Issues in the Executive Branch

Puzzle of the Weak State and National Security State

'Weak State' View of US government

- State apparatus as:
  organization composed of numerous agencies led and coordinated by the executive authority

- State v. society

Elements of the Weak State

- Limited autonomy (from society)
- Limited capacity (to implement policies)
- Diffusion of authority

National Security State

- Emerges during the Cold War
  o External threat from Soviet Union
  o Internal fears of subversion

- Concentration and Accumulation of Power in Executive Branch
  o National Security Act of 1947, 1949
  o National Security Council
  o Dept. of Defense/ Joint Chiefs of Staff
  o Central Intelligence Agency
Ideology of the National Security State

- International order is threatening
  o Crises requires speedy action
  o Democratic debate delays action
  o Executive has better information
- Power is best centralized in presidency for security

Anti-Statist Ideology

- Fear of "Garrison" State emerging (A. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State*)
  o State would mobilize for total war in peacetime
  o "specialists in violence" would dominate policy
  o Economy would be directed toward war production
- Some elements of NSS resisted...
  o No Universal Military Training
  o Military budgets/armaments restrained prior to Korean War
  o Increased taxation and economic federal direction resisted
- ... but secrecy maintained
  o Intelligence budgets classified: est. $30 billion
  o President controls secrecy policy (executive orders)
- Foreign policy becomes element of "national security"

Is the NSS democratic?

- Civilian control exists
- Congressional control is limited
- Increased secrecy with limited oversight
Challenges to NSS in mid-1970s

- Doubts over executive competence
- Fears of “secret” foreign policy
- Intelligence agency abuses
- Congressional oversight increased

Post-Cold War Challenges

Would NSS remain intact?

- Was world 'safe' for democratic foreign policy?
- How should 'national security' be defined?

How Strong is the Weak State?

Interest groups lobby on security issues

- Base closures
- Weapons programs (e.g., Challenger, F-22)
- Foreign aid levels
- Arms control treaties (e.g., land mine ban)
- Armed humanitarian intervention (Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, Sudan)

Who controls "grand strategy"?

- Is state able to formulate broader aims autonomously?
- Should president and executive do so with limited legislative or societal input?

Post-11 Sep. Issues

- Homeland security v. national security
- Undeclared “War on Terror” v. war on al-Qaeda