

Searching for a Cause

by George Friedman - July 15, 2024

The instability in the United States predicted by **our model** continued this weekend with the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump. It should be remembered that our model, defined by 50-year socio-economic and 80-year institutional cycles, simply notes historical rhythms and assumes that they tend to repeat themselves. So far, the model has tended to be correct. But it provides no explanation of why there is an orderly parade of events. It does not explain the most important thing: causation. The only argument for the model is that it has worked so far. Given this, it would seem likely that this cycle of unrest will last until 2028.

It seems that elections, rather than periods of time, are the markers for this model, which is marked by two terms of tension followed by a new president who calms things down. Such was the case for Franklin D. Roosevelt, who oversaw the Great Depression and World War II. Such was also the case for Ronald Reagan, who oversaw the tension of the culture wars that arose partly from the Vietnam War.

According to our model, they were both critical presidents who, to a great extent, ended the crisis of their times. The question is: Was it they who stabilized the situation, or was it someone or something else? In both cases, tension was overridden by a more powerful force, and each leader used that force to calm the system. For Roosevelt, it was World War II that stabilized the economy and created a new sense of unity. For Reagan, it was the collapse of the Soviet Union that rendered Vietnam marginal and gave the government a sense of competence and achievement.

Coming back to the question of how this ends, it would seem that a foreign policy success in or about 2028 could calm the system. World War II and the Cold War were major events with far-reaching consequences. It's hard to see anything at this point that could similarly affect the global system.

Therein lies the problem: There is an order to the political system that is easy to see but hard to explain. **I forecast the current domestic crisis** but gave no reason for its occurrence. And when a method has worked without explanation, it is hard not to use and build on it.

The point here is that, based on our model, it appears that the tension of the sorts that we are seeing now will continue until 2028. The inability to explain why something works calls for caution in both using it and ignoring it.

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