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The Inherent Dialectic of International Politics

1 Introduction

The 20th century has witnessed a dialectical process within our field. Today, there is a need for a higher and richer synthesis, combining the insights of the thesis – Wilsonian idealism – and those of the antithesis – modern realism: "Perhaps work in the 1990s will be able to synthesize rather than repeat the dialectic of the 1970s and the 1980s" (Nye, 1988: 251).

Writing in the first months of 1990 I purport to reanalyze political idealism and political realism, and I do so from the assumption that an operational doctrine is to be conceived of as "a conversion medium connecting general ideological convictions with specific positions on concrete cases of practic policy" (Petersson, 1964: 29). I work, moreover, from the assumption that there is an interplay between domestic and foreign policy, and a causal relationship between a person's view of human nature and his philosophy of world politics.

The essay is based on an explanation of Woodrow Wilson's high-minded idealism. A salient object is to answer to what degree contextual variables impinge upon a decision-maker in his position. The sources and content of Wilson's belief system, his motives and perceptions, as well as the influences exerted on him by cross-pressures and political-cultural guidelines, will be analyzed. I combine a cognitive approach with a sociocultural one, and, except for psychoanalytic theory, I am particularly indebted to consistency/dissonance theory and to the theory of symbolic interactionism.

In the first sentence of 'Superpower: Comparing American and Soviet Foreign Policy', my tutor wrote: "Researchers, like elephants, have long pregnancies. I have been pregnant with this research project for the better part of a decade" (Jönsson, 1984: vii). The time available for my own project was much more restricted. I have, in fact, only been pregnant for four months, i. e., as long as a pig's approximate pregnancy. Just as ruthless researchers have manipulated the body of this

lovely animal, so I have tried to streamline my progeny. If chapter three will be regarded as unnecessarily extended, please observe that this part corresponds to the backbone ...

2 *Political Origins of Idealism and Realism*

In the beginning was John Locke. His political philosophy was exported to the New World, where it became a dominant theme (Hartz, 1955: 140; Morgan, 1963: 14). Locke's famous 'Second Treatise of Government' connotes two contrasting pictures of the state of nature: "The one is reasonable and peaceful; the other eminently Hobbesian. The liberals, seeing only the first, construct their arguments upon it" (Matthews, 1987: 1134; cf Colie, 1968: 466). Thomas Jefferson emphasized the first picture and praised Locke's work as being "perfect as far as it goes" (quoted in Hofstadter, 1949: 29). Consequently, the Declaration of Independence is nothing less than a refrain of Locke's music (Weisband, 1973: 18). The Declaration proclaimed the "self-evident" truths of spiritual equality, and the people's right to alter their governments (cf Davie, 1954: 55-8). Jefferson expressed the American ideal and his draft rendered him uniquely symbolic of the myth called Americanism.

Another masterpiece appeared in the remarkable year of 1776; Adam Smith's 'The Wealth of Nations'. Since Jefferson saw democracy conditional on a wide distribution of private property, he embraced Smith's doctrines wholeheartedly (Schlesinger, 1986: 221). Jefferson believed in progress, and preached the virtues of unrestrained free trade (Kramnick, 1982: 645). As minister in Paris during the French Revolution, he made known his belief in the common man: "I have so much confidence in the good sense of man, and his qualifications for self-government, that I am never afraid of the issue where reason is left free to exert her force" (quoted in Hunt, 1987: 98; cf Volkomer, 1969: 68,73).

However, neither Locke nor Jefferson stands alone. While Jefferson served in France, the Founding Fathers drew up the Constitution in Philadelphia. In the debate of 1787 to 1789 over the ratification, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton emphasized the second picture of the state of nature; i. e., the Hobbesian. Madison, the Father of the Constitution, rejected the perception of a natural harmony of interests, and maintained that society consists of different and frequently clashing interests (Hofstadter, 1955: 64; Wood, 1988: 38). However, Madison's view of human nature was only moderately skeptical. He meant that passion tends to rule when individuals are members of a group, whereas they tend to behave rationally in isolation: "The difference between Hobbes and Madison is that the former views man only in his individual capacity and the latter tends to view him only in his group capacity, where men refuse to conform to reason" (Matthews, 1987: 1141; cf Weinberg, 1958: 482 f). Primarily, it was Madison's insights in this respcet that resulted in the political system of checks and balances. The right of the individual, or of the minority, must be saved from arbitrary state power.

Hamilton, on the other hand, fully embraced a Hobbesian view of human nature. To Hamilton, power politics was inevitable because "men are ambitious, vindictive, and rapacious" (quoted in Hunt, 1987: 23). His ideas had a great influence on contemporaries, and contributed to shape the constitution into a piece of work with a conservative connotation (Nisbet, 1986: 40-1). Although a conservative, Hamilton did not fear change or experimentation. In his capacity as the first Secretary of the Treasury, he carried out a thoroughgoing program designed to build a strong government. His economic program was a means to a political end; to turn the United States into an independent power (Kramnick, 1988: 28). Accordingly, he rejected Smith's doctrine of free trade, and enunciated the influential doctrine of protectionism (Carr, 1946: 121 f).

No wonder that Jefferson and Hamilton, the symbols of two contrary philosophies, differed at almost every point of domestic and foreign policy. Jefferson thought Hamilton a threat to libery, while Hamilton considered Jefferson an impractical theorist and an obstacle to the measures needed for national survival: "Hamilton stood for strength, wealth, and power, Jefferson for the American dream" (Carr, 1946: 96). Jefferson was preoccupied with formulating a foreign policy consistent with his mission to propagate liberty and equality (Hunt, 1987: 22). He was an Enlightenment optimist, and it was therefore logical that he leant towards France.

The Secretary of the Treasury favored close ties with England. If America was to survive as an independent nation, ideals must be set aside, and a sober calculation of the national interest prevail (Holsti, 1988: 380). Thus, Hamilton the realist, wrote in 1793: "The obligation to assist the cause of liberty must be deduced from the merits of that cause and from the interest we have in its support" (quoted in Morgenthau, 1950: 842). All in all, the Founding Fathers saw international politics as a function of the balance of power (Schlesinger, 1986: 70). They understood that saving and perfecting America's own institutions was enough without trying to perfect humanity as well (Schlesinger, 1986: 68; Weinberg, 1958: 103).

The view that it is a moral obligation to avoid overcommitment gained ascendancy with the Farewell Ad-

dress (Weisband, 1973: 25). The Address was given by President Washington in 1796, and guess who had drafted most of it – Hamilton of course! The foreign policy doctrine of neutrality, noninvolvement, and nonintervention, was to be found in this great document of American history (cf Davie, 1954: 79-80). Such a foreign policy made good economic sense, and it is important to keep in mind that its intentions were only to assure national security, and to promote capital accumulation (cf Kennan, 1954: 12).

Out of this series of linkages between views of human nature, and policy preferences, emerged some radical proposals. The Manchester liberals Richard Cobden and John Bright inherited the strong belief in free trade. They opposed military adventures at the same time as they considered free trade the healing influence of the world (cf Gray, 1986: 27). Cobden, a liberal pacifist, believed in economic interdependence as a guarantor of permanent harmony among nations: "I see in the Free Trade principle that which shall act on the moral world as the principle of gravitation in the Universe – drawing men together, thrusting aside the antagonism of race and creed and language, and uniting us in the bonds of peace" (quoted in Herz, 1951: 113). Moreover, Cobden shared the hatred for the concept of the balance of power, which Bright embodied in his statement: "This excessive love for the balance of power is neither more nor less than a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the aristocracy of Great Britain" (quoted in Herz, 1951: 213; cf Waltz, 1959: 198).

At length, we have reached the conclusion that balance of power considerations gradually gave way to the doctrine of a natural harmony of interests. This prelude to a paradigm shift has been described by Morgenthau as follows: "During the nineteenth century, liberals everywhere shared the conviction that power politics and war were residues of an obsolete system of government, and that with the victory of democracy and constitutional government over absolutism and autocracy international harmony and permanent peace would win out over power politics and war. Of this liberal school of thought, Woodrow Wilson was the most eloquent and most influential spokesman" (1960: 32). If so, what would be more suitable than a case study of the life and times of this influential spokesman? Before we proceed, I would like to conclude this section with the remark: In the end was liberalism.

3 The Idealistic Approach of Woodrow Wilson

3.1 Wilson's Domestic Reform Program

Those who, in 1910, wanted Wilson to become the Governor of New Jersey were conservative Democrats (Link, 1954: 10). Regardless of their protests, Wilson liberated himself from those who had nominated him, and transformed into a liberal Democrat. While his backers obviously had misjudged him, he won the support of the progressive movement throughout the nation, and finally he also became the leader of the Democratic Party. The presidential election of 1912 was the natural consummation of a popular reform crusade, of which the first wave had been set in motion in the 1890s (Hofstadter, 1955: 164). Notwithstanding Wilson's beliefs, his chief task was to give leadership to an already aroused public opinion.

The instrument he found most appropriate was public messages, and the type of leadership to which Wilson was temperamentally inclined rested upon a unique gift for oratorical persuasion. To be an effective means of communication, public rhetoric must be rich in easily understood codewords, and in symbols reflecting cultural values (Hunt, 1987: 17). Since reform was the order of the day, Wilson had to appeal to the popular impulse which was endemic in American political culture (Hofstadter, 1955: 4). In other words, the reform program he undertook to implement already enjoyed considerable support. It would assure Wilson's ambition for great accomplishments, and would thereby increase his self-esteem, and serve as a psychological safety valve. As a matter of fact, Wilson was greatly concerned with the problem of whether he was loved or lovable, which produced an extraordinary need for affection (George and George, 1964: 31).[1] Throughout his life, Wilson needed external bolstering of his self-esteem which had been ruined during childhood. The stern Presbyterian attitude of his dominant father left an indelible impression upon the character of the future President, which he was totally aware of (George and George, 1964: 13). In his capacity as minister, Woodrow's father communicated to his son a solid sense of belonging to a religious tradition which extolled moral achievement and rigorous self-discipline above everything else.

Wilson suffered acutely from the inherited Calvinist spirit, and from disturbing inner turbulence. The means to cure his inner pain, as well as his persistent sense of guilt, was through high achievement and the acquisition of power.[2] He looked upon life as the progressive fulfillment of God's will, and decided at an early age to make politics his means of spreading spiritual enlightenment, and of expressing his Protestant urge for service (Link,

1957a: 12): "I have a passion for interpreting great thoughts to the world; I should be complete if I could inspire a great movement of opinion, if I could read the experiences of the past into the practical life of the men of today and so communicate the thought to the minds of the great mass of the people as to impel them to great political achievements ..." (quoted in Hofstadter, 1949: 243). Wilson wanted to do immortal work, and was throughout his career in search of a cause. Now when he was given the opportunity, Wilson observed the important changes of attitudes in society, and threw his weight on that side which he felt would lead to progress and reform. According to Wilson, the nation was on the threshold of a new age, and the privilege of being its chief architect was given to him. The Presbyterian priest of the regional election campaign in 1910, had become a national social engineer.

If Wilson sensed a loss of societal orientation, the rise to ideological activity was logical. Except being a potential and dangerous instrument of mass manipulation, an ideology fulfills two socially valid, and politically legitimate, purposes (Geertz, 1964: 55; Weisband, 1973: 7). Firstly, it has the power to knit a social group together. Secondly, it has the ability to endow collective action with meaning and moral value. Thus, ideologies are "maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of a collective conscience" (Geertz, 1964: 64).[3] Ideologies are primarily drawn from rationalistic philosophies, and given a rationalistic cultural matrix, an ideological mentality usually develops (Sartori, 1969: 402-3). An ideological belief system, flowing from its rationalistic matrix, tends to approach problems as follows: "i) deductive argumentation prevails over evidence and testing; ii) doctrine prevails over practice; iii) principle prevails over precedent; iv) ends prevail over means; and v) perceptions tend to be 'covered up', doctrine-loaded, typically indirect" (Sartori, 1969: 402).

How well these features correspond to Wilson's belief system will be understood throughout the course of this essay. However, the impression of American political culture as rationalistic may appear inconsistent with the previous picture of the Founding Fathers. Even though they had a keen sense of history, and their philsosophy was one of empericism and realism, it converged with the French rationalism Jefferson brought to the New World (Ruggiero, 1949: 439). Consequently, a strange dialectic was destined to appear as a result of the traditionalistic and rationalistic spirits of America's "Hegelian-like" childhood (Hartz, 1955: 48-50). These spirits were synthesized into an absolute liberal and moral ethos, which twisted conservatism and socialism entirely out of shape (Matthews, 1987: 1150).

The capacity to combine traditionalism with high inventiveness, and ancestor worship with ardent optimism, goes far to explain the American national character: "With freedom thus a matter of birthright and not of conquest, the American assumes liberalism as one of the presuppositions of life. With no social revolution in his past, the American has no sense of the role of catastrophe in social change. Consequently, he is, by nature, a gradualist; he sees few problems which cannot be solved by reason and debate; and he is confident that nearly all problems can be solved" (Schlesinger, 1956: 57). This "simple" rationalism of the average American, i.e., the belief that "things can be done", implies optimism as to ends and improvisation as to means (Almond, 1960: 50; Frankel, 1963: 152; Tingsten, 1948: 122). Coupled with a value-imitating and conformist tendency is the propensity for periodic moral and religious enthusiasm (Almond, 1960: 32).[4] Moreover, related to the "irreproachable" moral ethos of the American idealist is his inclination for being an honest man with a great amount of personal responsibility (Tingsten, 1948: 116).

A distinctive feature of Jeffersonian democracy was its close relation to the agrarian order of his time. Since the majority of the people were farmers, the central ideas of the American tradition of democracy were founded in rural sentiments, and on rural metaphors, such as "grass-roots democracy" (Hofstadter, 1955: 7). The farmer had a secure propertied stake in society and his psychology was Protestant and individualistic. Accordingly, there developed a sentimental agrarian myth, of which the Progressive Era (1901–1919) marked the ideological culmination.[5]

The agenda of Progressivism was to "restore a type of economic individualism and political democracy that was widely believed to have existed earlier in America and been destroyed by the great corporation and the corrupt political machine; and with that restoration to bring back a kind of morality and civic purity that was also believed to have been lost" (Hofstadter, 1955: 5). The Southern agrarian spokesmen demanded thoroughgoing reform, and in alliance with progressive forces throughout the nation, they "always had an American hero available to match any American villain they found, a Jefferson for every Hamilton" (Hartz, 1955: 31; cf Link, 1954: 48). These progressives were not fatalists; they wanted to smash trusts, and begin running the Lockian and Jeffersonian race all over again (Hartz, 1955: 223). In his own compaign race, Wilson preached the Lockian creed: "If America is not to have free enterprise, then she can have freedom of no sort whatever" (quoted in Link, 1954 21). Economic democracy was absolutely essential to political democra-

cy.

It is not impossible that Wilson converted to the rising progressive movement because this philosophy was more opportune for his career. On the other hand, as president of Princeton University, he had devoted himself to the question of a more democratic system of undergraduate life; he wanted to make education safe for democracy. Moreover, the reform measures he had carried out as Governor had been designed with the purpose of protecting the public from the trusts. It therefore seemed logical that his presidential program, the New Freedom, was fabricated out of promises to destroy autocratic monopolies and to restore free competition. Its doctrine of "special privileges to none" was in the essence of Wilson's philosophy (Link, 1954: 56). He was suspicious of the secret and conspiratorial plutocracy, and wanted to restore unfettered opportunity for individual action.

Throughout his campaign, throughout his career, Wilson exhorted his audience to adhere to reason in deciding political issues. Since Wilson had been a renowned professor, he succeeded in creating an impression of scholarly objectivity. However, Wilson's appeals were intensely emotional. Related to his youth was the sacred obligation to lead a crusade for morality and for righteousness (George and George, 1964: 107). His belief system varied, not only along a cognitive dimension, but also along an emotive dimension. "Likewise, whenever politics is depicted as a matter of faith, as a religion or even as a mystique, reference is made more often than not to a particular intensity of feeling, of emotional involvement, and we should speak, therefore, of ideological passion" (Sartori, 1969: 403).

Wilson glorified the Southerners interest in public affairs, and was seized by the Southern passion for rhetoric (Hofstadter, 1949: 241). He constantly intervened to persuade senators and representatives. However, Wilson was convinced that there were definite limits beyond which the federal authority should not be extended (Link, 1954: 20). Federal power should only be used to sweep away special privileges; to restore competition in business. As a matter of fact, Wilson abhorred the concept of power, and was sensitive to charges that he harbored autocratic tendencies.[6] He had a horror of being selfish and maintained that "there is nothing so self-destructive as selfishness ..." (quoted in George and George, 1964: 160). He had to prove to himself that he acted unselfishly, and felt a compelling personal need to purify his exercise of power.

It is a characteristic feature of the idealist that whenever he tries to justify a demand for change, he claims to be acting in the interest of the whole community, society or whatever. This type of justification is a rationalizing one, and frequently peppered with phrases such as "general welfare", "domestic and international solidarity", "reasonable distribution", "free expression of the general will" (Herz, 1951: 36). Through reasoning in such codewords, Wilson was provided with a mass following, which enabled him to fulfil his historic mission. His appeal to altruism acted as an emotional stimulus and satisfied the average citizen, who well understood what Wilson meant when he declared: "The high cost of living is arranged by private understanding" (quoted in Hofstadter, 1955: 170).[7] Now that prices were rising, the antitrust sentiment became a dominant motif in everyday life interaction.

Wilson's rhetoric also appeared in the form of a theory of progressive evolution, which he defined in Burkian terms: "Democracy in America ... has had, almost from the first, a truly organic growth. There was nothing revolutionary in its movements; it had not to overthrow other polities; it had only to organize itself. It had not to create, but only to expand self-government" (quoted in Hofstadter, 1949: 239). Wilson's fear of violence and social upheaval can be derived from his formative years in the south, slowly recovering from the Civil War. Consequently, the concept of revolution was uncomfortable to his American mind (Hartz, 1955: 295).

When Wilson's critics later on denounced his reforms as socialist, he replied: "I am not a socialist. And it is because I am not a socialist that I believe these things. I think the only way we can prevent communism is by some such action ..." (quoted in Hofstadter, 1949: 273 f). In other words, Wilson's reform program resulted from his sentimental desire to preserve traditional cultural values: "In Wilson one feels a genuine and pleasurable groping toward the new, and a coherent articulation of new and old" (Hofstadter, 1949: 241). Thus, in the last analysis, Wilson's progressive liberalism was not incompatible with his intense admiration of Burke's work 'Reflections on the Revolution in France'. In fact, Wilson could justify his reform program with reference to a well-known passage in the very canon of conservatism: "A state without the means of some change", wrote Burke, "is without the means of its own conservation" (quoted in Carr, 1946: 208).

From his first day in the White House, Wilson set out on a crusade against the money power in order to make the nation safe for democracy. He exhorted the people to help him democratize their political and economic institutions (Schlesinger, 1986: 31). He proceeded with amazing vigor to carry through reform upon reform, achievement upon achievement. His ambition seemed

insatiable and compulsive: "I am so constituted that, for some reason or other, I never have a sense of triumph" (quoted in George and George, 1964: 320).

Wilson's legislative record in his first two years of office was impressive, and, paradoxically, the most comprehensive since the days of Alexander Hamilton. The list of agricultural measures was the most far-reaching. As we have seen, the ideologists of agrarianism had appealed to the Jeffersonian idea that there is an interrelation between agrarianism and democracy (Hofstadter, 1955: 115). Wilson adopted this idea wholeheartedly, and significantly his first political mission was to be the timeless issue of the cotton-growers; i. e., free trade. What else could have been expected from a President among whose heroes were the Manchesterians Richard Cobden and John Bright (Hofstadter, 1949: 237). As a 19th-century liberal, Wilson saw trade as a symbol of progress (May, 1959: 41).

To progressive elements, the high protective tariff had been considered a loathsome symbol of privilege, and they therefore applauded their President when he managed to secure the first downward tariff revision since the Civil War. Wilson had devoted himself to the issue of tariff reductions, and when lobbyists put pressure on him, he replied: "I am not the kind that considers compromises when I once take my position" (quoted in George and George, 1964: 135). For the representatives of special interests, Wilson felt nothing but contempt. He found it serious "that the people at large should have no lobby and be voiceless in these matters, while great bodies of astute men seek to create an artificial opinion and to overcome the interests of the public for their private profit" (quoted in Link, 1954: 41).

Quite true, Wilson had made no binding commitments to any important economic interests during the campaign, and he could therefore feel completely free to serve the general will, whatever that might be (Link, 1954: 24). Bold and frank, he declared: "The business of government is to organize the common interests against the special interests" (quoted in Hofstadter, 1949: 250).

Wilson's far-reaching reforms created a new atmosphere. However, he had only wanted to synthesize the new with the old. While his hero was the little entrepreneur of classical economics, he did not object to bigness per se. He made a distinction between the big business he favored, and the trusts he disliked (Hofstadter, 1955: 248). He believed the government could best serve the common interest if it was an impartial agency, mediating between the plutocracy and the masses (Hofstadter, 1949: 245).

The reforms had won support from an almost unanimous public opinion, and from progressive journals and newspapers all over the country. Nevertheless, a virtual storm of protests arose from bankers, business leaders, and their spokesmen in Congress (Link, 1954: 51). With regard to Wilson's temperament it appears logical that he, in the spring of 1914, embarked upon a campaign which was calculated to ease the existing tension between the administration and the business community (Link, 1954: 75). There are also some evidence showing that Wilson was growing uncertain of whether the program would secure altruistic tendencies (George and George, 1964: 321). His sublime reforms did perhaps connote an autocratic tinge, at least subconsciously?[8] Most illustrative, however, is the fact that he shared the notion of a natural harmony of interests among the productive classes: "His attitude toward the industrial problem was conditioned by his belief that the vast majority of businessmen were honest and desired only the public good" (Link, 1954: 70).

Eventually, in the summer of 1914, Wilsons's energy was increasingly devoted to the problems of foreign affairs. There was an hiatus in his drive for domestic reforms. Wilson's Domestic Reform Program, the New Freedom, was brought to an end.

3.2 The Moral Dilemma of Justifying Force

Just before Wilson went to Washington D.C. in 1913, he had said: "It would be the irony of fate if my administration had to deal chiefly with foreign affairs" (quoted in Link, 1957a: 5). He had entered the presidency expecting to concentrate on domestic reforms, and his original thought of world politics was ideological only in its remotest sense (Bundy, 1963: 293; Frankel, 1963: 91). Nevertheless, in 1914, extraordinary events forced him to enter the international arena, and to concentrate his intellect on the puzzle of war and peace. He was perplexed by one crisis after another, and the question was, whether his compelling urge to render disinterested service and to do good, would be reiterated. In other words, was there a causal nexus between his beliefs and actions to the same remarkable degree as in the field of domestic politics? To give a satisfactory answer, one has to modify this question, and also take contextual variables into account: "Thus, as is well known, in making foreign policy decisions a policy maker may be influenced by personal considerations, domestic politics, and/or organizational interests as well as by his conception of the national interest" (George, 1979: 104).

If we are to understand the American outlook between 1914 and 1921, we are recommended to take the Spanish-American War of 1898 into consideration. The war was a turning point in American history, and marked

the beginning of a new era; the United States had become a world power (Hunt, 1987: 203; Osgood, 1953: 29, 42). It was America's war against an authoritarian and decadent Old World colonial power. The war was also a triumph for emotionally colored reporting and, in its aftermath, there was a shift from "materialism" to "moral values" (Hofstadter, 1955: 188, 210).[9] Force had been justified in humanitarian terms, and there was not much talk about material interests, or power politics (Rystad, 1975: 18; Weinberg, 1958: 271).[10] In this respect the war acted as a catalyst: "The Spanish-American war marked the translation of the rising sense of American power into the vocabulary of an American mission. If this was imperialism, it came swatched in the colors of a new morality. It was the age of Manifest Destiny, an era when the United States felt herself under the historical compulsion to spread the blessings of liberty to less fortunate peoples everywhere" (Steel, 1967: 197).[11]

Even though expansionists tried to rationalize the war by placing humanitarianism and force in association, an increasingly hostile opinion developed within America against imperialism: "The opinion certainly did not include a military intervention for the purpose of territorial expansion. A crusade was desired, not a war of conquest" (Rystad, 1975: 18). Democrats condemned the imperialistic policy and perceived the colonial rule a crime against the Declaration of Independence (Rystad, 1975: 158). The war became incongruous with the ideals embraced by evangelical pacifists, liberal intellectuals, and reformers (Osgood, 1953: 50, 86; Weinberg, 1958: 154). Accordingly, there was "an inclination toward consistency and the persons concerned tried to reduce their dissonance. The usual way of doing this was to change the cognitions that most easily lent themselves to change" (Rystad, 1975: 22; cf Larson, 1985: 30). The dissonant cognitive element consisted of an aggressive and bloody expansionism. The need for an elimination of this disturbing element proved that the sword finally had cut the hand of its wielder. Consequently, there arose a collective sense of guilt and self-accusation among progressive Americans, and an attitude change in the direction of pure isolationism followed in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War (Bundy, 1963: 296).

As a statement of realism, the Monroe Doctrine had defined the exact identity of America's national security interests. However, the doctrine also has an ideological connotation. There is a New World and an Old World, an in-group and an out-group. Monroe's message praised the democratic principle in contrast to the autocracies of Europe.[12] It therefore appears logical that Wilson embraced this ideological principle: "Perhaps more than any other President, Woodrow Wilson seems to have been influenced by Lockian liberalism and the ideology of the Monroe Doctrine. For him, its strictures were close to gospel truth" (Weisband, 1973: 38; cf Hartz, 1955: 290).

The victory of the Democratic Party in 1912 signalled the beginning of a doctrine of nonintervention in Latin American affairs. Prominent Democrats had, ever since 1898, consistently opposed interference, either through outright military force or through dollar diplomacy, and so had Wilson (Link, 1954: 93). Nevertheless, the ambition to give other people the blessings of Christianity and democracy prevailed. The idealistic urge motivated interference on a scale that had heretofore never been contemplated. Whereas Monroe had intervened in the Western hemisphere to prevent Europeans from stopping revolutionary disorder, Wilson considered it an obligation to put things right, notwithstanding European involvement: "This Hegelian development of thesis into antithesis appears less paradoxical when it is remembered that the Monroe Doctrine had in it a latent element of interventionism at the outset" (Weinberg, 1958: 416; cf Jönsson, 1984: 51).

Revolutionary Mexico confronted Wilson with a disturbing situation. He made known his belief that it was important "to teach the South American Republics to elect good men" (quoted in Weisband, 1973: 39). The key to liberty was to enforce a constitution, and to make certain that it was respected. However, the Mexican revolution was a puzzle without any clear solution, and was to plague Wilson until the end of his administration (Hunt, 1987: 109–10).

Intervention was always rationalized in terms of a good neighbor policy, rescuing the Caribbeans from internal disorders: "We are the friends of constitutional government in America; we are more than its friends, we are its champions; because in no other way can our neighbors, to whom we would wish in every way to make proof of our friendship, work out their own development in peace and liberty" (Wilson, quoted in Weinberg, 1958: 435).

Since there was no danger of European involvement at the moment, the humanitarian motif also prevailed during the interventions in Santo Domingo as well as Haiti (Link, 1954: 103). These interventions ushered in prolonged military occupations, and took place (Mexico included) without treaty sanctions and against the protests of the native governments (Weinberg, 1958: 434). Accordingly, the attitude of a large section of American public opinion produced an anti-imperialistic reaction comparable to that ensuing upon the subjugation of the Filippinos (Steel, 1967: 199–200).

There was an astonishing inconsistency between Wilson's foreign-policy actions in the Caribbean, and the philosophy of nonintervention and altruism he had formulated in 1913: "It is a very perilous thing to determine the foreign policy of a nation in the terms of material interest ... Human rights, national integrity, and opportunity as against material interests – that, ladies and gentlemen, is the issue which we now have to face ... the United States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest" (quoted in Osgood, 1953: 104–5). These noble words indicate that Wilson intended to apply the same precepts to foreign affairs as those that had been successful at home. However, if the New Freedom was to have its counterpart in a New Diplomacy, and if his rhetoric was not only to be considered instrumental, the President had to reorientate his foreign policy.

It was therefore likely that Wilson's failure to pan-Americanize his idealistic principles made him even more resolute to carry out his mission (cf Weisband, 1973: 41). Quite true, there are cases of cognitive dissonance when an actor is resistant to change, and ends up holding his view even more strongly than before (Jervis, 1976: 404). We work from the hypothesis that this "anti-learning theory" is applicable to Wilson.

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 did not worry the Americans. Why should they bother about European power politics three thousand miles away from home? (Osgood, 1953: 114). America was characterized by a strong isolationist impulse; "the sense that America's very liberal joy lay in the escape from a decadent Old World that could only infect it with its own diseases" (Hartz, 1955:286). Furthermore, no one had reason to believe that it would be wrong for the New World to fatten on the follies of the Old (May, 1959: 34).[13] Could a realistic view of international politics flourish in a nation so complacent about its own security? What kind of leadership was to be expected from a President who detested considerations of power and selfishness?

Wilson shared the general opinion that America should remain aloof from the heating European rivalries (Langer, 1957a: 24). He called it a "war with which we have nothing to do", and urged Americans to be "impartial in thought as well as in action" (quoted in Hofstadter, 1949: 256 f). Although Wilson early discovered the difficulties involved in protecting neutrality, he had committed himself to such a policy.[14] Did he thereby undergo premature cognitive closure? As is well known, an established perception is hard to change, and "incoming information tends to be assimilated to the pre-existing images: this tendency is greater the more ambiguous the information, the more confident the actor is of validity of his image, and the greater his commitment to the established view" (Jervis, 1976: 195; cf Larson, 1985: 41). This is another theoretical insight which seems applicable to Wilson, since, whenever he had emerged with a decision on an issue, his mind snapped shut (George and George, 1964: 120). One wonders, of course, whether Wilson's determination to keep America out of war, would turn out to be a blind alley from the outset?

Wilson's foreign policy advisers were concerned with the threat to America's security, and progressive development, that a German victory would pose. Colonel House, the President's unofficial adviser, shared a realist view of international politics. He thought that America's national interest was best served by the workings of a European balance of power system, inasmuch as it prevented any nation from challenging British power (May, 1959: 45–6). All in all, Wilson's advisers, like himself, were confirmed Anglophiles.[15] They seem to have embraced an older ethnocentric notion of Anglo-Saxon superiority, and a sense of solidarity, as a means to contain German barbarism (cf Hunt, 1987:78–9).

The advisers, including Secretary of State Lansing, recommended the President to follow more forceful tracks, but he rejected their counsel (May, 1959: 167). Because of Wilson's character, there were crucial prerequisites for "groupthink": "... Wilson did not want their advice unless it complemented his own thought or prejudices ... Because he valued loyalty and flattery over hardheaded frankness and cold and sometimes unpleasant logic, he was an extraordinary poor judge of men. Because he resented criticism, his advisers either told him what they thought he wanted to hear or else remained silent" (Link, 1954: 32).[16] The President's power-conscious advisers came to rely less and less on hardheaded arguments. They knew that neither Wilson nor public opinion would sanction intervention on realistic grounds. Their advice, therefore, had to stress idealistic considerations (Osgood, 1953: 171).

Wilson stated that it was inconsistent with American principles to maintain a large standing army; he was thinking of peace, certainly not of war: "America's role, he said, was to stand aside and perfect its own ideals and institutions so that it might give disinterested service for lasting peace when the time came" (Osgood, 1953: 202).

Despite Wilson's natural sympathy for Britain, he felt rigidly constrained to prevent his emotional preference for the Allies from influencing his foreign policy. Although he estimated 90 per cent of the American people to be pro-Ally, he wanted to remain neutral in thought as well as in deed (May, 1959: 36). As we have seen, Wilson had cultivated self-control and patience

ever since childhood.

However, in early May 1915, a German submarine sank the British passenger liner 'Lusitania' with the loss of almost 1 200 civilians, including 128 Americans (Link, 1954: 164). It was a dreadful event which confirmed the growing impression that the Germans were monsters. Nevertheless, most Americans still wanted to avoid intervention. They applauded their President when he declared in a public speech: "There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight. There is such a thing as a nation being so right that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right" (quoted in Osgood, 1953: 141).

Wilson's pacifist instincts held him back in order to wait and hope for some miraculous deliverance. However, the nation was not united. Although Wilson was convinced that most Americans wanted to preserve neutrality, he recognized the ambivalence in public opinion: "The opinion of the country seems to demand two inconsistent things, firmness and the avoidance of war" (quoted in May, 1959: 172).

From the end of the summer of 1915, Germany's violation of neutral rights forced Wilson to make some kind of response, but it must not lead to hostilities (Link, 1957a: 56). He had to synthesize militant nationalism and anti-war neutralism: "Speaking for preparedness, he used the language of pacifist Progressivism. Peace, progress, reform, and the protection of individual liberties were his aims, he insisted, and the reserve army was to be, as nearly as possible, a democratic and civilian force. Defending his diplomacy, he proclaimed that it had only peaceful ends" (May, 1959: 175).

The administration wanted to help restoring peace, and Wilson earnestly wanted to mediate. However, by the end of 1916, the forces in Britain working for the preservation of Anglo-Saxon harmony had grown very weak. The British Cabinet had become a hostage of public opinion due to Wilson's continued inaction and maintenance of neutrality (May, 1959: 319–20). An influential "lesson of the past" was troubling Wilson: "He thought of 1812, when popular feeling, he believed, had made it impossible for Madison to do what he thought wisest" (May, 1959: 60, 152).[17]

Nevertheless, as long as Wilson was able to grant America's "double wish" it seemed likely that hatred of Germany would be confined to words. As a matter of fact, Wilson was deeply suspicious of the Allied leaders, and their methods of secret diplomacy. He decided to move towards stricter impartiality, and made up his mind as far as instrumental beliefs were concerned. Once again, he would turn directly to the people, but not until after the presidential election of November 7, 1916 (George and George, 1964: 171).

As mentioned, Wilson always sought to assure himself of public support. This support could be an asset as well as a liability: "The external situation in which a political leader functions ... necessarily defines and delimits the field upon which his individual traits can gain expression ... So with all aspects of leadership: it must express some vital force within the body politic else, in a democracy, it will be repudiated" (George and George, 1964: xxii).[18]

Germany's submarine warfare had subsided since May. Americans thought it was a diplomatic victory for their President, who could exploit it during the campaign. The slogan "He kept us out of war" had a strong popular appeal, and contributed to the re-election of Wilson. Still, the slogan symbolized a commitment that frightened Wilson: "I can't keep the country out of war ... Any little German lieutenant can put us into the war at any time by some calculated outrage" (quoted in Hofstadter, 1949: 263). Here, he proved to be right, as he had to go before Congress on April 2, 1917, to ask for a declaration of war.

There were several causes of this watershed event.[19] The most important, however, were Germany's renewal of the submarine warfare, and the Zimmermann Telegram. This was a remarkable cable from the German foreign secretary, Zimmermann, to the German minister in Mexico. It suggested a German-Mexican-Japanese alliance, and a Mexican reconquest of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas (Osgood, 1953: 254). This incident, more than anything else, unified the American people, and prepared them for intervention. Finally, an attitude change occured among Americans because of a concrete and common threat, corroborating the following theoretical approach: "Concrete, firsthand information has greater influence on foreign policy judgments than more abstract theoretical material" (Larson, 1985: 39, cf Holsti, 1988:344).

As in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, Americans had shown that their orientation towards foreign affairs was one of changing moods. Their normal attitude appeared to be one of comparative indifference and withdrawal (Almond, 1960: 54; cf Holsti, 1988: 344).[20] "However, when threats from abroad become grave and immediate, Americans tend to break out of their private orbits, and tremendous energies become available for foreign policy" (Almond, 1960: 60; cf Hartz, 1955: 286). In the spring of 1917, the in-group perceived a threat from the out-group, and the supreme loyalty to their own group motivated action (cf Waltz, 1959: 177). Apparently, motivation "arises from certain components of collective psychology anchored in particular value patterns" (Petersson, 1964: 25).

Wilson could no longer resist the pressure of events

and an infuriated public opinion. Still he hesitated. For Wilson, it was not sufficient for a policy to be popular, it also had to be justified on legal as well as moral grounds. Wilson feared that war required "illiberalism at home to reinforce the men at the front" (quoted in Mayer, 1959: 12). He thought the constitution would not survive war, that free speech would go. He said: "If there is any alternative, for God's sake, let's take it" (quoted in Hofstadter, 1949: 266). These inner doubts were exclaimed by Wilson on his sleepless night of April 1. On the following day, he read his War Message to Congress, and as expected, it was peppered with idealistic formulations. Wilson's goal was ambitious; he wanted to make the world safe for democracy (cf Davie, 1954: 292 f).

3.3 Wilson's Liberal Peace Program

I take Woodrow Wilson as a symbol of a characteristic tendency in the whole nation's approach to foreign affairs . . . The chief feature of the Wilsonian syndrome is an oscillation from quietism to activism (Hoffmann, 1968:191).

Wilson's level of activation was impressive from the very day he held his War Message. He proceeded to initiate and carry out the construction of a global home. He had transformed himself into the world's chief architect; he had become an international social engineer. Finally, he was free to serve mankind, and to fulfil his historic mission. He had removed previous doubts, and public opinion facilitated for Wilson to do what he thought was necessary and right (Link, 1957a: 90).

A near-pacifist President had found himself marching step by step towards war, and, in April 1917, he had to choose war because he dreamed of peace (May, 1959: vii). Even though Wilson detested violence and war, he was not a doctrinaire pacifist. He was capable of using force as an instrument of foreign policy if the purity of the glorious end sanctified its dreadful means (George and George, 1964: 174). In this, he obviously shared the view of another great orator, Cicero, who had said: "For what can be done against force without force?" (quoted in Waltz, 1959: 159).

Wilson had improvised means before, but in accepting war, he had come face to face with his inner demons (if such there are), and turned his back upon the deepest of values. The man who had said that peace is the healing influence of the world "was now driven more desperately than ever in his life to justify himself, and the rest of his public career became a quest for self-vindication" (Hofstadter, 1949: 267). After a period of agonized uncertainty, Wilson had convinced himself of the necessity of intervention, and ever afterwards he denounced those whose doubts persisted.[21] He strove vehemently for cognitive consistency. "This pattern of decision-making – replacing extreme uncertainty with extreme certainty – was characteristic of the man" (George and George, 1964: 176).

Wilson's thesis of a new world order, based on universal ideals, was vaguely outlined in an address before the Senate, January, 22, 1917: "There must be, not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries, but an organized common peace" (quoted in Link, 1957a: 96). The President declared that an enduring peace must be a "peace without victory", and proposed that "the nations should with one accord adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world" (quoted in Weisband, 1973: 42).

Wilson's unwillingness to think in terms of power politics and national interests, was extreme. He was convinced that unless checked by him, the Allied statesmen would betray their own people. He viewed secret agreements with disapproval and disgust (Kennan, 1956: 142). The fact that he even tried to conduct diplomacy through the newspaper was a characteristic feature of his (Link, 1957b: 12). No wonder, Wilson's call for a "peace without victory" was bitterly resented by the Allies.

In the dialectic between an Old and a New Diplomacy, progressive elements leant heavily upon Wilson: "Like Woodrow Wilson, Europe's progressives also assumed that the politically emerging masses of workers and peasants were equipped with sufficient reason and rationality to enable them to judge and support an enlightened foreign policy for their nation" (Mayer, 1959: 56). To Wilson, conflict was only a temporary disruption of a natural harmony of interests among individuals and nations. His faith in man's intrinsic goodness, and in the possibility of progress was so strong that, in his mind, all people were capable of self-government. His belief in the common man led him even further; "to the belief that a peaceful world community, could exist only when democracy was itself triumphant everywhere" (Link, 1957a: 14).

In this respect, Wilson introduced a desirable ideological message in the middle of a transition period, in which "millions of bayonets were in search of an idea (ideology)" (Mayer, 1959: 33). In his War Message, Wilson had stated that the world was at the beginning of an age, in which "the same standards of conduct and of responsibility for wrong shall be observed among nations and their governments that are observed among the individual citizens of civilized States" (quoted in Davie, 1954: 292). This notion had a strong popular appeal.

Although the idealistic codewords with which Wilson wrapped his rhetoric were on a high level of abstraction,

they were widely embraced. Wilson knew how to seduce public opinion. His thesis implied an effective instrument for obtaining political mobilization. Wilson's concern about the future can be derived from his deductive reasoning and rationalistic cultural matrix. The centrality, the level of abstraction, and the comprehensiveness of Wilson's belief system varied in accordance with the following theoretical approach:

First: the greater the centrality of the belief elements designating ends, the more a belief system will elicit normative, goal-oriented, if not futuristic or even chiliastic responses and behavior. Second: The more abstract a belief system . . . the more it allows for elite manipulation and maneuvering. Third and correlatively: The more a belief system transcends common sense spatial and temporal boundaries, that is, the more it obtains a totalistic comprehensiveness, the more it calls for elite interpretation and facilitates elite control (Sartori, 1969: 410–11).[22]

Wilson had succeeded so well in communicating the American ideal to his own people, that it is hard to imagine how he could have resisted the temptation of applying the same instrument to the stage of world politics. He had brought America's progressive movement to its first culmination on the national level, and was just about to give leadership to its international counterpart. Wilson looked upon himself as an instrument for bringing about domestic as well as international reforms, and for redressing injustice wherever it could be found. His compulsive ambition to lead the people along the road of progressivism was interconnected with his philosophy of leadership: "I do not believe that any man can lead who does not act, whether it be consciously or unconsciously, under the impulse of a profound sympathy with those whom he leads" (quoted in Link, 1957b: 2). As a professor, Wilson had written that in the future, the White House would be taken in possession of men who were contributing to enlightenment (cf Neustadt, 1965: 126–28; Carr, 1946: 38). In office, Wilson had the opportunity to spread enlightenment and to act missionary diplomatist: "Woodrow Wilson's mission was precisely to move the world beyond power politics" (Schlesinger, 1986: 70). To Wilson, the war was only a prelude to global reform: "An enlightened peace would redeem the bloody sacrifices of the war and break the grim cycle of suspicion, hatred, and conflict" (Hunt, 1987: 134).

Europeans looked upon Wilson as a savior, and his War Message seemed to assure adherents of progressivism that in search of ideological inspiration they should look, not only to Petrograd (where a bourgeois revolution had taken place in March) but also to Washington (Mayer, 1959: 169). Likewise, some radical groups wanted to globalize the liberal principle underlying the Monroe Doctrine (Petersson, 1964: 310).

Wilson's ideological and psychological "warfare" against the autocratic Central Powers was embodied in the Fourteen Points. They were addressed to Congress on January, 8, 1918, and were intended, firstly, to reduce the will of the war-weary people of the "enemy" nations to continue fighting, and, secondly, to "rally the Allied peoples – if not the Allied governments – to a liberal peace program" (George and George, 1964: 199). Wilson regarded his Fourteen Points as being an essential basis for a just and lasting peace. In some people's opinions, it was a wasted effort to bring Utopia down to earth. Notwithstanding its utility as a practical peace program, the propagandistic efficiency was undeniable: "The enormous contribution Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points made to the victory of the Allies in the First World War by strengthening the morale of the Allies and weakening the morale of the Central Powers is the classic example of the importance of the morale factor for international politics" (Morgenthau, 1960: 89).

The ideological form of the First World War stemmed to a large extent from Wilson's justifications for entering it. It also resulted from the breakdown of Europe's political and ideological equilibrium. In fact, the Old Diplomacy was widely regarded as a failure: "The war was the work of the old order. The peoples, who had nowhere been consulted, did not want it" (Petersson, 1964: 246 f). A new political atmosphere and democratization through a victorious war were highly desirable. Foreign policy was traditionally surroundered by far more secrecy than domestic politics, and the public was not expected to have any opinions on questions of national security. This tradition of aristocratic diplomacy enjoyed hegemony until Woodrow Wilson, the "foreign minister of international democracy", announced his Fourteen Points (cf Frankel, 1963: 71).

Some wars are more ideological than others, but the war in question appears to be outstanding in this respect. From November, 1917, the rhetoric of international communism arose. In contrast to the Bolsheviks' extremism, the net effect of Wilson's liberal peace program was the fact that progressive parties moved away from the Third International (cf Mayer, 1959: 389). In addition, when the Germans faced total defeat in October, 1918, they turned to Wilson, appealing for an armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points (Link, 1957a: 107). Wilson replied that he wanted an agreement that left the German ground forces intact, since "too much success or security on the part of the Allies will make a genuine peace settlement exceedingly diffi-

cult, if not impossible" (quoted in Link, 1957a: 107–8). He argued that if the German people were humiliated, their government would be destroyed and instead Bolshevism would take its place (Langer, 1957b: 76). How did the Allies respond to noble aspirations like these? The Paris Conference was to give the answer.

Wilson was determined to go to Paris himself in order to lead the battle for the principles that he had been advocating. Overall, his program was constituted of three interlocking concepts: national self-determination, free trade, and a League of Nations to keep the peace (Hofstadter, 1949: 269).[23]

The President sailed on the George Washington (another irony) and arrived at Brest on December, 13, 1918. He was received with tumultuous enthusiasm, and enjoyed a "prestige and moral influence throughout the world unequalled in history. His bold and measured words carried to the peoples of Europe above and beyond the voices of their own politicians. The enemy peoples trusted him to carry out the compact he had made with them; and the allied peoples acknowledged him not as a victor only but almost as a prophet" (Keynes, 1920: 34–5).

The most vital point to Wilson was the fourteenth. From the very moment he adopted the League idea, he became extremely possessive of it, and on the day he arrived in Paris he made it clear that once a League of Nations was established, other difficult problems would disappear (George and George, 1964: 208–14).[24] Likewise, he rejected the British proposal of using the Congress of Vienna as model for the conference (Thompson, 1960: 16). Wilson insisted that the delegates must look to the League for the gradual evolution of a more tolerable life for Europe, and he was determined to do nothing that was not just and right (Keynes, 1920: 211, 240).

However, even though Wilson wanted to be the voice of the Paris Conference, he was among power-conscious and skilful negotiators. Wilson's program for a new world order met a rival scheme in Clemenceau's Carthagian Peace. The essence of this scheme's philosophy was that power politics is inevitable, and that one must never negotiate with a German; instead, one must dictate to him (Keynes, 1920: 29). Wilson's statement that "the central idea of the League of Nations was that States must support each other even when their interests were not involved", did not convince Clemenceau and Lloyd George (quoted in George and George, 1964: 231). To them, the national interest and the balance of power were of supreme importance.[25]

As the Versailles Treaty was close to completion, it was evident that it fell short of the proclaimed ideals and Wilson was heartsick over the compromises he had made (Langer, 1957b: 89). Retrospective analyses have criticized Wilson for his bargaining shortcomings: "A statesman who looks forward to a peaceful world based upon international cooperation will not drive a hard bargain with the very nations upon whose collaboration he feels most dependent" (Hofstadter, 1949: 269). To Wilson, bargaining was part of an evil diplomacy which he wanted to supplant.

The President had capitulated to Clemenceau in order to obtain French approval of the Monroe Doctrine amendment. To achieve this amendment, which was demanded by senatorial critics, Wilson's freedom of action was restricted. However, there was a bargaining chip he failed to exploit: economic sanctions. Before the First World War, economic policy as an instrument of foreign policy was nearly nonexistent (Bundy, 1963: 300). The vast loans and financial rearrangements changed all this, and Wilson emphasized that foreign trade had become vital to America (May, 1959: 156). He had earlier been recommended to embargo wheat, but rejected this counsel on the grounds that there was a self-defeating "boomerang effect" inherent in any such effort (May, 1959: 333). Likewise, it is not impossible that he had the inefficient outcome of Jefferson's Embargo Act (introduced in 1807) in mind.

Its deficiencies notwithstanding, Wilson had achieved a triumph in winning acceptance of the principle that a League of Nations should be an integral part of the Versailles Treaty. The Treaty was signed on June, 28, 1919, and the next day Wilson sailed for the United States, where another battle awaited him – to gain wide acceptance for his own progeny, the League of Nations. Back in Washington, the President made no effort to conceal his fighting mood. He told a skeptical reporter: "I do not think hypothetical questions are concerned. The Senate is going to ratify the treaty" (quoted in Link, 1957a: 130). After all, in the Senate's entire history it had never rejected a peace treaty (Langer, 1957b: 92). One wonders if Wilson might have been misled by this historical analogy? Be this as it may, the League idea was, unquestionably, a challenge to the American tradition (Osgood, 1953: 244). The very thought of domestic organization had been denounced as "un-American" by ideologists of agrarianism (Hartz, 1955: 223; Hofstadter, 1955: 115). Would tradition prevail in the domain of foreign affairs too?

The Congressional election, in November 1918, was a disappointment to Wilson. His party lost control of the Senate, and the influential Foreign Relations Committee was henceforth to be controlled by Wilson's personal and political adversaries. Henry Cabot Lodge, isolationist and nationalist, became chairman of the Com-

mittee, and leader of the Republican Party in the new Senate. He had a profound personal contempt for Wilson (Link, 1957a: 138). Until the election of 1920, there ensued a debate between these antagonists "no less important than the great debate of 1787 to 1789 over the ratification of the Constitution" (Link, 1957a: 127).

Lodge was furious with Wilson's attempt to globalize the Monroe Doctrine: "The Monroe Doctrine was the corollary of Washington's neutral policy and of his injunction against permanent alliances" (quoted in Weisband, 1973: 42). Lodge particularly questioned Article X of the Treaty, which implied collective security. George Washington's (read: Hamilton's) more than 120 year-old-advice, as well as Monroe's message, were powerful weapons in the rhetoric of Wilson's critics. The Monroe Doctrine was a unilateral proclamation of a sphere of influence, and must be exempted from interpretation by European powers.

In response, Wilson set forth on a crusade on behalf of the Treaty. In forty speeches throughout the nation, he searched for popular support (Link, 1957a: 140). He attempted to persuade people that Article X in no way threatened the viability of the Monroe Doctrine, and he also tried to describe how collective security would work. Wilson's liberal democratic peace was to a great extent lost in Paris. With regard to his personality, it seems logical that the League became a matter of most desperate psychological urgency to him (Hofstadter, 1949: 275).

Wilson's Hamletian state of indecision when justifying war was still plaguing him. In an emotional speech at an American cemetery on the first anniversary of the end of the war, Wilson's sense of guilt, as well as his allegiance to the League, were revealed: "I advised the Congress to declare that a state of war existed. I sent these lads over here to die. Shall I – can I – ever speak a word of counsel which is inconsistent with the assurances I gave them when they came over? It is inconceivable" (quoted in Jervis, 1976: 395). As a moralist, Wilson could not withdraw from the precepts that he previously had given voice to.

Wilson's method for relieving his inner pain was to "strive desperately to justify himself to himself by demonstrating his moral superiority over his opponents. He must show how right he was and how wrong they were" (George and George, 1964: 46). "They" had earlier been the Allied leaders, who were not representative of their own people. Now, Wilson thought he represented the people's will better than the Congress did. His resort to public opinion had served the purpose of relieving him from the responsibility to compromise. Yet, to get ratification of the the Treaty, compromises were necessary since the Republicans had a majority of two members in the Senate (Hofstadter, 1949: 276).

The struggle between Wilson and the leaders of the Senate developed into one of the most disheartening chapters of American history. On October, 2, 1919, Wilson suffered a severe stroke that isolated him and revealed some tragic personal traits. He lost some of his political judgment, and stubbornness came over him. However, as we have seen, it had never been in his nature to compromise away fundamental principles in which he believed: "For Wilson, truth was truth and justice, justice; and there was no need to modify their expression to suit any man" (George and George, 1964: 232). The President wanted to defeat the Senate, especially Lodge, and his inner demons of pride and intolerance drove him to the search for martyrdom (Hofstadter, 1949: 277). Cicero's old remark, that "it is in the nature of man to err, of a fool to persevere in his error", goes far to explain Wilson's rigid behavior in this matter (quoted in Frankel, 1963: 172).

In March, 1920, the final vote was taken on the ratifying resolution, that contained a strong reservation on Article X. The President still had to choose between ratification with reservations, or running the risk of outright defeat of the Treaty. Yet, he refused to accept even the mildest reservations regarding American membership. It would be the Treaty as it stood or no Treaty at all. Accordingly, Wilson was highly responsible for keeping the United States out of the League (Langer, 1957b: 93).

It must be considered an irony of fate that the man who had done more than anybody else to create the League of Nations, kept America out of it. Wilson was obstructing his own cause, and his awareness of this was a terrible burden. He grew thinner, paler, and more tired every day. The 1919 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to him was poor comfort. He was a broken man, and his physical condition prevented him from taking an active role in the presidential campaign. The election proved an overwhelming victory for the Republican candidate, Harding, who was Wilson's very antithesis. On March, 4, 1921, Wilson attended the inauguration of his successor. It was a tragic end to Wilson's career. He took the opportunity to deliver a symbolic message to a hated enemy: "Senator Lodge, I have no further communication to make" (quoted in Hofstadter, 1949: 278).

It is evident that Wilson overestimated the public support for the League. In fact, an overwhelming majority of the American people favored ratification with some kind of reservations (Link, 1957a: 151).[26] Wilson's critics feared that the Treaty would deprive the nation of its sovereignty (Osgood, 1953: 291). In the aftermath, Wilson's active interventionism gave way for a quiet isolationism. However, Wilson's ghost was to mark American foreign policy during the interwar years. In 1928,

Secretary of State Kellogg proposed multilateral treaties outlawing war. His legalistic approach was embodied in the Kellog-Briand Pact. The Senate ratified this Treaty but, as one might expect, with a reservation applying to the sphere of influence covered by the Monroe Doctrine (Osgood, 1953: 348).

In 1937, twenty years after Wilson's War Message, 70 per cent of the Americans considered the entry into the First World War a mistake (Hunt, 1987: 136). They wanted to prevent another Wilson from involving America in European quarrels. President Roosevelt had to face a struggle against considerable isolationist opposition, but found a justification for entering World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor: "With that attack went the last obstacle to a renewal of the Wilsonian crusade" (Hunt, 1987: 150).

The analysis of the covered period confirms the view that the American outlook is one of mood (cf Klingberg, 1979): "We have been able to dream of ourselves as emancipators of the world at the very moment that we have withdrawn from it. We have been able to see ourselves as saviors at the very moment that we have been isolationists" (Hartz, 1955: 38).

4 The Realist Critique and Alternative

I see the most serious fault of our past policy formulation to lie in something that I might call the legalistic-moralistic approach to international problems ... It is the belief that it should be possible to suppress the chaotic and dangerous aspirations of governments in the international field by the acceptance of some system of legal rules and restraints (Kennan, 1951: 95).

Before we reach the synthesizing chapter, the antithesis to Wilson's idealistic approach will be outlined. The names found in the following are not necessarily within the realist school of thought, but their beliefs are, whenever quoted. However, two of the most prominent realists, George F Kennan and Hans J Morgenthau, appear frequently. These gentlemen are disciples of Reinhold Niebuhr, who took particular issue with Wilson's naive view of human nature, and of his utopian claim that the same code of morality is applicable to individuals and to states. To Niebuhr, unselfishness must remain the criterion of highest individual morality, but it "is inappropriate to the action of a state. No one has a right to be unselfish with other people's interests" (quoted in Schlesinger, 1986: 71; cf Stone, 1968: 593–95; Weigel, 1987: 33, 40). He attacked the trust in progress and advocated balance of power. Kennan once called Niebuhr "the Father of us all", and Morgenthau said Niebuhr was "the greatest living political philosopher of America" (quoted in Stone, 1968: 593).[27] Consequently, Niebuhr's ghost is to mark the philosophy of the present chapter.

In the interwar years, realists were discredited and Wilsonian idealism enjoyed an almost unchallenged position. However, the Holocaust and the Gulag, as well as the breakdown of the League and the coming of World War II, caused disillusionment. Heaven seemed to be unattainable. It was therefore logical that idealism was criticized and challenged by realists, who applied a Socratic method in order to awake starry-eyed Wilsonians, who tended to ignore the hard facts of international politics.

An optimistic belief in man's intrinsic goodness is said to create an artificial harmony which the facts do not warrant: "Monks and saints have rarely, if ever, constituted a majority, or even a considerable minority, of the population" (Herz, 1951: 5; cf Waltz, 1959: 39–41). Like Nietzsche, the realist thinker considers the struggle for power as the result of forces inherent in human nature. The notion of a harmony of interests is utopian, and the security and power dilemma is the state of nature. This dilemma is the basis for a fact-driven realist theory.

Realists give voice to the view that one should not expect too much: "Man cannot hope to be good but must be content with not being too evil" (Morgenthau, 1945: 12; cf 1952: 962). Accordingly, their political philosophy rests on a negative conception: "In a less than perfect world, where the ideal so obviously lies beyond human reach, it is natural that the avoidance of the worst should often be a more practical undertaking than the achievement of the best ..." (Kennan, 1985–86: 212).

The skeptical view of man and the conception of nature as a field of conflict, are considered to be conservative corrections of the liberal's illusions (Thompson, 1960: 76). Realism claims to be pragmatic and empirical. Treated as an ideal type, the empirical processing-coding is the very antithesis of the rationalistic one. Accordingly, means prevail over ends: "Realism would prepare men for the tragic and stubborn discrepancy of means and ends in international politics" (Thompson, 1960: 69). Concomitantly, realism is inductive and practice therefore prevails over abstract deductive argumentation. It follows that Wilson's idealism was unrealistic and "without influence on the future because it no longer had any roots in the present" (Carr, 1946: 224).

Wilson embodied the most perfect, and tragic, example of a theorist in politics. His insistence on universal ideals such as national self-determination, free trade, and collective security, evoked a common emotion, but were fruitless as a practical peace program. As Lippmann put it: "Mr Wilson's phrases were understood in endlessly different ways in every corner of the earth ...

And so, when the day of settlement came, everybody expected everything" (quoted in Morgenthau, 1960: 266; cf Carr, 1946: 140).

Wilson's inclination to think in absolutes – black or white – arose a storm of criticism among realists, to whom it is a "fact that there are few if any absolutes in international politics" (Thompson, 1960: 150; cf Kennan, 1954: 82; Morgenthau, 1960: 154). There is neither such a thing as absolute security nor an absolute precept of what is best for everybody.

It is important to emphasize that empiricism and pragmatism are also states of belief systems, and are not without normative elements (Sartori, 1969: 400). Perhaps most important is the view that a calculated, sober, and rational foreign policy must be exempted from a moody public opinion. Since the human mind cannot bear to look hard facts of power politics in the face, it twists ambiguous information to subdue its inner pains, and is thereby engaged in self-deception. It is the realist's obligation to serve facts, and to make people overcome their psychological resistance. However, the task to educate a passionate public opinion is not likely to be successful. According to Kennan, America's trouble "stemmed from the extent to which the executive has felt itself beholden to short-term trends of public opinion in the country and from what we might call the erratic and subjective nature of public reaction to foreign-policy questions" (1951: 93). A government must realize that it is the leader, not the slave, of public opinion (Morgenthau, 1960: 146).

The upswing of realism was coeval with the "end-of-ideology debate" among social scientists. This interrelation goes far to explain why the concept of ideology is given a pejorative connotation. An ideological foreign policy invites a host of dangers. Moral absolutism leads to crusades for an ideal or a set of principles for which the crusader claims the monopoly of truth and virtue. The problem is that universal ideals which reflect the moral code of one group are often incompatible with the code of another group. If these codes are to be implemented, unlimited war for unlimited ends will follow (Kennan, 1951: 101; Waltz, 1959: 113). Since there is room for only one code, the other must yield or be destroyed. To Morgenthau, the crusader is rigid and one-tracked: "The crusading mind knows nothing of persuasion and compromise. It knows only of victory and of defeat" (1960: 551). Needless to say, Wilson as well as Lenin, belong to this crusading category. A short empirical analysis of Wilson's foreign policy toward Russia sheds light on this insight.

Wilson had welcomed the March revolution for making Russia a fit partner in a democratic crusade. He celebrated the Russian people, who were "always in fact democratic at heart" (quoted in Hunt, 1987: 113). The temptation to take advantage of this event was strong, and made it possible for Wilson to construct a convincing ideological rationale in support of the American war effort. However, Wilson's commitment to the assumption that Russia would immediately advance toward a stable democracy proved illusory. The Bolshevik seizure of power, in November, produced the same sense of disillusionment that the French revolution had done in the 1790s. Jefferson had been optimistic of the future of the revolution, but could retrospectively conclude that it was the greatest intellectual error of his life (Hunt, 1987: 94–100). He had allowed himself to indulge in wishful thinking, and Wilson made the same mistake almost 130 years later.

In spite of this misperception, Wilson did not abandon his belief in the Russian people's capacity for self-government: "Whether their present leaders believe it or not, it is our heartfelt desire and hope that some way may be opened whereby we may be privileged to assist the people of Russia to attain their utmost hope of liberty and ordered peace ..." (quoted in Kennan, 1956: 255). This passage was unrealistic in that it overrated the average Russian's concern for international affairs, and underestimated the profundity of Bolshevik hatred and contempt for the "rotten liberalism" of the capitalist world. An article in Pravda was significative: "... The American President Wilson, in the tones of a Quaker preacher, proclaims to the peoples of the world the teaching of highest governmental morality. But the peoples know the reasons for the entry of the United States into the war. The peoples know that behind this intervention stood not a concern for the interests of right and justice, but the cynical interests of the New York stock market" (quoted in Kennan, 1956: 262).

Wilson's failure to predict the coming of the November revolution can be explained with reference to two causal factors. The first factor is derived from his cultural matrix; i. e., the tendency to speak in an ethnocentric vocabulary, revealing an unfamiliarity with the feelings and the beliefs of other people: "It had never occurred to most Americans that the political principles by which they themselves lived might have been historically conditioned and might not enjoy universal validity" (Kennan, 1956: 12; cf 1985–86: 208, Hartz, 1955: 66).[28] Secondly, Wilson's style of decision-making was individualistic and he was disinclined to use the network of foreign policy advisers. As we have seen, Wilson appealed directly to foreign opinion, often without different ambassadors knowing about the President's intentions. He neither informed them nor did he want them to become informed, and posterity will never know how

much confusion, mistakes, and lost opportunities followed from Wilson's missionary diplomacy (Kennan, 1956: 242; cf Link, 1957a: 26).

The traditional diplomatic method for influencing the attitudes of foreign governments is held to be superior by realists: "Foreign policy is too intricate a topic to suffer any total taboos. There may be rare moments when a secret operation appears indispensable" (Kennan, 1985–86: 214). A skilled diplomacy is the most important factor for the power of a nation (Morgenthau, 1960: 139). Realists favor a return to an old-fashioned diplomacy, exempted from the people's emotionalism (Kennan, 1951: 93–4; 1954: 36). The realist school of thought reiterates the classical incompatibility hypothesis; that is, there is an inherent incompatibility between the ideal of democracy and the realities of international politics. The politicization of foreign policy is constrained by the principles of bargaining and supreme interest (cf Goldmann et al, 1986: 1–5, 176–77).[29] Moreover, a government committed to a democratic foreign policy is considered to be inferior to an authoritarian government, which has the "privilege" to shape its external conduct without considerations for domestic subsystems like public opinion (Kennan, 1954: 44).

The value of traditional diplomacy was its sense of moderation and its openness for compromise. It is of crucial importance to distinguish desirable goals from essential goals, and to formulate goals that do not range beyond the power available: "Diplomacy of high quality will bring the ends and means of foreign policy into harmony with the available resources of national power" (Morgenthau, 1960: 139; cf Robinson, 1969: 185).

As an international reformer, Wilson's commitments to glorious ends made him intolerant to criticism of the means proposed. On his way to Paris, he said to an adviser who questioned the League of Nations: "If it won't work, it must be made to work" (quoted in Carr, 1946: 8). To reply in such a flimsy way, one might as well count on the helping hand of God Almighty himself. The realist critique to Wilson's behavior in Paris is far from merciful. Quite true, a negotiator faces the risk of setting his sights too low, but he may also set his sights too high, neglecting the available power. According to Morgenthau, Wilson made the latter mistake during the Peace Conference (1960: 143). Wilson embodied incompetent diplomacy in his heedless rush into untenable positions. Morgenthau's maxim for a skilled diplomacy "is to avoid the absolutes of victory and defeat and meet the other side on the middle ground of negotiated compromise" (1960: 567; cf Thompson, 1960: 170).

Morgenthau, as well as Kennan, point out that the American tendency to bring its unique liberal experience to the international arena is misleading: "The community of the American people antedated the American state, as a world community must antedate a world state" (1960: 518). It is hard to transform national loyalties into an international organization. To make nations act policemen, whether they see their own interests threatened or not, is even harder: "If we demand that nations act wholly in a disinterested and international way, in effect we ask them to cease to be nations" (Thompson, 1960: 195).

History proved to Wilsonians that an organization like the League cannot synthesize contradictory moral codes and ideologies (cf Petersson, 1980: 346; Waltz, 1959: 84). It is equally unlikely that the economic policy of one country will be perceived as advantageous to all countries. To repudiate free trade is expensive but logical, wherever autarky is considered a desirable instrument of power. Ironically, it was the United States that actually began international tariff warfare in the 1920s (cf Hofstadter, 1949: 270). Hamilton's ghost had spoken again.

Likewise, history has proved that the step toward disarmament was another futility. To Morgenthau, armaments and the armaments race are important manifestations of the struggle for power among nations: "Men do not fight because they have arms. They have arms because they deem it necessary to fight" (1960: 408). This fact is often neglected by complacent Americans living far away from the realities of power politics. Wilson is being blamed for his failure to prepare America, militarily as well as psychologically (Osgood, 1953: 222, 262). Even worse, he challenged the hailed tradition of isolationism: "In arguing that all change in the world had to take place within the League's framework, Wilson encouraged the illusion that pursuit of national interest was fundamentally in opposition to the norms of the American social heritage" (Weisband, 1973: 43).

At length, we have found the conception closest to the realist's heart; that is, "the concept of interest defined in terms of power" (Morgenthau, 1960: 5). The total national interest consists of those essential national goals which are distinguished from desirable goals (Robinson, 1969: 185). Moreover, since conflict results from the clash of interests, a Madisonian system of checks and balances is the most efficient means to contain violent outbursts (Morgenthau, 1952: 962). To preserve the balance of power is almost always to act on behalf of the national interest.

In rejecting the national interest as an explanation for American entry into the First World War, Wilson failed to realize the blessings of the very power balance that

had saved Europe, and America indirectly, from a major war on the Continent during the century prior to 1914 (Kennan, 1951: 67–9). This still remains to be proved by the realists, who also have to demonstrate that responsible statesmen can guide the man in the street "by awakening his latent understanding of the national interest" (Morgenthau, 1952: 971).

Whether he wanted to believe it or not, Wilson, like all statesmen, had to think and act in terms of interest defined as power. Thus, in 1917, only half-known to himself, Wilson could not escape the objective force of the national interest: "Germany threatened the balance of power in Europe, and it was in order to remove that threat – and not to make the world safe for democracy – that the United States put its weight into the Allies' scale. Wilson pursued the right policy, but he pursued it for the wrong reasons" (Morgenthau, 1950: 848).[30]

Realism states that rivalry, competition, and conflict occur because of the anarchic state of the international system, that is, notwithstanding the internal structures of states and the belief systems of decision-makers.[31] Accordingly, Wilson must have been wrong when he assigned to democracies all the attributes of a peaceful state. However, his worst mistake is said to have been his identification of American cultural values with universal good. Wilson was a master in the Anglo-Saxon art of concealing the selfish national interests in the guise of the general will (Carr, 1946: 79). His supposedly absolute and universal principles were hypocritical since they were unconscious reflections of nothing less than the national interest of the United States (Carr, 1946: 87).

Wilson purchased psychological harmony at the price of neglecting those cognitive elements that disturbed him. He built up his self-esteem on the conviction "that he possessed the key to a just, comprehensive and final settlement of the political ills of mankind" (Carr, 1946: 90). However, Wilson's method for identifying the good of the whole with the good of the part, failed to produce an effective conception of morality. His failure in this respect proved that there is no escape from the fact that every part, every code of morality, has to sacrifice something to the good of the whole; eating your cake and still having it is very rare in politics. To face this fact is the prerequisite of a sober world-view and of moderation: "It will mean that we will have the modesty to admit that our own national interest is all that we are really capable of knowing and understanding ..." (Kennan, 1951: 103).

Every political leader has a special moral responsibility to act wisely; i.e., in awareness not only of his own national interest, but also of that of other nations, since collaboration occurs when parties find their interests compatible (Morgenthau, 1952: 977). However, whenever national security is at stake, the statesman has a moral duty first of all to take care of the national interest (Morgenthau, 1952: 987). This wisdom was embraced by the Founding Fathers. Alexander Hamilton appears in history as a statesman who realized that the national interest must necessarily be defind in terms of power. In his emphasis upon self-preservation, security, and moderation, Hamilton stands out as the hero of modern realists (cf Morgenthau, 1950: 840–44; Kennan, 1954: 12–4). Hamilton's notion that the code of morality is not the same between nations as it is between individuals runs like a continuous thread through political realism ever since.

As Morgenthau points out, it is hard to imagine a greater contrast in the way of thinking about foreign affairs than that which separates Hamilton from Wilson (1950: 835). Moreover, like McKinley, Wilson betrayed the realistic connotation of the Monroe Doctrine. The tragedy of Wilson's political career was the fact that the neglect of the American national interest was not compensated for by the triumph of the morality he claimed. "Thus Wilson returned from Versailles a compromised idealist, en empty-handed statesman, a discredited ally. In that triple failure lies the tragedy not only of Wilson, a great yet misguided man, but of Wilsonianism as a political doctrine as well" (Morgenthau, 1950: 849).[32]

5 *The Search for a Creative Synthesis*

Sometimes people call me an idealist. Well, that is the way I know I am an American. America ... is the only idealistic Nation in the world (Woodrow Wilson, quoted in Osgood, 1953: 297; cf Steel, 1967: 3).

It must also be understood that in world affairs, as in personal life, example exerts a greater power than precept (Kennan, 1985–86: 216).

Like power, the national interest is another ambiguous and elusive concept. It was used by Morgenthau as an objective force. However, several scholars have clarified that the perception of the national interest is rooted in values (cf Rosenau, 1968: 36; Sondermann, 1977: 124). In other words, there is a significant discrepancy between the objective and subjective connotations of the concept (Wolfers, 1952: 485). In the nuclear era, the national interest has come to be practically synonymous with national security (Wolfers, 1952: 482). We are dealing with a concept based on feelings and perceptions. Since nations still do not share moral codes or values, they tend to differ widely in their reaction to one and the same external situation (Herz, 1981: 188).

It is important to emphasize that, in an age of inter-

dependence, there are not only clashing interests, but also a great deal of common interests. In such a world, there are incentives to gain collaboration by expressing universal ideals, since a foreign policy based on the national interest is destined to cause suspicion and distrust. In an empirical analysis of the process of détente between the superpowers in the 1970s, I supported wholeheartedly the view that it collapsed "because each side tried to define the terms of competition and the terms of collaboration in ways more geared to maximizing unilateral advantage than to expanding the mutual interest in institutionalizing the relationship" (Breslauer, quoted in Johansson, 1988: 30). Apparently, it might be compatible with the national interest to act idealistically, provided that the other actor finds the ideal reasonable. In other words, the more the interests of the other side are taken into consideration when an idealistic goal is formulated, the more rational is a foreign policy. Let me put it as follows: a wise decision-maker should ask himself the question, "How idealistic is it realistic to be?" (Schilling, 1956: 574).

Although there is a strong conformist tendency when an in-group is dealing with an out-group, states are not monolithic blocs, and people within them must not embrace the same values. Who is then going to decide which interest is the national? Take isolationist impulses in the United States for example. The suspicion that many Americans are at heart isolationists has made the foreign policy establishment in Washington "reluctant to make the public a genuine partner in policy making or to risk open and vigorous debate" (Hunt, 1987: 180). This elitist thought is fully in line with realism, but deficient in an age of democracy (cf Gardner, 1972: 288). Suppose that a cross-section of American public opinion favors steps towards isolationism, but that the foreign policy elite rejects it. If, in this situation, the people are not being listened to, it follows that they are downgraded, and that the elitist philosophy of decision-making is so-called "Government House utilitarianism" (= "State Department utilitarianism"; cf Simmonds, 1986: 45–6).

Realism neglects how states define their interests, and how their interests change over time (Nye, 1988: 238). It is evident that the national interest is a concept, whose contents are to be interpreted by high officials and policymakers (Sondermann, 1977: 132). Even though it is hard to see an alternative to this practice, the interpretation depends above all on the will of the decision-makers (Levi, 1971: 588): "Operationally, the substantive content of the national interest thus becomes whatever a society's officials decide it to be, and the main determinant of content is the procedure by which such decisions are made" (Rosenau, 1968: 38).

In this essay, three stages of American foreign policy have been outlined. Except for isolationism, the others are imperialism and interventionism. Unfortunately, the two latter stages are hard to separate from each other (cf Tingsten, 1948: 9). This is the reason why Wilson met with difficulties when he tried to justify his foreign policy actions in the Caribbean.

McKinley's rationalization of the imperialism of 1898 is astounding (cf note 10). As we have seen, altruism and egotism tend to converge in public rhetoric: "The man of the world can combine morality and national self-interest more easily than he can find a wife with both virtue and wealth; he may consider himself a fool not to do both" (Weinberg, 1958: 297). No doubt, Morgenthau is right when he states that the true nature of a policy is often concealed by rationalization and ideological justifications: "A policy of imperialism is always in need of an ideology; for in contrast to a policy of the status quo, imperialism always has the burden of proof" (1960: 91). However, to argue that a policy of status quo is superior because it "has already, by virtue of its very existence, acquired a certain moral legitimacy" (1961: 90) might definitely be questioned.

The empirical analyses of realists are above all preoccupied with the comparatively stable world order which reigned in the century following the Vienna Congress. Their heroes are (with the exception of Hamilton) Metternich, Bismarck, and Churchill. The realist's attitude is thereby revealed, and in glorifying the order of the 19th century, one is not prepared to set about the problems of our common future. Churchill deserves to be quoted in this respect: "I like to live in the past. I don't think people are going to get much fun in the future" (quoted in Nisbet, 1986: 19). However, we are living in a turbulent world of change, and a conservative attitude is likely to result in the loss of opportunities: "Admittedly conservatism has many advantages but is suitable only for periods of reasonable stability. It is a disadvantage in periods of rapid change" (Frankel, 1963: 159; cf Walker, 1987: 70, 82).

It can, of course, be accepted as a fact in past international politics that statesmen were primarily preoccupied with the struggle for power among nations, but to argue that all other factors are subordinate to or dependent upon this, is to exclude too much of importance. Furthermore, a theory that starts from the assumption that the human nature is evil, has put itself in an untenable position (cf Nye, 1988: 239). Anthropological evidence shows that humanness is socio-culturally variable and not biologically fixed (cf Berger and Luckmann, 1984: 67).

The events in Eastern Europe during the historical fall of 1989 prove that man cannot generally be consid-

ered indifferent or ignorant. Again, the people of Europe have been in search of an idea, with or without bayonets, and once more "special privileges to none" has proved to be a slogan with strong popular appeal. It remains true that the concept of the national interest is interconnected with protection of the status quo, but recent events show that a political system without the means of some change is really without the means of its own preservation.

Carr drew attention to the fact that realists tend to read history too gloomily, and that they thereby run the risk of cynicism: "Consistent realism excludes four things which appear to be essential ingredient of all effective thinking: a finite goal, an emotional appeal, a right of moral judgment and a ground for action" (1946: 89). He considered Utopia as well as reality two facets of political science, and maintained that they both deserve a place in a sound political theory (1946: 10; cf Hoffmann, 1969: 40). As a matter of fact, a society, domestic as well as international, without a vision is, indeed, a poor society.

Wilson ignored the hard reality, but succeeded in communicating his vision. To the extent that his idealistic approach stemmed from his rationalistic belief system and from his rationalistic cultural matrix, its popularity supports the hypothesis that "ideologies drawn from rationalistic philosophies and nurtured in a rationalistic soil – travel easily throughout the world" (Sartori, 1969: 402). The Wilsonian approach to travel is today to be found in Vaclav Havel. He appears to share Wilson's vision of democracy, peace, and human freedom (cf Weigel, 1987: 39). Be this as it may, it is to Wilson's credit that he recognized the dawning era of democracy.

Nevertheless, Wilson failed to bring desirable ends into reasonable harmony with attainable means. Perhaps the most valuable insight of realism is its critique of a starry-eyed Wilsonian, who tended to see nothing but progress and reform. A policy of innocence, that is one which assumes that a complete reconstruction of our social world would immediately lead to a workable system, is destined to cause disillusionment: "Our dream of heaven cannot be realized on earth" (Popper, 1966: 200). Likewise, Hoffmann has pictured the reformist vision: "Typically, it consists of ends without means – shopping lists without the prices marked – or of oversimplified notions about means. The Declaration of Independence is not a sufficient charter for policy" (1968: 117). This insight shows why utopian social engineering is inferior to the method of piecemeal engineering; i. e., why we must reform our "institutions little by little, until we have more experience in social engineering" (Popper, 1966: 167).

In a changing world, yesterday's Utopia may be tomorrow's reality. In the international context of Wilson's days, his liberal peace program was bound to be considered utopian, but is today no less urgent than it was in his own time. As a matter of fact, Wilson's idealism did succeed in setting up an intergovernmental organization. Although the League broke down in the 1930s, the United Nations stands today in testimony of that change of policy he advocated (cf George and George, 1964: 315): "I would rather fail in a cause that I know will some day triumph", Wilson said, "than win in a cause that I know will some day fail" (quoted in Davie, 1954: 82).

The normative elements of realism have been successfully challenged in recent studies of international integration and regimes. These studies have been engaged in answering questions about the causes of peace, instead of inquiring, as had realists, into the causes of war (cf Holsti, 1989; Russett, 1982). In other words, once more a liberal international political theory has been constructed, but this time with the participation of self-critical realists. Some of these have also perceived the need for a creative synthesis (cf Herz, 1981). The reason for this attitude change is to derive from the common threats challenging mankind; the demographic, economic, and ecological predicaments: "All of this, of course, presupposes changes of world views, of perceptions that must encompass what is universalist, internationalist, functionalist in the new approach" (Herz, 1981: 195). No doubt, posterity is about to vindicate Wilson.

Contemporary liberals also embrace Cobden's and Wilson's views that trade and economic incentives may alter state behavior. However, the illusions of classical free trade liberals are avoided, since high levels of trade actually failed to prevent the outbreak of World War I (Nye, 1988: 246). Liberal theorists are also aware of the fact that economic interdependence may be associated with conflict (Keohane and Nye, 1977: 5–19).

A theme close to Wilson's heart was that democracies are peaceful. All in all, this is the core theme of Wilsonianism, and it is embraced by liberals, who in empirical analyses have found that liberal democracies may often fight wars, but that they hardly ever fight each other (Doyle, 1986: 1156; Russett, 1982: 190). Likewise, China and the Soviet Union today stand as two Big (with a capital "B") testimonies of Wilson's view that there is a strong interrelation between economic and political democracy: "This also poses the intriguing but daunting possibility that on a global basis stable peace, economic rights of equality, decent living conditions, and political liberties may all be bound together in an inseparable package – to strive with any promise

for one would require us to strive for all of them together" (Russett, 1982: 192).

Wilson realized that there was no going back for America, because she had become a determining factor, and when you have become a determining factor "you cannot remain isolated, whether you want to or not" (quoted in Link, 1957a: 145). Nevertheless, Wilson went too far when he thought that it was possible to redeem the world through intervention. His messianic interventionism, under the guise of ethnocentric ideals, must not necessarily attract everybody (cf Waltz, 1959: 103–19).

Since Wilson was a "hard" idealist, it is probable that he would have advocated America's involvement into the Vietnam War. In contrast to "soft" idealists and realists, it was the "hard" idealists who inspired the war and had the burden of justifying this ruthless crusade (Claude, 1981: 199–200). Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and Kennan, opposed what they regarded as American overcommitment. They embraced the view of the Founding Fathers, which rested upon the fact that America would redeem the world, not by intervention, but by example. According to Kennan, such a more modest diplomacy is superior: "Our diplomacy can never be stronger than the impression we contrive to create on others, not just by virtue of what we do but rather – and even more importantly – by what we are" (Kennan, 1958: 101).

To rely on the influence of example does not imply turning back from the international arena. It is a role conception which "emphasizes the importance of promoting prestige and gaining influence in the international system by pursuing certain domestic policies" (Holsti, 1988: 114). It should be possible to bring about an alliance between idealism and realism in this respect. After all, Hamilton as well as Wilson had the ambition to perfect America's own institutions. None of them feared change or experimentation. This essay shows that it was Wilson's domestic reform program, the New Freedom, which earned him the prestige to formulate a New Diplomacy, and to speak of freedom and justice abroad (cf Schlesinger, 1986: 81). Likewise, if the world's attention is not to shift away from America, her 41st President has to show the boldness that has paid off in foreign affairs: "If the 1980s taught anything, it is that even a superpower's influence abroad depends on its self-confidence at home" (Economist, 20–26 January, 1990, p 13).

Conclusions

If Wilson conceived of world responsibility both too narrowly and too idealistically, if he assumed that the League and the United States in the League were ready to shoulder more burdens than proved possible, he at least caught a glimpse of the dawning of a new era and expressed this fearlessly (Thompson, 1960: 245).

Wilson's weaknesses notwithstanding, he formulated a comprehensive program of utmost relevance to the contemporary world. His high-minded idealism, so often condemned, so often refuted, deserves resurrection. Wilson's thought proved premature, and is today no less urgent than in his own days.

It is interesting how Wilson's approach to world politics reflected his domestic Progressivism (cf Hartz, 1955: 295; Hofstadter, 1949: 272). His philosophy of "special privileges to none" saw no boundaries. The lowest common denominator of Wilson's domestic reform program, the New Freedom, and of his liberal peace program, was his idealistic crusade for the rights and opportunities of the small man. Wilson's political thought was within the liberal tradition. The elements of his conception were egalitarian, meliorist, universalist, and, to a varying extent, individualist. Wilson's reform measures, at home as well as abroad, must be seen in the light of the upswing of communism. To remove that threat, Wilson looked upon politics as the "great means of counteracting private interest, of reviving public virtue and of overcoming the apathy that prepares the way for despotism" (Schlesinger, 1986: 43).

This essay supports a decision-making approach to international politics. In order to understand international phenomena, we must look into domestic sources like belief systems of decision-makers, their perceptions and motives, as well as into the influences exerted on them by public opinion. However, the essay lacks two important pieces of the puzzle: the Organizational Process and Governmental Politics Models (cf Allison, 1971). Wilson's individual style of decision-making indicates that they were unimportant or almost nonexistent in his days.

This essay, together with recent events, confirms the notion that the grassroots level should be taken into consideration in future theory constructions. This is even more important as the world is going towards becoming safe for democracy. Recent events also show that we are living in an age of unpredictability, and that man as a member of a group still has an inclination for violent outbursts. In this respect, the tendency to claim realism as dead is definitely unwarranted.

Just as the course a democracy takes results from a dialectical process between the belief systems of its decision-makers and the socio-cultural context, so there is an inherent dialectic of international politics. Once a synthesis has been achieved, there is always a risk that unforeseeable events will tear it apart into thesis and antithesis, and on we go again. Even for the wisest analyst of our sub-discipline, the world out there is to a

large extent unpredictable, and much of his predictions are just plain guesswork. This must not imply a hopeless skepticism, but rather, and even more importantly, the need for a creative synthesis with a high level of credibility and capacity for institutionalization. It will not make a great deal of difference whether that would be a synthesis under the title of Realist Liberalism, Critical Rationalism or Visionary Realism.

A normative element of this essay is that decision-makers should think in alternatives; not in "black or white", but in terms of "more-or-less". It goes without saying that this element is also valid to the scholar, who best shape a creative synthesis if his prejudices are left behind. In fact, the 1980s taught us that "our field will necessarily be characterized by a multiplicity of theories" (Holsti, 1989: 255):

> The possibility that the future might just as easily involve greater pluralism, greater fragmentation, greater difference does not necessarily imply the impossibility of global community, or the other way around. It is just as possible that forces of change in international politics might arise from fragmented and peripheralized local and grassroots movements around the world as from states or transnational economic structures. Nor does a move in either direction necessarily imply that the state is either obstinate or obsolete (Walker, 1987: 83).

In such a future their is place for vision as well as reality. As stated, a community or society without a vision is indeed a poor one. This was realized by Woodrow Wilson, and I thereby declare him resurrected.

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Notes on the text

[1] According to Gabriel Almond, this is a characteristic trait of the American value orientation: "The fear of failure and the apprehension over the hostility which is invoked in one's relations with other persons produce on the one hand an extraordinary need for affection and reassurance, and on the other, an extraordinary tendency to resort to psychological and spiritual narcosis" (1960: 49–50).

[2] This is nothing less than the well-known Schuldgefühl à la Freud. Herz points out that the most powerful minds, who have become leaders of great idealistic movements, did so out of a feeling of guilt (1951: 127).

[3] I also would like to draw attention to Tingsten's definition of ideology: An ideology is "a collection of general political ideas forming a systematic whole and providing general and definite directives for action" (quoted in Petersson, 1964: 23).

[4] Chesterton once described the United States as a "nation with a soul of a church" (quoted in Weigel, 1987: 40).

[5] By myth is here meant an idea "that so effectively embodies men's values that it profoundly influences their way of perceiving reality and hence their behavior" (Hofstadter, 1955: 24).

[6] It is interesting to compare what Burke, Wilson's hero, once said about the concept of power: "I must fairly say, I dread our own power and our own ambition" (quoted in Steel, 1967: 351). Like Wilson, Edmund Burke was a moralist (cf Frankel, 1963: 164).

[7] This statement is to me nothing less than a paraphrase of Adam Smith's perception that "People of the same trade seldom meet together, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some diversion to raise prices" (quoted in Heilbroner, 1980: 67). To Smith, the great enemy was not so much government per se as monopoly in any form.

[8] Wilson probably felt like de Tocqueville's famous shepherd, who guided the "flock of timid and industrious animals" (quoted in Nisbet, 1986: 44; cf Gray, 1986: 21).

[9] The involvement of the Hearst chain has been documented (cf Rystad, 1975: 177–78).

[10] President McKinley justified the control of the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico as a "great trust" that the United States carried "under the providence of God and in the name of human progress and civilization". He reassured doubters with the claim that "our priceless principles undergo no change under a tropical sun. They go with the flag" (quoted in Hunt, 1987: 38).

[11] In essence, the Manifest Destiny is "the doctrine that one nation has a preeminent social worth, a distinctively lofty mission, and consequently unique rights in the application of moral principles" (Weinberg, 1958: 8).

[12] "The political system of the allied powers is essentially different . . . from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective Governments – we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety" (quoted in Davie, 1954: 81; cf Weisband, 1973: 22, 63).

[13] "The new world", Jefferson said in 1790, "will fatten on the follies of the old" (quoted in May, 1959: 34).

[14] "Commitment here means not only the degree to which the person's power and prestige are involved but also – and more importantly – the degree to which this way of seeing the world has proved satisfactory and has become internalized" (Jervis, 1976: 196).

[15] As a professor, Wilson was a follower of Walter Bagehot. In Wilson's widely read 'Congressional Government', first published in 1885, he advocated responsible party leadership and revealed his admiration for the British system of cabinet government (cf Hofstadter, 1949: 237; Ladd, 1987: 357).

[16] A passage from a letter that Colonel House wrote to Wilson was telling: "Goodbye, dear friend, and may God sustain you in all your noble undertakings ... You are the bravest, wisest leader, the gentlest and most gallant gentleman and the truest friend in all the world" (quoted in George and George, 1964: 163). Certainly, this must have been lovely music to Wilson.

[17] Madison succeeded Jefferson as President in 1809. In 1812, he had to involve the United States in a war against Britain.

[18] As a professor, Wilson once very truly observed: "The legislative leader must perceive the direction of the nation's permanent forces and must feel the speed of their operation" (quoted in George and George, 1964: xxii).

[19] The House Committee on Foreign Affairs submitted a catalogue of acts that justified war: "Germany's conduct of sea warfare; intrigues in the United States, including bomb plots and espionage; indignities to Americans; other unfriendly acts, including the Zimmermann note" (Osgood, 1953: 260).

[20] Ex-President Theodore Roosevelt wrote in November, 1914: "Our people are short-sighted, and they do not understand international matters – Thanks to the width of the ocean, our people believe that they have nothing to fear from the present contest, and that they have no responsibility concerning it" (quoted in Osgood, 1953: 137).

[21] Wilson's introspective character implied a low threshold of tolerance for inconsistency.

[22] Sartori's view is that ideology is crucial to an empirical theory of politics. He argues that we above all are concerned about ideologies "because we are concerned, in the final analysis, with the power of man over man, with how populations and nations can be mobilized and manipulated all along the way that leads to political messianism and fanaticism" (1969: 411).

[23] Wilson's combination of universalism and national self-determination has its origin in the Italian patriot and influential prophet of liberal nationalism, Giuseppe Mazzini. His liberal democratic idealism was reflected in a search for a united Europe of free people, and a pan-European harmony (Encyclopedia Britannica, vol 14, 1979: 692).

[24] Hocus-pocus!

[25] Clemenceau had ridiculed Wilson for claiming four more points than the Lord Himself, and asserted in January, 1919: "There is an old system of alliances called the Balance of Power – this system of alliance ... will be my guiding thought at the Peace Conference (quoted in Osgood, 1953: 288).

[26] The Hearst chain played once more an important part. The papers of this conglomerate were unconditionally opposed to the idea of a League (cf Osgood, 1953: 291).

[27] Kennan was born in 1904, and is still going strong. Niebuhr died in 1971 and Morgenthau in 1981.

[28] We are reminded of de Tocqueville's classical words on the United States, expressed in 1831: "The more I see of this country the more I admit myself penetrated with this truth: that there is nothing absolute in the theoretical value of political institutions, and that their efficiency depends almost always on the original circumstances and the social conditions of people to whom they are applied" (quoted in Thompson, 1960: 52).

[29] This view is also to be found in a passage of Locke's 'Second Treatise of Government' (cf Goldmann et al, 1986: 1).

[30] Lippmann argued that Wilson was aware of the challenge to national security, and that he decided upon intervention on the basis of a statesmanlike judgment of what was vital to the defense of America. If this thesis is correct, a realistic approach to world politics was prevalent, and Wilson's rhetoric thus only instrumental (cf Osgood, 1953: 116, 134). However, Lippman's thesis is by no means verified, neither is it representative among analysts.

[31] I conclude that Morgenthau probably would have disliked my essay since he rejects operational-code studies in general: "A realist theory of international politics will also avoid the popular fallacy of equating the foreign policies of a statesman with his philosophic or political sympathies, and of deducing the former from the latter" (1960: 7).

[32] A similar judgment is embraced by the late Harvard professor, William Langer, who, even though he admired Wilson, concluded: "All in all, Woodrow Wilson had his weaknesses and these weaknesses bred mistakes. As I see it his failings were mostly those of his generation – exaggerated idealism, superiority complex, ignorance of world affairs resulting from isolation, failure to recognize the true national interest and to assume the obligations demanded by it" (1957b: 95).

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