Chapter 12

The President

The historical development of the office of the President
• The founders viewed a presidency whose power was limited.
• They had seen the abuses of the king.
• Royal governors had been authoritarian like the king.
• Belief that hierarchies of authority all subordinate levels imitate the highest level.

Evolution of Office
• As the President’s international role grew so did the office grow in importance.
• The role of the presidency increases with the growth of the nation.
• Thomas Jefferson’s Louisiana Purchase
• The existence of federal land outside the boundaries of states increases federal and presidential authority

President’s Power
• Regions where there are no state authority.
• Native American tribes did not always match state boundaries.
• Federal law restricts state from dealing with Native American tribes directly.
• States exploit the tribes, usually for land.
• Basis for lawsuits in New York State.

In Emergencies– Powers Grow
• The Civil War increases the power of the president.
• The impeachment of President Andrew Johnson was really just an assault on Presidential authority which had increased
• Waging war domestically changes authority.
• Reconstruction again increases president’s authority

A Step Back
• Following Reconstruction presidential authority reverts to pre-Civil war model.
• Waging war against Native Americans keeps presidential authority active in western states.
• In the West federal troops enforce power
• In the East the presidents authority is diminishing with industrialization

America Changes– Powers Grow
• The role of the executive changes with industrialization.
• Government’s growth responds to business growth.
• Culture’s notion about leadership changes.
• Industrialists were virtual dictators over many thousands of workers.
• Power is consolidated in the private sector.

Industrialists & Political Power
• Industrialists become so powerful that they challenge elected authority.
• State offices controlled by industrialists.
• State legislatures controlled by contributions and outright bribery.
• Industrialists known as “Robber Barons”

Teddy Roosevelt as Progressive
• Federal authority challenges industrialists.
• Teddy Roosevelt known as “Trust Buster.”
• TR moves to protect environment in West.
• TR sides with striking miners over mine owner
America as Imperial Power

- Defeat of Spain leaves America as imperial power.
- Philippines
- Cuba
- Puerto Rico
- Marshall Islands
- American businessmen orchestrate overthrow of Hawaiian Monarchy

World War Increases Power

- World War I increases president’s stature.
- America saves the day for Europe.
- President Wilson was influential.
- Senate Isolationists reject Wilson’s international initiative.
- Wilson suffers stroke fighting Senate.
- The President of U.S. is now an international leader

One Step Back

- Presidential authority returns to post-Reconstruction inaction following World War I.
- Presidents Harding and Coolidge believed in limited presidency.
- Teapot Dome scandal rocks Harding’s term.
- Scandal where Harding fathers illegitimate child breaks while in office.

Emergency Increases Presidential Power-Again

- The Great Depression results in dramatic changes in the power of presidency.
- At first, President Hoover tries to use voluntary measures to address crisis.
- After witnessing limited results in New York State as governor Franklin Roosevelt is elected president.
- Roosevelt wins landslide election.
The New Deal

- First 100 days proposes dramatic increase in governmental authority.
- President takes initiative.
- President becomes primary legislator.
- Landslide brought in many Democrats willing to do whatever FDR wanted.
- Nation ready to try anything that works.

President as National Symbol

- FDR becomes living symbol of hope (and authority) President’s power increases.
- Believes prosperity evident in wartime can be reproduced without war.
- Lincoln had become a symbol of national unity for the Union
- For the South he was a symbol of authoritarianism and aggression

Keynesian Economics

- English Economist John Maynard Keynes.
- Economies grow during wartime
- Seeks to reproduce wartime economy without death and destruction
- To do so increases governmental involvement in the economy at all times
- FDR believes in this economic policy

FDR Responds to crisis

- Addresses concerns of agriculture
- Establishes economic development in South and rural areas.
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Rural Electrification Program.
- Does not move to help African-Americans
- Southern segregationist “Conservatives” control many Congressional committees
Lincoln was not Pro-Active, at first

- Lincoln was re-active
- Would not have ended slavery
- He made it known that he would only restrict slavery’s growth to West
- South fired first shot at Ft. Sumter.
- During the course of the war Lincoln becomes more pro-active

Presidential Power Equation

- Commander in Chief + domestic crisis= power
- Has power grown following 9/11 under President Bush?

Post FDR Presidential Power

- Truman follows in FDR’s footsteps
- Bolder than FDR in that he integrates the U.S. Armed Forces
- Truman fires General Macarthur for insubordination
- Sends U.S. forces into Korea while Congress was in recess.
- Truman doesn’t run for third term.

Eisenhower & Integration

- Eisenhower returns to Hoover’s mold.
- Forced to take position over Civil Rights.
- Supreme Court appointment ends segregation
- Arkansas refuses to obey federal courts.
- Former general appalled by insubordination.
- Federal troops enforce integration in Little Rock.
- Ike authorizes it reluctantly.
Cold War enhances presidential authority

- Kennedy embraces FDR model as symbol.
- Like Truman, Kennedy tries to duplicate without imitating.
- Johnson tries to become FDR clone.
- Guns and butter
- Massive increases in bureaucracy and programs-The War on Poverty.
- Post assassination mandate.

Presidential Authority & Vietnam

- Nixon, the centrist president.
- Starts out acting more like Kennedy & Truman
- Reverts to his House Un-American Activities Committee style- paranoid & conspiratorial
- Ford and Carter follow centrist model.

The Reagan Era

- Reagan uses FDR-like charisma to dismantle FDR’s style activist government.
- Presidency as a symbol of a political philosophy-Conservatism, anti-government.
- Retains the international authority of cold warrior.
- Historians believe he delegated much of the decision making

The First Bush Administration

- Bush one part Reagan, two parts Ford.
- Reagan’s ideological legacy hampers Bush’s moderate-centrist approach.
- Remember: In 1980 Bush had been the most moderate Republican in primaries
- Desert Storm increases presidential authority
- Increase in authority results in blame for the economic recession
Important Maxim
• If a president takes credit for all that is good that happens during his watch he (someday, she) must accept responsibility for what goes wrong— even if they might not really be responsible for either.

The Clinton Years
• Clinton changes courses in mid-stream.
• After health care debacle becomes centrist in Ford-Carter-Bush mold.
• Attempts to duplicate Truman’s ending segregation in the military by setting national example on treating gays.
• Coops Republican “Contract with America.”
• Prosperity produced by end of Cold War and political stalemate?

What the Constitution Says
• Official Functions of the President:
  • Chief of State
  • Commander in Chief
  • Head of the Executive Branch
  • Enforcing the Constitution
  • Chief Diplomat

Authority not Specified in Constitution
• Joint Chief Legislator
• Manager of the Economy
• Head of the Political Party
• Symbol of national authority
• Moral Example?
• Hero?
Offices of Assistants to President
• White House Staff
• Chief of Staff
• National Security Advisor
• Domestic Policy Advisor
• Press Secretary

Executive Office of the President
• Office of Management and Budget
• Council of Economic Advisors
• National Security Advisor
• Vice President

The Cabinet
• The Departments of:
  – Agriculture
  – Commerce
  – Defense
  – Education
  – Energy
  – Health & Human Services
  – Homeland Security

  – Housing & Urban Development
  – Interior
  – Justice
  – Labor
  – State
  – Transportation
  – Treasury
– Veterans Affairs

**Growth of Cabinet**

- Originally the Cabinets functioned as the White House Staff and the Executive Office of the President. As the government grew they became more managers than advisors. They still fill an advice function competing with more intimate advisors on staff or EOP.

**Example:**

- Secretary of State lost out National Security Advisor in gaining access to the President
- Condoleezza Rice was the de-facto Secretary of State until 2004 while Colin Powell is the chief roving diplomat