

**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY**

A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

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“In trying to explain the role of the Secretary of State, George Schultz likens it to the more mundane occupation of gardening ...the constant nurturing of a complex array of actors, interests and goals....Schultz’s former Stanford University colleague and pupil, current Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, wants to try something different....She describes this as ‘transformational diplomacy,’ not just accepting the world as it is, but trying to change it. Rice’s ambition is not just to be a gardener — she wants to be a landscape architect.” **Chollet (2005)**

“If there is one soft power gift America does possess, it is this tendency to imagine new worlds....Stephen Sestanovich [argues] that American diplomacy is often most effective when it pursues not an ‘incrementalist’ but a ‘maximalist’ agenda, leaping over allies and making the crude, bold, vantage-shifting proposal — like pushing for the reunification of Germany when almost everyone else was trying to preserve the so-called stability of the Warsaw Pact.” **Brooks (2005)**

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Foreign policy is usually over-determined. The “national interest” often appears to be an immutable dictation of the international system and of domestic politics. As Henry Kissinger put it when he was Secretary of State, “the essential outlines of U.S. policy will remain the same no matter who wins the U.S. Presidential election” (Wittkopf, 2003, 524). Yet sometimes, “reality” is more malleable than it first appears. Not so long ago, it seemed “unimaginable” that the Soviet Union would disappear and Germany would be peacefully reunited. As former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft put it in 2003, the main divisions in foreign policy today are not between liberals and conservatives, but between the tra-

ditionalists and the transformationalists.¹ The transformationalists believe that “we know what has to be done and have the power to do it. What has to be done is to transform the Middle East into a collection of democracies. That will bring peace and stability” (Rothkopf, 2005, 428). Transformational leadership has become a central part of the current debate about American foreign policy.

Academics are generally skeptical about the role of individuals and transformational foreign policies. Kenneth Waltz, for example, has argued that explanations of international events cluster under three images or levels of analysis: the international system, the nature of the domestic regime, and individual leaders. He ranks their explanatory value in that order, and most recent social science focuses on the first two (Waltz, 1959). While there are many good biographies, there has been relatively little comparative work on the roles of individual leaders in shaping foreign policy. Of course, at the anecdotal level it is not difficult to assert that leaders matter: Witness the consequences of the different solutions that Bismarck, the Kaiser, and Hitler chose to solve “the German problem.” Or imagine a counterfactual situation in which a few hundred voters had chosen differently in Florida in 2000. A hypothetical President Gore would probably have invaded Afghanistan, but might not have invaded Iraq.

But is there anything general we can say about the value that is added by individuals? Is transformational leadership possible in foreign policy? If so, what does it mean and how and when does it occur and succeed?²

These questions, of course, are a subset of the classic question of human agency in history: To what extent do leaders matter? In the 19th century, Carlyle and Spencer took opposing views, and Marx famously

pointed out that men make history but not under the conditions of their own choosing. More recently, Richard Samuels has compared Japan and Italy over the last 150 years and demonstrated the long-term effects of leaders' choices. As he puts it, everything is determined, but some leaders choose to select against the structural forces (Samuels, 2003, 4).

There will never be definitive answers to such questions; contemporary philosophers still debate the age old issue of free will. Can we learn something about the role of individuals in foreign policy by turning to current leadership theory? Is it meaningful to use their term "transformational leadership" in the field of foreign policy? Perhaps not. There is a rich literature, but the leadership field is currently dominated by management experts and psychologists who usually focus on organizations. Thus they build theory and conduct experiments in a context that is very different from foreign policy. Nonetheless, it is worth a look. This paper is an early exploration.

LEADERSHIP THEORIES

There are various definitions of leadership, and I will use a simple one that defines leaders as those who help a group define and pursue shared objectives.³ This has the virtue of being close to the standard dictionary definition, which says leaders show the way by going before or along. It is also purely descriptive in a field where some definitions mix normative with descriptive dimensions. The social role of leader may switch among members of a group, and sometimes the person in a formal role of authority may not be the most effective leader in a group. The role of effective leader depends upon others accepting social roles as followers.

Leadership as a process has three components: leaders, followers, and a relationship between them that varies with time and context. Each deserves attention. As we will see below, we can look at different types of leaders, different situations, and different followers. National leaders interact with concentric circles of followers. Domestically they include an inner team which has direct contact; and outer circles of public opinion that include true believers, obedient citizens, bystanders, and opponents. When conducting foreign policy, leaders interact with similar circles beyond their national borders. A leader in the eyes of one circle of followers may not appear so to other circles, and the strength of followership may vary over time.

Early leadership research sought to identify the traits that were characteristic of leaders. While some traits seem to hold up across multiple contexts, many do not. For example, early work by psychologists found a positive but weak relationship between IQ and successful leadership (Stogdill, 1948, 25-46). More recent studies have found that IQ is positively related to successful outcomes in low stress situations, but negatively correlated in high stress situations where experience and tacit knowledge weighs more heavily than analytical skills (Fiedler, 2002, 96-101). Context, including followers' perceptions of their needs, is crucial. When the contexts are carefully specified, analysis of traits may be more fruitful, as we will see when we look at certain traits and skills related to presidential leadership and foreign policy in the final section below.

One of the most prominent paradigms in the current leadership literature is neo-charismatic and transformational theory. In the 1970s and 80s, leadership theorists rediscovered Max Weber's concept of charisma which he defined as "the quality of an individual personality by which he is set apart ...and treated as endowed with superhuman or exceptional powers..." (Weber, 1921). Weber believed that charisma was an ideal type not to be found in history in pure form. He was also careful to point out that charisma was in the relationship, not just an individual trait. Personal charisma is created in the eyes of the fol-

lowers “as long as it receives recognition and is able to satisfy the followers or disciples. But this lasts only so long as the belief in its charismatic inspiration remains.” (Weber, 1921, 238) For example, as Hitler’s success increased in the 1930s, so did the circles of those who saw him as charismatic. And as he failed in 1944-45, those circles shrank, leaving just a small group of “true believers” in Hitler’s innermost circle. Weber was careful not to reify an indefinable personal trait, but to locate charisma in the relationship or social process, though not all theorists have been careful about specifying the process (Solomon, 2002, 83). As Ann Ruth Willner correctly notes, to locate the source of charisma, do not develop a list of individual traits, but locate the source in the factors that call forth such perceptions from followers. These factors, such as a sense of crisis or deep social and psychological needs, are likely to vary with times, societies and cultures. (Willner, 1984, 15)

Recent theorists use the term “charismatic” to refer to a leadership process that relies on personal and inspirational power resources rather than official or positional power.⁴ R.J. House, for example, describes the behavior of charismatic leaders as including: communication, vision, confidence, being an exemplar, and impression management (House, 1976). Bernard Bass defines a charismatic leadership process as one where a leader influences followers by arousing strong emotions and identification with the leader (Bass, 1998). The virtue of such definitions is that they allow for degrees of charisma and can vary with situational context. As Janice Beyer has put it, “the neo-charismatic and transformational leadership paradigms have tamed the original concept of charisma...” (Beyer, 1999, 308) In principle, charisma can be measured by surveys of followers. Charisma is not the only source of personal or attractive (as opposed to positional) power, and in current usage, charisma is widely treated as a synonym for “personal magnetism.” It is in this sense that I use the term as a component of inspirational leadership which I discuss below.

This approach separates description from normative judgment. Charisma is not good or bad per se. Kets de Vries has pointed out the dangers of negative charismatic leaders who are too narcissistic: grandiose projects, failure on details of implementation, failure to delegate credit and empower followers, failure to develop successors, no institutionalization (Kets de Vries, 1988). James Jones, who led more than 900 people to commit mass suicide in Guyana in the 1970s was an effective charismatic leader, at least for his circle of true believers, but normatively we would not say he was a good one judged by outcomes (Lindholm, 1990).

The needs of followers are the other essential component of the relationship that creates charismatic leadership. It is more likely to emerge when followers have strong felt needs for change, often in the context of personal or social crisis. For example, was Winston Churchill a charismatic leader? Not in 1939, when he was widely regarded as a washed up back bench Tory MP. But his vision, confidence, communications skills and example made him charismatic in the eyes of the British people and the needs they felt after the fall of France and Dunkirk (Lukacs, 1999). In a sense, Hitler’s actions transformed Churchill from a back bencher into one of the great leaders of the 20th century. And Hitler himself was a charismatic leader in the eyes of many Germans of the depression era, though he fits the description of a negative charismatic leader, and would not be seen as charismatic by most Germans today. Or to take a contemporary example, Helmut Kohl described Bill Clinton as charismatic, and Clinton certainly possesses individual traits of empathy, communication and personal magnetism. But in historical terms, no situations arose during Clinton’s presidency which led broad circles of followers to feel deep needs that led them to attribute lasting charisma to him (Harris, 2005, 5). Of course, individuals differ in the magnetism of their personalities, but the terms charismatic or inspirational leadership are most useful if one sees such leadership as part of a relationship and does not reify it as some set of mystical individual traits.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership theorists developed the idea of transformational (or transforming) leadership in the 1970s and 80s. The concept builds upon but differs from charismatic leadership. In 1978, James McGregor Burns distinguished transformational from transactional leaders (Burns, 1978). The former mobilize power for change by appealing to their followers' higher ideals and moral values such as liberty, justice, and peace rather than baser emotions of fear, greed, and hatred. They use conflict and crisis to raise their followers' consciousness and transform them. Conversely, transactional leaders motivate followers by appealing to their self interest. On the continuum of interests that stretches from the individual to the collectivity for most social groups, transformational leaders appeal more to the collective interests of the group and transactional leaders more to individual interests. This tendency is neither good nor bad per se, but has to be judged normatively in terms of particular situations and needs of groups.

Judging which needs or interests are higher depends on whose values are applied. Although he referred to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the question of what constitutes "higher ideals" imported a normative dimension into Burns's categories. Burns is explicit about this: in his more recent work, *Transforming Leadership*, he states that "bad leadership means no leadership" (Burns, 2003, 2). As Barbara Kellerman and others have argued, this creates a serious problem for descriptive analysis (Kellerman, 2003).

In 1985, Bernard Bass turned Burns's distinction into a purely descriptive categorization, though he later added a normative element as well. According to Bass, transformational leaders induce followers to transcend their self interest for the sake of the higher purposes of the organization that provides the context of the relationship. Followers are thus inspired to do more than they originally expected based on self interest alone. For Bass, charisma is a necessary but not sufficient condition for transformational leadership (Bass, 1994, 4-6). Bass also expanded his definition to add a cognitive element of "intellectual stimulation"—broadening followers' awareness of situations and new perspectives—and "individualized consideration"—providing support and developmental experiences to followers rather than treating them as mere means to an end. As Gary Yukl notes, this formulation is not conceptually clear. Some charismatic leaders are not transformational, and some transformational leaders are not charismatic. In practice, it may be rare to find the two characteristics in long-term equilibrium (Yukl, 1999, 300).

Transformational leaders seek to empower and elevate their followers. Some charismatic leaders also empower their followers, but others do quite the opposite and seek to keep their followers weak and dependent. They want personal loyalty rather than commitment to group ideals. As stated, Bass sees charisma as necessary but not sufficient for transformational leadership. Bass also added to Burns's transactional category by arguing that transactional leaders create incentives to influence followers' efforts and make clear the work that is needed to obtain rewards. The two types of leadership processes are not mutually exclusive, and many leaders can use both styles at different times in different contexts. Moreover, although transformational leadership is sometimes treated as synonymous with effectiveness, the empirical evidence shows that to be a doubtful proposition.

When one goes beyond organizational behavior and considers national politics, there is significant confusion regarding what constitutes a transformational leader. For example, as described by Robert Caro, Senator Lyndon Johnson deeply wanted to transform racial injustice in the South, but he did not preach to or inspire a new vision in his fellow senators (Caro, 2002). Instead he used a very transactional style of detailed bullying and bargaining to achieve his transformational objectives in passing civil rights legislation that was anathema to many of the supporters who had made him majority leader. Was he a transactional or a transformational leader? Franklin Roosevelt is often cited as an example of a transfor-

mational leader, and in the 1930s, he used inspirational communications to help achieve his transformational goals of social reform; but he also used very indirect transactional means, such as the destroyers for bases deal, to pursue his goal of transforming American foreign policy toward support of Great Britain before World War II. Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, his followers were ready for transformation on social issues, but not on foreign policy.

THREE USES OF “TRANSFORMATIONAL”

Some of the confusion about what is a transformational leader can be avoided by distinguishing three different things that are covered by the overlapping uses of one term. It helps to separate a leader’s: objectives, means (i.e., the style of using power), and outcomes.

1. Objectives. Some leaders mobilize followers to pursue new goals. In this sense they are transformational. (Whether the goals are better or worse is an important but separate normative question.) Others reflect or encourage followers’ preferences for the status quo goals or mere incremental changes in objectives. But for this dimension, “transactional” is not the best antonym to transformational. “Status quo” would be a more accurate term.

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We can locate leaders’ objectives on a continuum between seeking total transformation and preserving the status quo. More specifically, leaders may seek to preserve the status quo, make incremental changes, accelerate existing changes, redirect or reverse changes, or reinstate changes (Sternberg, 2002, 17). We should use the word transformational for leaders whose objectives cluster toward one end of this continuum and challenge prevailing orthodoxies in a fundamental way. Operationally, in terms of Sternberg’s categorization of seven types of change, I consider objectives that seek replication, redefinition, and forward incrementation as status quo, while objectives that seek accelerated forward motion, redirection, divergent motion and reinstated motion I label transformative. There is no contradiction between a leader having transformational objectives on some issues and at some times, but not others. Churchill sought to transform the balance of power in Europe by demanding the unconditional surrender of Germany, but he did not want to see the decolonization of the British Empire. Richard Nixon wanted to transform American foreign policy toward China, but he did so in order to balance what he saw as the growing power of the Soviet Union. We can still make aggregate judgments of leaders’ overall transformational postures, and more refined assessments by issue.

During the 20th century, for example, the two Roosevelts, Wilson, Truman, and George W. Bush pursued significantly transformational objectives on grand strategy, or the central security issues of foreign policy. Taft, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover, Eisenhower, Johnson, Ford, George H.W. Bush and Clinton did not. Nixon, Carter and Reagan pursued partially transformational objectives in terms of adjusting the tactics of the balance of power by improving relations with China in the Nixon’s case; Carter’s adding serious pursuit of human rights to foreign policy; and Reagan’s rhetoric about change in the Soviet Union. But all were within a Cold War doctrine of containment that even Reagan did not fundamentally alter. George H.W. Bush skillfully managed the transition to a “new world order” that Reagan (and more importantly, Gorbachev) helped to start, but he did not very clearly express transformational objectives. As he put it, “We, of course, did not (and could not) anticipate what was about to happen as we came into office.... We set the right tone of gentle encouragement to the reformers of Eastern Europe...” (Bush & Scowcroft, 1998, 565). And some who pursued transformational objectives failed to achieve them; Woodrow Wilson is a prime example.

2. Outcomes. We must also consider whether a leader was successful in achieving his (or her) transformational objectives. If he was, we give him that label; for cases in which he was not successful, such as Wilson, we reserve the term “failed transformational.” Of course, this category can only be judged post hoc, and even then there are difficult judgment calls. While there is an interesting question of how to weigh delayed and intergenerational effects in judging leaders’ success, I will use a threshold of success during an administration and its two successors. When one goes beyond a decade or two, causation becomes blurred. Wilson left a lasting legacy in American opinions about foreign policy, but if his objectives are judged by changes in the world during his lifetime, or in the next three administrations, he failed.

The attribution of causation is difficult in complex international affairs, and luck sometimes plays a key role. That is why Machiavelli gave so much credit to “fortuna.” Consider that if Wilson had died rather than been disabled by his stroke in 1919, the U.S. Senate would probably have passed the Versailles Treaty and Wilson would be judged a successful transformational leader. And if Hitler had not given Franklin Roosevelt the gift of declaring war on the United States after Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt might not have been able to come promptly to Britain’s aid in Europe before replying to the Japanese attack. Moreover, leaders may be successful transformationalists on some dimensions but not on others—witness Burns’s description of Roosevelt’s failure to transform the Democratic Party (Burns, 2002). Moreover, some transformations may take the form of unintended consequences. George H.W. Bush presided over the major transformation of the international system that occurred at the end of the Cold War, but in his words: “Did we see what was coming when we entered office? No, we did not, nor could we have planned it” (Bush & Scrowcroft, 1998, xiii). Finally, success, however judged, still leaves open normative questions for further judgment. Nonetheless, we can generally say post hoc that a leader succeeded or not in the transformational outcomes he or she pursued.

There is also a second important dimension of outcomes that can only be judged post hoc, and that is the lasting effect on followers of the inspiration or vision that leaders expound. This effect is central to Burns’s account of transformational leadership. In some cases, the emotional and cognitive appeal of a vision has a lasting transformative impact on followers. Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King are often cited as prototypical examples of leaders who had a lasting effect on the values of a number, though not all, of their followers. Franklin Roosevelt had such a lasting effect on the attitudes of many of his followers on issues of social security (broadly defined). Leaders are educators, and even when they do not transform the world, they may transform the foreign policy positions of some followers. Woodrow Wilson may have failed to achieve his objectives of transforming the world, but he had a more lasting effect on the attitudes of many Americans, including FDR, about promoting democracy and international organizations (Kissinger, 1992). This role of the transformational leader as exemplar and teacher is affected, but not solely determined by success measured in achieving the tangible changes stated in the inspirational message. For some religious leaders, the relationship between worldly success and transforming followers’ attitudes can be remote. This is less likely in foreign policy.

The durability of the lessons taught by transformational leaders in foreign policy can only be judged post hoc. And the value of the lessons taught is a separate normative question—witness disputes to this day about Wilson’s legacy of promoting democracy abroad. While it is possible to speak of transformational leaders who “turn the work over to the people” and help a group better accomplish its goals, the value of the goals is a separate question (Heifetz, 1994). For example, there is a debate in the leadership literature about whether Hitler was a leader. For Burns, this is impossible because he has ruled out the possibility by definition (Burns, 2003). Hitler was a mere power wielder who relied on coercion. But as David Hume noted two centuries ago, even coercive leaders have to attract some henchmen to help carry out their coercion (Hume, 1985). Some degree of attractive or soft power is a necessary condition of leadership, but it is often not sufficient.

Leadership always entails some degree of soft power, but it may also include large elements of hard power. (Nye, 2004) To banish coercion from the arsenal of a leader's power resources seems odd from a descriptive perspective. Hitler was a transformational leader who inspired his followers to change their objectives and taught them lessons which changed their lives. He also used coercion against those who refused to follow. For a decade he succeeded. But in the longer term, Hitler was a failed transformational leader. Not only can one normatively condemn his lessons, but objectively one can judge (post hoc) that the outcome of his transformative lessons ultimately proved disastrous for the German people.⁵ But such judgment of outcomes should not be ruled out by definition.

3. Means or style of using power. Transformational means or style is harder to pin down. Here the concept is at its weakest. For Bass, transactional style rests on contingent reinforcement (rewards and punishments) while transformational style moves beyond followers' self interest and is emotionally and intellectually stimulating. But as Bass says, most leaders use both styles, so it is difficult to categorize a leader as purely one or the other (Bass, 1998). Moreover, as he points out, some leaders with an inspirational style, like the Civil War general George McClellan, were loved by their troops but totally feckless in battle. In addition to the complex case of Senator Lyndon Johnson cited above, Harry Truman was a successful transformational leader who was not particularly inspirational in his style.

Bass argues that transactional leadership style is more likely to emerge and be effective in stable and predictable environments; in contrast, a transformational style is more likely under conditions of rapid or discontinuous change (Bass, 1998, 52). But is it the pre-existing style of the leader or the new conditions that make the leader's style transformational? Consider the case of Churchill described above.

It might be more useful to distinguish leadership types by the way a leader uses the hard and soft power resources that are available in various situations. In democratic polities (though not necessarily in their foreign policies), force is not a significant power option, so the continuum is truncated. At the hard end is bullying, buying and bargaining. At the soft end are ideas, attraction and emotional inspiration (the "tamed" version of charisma). As Harry Truman observed, "I sit here all day trying to persuade people to do the things they ought to have sense enough to do without my persuading them....That's all the powers of the President amount to" (Neustadt, 1990).

We can use the terms "transactional style" to characterize the bullying, buying and bargaining that leaders do at the hard end of the spectrum to affect the self interest of followers and "inspirational style" to characterize leadership that rests on charisma and other personal power resources at the soft end of the spectrum. Inspirational is a clearer antonym than transformational in this context, and using a separate term avoids confusion of means with objectives. Inspiration that broadens followers' perspectives and raises their sights above their short term interests is likely to lead to a higher morality judged in terms of the groups shared interests, and participation in such a perspective may give them a greater sense of empowerment. But as discussed above, this should be judged empirically after the fact, not simply assumed. Some inspirational leaders may be deceptive. Bass seems to have realized this point when he amended his original definition of transformational (which includes charisma) to allow for what he termed "pseudo-transformational" leaders (Bass & Steidlmeier, 2004). By sticking to descriptive language, we can see how different leaders used power and reserve our normative judgments for the ends to which they put that power. Inspirational leadership may or may not be a good thing in any particular context. That determination requires a separate normative judgment.

Combining these two categories produces a two by two matrix in which you can have transformational leaders who mostly use a transactional style (Harry Truman); transformational leaders who are strongest on inspirational style (Woodrow Wilson); status quo leaders with a transactional style (Dwight Eisenhower) and status quo leaders who often use an inspirational style (Bill Clinton).

	TRANSACTIONAL STYLE	INSPIRATIONAL STYLE
Transformational Leader	Harry Truman	Woodrow Wilson
Status Quo Leader	Dwight Eisenhower	Bill Clinton

Or, more accurately, since there is a continuum of objectives regarding change between transformation and status quo on one axis, and a continuum between transactional and inspirational styles of using power resources on the other, one could display leaders in various positions of a two dimensional space rather than restrict them only to one of the four quadrants. Franklin Roosevelt, for example is difficult to so restrict to one quadrant.

Organizational leadership theorists might claim that they too could display leaders in such a matrix which would allow the terms transformational/transactional to be used on both axes of objectives and style. One would then speak of “doubly transformational” and “singly transformational” leaders. But in my view, such language becomes awkward and confusing. Unpacking the terms, as I have suggested here, is likely to provide greater clarity for analysis. When studying political leadership and foreign policy, it would be best for analytical clarity to scrap the use of the word “transformational” as descriptive of style, and restrict its use to describing objectives and outcomes regarding the condition of the world and the state of mind of a leader’s followers as described above.

The use of the antonyms “transformational vs. status quo” and “transactional vs. inspirational” does not diminish Bass’s insight relating leadership style to contexts (Bass, 1998). We would expect transactional leadership to be more frequent and effective in stable predictable environments, and inspirational leadership to be more frequent in periods of rapid and discontinuous change. Crisis conditions can liberate a gifted leader from the accumulated constraints from pressure groups and bureaucracies that normally inhibit action. Followers experience new or accentuated needs. They look for new guidance. Action becomes more fluid. As Charles Hermann, pointed out some time ago, in foreign policy crises, the highest levels of government are involved, bureaucratic procedures can be more easily side-stepped, information is at a premium, analogies are often used in the absence of adequate information, and substantial energy is devoted to mobilizing support for whatever decision is eventually made (Hermann, 1969, 416).

“Crisis conditions can liberate a gifted leader from the accumulated constraints from pressure groups and bureaucracies that normally inhibit action.”

Even in crisis situations, however, different leaders may respond in different ways. For example, Neville Chamberlain, a status quo leader with a transactional style, responded very differently to the changed context in Europe than did Churchill, a transformational leader with a more inspirational style. The change in Britain from one leader to the other reflected changes in the context, which affected the followers and led to a change in their preference of whom they wanted in the leader’s role. But even two transformational leaders may differ in response to the same crisis. In the prelude to World War I, both Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson could be considered leaders with transformational objectives and inspirational styles. But the American public was less responsive to Roosevelt’s balance of power arguments for entering the war than to Wilson’s appeal to the idealist tradition.

Henry Kissinger has argued that Wilson’s idealism had a more profound effect in transforming American public opinion about foreign policy than did Roosevelt’s realism. That is true, but in a sense Wilson did less to transform his followers’ traditional American conceptions of international politics than Roosevelt attempted. In the short run, with the help of German actions, Wilson was more successful in moving the American public into action, and his Fourteen Points expressed significantly transforma-

tional objectives in regard to world politics. But in another sense, his objectives were less transformative than Roosevelt's in regard to changing the views of the American public. Wilson was appealing to an existing tradition of American exceptionalism, while Roosevelt was trying to persuade Americans to adopt a style of realism which was more in the European tradition.

In any event, such paired comparisons of responses to the same world events may help to illuminate differences in leadership objectives and styles. Other possibilities include Carter and Reagan's response to Soviet power in the late 1970s-early 1980s, Peres and Sharon's response to the Palestinian question and Johnson and Fulbright's responses to Vietnam.

THE FOREIGN POLICY CONTEXT

As mentioned above, context is the third side of the leadership triangle. Leadership varies with context, and foreign policy leaders are working in a significantly different context from domestic politics. In the face of frustrating domestic pressures, presidents sometimes turn to foreign policy where they feel less constrained in the role of commander in chief. But this does not mean that transformational leadership is easier in foreign policy than in domestic politics. On the contrary, it is interesting to note that presidents such as Wilson, FDR (before 1941), Johnson, and Reagan found it easier to be transformational in domestic than in foreign policy. Foreign policy involves initiating and responding to changes in the surrounding world. Correctly intuiting the direction and pace of external changes, designing appropriate responses that match goals and resources, educating diverse followers to see the changes and support policies and implementing such policies through a combination of hard and soft power are the essential requirements of foreign policy leadership.

One key difference between the domestic and foreign policy contexts is systemic effects. Foreign policy leaders have to think of the effects of their actions not only on individuals and states, but on the international system as well. Moreover, given the complexity of the international system, it is harder for individuals to make a difference (Byman & Pollack, 2001, 107.) States are not homogenous or equal in size, and leaders of the American superpower have more responsibilities for systemic effects, including leading by example, than do leaders of small weak states. But even for small states, a leader like Lee Kuan Yew had a positive influence and Kim Jong Il a negative one beyond the scale of his country.

A second major difference of the foreign policy context is the "audience problem." Leaders have very different sets of followers: domestic and foreign, and the latter includes not only other governments, but also civil societies which may differ from their governments. This could be called the two (or multiple) audience problem, and it is becoming more important in a world of instantaneous global communication. There are not only multiple circles of followers domestically, but internationally as well. Communications usually reach both foreign and domestic audiences simultaneously, but are heard in very different ways because of cultural and national differences. It is hard to appeal to all followers at once. Some leaders manage both—Wilson's triumphal tour of Europe in 1919 is an example; but even that did not last. Sometimes leaders retain more followers abroad than at home—witness Clinton in 1999. Or conversely, George W. Bush was more successful throughout his first term at appealing to American audiences than to foreign audiences. While his popularity remained sufficient to earn re-election in 2004, polls overseas showed that much of the decline in American attractiveness or soft power was attributed to his policies (Nye, 2004). The extent to which this matters can be debated. For some, it was essential to change the expectations of foreign audiences in order to transform the Middle East, the major contemporary source of terrorists. On the other hand, the former director of policy planning in Bush's State

Department has argued that “anti-Americanism is anything but cost-free. In the short run, it affects how much cooperation and burden sharing can be generated....There is also a long term price to be paid...as people who come of age hating the United States will one day come to power mistrustful of the United States or worse” (Haass, 2005, 202). Whether the costs will exceed the benefits will not be known for some time, but the management of multiple audiences has been difficult.

A third difference between domestic and foreign policy contexts is that the spectrum of power resources is not truncated as it is in democratic polities. Democratic politicians rarely have occasion to use force at home, but force remains a critical hard power resource in world politics and leaders ignore it at their peril. When Burns excludes force as a resource for leaders (by definition, he calls them rulers rather than leaders) he is avoiding a critical leadership issue that arises in foreign policy. Hard and soft power can substitute, reinforce or interfere with each other. Leaders have to be aware of how to blend hard and soft power in a productive rather than counter-productive way. That is smart power. George H.W. Bush was good at it; in his first term George W. Bush was not.

The challenge is not new; Machiavelli’s observations on combining hard and soft power in the 16th century Italian city-state system remain relevant in some parts of the world today. He noted that punishment must sometimes be excessive and notable to be effective (Machiavelli, 1952). Many in the George W. Bush administration argued that a strong military response after the September 11 terrorist attacks was necessary to reverse the lessons that terrorists had learned about “weak” American responses since 1983. But the foreign policy context is not a single domain. Force may be productive in one dimension and counterproductive in another. Among post modern democracies, there is a Kantian world of complex interdependence in which all are from Venus, and force can be counter productive in the eyes of followers at home and abroad. In industrializing and pre-modern domains, however, the ethos of Mars remains present, and the prospect of force and violence must be part of a leader’s calculation of means whether his objectives are transformational or status quo (Kagan, 2003; Cooper, 2004). A foreign policy leader has to understand both hard and soft power resources, and when and how to combine them.

More specifically, in the American foreign policy context, executive branch leaders have to be alert not only to changes in public opinion, but also to how it is refracted through the Congress. American government consists of separate institutions sharing power, and Congress has a greater role in foreign policy than do legislatures in parliamentary democracies. As one expert put it, the Constitution does not assign foreign policy to the president, but rather establishes “an invitation to struggle” between the branches (Corwin, 1957). Presidents are not as free as the term commander in chief implies. They can take initiatives and make changes, but foreign policy transformations do not become “locked in” until they are broadly accepted in the Congress. One of Theodore Roosevelt’s accomplishments was to convince Congress to become fully involved in supporting American hegemony in the Western hemisphere, though he had less success in selling legislators his global vision of America’s role in the world.⁶ Franklin Roosevelt’s efforts to obtain Congressional support for his initiatives to help Britain were weak and generally ineffective until after the Congressional declaration of war in 1941, and Harry Truman’s initiatives toward containment of the Soviet Union were not firmly in place until Senator Arthur Vandenberg provided bipartisan Congressional support.

The extent to which public and Congressional opinion supports presidential initiatives depends upon public awareness of changes in the world. That, in turn, is affected by whether there are crisis conditions or not. Broadly speaking, there are four types of context regarding change in the structure of power in the international system. First, in periods of “normality,” there is modest incremental change in the international system, although there may be more rapid change in some regional and functional subsystems. In

such status quo periods, one would not expect leaders to express transformational objectives. Second, there can also be periods of rapid change that is favorable to a country's interests, and third, periods of rapid unfavorable change. Finally, there are periods of crisis when the external environment visibly demands response such as the sinking of American ships in 1917, Pearl Harbor in 1941, and September 11, 2001. In such visible crises, followers tend to demand foreign policy change by leaders.

“In periods of rapid favorable change, such as the rise of American power at the beginning of the 20th century or the collapse of the Soviet power near the end of the century, leaders had more leeway in the design of foreign policy.”

Thus it is not surprising that Wilson, FDR, and George W. Bush responded in each case with inspirational rhetoric that stressed transformational objectives. Designing foreign policy in periods of rapid unfavorable change, such as the rise of German power before each of the world wars, was more difficult. Wilson and FDR's followers did not initially support American involvement in Europe's conflicts, and the two leaders were appropriately cautious in their public expressions of objectives. In periods of rapid favorable change, such as the rise of American power at the beginning of the 20th century or the collapse of the Soviet power near the end of the century, leaders had more leeway in the design of foreign policy. In the earlier case, McKinley was cautious about expressing transformational objectives, Theodore Roosevelt a little less so. But even Roosevelt was reluctant to

explain to Congress and the public why he was meddling in European affairs during the Morocco crisis in 1905-06. More recently, George H.W. Bush was cautious in expressing his objectives. His “new world order” was more a post hoc rationalization than a plan. And Clinton used lofty rhetoric about enlargement and engagement, but was cautious about preaching or implementing truly transformational objectives.

TRANSFORMATIONS OF GRAND STRATEGY IN THE PAST CENTURY

As the twentieth century dawned, American industrial power surpassed that of Britain and Germany. Simultaneously, the transportation revolution reduced America's geographical separation from Europe. Different American leaders responded to these developments in different ways. Theodore Roosevelt used diplomacy to move the United States beyond hemispheric hegemony and to engage in global balance of power politics. He sought to transform American foreign policy to fit its growing position in the world, by using a combination of hard power (building the fleet, enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine) and soft power (diplomacy, support for The Hague conference). William Taft focused more on preserving the status quo by using commercial opportunities, dollar diplomacy and international law. Woodrow Wilson, who came into office thinking primarily about domestic transformations, set aside Theodore Roosevelt's balance of power diplomacy and Taft's dollar diplomacy. He ran on a peace platform in 1916. Eventually, however, faced with German recalcitrance and crisis conditions in 1917, Wilson turned to war (as Teddy Roosevelt had already advocated for several years); he coupled the use of hard power with inspirational appeals for democracy and international institutional change. But the transformational goals he set outstripped his resources and he was unable to implement his policies. The 1920s and 1930s saw the rejection of his policies and American attitudes returned toward the more traditional distancing from the European balance of power.

According to John Gaddis, a major transformation then occurred under Franklin Roosevelt. After trying, with limited success, to educate the American people about the rapid unfavorable change in the international system that Hitler represented, Roosevelt built upon the opportunity provided by the surprise

attack on Pearl Harbor to create alliances. In Gaddis's view, Roosevelt expanded American hegemony by scrapping isolationism and turning to multilateralism. Summarizing FDR's approach, Gaddis notes, "He never neglected, as Wilson did, the need to keep proclaimed interests from extending beyond actual capabilities" (Gaddis, 2004, 47-64). Instead, FDR linked Wilsonian ideals to a realist vision, combining his four-freedoms with the idea of four policemen represented by the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. And in the Bretton Woods institutions, FDR laid a basis for economic hegemony. He was adept at combining hard and soft power. In Gaddis's words, he realized that "power is far easier to maintain, in such situations, when it's there by consent instead of coercion" (Gaddis, 2004, 47-64). FDR laid the foundation for the rise of global institutions and American foreign policy that lasted more than half a century, in part because of the success of Harry Truman in adapting FDR's policies to the changing situation at the end of World War II. In that sense, the transformation was of the result of Roosevelt and Truman's efforts. Subsequent Cold War presidents adapted to more incremental changes within that framework. Even the successful foreign policy of George H.W. Bush, who presided over a major transformation in the international system, was of the result of brilliant intuition and management of rapid favorable change within the post-1945 framework rather than a conscious effort to transform the world.

Gaddis sees the September 11 terrorist attacks as the precipitating crisis that led George W. Bush's administration to pursue a significant transformation of U.S. foreign policy. During the 2000 presidential election, Bush had campaigned as a limited realist with little interest in foreign policy. But he became transformational in his objectives after 9/11. Gaddis argues that his new strategy reverted to America's 19th century tradition of unilateralism, preemption and hegemony. However, like Wilson, FDR and Truman, George W. Bush turned to the rhetoric of democracy—the default option in U.S. foreign policy—to rally his domestic followers in a time of crisis. Bill Clinton had also spoken about enlarging freedom and democracy, but the 1990s was a period in which the American people saw normality rather than unfavorable change. Consequently, Clinton was unable to significantly alter U.S. grand strategy. Indeed, in Gaddis's view, Clinton lacked a grand strategy, and allegedly told Strobe Talbott that FDR and Truman "just made it up as they went along" (Gaddis, 2004, 77). Gaddis argues that Clinton, like Harding and Coolidge, "allowed an illusion of safety to produce a laissez-faire foreign and national security policy" (Gaddis, 2004, 77).

Gaddis describes Bush's 2002 National Security Strategy as an expansion of "John Quincy Adams's vision of continental hegemony through Franklin D. Roosevelt's conception of a great power coalition, aimed at containing, deterring and, if necessary, defeating aggressor states, to what is already being called the Bush Doctrine: That the United States will identify and eliminate terrorists wherever they are, together with the regimes that sustain them." The solution to the roots of the terrorist problem is to spread democracy everywhere. It is "Fukuyama plus force," and is designed to make terrorism as obsolete as slavery or piracy. When choosing where to first pursue this strategy, Gaddis argues "Iraq was the most feasible place to strike the next blow" (Gaddis, 2004, 93).

Gaddis cautions about the dangers of Bush's transformational strategy, noting that the U.S. "exchanged its long-established reputation as the principal stabilizer of the international system for one as its chief destabilizer.... This was a heavy price to pay to sustain momentum, however great the need for it may have been." As he plots the course of his second-term policy, Bush should realize that the revolutionary Bismarck turned conservative. Unfortunately, Gaddis has found that "bad strategists don't know when to make this switch" (Gaddis, 2004, 101). Following 9/11, the Administration's rhetoric was ragged, and there was no clear voice of reassurance. It is also not clear that democracy is the blueprint for security in the Middle East. John Quincy Adams feared America becoming the "dictatress of the world," but Bush seeks to secure liberty throughout the world (Gaddis, 2004, 110).

When Gaddis describes Bush's foreign policy as the result of one of only three great transformations in American foreign policy, he sets an artificially high threshold. If one sets the threshold at major changes in American grand strategy, one can count six transformational changes over the past century. Specifically, using Sternberg's previously described categories of change, one should also include the transformational objectives of Teddy Roosevelt's diplomatic entanglements in a changing global balance of power, Wilson's entry into WWI, and Truman's response to Stalin and the paralysis of the United Nations. These changes can be measured in relation to the default option of the 19th century grand strategy from which they depart. That 19th century strategy could be described as follows: in the Western hemisphere: hegemony; in Europe: avoid entanglement; in Asia: open door for trade; in style: mostly unilateral.

MAJOR CHANGES IN U.S. GRAND STRATEGY OVER PAST CENTURY

CHANGE	DURATION	LEADERSHIP	CONTEXT	FOLLOWERS/ PUBLIC OPINION	CONGRESS BUY-IN?	OUTCOME: END OF TERM	OUTCOME: DECADE/LATER
1 Colonial Acquisition	1898-1902	McKinley	Rising US Power	Closely divided	No	Fail	Fail
2 Global Balancing	1901-1908	T. Roosevelt	Rising US Power	Reluctant partial acceptance	No	Succeed	Fail
3 War in Europe; Global Institution	1917-1920	Wilson	Rise of German Power, Crisis	Accept, then reject	No	Fail	Fail
4 War in Europe and Asia; Global Institutions	1939-1945	F. D. Roosevelt	Rise of German, Japanese Power; Crisis	Reluctance followed by acceptance	Yes	Succeed	Succeed
5 Containment; Global Institutions and long alliances	1947-1991	Truman	Rise and fall of Soviet Power	Gradual acceptance	Yes	Succeed	Succeed
6 Unilateralism, preventive war, democratization	2001-?	George W. Bush	End of Bipolarity, Rise of Transnational Threats	Accept in Crisis; gradual erosion after Iraq War	No	?	?

1 Colonialism (1898-1902): The first major departure from the default model was the period of colonial acquisition in the Caribbean and Pacific (Hawaii, Philippines, Guam) between 1898 and 1902. The global political context was the rise of American power. President McKinley started with primarily status quo objectives. His elite followers and the Congress were closely divided, and for a brief period the expansionists prevailed and pressed him into a transformational policy (May, 1968). It failed after the elite reunited on the default position, and the transformation never took root.

2 Global balancing (1901-08): The second departure was Theodore Roosevelt's efforts to involve the United States in the global balance of power with his actions in Europe and Asia (exemplified by his mediation of the Morocco crisis and the Russo-Japanese War). The context was again rising American power. Roosevelt was able to obtain reluctant and partial public acceptance from his followers. But while he succeeded in getting Congressional buy-in for hemispheric hegemony on issues such as the Panama Canal, the Platt Amendment and the Dominican Republic, he did not fully involve the legislative branch in his global innovations. While his policy change succeeded during his presidency, he did not transform basic public attitudes about the balance of power, and the transformation did not survive into the term of his successor.

3 War in Europe and a global institution (1917-20): Woodrow Wilson initially made significant efforts to avoid the European war. In the context of the rise of German power and a crisis over the sinking of American ships, he developed a transformational response and was able to secure acceptance from the public and a declaration of war from Congress when the crisis was clear. He lost support after the war ended, his health failed, and he refused to compromise with opponents in Congress over measures that would reconcile his global institution—the League of Nations—with American sovereignty and hemispheric orientation. In subsequent elections, the public sought to return to the “normalcy” of the default position. Consequently, Wilson’s attempted transformation was a failure both during his term and for the next two decades.

4 War in Europe and Asia; global institutions (1939-45): In the context of rising German and Japanese power, Franklin Roosevelt developed transformational objectives but was unable to persuade the majority of the public and Congress to pursue them until the attack on Pearl Harbor. At that point, Congress agreed to declare war. FDR used the crisis and the war to mobilize support for his transformational objectives, which succeeded during his term and that of his successor.

5 Containment, global institutions, and long term alliances (1947-91): In the context of the expansion of Soviet power, Harry Truman pursued transformational changes (containment and permanent alliances) to the grand strategy he inherited from FDR. Events and crises, such as the fall of Czechoslovakia and the Korean War, provided him leverage to overcome the resistance from those who preferred the isolationist default option. With Senator Vandenberg’s support, Congress approved the Marshall Plan and ratified NATO. This transformation succeeded during Truman’s term (despite his loss of popularity over the Korean War). Equally important, it provided the broad framework for the foreign policies of his successors.

6 Unilateralism, preventive war, and democratization (2001- ?): In the new context of unipolarity and the realization of the threat of transnational terrorism, George W. Bush transformed American grand strategy by reducing reliance on global institutions and permanent alliances in Europe. Before September 11, his policies reflected the unilateralist approach that had gained strength in Congress in the 1990s, and he was slow in assigning priority to the terrorist threat (Daalder & Lindsey, 2003). However, after 9/11, Bush asserted a broad right of preventive war, as well as coercive democratization as the primary solution to terrorism and anti-Americanism emanating from the Middle East. In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 crisis he was able to convince the majority of the public to accept these changes, and he won Congressional support for the use of force in Iraq. After the invasion, when the rationales of Weapons of Mass Destruction and a possible connection between Iraq and 9/11 were disproven, public and Congressional support eroded, forcing Bush to increase his emphasis on the transformational goal of spreading democracy—albeit with less emphasis on coercion.

By the beginning of Bush’s second term, preventive war was downplayed and his approach to North Korea and Iran included more multilateralism than in the first term. In the words of one observer, “The best way to assess the durability of the Bush doctrine is to ask how likely it is to be applied again in the future” (Fukuyama, 2005). The success or failure of Bush’s transformation remains uncertain, but at this time, two of its three pillars seem shaky. As one senior administration official said privately in 2005, “It is a good thing we won re-election. If we were judged only on the first term, history might see us as a failure.”⁷ Top officials believe that the second term focus on democratization will prove successful and sustainable beyond this Administration.

Surveying these major changes in grand strategy, it is notable that while three succeeded during the term of the leader, only two proved to be durable for more than a decade; the jury is, of course, still out on the sixth. Two in a century suggests that successful transformational leadership in grand strategy is rare. The two successes both occurred when followers' perception of the need for change was heightened by crises. But crises are not sufficient for lasting change, as Wilson's experience proves. Whether George W. Bush can build a durable transformation upon the 9/11 crisis or whether the problems of the Iraq War will undercut his changes remains an open question.

LEADERSHIP STYLES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL PRESIDENTS

In this concluding section, I will speculate on the ways in which the traits and skills of presidents with transformational objectives contributed to these outcomes. Fred Greenstein has listed six traits and skills by which he judges presidential leadership (Greenstein, 2003). I have adapted them for foreign policy. The first three are more relevant to inspirational style and the exercise of soft power to attract followers at home and abroad.

“Anyone can produce a wish list, but effective visions combine inspiration with feasibility.”

- *Policy Vision* is the ability to articulate an inspiring picture of the future. The vision has to be attractive to the various circles of followers, but also must be sustainable and be an effective diagnosis of the situation in the world. One can judge the quality of a vision in terms of whether it creates a sensible balance between realism and risk, and whether it balances ideals with capabilities. Anyone can produce a wish list, but effective visions combine inspiration with feasibility. Franklin Roosevelt was good at this.
- *Emotional Intelligence* is the self-mastery and discipline that allows leader to avoid distorting their public actions by personal passions. It also affects the consistency of their “charisma.” Does their personal magnetism hold up over changing contexts? Successful management of impressions and magnetism requires some of the same emotional discipline possessed by good actors. Ronald Reagan's prior experience served him well in this regard.
- *Communication*. Finally, an inspirational leader in foreign policy has to have the capacity to communicate effectively to domestic and foreign audiences. Good rhetorical skills help to generate soft power, but leading by example is also important. Organizational skills can compensate for rhetorical deficiencies, but effective rhetoric can partly compensate for low organizational skills. Harry Truman was a modest orator, but compensated for the lack of rhetoric by ably managing a stellar set of advisors.

Three other traits and skills are more closely related to transactional skills and hard power.

- *Organizational Capacity* refers to the ability to manage the structures of government to shape and to implement policy, including the effective management of flows of information regarding both inputs and outputs of decisions. How do presidents manage their inner circle of advisors to ensure an accurate flow of information and influence? How well do they avoid the “emperor's trap” of only hearing how beautiful their new clothes are? How thoroughly do they check for new information? How do they find out what is really happening in their government? George H.W. Bush, like Truman, knew how to manage an able group of advisors. George W. Bush has better political skills than his father, but his father had greater organizational capacity.

- *Political Skill* is obvious and crucial. It means finding means that are efficient and adequate to achieve the ends set forth in the vision, whether it be by bargaining, buying or bullying. In foreign policy, political skills must be both domestic and foreign, and must include the ability to balance hard and soft power. It means success in achieving goals not just for narrow groups of followers, but doing so in a manner which builds political capital with wider circles of followers at home and abroad. Lyndon Johnson was a successful politician for most of his career in domestic politics, particularly in the setting of the Senate, but he was less skillful in foreign politics.
- *Contextual Intelligence* is defined by Anthony Mayo and Nitin Nohria as the ability to understand an evolving environment, and to capitalize on the sweeping trends of the times (Mayo & Nohria, 2005). They apply it to markets, but in foreign policy it is an intuitive diagnostic skill that helps align resources with objectives by moving with, rather than against the flow of events in a complex international system. It implies adaptability while still trying to shape events. It is analogous to what Bismarck once described as sensing God's movements and grabbing his coattails. It is the self-made part of luck. Ronald Reagan, for example, was often faulted on his pure cognitive skills, but had a keen contextual intelligence.

It is interesting to compare George W. Bush with Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt. Each leader faced a crisis which had a powerful effect on their followers. Each turned to the hard power of war combined with the soft power of inspirational appeals regarding the promotion of democracy. The rhetoric of democracy was useful to all three presidents in crisis situations, probably because it helped to inspire their followers. All three men had started their terms focused on domestic concerns, and had little interest in foreign policy. Wilson once said it would be ironic if he became known as a foreign policy president. FDR was focused on the economic depression at home, and while he was interested in world affairs, he did not focus on them. George W. Bush had little background in foreign policy. He promised a limited, "humble" foreign policy, and focused successfully on domestic issues such as tax cuts and education reforms.

Yet all three leaders, confronted with major crises, wound up pursuing transformational objectives in foreign policy. At first glance, this would suggest that it is the situation and context of crisis rather than individual traits that determine whether a president becomes a successful transformational leader in foreign policy. But that is not the whole story. FDR had the best contextual intelligence of the three leaders before the crisis struck, and his efforts to rearm in the face of Hitler's threat helped prepare the national response after the crisis. George W. Bush paid almost no attention to the new threat of transnational terrorism before the 9/11 crisis struck, and has been criticized for being ill prepared. Similarly, Woodrow Wilson could not draw a clear picture in his mind of American interests during the early years of World War I. Moreover, Wilson's deficiencies in transactional skills on foreign policy, particularly in his later years, contributed to his failure to achieve his transformational objectives. It is still too soon to judge whether George W. Bush will follow in the path of Roosevelt or Wilson.

There are some uncanny similarities between Woodrow Wilson and George W. Bush. Both are highly religious and moralistic men who were elected initially with less than a majority of the popular vote, and focused on domestic issues without any vision of foreign policy. Both were initially successful with their domestic agendas in the Congress. Both tended to see the world in black and white rather than shades of gray. Both projected self confidence, responded boldly after crisis struck and articulated clear foreign policy visions. Both were stubborn in persevering in their chosen strategy. Both relied on a close political advisor (Colonel House and Karl Rove, respectively), had a top-down management style and failed to ade-

quately manage information inputs. As Secretary of State Robert Lansing commented in 1917, “Even established facts were ignored if they did not fit in with this intuitive sense, this semi-divine power to select the right” (MacMillan, 2001, 10). Wilson did not have impressive organizational skills for running the machinery of government.

Although sometimes described as the first MBA-style president, Bush displayed some of the same organizational deficiencies as Wilson in sorting out the conflicting information he received in making his decisions. As described by David Gergen, “Bush is a top-down, no-nonsense, decisive, macho leader who sets his eye on the far horizon and doesn’t ‘go wobbly’ getting there” (Gergen, 2003, 15). But information flows were limited. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell reported that Bush “knows kind of what he wants to do, and what he wants to hear is how to get it done” (Rothkopf, 2005, 33). According to Powell’s chief of staff, Bush trusted Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to make decisions, and “this furtive process was camouflaged neatly by the dysfunction and inefficiency of the formal decision-making process.” Bush was decisive and persistent, but closed to new information once his mind was made up. He was “too aloof, too distant from the details of postwar planning. Underlings exploited Bush’s detachment” (Wilkerson, 2005; Gearan, 2005). A White House official confirmed this organizational chaos, noting that when Bush asked his military commanders if they had enough troops, he was insufficiently aware of the climate in the Rumsfeld Pentagon that impeded a full and frank answer.⁸ A 2004 report by Richard Kerr, former deputy director of central intelligence under George H.W. Bush, concluded that George W. Bush “apparently paid little or no attention to prewar assessments by the Central Intelligence Agency that warned of major cultural and political obstacles to stability in postwar Iraq” (Jehl, 2005, 10).

Both Wilson and Bush were stubborn and resistant to hearing new information once their minds were made up. As a close advisor described Wilson, “Whenever a question is presented he keeps an absolutely open mind and welcomes all suggestion or advice which will lead to a correct decision. Once a decision is made it is final and there is an end to all advice and suggestion. There is no moving him after that” (MacMillan, 2001, 5). While persistence can be an admirable trait in a leader, it can also be dangerous when it blocks the cognitive process, impedes the flow of information, and slows course corrections.

Both Wilson and Bush were willing to use force to achieve transformational policy objectives. Though Wilson started as an idealist and Bush as a realist, both wound up stressing the promotion of democracy and freedom in the rest of the world as the central feature of their foreign policy vision. Both adhered to American exceptionalism, and appealed to the uniqueness of American democratic ideas in a time of crisis. In addition, both Wilson and Bush defined visions that had a large imbalance between expressed ideals and national capacities. Many of Bush’s speeches sound like they could have been uttered by Wilson, though Wilson was the superior rhetorician.

Conversely, Bush possesses skills that Wilson did not. He has a self mastery that failed Wilson at crucial moments, relies less on inspirational oratory alone and more on transactional skills, is more willing to bargain and generally more personable whereas Wilson was often stiff and aloof. Wilson once said he was more interested in people than persons. Bush seems the opposite. Bush seems a more adept politician and a less brittle person. Whether these differences in leadership skills will lead to different outcomes remains open.

Both Wilson and Bush invested considerable efforts in educating their followers to accept their picture of the world system and the appropriateness of their transformational policy responses. In a sympathetic appraisal written during Bush’s first term, Hugh Heclö argues that “protecting the security of the

nation...requires transformative leadership by one who learns and teaches others to think anew and act anew." But Heclo also points out that "a president is always teaching. Not least of all, he is teaching people about himself by teaching them about events. The less hard realism he teaches about events—the more he mistakes selling for educating—the harder it will go for him in the long run....Bush clearly understands the need for persuading people to his point of view, but it is also possible to sell people on things without broadening their horizons. The paradox is that successful teaching requires ongoing learning on the teacher's part" (Heclo, 2003, 48-49).

David Gergen has described the difference between the boldness of FDR and George W. Bush: "FDR was also much more of a public educator than Bush, talking people carefully through the challenges and choices the nation faced, cultivating public opinion, building up a sturdy foundation of support before he acted. As he showed during the lead-up to World War II, he would never charge as far in front of his followers as Bush" (Gergen, 2003,15). Bush's temperament seems less patient. In the words of a journalist who spent many hours with him, "He has a transformational temperament. He likes to shake things up. He says, 'Don't play small ball.' That was the key to going into Iraq."⁹ That temperament also contributed to the organizational process Bush put in place that did not encourage the ongoing learning that Heclo argues is required for successful presidential education of the public. In his second term, Bush made an effort to change the debate on Iraq by publicly acknowledging new facts. But as one of the designers of his strategy said, "It only worked because we married it up with admitting some mistakes and that was quite a fight, because the president doesn't talk that way" (Sanger, 2005).

"Leaders with transformational objectives or an inspirational style are not necessary for a successful foreign policy."

Wilson succeeded initially in educating a majority of the American people about his vision of change. He was a skillful rhetorician, and at one point, the League of Nations was quite popular. During his fateful and near fatal Western tour, Wilson thought he could educate the public over the heads of their senators. Notwithstanding the stroke that cut his trip short, it is highly likely that the Senate would have approved the League if Wilson had been willing to make modest compromises with Henry Cabot Lodge or other senators. Indeed, as mentioned above, some of Wilson's work as a teacher remained as a long term legacy in American foreign policy, though it was rejected in the two decades that immediately followed his presidency. Whether George W. Bush will be able to persuade the American people of his characterization of rapid unfavorable change and the appropriateness of his proposed foreign policy responses remains to be seen. At the time of writing, some experts are challenging his diagnosis of democratization of the Middle East as the solution to the terrorist threat, and polls show that the attraction of his message is slipping at home as well as abroad. In any event, much of his legacy will depend upon the outcome of the preventive war in Iraq, which was his particular addition to the crisis created by Al Qaeda's attack on 9/11.

CONCLUSIONS

What this initial survey shows is that (1) the concept of transformational leadership, one of the most prominent paradigms in organizational theories of leadership is too ambiguously defined to be useful in debates over foreign policy leadership unless it is more carefully specified. (2) Even when so specified, and one focuses on objectives and outcomes, it is remarkable how rare successful major transformational leadership has been in foreign policy over the past century. It certainly is possible, but it is very difficult. (3) Leaders with transformational objectives or an inspirational style are not necessary for a

successful foreign policy, even in periods of major change in the international context. George H.W. Bush was a very successful foreign policy leader who faced dramatic changes in the international context, and responded with status quo objectives, contextual intelligence and great transactional skills. (4) Nor, as Harry Truman demonstrated, is an inspirational style necessary to achieve transformational objectives in foreign policy. Moreover, (5) leaders with inspirational styles who successfully achieve transformational objectives in domestic politics may find that their skills do not carry over into foreign policy—witness Woodrow Wilson.

From this preliminary survey, I conclude that (6) the prospects for successful transformational leadership in foreign policy seem most likely in the context of international crisis. (7) But even then, it takes a combination of soft power skills of cognitive and inspirational ability to outline a feasible vision, and great transactional skills at home and abroad to implement the vision. Franklin Roosevelt had the combination. Woodrow Wilson did not. George W. Bush has articulated transformational objectives, but has not yet demonstrated an adequate transactional strategy to accomplish them. He remains an open case.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Personal communication, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 2003.
- 2 And normatively, ought implies can. If there are no real degrees of freedom, it is difficult for us to judge different leaders.
- 3 For a discussion of how various definitions have come in and out of fashion over the decades, see Joanne Ciulla, "Leadership Ethics: Mapping the Territory," in *Ethics: The Heart of Leadership* (2nd ed), p.10; for Gardner's commonsense definition, see *On Leadership* (1990), p. 1.
- 4 Though note that the aura of power sometimes migrates from position to person.
- 5 For a good, clear treatment, see Barbara Kellerman, *Bad Leadership* (2004). See also Burns's preface to Ciulla, *Ethics* (2004), and her ensuing discussion.
- 6 I am indebted to Ernest May for making this point clear to me.
- 7 Private conversation, December 2005.
- 8 Based on two personal interviews, March 2005.
- 9 Based on a personal interview, August 2005.

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