

Seminář 23. 10. 2019

- 435 congressional districts; one representative for each 600-700 thousand people; redistricting each 10 years (after each census)
- Swing voters in districts pose a threat to their representatives – representatives are more loyal to their district than to the party (elections each 2 years – high accountability)
- Articles of Confederation – no executive power (fear of monarch's abuse of power; more power and decision-making to states). Congress was getting too powerful, need to create checks and balances
- Different interpretations of the Constitution; 4 visions of presidency (potent, princely, perverted, progressive)
- Case study: usage of veto power (regular veto X pocket veto – no action when Congress is not in session)
 - G. Washington – careful approach to the Congress (he did not want to substitute their judgement with his); 2 vetoes
 - Jefferson never used it (more accountable to electors back then than now; now elected more directly by the people; before less bound by the people)
 - Andrew Jackson was using veto more – critical reactions (King Andrew the first) – unexpected proactivity – encroaching upon legislation
 - Wade-Davis Bill – Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln suggested 10 % of southern states population to pledge allegiance to the Union to be re-accepted; Wade & Davis suggested 50 % of population (majority). Lincoln believed it would be too difficult to repair all of the ties within the Union if the Wade–Davis bill passed – vetoed.
- Introducing laws: president can only suggest them in an informal way, only congressmen can propose them
- Executive power to wage a war – depending on words → FDR's inaugural speech – EMERGENCY, duty
- Unilateral/imperial presidency: executive orders, presidential memoranda, directives, proclamations, military orders, national security directives → enable the president to legislate; bypassing the Congress?
- How to stop executive orders? Judicial review (SCOTUS), impeachment (Congress), passing a bill reverting the order (or taking precautions) – contradictory; easy for a following presidents to cancel them. Fulfilling the agenda/bad reputation – strategic decisions

Seminář 6. 11. 2019 – Politics and the water's edge

Signing statement – public statement on dis/agreement; not as powerful as executive order, but still have some weight (president's view on a law); not as common

Constitutional balance and war – foreign policy making and the balance between presidency and Congress

Congress declares war (president makes it – he is the commander in chief); treaties must be accepted by 2/3 of Senate. How to bypass constitution/congress: on domestic policy there is executive order, in foreign policy there are executive agreements

When a war is a war?

1. 1950 – Harry Truman and incidents in Korea – Truman never labelled the conflict a “war” (police action, raid, the situation in Korea) – congress never declared it a war; there was a UN mandate. Truman never asked for a Congressional mandate, he was protecting the presidential right to do it; he didn't want the Congress to step over
2. 1955 – Eisenhower and China (Taiwan) – he asked for authorization to use power in case the situation escalates (joint resolution that became law) – “*the president is authorized to employ the Armed Forces as he deems necessary for the specific purpose of securing and protecting Formosa and the Pescadores against armed attack*” – aim to deter China; he was given the power which he would be able to use.
3. 1794 – Presidential proclamation of neutrality (when Congress was not in session)

Vietnam and War Powers Resolution – aim to limit presidential powers; Johnson asked the Congress for authorization to use power; however, in the Gulf of Tonkin was only an assumption of attack, which likely did not happen – president was misusing the information asymmetry (Congress had no reason why not to believe him) – the only way, how Congress could limit the President in the Vietnam war, was financing (which it eventually did not do). Turning point – involvement in Cambodia, enough for Congress – War Powers Resolution → President can use the armed forces, but has to inform the Congress within a short period; Congress must pass a resolution or law within 60 days. If not, he must withdraw the forces in 60 days.

Strikes lacking resolution by Congress – Clinton and Kosovo; Obama and Libya

2001 – Authorization for use of USA armed forces – made the president very powerful, he could basically himself decide whom to attack; also missed the time frame; very loose, no mention of Al-Qaeda or specific nations. Attempts to repeal that in the recent years; engagement against ISIS still based on this Authorization; also the drones in Yemen

1991 Authorization was much stricter – he must demonstrate that he used all available diplomatic means to avoid the war; the strike would be the only last resort

Since WW2, there was no formal declaration of war by the USA

Liberal internationalism, end of bipartisan foreign policy (polarization); American politics stops at the water's edge – on the coast, in the foreign policy, USA is unified, domestic policy should not influence the FP (notion in the 1960s), nowadays different, there is no more a common enemy

Seminář 20. 11. 2019

President X Congress – American Federal budget; increasingly a partisan topic and political tool

Government shutdown – no money to pay the federal employees; FY starts always on the 1st of October. If not approved by that time, stop-gap bills and continuing resolutions are used (regime of a last year). Issues of disagreement: social expenditures \leftrightarrow defence; environment (national parks X mining and resources extraction); education; border security (wall)

FY – 1st October, preparations a year or even 14 months ahead:

1. Departments draft their own budgets for review to President, he re-drafts it and submits to Congress (usually in February, presidents usually do not meet the deadline)
2. Both House and Senate review; Congress can either accommodate the preferences or change them \rightarrow budget resolution (spring time). Each department prepares a Congress justification (detailed)
3. House and Senate floor votes
4. President vetoes or signs into law

Components of federal spending: 61 % mandatory spending, 30 % discretionary spending, only 9 % interest

US Grand strategy

Four archetypes of US foreign policy schools of thought (Jeffersonian, Jacksonian, Wilsonian and

During the Cold War it was the concept of “containment” – framework of policies

- Jacksonian – what is it to be “American” – strict definition of ethnic and religious background – WASP – white anglo-saxon protestants; policy of isolationism, unilateralism; anti-immigration; returned with Trump; aspect of national honour, patriotism; anti-globalism (elites for their own benefits)
 - Physical security and economic wellbeing of the American population is a key
 - Suspicious of foreign adventures and elites (and their preferences)
 - Focus on national defence and honour
 - Sharp distinction between INSIDE and OUTSIDE; us and them, the others always looming (immigrants, North Koreans, terrorists...)
 - Once in war, no substitute for victory
 - Government should protect, not oppress people
 - Notion of marginalization and even discrimination of WASPs
- Hamiltonian – more pragmatic in the economic sense; initially he was for protectionist policies
 - Build US FP around economic and commercial interests – freedom of seas (economic diplomacy)
 - International trade is not a zero-sum game
 - Pulling other powers into the created system
 - Technological leadership

- In support of a strong alliance between big business and government
- Jeffersonian – his perspective is simply to protect the American democracy; we need it to protect our own freedom.
 - Avoid wars and foreign entanglements at all costs; wars undermine civil liberties
 - Opposition to Hamilton
 - Most interested in protection of American democracy on the home front
 - Crony capitalists may use the US government to promote their own business interests
- Wilsonian – created post WW2 world order
 - Anchoring the world order in liberal values (best serves US interests), it is practical
 - Building a framework based on international law rather than on economic and security ties
 - Liberal internationalism
 - US has missionary and moral obligation to further freedom and democratic values

Seminář 18. 12. 2019

Identity and US Foreign policy

Realism (rationalism) X liberalism (cooperation in order to avoid a conflict; inter-dependence to make world more peaceful) X constructivism/post-structuralism (states might act irrationally)

Is danger objective? The way of naming a danger – securitization; the danger become more urgent once somebody names it (war on drugs, war on cancer, war on terror...)