AP American Government: Unit VIII
The Executive Branch

Thursday 12/5 :Assessing Presidential Greatness Criteria(Group Activity)

Friday 12/6 Quiz:368-379/Assessing Greatness(Group Activity)

Monday	12/9	Summary:"The Presidential Difference" by Fred Greenstein due. (In Packet). Class discussion of article.
Tuesday	12/10	***Quiz 379-390/*** **Finish Mr. Smith Goes to Washington**
Wednesday	12/11	**Mock Senate, Opening Session.**

Thursday	12/12	**Mock Senate**
Friday	12/13	**Mock Senate Assembly Schedule.**
Monday	12/16	**Mock Senate**
Tuesday	12/17	**Mock Senate (EA!)**
Wednesday	12/18	Semester Exams: **Book Reviews Due!**

Friday 1/24 **Essay** Format Test Questions - 2 Required questions **-45 Minutes**

Friday 1/24 **Essay** Format Test Questions - 2 Required questions -**45 Minutes**

AP American Government: Unit VIII

The Executive Branch

Thursday 12/5 :Assessing Presidential Greatness Criteria(Group Activity)

Friday 12/6 Quiz:368-379/Assessing Greatness(Group Activity)

Monday	12/9	Summary:"The Presidential Difference" by Fred Greenstein due. (In Packet). Class discussion of article.
Tuesday	12/10	***Quiz 379-390/*** **Finish Mr. Smith Goes to Washington**
Wednesday	12/11	**Mock Senate, Opening Session.**

Thursday	12/12	**Mock Senate**
Friday	12/13	**Mock Senate Assembly Schedule.**
Monday	12/16	**Mock Senate**
Tuesday	12/17	**Mock Senate (EA!)**
Wednesday	12/18	Semester Exams: **Book Reviews Due!**

Friday	1/24	**Essay** Format Test Questions - 2 Required questions -**45 Minutes**

12

THE PRESIDENCY

The American presidency is a unique office. Presidents can send the most formidable military forces of the world into combat but can also have Congress reject their most treasured programs. The key to understanding this paradox is found in the system of separation of powers.

KEY TERMS

ad hoc structure
cabinet
circular structure
divided government
electoral college
executive privilege
impeachment
impoundment of funds
independent agencies
pocket veto
presidential coattails
presidential succession
pyramid structure
Twenty-fifth Amendment
Twenty-second Amendment
unified government
veto
White House office

KEY CONCEPTS

- The powers of the presidency are constrained by the separation of powers in the Constitution.
- The executive branch includes the president's personal staff, the cabinet, and many other agencies that report to him.
- Presidential power often rests on the president's ability to persuade, as well as the checks and balances he has on other branches of government.
- Presidents bring to office a program they hope to enact during their terms.
- Succession to presidents who leave office because of death, impeachment, or incapacitation has been clarified over the span of American history.

The Framers also gave the president the power to make treaties and to appoint ambassadors, judges, and high officials, but because the Senate must give its consent, these powers are shared. In addition, the Framers gave the president the power to approve legislation.

Perhaps even greater than these explicit presidential powers have been those informal powers that lie in manipulating politics and public opinion. Americans increasingly look to the president for leadership and hold him responsible for a large and growing portion of our national affairs.

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The executive branch includes four areas:

- **The White House Office** The president's closest assistants have offices in the White House, usually in its West Wing. Titles vary from administration to administration, but in general the men and women who hold these offices oversee the political and policy interests of the president. They are not confirmed by the Senate and can be hired and fired at the president's will. There are three ways that presidents can organize their personal staffs:

AP Tip

A president's leadership style, which says much about the way an administration will evolve, is often a topic on the AP exam.

  - **Pyramid structure** Most assistants report through a hierarchy to a chief of staff, who then deals directly with the president. The Eisenhower, Nixon, and Reagan administrations are examples of this.
  - **Circular structure** The assistants in the West Wing report directly to the president, with no screening by the chief of staff. Carter's administration is a good example. This is also known as a wheel-and-spokes structure.
  - **Ad hoc structure** Task forces, committees, and informal groups of friends and advisers deal directly with the president. For example, Clinton's health care policy was headed not by a cabinet member but by First Lady Hillary Clinton.

- **The Executive Office of the President** Agencies in the Executive Office report directly to the president and perform staff services for him. Unlike the White House staff, Executive Office appointments must receive Senate confirmation. The principal agencies are the Office of Management and Budget (which assembles the budget), the Central Intelligence Agency, the Council of Economic Advisers, the Office of Personnel Management, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

Another form of presidential power is the ability to prevent other branches of government from pushing their agendas. Presidents can use their powers by saying "no" in a number of ways:

- **The budget** The president's staff and the Office of Management and Budget put together budget proposals to present to Congress. An administration's priorities and policies show up there, and the president can say "no" by excluding agency proposals from the final budget.
- **Veto** The president can send a veto message to Congress within ten days of the bill's passage. In it he sets forth his reasons for not signing the bill. A bill that has been returned to Congress with a veto message can be passed if two-thirds of each house votes to override the veto. Congress rarely overrides vetoes. Attempts at line-item vetoes (approving some provisions of a bill but rejecting others) were made in 1996, but the Supreme Court has ruled them unconstitutional. A bill that is not signed or vetoed within ten days while Congress is still in session becomes law automatically, without the president's approval. A pocket veto occurs when the president does not sign the bill within ten days and Congress has already adjourned. The bill does not become law.
- **Executive privilege** Confidential communications between the president and his advisers do not have to be disclosed. The justification for this practice has been the separation of powers and the need a president has for candid advice. During the Watergate scandal, President Nixon refused to turn over tape recordings of White House conversations. The Supreme Court, ruling on executive privilege for the first time, held that there was a sound basis for the practice, particularly in military and diplomatic matters, but there was no immunity from judicial process under all circumstances.
- **Impoundment of funds** From time to time presidents have refused to spend money appropriated by Congress. In response to President Nixon's impoundments in 1972, the Budget Reform Act of 1974 was passed. The act requires presidents to notify Congress of funds they do not intend to spend. Congress must agree within forty-five days to delete the item. If Congress doesn't agree with the impoundment of funds, the president is required to spend the money. The act also requires presidents to notify Congress of delays in spending.

THE PRESIDENT'S PROGRAM

Modern presidents are expected to have a program when they take office—for example, Reagan's commitment to tax cuts and larger military expenditures, Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. There are two ways for a president to develop a program. One, exemplified by Presidents Carter and Clinton, is to have a policy on almost everything. Another way, illustrated by President Reagan, is to concentrate on three or four major initiatives or themes and leave everything else to subordinates. In either case, a president's resources in developing a program include interest groups, aides, campaign advisers, federal departments and agencies, and various specialists.

13

THE BUREAUCRACY

The federal bureaucracy is a complex web of federal agencies with overlapping jurisdictions. Most people think of the bureaucracy as wasteful, confusing, and rigid. Because the bureaucracy has such a large and complex organization, it is easy to find examples supporting this view. A closer look at the bureaucracy reveals that there is satisfaction with many aspects of government services and that many of the bureaucracy's problems are the result of actions taken by Congress, the courts, and the president.

KEY TERMS

- civil service
- competitive service
- congressional oversight
- discretionary authority
- excepted service
- iron triangle
- issue networks
- laissez-faire
- merit system
- National Performance Review
- Office of Personnel Management
- patronage
- Pendleton Act
- red tape

KEY CONCEPTS

- The federal bureaucracy grew dramatically as a result of the Great Depression and World War II.
- Federal agencies have substantial power in setting policy.
- The characteristics of bureaucrats generally reflect those of the American public.
- Congressional oversight is an important check on the powers of the bureaucracy.
- Several impressions of the federal bureaucracy are constant subjects of reform.

Congress has delegated substantial authority to administrative agencies in three areas:

- paying subsidies to particular groups and organizations in society (for example, farmers, veterans, scientists, schools, universities, hospitals)
- transferring money from the federal government to state and local governments through grants
- devising and enforcing regulations for various sectors of society, particularly the economy, schools, health care, roads, and telecommunications

BUREAUCRATS

Bureaucrats—employees of agencies or bureaus—are distinct from elected officials. While in practice bureaucrats have some discretionary authority (for example, police do not arrest every lawbreaker they see), only elected officials are supposed to have discretionary authority. This explains why bureaucrats are insulated from being fired for political purposes and why bureaucrats must engage in seemingly redundant procedures and rules. These assure that policies made at the top are carried out throughout the organization and that every citizen is treated the same way.

The activities and powers of various agencies have tremendous impact on public policy. An understanding of who runs and works in those agencies is important:

- **Recruitment and retention** The federal civil service system was designed to recruit qualified people on the basis of merit and to retain and promote employees on the basis of performance. Many federal officials belong to the *competitive service,* in which they are appointed only after they have passed a written examination. Employees hired outside the competitive service are part of the *excepted service*—they are not hired based on an exam but, typically, are hired in a nonpartisan fashion. Most bureaucrats cannot be easily fired, although there are informal methods of discipline. When bureaucrats do get fired, the process of dismissal often takes more than a year.
- **Personal and professional attributes** The bureaucracy is a cross section of American society in terms of the education, sex, race, and social origins of its members. As is the case in the general workforce, African Americans and other minorities are most likely to be heavily represented in the lowest grade levels and tend to be underrepresented at the executive level. Because of the civil service system, bureaucracies were, for a long time, less discriminatory in hiring minorities and women than private businesses were. At higher levels, the typical civil servant is a middle-aged male with a college degree whose father was somewhat more advantaged than the average citizen. While career civil servants are more progovernment

given program. This may be permanent, or it may be renewed each year. Third, even funds that have been authorized cannot be spent unless they are also appropriated. The House Appropriations Committee and its various subcommittees make appropriations annually.

The House Appropriations Committee has special power over agencies. The committee can recommend an amount lower than what an agency has requested and can revise or amend an agency's budget request. Both practices have the effect of strong congressional influence on agency policy. Although the Appropriations Committee does not have the power it once did, it still is the single most powerful influence on agency spending and policy.

Congress can also investigate agencies by holding hearings. Although the power to investigate is only implied in the Constitution, the Supreme Court has consistently upheld Congress's right to investigate. Investigations are generally used as a means for checking agency discretion and also for authorizing agency actions independent of presidential preferences.

REFORMING THE BUREAUCRACY

There are five frequently mentioned problems with the bureaucracy:

- **Red tape** Too many complex rules and procedures must be followed to get something done.
- **Conflict** Some agencies seem to be working at cross-purposes with other agencies.
- **Duplication** Two government agencies seem to be doing the same thing.
- **Imperialism** Agencies tend to grow without regard to the benefits that their programs confer or the costs that they entail.
- **Waste** Agencies spend more than is necessary to buy some products and services.

These problems do exist, but they are overstated and have logical origins in the Constitution and the policy-making process. For example, conflict and duplication occur because Congress, in setting up agencies and programs, often wants to achieve a number of different, partially inconsistent goals or cannot decide which goal it values most. Red tape and waste result from the obligation of bureaucrats to execute policy in accord with the rules set by elected officials and political appointees. It is noteworthy in regard to bureaucratic problems that while people are likely to say that they have a poor opinion of "the bureaucracy," they also often say that they have had good experiences with the bureaucrats with whom they have dealt personally.

Bureaucratic reform is always difficult to accomplish. Most rules and red tape grow out of struggles between the president and Congress. Periods of divided government make matters worse. This does not mean that reform is impossible, only that it is very difficult. There have been many attempts to make the bureaucracy work better for less money. Several reforms have stressed presidential control over the bureaucracy for the sake of efficiency, accountability, and

lminated in the partition of Vietnam into a communist North and a ncommunist South.

One member of Eisenhower's administration who disagreed with s decision not to take military action was the official next in the line presidential succession, Vice President Richard M. Nixon. Would ixon have committed American military power in Indochina if he ad been president? That can never be known with certainty, but it is kely that he would have.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson faced a similar choice. The merican-backed South Vietnam government was in danger of falling the Vietnamese communists. On January 27, Johnson's top advisers resented him with two options: seek negotiations and "salvage what ttle can be preserved with no major addition to our present military sks" or "use our military power in the Far East to force a change of ommunist policy." Johnson opted for military power, first ordering he bombing of North Vietnam and then committing a mounting U.S. round force to combat in Vietnam. By 1968, a half-million American oldiers were mired in Southeast Asia, at which point Johnson nnounced that he would halt the military buildup, seek negotiations vith the communists, and remove himself from the running for a second elected term.

Again the vice president did not agree with the president's deciion. Shortly after the bombing began, Hubert H. Humphrey sent ohnson a confidential memorandum warning of the risk of becoming mbroiled in an unpopular war in Vietnam, and urging Johnson to apply his political skills to finding a diplomatic solution. Johnson reprimanded Humphrey for venturing an opinion on the matter and excluded him from meetings on Vietnam until he fell in line behind the administration's military effort. Would a President Humphrey have taken a different course of action than Johnson? The answer is unknowable, but it is probable that he would have.[1]

The United States is said to have a government of laws and institutions rather than individuals, but as these examples remind us, it is one in which the matter of who occupies the nation's highest office can have profound repercussions. That is not everywhere the case. In

Great Britain, with its tradition of collective leadership, for example, the rare Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, or Tony Blair is far outnumbered by the many Stanley Baldwins, Harold Wilsons, and John Majors, whose personal impact on governmental actions is at best limited.

If some higher power had set out to design a democracy in which the individual on top mattered, the result might well resemble the American political system. American chief executives have placed their stamp on the nation's policies since the founding of the Republic, but until the 1930s, Congress typically took the lead in policymaking, and the programs of the federal government were of modest importance for the nation and world.

Then came the emergence of what is commonly called the modern presidency. Under the stimulus of the New Deal, World War II, and the entrepreneurial leadership of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, there was a vast expansion of the scope and influence of the federal government. Meanwhile, the United States became a world and then a nuclear power, and the presidency underwent fundamental changes that increase the likelihood that the personal attributes distinguishing one White House incumbent from another will shape political outcomes.

The chief executive became the principal source of policy initiative, proposing much of the legislation considered by Congress. Presidents began to make an increasing amount of policy independent of the legislature, drawing on their sweeping administrative powers in an era of activist government and global leadership. The president became the most visible landmark in the political landscape, virtually standing for the federal government in the minds of many Americans. And the Executive Office of the President was created, providing the president with the organizational support needed to carry out his—and someday her—obligations.*

The power of modern American presidents manifests itself in its

*I use the masculine pronoun throughout to avoid gender-free locutions in discussing an office that has had only male incumbents at the time of writing. It is highly unlikely, however, that the presidency will remain a male bastion.

nessed to a *vision* of public policy. The fifth is the *cognitive style* with which the president processes the Niagara of advice and information that comes his way. The last is what the German sociologist Max Weber called "the firm taming of the soul" and has come to be referred to as *emotional intelligence*—the president's ability to manage his emotions and turn them to constructive purposes, rather than being dominated by them and allowing them to diminish his leadership.[3]

I embarked on an extended inquiry into the endlessly fascinating occupants of the modern Oval Office early in 1974, when the presidency of Richard Nixon was on the rocks. Why, I wondered, was that politically gifted chief executive, whose first term had resulted in such dramatic achievements as the opening to China and détente with the Soviet Union, succumbing to what was plainly a self-inflicted political disaster? Rather than confining myself to the enigma of Richard Nixon, I decided to examine presidential political psychology broadly, studying the full array of modern chief executives. In the following years, I immersed myself in the literature on the presidents from FDR to Bill Clinton, mined their unpublished papers, and interviewed large numbers of past and current presidential associates. I also have had informative personal encounters with several of the protagonists of my study, three of which help frame what follows.

In 1977, I led a group of undergraduates in an interview with the recently defeated Gerald Ford. Mindful of the personal toll the presidency had taken on Johnson and Nixon, I asked Ford how he dealt with the pressures of his job. His answer bespoke the even-tempered composure of a stolid son of the Midwest:

> I had to have a physical outlet—swimming or some other activity—that burned up those juices that were not normally consumed during the day. . . . But I found that the pressures I had read about were not nearly as severe as I expected, as long as my staff organized them properly.[4]

The second encounter, which was with Jimmy Carter, was marked by anything but equanimity. Carter's first public appearance after stepping down from office in January 1981 was an informal visit to Princeton University during which he met with the students in my presidency course. One of them asked him what he had found most and least rewarding about being president. He replied by excoriating the Democratic party for not rallying behind his policies, mentioning nothing positive about his White House experience.

Another student observed that Carter had initially managed his own White House but had later appointed a chief of staff. Was this, the questioner asked, because he discovered that the demands on a president had become too great for him to administer his own presidency? For reasons that were unclear, Carter took umbrage at the question, denying that he had ever taken the highly publicized action of appointing a chief of staff. By the end of this unexpectedly contentious session, it was not hard to understand why Carter had failed to bond with the rest of the political community.

The third experience was with Bill Clinton, who had barely been in my line of vision until the final months of 1991. My first clear impression of Clinton came via C-Span. In January and February of 1992, Clinton had survived charges of adultery and draft evasion, run a stronger-than-expected race in New Hampshire, swept the southern primaries, and become the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination.

In March, I happened on a telecast of Clinton addressing an African American church congregation that could scarcely have been more responsive if Martin Luther King had been in the pulpit. Speaking with ease and self-assurance, Clinton issued a call for policies that would enable citizens to lift themselves by their bootstraps rather than relying on government handouts. Explaining that he was making the same proposal to audiences of whites, Clinton called on all Americans to put aside their differences and recognize their common bonds.[5]

It was an electric performance by a man who seemed on his way to a presidency of great accomplishments. Instead, Clinton went on to preside over one of the most ragged first two years in office of any modern president. He only hit his stride after his party lost control of Congress in the 1994 midterm election, when he made effective use of

❖❖ The constitutional and statutory *authority* of the president is indeed extraordinary. However, it is more important to point out that the actual power of the president depends upon his political abilities. The president must act within the framework of a complex and diversified political constituency. He can use the authority of his office to buttress his strength, but this alone is not sufficient. Somehow he must be able to persuade those with whom he deals to follow him; otherwise, he will be weak and ineffective.

40

Richard E. Neustadt
PRESIDENTIAL POWER

In the United States we like to "rate" a president. We measure him as "weak" or "strong" and call what we are measuring his "leadership." We do not wait until a man is dead; we rate him from the moment he takes office. We are quite right to do so. His office has become the focal point of politics and policy in our political system. Our commentators and our politicians make a specialty of taking the man's measurements. The rest of us join in when we feel "government" impinging on our private lives. In the third quarter of the twentieth century millions of us have that feeling often.

. . . Although we all make judgments about presidential leadership, we often base our judgments upon images of office that are far removed from the reality. We also use those images when we tell one another whom to choose as president. But it is risky to appraise a man in office or to choose a man for office on false premises about the nature of his job. When the job is the presidency of the United States the risk becomes excessive. . . .

We deal here with the president himself and with his influence on governmental action. In institutional terms the presidency now includes 2,000 men and women. The president is only one of them. But *his* performance scarcely can be measured without focusing on *him.* In terms of party, or of country, or the West, so-called, his leadership involves far more than governmental action. But the sharpening of spirit and of values and of purposes is not done in a vacuum. Although governmental action may not be the whole of leadership, all else is nurtured by it and gains meaning from it. Yet if we treat the presidency as the president, we cannot measure him as though he were the government. Not action

Reprinted with permission of Macmillan Publishing Company from *Presidential Power* by Richard E. Neustadt. Copyright © 1986 by Macmillan Publishing Company.

A modern president is bound to face demands for aid and service from five more or less distinguishable sources: the Executive officialdom, from Congress, from his partisans, from citizens at large, and from abroad. The presidency's clerkship is expressive of these pressures. In effect they are constituency pressures and each president has five sets of constituents. The five are not distinguished by their membership; membership is obviously an overlapping matter. And taken one by one they do not match the man's electorate; one of them, indeed, is outside his electorate. They are distinguished, rather, by their different claims upon him. Initiatives are what they want, for five distinctive reasons. Since government and politics have offered no alternative, our laws and customs turn those wants into his obligations.

Why, then, is the president not guaranteed an influence commensurate with services performed? Constituent relations are relations of dependence. Everyone with any share in governing this country will belong to one (or two, or three) of his "constituencies." Since everyone depends on him why is he not assured of everyone's support? The answer is that no one else sits where he sits, or sees quite as he sees; no one else feels the full weight of his obligations. Those obligations are a tribute to his unique place in our political system. But just because it is unique they fall on him alone. *The same conditions that promote his leadership in form preclude a guarantee of leadership in fact.* No man or group at either end of Pennsylvania Avenue shares his peculiar status in our government and politics. That is why his services are in demand. By the same token, though, the obligations of all other men are different from his own. His Cabinet officers have departmental duties and constituents. His legislative leaders head *Congressional* parties, one in either House. His national party organization stands apart from his official family. His political allies in the states need not face Washington, or one another. The private groups that seek him out are not compelled to govern. And friends abroad are not compelled to run in our elections. Lacking his position and prerogatives, these men cannot regard his obligations as his own. They have their jobs to do; none is the same as his. As they perceive their duty they may find it right to follow him, in fact, or they may not. Whether they will feel obliged *on their responsibility* to do what he wants done remains an open question. . . .

There is reason to suppose that in the years immediately ahead the power problems of a president will remain what they have been in the decades just behind us. If so there will be equal need for presidential expertise of the peculiar sort . . . that has [been] stressed [i.e., political skill]. Indeed, the need is likely to be greater. The president himself and with him the whole government are likely to be more than ever at the mercy of his personal approach.

What may the sixties do to politics and policy and to the place of presidents in our political system? The sixties may destroy them as we know them; that goes without saying. But barring deep depression or unlimited war, a total transformation is the least of likelihoods. Without catastrophes of those dimensions nothing in our past experience suggests that we shall see either consensus of the sort available to F.D.R. in 1933 and 1942, or popular demand for institutional adjustments likely to assist a president. Lacking popular demand, the natural con-

Excerpted from Marc Landy and Sydney M. Milkis, ***Presidential Greatness*** (University Press of Kansas, 2001).

1

PRESIDENTIAL GREATNESS AND DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

The scandalous politics of Bill Clinton's second term, which saw the president of the United States ensnared by revelations of an affair with a White House intern, deeply embarrassed the nation. Nonetheless, these events also provided an opportunity to revisit the most fundamental issues of leadership in contemporary American democracy: the role of public opinion in representative government, the relative weight of the executive and legislative branches of government, the uneasy relationship between a free press and democratic leadership, and the line between private morality and public authority. The role that morality and character play in presidential leadership is an especially fascinating and troubling matter. Even as he became the first president in 130 years to be impeached by the House, Bill Clinton had remarkable support among the public, which approved of the way he governed.

In truth, Clinton's resiliency testified not only to his record of achievement but also to the public's disdain for the zealousness with which the special prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, pursued the investigation of the president's peccadilloes and the alacrity with which a Congress bitterly divided by partisanship supported it. But Americans distinguished sharply between Clinton the chief executive, of whom they approved, and Clinton the man, whom they regarded as immoral and untrustworthy. Thus, even though the Senate acquitted the president on the impeachment charges, Clinton faced an erosion of credibility, which weakened severely his ability to command the nation.

That a constitutional crisis could be brought by such a tawdry episode led government officials, pundits, and a benumbed public to decry the current state of leadership in American politics—to lament the absence of great leaders like Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt as well as the fractious state of American democracy, which appeared to make such extraordinary statesmanship a chimera. This book attempts to recapture our understand-

it to be more energetic and public spirited. Just as a parent is held responsible for the moral and practical education of his children, so a president bears a large share of responsibility for the public's civic education. A democratic leader is one who takes the public to school.[6]

By these criteria, the great presidents did indeed provide meaningful democratic leadership. Washington apart, they all were either founders or refounders of political parties. Parties, we will argue, are the most important source of democratic presidential accountability. And although the great presidents were revolutionaries, they were revolutionaries of a distinctly conservative stripe.[7] They taught the citizenry about the need for great change but also about how to reconcile change with American constitutional traditions and purposes. Their capacity to rule and be ruled by their party, and the rhetorical capacity to tie fundamental changes to enduring political verities, made the presidential greats great democratic presidents. Even as they transformed the country, they remained rooted in a democratic polity that had the wit and self-possession to hold them accountable. Such ties liberate, even as they bind. The great presidents were not apart from democratic politics; they mastered it.

THE PRESIDENT AS CONSERVATOR

In probing the meaning of "conservative revolution," the title "president" is intriguing. To preside is different than to lead, direct, or control. It connotes a responsibility for preserving harmony and coherence. But preside over what? Prior to the adoption of the Constitution, the title had been used for the presiding officer of Congress and of many other legislative bodies, including the Constitutional Convention.[8] But the president created in 1787 has no specific presiding responsibilities. Rather, the notion of presiding must be understood in a broader sense. As the president's oath of office states, he has the responsibility "to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution itself." The actual language of the president's oath is included in the Constitution. These words were not written frivolously, but were intended to convey his solemn duty to preside over an entire constitutional order. This is his deepest conservative duty: to stand guard over a system that is meant to hold him in check.[9]

As James Madison noted in the famous *Federalist* No. 10, the political order created by the Constitution was a republican rather than a purely democratic one.[10] By this he meant that the complex system of divided and separated powers in the Constitution had several purposes in addition to

promoting democratic rule. It was intended to mediate between partisan factions, as well as between representatives and the people, to "protect the people against their own temporary errors and delusions." Its objective was to cultivate the "cool and deliberate sense of the community . . . ," to "refine and enlarge the public views."

In *Federalist* No. 71, Alexander Hamilton elaborated on the special responsibility of the president within the constitutional frame. "There are some who would be inclined to regard the servile pliancy of the executive to a prevailing current, either in the community or the legislature, as its best recommendation," he lamented. This "crude notion" of representative government failed to grasp that the "republican principle . . . did not require an unqualified complaisance to every sudden breeze of passion or every transient impulse which the people may receive from the arts of men, who flatter their prejudices to betray their interests." Rather, Hamilton argued, "when occasions present themselves in which the interests of the people are at variance with their inclinations, it is the duty of the persons whom they have appointed to be the guardians of those interests to withstand the temporary delusion in order to give them time and opportunity for cool and sedate reflection."[11]

This sense of "guardianship" was not confined to ardent defenders of executive power such as Hamilton. Thomas Jefferson, whose concept of the president's authority was far more circumspect, was no less committed to the idea of the executive's responsibility to protect the constitutional order. Only the president could "command a view of the whole ground" and was thus deserving of the people's "support against the errors of others, who may condemn what they would not if seen in all its parts."[12]

In probing the roots of executive authority, therefore, we must try to understand the republican as well as the democratic aspects of the presidency. Yet as the guardian of the people's interests, the executive was not expected to have unlimited power. Just as the Constitution places limits on the arbitrary actions of the people, so it constrained their tribune. To prevent executive guardianship from becoming despotic, the framers regularized it as an office in a constitutional framework, juxtaposing its power with that of the judiciary and legislature. "Ambition would counteract ambition."[13] The hope was that presidents would not simply become frustrated by the limits of power but, in upholding their powers, play a critical part in defending the people's liberties.

It was Lincoln who acknowledged that "public opinion in this country is everything."[14] At the same time, he grasped that the president's constitutional duty was not merely to rouse public opinion but to temper it. The duty to temper imposes various demands on the president. For example, to

Pericles is at least as famous for what he said as for what he did. His funeral oration remains perhaps the most moving of all utterances designed to encourage democratic citizens to live up to their political obligations.

Washington was hardly an orator of Periclean dimensions. Still, in his Farewell Address, he undertook a similarly ambitious effort to educate his fellow citizens. He reminded them of their most important political responsibilities and warned them against the most appealing and therefore the most dangerous political temptations to which they were subjected.

And yet one's admiration of Washington should not blind one to the inadequacy of the model he provides of democratic presidential leadership. Thucydides' criticism of Pericles applies with equal force to him. Their success was too dependent on the absence of rivals. Both, because of their extraordinary gifts and the circumstances in which they came to rule, were able to suppress rivalry and factionalism. But they left no legacy capable of suppressing those centrifugal forces in their absence. Thucydides ends the paean to Pericles with the following dispirited observation:

> But his successors, who were more on a level with each other and each of whom aimed at occupying the first place, adopted methods of demagogy which resulted in their losing control over the actual conduct of affairs.[17]

PARTY

From ancient Athens to today, the disruption of democracy by rivalry and factionalism has remained endemic. Ironically, the best means for taming factionalism and reconciling rivalry with lawful rotation in power has proved to be an institution that Washington feared and despised—political party. To compound the irony, Thomas Jefferson, who shared Washington's antipathy, created the first great democratic political party. Jefferson was a better builder than he was an architect. His vision was to create the party that would end party, that would erase the Federalist-inspired perversions of the Constitution and restore and strengthen it to such an extent that constitutional liberties would no longer require partisan defense. It fell to his erstwhile disciple, Martin Van Buren, a man who inspired few "lasting monuments," to recognize that one party would inevitably degenerate into no party and that the full defense of the Constitution required the establishment of a *party system*. The mantle of greatness was bestowed not on Van Buren, the operative and theoretician, but on the one who actually presided

over the establishment of the party system, Andrew Jackson. When that system threatened to degenerate into mere bread and circuses, Lincoln presided over the creation of a new great party of principle.

Seminal scholars of the party system such as James Ceaser, Walter Dean Burnham, and Wilson C. McWilliams have described how party came to the rescue of American constitutional democracy and how great presidents founded, led, and were disciplined by party.

James Sterling Young describes how the nonpartisan Era of Good Feelings led to an attenuation of concern for and interest in the national project. It was the Jacksonian revitalization of political life, reestablishing a vital link between local and national politics via party, that reinvigorated national attachments. More to the point, Jacksonian democracy reestablished a responsible relationship between the president and the people. Nomination and election by mass political parties gave the president the stature of a popular spokesman; equally important, the party system made the executive accountable to a collective organization with a past and a future—to a national institution that enlarged even as it restrained presidential ambition.[18]

Parties reflected the concern first expressed by the Anti-Federalists, and later revived by Jefferson and Madison, that the Constitution did not adequately provide for the cultivation of an active and competent citizenry. Forged on the anvil of Jeffersonian democracy, political parties were conceived as bulwarks of decentralization, as localized political associations that could provide a vital link between constitutional offices, especially the executive, and the people. They would do so by balancing state and local communities, championed by the Anti-Federalists, and the national government, strengthened by the Constitution of 1787.[19]

Paradoxically, patriotism in the United States would grow out of the provinces. Even as they supported a decentralization of power, political parties discouraged sectionalism. Jacksonian parties found their strength principally in the political combat of presidential elections—a battleground that encouraged partisans to overlook their differences in the interest of victory. As Van Buren recognized, party provided the only plausible means for tempting southerners and northerners to overlook their grave differences for the greater good of winning elections. This "greater good" was composed of both principle and pelf. The infamous "spoils system" was designed to give aspiring politicians of whatever region a strong incentive to stick by a party capable of winning national elections. Strict adherence to Jeffersonian political doctrine was equally vital for compelling Democrats to overlook sectionally inspired differences.

the way in which he makes decisions. From the very beginning the office was thought of in highly personal terms, for the framers of the Constitution, in part at least, built the office around the character of George Washington, who virtually everyone at the time thought would be the first occupant of the office. And evolution of the office since 1787 has added to its personal quotient. James David Barber provides a framework for the analysis of presidential character and its effect upon performance in the White House.

42

James David Barber
THE PRESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

When a citizen votes for a presidential candidate he makes, in effect, a prediction. He chooses from among the contenders the one he thinks (or feels, or guesses) would be the best president. He operates in a situation of immense uncertainty. If he has a long voting history, he can recall time and time again when he guessed wrong. He listens to the commentators, the politicians, and his friends, then adds it all up in some rough way to produce his prediction and his vote. Earlier in the game, his anticipations have been taken into account, either directly in the polls and primaries or indirectly in the minds of politicians who want to nominate someone he will like. But he must choose in the midst of a cloud of confusion, a rain of phony advertising, a storm of sermons, a hail of complex issues, a fog of charisma and boredom, and a thunder of accusation and defense. In the face of this chaos, a great many citizens fall back on the past, vote their old allegiances, and let it go at that. Nevertheless, the citizen's vote says that on balance he expects Mr. X would outshine Mr. Y in the presidency.

This [book] is meant to help citizens and those who advise them cut through the confusion and get at some clear criteria for choosing presidents. To understand what actual presidents do and what potential presidents might do, the first need is to see the man whole—not as some abstract embodiment of civic virtue, some scorecard of issue stands, or some reflection of a faction, but as a human being like the rest of us, a person trying to cope with a difficult environment. To that task he brings his own character, his own view of the world, his own political style. None of that is new for him. If we can see the pattern he has set for his political life we

Excerpted from James David Barber, *The Presidential Character*, 2d and 3d editions (Prentice-Hall, Inc.). © 1972, 1977, 1985 by James David Barber. Reprinted by permission of the author.

talents—Coolidge-type or Roosevelt-type—the president is the only available object for such national-religious-monarchical sentiments as Americans possess.

The president helps people make sense of politics. Congress is a tangle of committees, the bureaucracy is a maze of agencies. The president is one man trying to do a job—a picture much more understandable to the mass of people who find themselves in the same boat. Furthermore, he is the top man. He ought to know what is going on and set it right. So when the economy goes sour, or war drags on, or domestic violence erupts, the president is available to take the blame. Then when things go right, it seems the president must have had a hand in it. Indeed, the flow of political life is marked off by presidents: the "Eisenhower Era," the "Kennedy Years."

What all this means is that the president's *main* responsibilities reach far beyond administering the Executive Branch or commanding the armed forces. The White House is first and foremost a place of public leadership. That inevitably brings to bear on the president intense moral, sentimental, and quasi-religious pressures which can, if he lets them, distort his own thinking and feeling. If there is such a thing as extraordinary sanity, it is needed nowhere so much as in the White House.

Who the president is at a given time can make a profound difference in the whole thrust and direction of national politics. Since we have only one president at a time, we can never prove this by comparison, but even the most superficial speculation confirms the commonsense view that the man himself weighs heavily among other historical factors. A Wilson reelected in 1920, a Hoover in 1932, a John F. Kennedy in 1964 would, it seems very likely, have guided the body politic along rather different paths from those their actual successors chose. Or try to imagine a Theodore Roosevelt ensconced behind today's "bully pulpit" of a presidency, or Lyndon Johnson as president in the age of McKinley. Only someone mesmerized by the lures of historical inevitability can suppose that it would have made little or no difference to government policy had Alf Landon replaced FDR in 1936, had Dewey beaten Truman in 1948, or Adlai Stevenson reigned through the 1950s. Not only would these alternative presidents have advocated different policies—they would have approached the office from very different psychological angles. It stretches credibility to think that Eugene McCarthy would have run the institution the way Lyndon Johnson did.

The burden of this [argument] is that the crucial differences can be anticipated by an understanding of a potential president's character, his world view, and his style. This kind of prediction is not easy; well-informed observers often have guessed wrong as they watched a man step toward the White House. One thinks of Woodrow Wilson, the scholar who would bring reason to politics; of Herbert Hoover, the Great Engineer who would organize chaos into progress; of Franklin D. Roosevelt, that champion of the balanced budget; of Harry Truman, whom the office would surely overwhelm; of Dwight D. Eisenhower, militant crusader; of John F. Kennedy, who would lead beyond moralisms to achievements; of Lyndon B. Johnson, the Southern conservative; and of Richard M. Nixon, conciliator. Spotting the errors is easy. Predicting with even approximate accuracy is going to require some sharp tools and close attention in their use. But the experiment is

media, to large audiences; to deal face to face with other politicians, individually and in small, relatively private groups; and to read, write, and calculate by himself in order to manage the endless flow of details that stream onto his desk. No president can escape doing at least some of each. But there are marked differences in stylistic emphasis from president to president. The *balance* among the three style elements varies; one president may put most of himself into rhetoric, another may stress close, informal dealing, while still another may devote his energies mainly to study and cogitation. Beyond the balance, we want to see each president's peculiar habits of style, his mode of coping with and adapting to these presidential demands. For example, I think both Calvin Coolidge and John F. Kennedy were primarily rhetoricians, but they went about it in contrasting ways.

A president's *world view consists of his primary, politically relevant beliefs, particularly his conceptions of social causality, human nature, and the central moral conflicts of the time.* This is how he sees the world and his lasting opinions about what he sees. Style is his way of acting; world view is his way of seeing. Like the rest of us, a president develops over a lifetime certain conceptions of reality—how things work in politics, what people are like, what the main purposes are. These assumptions or conceptions help him make sense of his world, give some semblance of order to the chaos of existence. Perhaps most important: a man's world view affects what he pays attention to, and a great deal of politics is about paying attention. The name of the game for many politicians is not so much "Do this, do that" as it is "Look here!"

"Character" comes from the Greek word for engraving; in one sense it is what life has marked into a man's being. As used here, *character is the way the president orients himself toward life*—not for the moment, but enduringly. Character is the person's stance as he confronts experience. And at the core of character, a man confronts himself. The president's fundamental self-esteem is his prime personal resource; to defend and advance that, he will sacrifice much else he values. Down there in the privacy of his heart, does he find himself superb, or ordinary, or debased, or in some intermediate range? No president has been utterly paralyzed by self-doubt and none has been utterly free of midnight self-mockery. In between, the real presidents move out on life from positions of relative strength or weakness. Equally important are the criteria by which they judge themselves. A president who rates himself by the standard of achievement, for instance, may be little affected by losses of affection.

Character, world view, and style are abstractions from the reality of the whole individual. In every case they form an integrated pattern: the man develops a combination which makes psychological sense for him, a dynamic arrangement of motives, beliefs, and habits in the service of his need for self-esteem.

THE POWER SITUATION AND "CLIMATE OF EXPECTATIONS"

Presidential character resonates with the political situation the president faces. It adapts him as he tries to adapt it. The support he has from the public and interest

self-images and evaluations, certain ways of looking at the world, certain styles of action get confirmed by his experience and he gradually adopts them as his own. If we can see that process of development, we can understand the product. The features to note are those bearing on presidential performance.

Experimental development continues all the way to death; we will not blind ourselves to midlife changes, particularly in the full-scale prediction case, that of Richard Nixon. But it is often much easier to see the basic patterns in early life histories. Later on a whole host of distractions—especially the image-making all politicians learn to practice—clouds the picture.

In general, character has its *main* development in childhood, world view in adolescence, style in early adulthood. The stance toward life I call character grows out of the child's experiments in relating to parents, brothers and sisters, and peers at play and in school, as well as to his own body and the objects around it. Slowly the child defines an orientation toward experience; once established, that tends to last despite much subsequent contradiction. By adolescence, the child has been hearing and seeing how people make their worlds meaningful, and now he is moved to relate himself—his own meanings—to those around him. His focus of attention shifts toward the future; he senses that decisions about his fate are coming and he looks into the premises for those decisions. Thoughts about the way the world works and how one might work in it, about what people are like and how one might be like them or not, and about the values people share and how one might share in them too—these are typical concerns for the post-child, pre-adult mind of the adolescent.

These themes come together strongly in early adulthood, when the person moves from contemplation to responsible action and adopts a style. In most biographical accounts this period stands out in stark clarity—the time of emergence, the time the young man found himself. I call it his first independent political success. It was then he moved beyond the detailed guidance of his family; then his self-esteem was dramatically boosted; then he came forth as a person to be reckoned with by other people. The *way* he did that is profoundly important to him. Typically he grasps that style and hangs onto it. Much later, coming into the presidency, something in him remembers this earlier victory and reemphasizes the style that made it happen.

Character provides the main thrust and broad direction—but it does not *determine*, in any fixed sense, world view and style. The story of development does not end with the end of childhood. Thereafter, the culture one grows in and the ways that culture is translated by parents and peers shape the meanings one makes of his character. The going world view gets learned and that learning helps channel character forces. Thus it will not necessarily be true that compulsive characters have reactionary beliefs, or that compliant characters believe in compromise. Similarly for style: historical accidents play a large part in furnishing special opportunities for action—and in blocking off alternatives. For example, however much anger a young man may feel, that anger will not be expressed in rhetoric unless and until his life situation provides a platform and an audience. Style thus has a stature and independence of its own. Those who would reduce all explana-

patterns long familiar in psychological research. In summary form, these are the main configurations:

Active-positive: There is a congruence, a consistency, between much activity and the enjoyment of it, indicating relatively high self-esteem and relative success in relating to the environment. The man shows an orientation toward productiveness as a value and an ability to use his styles flexibly, adaptively, suiting the dance to the music. He sees himself as developing over time toward relatively well defined personal goals—growing toward his image of himself as he might yet be. There is an emphasis on rational mastery, on using the brain to move the feet. This may get him into trouble; he may fail to take account of the irrational in politics. Not everyone he deals with sees things his way and he may find it hard to understand why.

Active-negative: The contradiction here is between relatively intense effort and relatively low emotional reward for that effort. The activity has a compulsive quality, as if the man were trying to make up for something or to escape from anxiety into hard work. He seems ambitious, striving upward, power-seeking. His stance toward the environment is aggressive and he has a persistent problem in managing his aggressive feelings. His self-image is vague and discontinuous. Life is a hard struggle to achieve and hold power, hampered by the condemnations of a perfectionistic conscience. Active-negative types pour energy into the political system, but it is an energy distorted from within.

Passive-positive: This is the receptive, compliant, other-directed character whose life is a search for affection as a reward for being agreeable and cooperative rather than personally assertive. The contradiction is between low self-esteem (on grounds of being unlovable, unattractive) and a superficial optimism. A hopeful attitude helps dispel doubt and elicits encouragement from others. Passive-positive types help soften the harsh edges of politics. But their dependence and the fragility of their hopes and enjoyments make disappointment in politics likely.

Passive-negative: The factors are consistent—but how are we to account for the man's *political* role-taking? Why is someone who does little in politics and enjoys it less there at all? The answer lies in the passive-negative's character-rooted orientation toward doing dutiful service; this compensates for low self-esteem based on a sense of uselessness. Passive-negative types are in politics because they think they ought to be. They may be well adapted to certain nonpolitical roles, but they lack the experience and flexibility to perform effectively as political leaders. Their tendency is to withdraw, to escape from the conflict and uncertainty of politics by emphasizing vague principles (especially prohibitions) and procedural arrangements. They become guardians of the right and proper way, above the sordid politicking of lesser men.

ministration's historical reputation; but he left the presidency with the United States close to bankruptcy and secession.

These four presidents—like all presidents—were persons trying to cope with the roles they had won by using the equipment they had built over a lifetime. The President is not some shapeless organism in a flood of novelties, but a man with a memory in a system with a history. Like all of us, he draws on his past to shape his future. The pathetic hope that the White House will turn a Caligula into a Marcus Aurelius is as naive as the fear that ultimate power inevitably corrupts. The problem is to understand—and to state understandably—what in the personal past foreshadows the presidential future. . . .

❖❖ The President and the Media

The media spotlight is on the presidency more than on other governmental institutions. Theodore Roosevelt was the first president to undertake a major effort to co-opt the press, giving Washington reporters space in the White House in order to facilitate his use of them as much as to accommodate the growing presidential press corps. Teddy Roosevelt knew that the press could be an important ally of government, that publicity for presidential policies and actions could help to build public support and ease the job of his administration.

Teddy Roosevelt set a precedent for twentieth-century presidents in recognizing the power of the press and the importance of turning the political reporters' craft to the advantage of the White House by managing the news. Teddy Roosevelt's cousin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, held regular informal press conferences with reporters in the Oval Office, knowing that if he kept them informed of his programs and progress the nation would learn about and, he hoped, support the New Deal.

From the vantage point of the White House, the press, while potentially a useful conduit of managed news, is seen more as a critic than an ally. Presidents tend to view the press as the enemy with which they have to deal. Charged with the responsibility of coping with the press is the presidential press secretary, who conducts daily briefings apprising White House reporters of the president's actions and plans.

A former white House insider, George E. Reedy, portrays the world of the White House reporter and the way in which presidents view and treat the press.

of a foreign dictator. He knew that much. This president and his supporters would seem to have a mind for only one thing -- to take power, to remain in power, and to use that power for the sake of themselves and their friends.

A war will do that as well as anything. You become a wartime leader. The country gets behind you. Dissent becomes inappropriate. And so he does not drop to his knees, he is not contrite, he does not sit in the church with the grieving parents and wives and children. He is the president who does not feel. He does not feel for the families of the dead, he does not feel for the 35 million of us who live in poverty, he does not feel for the 40 percent who cannot afford health insurance, he does not feel for the miners whose lungs are turning black or for the working people he has deprived of the chance to work overtime at time-and-a-half to pay their bills - it is amazing for how many people in this country this president does not feel.

But he will dissemble feeling. He will say in all sincerity he is relieving the wealthiest 1 percent of the population of their tax burden for the sake of the rest of us, and that he is polluting the air we breathe for the sake of our economy, and that he is decreasing the quality of air in coal mines to save the coal miners' jobs, and that he is depriving workers of their time-and-a-half benefits for overtime because this is actually a way to honor them by raising them into the professional class.

And this litany of lies he will versify with reverences for God and the flag and democracy, when just what he and his party are doing to our democracy is choking the life out of it.

But there is one more terribly sad thing about all of this. I remember the millions of people here and around the world who marched against the war. It was extraordinary, that spontaneous aroused oversoul of alarm and protest that transcended national borders. Why did it happen? After all, this was not the only war anyone had ever seen coming. There are little wars all over he world most of the time.

But the cry of protest was the appalled understanding of millions of people that America was ceding its role as the last best hope of mankind. It was their perception that the classic archetype of democracy was morphing into a rogue nation. The greatest democratic republic in history was turning its back on the future, using its extraordinary power and standing not to advance the ideal of a concordance of civilizations but to endorse the kind of tribal combat that originated with the Neanderthals, a people, now extinct, who could imagine ensuring their survival by no other means than pre-emptive war.

The president we get is the country we get. With each president the nation is conformed spiritually. He is the artificer of our malleable national soul. He proposes not only the laws but the kinds of lawlessness that govern our lives and invoke our responses. The people he appoints are cast in his image. The trouble they get into and get us into, is his characteristic trouble.

Finally, the media amplify his character into our moral weather report. He becomes the face of our sky, the conditions that prevail. How can we sustain ourselves as the United States of America given the stupid and ineffective warmaking, the constitutionally insensitive lawgiving, and the monarchal economics of this president?

Bill Clinton Was No Champion of the Poor

ɔy Paul Street
September 29, 2005

"We Had a Different Policy"

It's interesting to see former Democratic President William Jefferson Clinton speaking for the poor and against those who would distribute wealth yet further upward in America. Two Saturdays ago, Clinton told ABC News that "you can't have an emergency plan that works if it only affects middle-class people and up and when you tell people to do something they don't have the means to do you're going to leave the poor out." Clinton added that Tropical Storm Katrina pointed up steep "class division[s] that often play out along racial lines" in America.

Before making these comments, Clinton reminded ABC that poverty fell in the United States (U.S.) during his presidency. As Clinton knows, American poverty has risen during every single year of the George W. Bush presidency -- the first time that the nation's official deprivation gauge has gone up for five consecutive years.

The White House was so stung by Clinton's comments that Bush spokesman Scott McClellan was compelled to make a curiously reflective announcement. "There is a deep history of injustice that has led to poverty and inequality" in the U.S., McClellan noted, "and it will not be overcome instantly."

"From Day 1," McClellan added, Bush "has been acting boldly to achieve real results for real Americans."

By Clinton's accurate account, Bush's "real results for real Americans" have included the redistribution of money and wealth from real lower and middle-class Americans to really rich Americans.

Whether it's race-based or not," Clinton told ABC, "if you give tax cuts to the rich and hope everything turns out alright and poverty goes up and it disproportionately affects brown and black people, that's a consequence of the action made. That's what they did in the 80s; that's what they've done in this decade." "In the middle," Clinton reflected, "we had a different policy." (Phillip Shenon, "the Ex-President: Clinton Levels Sharp Criticism of the President's Relief Effort," New York Times, 19 September 2005, A17).

How "Different?"

Fair enough on Reagan and the two Bushes. But how "different" and more socio-economically and therefore (by Clinton's analysis) racially democratic was administration policy under Bill Clinton, the self-appointed post-Katrina champion of the poor? By Clinton's account, McClellan's "deep history of injustice" was under egalitarian federal assault during the years of the Clinton regime. The record suggests otherwise.

A good place to check that history against Clinton's populist claims is the thirteenth chapter, titled "The Clinton Presidency," of Howard Zinn's magnificent modern history counter-text The Twentieth Century (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2003). Another place to look is progressive economist Robert Pollin's excellent Contours of Descent: U.S. Economic Fracturing and the Landscape of Global Austerity (New York, NY: Verso, 2003).

What emerges from a careful reading of these and numerous other texts and sources is a Clinton administration that defied mainstream public support for socially democratic policies by conducting the public business in regressive accord with the interrelated neoliberal and racially disparate imperatives of empire and inequality.

Clinton's domestic agenda was first announced as a gigantic jobs-creation program coupled with a determined effort to ;uarantee health care for all. But, Zinn notes, Clinton quickly betrayed these declared campaign priorities by "concentrating on reduction of the deficit, which under Reagan and Bush I had left a national debt of $4 trillion." This emphasis, Zinn argued, "meant that there would be no bold programs of expenditures for universal health care, education, child care, housing, the environment, the arts, or job creation." Clinton's "small gestures" toward social democracy did "not come close to what was needed in a nation where one-fourth of the children lived in poverty; where homeless people

administration, which did virtually nothing to enhance workers' bargaining power vis-à-vis business, thereby making it certain that the "traumatized [American] worker" (as Greenspan described American working people to Congress in 1997) would accept historically minor wage increases during the 1990s boom.

"Putting People First?"

Clinton's heralded fiscal transformation (from deficit to surplus) was achieved only at extraordinary public cost. The single leading factor behind this transformation, Pollin shows, was neither faster economic growth nor the Clinton administration's modest reversal of massive Reagan-Bush tax cuts for the wealthy, but the significant reduction of federal government spending as a percentage of American GDP from 22% in 1992 to 18% in 2000. While post-Cold war cuts in military spending explained part of this reduction, a bigger share came through significant declines in federal spending on education, poverty-reduction, environmental protection, economic regulation, and equity promotion -- all while wealth exploded at the top and the "poverty gap" (the amount of money required to bring all poor people exactly up to the official poverty line) rose from $1,538 to $1,620 from 1993 to 1999. At the same time, Pollin notes, the U.S. military budget remained "more than the amount spent by all the rest of NATO plus Russia, plus all the countries in the Middle East and North Africa, including Israel, combined."

Finally, the significant, albeit limited and uneven, economic expansion that occurred under Clinton was purchased against the future. It was fueled primarily by an inherently tenuous, debt-financed stock market bubble that fueled primarily upper class consumption and which inevitably burst, with recessionary consequences passed on to the presidency of Bush II. The dramatic and dangerous over-escalation of stock prices could have been stemmed with elementary regulatory measures the Clinton administration refused to undertake because of its allegiance to neoliberal prescriptions against government intervention in the workings of the supposed "free market" to limit the excesses of private economic elites.

This performance made a mockery of Clinton's 1992 campaign slogan, "Putting People First," which communicated a populist message Clinton rapidly abandoned once he attained the White House, and his Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin (former head of Goldman Sachs) reminded him that extremely wealthy folks are the people who matter most when it comes to running the country. Even before Rubin's reminder, however, Clinton was a veteran of the Republican-light Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), formed to increase the influence of big business and reduce the influence of labor and other progressive forces within the Democratic Party. The Clinton Democrats' basic commitment to business-class neoliberal values poisoned the 2000 presidential election, when Al Gore could see nothing better to do with Clinton's federal surplus than to pay down the national debt even as nearly 700,000 African-American children lived in "deep poverty" (at less than half of the nation's notoriously inadequate poverty level) and beyond.

Beyond Centrist-Democratic Snakeoil

You can't blame Clinton for trying to help his wife and his party make some pseudo-populist political hay out of the Bush administration's pathetic performance before and during Tropical Storm and Societal Failure Katrina. Clinton has always had a strong sense of when to push populist buttons and when (more commonly) to return to standard corporate-neoliberal rostrums. Since he does in fact come (as he told ABC News) "out of an environment with a disproportionate amount of poor people," he's always been more genuinely comfortable around the sort of non-affluent people that tend to make the aristocratic Bush clan wince. Still, Americans who wish to substantively overcome McClellan's "deep history of injustice" would do well to remember that the sociopolitical construction of American inequality is a richly bipartisan affair. Real solutions will require dedicated activism against reactionary agents of class and race privilege within both wings of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Party. They will not emerge from the superficially populist rhetoric of past American presidents, no matter how accurate those ex-presidents' critical take on current Republican policy.

Paul Street is an historian, journalist, and public speaker in DeKalb, IL. He is the author of three books to date: ***Empire and Inequality: America and the World Since 9/11*** (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, October 2004); ***Segregated Schools: Class, Race, and Educational Apartheid in the Post-Civil Rights Era*** (New York, NY: Routledge-Falmer, 2005); ***Still Separate, Unequal: Race, Place, Policy, and the State of Black Chicago*** (Chicago, IL: The Chicago Urban League, April 2005). Street's next book, ***Racial Apartheid in the Global Metropolis*** (New York, NY: Rowman-Littefield) will be published in late 2006. He can be reached at: pstreet@niu.edu

we control the activities of the administrative branch? In order to approach an understanding of this difficult problem, it is necessary to appreciate the nature of the administrative process and how it interacts with other branches of the government and with the general public. It is also important to understand the nature of our constitutional system, and the political context within which agencies function.

We operate within the framework of a constitutional democracy. This means, first, that the government is to be limited by the separation of powers and Bill of Rights. Another component of the system, federalism, is designed in theory to provide states with a certain amount of authority when it is not implied at the national level. Our separation of powers, the system of checks and balances, and the federal system help to explain some of the differences between administrative organization here and in other countries. But the Constitution does not explicitly provide for the administrative branch, which has become a new fourth branch of government. This raises the question of how to control the bureaucracy when there are no clear constitutional limits upon it. The second aspect of our system, democracy, is of course implied in the Constitution itself, but has expanded greatly since it was adopted. We are confronted, very broadly speaking, first with the problem of constitutional limitation, and secondly with the problem of democratic participation in the activities of the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy must be accommodated within the framework of our system of constitutional democracy. This is the crux of the problem of administrative responsibility.

Even though the Constitution does not explicitly provide for the bureaucracy, it has had a profound impact upon the structure, functions, and general place that the bureaucracy occupies in government. The administrative process was incorporated into the constitutional system under the heading of "The Executive Branch." But the concept of "administration" at the time of the adoption of the Constitution was a very simple one, involving the "mere execution" of "executive details," to use the phrases of Hamilton in *The Federalist*. The idea, at that time, was simply that the president as Chief Executive would be able to control the Executive Branch in carrying out the mandates of Congress. In *Federalist 72*, after defining administration in this very narrow way, Hamilton stated:

> . . . The persons, therefore, to whose immediate management the different administrative matters are committed ought to be considered as Assistants or Deputies of the Chief Magistrate, and on this account, they ought to derive their offices from his appointment, at least from his nomination, and ought to be subject to his superintendence.

It was clear that Hamilton felt the president would be responsible for administrative action as long as he was in office. This fact later turned up in what can be called the "presidential supremacy" school of thought, which held and still holds that the president is *constitutionally* responsible for the administrative branch, and that Congress should delegate to him all necessary authority for this purpose. Nevertheless, whatever the framers of the Constitution might have planned if they could have foreseen the nature of bureaucratic development, the fact is that the

constitutional authorization for the president to be "Chief Administrator."

This is not to say that the president does not have an important responsibility to act as chief of the bureaucracy, merely that there is no constitutional mandate for this. As our system evolved, the president was given more and more responsibility until he became, in practice, Chief Administrator. At the same time the constitutional system has often impeded progress in this direction. The president's Committee on Administrative Management in 1937, and later the Hoover Commissions of 1949 and 1955, called upon Congress to initiate a series of reforms increasing presidential authority over the administrative branch. It was felt that this was necessary to make democracy work. The president is the only official elected nationally, and if the administration is to be held democratically accountable, he alone can stand as its representative. But meaningful control from the White House requires that the president have a comprehensive program which encompasses the activities of the bureaucracy. He must be informed as to what they are doing, and be able to control them. He must understand the complex responsibilities of the bureaucracy. Moreover, he must be able to call on sufficient political support to balance the support which the agencies draw from private clientele groups and congressional committees. This has frequently proven a difficult and often impossible task for the president. He may have the *authority* to control the bureaucracy in many areas, but not enough power.

On the basis of the Constitution, Congress feels it quite proper that when it delegates legislative authority to administrative agencies it can relatively often place these groups outside the control of the president. For example, in the case of the Interstate Commerce Commission . . . Congress has delegated final authority to that agency to control railroad mergers and other aspects of transportation activity, without giving the president the right to veto. The president may feel that a particular merger is undesirable because it is in violation of the antitrust laws, but the Interstate Commerce Commission is likely to feel differently. In such a situation, the president can do nothing because he does not have the *legal authority* to take any action. If he could muster enough political support to exercise influence over the ICC, he would be able to control it, but the absence of legal authority is an important factor in such cases and diminishes presidential power. Moreover, the ICC draws strong support from the railroad industry, which has been able to counterbalance the political support possessed by the president and other groups that have wished to control it. Analogous situations exist with respect to other regulatory agencies.

Besides the problem of congressional and presidential control over the bureaucracy, there is the question of judicial review of administrative decisions. The rule of law is a central element in our Constitution. The rule of law means that decisions judicial in nature should be handled by common law courts, because of their expertise in rendering due process of law. When administrative agencies engage in adjudication their decisions should be subject to judicial review—at least, they should if one supports the idea of the supremacy of law. Judicial decisions are supposed to be rendered on an independent and impartial basis,

Part Three/Classic Statement

"Bureaucracy" from Essays in Sociology, by Max Weber[1]

Introduction

While Weber's essay on bureaucracy certainly is not directed exclusively at America or American government, it does deal with the way in which both governments and all large private enterprises in the modern world organize themselves and operate. It is thus relevant not only to our study of the executive power of government but to the other branches, to the political parties, to privately incorporated businesses, and indeed to much of the human environment in which we live our lives in modern times.

Weber proceeds by comparing and contrasting how the major activities of human life were organized in traditional society and how they are organized in our own times—"gemeinshaft" and "gesellshaft," in his terminology. Face-to-face interactions based on personal loyalties give way to large, impersonal organizations run by abstract rules and loyalty to the organization itself—whether private or public.

As you work your way through this section, ask yourself at how many points in your own life you come into contact with bureaucracy as Weber portrays it.

Characteristics of Bureaucracy

Modern officialdom functions in the following specific manner:

I. There is the principle of fixed and official jurisdictional areas, which are generally ordered by rules, that is, by laws or administrative regulations.

1. The regular activities required for the purposes of the bureaucratically governed structure and distributed in a fixed way as official duties.

2. The authority to give the commands required for the discharge of these duties is distributed in a stable way and is strictly delimited by rules concerning the coercive means, physical, sacerdotal, or otherwise, which may be placed at the disposal of officials.

3. Methodical provision is made for the regular and continuous fulfillment of these duties and for the execution of the corresponding rights; only persons who have the generally regulated qualifications to serve are employed.

In public and lawful government these three elements constitute 'bureaucratic authority.' In private economic domination, they constitute bureaucratic 'management.' Bureaucracy, thus understood, is fully developed in political and ecclesiastical communities only in

[1] Max Weber, a German scholar, is widely referred to as the father of sociology, yet his writings cover a variety of different fields and have been influential in many of them—political science being no exception. His essay on bureaucracy, from which this selection is taken, comes from *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited and translated by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946).

to order certain matters by decree—which has been legally granted to public authorities—does not entitle the bureau to regulate the matter by commands given for each case, but only to regulate the matter abstractly. This stands in extreme contrast to the regulation of all relationships through individual privileges and bestowals of favor, which is absolutely dominant in patrimonialism, at least in so far as such relationships are not fixed by sacred tradition. . . .

The Leveling of Social Differences

Bureaucratic organization has usually come into power on the basis of a leveling of economic and social differences. This leveling has been at least relative, and has concerned the significance of social and economic differences for the assumption of administrative functions.

Bureaucracy inevitably accompanies modern *mass democracy* in contrast to the democratic self-government of small homogeneous units. This results from the characteristic principle of bureaucracy: the abstract regularity of the execution of authority, which is a result of the demand for 'equality before the law' in the personal and functional sense—hence, of the horror of 'privilege,' and the principled rejection of doing business 'from case to case.' Such regularity also follows from the social preconditions of the origin of bureaucracies. The non-bureaucratic administration of any large social structure rests in some way upon the fact that existing social, material, or honorific preferences and ranks are connected with administrative functions and duties. This usually means that a direct or indirect economic exploitation or a 'social' exploitation of position, which every sort of administrative activity gives to its bearers, is equivalent to the assumption of administrative functions.

Bureaucratization and democratization within the administration of the state therefore signify and increase the cash expenditures of the public treasury. And this is the case in spite of the fact that bureaucratic administration is usually more 'economical' in character than other forms of administration. Until recent times—at least from the point of view of the treasury—the cheapest way of satisfying the need for administration was to leave almost the entire local administration and lower judicature to the landlords of Eastern Prussia. The same fact applies to the administration of sheriffs in England. Mass democracy makes a clean sweep of the feudal, patrimonial, and—at least in intent—the plutocratic privileges in administration. Unavoidably it puts paid professional labor in place of the historically inherited avocational administration by notables.

This not only applies to structures of the state. For it is no accident that in their own organizations, the democratic mass parties have completely broken with traditional notable rule based upon personal relationships and personal esteem. Yet such personal structures frequently continue among the old conservative as well as the old liberal parties. Democratic mass parties are bureaucratically organized under the leadership of party officials, professional party and trade union secretaries, et cetera. In Germany, for instance, this has happened in the Social Democratic party and in the agrarian mass-movement; and in England, for the first time, in the caucus democracy of Gladstone-Chamberlain, which was originally organized in Birmingham and since the 1870's has spread. In the United States, both parties since Jackson's administration have developed bureaucratically. In France, however, attempts to organize disciplined political parties on the basis of an election system that would compel bureaucratic organization have repeatedly failed. The resistance of local circles of notables against the ultimately unavoidable bureaucratization of the parties, which would encompass the entire country and break their influence, could not be overcome. Every advance of the simple election techniques, for instance the system of proportional elections, which calculates with figures, means a strict and interlocal bureaucratic organization of the parties and therewith an increasing domination of party bureaucracy and discipline, as well as the elimination of the local circles of notables—at least this holds for great states.

The progress of bureaucratization in the state administration itself is a parallel phenomenon of democracy, as is quite obvious in France, North America, and now in England. Of course one must always remember that the term 'democratization' can be misleading. The *demos* itself, in the sense of an inarticulate mass, never 'governs' larger associations;

ministration on the basis of the filed documents may be. The naive idea of Bakuninism of destroying the basis of 'acquired rights' and 'domination' by destroying public documents overlooks the settled orientation of *man* for keeping to the habitual rules and regulations that continue to exist independently of the documents. Every reorganization of beaten or dissolved troops, as well as the restoration of administrative orders destroyed by revolt, panic, or other catastrophes, is realized by appealing to the trained orientation of obedient compliance to such orders. Such compliance has been conditioned into the officials, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, into the governed. If such an appeal is successful it brings, as it were, the disturbed mechanism into gear again.

The objective indispensability of the once-existing apparatus, with its peculiar, 'impersonal' character, means that the mechanism—in contrast to feudal orders based upon personal piety—is easily made to work for anybody who knows how to gain control over it. A rationally ordered system of officials continues to function smoothly after the enemy has occupied the area; he merely needs to change the top officials. This body of officials continues to operate because it is to the vital interest of everyone concerned, including above all the enemy.

During the course of his long years in power, Bismarck brought his ministerial colleagues into unconditional bureaucratic dependence by eliminating all independent statesmen. Upon his retirement, he saw to his surprise that they continued to manage their offices unconcerned and undismayed, as if he had not been the master mind and creator of these creatures, but rather as if some single figure had been exchanged for some other figure in the bureaucratic machine. With all the changes of masters in France since the time of the First Empire, the power machine has remained essentially the same. Such a machine makes 'revolution,' in the sense of the forceful creation of entirely new formations of authority, technically more and more impossible, especially when the apparatus controls the modern means of communication (telegraph, et cetera) and also by virtue of its internal rationalized structure. In classic fashion, France has demonstrated how this process has substituted *coups d'état* for 'revolutions': all successful transformations in France have amounted to *coups d'état*.

Questions for Understanding and Discussion

1. What are the key characteristics of modern officialdom, and what terms are commonly used to designate the governmental and corporate varieties of bureaucratic authority?
2. In what country, according to Weber, is it accepted that the bureaucratic activities of the state are essentially similar to those of the private economy?
3. How does Weber insist that the term "democratization" should be used, and what is the effect of democratization in this sense?
4. What relationship does he say exists between democratization and bureaucracy?
5. Why, according to Weber, does bureaucracy tend to become permanent, and what does this do to the prospects for social or political revolution?

experience with chaotic and inefficient management under the Continental Congress and the Articles of Confederation that they had assembled in Philadelphia. Management by committees composed of part-time amateurs had cost the colonies dearly in the War of Independence and few, if any, of the Founders wished to return to that system. The argument was only over how the heads of the necessary departments of government were to be selected, and whether these heads should be wholly subordinate to the President or whether instead they should form some sort of council that would advise the President and perhaps share in his authority. In the end, the Founders left it up to Congress to decide the matter.

There was no dispute in Congress that there should be executive departments, headed by single appointed officials, and, of course, the Constitution specified that these would be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The only issue was how such officials might be removed. After prolonged debate and by the narrowest of majorities, Congress agreed that the President should have the sole right of removal, thus confirming that the infant administrative system would be wholly subordinate—in law at least—to the President. Had not Vice-President John Adams, presiding over a Senate equally divided on the issue, cast the deciding vote in favor of presidential removal, the administrative departments might conceivably have become legal dependencies of the legislature, with incalculable consequences for the development of the embryonic government.

THE "BUREAUCRACY PROBLEM"

The original departments were small and had limited duties. The State Department, the first to be created, had but nine employees in addition to the Secretary. The War Department did not reach 80 civilian employees until 1801; it commanded only a few thousand soldiers. Only the Treasury Department had substantial powers—it collected taxes, managed the public debt, ran the national bank, conducted land surveys, and purchased military supplies. Because of this, Congress gave the closest scrutiny to its structure and its activities.

The number of administrative agencies and employees grew slowly but steadily during the 19th and early 20th centuries and then increased explosively on the occasion of World War I, the Depression, and World War II. It is difficult to say at what point in this process the administrative system became a distinct locus of power or an independent source of political initiatives and problems. What is clear is that the emphasis on the sheer *size* of the administrative establishment—conventional in many treatments of the subject—is misleading.

The government can spend vast sums of money—wisely or unwisely—without creating that set of conditions we ordinarily associate with the bureaucratic state. For example, there could be massive transfer payments made under government auspices from person to person or from state to state, all managed by a comparatively small staff of officials and a few large computers. In 1971, the federal

government paid
Social Security A
form purely routi
And though
employ an army.
patterns that we
should decide to
students. This w
schoolrooms, but
identical tasks, a
hood schools). T
would not be aw
indeed, owing to
pupil and his or
had been a subs
To the read
these hypothetic
in capitalist anc
"overtowering"
save perhaps th
their inability t
suspicion that a
private one. Lib
cracy as reactio
when obviously
view toward th
from the view b

POLITICAL

There are at lea
into bureaucrat
to be immune
reaucracy of an
authority in the
responsive to t
of bureaucratic
cracies are son
their political s
point of view o
can possibly tr
here—the exte
an unaccounta

is, if not the most important problem, then surely the one that would most have troubled our Revolutionary leaders, especially those that went on to produce the Constitution. It was, after all, the question of power that chiefly concerned them, both in redefining our relationship with England and in finding a new basis for political authority in the Colonies.

To some, following in the tradition of [Max] Weber, bureaucracy is the inevitable consequence and perhaps necessary concomitant of modernity. A money economy, the division of labor, and the evolution of legal-rational norms to justify organizational authority require the efficient adaptation of means to ends and a high degree of predictability in the behavior of rulers. To this, Georg Simmel added the view that organizations tend to acquire the characteristics of those institutions with which they are in conflict, so that as government becomes more bureaucratic, private organizations—political parties, trade unions, voluntary associations—will have an additional reason to become bureaucratic as well.

By viewing bureaucracy as an inevitable (or, as some would put it, "functional") aspect of society, we find ourselves attracted to theories that explain the growth of bureaucracy in terms of some inner dynamic to which all agencies respond and which makes all barely governable and scarcely tolerable. Bureaucracies grow, we are told, because of Parkinson's Law: Work and personnel expand to consume the available resources. Bureaucracies behave, we believe, in accord with various other maxims, such as the Peter Principle: In hierarchical organizations, personnel are promoted up to that point at which their incompetence becomes manifest—hence, all important positions are held by incompetents. More elegant, if not essentially different, theories have been propounded by scholars. The tendency of all bureaus to expand is explained by William A. Niskanen by the assumption, derived from the theory of the firm, that "bureaucrats maximize the total budget of their bureau during their tenure"—hence, "all bureaus are too large." What keeps them from being not merely too large but all-consuming is that fact that a bureau must deliver to some degree on its promised output, and if it consistently underdelivers, its budget will be cut by unhappy legislators. But since measuring the output of a bureau is often difficult—indeed, even *conceptualizing* the output of the State Department is mind-boggling—the bureau has a great deal of freedom within which to seek the largest possible budget.

Such theories, both the popular and the scholarly, assign little importance to the nature of the tasks an agency performs, the constitutional framework in which it is embedded, or the preferences and attitudes of citizens and legislators. Our approach will be quite different: Different agencies will be examined in historical perspective to discover the kinds of problems—if any, to which their operations give rise, and how those problems were affected—perhaps determined—by the tasks which they were assigned, the political system in which they operated, and the preferences they were required to consult. What follows will be far from a systematic treatment of such matters, and even farther from a rigorous testing of any theory of bureaucratization. Our knowledge of agency history and behavior is too sketchy to permit that.