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Introduction

The Pageantry of the Presidency

To many people, the presidency is the most visible part of the U.S. government, especially internationally, where the president is both the public face of the United States and the country's official representative abroad. While this has, to a degree, always been the case—George Washington was, after all, known as “the Father of His Country”—the intensive coverage by the media in recent years has only further increased the office's visibility and importance.

Stories about the president are found on the front page of the nation's newspapers and lead the evening news broadcast. The White House press corps treats the public to the most mundane and private details about the First Family: Ronald Reagan liked jelly beans; George and Barbara Bush's dog was named Millie; Bill Clinton's daughter, Chelsea, graduated from Stanford; and Gerald Ford apparently had a tendency to trip or fall at the most public and inopportune times. In short, the centrality of the presidency in the American political system is beyond question.

To scholars and students alike, the presidency is also an important academic field of study in both political science and U.S. history. Yet, ironically, it is one of the least understood and least studied components of American government. Although scores of good biographies exist on presidents throughout history, the formal study of the institution is a relatively recent scholarly endeavor.

One of the challenges in studying the presidency is that, as of 2015, only forty-three men had held the office. (Barack Obama was the

forty-third man to hold the office, but he was the forty-fourth president because Grover Cleveland served two nonconsecutive terms as the twenty-second and twenty-fourth president.) Among the few who have occupied the office, there has been much variation in their approach to the presidency as well as in their experiences in office and the skill with which they discharged their duties. This fact makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the nature of the institution based on so few examples.

At the same time, however, the office has seen little diversity and variation in the types of individuals elected. For instance, as of this writing all the presidents have been male. The United States has yet to elect a female president, even though a few dozen nations around the world have been led by women in the modern era. This list includes some of the United States' closest allies, such as Canada, Great Britain, and Israel. Women have pursued the American presidency beginning with Victoria Woodhull in 1872, but none has come close to winning. When Geraldine Ferraro was selected by Walter Mondale to join the Democratic ticket in 1984, she became the first female vice presidential nominee of a major political party in history.

Likewise, all the presidents have been white except Barack Obama. Only a handful of other African-Americans have even campaigned for the office—Jesse Jackson, Alan Keyes, Al Sharpton—and until the 2016 presidential campaign, no major campaign had been launched by an Hispanic, Asian, or other ethnic candidate. The 2016 campaign, however, saw

two prominent Latinos — Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, both Cuban-American — in the race. Every president has come from northern European ancestry, and the United States has yet to elect a president from southern or eastern European lineage. The only exception is Barack Obama, whose father was from Africa. All but five of the presidents have been of British descent (English, Irish, Welsh, Scottish): Both Roosevelts and Martin Van Buren were Dutch, Herbert Hoover was Swiss, and Dwight Eisenhower was German. Nonetheless, it must be said that in an increasingly pluralistic society, it is not a matter of *if*, but rather *when*, the country elects its first female president.

Many presidents also shared a common occupation and educational experience. The field of law is the most represented occupation of presidents before their political careers, with only a few exceptions. Several presidents had military experience, and a few — George Washington, Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, Ulysses Grant, Dwight Eisenhower — were generals or career officers. Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and others such as Jimmy Carter earned their living by farming, while Woodrow Wilson was a professor and university president and Ronald Reagan was an actor. Most presidents were well educated, graduating from prestigious private colleges. Both George H. W. and George W. Bush as well as William Howard Taft graduated from Yale, while both Franklin and Teddy Roosevelt as well as John F. Kennedy and Barack Obama were Harvard graduates. But there are a few exceptions. The last president to not have a college degree was Harry Truman, and both George Washington and Abraham Lincoln received very little in the way of a formal education.

There are other similarities among the presidents worth noting. All but one of the commanders in chief were Protestant Christians (John F. Kennedy was Roman Catholic), and the lion's share of them were "mainline" de-

nominations such as Episcopalian or Presbyterian. All but one president was married, the exception being lifelong bachelor James Buchanan, although Grover Cleveland married when he was already president. The only divorced president was Ronald Reagan, who had been married to actress Jane Wyman before his wedding to Nancy Davis, who would serve as First Lady.

Few presidents came from west of the Mississippi River, and many states have yet to produce a president. The earliest presidents hailed from Virginia and Massachusetts, and Ohio and New York have also produced several presidents. Physically, many of the presidents have been taller than average in height, and most have had blue or gray eyes.

So what does all this mean? The presidents are, in many ways, from a rather narrow cross section of American society, and this fact suggests something about the prevailing political preferences of the American public. Also, the United States has been served by some great presidents, men of distinction who left deep footprints on the office and nation. Among them are such presidents as Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Harry Truman, Teddy Roosevelt, and Andrew Jackson, all leaders rated by scholars as among the best to serve. So too have there been presidents who struggled with the challenges of the office. The experiences of Warren Harding, James Buchanan, Franklin Pierce, and Andrew Johnson were such that the office and the nation were fundamentally weaker after their presidencies than when they were inaugurated.

Founding

Another challenge that presidents have faced is crafting their approach to the office. Article II of the Constitution, which discusses the chief executive, is among the shortest, most vague components of the founding document. From its inception, the presidency was configured as

a weak office with few formal powers. And this was not by accident but by design.

The political arrangement that governed the newly declared states during the revolutionary struggle did not take long to prove ineffectual. The Continental Congress was often unable to provide the political or financial support that General George Washington needed to wage war. Under the Articles of Confederation after independence, the lack of an executive branch, coupled with weak governorships, precluded the new nation from adequately addressing such pressing problems as the war, debt, trade, squabbles among states and between the central government and the state governments, the need for a uniform currency, and continued threats from abroad. Indeed, by 1786 it had become clear to many of the leaders of the new nation that change was necessary in order for the grand experiment in popular democracy to work. As such, on September 11, 1786, delegates from the states met in Annapolis, Maryland, to discuss various problems facing the government, most notably commerce and trade.

Many in attendance—most prominently Alexander Hamilton and James Madison—maintained that the problems facing the young government were such that a convention to revisit the design of the Articles was necessary. The convention in question (the Constitutional Convention) commenced in May of 1787 in Philadelphia, and the task of revising the Articles quickly gave way to the more ambitious project of drafting an entirely new system of government.

One of the issues generating the most debate among the Framers of the Constitution was the nature of the executive office. During the long summer of debate at Philadelphia's Constitution Hall, momentum gradually gathered for establishing an executive, increasing national powers, and creating a blended (federal) system whereby the task of governing would be shared by the federal and state gov-

ernments. The questions surrounding the executive included whether it should be assumed by one person or a council, whether it would be selected by the legislature or by some other means, what the length of the executive's term should be as well as whether to limit the number of terms that any person could serve, and how much power to grant to the executive. Hamilton and his Federalist supporters favored a stronger executive, citing the obvious problems created by the ineffectual Articles of Confederation. Yet, the antifederalists remained firm in their concern over a strong executive and preference for a weaker office. In the "Great Compromise" between the large and small states and among the Framers, the Federalists ultimately succeeded in designing an office to be held by one person who would serve for four years and without term limits. However, it was a constitutionally weak office by design.

The views of the Framers regarding the issues of an executive and the amount of power to grant him were to a large measure the result of two factors—the experience of the colonies as British subjects and the writings of European political philosophers. Regarding the former, Britain's King George III and most of the appointed governors had abused their powers and showed little concern for the general welfare of the colonials. As the first calls for an expanded role in governing were heard from the colonists, Britain unwisely responded by levying new taxes on popular goods and expanding the presence of soldiers in the colonies. This action led to the so-called Boston Tea Party and only further inflamed the fledgling movement for political rights and self-determination.

The Framers had justifiable concerns about tyranny by an executive. Accordingly, they devoted considerable attention to making sure that the executive's powers were neither excessive nor unchecked. The result was the creation of a weak executive in the formal sense, one whose powers were balanced with those of

other branches of government. As such, the president had “limited powers,” “divided powers,” and “checked powers.” For instance, the president is able to veto legislation, but the veto can be overridden by a two-thirds majority of both houses of Congress. The president has the power to appoint federal officers, but judicial, ambassadorial, and senior administrative appointees must be confirmed by the Senate. And, the president can make treaties, but they too are subject to Senate approval by a two-thirds concurrence. Although the language in Article II is often ambiguous, the phrase “The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America” has been used to establish many of the powers and general authority that the president now enjoys and needs in order to manage the executive branch of the national government.

Article II of the Constitution is purposely vague and brief, raising more questions than it provides answers. Debate over the nature and extent of the presidential powers listed in Article II depend on one’s view of the Constitution. Indeed, for well over two hundred years presidents, members of Congress, the courts, and the public have wrestled with the matter of what the president can and cannot do. It is interesting to note that many of the situations defining the office historically are not based in constitutional decrees but rather were the result of precedents set by George Washington. So imposing was the first president’s standing that his legacy continues to define the office that he helped forge with every action and inaction.

The language in the Constitution discussing the requirements for the office provides one of the few specific details about the presidency. Presidents must be thirty-five years of age, native-born citizens of the United States, and residents of the country for a period of fourteen consecutive years prior to taking the oath of office.

A Growing, Dynamic Office

The presidency is a dynamic institution. Although the presidency is rooted in the Constitution and many of the traditions and customs of the institution are carried over from president to president, it is at the same time certainly not the office today that was occupied by George Washington. Washington oversaw five federal agencies: the departments of war, state, and treasury (which was conceived as a congressional department); the attorney general; and the post office. He also managed a small staff and few federal employees, and he administered a budget of roughly \$250,000. Today, the president’s staff numbers in the thousands, the federal government’s budget has long surpassed the trillion-dollar mark, the federal workforce numbers in the millions, and fifteen federal cabinet departments and scores of other agencies report to the chief executive.

In the words of the late presidential scholar Edward S. Corwin, the Constitution produces an “invitation to struggle.” The balance of powers among the three branches creates an environment where conflict and compromise are inevitable results of the task of governing. The fact that the president must share power with Congress has meant that presidents have relied on their personalities to enhance their otherwise limited powers or to respond to crises of the day in a way that expands their powers.

A good example was Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose charisma and the momentous events of the Great Depression and World War II created an opportunity for him to win four presidential elections and fundamentally change the nature of the office. More recently, George W. Bush sought to expand presidential war powers through the use of military tribunals, the Patriot Act (which, among other things, expanded government’s surveillance and arrest powers), and the detention of “enemy combatants” in order to fight the war on terrorism and did so within the backdrop of national security.

The personality of individual presidents

and factors such as national security and crises have contributed to the evolving role and power of the office. Recent presidents have recognized that real power in the office is neither formal nor constitutional in origin. Executive powers are too limited, divided, and checked by constitutional design. Rather, their power and ability to govern stem from influence, which is the by-product of their character, political skills, and ability to lead through their bully pulpit. In the words of the noted presidential scholar Richard Neustadt, the president must use the “power to persuade” in order to govern.

Many have even commented that charisma is a necessary ingredient for success in the White House, and polling has suggested that presidential character plays a role in the minds of voters. Clearly, much of the success enjoyed by Washington, Lincoln, and both Roosevelts, for example, can be attributed to the strength of character and attractiveness of their personalities. By the same measure, other presidents—most notably Richard Nixon—were plagued by shortcomings in their character.

The size, roles, and scope of the federal government have ballooned since 1789, when Washington was inaugurated. They have grown dramatically since 1933, when Franklin D. Roosevelt expanded in a revolutionary manner the function of government in order to address the Great Depression. Arguably, the first fundamental shift in and growth of the role and scope of the presidency occurred under FDR and is frequently referred to as the starting point for the “modern presidency,” with the period from Washington leading up to the inauguration of the thirty-second president in 1933 known as the “traditional presidency.”

Roosevelt entered the office with the government unable to respond to the high unemployment rate, widespread failure of businesses, and collapse of the banking and financial systems that had paralyzed the nation. With assistance from the Brownlow Com-

mission, the organization of federal agencies was revamped. Through his record four terms in office, Roosevelt managed the economy, created Social Security and other social supports for citizens falling through the cracks of society, provided electricity to rural areas, and put the jobless to work on large public infrastructure projects. By the time of his death in 1945, the presidency’s power had been greatly increased and its centrality in American life was established.

As the times have changed, so has the presidency. Factors such as the central role that the United States has played in international affairs since World War II and the growing technological and economic complexity of the country have contributed to the evolving nature of the office. One such development was the advent of the mass media, which began some years earlier at the turn of the century.

The presence of mass circulation newspapers, radio, television, and more recently satellite technology, cable television, the Internet, and twenty-four-hour news coverage have revolutionized the presidency. The effective use of the radio by FDR, for instance, allowed him to speak to the nation and, in so doing, bypass the usual legislative process and White House press corps. By taking his message directly to the people, FDR established an intimate rapport between the president and the public, one that would further strengthen the presidency and last to the present time. Presidents are now able to make direct appeals to the public, using the media to build support for themselves and their policy agenda. Coined by presidency scholar Samuel Kernell, this strategy of “going public” enables presidents to bypass Congress to a degree and move their proposals forward. Television would further add to the intimacy and connectedness of president and voters.

By the 1960’s and 1970’s, presidential power was seen as excessive and problematic. In the words of historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., an

overextended, so-called imperial presidency emerged. Commentators have suggested that this phenomenon contributed to the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, and other negative actions by presidents. Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter entered the presidency in the mid- and late 1970's attempting to heal the nation, return the office to a sense of normalcy, and renew respect for the institution.

But their efforts were apparently not enough. Starting in the 1960's, public frustration with, and even hostility toward, the office grew. The growing cynicism of the public coincided with increasing animosity between Congress and the president, antagonistic relations between the White House and the press corps, and divided government—whereby the presidency was in the hands of one party and Congress was controlled by the other party—which seemed to become the norm and resulted in policy gridlock. Not only were individual presidents challenged by these conditions, but public opinion polls revealed that public faith in the institution itself was eroding as well.

In the past few decades, the presidency has suffered from major foreign policy crises seemingly beyond the control of the sitting president, a series of foreign policy and political missteps, and scandals that were magnified by an adversarial press and an already weakened office: Watergate in the 1970's, Iran-Contra in the 1980's, the Monica Lewinsky scandal in the 1990's, the war in Iraq and the poor federal response to Hurricane Katrina's devastation in the first decade of the new century. Barack Obama faced an extraordinary array of international challenges including upheaval in Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, threats from China, Russia, and North Korea, and massive refugee movements from Central America and in the Middle East, and the effects of the crippling economic downturn just prior to his presidency.

Media commentators were quick to focus on Ronald Reagan's disconnected (even absent) style, George H. W. Bush's inability to

connect with the public and articulate a vision for the country, Bill Clinton's lack of personal integrity, and George W. Bush's suspect intellectual abilities and arrogance to the point that these issues became defining traits of their presidencies and further eroded public confidence in the office.

Accordingly, the United States finds itself today in a position whereby some scholars and commentators note the near ungovernability of the office. Yet, it must be said that such problems are not new, and similar criticisms were directed at many of the presidents serving in the mid- and late nineteenth century. Others have noted some fundamental limitations inherent in the political system facing presidents. For instance, presidential scholar Michael Genovese has identified a "variety of built-in roadblocks" which make it difficult for presidents to lead, including a cynical public, the difficulty of making good on campaign promises, conflicting expectations of presidents, a hostile media, and the inherent constitutional weakness of the office.

Roles and Duties

The Constitution loosely discusses the fundamental duties of a president. Five basic roles can be traced to and are derived from the Constitution. The first is "chief of state." The United States (unlike Great Britain, for instance) does not have a monarch or separate head of state. As such, both executive and ceremonial roles are merged into one office, whereby the president functions as the symbolic head of state, visiting other nations, receiving dignitaries, and presiding over ceremonies and national events.

The Constitution is clear about the president's role as "Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several states, when called into the actual Service of the United States," although considerable debate remains over the role of the president and Congress in declaring a war and the extent of war powers.

A third role is that of “chief executive.” The president is the head of the executive branch and oversees the numerous departments, agencies, and bureaus that compose the federal government. In this capacity, the president can appoint and remove federal administrative officers and can grant pardons and reprieves (a postponement of the execution of a court sentence).

The president also has the power to veto legislation, making him the “chief legislator.” As such, the president fulfills an important component in the legislative process. While Congress is the legislative branch, the president often influences the legislative agenda through the State of the Union address and the development of the federal budget.

Finally, the president functions as “chief diplomat,” making treaties, appointing the country’s ambassadors, and recognizing nations. In this capacity, the president has come to dominate U.S. foreign policy.

As the nation and office have changed, so too have some of the basic roles and duties of the president. The president now functions as “party chief.” Even though the United States is said to have a weak party system—or perhaps because of it—presidents are looked to by their political parties for leadership. The president often selects the national party chair, recruits candidates for office, and establishes the party’s policy platform.

In the words of Franklin Roosevelt, the presidency is “preeminently a place for moral leadership.” Acting as something of a “preacher in chief,” the president appeals to what Abraham Lincoln called “the better angels of our nature” and is expected to set a moral example for the nation. Lincoln led by moral courage, and his shadow continues to loom large over the office.

Lastly, through the power of their personality and use of the media, presidents have a bully pulpit from which to speak to the country. In so doing, many presidents have served both symbolically and practically as advocates for U.S. products, culture, and achievements,

boosting and promoting the United States at home and abroad. The president is expected to invigorate the national spirit in times of crisis and to champion all things American in the capacity of what can be described as a “cheerleader in chief.” Certainly FDR’s famous “fireside chats”—his radio addresses to a nation struggling through the Great Depression—soothed anxieties, calmed fears, and lifted hopes, as did George W. Bush’s words—bullhorn in hand—from atop the rubble of the World Trade Center in New York City a few days after the tragic terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Washington’s Legacy

George Washington served as the country’s first president from private mansions in New York City and later Philadelphia while the new nation’s capital buildings and executive mansion were being constructed. Paralleling the institution that it houses, the White House has endured times of tragedy (it was burned by the British in 1814 during the War of 1812), has experienced great growth (it was enlarged under Theodore Roosevelt and other presidents), and has changed in response to the times (it was gutted and rebuilt under Harry Truman).

Washington, who played a prominent role in the building’s planning and construction, did not live to see it completed, dying in December of 1799 almost one year before the mansion opened its doors to President John Adams. Washington and Adams would scarcely recognize the building—or the office—today.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, few would doubt the centrality of the presidency in the American political system or world affairs. Although the presidency would be unrecognizable to Washington, his fingerprints remain on the office. The American president has emerged as a symbol of the nation internationally, the focal point of media coverage, and the most influential actor in the American drama.

Robert P. Watson, Consulting Editor

Dwight D. Eisenhower

34th President, 1953-1961

Born: October 14, 1890
Denison, Texas
Died: March 28, 1969
Washington, D.C.

Political Party: Republican
Vice President: Richard M. Nixon

Cabinet Members

Secretary of State: John Foster Dulles,
Christian A. Herter
Secretary of the Treasury: George Humphrey,
Robert B. Anderson
Secretary of Defense: Charles E. Wilson, Neil
H. McElroy, Thomas S. Gates
Attorney General: H. Brownell, Jr., William P.
Rogers
Postmaster General: A. E. Summerfield
Secretary of the Interior: Douglas McKay, Fred
Seaton
Secretary of Agriculture: Ezra T. Benton
Secretary of Commerce: Sinclair Weeks,
Lewis L. Strauss
Secretary of Labor: Martin Durkin, James P.
Mitchell
Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare:
Oveta Culp Hobby, Marion B. Folsom,
Arthur S. Flemming

During his administration, Dwight David Eisenhower, the thirty-fourth president of the United States, was much criticized by news commentators, political pundits, and students of the presidency. Critics attacked him for his alleged blunders, blandness, and laziness in office. A common image of the president depicted him as a mumbling, bumbling, stumbling, fum-

bling leader who preferred a game of golf or a bridge foursome to the duties of his office. A series of stories and jokes, at Eisenhower's expense, circulated even while he was in office. One story claimed that if Eisenhower died, then Vice President Richard Nixon would become president, but if Sherman Adams (Eisenhower's chief of staff, who supposedly ran the administration) died, then Eisenhower would become president. Another story described an Eisenhower doll as one that, when wound, did nothing for four years. One of Eisenhower's own speechwriters described the president as a "walking debate" and an "oaf."

Yet to the majority of Americans in the



Portrait of Dwight D. Eisenhower. (Whitehouse.gov)

The First Lady Mamie Eisenhower

Mary “Mamie” Geneva Doud was born on November 14, 1896, in Boone, Iowa. One of four daughters of a wealthy businessman, Mamie grew up in a loving family in comfortable homes with summers in Denver, Colorado, her studies culminated by completing Miss Walcott’s Fashionable School in Denver. She married Dwight D. “Ike” Eisenhower, an Army lieutenant, in 1916 after a brief courtship.

Mamie entered the White House in January, 1953, with a wealth of experience in meeting and entertaining prominent and powerful national and international leaders. She had been the hostess of numerous informal and formal gatherings while Eisenhower was president of Columbia University and a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) commander. She quickly established a reputation for running the White House in a firm, efficient, and yet benevolent manner.

Her view of being First Lady clearly was to remain largely in the background and provide her husband with personal, but not policy, support. Mamie was unquestionably successful at this, maintaining high public opinion levels throughout Eisenhower’s eight years in office. She became famous for her “Mamie bangs” hairstyle and for favoring pink clothing. However, Mamie fought to overcome personal health problems. Particularly troublesome were a weak heart and an inner-ear malady which made her light-headed and caused her to stagger while walking. This symptom led to gossip that she had a drinking problem. Mamie fought this rumor by declining to drink alcohol in public and withdrawing to her bedroom during bouts of dizziness.

The strength of Mamie’s support for her husband was evident during the several medical crises that he suffered during his presidency. Aides noted that she remained at his side and played a key yet private role in ensuring that his recovery progressed according to the physicians’ plan.

Mamie left the White House with Eisenhower in 1960 for their retirement home in a farmhouse near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. She and Ike enjoyed a quiet life there entertaining family and friends until his death on March 28, 1969. Mamie maintained as many family traditions as her health permitted until her death on November 1, 1979.

Robert Dewhirst

norities, and the most destitute were largely ignored – African Americans until the end of the 1950’s, and the others until the 1960’s.) Advocating moderate policies and an economy of abundance, Eisenhower rejected both orthodox Republicanism and New Deal statism. Instead, he sought an authentic American center, which would assure freedom and security by accepting the basic economic and social tenets of the New Deal, even as he remained a fiscal conservative in most matters. At the same time, Eisenhower was a strident anticommunist who continued the nation’s basic foreign policy of containment, with the added flourish of threat-

ening massive retaliation in case of communist aggression, but who nevertheless followed policies in many ways more restrained than those of subsequent administrations. In short, Eisenhower reflected perfectly the temper of the times even as he led the country with good sense and much prudence.

A Midwestern Boyhood

The future president was born in Denison, Texas, on October 14, 1890, the third son of David and Ida Eisenhower. Both his parents were members of the River Brethren Protestant sect, descendants of German-born farmers who had

hower's attempts to limit the federal role in the development of electric power involved a proposal by Edgar Dixon and Eugene Yates to build a privately owned and operated generating plant to supply the power needs of the city of Memphis. This would allow the federally operated Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which provided power to Memphis, to divert electricity to a plant of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) in Paducah, Kentucky. Eisenhower preferred this option to the construction by the TVA of an additional facility to supply the AEC's needs. In 1954, Eisenhower instructed the AEC to negotiate a contract with Dixon and Yates. The opposition by public power adherents to the contract was immense, however, and became even more so when dis-

crepancies in awarding the contract became public, including a conflict of interest and the failure to let out the contract for public bidding.

The Dixon-Yates issue played a role in the 1954 elections when the Democrats employed the slogan "Nixon, Dixon and Yates" to embarrass the administration. They might have embarrassed the White House even more had not Memphis announced that it would build its own power plant. Claiming that he favored this type of municipal initiative in the first place, the president ordered the AEC to cancel its contract with the Dixon-Yates combine. When Dixon-Yates sued to recoup its losses, the administration was placed in the uncomfortable position of having to state that the contract was invalid because of a possible conflict of interest in



Eisenhower reacts to cheers during his inauguration ceremony, while Harry S. Truman stands behind him, on January 20, 1953. (*Library of Congress*)

Excerpts from Dwight D. Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" address to the United Nations General Assembly, December 8, 1953:

The United States knows that if the fearful trend of atomic military buildup can be reversed, this greatest of destructive forces can be developed into a great boon, for the benefit of all mankind.

The United States knows that peaceful power from atomic energy is no dream of the future. That capability, already proved, is here — now — today. Who can doubt, if the entire body of the world's scientists and engineers had adequate amounts of fissionable material with which to test and develop their ideas, that this capability would rapidly be transformed into universal, efficient, and economic usage.

To hasten the day when fear of the atom will begin to disappear from the minds of people, and the governments of the East and West, there are certain steps that can be taken now.

I therefore make the following proposals:

The Governments principally involved, to the extent permitted by elementary prudence, to begin now and continue to make joint contributions from their stockpiles of normal uranium and fissionable materials to an International Atomic Energy Agency. We would expect that such an agency would be set up under the aegis of the United Nations. . . .

I would be prepared to submit to the Congress of the United States, and with every expectation of approval, any such plan that would:

First, encourage worldwide investigation into the most effective peacetime uses of fissionable material, and with the certainty that they had all the material needed for the conduct of all experiments that were appropriate;

Second, begin to diminish the potential destructive power of the world's atomic stockpiles;

Third, allow all peoples of all nations to see that, in this enlightened age, the great powers of the earth, both of the East and of the West, are interested in human aspirations first, rather than in building up the armaments of war;

Fourth, open up a new channel for peaceful discussion, and initiate at least a new approach to the many difficult problems that must be solved in both private and public conversations, if the world is to shake off the inertia imposed by fear, and is to make positive progress toward peace.

Against the dark background of the atomic bomb, the United States does not wish merely to present strength, but also the desire and the hope for peace.

Brown v. Topeka: Beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement

On the issue of civil rights, the White House's record was substantially better, but not all that it might have been. As a general proposition, Eisenhower believed that every American citizen was entitled to vote and to equal protection under the law. As a military commander in World War II, he had experimented with integrating several army units toward the end of the war, and one of his first acts as president was to order desegregation of facilities in federal offices and on military bases. At the same time, however,

the president thought that responsibility for civil rights should be left to the individual states, and in his memoirs he later made clear that he had little regard for those who "believed that legislation could institute instant morality."

In 1954, the Supreme Court under Earl Warren, whom Eisenhower had appointed as chief justice eight months earlier, concluded unanimously in a landmark case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, that "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' had no place. Separate educational facili-

Time Line

Washington

- 1732, February 11: George Washington is born in Westmoreland County, Virginia.
- 1755, July 9: After General Edward Braddock's defeat near Fort Duquesne, Pennsylvania, Washington withdraws his defeated army.
- 1759, January 6: Washington marries Martha Dandridge Custis, the widow of Daniel Parke Custis, in New Kent County, Virginia.
- 1775, June 15: Congress names Washington as general and commander in chief of the Army of the United Colonies.
- 1776, March 17: Washington forces the British to evacuate Boston.
- 1776, August 27: Washington is defeated at the Battle of Long Island.
- 1776, December 26: Washington defeats the Hessians at the Battle of Trenton.
- 1777, December 19: The Continental Army goes into winter quarters at Valley Forge.
- 1781, October 19: Lord Cornwallis surrenders to Washington at Yorktown.
- 1783, September 3: A peace treaty ends the Revolutionary War.
- 1783, December 23: Washington resigns his commission and returns to private life.
- 1787, May 25: Washington is unanimously elected president of the Constitutional Convention.
- 1789, February 4: Washington is unanimously elected the first president of the United States.
- 1789, April 30: Washington is inaugurated at Federal Hall in New York City.
- 1789, July 4: The first tariff act places duties on imports.
- 1789, August 4: The first federal bond is issued to fund domestic and state debt.
- 1790, March 1: The first U.S. census is authorized.
- 1790, July 16: Congress locates the national capital in the District of Columbia.
- 1791, March 4: Vermont is admitted as the fourteenth state.
- 1791, December 15: The first ten amendments to the Constitution (the Bill of Rights) are ratified.
- 1792, June 1: Kentucky is admitted as the fifteenth state.
- 1792, December 5: Washington is unanimously reelected president.
- 1793, March 4: Washington is inaugurated in Philadelphia for a second term.
- 1794, July-November: The Whiskey Rebellion occurs in western Pennsylvania.
- 1796, June 1: Tennessee is admitted as the sixteenth state.
- 1796, September 17: Washington issues his farewell address.
- 1799, December 14: George Washington dies at Mount Vernon, Virginia.

J. Adams

- 1735, October 30: John Adams is born in Braintree, Massachusetts.
- 1764, October 25: Adams marries Abigail Smith in Weymouth, Massachusetts.

Cabinet Members by Administration

Washington

Secretary of State

Thomas Jefferson (1789-1794)
Edmund Randolph (1794-1795)
Timothy Pickering (1795-1797)

Secretary of the Treasury

Alexander Hamilton (1789-1795)
Oliver Wolcott, Jr. (1795-1797)

Secretary of War

Henry Knox (1789-1795)
Timothy Pickering (1795)
James McHenry (1796-1797)

Attorney General

Edmund Randolph (1789-1794)
William Bradford (1794-1795)
Charles Lee (1795-1797)

J. Adams

Secretary of State

Timothy Pickering (1797-1800)
John Marshall (1800-1801)

Secretary of the Treasury

Oliver Wolcott, Jr. (1797-1801)
Samuel Dexter (1801)

Secretary of War

James McHenry (1797-1800)
Samuel Dexter (1800-1801)

Secretary of the Navy

Benjamin Stoddert (1798-1801)

Attorney General

Charles Lee (1797-1801)

Jefferson

Secretary of State

James Madison (1801-1809)

Secretary of the Treasury

Samuel Dexter (1801)
Albert Gallatin (1801-1809)

Secretary of War

Henry Dearborn (1801-1809)

Secretary of the Navy

Benjamin Stoddert (1801)
Robert Smith (1801-1809)

Attorney General

Levi Lincoln (1801-1805)
John Breckinridge (1805-1807)
Caesar Rodney (1807-1809)

Museums, Historic Sites, and Websites

*Editor's Note: Among the following are homes of presidents or presidential couples, before or after their years in office. Many of these places are mentioned in the text of *The American Presidents*, and all are open to the public. The first four listings contain information on all or most of the presidents or First Ladies; the sites listed thereafter are president-specific and appear in alphabetical order by president's name. All websites were visited by editors of *Salem Press* in October 2015.*

General Resources on Presidents and First Ladies

American President Website:

www.americanpresident.org

The American Presidents Website:

www.americanpresidents.org/places

(Includes links to presidential places for each president)

National Archives and Records

Administration Presidential Libraries

Website: www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries

National First Ladies' Library

331 South Market Avenue

Canton, OH 44702

Ph.: (330) 452-0876

Website: www.firstladies.org

Presidential Museums, Historic Sites, and Websites

JOHN ADAMS AND JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

Adams National Historical Park

135 Adams Street

Quincy, MA 02169

Ph.: (617) 770-1175 (visitor information)

Website: www.nps.gov/adam

(Includes home of John and Abigail Adams)

Massachusetts Historical Society

1154 Boylston Street

Boston, MA 02215

Ph.: (617) 536-1608

Website: www.masshist.org

(Contains the Adams Papers Collection)