

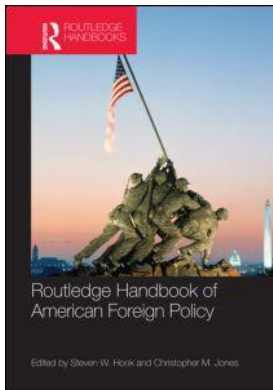
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Part III

State Actors

The Presidency

Glenn P. Hastedt

In studying foreign policy a distinction is often made between what a country's stated position is and what it actually does. No matter which of these approaches is adopted, political commentators most often answer the question "What is American foreign policy?" by turning their attention to the occupant of the White House. In the first instance, this presidential focus is found in historic declarations such as the Monroe and Reagan doctrines. Second, the same focus is reflected in terms such as Iraq being "Bush's war."

Historically, the literature on presidents and foreign policy, much like the more general literature on presidents, has been at its best in presenting descriptions of past policy behavior and making recommendations for future action. The scholarly literature has been at its weakest in theorizing and making meaningful comparisons among presidents, although this is changing. Case studies remain the dominant mode of analysis. In this chapter, we trace the development of research on the president and foreign policy with an emphasis on how best to think about chief executives' relationship to the organizations they command. We consider such issues the "life cycle" of presidential terms in office and the war powers of presidents. We conclude with a look at the major competing approaches to conceptualizing the powers of the presidency in American foreign policy today.

Assessing Presidential Power

Given this strong identification of U.S. foreign policy with the president, it is noteworthy that the seminal work which virtually all studies of the president and foreign policy take as their starting point, either in affirmation or opposition, is Richard Neustadt's *Presidential Power* (1960). Neustadt saw weakness, not strength, in the White House. The core problem was the gap between what was expected of the president and his capacity to carry through and govern. For Neustadt, presidential power can be reduced to "the power to persuade," and persuasion is carried out through the exercise of influence. Bargaining, not command, is the coin of the realm. The president's personal reputation and public standing are the key sources of his powers in this bargaining game. Success requires that presidents think about the future in exercising influence in the present. When they fail to do so, short-term victories will undermine longer-run power considerations.

Many scholars did not share this view, seeing instead evidence of an “imperial presidency” (Schlesinger 1973). Yet Neustadt (1990) remained convinced of his argument as it applied to such subjects as the Vietnam War and the Iran-*Contra* scandal in the mid-1980s. Others asserted that both his focus and methodology—writing from a personal perspective with few linkages to the broader scholarly literature—hindered the development of presidential studies as a field by directing attention away from the growing institutionalization of the presidency and from the social sciences more generally (Moe 2009). Neustadt is not without his defenders, however, as some scholars (e.g., Dickinson 2009) credit him with revealing valuable insights into the place of the presidency in the American political system.

Before Neustadt’s study of presidential power appeared, the leading works in the field adopted functional and legalistic interpretations of the presidency, most of which stressed its strength. Clinton Rossiter in *The American Presidency* (1956) noted that the president simultaneously fills numerous roles: head of state, chief diplomat, commander in chief, chief legislator, head of party, and “voice of the people.” Rossiter was fully cognizant of the restraints that Congress and the American public place on presidents. He nonetheless characterized the modern president as “a kind of magnificent lion who can roam widely and do great deeds so long as he does not break loose from his broad reservation” (Rossiter 1956: 52). In the following year, Edward Corwin (1957) authored an interpretative history of the development of the presidency that was rooted in a reading of constitutional debates and Supreme Court decisions. His often-quoted conclusion was that the Constitution is “an invitation to struggle for the privilege of directing American foreign policy.” Corwin (1957: 171) added that it was a struggle with the “lion’s share [of these powers] falling usually, though by no means always, to the President.”

The central arguments in Neustadt’s (1990) work led to two major avenues of research on the president and U.S. foreign policy: achieving a better understanding of the president as an individual, and understanding how presidents interact with other actors in the policy process. The enduring nature of these themes is highlighted by the fact that both research questions were raised by these early scholars. Rossiter (1956: 147), for example, found that the real problem for the president was that he would be “buried under his own machinery.” For his part, Corwin (1957: 305) concluded that, in spite of its emerging institutional character, the “presidency is still very much a matter of who is President.”

The President as an Individual

As Mark Schafer describes in the previous chapter, American foreign policy involves many complex organizations but ultimately boils down to individual actions. This insight directs our attention to psychological factors that influence the president’s management of foreign policy. The benchmark study of presidential personality and foreign policy was Alexander George and Juliette George’s (1956) study of Woodrow Wilson. Their work interpreted Wilson’s failure to obtain Senate approval of the Treaty of Versailles as the result of a “tragic flaw” in his personality that repeatedly led him to adopt an uncompromising position with his opponents, leading to disastrous political results. A stubborn insistence on doing “the right thing” became for Wilson a vehicle for escaping inner doubts over his actions that were rooted in low self-esteem formed during his childhood.

Whereas George and George examined one president’s personality in depth, James David Barber (1992) explored presidential personality through a comparative framework. He defined personality in terms of three elements, the most important of which was “character,” defined as the way in which presidents oriented themselves toward the outside world. In his analysis,

presidential character has two dimensions: the amount of energy presidents put into their work, and whether or not presidents derive personal satisfaction from their job.

In Barber's model, these factors produced four different presidential personalities. "Active-positives" are achievement oriented, put a great deal of energy into the presidency, tend to be pragmatists, and derive great satisfaction from the game of politics. "Active negatives" are compulsive individuals who adopt a domineering posture to those around them and tend to get locked into rigid positions from which they cannot escape. "Passive-positives" do not make full use of the powers of the presidency but feel satisfied from the exercise of that power. Finally, "passive-negatives" neither exercise significant amounts of presidential power nor do they derive much satisfaction from the office. Two problems stem from having passive presidents in office: policy drift and a lack of accountability. In Barber's original formulation of his argument, the active-positive was best suited to the presidency. This normative and predictive orientation was criticized by those who believed that all presidential personalities bring with them potential policy problems. Problems also surfaced in the placement of various presidents in each category since they often appear in more than one category of presidential character (see George 1974). For example, Greenstein (1982) argues that President Dwight Eisenhower was not a passive-negative, as asserted by Barber, but practiced a low-profile activism behind the scenes.

Barber's formulation of presidential personality continues to spark debate. George W. Bush has emerged as a prime case in point leading some to define him as an active-positive (Wittkopf, Jones and Kegley 2008) and others to see him as an active-negative (Peleg 2009). Early speculation points to Barack Obama as an active-positive (Renshon 2008). He is portrayed as a listener who is open to the views of others while also being capable and willing to defend his own interests. Obama is also characterized as someone who is able to recognize and seize opportunities and to avoid being locked into losing positions or those which carry with them a high price tag for victory.

The inductive and subjective nature of psychological studies of presidents and the conduct of American foreign policy have led to attempts to devise more objective means for studying presidential character broadly defined. One approach recently adopted was to create composite assessments based on the results of a lengthy 592-item questionnaire distributed to more than 120 presidential scholars. The survey was designed to group presidents along a number of different dimensions, including neuroticism, extraversion, experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Rubenzer and Faschingbauer 2004). The authors of the study grouped presidents into eight different categories based on these results. Presidential success was not tied to specific policy issues although characterization by others as a "world leader" was identified as one of the traits of a successful president.

Lloyd Etheredge (1978) previously adopted another approach to reducing the subjectivity involved in assessing the potential impact of personality on foreign policy. He began by identifying cases of intra-elite foreign policy conflict and then tested the proposition that the direction of the disagreements could be predicted from independently derived knowledge of personality differences between the participants. Etheredge examined forty-nine such cases that occurred from 1898–1968 involving coercion and the use of force and thirteen cases relating to U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union during the Cold War. He found that in most cases the direction of policy disagreements among presidents, secretaries of state, and key advisors could be predicted. His study grouped individuals along two dimensions, introvert-extrovert and high domineering–low domineering, to produce four speculative personality types: bloc leaders, world leaders, maintainers, and conciliators. Etheredge concluded that inclinations toward military solutions and the adoption of hard-line policies are pervasive in the U.S. political system due to the self selection and recruitment of high-dominance individuals to positions of high office who are predisposed to threaten or use force.

Managing the White House

Concern for the president's ability to control rather than be controlled by those around him has led research on the president and foreign policy in two directions. The first is normative in nature. It seeks to identify the best or correct way to organize and manage the White House. A frequent subject of such studies is the National Security Council system and the role of the national security advisor (Prados 1991; Inderfurth and Johnson 2004). In reviewing this subject from the Kennedy through George W. Bush administrations, Daalder and Destler (2009) observe that the right way to manage the decision-making process lies in the creation of a deliberative process that presents presidents with a clear set of alternatives based on a careful reading of the information available. The key resource national security advisors need is the belief of presidents that they are being given the best advice and the belief of senior officials that their views are being presented to the president fairly.

These conclusions are affirmed by James Pfiffner (2009) in his analysis of four key foreign policy decisions in the George W. Bush administration, two of which deal with its detainee policy in Bush's "global war on terror" and two with the conduct of the war in Iraq. Each, he concludes, was unwise, although he acknowledges that a more open and inclusive advisory system would not necessarily have led to different decisions. These negative assessments of the Bush administration's decision making on Iraq are widely shared (e.g., see Mitchell and Massoud 2009). Others (e.g., Haney 1997) are even less sanguine about the possibility of creating an advisory system that will lead to better decisions.

The second direction taken by research on the relationship between the president and his supporting institutions has been to identify the existence of a set of managerial strategies used by presidents and then to see if linkages can be established between these strategies and policy outcomes. The three most frequently identified managerial styles were first presented by Richard Johnson (1974) and built upon by Alexander George (1980). Whereas Johnson viewed the choice of a managerial system as reflecting inherent tensions in any decision-making system, George saw such a choice as reflecting a president's personality traits. None of the three were defined as inherently better than the others as each featured its own costs and benefits.

In this typology, a *formalistic* model operates on the basis of hierarchy, orderly routines and procedures, and efforts to minimize conflict and political pressures. While this model is conducive to managing routine and repetitive problems, it may produce slow or ill-informed responses to crises. A *competitive* model places emphasis on free and open debate and has overlapping, unstructured and incomplete lines of jurisdiction that require a great deal of the president's time and attention. The third model is a *collegial* system in which the president tries to bring advisors and department heads together as a problem-solving team. In doing so it tries to move away from a win-lose perspective that can arise in competitive managerial systems to one in which disagreement is welcomed and "scores" are not kept. Here too the president must become deeply involved in the managerial process if the interdependence among subordinates is to be functionally productive.

A prominent critique made of the Johnson/George typology is that the managerial styles commonly overlap and fail to accurately capture the manner in which presidents actually manage their advisory systems (Burke 2000; Ponder 2000). Mitchell (2005) incorporates a concern for centralization into his typology as a means to capture the degree of informality that exists within an administration's decision-making processes. He uses the concept of "unstructured solutions" in examining the Nixon administration's decision making on Vietnam, Jimmy Carter's decision making on strategic arms control issues, Ronald Reagan's approach to arms reduction, and Bill Clinton's policy toward Bosnia.

The importance of presidential style and experience are themes picked up by James Dobbins (2008–09) in his study of presidential efforts at nation-building from Franklin Roosevelt to George W. Bush. He cites Truman and George H.W. Bush as presidents with considerable Washington experience who organized effective decision-making structures that led to successful nation-building efforts. Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, however, were seen as lacking these traits and, for this reason, they struggled with the challenges of nation-building during their administrations.

Electoral Factors and the “Life Cycle”

There is no basis to expect that the manner in which presidents handle foreign policy issues, or the positions they take on them, will be the same every year. Stated another way, presidents do not get to choose the foreign policy problems they will face. They do not get to choose when the Berlin Wall falls or when the Shah of Iran goes into exile. This is not to say that presidents are powerless to set their own foreign policy agendas. Decisions on when to launch a Bay of Pigs invasion, hold a Camp David peace conference, or to be the first president to visit communist China, are all made in the White House.

Scholars have identified recurring patterns that reveal a “life cycle” of presidential performance. One approach to understanding the impact of a presidential life cycle on foreign policy focuses on elections, since a president’s term in office is defined by campaigns for election, re-election, and succession (Quandt 1986). The first year in office generally is characterized by policy experimentation, false starts, and overly zealous goals. During the second year in office, pragmatism becomes more evident in large part due to a fear that a foreign policy mishap may lead to the loss of congressional seats in the midterm elections. In the third year, foreign policy issues are evaluated largely in terms of their potential impact on the presidential re-election campaign. The final year brings stalemate to the foreign policy process, as presidents become locked in domestic electoral politics.

Miroslav Nincic (1990) utilizes an electoral cycle framework to analyze U.S.–Soviet Cold War relations. He hypothesizes that the belligerent foreign policy tone found in campaign promises are likely to carry over into the first year of new presidency. But this may decrease for non-electoral reasons, the most important of which are the public’s distaste for extremes and changes in the president’s motivational structure. The fruits of these changes, and a move to cooperation, are most likely to take place in the third year of a president’s term due to the time lag involved in negotiating international agreements. Nincic is quick to point out that electoral cycles are not deterministic in terms of foreign policy outcomes but rather inject a strong bias into the decision-making process. To emphasize this point, he notes that following President John Kennedy’s death, the Vietnam War, and the Nixon–Ford period of U.S.–Soviet détente, the link between election cycles and U.S. Cold War foreign policy was disrupted.

A more recent example of the influence of the election cycle comes from George W. Bush’s efforts to deal with Iraq in his second term. The fear of an explosive news story before the 2006 mid-term elections delayed a serious strategic review of Iraq policy even though it was acknowledged within the White House that the current strategy was not working (Woodward 2008). Only after the election were military planners brought into the decision-making process. To the extent that Iraq policy was being reviewed, great care was taken that it proceeded undetected by the media.

Whereas some focus on the entirety of a president’s term, others focus on one particular period. In this respect the transitional period running from when a candidate is elected president and the first months of the ensuing presidency is of interest to some scholars.

Neustadt (1994) finds this a dangerous period because, regardless of their backgrounds, most first-term presidents and all presidential successors will be new to the policy process. Thus, president-elects are prone to be caught by surprise by events. They will face pressure to act in haste, demonstrating their capacity to act “presidential.” And they will likely face the problem of hubris, or the “arrogance of power.”

The path-breaking study of presidential transitions was conducted by Laurin Henry (1960), who examined several transitions in the twentieth century. Substantive foreign policy issues as well as management and staffing problems received attention in each transition. Viewed from a contemporary perspective, what is particularly valuable about these discussions is that they highlight the extent to which incoming presidents undertook significant foreign policy initiatives that broke with the past in an era in which instantaneous global communications did not create pressures for change. For example, only a week after his inauguration, Wilson drafted a new set of principles for dealing with Latin American states. Shortly thereafter he did the same with regard to China. The day after he was inaugurated in 1921, Warren G. Harding changed the course of U.S. foreign policy toward a conflict between Panama and Costa Rica. Also during the first month of his presidency, Harding addressed the question of the U.S. relationship with the League of Nations.

Looking at more recent presidential transitions, Glenn Hastedt and Anthony Eksterowicz (2001, 2005) identify a three-part foreign policy transition “syndrome” and apply it to the Carter, Reagan, Clinton, and G. W. Bush transitions. First, key foreign policy decisions in the transition period are adopted on the basis of campaign promises or broad strategic principles that have not been subject to the realities of governing. Second, desiring to separate themselves from their predecessors, incoming administrations frequently commit themselves to dealing with foreign policy problems before established policy-making procedures are in place. Finally, there is a tendency to pursue foreign policy options with insufficient regard for how the solution will be viewed in other countries. In spite of this wide variation in organizing their transitions, evidence of a transition syndrome could be found in the early initiatives of all three new presidential administrations. In Carter’s case, it was present in the Panama Canal Treaty initiative; in Reagan’s first months as president, it was seen in his decision on the sale of AWACS reconnaissance aircraft to Saudi Arabia and the “White Paper” on El Salvador. Under Clinton, the syndrome surfaced in his decision on gays in the military and his policy toward Bosnia. Evidence of the transition syndrome was present in Bush’s handling of the downing of a naval surveillance plane over the South China Sea, and later in the place of terrorism on his foreign policy agenda.

Kurt Campbell and James Steinberg (2008), both of whom have taken part in incoming and outgoing presidential transitions, reviewed the foreign policy perils associated with transitions. Quoting former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, they observe that the heart of the problem is simple: “you have ten weeks to organize the president’s new strategy for dealing with the world” (xii). They too focus on how the ambiguities and uncertainties rooted in campaign promises and the time pressures of starting a new administration can create acute vulnerabilities in U.S. foreign policy. Campbell and Steinberg cite seven key factors that are increasing the challenges associated with presidential transitions: the increasing magnitude of the risks being faced; the increasing range and complexity of national security issues; the growing global interests of the United States; the 24/7 news cycle and the emergence of new media; the increasing politicalization of national security policy; the growing number and slow pace of appointments that must be made; and the mismatch between old institutions and new threats. They end their study with the caution that there is “no magic formula” that guarantees success in a new presidency.

Often commented upon but less often systematically studied is the period marking the president’s last months or two years in office, depending upon whether we are looking at

a one- or two-term presidency. Empirically it is a period which often brings about foreign policy changes. Nincic (1990), for example, notes the increased frequency of cooperative agreements late in a president's term in office. Supporters of Ronald Reagan characterized his administration's foreign policy as he left office as being one of "Carterism without Carter." Similarly, many spoke of the similarities found in George W. Bush's foreign policy and that of Bill Clinton which Bush had denounced so strongly in the 2000 presidential election. Typically, the president during this period is seen as a "lame duck" with a sharp reduction in the political power that can be wielded to move a foreign policy agenda forward. The most frequently given explanation for the combination of continued foreign policy activity and its changing complexion is that presidents are now both largely free of the domestic political constraints that limit their freedom of maneuver and free to pursue their foreign policy legacy. Personal motivations replace electoral considerations in the mind of presidents.

While frequently employed, breaking down presidential administrations with explicit or implicit reference to elections is not the only approach to examining how the life cycle of a presidency may influence foreign policy. An alternative approach is found in the work of Philip Potter (2007), who argues that central to explaining the probability of a crisis involving the United States is the experience of a president. Simply stated, the longer the president is in office, the probability of a crisis declines. The decline is continuous over the life of a presidency, declining by more than 20 percent by the first midterm election, by one-third by the end of the first term, and by more than half by the end of a two-term presidency. An interesting inference from Potter's finding is that it casts doubt on the argument that presidents deliberately create crises in order to induce a "rally around the flag" effect to bolster their re-election chances or increase their party's standing in Congress.

Presidents and War

Attention to presidents and the conduct of war is by no means new. The role of presidents in war has been a constant theme in historical writings on the presidency. Among many others, James Madison, Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin Roosevelt have been often studied as "war-time presidents." This topic is also frequently revisited by constitutional scholars (Glennon 1990; Koh, 1990; Henkin 1996). What distinguishes accounts of post-World War II presidents from those written about their predecessors is the transformed context as symbolized by the phrase "national security policy (Jordon et al. 2009). In concrete terms, this has produced a literature on presidents and war that takes as its point of departure a more varied set of research concerns such as the changing nature of warfare (Art and Waltz 2004), the status of the United States as a superpower with global interests and military responsibilities (Haass 1994; Kagan 2006), an increased attention and sophistication regarding the dynamics of public opinion (Mueller 1973, Ostrom and Simon 1985, Baum 2003), and the absence of declarations of war (Moss 2008).

Broadly speaking, the dominant format used to study presidents and war is the case study, although within this genre much variation can be found. Glenn Paige (1968) examines the onset of the Korean War by treating each of the six days from its outbreak to the decision to send troops as a separate case. David Halberstam (1972) presents his narrative of the Vietnam War as a seamless story with attention to both what transpires in Vietnam and Washington. More recently, Woodward (2002, 2004, 2008), in his presentation of the Bush administration's decision making on Iraq, focuses almost exclusively on internal decision making and domestic politics.

Truly comparative accounts of presidents and war remain the exception. More so than with other accounts of presidents and foreign policy, studies of presidents and war tend

to treat each administration as a unique and distinct case. For this reason, while they are seen as containing valuable insights into the actions of individual presidents, this research has not generated a series of generalizable findings on presidents and war. A recent example of explicitly comparative study compares Madison and George W. Bush (Eksterowicz and Hastedt 2009). More common are efforts to examine several different presidents and war on a chapter-by-chapter basis or to examine several different wars managed by the same president. Gary Hess's (2009) examination of Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf exemplifies the former approach while Hendrickson's (2002) accounting of the "Clinton Wars" captures the essence of the second approach.

The highly contentious nature of the Iraq War, along with the Bush administration's assertion of extensive presidential powers both at home and abroad, has added a new (yet not so new) dimension to the literature on presidents and war. It has reawakened the debate heard during the Vietnam era that an "imperial presidency" had taken hold. Schlesinger (2004) answers in the affirmative while Wolfensberger (2002) argues such a conclusion is premature. For his part, Andrew Rudalevige (2005) asserts that presidents are contingently, but not inherently, imperial. He observes that all presidents try to push the limits of their powers and that other political actors will push back. The problem is as much an "invisible Congress" as it is a too strong president. His conclusion that part of the problem lies with Congress is not unique. Kenneth Moss (2008) concurs in finding Congress to be timid and deferential in the face of ambitious and opportunistic presidents.

Multiple "Presidencies" in Foreign Policy

A standard point of criticism of the presidential studies literature in general is that it has long been theoretically and empirically underdeveloped (Mayer 2009). As this review has demonstrated, the literature on the president and foreign policy is not exempt from such criticism. Much of the work has focused on individual presidents with only the most broadly of stated comparative conclusions presented. That said, in individual areas of inquiry significant progress has been made in furthering our understanding of the president and foreign policy and refining the research questions posed. One particularly important and lively area of debate today places the literature on the study of the president and foreign policy squarely within the broader debate taking place in presidential studies: what is the fundamental source of power available to presidents to conduct foreign policy? Four depictions of the presidency are frequently raised, as described below.

The Rhetorical Presidency

Presidential rhetoric provides an important resource on which presidents can draw because they exercise power and authority not just through their actions but also through their words (Tulis 1987). Words can be used to defend and expand presidential power as well as to help build the political capital on which to base future claims of presidential power. While presidents have varied greatly in their rhetorical abilities, viewed from a long-term perspective presidential rhetoric reveals an underlying consistency rooted in the constitutional distribution of powers discussed above.

One of the most important displays of presidential rhetorical powers lies in the language and imagery used to justify the use of military force. Campbell and Jamieson (1990) identify five reoccurring pivotal characteristics of presidential war rhetoric:

- the movement toward war or the use of military force is characterized as the product of careful deliberation;
- a narrative of events is provided that justifies the military action being taken;
- the importance of unanimity and total commitment is impressed upon the audience;
- an effort is made not only to justify the use of force but to legitimize the assumption of broad presidential powers, including those of commander-in-chief; and
- the war rhetoric contains misrepresentations of fact that are used to strengthen and legitimize the president's actions.

Campbell and Jamieson (1990) trace the use of these themes through an extended analysis of war speeches of presidents spanning the period from Madison to George W. Bush. While they found great consistency in presidential rhetoric, they also noted that their context and purpose has changed. Early presidential war rhetoric was designed to justify action to be taken and had the effect of enlarging and justifying later claims to unilateral presidential powers. Later exercises of presidential war rhetoric built on this base and now are used to provide an after-the-fact rationale for military action already taken.

A more recent study of presidential rhetoric by Jason Edwards (2009) examined the manner in which Presidents Reagan, Clinton, and George W. Bush used the memory of Harry Truman to advance their policies. Each of them, Edwards argues, positioned themselves as Truman's heirs and used his legacy to sanction, validate, and ratify their foreign policy agendas. Edwards notes that what exactly constitutes Truman's foreign policy legacy is a matter of debate and that Presidents are able to capitalize on the American public's selective and partial reading of history.

The Partisan Presidency

Emphasizing the role of party leader, it is argued that we are witnessing the solidification of the partisan presidency that first emerged under Reagan (Skinner 2008–09). Rather than exist above party politics and serve as a unifying force in American politics, partisan presidents seek to use political party loyalty, patronage, and ideology as the principal tools of governing. Political consultants from ideological think tanks rather than those with nonpartisan expertise are relied upon for policy advice. Partisan presidents use the news media to reach out and mobilize their base instead of broadcasting to the public at large. One of the most significant consequences of a partisan presidency for the conduct of foreign policy is its rejection of bipartisanship. Rather than reach across the aisle, partisan presidents favor working closely with their own party leadership and select members of the opposition.

A partisan presidency creates a political atmosphere that stands in direct contradiction to the twofold purpose of bipartisanship. The first was to demonstrate unity to the leaders of other states in order to discourage them from trying to foment dissent among the American public and weaken support for presidential foreign policy initiatives. The second was to provide continuity across presidential administrations in American foreign policy. While the actual extent of bipartisanship in American foreign policy is subject to debate, governing on the basis of differences and party loyalty accentuates the very features of political debate that bipartisanship sought to minimize. In the short run, presidential partisanship may be seen as offering presidents advantages in making foreign policy by removing the need to build a broad consensus and reducing the number of policy voices competing for the attention of the president. Mobilizing and holding the partisan base in support of a single strategic vision is all that is required. In the long run, however, it creates potential difficulties for presidential

foreign policy initiatives by making compromise more difficult and speeding up the time frame within which success and failure are judged. Moreover, whereas bipartisanship can be seen as providing a basis from which learning can take place, partisanship is more likely to provide a foundation for the politics of blame.

The Unilateral Presidency

Far more so than the two previous formulations of presidential power as it relates to foreign policy, it is the conceptualization of the president as a strong and unilateral decision maker that has fueled political and scholarly controversy over the presidency (Howell 2003). From this perspective, the president is capable of taking advantages of ambiguities in the constitutional distribution of powers, the existence of vaguely worded and ambiguous legislative language, the inherent difficulties of collective action by the Congress and courts, as well as the president's ability to issue executive orders and proclamations, appoint key members of the executive branch, reorganize governmental units, and spend money to determine the course of American foreign policy. John Yoo (2005, 2010), a legal scholar who served in the George W. Bush administration, has written extensively defending the administration's expansive war powers.

A particularly prominent exercise of presidential unilateral power is the use of signing statements (Kelly and Marshall 2007) to affirm the president's power as commander-in-chief and his role as chief diplomat. Two examples illustrate the reach of this power. The 2005 anti-torture legislation passed by Congress contained language opposed by Bush, whose signing statement stated: "the Executive Branch shall construe ... the Act relating to detainees in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and as commander-in-chief." The effect of this statement was to claim presidential authority to conduct the war on terrorism as the administration saw fit. President Obama was quick to exercise this power as well. In June 2009 he signed a spending bill that placed conditions on funds destined for the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. In his signing statement, he also indicated that this legislation would not interfere with his authority as president to conduct foreign policy and negotiate with other countries.

The Constitutional Presidency

Advocates of the constitutional presidency perspective are the most vigorous opponents of the unilateral perspective. In their view the unilateral assertion of presidential powers does not grow out of ambiguities in the Constitution but directly contradicts its key premises. As did an earlier generation of presidential scholars, they base their argument on a reading of the Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the arguments presented in key Supreme Court decisions such as *United States v. Curtiss Wright*, *Youngstown Sheet and Tube v. Sawyer*, and *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*. And, like an early generation of foreign policy critics when confronted by the assertion of "imperial" presidential powers, these scholars have sought redress in modifying presidential powers through legislation, most notably a revision of the War Powers Resolution put into place after Vietnam (Oliver 2010).

An important constitutionalist voice is that of Louis Fisher (2007a, 2007b, 2009), who asserts that the claim to inherent presidential powers is an illusion. In his view, "the purpose of the U.S. Constitution is to specify and confine governmental powers in order to protect individual rights and liberties ... the Constitution is undermined by claims of open-ended authorities that cannot be located, defined or circumscribed" (Fisher 2009: 349). For Fisher,

working within the constitutional distribution of powers is also a matter of good policy in as much as “respect for the Constitution and joint action with Congress provides the strongest possible signal to both enemies and allies” (347). Others who adopt a constitutionalist perspective include Pious (2007), Lobel (2007) and Rakove (2007).

Conclusion

One of the noteworthy points emerging from this review of the contemporary debate over the foundations of presidential power in foreign policy is that, while it is focused on the present and future, our attention also returns to long-standing questions involving the extent of presidential powers (see Hilsman 1971; Crabb and Mulcahy 1986; Hastedt and Eksterowicz 2005; Strong 2005). A key question is whether the president is more a general contractor or a chief architect; a question that seems resistant to a concrete answer. We also find in these debates echoes of Rossiter’s observation that the president plays several roles at once and that the Constitution represents an “invitation to struggle” for supremacy in foreign policy. Such an invitation, of course, reveals that this struggle is an ongoing one that, from the perspective of the nation’s founders, is healthy for the democratic conduct of foreign policy. Whether the struggle produces sound or effective policies, however, is a matter for students and scholars of American foreign policy to evaluate.

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