INTRODUCTION

A UNIQUE PRESIDENCY

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It is fitting to examine the impact of Bill Clinton, that most political of presidents, on American politics. The task is not a simple one, because the Clinton presidency is in several important respects unique. Of course, every presidency is in some sense "one of a kind." Only Woodrow Wilson could be the first president to deliver a State of the Union address on the floor of the House of Representatives; only Millard Fillmore could be the first to install an indoor toilet in the White House. Some presidential "firsts," like Wilson's, are politically consequential; many, like Fillmore's, are not. The Clinton presidency produced several remarkable and consequential political events: in electoral results, policy enactments, and presidential and congressional behavior. This chapter relates the distinctive characteristics of a presidency that is "marked by an unusual number of firsts." (Milkis and Nelson 1999, 371).

Scholars commonly acknowledge that the Clinton presidency is idiosyncratic. Descriptions of his tenure in office range from "unusual" (Rockman 1996, 356) and "puzzling" (Peri Arnold, in this volume) to "bizarre" (Skowronek 1997, 447). What accounts for the relative strangeness of Clinton's tenure in office? Perhaps, in part, the quirks of contemporary culture do. Bruce Miroff argues in his chapter that Clinton's "postmodern style"—involving multiple transformations of his political persona—fared well in a postmodern culture grounded in ambiguity, confusion, and irony. Most of the authors here assess aspects of this style, leading us to label his presidency as "postmodern"

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in the book's title. Stephen Skowronek, a leading scholar of the presidency, provides a more historical answer to the question.

The title of Skowronek's landmark book, *The Politics Presidents Make,* is a central topic of this volume. In it he argues presidents are forced to create new politics because the presidency is an order-creating institution. Chief executives try to "construct some new political arrangements that can stand the test of legitimacy with other institutions of government as well as the nation at large" (20–21). Creating new arrangements is a disruptive process, likely to induce pitched political battles over the president's efforts. In the late twentieth century, the persistence of large, stable governmental institutions made presidential attempts at political reconstruction more difficult: "More has to be changed to create a break from the past, and those adversely affected by the changes will be able to put up more formidable resistance" (56). The enhanced resistance to Bill Clinton's initiatives provided his presidency with several unique qualities. According to Skowronek, Clinton was a "preemptive president" working as an opposition leader to a resilient governmental regime (43).

What was this "regime" that Clinton challenged? Much of it involved the resistance of an independent Congress dominated in 1993 by a complacent Democratic majority and after 1994 by an insurgent Republican majority strongly opposed to Clinton, each supported by potent alliances of established interest groups. But beyond Congress and organized interests lay the "conventional wisdom" of the Reagan-Bush years, still powerful and resistant to major changes in national direction; America became more conservative from 1980 until the beginning of 1993. The Reagan-Bush agenda of lower taxes, smaller government, and increased defense spending had become the established national tendency by the early 1990s. As James Ceaser put it in 1988, "When it comes to the substance of his public philosophy, Reagan has succeeded for the moment in making his program the 'base' of American political discourse. Just as candidates once defined their position by reference to the New Deal, they now define themselves by reference to the Reagan Revolution" (206). Indeed, George Bush's apostasy from the Reagan creed when he raised taxes in 1990 helped to defeat him in 1992. The public ousted Bush, but it was not at all clear that they repudiated the twelve years of governance before 1992. Clinton, after all, received only 43 percent of the popular vote.

This produced an uncertain political environment for Bill Clinton in 1993, one in which he constantly had to improvise politically in order to survive. Preemptive presidents like Clinton are the "wild cards" of presidential history, who are prone to "zig-zagging" on policy in response to adverse political conditions (Skowronek 1997, 450, 453). Thus the Clinton presidency displayed

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several different political hues. From 1993 to 1994, Clinton tried to govern within the Democratic coalition and overcome Republican opposition. In 1995, he positioned himself rightward but also in opposition to the vehement new Republican majority in Congress. Then in 1996, Clinton cut deals with the Republican Congress that worked to their mutual electoral benefit that November. After 1997, he was forced into a survival mode as investigations surrounded him, culminating in impeachment.

In the uniquely turbulent politics of the 1990s, characterized by "weak partisan loyalties, divided government, and widespread distrust of the political process" (Milkis and Nelson 1999, 372), it is hardly surprising that a preemptive president would rack up an extraordinary number of political firsts. The ensuing sections discuss the often-distinctive characteristics of Clinton's political reign. First, I identify unique historical events and the remarkable electoral record of the decade. Then, Clinton's original governing style and some remarkable instances of presidential and congressional behavior receive attention. Finally, the distinctive policy results of the Clinton era are recapitulated. Bill Clinton's presidency was indeed no ordinary time.

Historical Trends and Events

Several "firsts" of the Clinton presidency shaped the political tone of the 1990s. James Guth chronicles in his chapter the distinctive role the president played in sharpening the cultural conflicts of the 1990s. As the first baby-boomer president, Bill Clinton had, along with many in his generation, found ways around the Vietnam draft, dabbled in drugs, and indulged in sex outside marriage. All these activities came to haunt Clinton with a vengeance, from the draft letter of the 1992 campaign to the Lewinsky scandal of 1998–1999. Media disclosures, resultant political attacks, and Clinton's evasive and at times false denials of such charges helped to give the politics of his time a distinctly nasty flavor. To borrow a phrase from feminists, "the personal became the political" in an unpleasant way for the president. As the initial First Lady strongly influenced by the feminist movement of the sixties and seventies, Hillary Rodham Clinton dramatically redefined the role of presidential spouse. Gone was the decorative and subordinate homebody; in her place was an assertive and independent political force working alongside her spouse. During Clinton's first term, she controversially spearheaded an abortive effort to reform health care, but she remained an important political adviser throughout his presidency. Indeed, her loyalty and discretion during the Lewinsky scandal saved his presidency. In 2000, Hillary again made history—

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this time by running for a New York Senate seat while still serving as First Lady. In her contribution to this volume, Barbara Burrell details how the Clintons' generational experiences help to explain their emphasis on appointing women to the administration, addressing the policy concerns of women, and cultivating women as a political constituency.

The controversies surrounding the Clintons' pasts and their unorthodox political partnership intensified the combative political environment of national governance. The 1990s produced a close partisan balance in national politics, giving officeholders of each national party strong incentive to press differences and embarrass their partisan enemies. The Clintons became prime targets, due in no small part to their own political mistakes both before and during Bill Clinton's White House tenure. A public disaffected with parties produced (with the exception of 1992) election results that created divided government and resultant institutional warfare between president and Congress. As elections less conclusively determined who would govern, politics became dominated by forms of nonelectoral warfare aimed at destroying political enemies (Ginsberg and Shefter 1999). John J. Pitney in his chapter explains how the process of "revelation, investigation, and prosecution" begun in the 1970s reached its apogee in the Starr investigation and impeachment battles of 1997–1998 (41–44). The goal in this process is to control government not by winning elections but by politically disabling the opposition. Bill Clinton and his nemesis, Newt Gingrich, were the major targets and victims of the new scandal culture.

Washington scandals continued to rage because they had no great effect on most citizens' lives and did little to hamper the booming American economy of the 1990s. Though the president can claim some credit for the good economic results (because of his deficit reduction package of 1993 and appointments of Robert Rubin as Treasury Secretary and Alan Greenspan as chair of the Federal Reserve Board), the economy did more for him than he ever did for it. Several years of increasing economic growth, low inflation, and soaring stock prices aided his reelection and helped him to survive the Lewinsky scandal. The intense political jousting in Washington hardly encouraged public fixation on politics. In the 1996 presidential election, electoral participation dropped to below 50 percent for the first time since 1924 (shortly after women got the vote) and also declined during the off-year election of 1998 to 36 percent, the lowest since 1942 (which was in the midst of a world war). The stakes in Washington probably seemed small to many Americans because times were good.

Of all the historical circumstances of the 1990s, two had the greatest ef-

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fect on presidential politics. One, already noted, is Skowronek's "institutional thickening" in Washington: "an ever thicker government" producing "greater institutional resilience" to attempts by presidents to alter established arrangements (1997, 413). This secular trend produced considerable difficulties for Clinton in the 1990s. In particular it placed him in a separated presidency with limited resources to employ in bending other Washington institutions to his wishes (Jones 1999, 75). Congress and the bureaucracy remained rival and competitive institutions supported by strong and enduring interest groups. Clinton's response, as we will see, was to manage public perceptions and create a personalized, postmodern presidency to help him deal with other Washington power centers and survive scandal.

The second grand historical circumstance of the 1990s, the end of the Cold War, importantly altered the president's job description. Lawrence Dodd describes the Olympian attributes expected of presidents during the Cold War era: "Military service, preferably a heroic performance in wartime, became a virtual necessity . . . personal problems became stigmas to be avoided or hidden at all costs, and significant symbols of personal success—in national politics, during wartime, or in business—seemed virtually mandatory" (1995, 259). Bill Clinton possessed none of these traits, and America seemed to no longer demand them from a president. Instead, Clinton redefined the presidency as an exalted governorship, aimed at solving the immediate domestic problems of citizens (Weisberg 1999). The public's interest in foreign policy shrank considerably, allowing domestic policy to dominate the presidential elections of the 1990s, a policy arena Bill Clinton knew well and in which he could excel. The end of the Cold War also produced great uncertainty over the course of American foreign policy. Without a great rival, how do we define American interests? How do we pursue them? These questions plagued Clinton and the rest of Washington during his presidency.

The Electoral Record

The changing public expectations of the presidency, endemic institutional combat in Washington, and low incidence of party voting by the electorate all combined to produce a remarkably quirky series of national elections in the 1990s. The electoral arena for the first time in this century featured close competitive balance between the two parties at both presidential and congressional levels in an environment in which individual elections centered not around party labels but on the personal traits and campaigns of individual candidates. The following facts and interpretations demonstrate that elections

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in the 1990s involved Clinton in an electoral roller-coaster ride unlike anything encountered by previous presidents.

- Clinton's election and reelection as a Democratic president was unusual. He became the first two-term Democratic president since Franklin Roosevelt and the first two-term president never to win a majority of the popular vote since Woodrow Wilson. Clinton is also the only two-term president in the twentieth century to win election twice with less than four hundred electoral votes. In 1992, Clinton won the presidency while running well behind all but a handful of congressional Democrats in their districts and although Democrats lost ten House seats. While the House experienced only small partisan change, it underwent the biggest turnover of its membership in forty years—due to retirements, redistricting, and public disaffection resulting from the House banking scandal. The combination of a Clinton victory, Democratic House losses, and great member turnover in the House caused Gary Jacobson to describe the 1992 congressional elections as "most peculiar" (1993, 154). Bill Clinton thus shattered recent precedents by winning twice without either time receiving a strong electoral mandate from the public.
- The 1994 election, described by Walter Dean Burnham as "very likely the most consequential off year election in one hundred years" (1996, 363), produced fifty-two additional Republican House members and eight new senators, giving Republicans unified control of Congress for the first time in forty years. Burnham argues the 1994 election was so great a shift toward Republican voting that it may betoken an incipient partisan realignment (1996). The administration suffered the largest congressional losses since 1922, in the wake of the Teapot Dome scandal. The election also led to the "unique" rise of Speaker Newt Gingrich, who attempted to assert the powers of a prime minister during the heady days of the congressional Republican revolution of 1995 (Campbell 2000, 50). The overreaching by the Gingrich-led congressional Republicans led to budget stalemate and two government shutdowns that rekindled Clinton's popularity and contributed to his reelection in 1996.
- The 1996 elections made Clinton the first Democrat ever to win reelection while Republicans retained control of Congress and made him the first Democratic president to serve more than two years with a Republican Congress. Democrats picked up nine House seats but lost two Senate seats; Clinton's personal victory did not translate into a broader party victory.

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- The 1998 elections produced results described as "very unusual" by political analyst Charles Cook (1998, 1). Though the elections occurred in the midst of an impeachment investigation by the House of Representatives, Democrats nevertheless gained six House seats, the first time a president's party had picked up seats during the midterm election of a president's second term since 1822, while no net change resulted in the Senate. Not since 1934 had Democrats gained any House seats in a midterm election when their party held the White House. The overall change in seats in 1998 was the second lowest of post–World War II midterms (Shafer 2000, 28). Together, the congressional election results of 1996 and 1998 produced "remarkable stasis" given the turbulence of national politics during this time (27).
- The elections of the 1990s produced new presidential voting alignments. In both 1992 and 1996, Clinton effectively targeted swing voters largely concentrated in America's suburbs and presented a carefully tailored agenda suited to their concerns (Stengel and Pooley 1996; Schier 2000), thus producing new electoral inroads for a Democratic presidential candidate.
- Clinton also assembled an Electoral College base of states from America's northeast, west, and northern border states that may serve as the basis for future Democratic success in presidential elections. Clinton is also the first president to make female and black voters so central a component of his electoral coalition in important swing states (Sapiro and Canon 2000). The administration's record regarding women and racial minorities, discussed by both Barbara Burrell and Sharon Wright in this volume, was mixed, but better in the eyes of advocates than that of any recent predecessor. Women and blacks "emerged from the periphery to help shape the last presidency of the twentieth century," a development with many possible implications for the future of American politics (170).

John Coleman in this volume finds a pattern underlying the seemingly confusing electoral results of the 1990s. He argues that the 1968 election produced a party realignment that resembled more a "dealignment" in which Democrats had an advantage among a less partisan electorate that increasingly elected divided national governments. In 1994, a similar realignment resulted, one in which Republicans now gained the advantage in national elections. But the public clearly preferred neither party as a normal majority party, as Clinton's reelection in 1996 and the stalemate verdict in 1998 revealed. In such a fluid situation, according to Coleman, "there are several paths for party

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development." The volatility of the 1990s gives us no strong clues as to which possible path will actually result.

An additional Clinton-era electoral innovation receives fuller discussion in the following section, which is concerned with the president's governing style. Clinton's governance can be termed "hyperpolitical," due to his uniquely strong concern with using the presidency to maximize both his reelection chances and his job approval among the public. Other presidents, such as Lyndon Johnson, devoted much attention to such matters. Clinton, though, elevated the cultivation of personal political success to a near-obsession.

Governing Style

George Edwards and Stephen Wayne argue that a president's governing style involves two distinct sorts of leadership activities. First, a president must at times be a "director of change, creating opportunities to move in new directions and leading others where they otherwise would not go." And in other circumstances, a president must be a "facilitator of change, exploiting opportunities to help others go where they want to go anyway" (1994, 14). Bill Clinton, characteristically, developed a governing style that frequently permitted him to "have it both ways" with the public—acting as a director and facilitator of change at the same time. Clinton and his advisers perfected this method in 1995 and 1996 while preparing for his reelection campaign. First, his pollsters surveyed swing voters on various small-scale domestic politics they might prefer. Once these were identified, Clinton then publicly emphasized the policies. The public would not have gone for these policies had they not been first discovered by surveys. The polling thus directed attention to new directions that might prove popular, once discovered. Clinton could then direct public and congressional attention to the policies, and engage in leadership by facilitation once the public discovered the president's agenda and expressed approval. This merger of direction and facilitation is no small political achievement and is unmatched among recent presidents. When a president can create opportunities for people to move in new directions that appear the directions they want to go anyway, the political costs of public presidential leadership shrink. Only Ronald Reagan achieved this political ideal on occasion, but his more emphatic ideological convictions produced fewer opportunities for conflating the direction and facilitation of change. The ideologically much more flexible Clinton made the discovery of such opportunities the core of his governing style.

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How did Clinton do it? He initially learned from painful experience. After his first hundred days, he was less popular than was any president in the history of polling. Yet by his sixth year, in the midst of the historically unprecedented Lewinsky scandal, he had the highest job approval ever of any president at that point in his term. Given the limited resources and opportunities available to presidents due to the decline of parties, the rise of congressional assertiveness, divided government, and the interest group intransigence of "permanent Washington," this is a remarkable political achievement. His governing style successfully aimed at public approval and entailed many components.

Clinton raised the importance of pollsters as presidential advisers to new heights. No other American president has demonstrated Bill Clinton's interest in opinion polls (Edwards 2000, 37). In his chapter, John Harris explains how in 1995 and 1996, pollster Dick Morris gained unprecedented authority in framing domestic policy for Clinton with an eye toward reelection. Morris helped to direct public attention to poll-discovered policies so that Clinton could lead through facilitation—a novel conflation of direction and facilitation (Morris 1997). Clinton also often resorted to pure facilitation. Even during the war in Kosovo, Clinton relied on pollster Mark Penn's daily survey results, which consistently revealed support for aerial bombing but opposition to ground troops. Clinton followed this advice to military victory and popular success in the conflict (Harris 1999c).

"Governing by campaigning," which appeared first during the Reagan presidency, became a constant under Clinton (Jones 1999, 278). From the beginning of his presidency, Clinton set a new pace by engaging in more public appearances than any previous president (Ragsdale 1996, 176, 179). As part of his triangulation strategy of 1995–1996, in which he attempted to place himself near the political center and equidistant from congressional Republicans and Democrats, Clinton engaged in innovative use of presidential advertising. For the first time in a nonelection year, the White House supervised spending some $18 million in television ads on the president's behalf (Woodward 1996, 344). The legality of the "soft money" spending by the Democratic National Committee was questionable, but the ads helped to frame issues for the 1996 election in ways favorable to the president.

The result was a governing strategy combining rhetoric and administrative actions to create personal ties with the public. This created distance between the president and his own party, as Nicol C. Rae notes in his chapter. It also did not encourage popular debate or discussion of issues in any depth.

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Instead, it attached the president to popular policies. This personal relationship between the president and targeted parts of the public proved helpful in the short run for Clinton, particularly when he was under frequent political assault from scandal and investigation; an effective governing strategy eventually became a vital survival strategy.

Though it is difficult to overstate the effectiveness of Clinton's governing strategy with the public, that approach proved of only limited effectiveness when the separated president faced the other power centers of Washington. Though often popular with the public, Clinton's initiatives fared less well in Washington. His proposals often came in great quantity and complexity, allowing Congress to ignore many of them without great political cost. Presentation of a few simple, popular initiatives might have a promising chance of success, but Clinton could not restrain himself from overloading his agenda, giving overly long State of the Union addresses stuffed with dozens of small policy proposals (Rockman 2000).

A deeper problem for his governing style, discussed further in the next section, was his reputation within Washington, defined by Richard Neustadt as "impressions within the Washington community about how he will put his powers to use" (1990, 185). As his presidency proceeded, Clinton's reputation gradually suffered, for several reasons. His long and diffuse agenda and frequent shifts in priorities gave uncertain signals. He also developed a reputation among legislators as a president who could not be trusted to keep his word (Penny 1999). Bob Kerrey, fellow Democrat and senator from Nebraska, even publicly referred to him as "an unusually good liar—unusually good" (Will 1997). In 1993, for example, House Democrats took a political risk in voting for an administration-sponsored increase in energy taxes, only to have the president drop the proposal when negotiating with the Senate. Actions like this lingered long among Democrats on Capitol Hill, though most continued to support his initiatives in 1993 and 1994.

The arrival of a Republican Congress and the onset of the Lewinsky debacle dramatically worsened the president's reputation problems in Washington. The new Congress disagreed with the president on policy and seldom trusted him to keep his word. As a result, congressional support for presidential initiatives tumbled further during a two-year period than ever before since *Congressional Quarterly* started the calculations in 1953, from an impressive 86.4 percent success in 1994 to an abysmal 36.1 percent in 1995 (Doherty 1996, 3427). Though Clinton's congressional support grew later in his term, it never again approached the level of his first two years.

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Institutional Behavior

The president's reputation problems help to explain the unique combination of his public popularity and the widespread suspicion Washington accorded him during most of his presidency. Add an unusual level of partisan polarization in Congress, and the result is a climate in which policymaking becomes extraordinarily difficult. Washington in the nineties witnessed several government shutdowns, record use of the filibuster as an obstructive device in the Senate, and an unparalleled invasive investigative assault on the president by independent counsel Kenneth Starr.

The rancorous partisanship in Congress during the 1990s can hardly be overstated. Shortly after Clinton took office, the filibuster became a new tool of partisan warfare in the Senate. It was previously used only by a few senators to obstruct Senate business at the end of a session. Minority Leader Bob Dole managed to unify Senate Republicans behind an unprecedented party-line filibuster of the economic stimulus component of Clinton's economic plan in 1993. As a result of their success, the minority party in the Senate has gained new clout through threatening and executing filibusters, thus slowing down the pace of Senate work and empowering minorities who seek to make partisan points. Though the majority party continues to direct House business without effective minority obstruction, that chamber as well has confronted poisonous partisanship, from the ethics investigation of Speaker Gingrich in 1995–1996 to the impeachment debate of 1999.

President Clinton, lacking Washington reputation and finding unending combat on Capitol Hill, spent most of his second term resisting forays by congressional investigative committees on Whitewater, campaign finance, the Lewinsky matter, and the loss of nuclear secrets to the Chinese. His battles with independent counsel Starr became an unprecedented struggle for presidential survival. Clinton became the first president subpoenaed by a prosecutor while in office and the first to testify before a grand jury—which he did twice, once regarding charges of sexual harassment towards Paula Jones and once concerning a possible obstruction of justice regarding his affair with Monica Lewinsky. The administration asserted an immunity from prosecution claim in the Jones case and a series of executive privilege claims in the Lewinsky situation, leading to several historic federal court decisions that promise to circumscribe such claims by future presidents. In *Clinton v. Jones* (117 S. Ct. 1636) the Supreme Court ruled in 1997 that the president has no immunity from sexual harassment prosecution while in office, holding that

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"the doctrine of separation of powers does not require federal courts to stay all private actions against the president until he leaves office." The process of discovery proceeded in the Jones case, leading to revelations of a sexual affair between the president and a young White House intern, Monica Lewinsky.

Independent counsel Starr, seeking evidence of possible obstruction of justice by the White House in the Jones case, subpoenaed the president, his secret service officers, and White House attorneys for evidence about the Lewinsky matter. The administration appealed the subpoenas of secret service agents and White House lawyers, arguing that executive privilege shielded them from testifying. In each case, a federal appeals court ruled against the White House. Testimony before grand juries proceeded, and the presidential zone of privacy shrank further for Clinton and future presidents.

The culmination of the testimony involved the first impeachment proceedings against a popularly elected president. The House of Representatives on December 19,1998, approved two articles of impeachment by narrow, partisan margins. One accused the president of lying under oath before the Starr grand jury, and the other charged him with obstruction of justice in the Jones civil case. This occurred despite public opposition to impeachment in opinion polls and the surprising Republican losses in the midterm elections the month before. The Senate trial failed to muster majority votes for either article.

The future of impeachment politics remains uncertain. Skowronek notes that preemptive presidents like Clinton have faced torrents of personal abuse while in office—Andrew Johnson, the only other president impeached, also ranks as a preemptive president (1997, 44). In her chapter, Diane Harvey suggests that Clinton's behavior may have "desensitized the public to presidential scandals—particularly sex scandals." Much hinges on the political consequences of impeachment in the 2000 elections; a large political penalty imposed on Republicans would lessen enthusiasm for impeachment investigations in the future. At this point, however, impeachment's impact on the 2000 elections seems limited, which may make impeachment a more frequent tool of political combat in Washington. Harvey demonstrates, however, how popular suspicion of Clinton's accusers helped him through the crisis, which might deter similar future assaults. But partisan and principled motivations can overcome such tactical calculations. Should the competitive, evenly matched, and poisonous partisanship of the late 1990s persist, impeachment may well be invoked again soon. In this most dramatic sense, the Clinton presidency has produced unprecedented institutional behavior in Washington.

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Policy Legacy

The Clinton record on policy is hard to assess because he presented so many small initiatives—some of which became law, but none of which changed American life fundamentally. A few major policy initiatives do promise to mark the Clinton presidency as distinctive. First, as Peri Arnold and John Coleman note herein, the president can claim partial credit for an unprecedented turnaround in government finances. No president has seen the national budget move from such deep deficits to such strong surpluses during his time in office. In Fiscal Year 1993, Clinton faced a deficit amounting to 3.9 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), totaling $300 billion dollars (Council of Economic Advisors 1999, B-79). By Fiscal Year 1999, that deficit had reached a surplus equal to $99 billion, 1.2 percent of GDP (Pianin and Harris 1999, A1). The budget turnaround under Clinton promises to restructure spending politics, so long constrained by the shadow of large deficits.

Another major action of the Clinton presidency, discussed by Raymond Tatalovich and John Frendreis in this book, was the 1996 disentitling of welfare. Clinton reached a compromise with a Republican Congress over welfare policy, shifting its focus from income maintenance through entitlement to limited-term assistance and mandatory training and employment. Aid to Families with Dependent Children, an entitlement since the days of FDR, was abolished, the first such eradication in this century. The successful economy, accompanied with this reform, helped to shrink welfare rolls dramatically in the late 1990s (Quirk and Cunion 2000, 200–201). The fate of the poor under these new laws during an economic downturn, however, has yet to be known.

A third major legacy may be the successful military action in Kosovo. James McCormick notes in his chapter how the Kosovo war reflected the administration's strong commitment to many forms of international engagement. The terms, however, have changed; for the first time, America participated in an offensive military action by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The underlying logic of the action was innovative as well. No vital national interest lay behind the American military action; rather, the action sought to improve the humanitarian lot of the Kosovars by defeating Serb repression and thus bringing new stability to the region. Instead, the initial effects of the operation produced the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Kosovars. Whether stability will come to the Balkans at last remains to be seen. The action did open the possibility, however, that foreign and defense policy will pursue humanitarian goals beyond the traditional strategic objec-

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tives of America's national interests. In the short run, this produced a surprising bipartisan consensus in support of additional defense spending, as many liberals responded positively to the prospect of a military policy driven more by humanitarian concerns (Pianin 1999, A1).

A fourth and more ambiguous policy impact lies in the growing domestic and international salience of trade policy, emphasized by the Clinton administration as an important element of its international strategy. The successful passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993 and of permanent normal trade relations with China in 2000 marked the major administration triumphs in trade policy. Even so, a majority of House Democrats opposed these trade liberalizations. Between the two triumphs, the administration suffered a series of trade policy setbacks, failing to win congressional support for expanding NAFTA to Latin America and extended "fast track" presidential negotiation powers. The tumultuous failure of the Seattle round of World Trade Organization talks in 1999, amidst tens of thousands of anti-WTO protestors, dramatized the higher political stakes in trade policy. As several authors in this volume note, Clinton did not convince key components of his party's coalition—environmentalists and labor unions—of the utility of his administration's push for market liberalization. Thanks in part to Clinton's own emphasis on it, trade policy promises to remain a more important and controversial part of foreign policy than it has been in recent decades (Greenhouse 1999).

The Important "Firsts"

The above summary of the many remarkable and unprecedented occurrences during the Clinton presidency raises the question of their ultimate significance for American politics. Some of the "firsts" seem to have few lasting implications. Clinton's plummet in congressional voting support from 1994 to 1995, for example, seems very much a specific product of the times with few long-term political impacts. New facts make new politics, however, and the policy changes listed above promise repercussions into the twenty-first century. Other "firsts" reflect lasting changes in our politics. The role possibilities for First Ladies, for instance, seem to have been permanently widened by Hillary Clinton's pioneering assertiveness, and the presidential office has been redefined in a lasting way, as well. As Peri Arnold explains in his chapter, the federal courts have constricted executive privilege and presidential immunity from civil suits in ways that surely will affect future occupants of the Oval Office.

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One innovation of the Clinton presidency, however, deserves a final, special mention. It's likely that future presidents will employ more campaign styles and approaches to governing as a result of Bill Clinton's efforts in this regard. Clinton found it possible, through careful assessment of public opinion and shrewd campaigning while in office, to create public approval of his job performance without a stable governing coalition supporting him in Washington or widespread policy consensus on the role of government among the public. This is no small accomplishment in the treacherous politics of the 1990s. His survival of impeachment is the ultimate testament to the efficacy of this governing style for personal presidential survival and success, and it is a lesson that will not be lost on his successors. Clinton's remarkable ability to reinvent himself in such threatening circumstances earns him the label of "postmodern" president—one able to successfully alter his identity as the political context shifted.

The Plan of the Book

Unlike most "legacy" books, which primarily recapitulate what happened, this book assesses the impact of Bill Clinton's presidency on the future of American politics and public policy. Each author evaluates Clinton's record in the context of its likely effects on future events. A prospective focus supplies an expansive perspective for examining Clinton's record and will stimulate many constructive speculations among the book's readers. The authors here offer varying hypothetical speculations as well. This does not always produce consensus among them, but does add to the liveliness of the volume.

Reflecting Clinton's affinity for policy substance, this volume begins with three pieces that examine his stewardship of the institutional presidency and his impact on economic and foreign policy. Peri Arnold emphasizes Clinton's personalization of his presidential role in his conduct ofthe institutional presidency. Raymond Tatalovich and John Frendreis explain how Clinton's economic policies departed from those of previous Democratic presidents by deemphasizing economic redistribution. James McCormick reveals how the Clinton administration heavily weighed domestic political considerations in its conduct of foreign policy. Uneven presidential attention to foreign policy, he argues, hindered its coherence.

Clinton's great emphasis on directing and facilitating public opinion then receives attention from three quite differing viewpoints. John Harris, from the perspective of a White House reporter, explains the politicized nature of the Clinton presidency's daily operations, with particular attention to the unprec-

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edented influence of pollster Dick Morris in 1995 and 1996. Bruce Miroff's cultural analysis reveals the convergent "postmodern" traits of Clinton the politician and American culture in explaining his successful courtship of the public. Diane Harvey systematically analyzes public opinion data to discover the sources of Clinton's public popularity and its impressive durability during the impeachment ordeal.

Clinton devoted much time and energy to electoral politics, and the next three chapters examine the future implications of his masterful conduct of that role. John Coleman explains how Clinton affected the pattern of party alignments in the electorate through his efforts as a preemptive president and his impact on economic policy. John Pitney, also reflecting the "preemptive" theme, notes the many ways that Clinton's actions toward the Republican Party resembled Richard Nixon's tactics toward Democrats. Both, he argues, had large impacts on national politics through their handling of the opposition. Nicol C. Rae notes the distance Clinton placed between himself and his party in pursuit of reelection and in the policymaking of Dick Morris–inspired triangulation.

The final chapters in the book examine Clinton's effects on important divisions within America's politics. James Guth reveals the many ways that Clinton's presidency aggravated the culture war, contributing to his ultimate impeachment. Barbara Burrell examines the important effects of both Bill and Hillary Clinton on the politics of gender, through appointments, electoral strategies, and public policy. The complex impact of race on Clinton's politics and policy receives assessment by Sharon Wright. Clinton emphasized racial reconciliation more than previous presidents, she argues, and also came to depend heavily on support among racial minorities during the impeachment trauma.

Bill Clinton's presidency, with its many distinctive qualities, promises important consequences for America's political future. Each of this volume's contributing authors presents several of these likely consequences. Added together, they make an intriguing set of possible effects. Bill Clinton wanted to make a difference as president. In many ways, including several he surely did not intend, he has.

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