senate back to the GOP; the press made Karl Rove into a "genius" (i.e. "Bush's Brain"). One would have to believe that the 2002 strategy could play equally well again in 2004.<sup>[9]</sup>

A second dynamic for 2004 will be the unnoticed fact that the 2000 U.S. Census results will be applied for the first time to the Electoral College. Since "geography matters" and "demography is destiny" are two well-known truisms in American politics, the U.S. Census in 2000 showed that demography is moving slowly toward the "Bush Nation." Except for California, Bush in 2000 carried all the states that gained House seats from reapportionment. (Bush would today win 278 electoral votes based on the 2000 voting results, rather than the 271 he needed to win last time.) Additionally, the fastest-growing parts of the U.S. are formerly rural counties on metropolitan fringes, producing majorities large enough to offset the Democratic margins in culturally central cities (see Michael Barone, *National Journal*, 8/1/2001). As Barone has said ♦ correctly thus far, "The prospect ahead nevertheless is for close elections, closely divided Congresses, bitterly fought battles over issues and nominations" ♦ even with the war on terrorism front and center.

A third dynamic may also be in play for the 2004 presidential election: a softening of the gender gap. Female voters are more concerned than male voters about their personal safety from terrorist attacks. When asked in a late-April Gallup poll, "How worried are you that you or someone in your family will become a victim of terrorism?" females were more worried (+10% very/somewhat) than males. Females were also more worried than males about bio-terrorism (49% to 29%). Moreover, it was found that among those Democratic voters (44%) who were satisfied with the U.S. position in the world (post-Iraq war), 60% were female. These female Democrats are more in the South and Midwest, white, less educated, younger; some may defect from the "diplomatic left" of the Democratic Party and may be prime targets for the Bush campaign. However, about 60% of *married* women still favor the Republicans (2002 polling), while 60% of *unmarried* women favor Democrats ♦ and there is no evidence there is less polarization at this time.

Thus, we have no new evidence yet that the partisan stalemate revealed in the "hanging chad" election of 2000 has been broken; we have only pre-election short-term indicators while we search for the long-term ones. As Jacobson stated in his paper on the "Bush Presidency," "The question remains whether the radical reorientation of national politics after 9/11 will continue to

shape the electorate's view of the president and the parties in ways that might have durable electoral effects." We do, however, know the following:

- 1) September 11 has made defense and international security concerns salient, playing to a major GOP strength.
- 2) George Bush is the incumbent, remains a clear favorite, does not have a strong field of Democrats opposing him, and has near-universal support among his own party members. This is a significant difference from 1992.
- 3) The 2000 presidential election produced the highest levels of straight ticket voting in the nearly 50-year history of the University of Michigan's national post-election studies (ticket-splitting, as you would guess, was at its lowest level since 1960) and the partisan polarization remains strong and visible, even today. It should be remembered that intense polarization is a prerequisite for realignment to take place.

As Jacobson noted, "For Democrats to win, they will need more than a continuation of the current partisan stalemate; they will need the lift of a strong pro-Democratic national tide." What Jacobsen has in mind is the economic conditions at the time of the 2004 presidential election. Gallup measured the priority of economics versus the threat of terrorism recently (May 5-7) and found a 2:1 economic preference. However, framing their question differently, another recent national poll found that 51% of the public deemed terrorism and the economy "equally important." (Andres McKenna Research, 5/15/03)

- 4) As James Sundquist noted, for the theory of realignment to take place, there has to be both a "triggering event" and a New Issue to shift the party allegiances in the country. Gallup polls in early March, before the Iraq war, had both Democratic and Republican identifiers exactly even (47% each). The Gallup poll after the war on April 22-23 showed the GOP at about the same level (47%), but the amount of Democrats had dropped slightly, to 45%. More recent Gallup polling (May) had 49% GOP and 44% Democrat, another modest GOP increase. Continued polling needs to be observed before this trend can be validated, but it will be an interesting nation to watch.

The bottom line is most likely this: If Bush Republicans exploit the new issue of "defending America," if the Democrats remain divided between anti-war and war issues, and if the U.S. economic outlook begins to grow more positive, the Republicans should win, even if in another close election, but less so than in 2000. This combination could create a "chain reaction." There is a definite possibility that the partisan shift may be durable enough to indicate another party alignment or at least solidify the tenuous GOP control to one of more dominance.

After all, it will be about 36 years since the last critical election of 1968, which, in turn, was exactly 36 years after the critical election of 1932. If demography is, indeed, destiny, so well may be the periodicity for realignment in America. It will be interesting to attempt to classify the upcoming presidential election as a "realigning election" or simply as a "maintaining election." Since the U.S. political system is currently the "50-50" nation, the odds are at least 50-50 that 2004 could become a "critical election." An enormous amount of history is waiting to be written.

## APPENDIX

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- [1] "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is perhaps the end of the beginning." ♦ Winston Churchill after the British defeat of the German army in North Africa, Nov. 10, 1942.
- [2] "The United States at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a nation divided down the middle. In 1996, Bill Clinton was reelected with 49%, while Republicans held the House at 50% of the aggregate vote. In 2000, both Gore and Bush finished with 48% of the vote with GOP House candidates garnering 49% to the Democratic House candidates at 48%." ♦ *The National Journal*, 8/1/01, Michael Barone.
- [3] Measurements are from the Gallup national survey of April 22-23, 2003, after the fall of Baghdad.
- [4] For a counterpoint to Kristol, read Yale's Paul Kennedy "Is This America's Moment?" (*The Washington Post*, 4/30/03) in which the British, "86 years ago, were determined to make the Middle East secure and stable, believing that the British genius could reconcile Arab and Jewish interests in Palestine, which turned out to be a romantic delusion."
- [5] V.O. Key's seminal article, "A Theory of Critical Elections," (1955) moved the entire political science discipline to put more quantitative depth and meaning to the study of realignment.
- [6] A good example of this took place at a Hamilton University 2001 Forum when David Horowitz debated a professor of history on the subject "Can the Left and Right Agree About Anything About the Sixties?"
- [7] Layman's data for the 1992 national convention delegates: GOP delegates ♦ more than 22% were self-described "fundamentalist Christians," more than 66% attended worship services regularly, and 52% said they were satisfied with the term "Christian right." Democratic delegates ♦ 19% were self-described atheists, 55% rarely attended worship services, etc.
- [8] Party identification shifted dramatically over the last ten years in Texas: 52% GOP from 43% GOP, while Democrats fell from 48% to 40%.
- [9] According to Gary Jacobson ("The Bush Presidency," Princeton Conference, 4/21/03) and for a partisan contradistinctive analysis: "redistricting alone can account for all of the Republican House gains in 2000."