

groups, business, and the wealthy.

Now, however, political scientists fret about the recent rise of a “plebiscitary presidency,” in which the chief executive leads largely by making direct appeals to the public and needs immediate public approval to sustain his influence. Other political scientists worry that Congress, now more open and responsive than ever, can no longer legislate effectively.

Since the 1960s, Quirk and Hinchliffe argue, American political leaders have increasingly pandered to the “uninformed prejudices of the mass public” and slighted the counsel of “disinterested” policy experts. The authors’ long list of examples includes the failure to increase taxes or cut middle-class entitlement programs in order to reduce the large budget deficits of the 1980s and ’90s, and Washington’s high-profile but futile “war” against illegal drug traffic, waged despite evidence that efforts to prevent and treat drug abuse would be more effective.

In the 1950s, the authors explain, most citizens had little awareness of issues or ideologies, and voted largely on the basis of candidates’ personal qualities or party labels. By the late 1960s and early ’70s, however, voters

had become more educated, more ideological, and more issue oriented. Citizens with well-defined liberal or conservative views in 1973 made up 44 percent of the populace, compared with only 25 percent in 1956. But the new voters were not necessarily better informed, the authors observe. “The proportion of people who can, for example, give the name of the vice president or identify the purpose of a major domestic program has hardly changed” from what it was 50 years ago. Today’s voters may know where candidates stand on a particular issue, but they still often don’t understand the issue itself.

Politicians have become more solicitous of voters’ policy prejudices than ever, using polls to determine what those views are, the authors say. “Issue-oriented appeals, although often negative and almost always highly superficial, have become the principal currency of campaign politics.”

One plus to public opinion’s rising importance, the authors note, is that narrow special interests have lost clout. But the “downside,” they warn, is that policymaking is now “more vulnerable to popular leaders advancing dubious claims of entitlement, offering emotional release, or promoting fantasy.”

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Declaring War

“The War Powers Resolution: Time to Say Goodbye” by Louis Fisher and David Gray Adler, in *Political Science Quarterly* (Spring 1998), 475 Riverside Dr., Ste. 1274, New York, N.Y. 10115–1274.

Twenty-five years ago, as the conflict in Vietnam dragged on, Congress moved to reassert its constitutional authority to declare war with the War Powers Resolution. Enacted on November 7, 1973, over President Richard M. Nixon’s veto, it was ill-conceived from the start, contend Fisher, author of *Presidential War Power* (1995), and Adler, a political scientist at Idaho State University. Instead of restricting the chief executive’s power, it broadened his legal authority, giving him “unbridled discretion to go to war as he deems necessary against anyone, anytime, anywhere, for at least 90 days.”

Senator Thomas Eagleton (D.-Mo.), one of the resolution’s original sponsors, was so appalled by the watered-down version that emerged from a House-Senate conference that he voted against it. The resolution

“has been horribly bastardized to the point of being a menace,” he warned. The original Senate bill had allowed the president to initiate the use of military force only to repel or retaliate against an armed attack, or to rescue endangered Americans abroad. It required him to end the military action after 30 days if he did not have specific congressional authorization. The emasculated War Powers Resolution merely requires the president “in every possible instance” to consult with Congress before putting U.S. troops into “hostile” situations, and lets the deployment go on for up to 90 days.

Ever since, Fisher and Adler say, presidents have routinely taken unilateral military action, usually treating “consultation” as meaning “notification after the fact.” President Ronald Reagan, without seeking

congressional authorization beforehand, “introduced U.S. troops to Lebanon, invaded Grenada, carried out air strikes against Libya, and maintained naval operations in the Persian Gulf.” President George Bush acted in the same way in invading Panama in 1989, “and only at the last minute did he come to Congress for support in acting offensively against Iraq” in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. President Bill Clinton has repeatedly used, or threatened to use, military force without congressional authority, in Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, as well as recently in Afghanistan and Sudan.

The Constitution vests in Congress “the sole and exclusive authority to initiate mil-

itary hostilities,” Fisher and Adler maintain, and the War Powers Resolution “unconstitutionally delegates the power to make war to the president.” It should be repealed, they assert. They acknowledge that situations are bound to arise, as they have in the past, in which a president considers it necessary to use military force without prior authorization from Congress. “But he cannot be the judge of his own actions,” they maintain. Instead, the president should afterward go to Congress, plead necessity, and seek retroactive authorization. If a presidential “usurpation” should be unwarranted, Fisher and Adler say, impeachment would be “a legitimate response.”

If Women Ran the World

“Women, Biology, and World Politics” by Francis Fukuyama, in *Foreign Affairs* (Sept.–Oct. 1998), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

If women ran the world, many feminists say, it would be a very different place, with much less aggression and violence. Fukuyama, author of *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) and a professor of public policy at George Mason University, not only agrees but believes that “all postindustrial or Western societies are moving” in that direction. But there’s a catch, he says.

The male propensities to compete for power and status and to engage in violence, he writes, are not just the products of a patriarchal culture—they are rooted in biology, according to “virtually all reputable evolutionary biologists today.” That, of course, makes those inclinations harder to change, both in men and in societies. Nevertheless, Fukuyama declares, they must be controlled, in international affairs as well as domestic societies, “through a web of norms, laws, agreements, contracts, and the like.” In addition, women need to become more involved, he says. “Only by participating fully in global politics can women both defend their own interests and shift the underlying male agenda.”

Over the last century, Fukuyama notes, world politics has been gradually becoming

feminized, “with very positive effects. Women have won the right to vote and participate in politics in all developed countries, as well as in many developing countries, and have exercised that right with increasing energy.”

Though he expects men to continue to play “a major, if not dominant, part in the governance” of the United States and other democracies, Fukuyama predicts that as women do get more politically involved, these countries are likely to become less willing “to use power around the world as freely as they have in the past.” American women (like their sisters in other rich countries) have been less disposed than men to favor defense spending and the use of force abroad.

“Will this shift toward a less status- and military-power-oriented world be a good thing?” Fukuyama asks. For relations among advanced democracies, it will be, he thinks, because it will strengthen their tendency to remain at peace with one another. However, in dealing with other nations, “feminized policies could be a liability. . . .

“[E]ven if the democratic, feminized, postindustrial world has evolved into a zone of



Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, indomitable after a failed IRA assassination attempt in 1984