
1980s. Between 1980 and '88, the proportion of the electorate identifying with the Democrats fell from 41 percent to 36 percent. Racial politics was the main reason, according to a widely accepted theory advanced by political scientists Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson. After a close look at American National Election Studies for 1980 and 1988, Abramowitz, a political scientist at Emory University, sees other causes.

Abramowitz agrees that the 1964 presidential election was a watershed, as Carmines and Stimson argue. President Lyndon B. Johnson, champion of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, trounced conservative Republican Senator Barry M. Goldwater, who had opposed it. Democratic leaders and activists then moved sharply to the left on racial issues, while their GOP counterparts moved sharply to the right. But that, Abramowitz points out, does not necessarily mean that voters were choosing parties on the basis of their racial attitudes, or that the subsequent "white flight" from the Democrats was racially motivated.

The survey data for 1988, he writes, show that among white voters, partisan differences over racial issues were "very limited." On most race-related questions, large majorities of Republicans and Democrats favored the "conservative" position. For example, 91 percent of white Republicans opposed racial preferences in hiring and promotion—but so did 82 percent of white Democrats. Similarly, 76 percent of white Republicans opposed the use of racial quotas by colleges—but so did 66 percent of white Demo-

crats. Overall, the difference between white Republicans and white Democrats on racial issues averaged only eight percentage points. That compares with an average difference of 20 points on social-welfare issues (e.g., health insurance, taxes versus services), and an average difference of 13 points on national-security issues.

Did racial attitudes have an indirect impact, by influencing attitudes toward social-welfare programs? In *Chain Reaction* (1991), Thomas Byrne Edsall, a *Washington Post* reporter, and his wife Mary D. Edsall, a writer, argue that white disillusionment with the welfare state reflected a growing perception that government welfare programs disproportionately aided blacks. Abramowitz, however, says that a sophisticated statistical analysis shows only a "rather modest" connection between racial attitudes and social-welfare ones. Any indirect effect on party identification would have been extremely weak.

White defections during the '80s, he concludes, cannot simply be blamed, as many Democrats would have it, on the GOP's willingness to play the race card. Democrats, Abramowitz argues, must face facts: The Democratic belief in an expanding welfare state no longer goes down well with a lot of white voters. Bill Clinton, running as "a new kind of Democrat" opposed to his party's traditional "tax and spend" policies, seemed to recognize that. But his victory, Abramowitz says, was far from a guarantee that the Democrats' identity problems are over.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Containing China, Politely

"Wealth, Power, and Instability: East Asia and the United States after the Cold War" by Richard K. Betts, in *International Security* (Winter 1993-94), Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Univ., 79 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

East Asia claims about one-third of the world's population, a growing share of its economic

product, and a big chunk of America's foreign trade. During the Cold War, Washington's strategy toward the region, stretching from Japan to Burma, was determined mainly by the requirements of America's global struggle with the Soviet Union. Now, the policymakers have no automatic answers, notes Betts, a Columbia University political scientist. Is China's prosperity in America's national interest? What about a rearmed Japan?

Analysts can draw on two main intellectual traditions: conservative "realism," which stresses the pursuit of national interests and a balance of power, and Wilsonian liberalism, which emphasizes the spread of liberal political values. During the Cold War, Americans often did not have to choose, Betts points out: "The communist threat, like the fascist threat before it, combined military power with anti-liberal ideology, allowing conservative realism's focus on might and liberal idealism's focus on right to converge in a militant policy."

Take the question of whether the United States should want China to prosper. "For liberals," Betts writes, "the answer is yes, since a quarter of the world's people would be relieved from poverty and because economic growth should make democratization more likely, which in turn should prevent war between Beijing and other democracies. For realists, however, the answer should be no, since a rich China would overturn any balance of power."

Liberal and realist prescriptions are similarly at odds on Japanese military power. For liberals, a stronger Japan would be at worst harmless, since Japan is a democracy and a long-standing ally of the United States. For realists, however, a Japan armed with military power commensurate with its economic power, "unless it is pinned down by a powerful common enemy, is a potential threat. It would be the strongest military power in Asia, and the second-ranking one in the world." The fact that Japan is democratic is no guarantee of peace. Indeed, some observers doubt that Japan really is or will remain a democracy in Western terms.

Betts (who leans toward the realist perspective) believes that China is "the state most likely over time to disturb equilibrium in the region—and the world." Even by conservative estimates, he notes, China is not far from becoming an economic superpower. With just "a bit of bad luck," Betts warns, China's economic development could make the old Soviet military threat seem almost modest. In any case, in dealing with a prosperous China, the only alternatives for the United States "will be to accept Chinese hegemony in the region or to balance Chinese power" with what he calls "polite containment."

Fighting the Last War

"Down the Hatch" by Eliot A. Cohen, in *The New Republic* (Mar. 7, 1994), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

In the difficult effort to chart a course in the post-Cold War world, the Clinton administration's 1993 "bottom-up review" of defense policy is a major policy statement. Unfortunately, argues Cohen, director of the strategic studies program at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, it does not supply the radical rethinking of U.S. military needs that is needed. Mincing no words, he calls the report "timid," "conservative," and "possibly dangerous."

The review is unrealistic on several levels,

Losing the Peace?

Václav Havel, president of the Czech Republic, in *Foreign Affairs* (Mar.–Apr. 1994):

If we in [the] "postcommunist" countries call for a new order, if we appeal to the West not to close itself off to us, and if we demand a radical reevaluation of the new situation, then this is not because we are concerned about our own security and stability, and not only because we feel that the security of the West itself is at stake. The reason is far deeper than that. We are concerned about the destiny of the values and principles that communism denied, and in whose name we resisted communism and ultimately brought it down. . . .

Naturally, all of us continue to pay lip service to democracy, human rights, the order of nature and responsibility for the world, but apparently only insofar as it does not require any sacrifice. By that, I do not mean, of course, merely sacrifice in the form of fallen soldiers. The West has made, and continues to make, such sacrifices. . . . I have in mind, rather, sacrifice in a less conspicuous but infinitely broader sense, that is, a willingness to sacrifice for the common interest something of one's own particular interests, including even the quest for larger and larger domestic production and consumption.