

## Chapter 2

### PRESIDENTIAL PERSUASION: DOES THE PUBLIC RESPOND?

#### PART I

The premise that the president has considerable potential to move the public is so widespread and so central to our understanding of politics that we rarely focus on it explicitly. However, it is questionable that we should *assume* that presidents, even skilled presidents, will be able to lead the public. John F. Kennedy once suggested an exchange from *King Henry IV, Part I* as an epigraph for Clinton Rossiter's classic work, *The American Presidency*:

Glendower: "I can call spirits from the vasty deep."

Hotspur: "Why, so can I, or so can any man.

But will they come when you do call them?"<sup>1</sup>

Kennedy's sardonic proposal reflected both his own frustrations in leading the public and his skepticism about the potential of public leadership.

What is the nature of presidential public leadership? In an earlier work, I outlined two contrasting views of presidential leadership. In the first the president is the *director* of change, establishing goals and leading others where they otherwise would not go. A second perspective is less heroic. Here the president is primarily a *facilitator* of change, reflecting and perhaps intensifying widely held views and exploiting opportunities to help others go where they want to go anyway.<sup>2</sup>

The director creates a constituency to follow his lead, whereas the facilitator endows his constituency's views with shape and purpose by interpreting them and

translating them into legislation. The director restructures the contours of the political landscape to pave the way for change, whereas the facilitator exploits opportunities presented by a favorable configuration of political forces.

In this chapter we take a first cut at the complex relationship between the president and the public. Before we investigate further the president's leadership of the public, we need to know if the president can be a director, whether the public actually moves in the president's direction. If it does, at least some of the time, then perhaps the assumption of many journalists and scholars that the White House *can* persuade or even mobilize the public if the president is simply skilled enough at using the "bully pulpit" is justified. If this is the case, we can narrow our focus in studying presidential leadership of the public to the personal and organizational skills necessary to lead and the conditions in which presidents are most successful in influencing the public. We can examine the quality of the president's presentations, the substance of his messages, the nature of the White House public relations operation, and the situations in which the public seems most responsive to leadership.

On the other hand, if the public rarely moves in the direction the president is trying to lead it, then Kennedy's skepticism about the potential of public leadership might be the more appropriate conclusion. If presidents cannot transform public opinion, if they are facilitators rather than directors of change, then it follows that we should devote less attention to evaluating presidents' public leadership skills. Similarly, if presidents do not have the potential to move the public, we should not attribute the failure of presidents to lead the public to their rhetorical or public relations deficiencies. Our analytical task becomes explaining why presidents are not more successful. Such a focus leads us to

consider broader forces in American society that may influence leadership of public opinion.

Most importantly, if the potential of the 'bully pulpit' is less than the conventional wisdom suggests, we must ask whether the White House is looking in the right direction as it seeks solutions to the problems of governing. If the pulpit is less than bully, it seems reasonable to focus more on presidents' abilities to evaluate the possibilities for change and effectively exploit the opportunities presented by the broad configuration of political forces in American society.

To help us determine whether presidential leadership of the public allows them to be directors or facilitators of change, it is useful to briefly examine previous work on presidential public leadership.

### **The Little We Know**

As a society, we devote extraordinary attention to what the president says and how he says it. Political commentators in both the press and the academy routinely evaluate presidents in terms of their public leadership, their ability to articulate a vision, rouse a crowd, or even stick to a speech. Yet we know very little about the impact of the permanent campaign. Despite the prominence of going public in scholarly commentary on the presidency, there are very few studies that focus directly on the impact of presidential leadership of opinion, and no full-length studies do so.

A few experimental studies provide suggestive findings. Lee Sigelman ascertained public opinion on six potential responses to the 1979–1980 hostage crisis in Iran. He then asked those who opposed each option whether they would change their view “if President Carter considered this action necessary.”<sup>3</sup> In each case a substantial

percentage of respondents changed their opinions in deference to the supposed opinion of the president. In another experiment during the Reagan presidency, Dan Thomas and Lee Sigelman posed policy proposals to sample subjects. When informed that the president was the source of the proposals, enthusiastic supporters of Reagan evaluated them in favorable terms, but when the source was withheld, Reagan supporters evaluated these same proposals unfavorably.<sup>4</sup>

Not all results are as positive, however. In another study, Lee and Carol Sigelman asked sample groups whether they supported two proposals, a domestic policy proposal dealing with welfare and a proposal dealing with foreign aid. One of the groups was told that President Carter supported the proposals, while the president was not mentioned to the other group. The authors found that attaching the president's name to either proposal not only failed to increase support for it, but actually had a negative effect because those who disapproved of Carter reacted very strongly against proposals they thought were his.<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey Mondak found that reference to the president in issue surveys affects results only when other information is scarce and that the president needs a high level of support (over 57%) before his policy endorsement constitutes a positive cue. Thus, he concludes, the president's credibility mediates his impact as a cue giver.<sup>6</sup>

Roberta Glaros and Bruce Miroff evaluated the reactions of some persons watching Ronald Reagan address the nation. Their conclusion was that the principal impact of the speeches was to reinforce the audience's predispositions. They found little evidence of persuasion taking place.<sup>7</sup>

Scholars have devoted substantial attention to what some years ago I have termed "the public presidency."<sup>8</sup> Another stream of literature focuses on the efforts of presidents

to "go public" and attempt to influence public opinion,<sup>9</sup> including managing the news.<sup>10</sup>

As in the literature on presidential rhetoric discussed in Chapter 1, this literature emphasizes what the president and his staff do rather than the impact of their activity on public opinion. Other studies have examined public evaluations of the president, but not the president's influence on those evaluations.<sup>11</sup>

A few studies have examined aggregate responses to the president's communications. Lyn Ragsdale found that a short-term increase of about 3 percentage points in presidential approval following a televised presidential address,<sup>12</sup> and Brace and Hinckley concluded that a major presidential address added 6 percentage points to the president's approval ratings.<sup>13</sup> There is reason to be skeptical about the impact of presidential speeches, however, as we will see later in this chapter.

A few studies have concluded that presidents could influence public opinion a small amount on issues, but only when they themselves have high approval ratings.<sup>14</sup> Others have found that people who approved of the president's performance are more supportive of policy stances of the president than those who disapproved.<sup>15</sup> Dennis Simon and Charles Ostrom concluded that presidential televised speeches typically had no impact at all on the president's approval.<sup>16</sup>

Jeffrey Cohen has done the most extensive work on aggregate opinion.<sup>17</sup> He finds that presidents can influence the public's agenda through symbolic speech in State of the Union messages, at least in the short run. He also finds, however, that presidents are only able to affect the public's agenda over time on foreign policy and that substantive policy rhetoric has no impact on the public's policy agenda. His work on agenda setting has

received support from Kim Hill.<sup>18</sup> In general, Cohen finds the president to have only a very modest impact on public opinion.

Samuel Kernell's work is the most prominent work on the president going public but provides only a few case studies of actual opinion leadership.<sup>19</sup> Since his focus is on describing and analyzing the strategy of going public, he does not provide a systematic study of the response of public opinion to the president. We will examine Kernell's case studies in more detail later.

People can usually relate domestic policy issues more easily and directly to their own experience. Foreign policy matters, in contrast, are typically more distant from the lives of most Americans than domestic policy, and it is easy for members of the public to view foreign policy as more complex and based on more specialized knowledge. There is some evidence that people tend to defer more to the president on foreign issues than on domestic problems. Studies have shown public opinion to have undergone changes in line with presidents' policies on the liberation of Kuwait, the invasion of Grenada, the testing of nuclear weapons, relations with the People's Republic of China, isolationism, and both the escalation and the de-escalation of the Vietnam War.<sup>20</sup>

In sum, very little work has focused on systematically examining the president's ability to influence the public. The studies that we have, although innovative and suggestive, offer mixed results and do not provide the basis for firm conclusions about the impact of the president's public leadership. We lack models of opinion leadership, including a sense of how people receive, understand, accept, and retain the president's messages. We have frequent references to the contribution of charisma and other personal characteristics of presidents in eliciting public support, but virtually no evidence

that such characteristics play any role in public leadership. Similarly, despite innumerable assertions to the contrary, we do not know how presidents can change public opinion on issues, mobilize the public to political action, or rally it to support themselves and their policies.

## **The Elusiveness of Public Approval**

Certainly one of the highest priorities of presidents is to obtain the public's support for themselves. As we saw in the previous chapter, presidents believe that public approval increases the probabilities of obtaining the passage of legislation in Congress, positive coverage in the press, and even responsiveness in the bureaucracy. As a result of their belief in the importance of public approval, they devote an impressive amount of time, energy, and money to obtaining it.

How well have they done? Table 2.1 shows the average approval levels of presidents over the past three decades. Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter did not even receive approval from 50 percent of the public on the average. Even Ronald Reagan, often considered the most popular of recent presidents, averaged only 52 percent approval - a bare majority. George Bush achieved the highest average approval, 61 percent. Yet when he needed the public's support the most, during his campaign for reelection, the public abandoned him. He received only 38 percent of the popular vote in the 1992 presidential election.

### **Insert Table 2.1**

The fact that Bill Clinton enjoyed strong public support during his impeachment trial should not mask the fact that he struggled to obtain even 50 percent approval during

his first term and did not achieve such an average for a year until his fourth year in office. Clinton's failure was not from lack of trying. The president operated on an explicit strategy of raising his approval ratings in order to create public support for his specific proposals. According to Mandy Grunwald, one of his closest political advisers, "The President's popularity first had to be improved, then Congress could be moved by a popular president." "It's a bank shot, what you say to the American people bounces back to Congress."<sup>21</sup>

The president was an indefatigable traveler on behalf of his efforts to move the public. Charles O. Jones reports that Clinton traveled to 194 places and made 268 appearances in the U.S. between his inauguration in January 1993 and the midterm election in November 1994, mostly to sell himself and his policy proposals. Yet, as Jones concludes, the president's efforts were "a colossal failure" – his approval ratings did not rise.<sup>22</sup>

We mentioned earlier that some authors have concluded that the president can reliably increase his support by delivering an address to the American people. Table 2.2 shows the difference in presidential approval in the Gallup polls taken most closely before and after each live presidential televised address to the nation since 1980. In comparing survey results of two samples such as those employed by Gallup, differences between the results must be about 6 percentage points before we can be reasonably sure that the results reflect a real difference.

### **Insert Table 2.2**

The figures in the third column of the table show that statistically significant changes in approval rarely follow a televised presidential address. Typically, the

president's ratings hardly move at all. Most changes are well within the margin of error – and many of them show a *loss* of approval. In most cases we can readily explain the exceptions by the actions the president was announcing or the context of the announcement rather than by the power of the bully pulpit. The only change of 6 percentage points or more in Ronald Reagan's tenure followed his speech on April 14, 1986 announcing an air strike against Libya, a highly consensual policy against what was widely viewed as an outlaw state.

Similarly, two of the four times that George H. W. Bush obtained at least a 6 percentage point increase in approval occurred following announcements of important military actions against unpopular foes: the December 20, 1989, morning speech announcing invasion of Panama and the effort to arrest Manuel Noriega and the January 16, 1991, address announcing the launching of Operation Desert Storm against Iraq. The huge increase in Bush's approval can easily be understood as a rally behind a successful war effort rather than a response to the president's speech. Another of Bush's statistically significant increases in approval occurred following his February 9, 1989 first speech outlining his administration's goals. The increase in this instance (like the slightly smaller increases for Reagan) was the product of the unusually low initial approval level (51 percent) Bush experienced in the first Gallup poll of his tenure when a large segment of the public withheld judgment on the president's performance. Finally, the president's September 5, 1989, speech on national drug control strategy was once again focused on a highly consensual policy.

Over his eight years in office, Bill Clinton obtained increases in approval of six percentage points or more following five of his speeches. The first instance occurred

after he delivered two addresses two days apart on his administration's goals and economic program on February 15 and 17, 1993. I count these speeches as one effort although they are listed separately in Table 2.1. The changes in approval reflect the same change in opinion in the same polls. As in the case of Reagan and Bush, there is more potential for increases in approval at the beginning of a term when people are undecided about the new chief executive. Clinton gained seven percentage points in approval following his announcement on June 26, 1993, of an air strike against Iraq after U.S. intelligence determined that Saddam Hussein had planned to assassinate former President George Bush while Bush was on a trip to Kuwait. Once again, the attack on Iraq was a highly consensual policy.

Perhaps Clinton's greatest success in using a speech to increase support for himself was his address on health care reform on September 22, 1993. The speech was well received by the public, although support for his reform program soon dissipated, as we will see later in this chapter. On January 23, 1996, the president delivered his State of the Union message following the resolution of two government shutdowns and a year of bitter fighting over the Republican Contract with America. Following the speech, the president's approval rose seven percentage points. Finally, the president gained ten percentage points in his approval ratings following his short December 19, 1998, address regarding the House's vote to impeach him. It does not strain logic to argue that the public was reacting more to the House's action, which is overwhelmingly opposed, than to the president's comments on it.

George W. Bush enjoyed the most dramatic increase in Table 2.2: 35 percentage points following the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. Few would attribute the

public's rallying around the commander in chief to the president's brief comments that evening.

The limited impact of presidential addresses on their public approval is nothing new. Baum and Kernell found that Franklin D. Roosevelt's radio appeals had less than a one percentage point increase on his approval.<sup>23</sup>

### **Bill Clinton and Opinion on Policy**

Presidents typically are as interested in obtaining public support for their policies as they are for themselves. To determine whether there is a *prima facie* case for successful presidential leadership of public opinion, I focus on two recent presidents, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton. Republican Reagan and Democrat Clinton are best-test cases for presidential leadership of the public. Each president displayed formidable rhetorical skills, and both supporters and detractors frequently commented on their unusual rapport with the public. Each president overwhelmingly won a second term in office and became the only presidents since Eisenhower's tenure in the 1950s to win and complete two terms. If we cannot find successful public leadership during the tenures of Reagan and Clinton, we are unlikely to find it anywhere.

Because of Ronald Reagan's reputation as a successful leader of public opinion, represented by his sobriquet of "The Great Communicator," and his role as leader of a conservative "revolution," I devote the entire following chapter to public responsiveness to his policy stances. I also focus on public responses to some of Reagan's individual speeches in the chapter on charisma and personality.

An articulate and energetic speaker, Bill Clinton displayed an impressive mastery of public policy and displayed a unique ability to empathize with his audience. The president's political resurrection following the dramatic Democratic losses in the 1994 midterm elections and his *rise* in public esteem in the face of clear evidence of lying to the public and engaging in what most people saw as immoral behavior in the Oval Office left an indelible imprint on pundits and politicians alike.

The best evidence, as we will see, is that Clinton typically was frustrated in his efforts to move public opinion in his direction. In a discussion of his problems in governing, President Clinton declared that he needed to do a better job of communicating. "[I]t's always frustrating to feel that you're misunderstood . . . and you can't quite get through."<sup>24</sup> A basic problem for the president was his overestimation of the extent to which the public was susceptible to his appeals for support.

## **Economic Program**

Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential election campaign kept a clear focus on the economy. On February 15, 1993, the new president addressed the nation on his economic program. Two days later he delivered a much more detailed address to the Congress on his policy plans. His economic proposals included spending for job creation, a tax increase on the wealthy, investment incentives, and aid to displaced workers. In the same month he introduced his first major legislative proposal, a plan to spend more than \$16 billion to stimulate the economy. It immediately ran into strong Republican opposition. During the April 1993 congressional recess, Clinton stepped up his rhetoric on his bill, counting on a groundswell of public opinion to pressure moderate Republicans into ending the filibuster on the bill. (Republicans, meanwhile, kept up a

steady flow of sound bites linking the president's package with wasteful spending and Clinton's proposed tax increase.) The groundswell never materialized, and the Republicans found little support for any new spending in their home states. Instead, they found their constituents railing against new taxes and spending.<sup>25</sup> The bill never came to a vote in the Senate.

The figures in Table 2.3 show that public support for the president's economic plan peaked immediately following his speech on February 17 and then dropped dramatically a few days later. (Clinton's chief speechwriter reports that the speech was viewed in Washington as a failure.<sup>26</sup>) During the period when the president needed support the most and when he worked hardest to obtain it, it diminished to the point that by May a plurality of the public *opposed* his plan.

### **Insert Table 2.3**

## **Health Care Reform**

Health care reform was to be the centerpiece of the Clinton administration. In September 1993, the president delivered a well-received national address on the need for reform. Yet the president was not able to sustain the support of the public for health-care reform. The White House held out against compromise with the Republicans and conservative Democrats, hoping for a groundswell of public support for reform. But it never came.<sup>27</sup> In the meantime, opponents of the president's proposal launched an aggressive counterattack, including running negative television advertisements. Clinton's tendency to carry the campaign mode to governance by demonizing opponents such as the medical profession and the drug and insurance industries probably exacerbated his problems in obtaining public support. As the figures in Table 2.4 show, by mid-July

1994, only 40 percent of the public favored the president's health-care reform proposal while 56 percent opposed them.

### **Insert Table 2.4**

## **The 1993 Budget**

The Clinton administration faced a series of budget battles during its two terms in office but none was more important or more difficult than the fight over the reconciliation bill for the FY1994 budget in 1993. The president took a considerable political risk by focusing on deficit reduction by raising taxes and limiting expenditures. On August 3, 1993, he spoke on national television on behalf of his budget proposal, and Senate Republican leader Robert Dole spoke against the plan. A CNN overnight poll following the president's speech found that support for his budget plan *dropped*.<sup>28</sup> A CBS News/*New York Times* poll with before-and-after samples on August 2 and 3 found that support for the president's budget remained unchanged even in the immediate aftermath of the speech (although opposition weakened). Several million calls were made to Congress in response to Clinton and Dole, with the callers overwhelmingly opposed to the president's plan.<sup>29</sup> In the end, the president prevailed, but not a single Republican supported his budget. The absence of public support made it easier for Republicans to label him in the 1994 midterm elections as a supporter of tax increases.

## **Government Spending**

The president engaged in a perennial series of battles with Republicans over the extent of government services and spending. In 1995-1996, this conflict led to two government shutdowns. Although the president was an active and articulate

spokesperson for doing and spending more, the public did not move much in his direction. The figures in Table 2.5 show that public support for government spending in general was the same in 1998 as it was in 1992, even with declining budget deficits. After eight years in office as Clinton was leaving the White House in 2000, opinion had moved only 3 percentage points in his direction.

### **Insert Table 2.5**

Table 2.6 shows that support for spending on food stamps decreased during the president's first term and support for increased spending was the same in 2000 as in 1992 (the National Election Study did not ask questions about spending on specific policies in 1998). Support for federal spending on child care (Table 2.7) did not increase in line with the president's stance in his first term, although it did increase substantially in his second term. The explanation for this change is not clear. It seems unlikely, however, that it was the result of the president's persuasion, as he did not make child care a central issue of his second term. Changes in society and a dramatic increase in available budgetary resources are more reasonable explanations. Support for spending on the environment fell slightly during Clinton's tenure (Table 2.8).

### **Insert Tables 2.6-2.8**

Perhaps no policy interested the president as much as education. Yet the figures in Table 2.9 show that public support for increased federal spending for education remained stable during his first term. As in the case of child care, support for federal aid to public schools did increase substantially in the second Clinton administration. The president regularly spoke out on behalf of more federal spending, but not more so than in

his first term (as Table 6.2 shows). Again, the budget surplus may have encouraged support for more aid.

### **Insert Table 2.9**

## **Crime**

Central to Bill Clinton's basic political strategy was co-opting Republican issues. One such issue was crime. When the crucial rule regarding debate on the 1994 crime bill was voted down in the House, the president immediately went public. Speaking to police officers with American flags in the background, he blamed special interests (like the National Rifle Association) and Republicans for a "procedural trick," but his appeal failed to catch fire. Meanwhile, Republicans were tapping public resentment by talking about pork barrel spending. Clinton's public push yielded only the votes of three members of the Black Caucus. So he had to go to moderate Republicans and cut private deals.

## **Haiti**

It is more difficult to characterize Clinton's foreign policy than it is to articulate a focus for Reagan's. One hallmark of foreign policy during the Clinton administration was a series of military interventions. One of these interventions occurred in Haiti in September 1994. On September 15, the president addressed the nation on military buildup for a possible intervention in Haiti, explaining U.S. involvement. Three days later on September 18, Clinton addressed the nation again, this time on the resolution of the Haitian conflict. The figures in Table 2.10 show that the president received a short-term increase in support for his handling of the situation in Haiti following his speech to

the nation on September 15, 1994,<sup>30</sup> but this support quickly deteriorated into plurality disapproval less than a month later. Indeed, Clinton faced near-majority disapproval only 5 days after his September 18 speech announcing a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

**Insert Table 2.10**

## **Bosnia**

Conflict within the former Yugoslavia posed a problem throughout Clinton's tenure in office. On November 27, 1995, the president gave a nationally televised address seeking the public's support for deploying U.S. peacekeeping troops to Bosnia. As the figures in Table 2.11 show, the president's plea met with little success. In fact, public support for sending U.S. troops to Bosnia dropped steadily as the president implemented this policy. It was not until two years later that a plurality of the public supported the deployment of U.S. troops in Bosnia.

**Insert Table 2.11**

## **Kosovo**

On March 24, 1999, Clinton gave a nationally televised address informing the public that he was ordering bombing on Serbia to stop the ethnic cleansing of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo province. From the beginning, the public supported the president's handling of Kosovo, with little variation in public opinion over the entire period of the bombing (see Table 2.12). At the same time, at no time did the public agree that the president had a clear and well-thought-out policy on the Kosovo situation (see Table 12.13). Indeed, for most of the period of the bombing, a majority of the public thought that he did *not* have such a policy.

**Insert Tables 2.12 and 2.13****NAFTA**

Free trade was another hallmark of Clinton's foreign policy. The first major free trade agreement to reach Congress during the Clinton administration was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The White House fought hard for the agreement but the figures in Table 2.14 show that the White House never achieved plurality support for NAFTA before Congress's decision to pass it.

**Insert Table 2.14**

The White House made a shred gamble when it agreed to have Vice President Al Gore debate NAFTA opponent Ross Perot on the *Larry King Live* television show. The show had the highest rating for any regularly scheduled program in the history of cable TV. In addition, it was also carried on broadcast stations, so perhaps 20 million people watched the show. Among the 357 adults who Gallup found had watched the debate, support for NAFTA increased from 34 percent to 56 percent and opposition decreased from 38 percent to 36 percent. The vice president succeeded in convincing many undecided voters, and Perot's negatives rose from 39 percent to 51 percent after the debate.<sup>31</sup> Thus, Gore provided political cover for members of Congress who feared a Perot-led backlash against their support for NAFTA and weakened the threat of Perot at the polls.

The small percentage of Americans who watched the debate limited the White House's ability to move public opinion, however. Gallup polls taken on November 2-4 and on November 15-16 (right before the House vote on November 17) both showed only

38 percent of the entire public in favor of the trade agreement. (Opposition diminished from 46 to 41 percent, however.) Thus, claims that the White House turned the public around on NAFTA are considerably exaggerated.<sup>32</sup> The president simply was not successful in obtaining the public's support.

## **On the Defense**

The presidency of Bill Clinton was a tumultuous one. Congress was highly polarized and the Republican majorities he faced for six of his eight years in office were eager to bring about change to which the president was opposed. Under such conditions, Clinton frequently had to defend both himself and his policies. The burden of moving public opinion in such cases was on his opponents, who had to build support to change the *status quo*. The White House's task was to *maintain* existing support. Under these circumstances, we would expect the White House to have more success than when it wished to change opinion. In other words, we would expect the president to do better on defense than on offense.

***Blame for Government Shutdowns.*** A prime example of Clinton fighting for public opinion on the defense is the government shutdowns of November 14-20, 1995 and December 16, 1995-January 6, 1996. These shutdowns were part of the president's larger battle with Republicans, especially in the House, over the policies represented in their *Contract with America*. The Republicans sought major changes in public policy and Clinton fought to thwart their efforts.

The figures in Table 2.15 show whom the public blamed for the two shutdowns of the federal government. For purposes of analysis, I have separated the poll taken more than two weeks before the first shutdown and the poll taken 9 months after the second

shutdown. The results are unequivocal: each poll found the public more likely to blame the Republicans for the shutdown than they were to blame the president. The results of polls taken during the shutdowns show essentially no change in public opinion during that period. The beginning and ending percentages for both the Republicans and Clinton are within one percentage point of each other.

### **Insert Table 2.15**

Although we may conclude that Clinton won the battle for public opinion, it is more difficult to infer that this victory resulted from Clinton's leadership of public opinion. At the height of the pitched public relations battle, when both the president and the public were focused on actual events, the shutdowns, public opinion was remarkably stable. Perhaps the president's leadership was effective in assigning the Republicans culpability *before* the shutdowns, and we lack measures of the movement of public opinion at that time. Or perhaps opinions simply reflected views about the highly visible reform efforts of the Republicans and the leader, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. It is reasonable to conclude that opinions were shaped before the issue of blame came to a head. Although it is possible that these opinions were responses to Clinton's focused assertions about the cause of a potential shutdown, it is more likely that the public was reacting to the much more salient policies and personalities of the time.

***Impeachment.*** Certainly the most dramatic issue of the Clinton administration was its successful effort to fight the president's removal from office following the Monica Lewinsky scandal. The media attention devoted to the impeachment controversy and thus the issue's visibility make it unique.

The results in Table 2.16 show public support for the impeachment and conviction of the president. In a brief nationally televised speech on August 17, 1998, the president admitted lying to the public about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky. Over the 5 and one half months between the poll on August 21-23, 1998 and the final poll on February 9, 1999, public opinion barely changed at all. Despite, or because of, the enormous volume of commentary from advocates on both sides of the issue, the public did not budge from opinions it had reached *before* the issue came to a head. As in the case of the government shutdowns, opinions were shaped before the issue was joined and before the president and his spokespersons took to the airways to combat the Republican impeachment effort. The president's task was to maintain the strong support he enjoyed on the issue and he seems to have done an effective job. It is difficult to determine whether Clinton's success was the result of his leadership of the public or the result of public reaction against what it saw as the overreaching of the Republicans.

### **Insert Table 2.16**

At the same time that the president was fighting to win or maintain public support in opposition to impeachment, Clinton was frustrated on other issues. His efforts to spark national dialogues on race and to forge a consensus on reforming the financing of Social Security died on the vine.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps it was the highly-charged, polarized atmosphere of 1998-1999, but the bottom line was that he could not generate much less sustain interest in the public or the media in his priority concerns.

## **Clinton in Perspective**

As we have seen, Bill Clinton based his strategy of governing on moving the public to support his policy initiatives. Despite his impressive political and communications skills, the evidence is clear that the president typically failed to obtain public support. He did succeed in defending the status quo against radical departures proposed by his Republican opponents, but he could not rally the public behind his own initiatives. Given his experience with attempting to lead the public, it is no wonder that at the middle of his first term Clinton lamented that, "I've got to . . . spend more time communicating with the American people about what we've done and where we're going."<sup>34</sup> Although he often declared that he needed to do a better job of *communicating*, it seems never to have occurred to him or his staff that his basic strategy may have been inherently flawed.

**Table 2.1**  
**Average Levels of Presidential Approval**

<b>President</b>	<b>Years in Office</b>	<b>Average Approval</b>
Nixon	1969-1974	48%
Ford	1974-1977	47
Carter	1977-1981	47
Reagan	1981-1989	52
Bush	1989-1993	61
Clinton	1993-2001	56

*Source:* George C. Edwards III with Alec M. Gallup, *Presidential Approval* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); updated by the author.

**Table 2.2**  
**Approval Change Following Nationally Televised Addresses (1981-2001)**

Date	Principal Subject	Opinion Change
<i>Reagan</i>		
January 20, 1981	Inaugural	NA
February 5, 1981	Tax and Deficit Reduction	4
February 18, 1981	Tax and Deficit Reduction	5
April 28, 1981	Tax and Deficit Reduction	1
July 27, 1981	Tax Reduction	4
September 24, 1981	Deficit Reduction	4
January 26, 1982	State of the Union	0
April 29, 1982	Deficit Reduction	1
September 1, 1982	Lebanon	0
September 20, 1982	Lebanon	0
October 13, 1982	State of the Economy	0
November 22, 1982	Defense Spending	-2
January 25, 1983	State of the Union	-2
March 23, 1983	Defense Spending	0
April 27, 1983	El Salvador and Nicaragua	2
September 5, 1983	Soviet Attack on Korean Airliner	4
October 27, 1983	Grenada; Lebanon	4
January 25, 1984	State of the Union	3
May 9, 1984	El Salvador and Nicaragua	2
January 21, 1985	Inaugural	2
February 6, 1985	State of the Union	-4
April 24, 1985	Deficit Reduction	3
May 28, 1985	Tax Reform	3
November 14, 1985	US-Soviet Summit in Geneva	3
November 21, 1985	US-Soviet Summit in Geneva	2
January 28, 1986	Challenger Explosion	-1
February 4, 1986	State of the Union	-1
February 26, 1986	Defense Spending	-1
March 16, 1986	Aid to Nicaraguan Contras	-1
April 14, 1986	Air strike against Libya	6
June 14, 1986	Aid to Nicaraguan Contras	3
July 4, 1986	Independence Day Greeting	-1
September 14, 1986	Anti-Drug Goals	2
October 13, 1986	US-Soviet Summit in Iceland	0
November 13, 1986	Iran-Contra	-16
December 2, 1986	Iran-Contra	-16

January 27, 1987	State of the Union	-6
March 4, 1987	Iran-Contra	-6
June 15, 1987	Venice Economic Summit	-4
August 12, 1987	Iran-Contra	4
December 10, 1987	US-Soviet Summit/INF Treaty	1
January 25, 1988	State of the Union	1
January 11, 1989	Farewell Address	No data

### ***G. H. W. Bush***

January 20, 1989	Inaugural	NA
February 9, 1989	Administration Goals	6
September 5, 1989	National Drug Control Strategy	6
November 22, 1989	Thanksgiving Address	1
December 20, 1989	Panama (morning)	9
January 31, 1990	State of the Union	-7
August 8, 1990	Desert Shield	0
September 11, 1990	Persian Gulf/Budget Deficit	-4
October 2, 1990	Budget Agreement	-2
January 16, 1991	Desert Storm	19
January 29, 1991	State of the Union	-1
February 23, 1991	Desert Storm, ground attack	0
February 26, 1991	Iraqi Withdrawal (morning)	-2
February 27, 1991	Suspension of Combat	-2
March 6, 1991	End of Gulf War	-2
December 25, 1991	Breakup of USSR	-4
January 28, 1992	State of the Union	1
May 1, 1992	Los Angeles Riots	0
September 1, 1992	Hurricane Andrew	-1
December 4, 1992	Somalia (afternoon)	0

### ***Clinton***

January 20, 1993	Inaugural	2
February 15, 1993	Economic Program	8
February 17, 1993	Economic Program	8
June 26, 1993	Air strike against Iraq	7
August 3, 1993	Budget	2
October 7, 1993	Somalia	-6
January 25, 1994	State of the Union	4
September 15, 1994	Troops to Haiti	4
September 18, 1994	Troops to Haiti	4
October 10, 1994	Iraq	-2
December 15, 1994	Middle Class Bill of Rights	1
January 24, 1995	State of the Union	2

June 13, 1995	Budget	1
November 27, 1995	Bosnia	-2
January 23, 1996	State of the Union	7
January 20, 1997	Inaugural	-5
February 4, 1997	State of the Union	-5
January 27, 1998	State of the Union	5
August 17, 1998	Grand Jury Testimony	4
August 20, 1998	Afghanistan and the Sudan	1
December 19, 1998	Impeachment	10
January 19, 1999	State of the Union	0
February 12, 1999	Impeachment	3
March 24, 1999	Kosovo	0
June 10, 1999	Kosovo	0
January 27, 2000	State of the Union	-1
January 18, 2001	Farewell Address	No data

### ***G. W. Bush***

January 20, 2001	Inaugural	NA
February 27, 2001	Administration Goals	1
August 9, 2001	Stem Cell Research	2
September 11, 2001	Terrorist Attack	35
September 20, 2001	Terrorist Attack	4
October 7, 2001	War in Afghanistan (afternoon)	2
November 8, 2001	War on Terrorism*	0
January 29, 2001	State of the Union	-2

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*Source:* Gallup Poll

\*Broadcast by only one network.

**Table 2.3**  
**Public Support for Clinton's Economic Plan**

Date	Support	Oppose	Mixed	No Opinion
02/17/93*	79%	16%	2%	5%
02/26-28/93	59	29	6	6
03/22-24/93	54	34	6	6
4/22-24/93	55	39	2	4
05/21-23/93	44	45	5	5
06/29-30/93	44	49	2	5

*Source:* Gallup Poll for CNN/USA Today question, "Do you generally support or oppose Bill Clinton's economic plan?"

\*"Do you generally support or oppose the economic plan that President (Bill) Clinton outlined tonight (in his speech Feb. 17, 1993)?"

**Table 2.4**  
**Public Support for Clinton's Health Care Reform**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
09/24-26/93	59%	33%	8%
10/28-30/93	45	45	10
11/2-4/93	52	40	8
11/19-21/93	52	41	7
01/15-17/94	56	39	6
01/28-30/94	57	38	5
02/26-28/94	46	48	5
03/28-30/94	44	47	9
05/20-22/94	46	49	5
06/11-12/94	42	50	8
06/25-28/94	44	49	8
07/15-17/94	40	56	5

*Source:* Gallup Poll question, "From everything you heard or read about the plan so far . . . do you favor or oppose President Clinton's plan to reform health care?"

**Table 2.5**  
**Public Support for Government Spending**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Fewer</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>More</b>
1992	27%	30%	43%
1994	43	28	31
1996	37	31	31
1998	30	28	42
2000	24	29	46

*Source:* National Election Study question, “Some people think that government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education, in order to reduce spending. Other people feel that it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Where would you place yourself on this scale?”

Note: Fewer services=1-3, Same=4, More services=5-7 on NES’ 7-point scale.

**Table 2.6**  
**Public Support for Food Stamp Spending, 1992-1998**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Increased</b>	<b>Kept About the Same</b>	<b>Decreased</b>
1992	16%	60%	24%
1994	10	48	42
1996	11	42	46
2000	16	51	31

*Source:* National Election Study question, “Should federal spending on food stamps be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?”

**Table 2.7**  
**Public Support for Child Care Spending, 1992-1998**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Increased</b>	<b>Kept About the Same</b>	<b>Decreased</b>
1992	52%	39%	9%
1994	54	33	9
1996	51	37	11
2000	63	29	7

*Source:* National Election Study question, “Should federal spending on child care be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?”

**Table 2.8**  
**Public Support for Environmental Spending, 1992-1998**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Increased</b>	<b>Kept About the Same</b>	<b>Decreased</b>
1992	55%	40%	5%
1994	40	49	11
1996	41	51	8
2000	52	39	9

*Source:* National Election Study question, “Should federal spending on the environment be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?”

**Table 2.9**  
**Public Support for Federal Public School Spending, 1992-1998**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Increased</b>	<b>Kept About the Same</b>	<b>Decreased</b>
1992	67%	30%	4%
1994	68	25	7
1996	67	26	6
2000	77	19	4

*Source:* National Election Study question, “Should federal spending on public schools be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?”

**Table 2.10**  
**Public Approval of Clinton's Handling of Haiti**

Date	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
07/15-17/94*	28%	56%	16%
09/6-7/94	27	58	15
09/14/94	35	49	15
09/15/94**	53	43	4
09/23-25/94*	48	48	4
10/11/94	43	49	9

*Source:* Gallup Poll question, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way (President) Bill Clinton is handling... the situation in Haiti?"

\* Same question, different lead in: "Now thinking of some issues, . . ."

\*\*Reinterview of 400 respondents from the previous day following the president's speech.

**Table 2.11**  
**Public Support of Troops in Bosnia**

Date	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
09/19-22/95*	50%	44%	6%
11/6-8/95*	47	49	4
11/27/95**	46	40	14
12/15-18/95	41	54	5
01/5-7/96	36	58	6
05/28-29/96	42	51	7
06/26-29/97	39	53	8
12/18-21/97	49	43	8
01/16-18/98	53	43	5

*Source:* Gallup Poll question, “Do you approve or disapprove of the presence of U.S. (United States) troops in Bosnia?”

\*Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* question, “There is a chance a peace agreement could be reached by all the groups currently fighting in Bosnia. If so, the Clinton Administration is considering contributing U.S. (United States) troops to an international peacekeeping force. Would you favor or oppose that?”

\*\*Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* question, “Now that a peace agreement has been reached by all the groups currently fighting in Bosnia, the Clinton Administration plans to contribute U.S. (United States) troops to an international peacekeeping force. Do you favor or oppose that?” 632 respondents were interviewed after the president's speech.

**Table 2.12**  
**Clinton's Handling of Kosovo**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
3/25/99	58%	32%	10%
4/6-7/99	58	35	7
4/13-14/99	61	34	5
4/26-27/99	54	41	5
4/30-5/2/99	54	41	5
5/7-9/99	55	35	10
6/4-5/99	56	39	5
6/10/99	55	35	10
6/11-13/99	57	38	5

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*Source:* Gallup Poll question, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Clinton is handling the situation in Kosovo?"

**Table 2.13**  
**Clinton's Kosovo Policy**

	<b><u>Clear and well- thought-out policy</u></b>	<b><u>Don't Think So</u></b>	<b><u>No Opinion</u></b>
3/30-31/99	46%	47%	7%
4/6-7/99	39	50	11
4/13-14/99	41	51	8
4/26-27/99	38	54	8
6/11-13/99	43	52	5

*Source:* Gallup Poll question, "From what you have heard or read, do you think the Clinton administration has a clear and well-thought-out policy on the Kosovo situation, or don't you think so?"

**Table 2.14**  
**Public Support for NAFTA**

Date	Favor	Oppose	Don't Know
6/21-6/24/93	43%	45%	12%
8/02-8/3/93	35	46	19
8/8-10/93***	41	44	15
9/10-12/93****	35	40	25
9/16-9/19/93*	33	40	27
11/02-11/4/93*	38	46	16
11/ 08-11/9/93*	34	38	29
11/11-11/14/93**	37	41	22
11/15-16/93***	38	41	21

*Source:* Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* Poll, CBS News/*New York Times* Poll, and NBC/*Wall Street Journal* Poll question, “Do you favor or oppose the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement—called NAFTA—with Mexico and Canada that eliminates nearly all restrictions on imports, exports, and business investment between the United States, Mexico, and Canada?”

\* *Source:* Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* Poll, “Do you favor or oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Mexico and Canada, sometimes known as N.A.F.T.A.?”

\*\* *Source:* CBS News/*New York Times* Poll question, “Would you say you (Favor/Oppose) N.A.F.T.A. (North American Free Trade Agreement) strongly or not so strongly?” [strongly and not strongly responses combined in the table]

\*\*\**Source:* Gallup, CNN, *USA TODAY* question: “Do you favor or oppose the proposed free **trade** agreement between the United States and Mexico?”

**Table 2.15**  
**Responsibility for Government Shutdowns**

Poll	N	Dates of Poll	Responsibility			No Opinion
			Republicans	Clinton	Both	
NBC <sup>1</sup>	1465	10/27-31/95	43%	32%	18%	7%
Gallup <sup>2</sup>	652	11/14/95	49	26	19	6
Gallup <sup>3</sup>	615	11/17-18/95	47	25	21	7
CBS <sup>4</sup>	819	11/19/95	51	28	15	6
NBC <sup>5</sup>	805	11/19/95	47	27	20	6
ABC <sup>6</sup>	852	1/6-7/96	50	27	20	3
CBS <sup>7</sup>	1479	10/17-20/96	53	28	11	8

<sup>1</sup> “If President (Bill) Clinton and the Republican Congress do not reach a budget agreement in time to avoid a major shutdown of the federal government, who do you think will more to blame--President Clinton or the Republican Congress?”

<sup>2</sup> “Overall, who do you blame more for the recent shutdown of the federal government – President (Bill) Clinton or the Republican leaders in Congress?”

<sup>3</sup> “(As you may know, the Republicans in Congress and President (Bill) Clinton have not reached an agreement on the federal budget. As a result, the federal government has shut down all non-essential services.) Overall, who do you blame more for the recent shutdown of the federal government . . . President (Bill) Clinton, or the Republican leaders in Congress?”

<sup>4</sup> “Monday night, the federal government was partially shut down when President (Bill) Clinton and the Republican leaders in Congress could not agree on a resolution to keep the government running while they debated the federal budget. Who do you blame more for the partial government shutdown – the Republicans in Congress or Bill Clinton?”

<sup>5</sup> “As you know, President (Bill) Clinton and the Republican Congress have not reached a budget agreement, and this has led to a shutdown of the federal government. Who do you think is more to blame for this shutdown – President Clinton or the Republican Congress?”

<sup>6</sup> “As you may know, the Clinton Administration and the Republicans have agreed to temporarily reopen the government offices that were closed for nearly three weeks while

they worked on a new budget. Whose fault do you think this partial government shutdown mainly was – (President Bill) Clinton's or the Republicans' in Congress?"

<sup>7</sup> “Who do you think was more responsible for the government shutdowns (last winter because of disagreements between Congress and the President over the budget), the Republicans in Congress or President (Bill) Clinton?”

**Table 2.16**  
**Support for Clinton Impeachment and Conviction**

<b>Poll Date</b>	<b>Remove from Office</b>	<b>Not Remove from Office</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
6/5-7/98	19%	77%	4%
8/7-8/98	23	75	2
8/10-12/98	20	76	4
8/17/98	25	69	6
8/18/98	26	70	4
8/21-23/98	29	67	4
9/10/98	31	63	6
9/11-12/98	30	64	6
9/13/98	31	66	3
9/20/98	35	60	5
9/21/98	32	66	2
9/23-24/98	29	68	3
10/6-7/98	32	65	3

*Source:* Gallup Poll, “Based on what you know at this point, do you think that Bill Clinton should or should not be impeached and removed from office”?

<b>Poll Date</b>	<b>Vote in Favor of Impeaching</b>	<b>Vote Against Impeaching</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
10/9-12/98	31%	63%	6%
10/23-25/98	30	63	7
11/13-15/98	30	68	2
11/20-22/98	33	64	3
12/4-6/98	33	65	2
12/12-13/98	35	61	4
12/15-16/98	34	63	3

*Source:* Gallup Poll, “As you may know, removing a president from office involves two major steps in Congress. First, the House of Representatives must vote on whether there is enough evidence to bring a president to trial before the Senate. This step is called impeachment. Next the Senate must vote on whether to remove the president from office, or not. What would you want your member of the House of Representatives to do?”

1. Vote in favor of impeaching Clinton and sending the case to the Senate for trial

2. Vote against impeachment of Clinton
3. Don't know/refused answer

<b>Poll Date</b>	<b>Vote in Favor of Convicting</b>	<b>Vote Against Convicting</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
12/19-20/98	29	68	3
1/6/99	33	63	4
1/8-10/99	32	63	5
1/18/99	33	63	4
1/22-24/99	33	64	3
2/4-7/99	36	62	4
2/9/99	31	66	3

*Source:* Gallup Poll, "As you may know, the House has now impeached [Bill] Clinton and the case has been sent to the Senate for trial. What do you want your Senators to do - vote in favor of convicting Clinton and removing him from office, or vote against convicting Clinton so he will remain in office?"

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), p. 392.

<sup>2</sup> George C. Edwards III, *At the Margins: Presidential Leadership of Congress* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Lee Sigelman, "Gauging the Public Response to Presidential Leadership," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 10 (Summer 1980): 427–433. See also Pamela Johnston Conover and Lee Sigelman, "Presidential Influence and Public Opinion: The Case of the Iranian Hostage Crisis," *Social Science Quarterly* 63 (June 1982): 249–264.

<sup>4</sup> Dan Thomas and Lee Sigelman, "Presidential Identification and Policy Leadership: Experimental Evidence on the Reagan Case," in Edwards, et al, *The Presidency and Public Policy Making*, pp. 37-49. See also a poll of Utah residents found that although two-thirds of them opposed deploying MX missiles in Utah and Nevada, an equal number said they would either "definitely" or "probably" support President Reagan if he decided to go ahead and base the missiles in those states.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Lee Sigelman and Carol K. Sigelman, "Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion: From 'Benevolent Leader' to Kiss of Death?" *Experimental Study of Politics* 7, no. 3, (1981): 1–22.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey J. Mondak, "Source Cues and Public Approval: The Cognitive Dynamics of Public Support for the Reagan Administration," *American Journal of Political Science* 37 (February 1993): 186-212.

<sup>7</sup> Roberta Glaros and Bruce Miroff, "Watching Ronald Reagan: Viewers' Reaction to the President on Television," *Congress and the Presidency* 10 (Spring 1983), pp. 25-46.

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<sup>8</sup> George C. Edwards III, *The Public Presidency* (New York: St. Martin's, 1983); Theodore J. Lowi, *The Personal President* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> Samuel Kernell, *Going Public*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1997); Jeffrey K. Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987); Richard J. Ellis, *Presidential Lightning Rods: The Politics of Blame Avoidance* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1994); George C. Edwards III, *The Public Presidency* (New York: St. Martin's, 1983); Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro, "Issues, Candidate Image, and Priming: The Use of Private Polls in Kennedy's 1960 Presidential Campaign," *American Political Science Review* 88 (September 1994): 527-540; Thomas Cronin, "The Presidency Public Relations Script," in Thomas E. Cronin and Rexford G. Tugwell, eds., *The Presidency Reappraised* (Praeger, 1974); William Lammers, "Presidential Attention-Focusing Activities," in Doris Graber, ed., *The President and the Public* (Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982); Bruce Miroff, "The Presidency and the Public: Leadership as Spectacle," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1995); Matthew A. Baum and Samuel Kernell, "Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television?" *American Political Science Review* 93 (March 1999): 99-114; John A. Hamman and Jeffrey E. Cohen, "Reelection and Congressional Support: Presidential Motives in Distributive Politics," *American Politics Quarterly* 25 (January 1997): 56-74; M. Stephen Weatherford, "The Interplay of Ideology and Advice in Economic Policy-Making: The Case of the Political Business Cycle," *Journal of Politics* 49 (November 1987): 925-952.

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<sup>10</sup> Michael B. Grossman and Martha J. Kumar, *Portraying the President* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981); and John Anthony Maltese, *Spin Control: The White House Office of Communications and the Management of Presidential News* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> George C. Edwards III, *Presidential Approval* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Richard A. Brody, *Assessing the President: The Media, Elite Opinion, and Public Support* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991); Samuel Kernell, "Explaining Presidential Popularity," *American Political Science Review* 72 (June 1978): 506-522; Donald R. Kinder, "Presidents, Prosperity, and Public Opinion," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 45 (Spring 1981): 1-21; George C. Edwards III, William Mitchell, and Reed Welch, "Explaining Presidential Approval: The Significance of Issue Salience," *American Journal of Political Science* (February 1995): 108-134; Richard Lau and David O. Sears, "Cognitive Links Between Economic Grievances and Political Responses," *Political Behavior* 3 (No. 4, 1981): 279-302; Jon A. Krosnick and Donald R. Kinder, "Altering the Foundations of Support for the President through Priming," *American Political Science Review* 84 (June 1990): 497-512; Jon A. Krosnick and Laura A. Brannon, "The Impact of the Gulf War on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Multidimensional Effects of Political Involvement," *American Political Science Review* 87 (December 1993): 963-975; John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (Wiley, 1970).

<sup>12</sup> Lyn Ragsdale, "The Politics of Presidential Speechmaking, 1949-1980" *American Political Science Review* 78 (December 1984): 971-984. See also Lyn

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Ragsdale, "Presidential Speechmaking and the Public Audience: Individual Presidents and Group Attitudes," *Journal of Politics* 49 (August 1987): 704-736.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Brace and Barbara Hinckley, *Follow the Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), pp. 56.

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, "Presidential Leadership through Public Opinion," in George C. Edwards III, Steven Y. Shull and Norman C. Thomas, eds., *The Presidency and Public Policy Making* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), p 22-36; Benjamin I. Page, Robert Y. Shapiro, and Glenn R. Dempsey, "What Moves Public Opinion?" *American Political Science Review* 81 (March 1987): 23-44; Roy L. Behr and Shanto Iyengar, "Television News, Real-World Cues, and Changes in the Public Agenda," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 49 (Spring 1985): 38-57. Cohen (see below), however, found little impact of approval on public leadership.

<sup>15</sup> See Samuel Kernell, "The Presidency and the People: The Modern Paradox," in *The Presidency and the Political System*, ed. Michael Nelson (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1984), 250-253; Lee Sigelman, "The Commander in Chief and the Public: Mass Response to Johnson's March 31, 1968 Bombing Halt Speech," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 8 (Spring 1980): 1-14.

<sup>16</sup> Dennis M. Simon and Charles W. Ostrom, Jr. "The Impact of Televised Speeches and Foreign Travel on Presidential Approval," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 53 (Spring 1989): 58-82.

<sup>17</sup> Jeffrey E. Cohen, *Presidential Responsiveness and Public Policy-Making* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

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<sup>18</sup> Kim Quaile Hill, "The Policy Agendas of the President and the Mass Public: A Research Validation and Extension," *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (October 1998): 1328-1334.

<sup>19</sup> Samuel Kernell, *Going Public*.

<sup>20</sup> Eugene J. Rossi, "Mass and Attentive Opinion on Nuclear Weapons Test and Fallout, 1954–1963," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 29 (Summer 1965): 280–297; Robert S. Erikson, Norman R. Luttbeg, and Kent L. Tedin, *American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content, and Impact*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley, 1980), p. 144; John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (New York: Wiley, 1970), pp. 69–74; CBS News/*The New York Times* Poll, October 28, 1983, p 2; Page and Shapiro, *The Rational Public*, p 182; and Barry Sussman, "Reagan's Talk Gains Support for Policies," *Washington Post*, October 30, 1983, sec. A, p. 1, 18. However, compare Page and Shapiro, *The Rational Public*, p 242, 250.

<sup>21</sup> As reported in Bob Woodward, *The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 248, 141.

<sup>22</sup> Charles O. Jones, *Clinton and Congress, 1993-1996* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), pp. 90-91.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew A. Baum and Samuel Kernell, "Economic Class and Popular Support for Franklin Roosevelt in War and Peace," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65 (Summer 2001): 218, 223.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Jack Nelson and Robert J. Donovan, "The Education of a President," *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, August 1, 1993, p. 14. See also "The President at Midterm," *USA Weekend*, November 4-6, 1994, p. 4.

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<sup>25</sup> “Democrats Look to Salvage Part of Stimulus Plan,” *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, April 24, 1993, pp. 1002-1003.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Waldman, *POTUS Speaks* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), p. 41.

<sup>27</sup> “Health Care Reform: The Lost Chance,” *Newsweek* September 19, 1994, p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> Bob Woodward, *The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), p. 285.

<sup>29</sup> “Switchboards Swamped with Calls over Tax Plan,” *New York Times*, August 5, 1993, p. A18.

<sup>30</sup> Caution is appropriate in interpreting the figures for the September 15 poll because only 400 persons were reinterviewed following the president's September 15 speech.

<sup>31</sup> Gallup Poll, November 9, 1993.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Waldman, *POTUS Speaks*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Waldman, *POTUS Speaks*, pp. 178, 220-221.

<sup>34</sup> White House transcript of interview of President Clinton by WWWE Radio, Cleveland, October 24, 1994.