

The US President is more powerful as a world statesman than the UK Prime Minister. Discuss.

I believe this theory poses the premise that due to the US President's singular role as Head of State he is more powerful than the UK Prime Minister as a world leader and statesman. Though the original intentions of America's founding fathers did not include the role of the President in terms of foreign affairs, the executive office of the twentieth century now plays a major role in the creation of international policies. However the UK Prime Minister's role as a world statesman cannot be underestimated. Not bound by a written constitution one could say that the PM is more free to develop his role as an international policy maker.

In 1936 with occurrence of the *United States of America vs. Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation* it was clearly identified that the "President alone has the power to speak or listen as a representative of the nation."

The President's role in foreign affairs however has developed from something not even envisaged by the original doctrines to something which is integral to the executive office. The President must accept the duty to represent the USA in international relations. Often this can be to maintain national unity as in the case of Nixon in Vietnam (1972). The latter example outlining the often bitter controversy which surrounds the President when making international policy decisions, but due to his independent nature he can take an effective stance of foreign issues. Often a President can manipulate Congress to his own means to give off the appearance of a united front as in the case of Bush's appeal for support for Iraq in September 2002. This ability by President to overturn public and congressional opinion in order to compliment his means is referred to as "prerogative powers."

One such prerogative power is the ability of President to create executive agreements. Its said in Article 2 of the constitution that the President shall have the ability to make treaties. These treaties are often in the form of informal agreements with other nations. These include the SALT talks of Nixon and Carter concerning the nuclear test ban. They also include agreements which are regard to economic and trade relations such as NAFTA and NATO. These agreements are binding and do not require the ratification of Senate. They must be reported to Congress though they cannot be undone by it.

The power of the President as a world statesman however fluctuates and sometimes the individual office may have a more dominant role to play on the international arena than others. During times of war it is found that the President has more extensive powers. Lyndon Johnson's bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong could be an example one easily sight. As the "President shall be Commander and chief of the armed forces," (Article 2) though Congress must approve a formal declaration of war informal strikes upon other nations are at the Presidents discretion.

The Prime Minister's office is too, intrinsically concerned with his/her input on the foreign scene. In recent times one can see how the Euro issue has proved the Prime Ministers position as the key figurehead in terms of foreign issues. Brown's reservation's and belief that a "Euro referendum should not take place in this parliament," squashed and by party whip and proved inconsequential in comparison with Blair's belief that it was an "opportunity to share the change of Europe." Thus we see how Prime Minister plays a key role as a representative to for his/her nation on the foreign scene.

The Prime Minister too, though not as independent in terms of his office can often take an effective stance on foreign scene. Indeed foreign policy can often act as

“smoke screen,” to direct public attention away from internal problems. One such example of this is Margaret Thatcher’s handling of economic problems within Britain during the 80’s by having a war in Falklands. The Prime Minister’s has a strong position as commander and chief of the armed forces and often this role act as a means by which the/she can act in negotiation for his/her nation such as the talks over Euro Fighter Planes.

Like the President the PM can also take part in informal negotiations and treaties with other nations as a singular head of his party. These executive agreements include representation of nation in NATO, UN and EU.

However as Head of State the PM is constrained by certain factors on the foreign scene. As head of his party the PM must continually subject to that role and thus is not free to the same degree in many ways as the U.S President. Many feel that this need top maintain party support results in the PM having a reliance upon short-termism when it comes to foreign policy and foreign affairs. This may be due to the lack of sustainable interest in any one issue.

The role as party leader also means that he is subject to constant dispute and conflict with various ministers and backbenchers. One such case is that of Gordon Howe’s resignation and damaging speech which resulted in part to Thatcher’s downfall.

Another example is that of the controversy which surrounds the Euro rebels which caused great problems to John Major.

On the other hand the U.S President too is subject to many constraints in regard to his role as “World Statesman.” As head of a singular office, the Executive, the President is subject to the continual scrutiny and constraints of Congress. One such constraint is the need for the President to acquire Congressional declaration of war if he wants to go to war. Unlike PM the President is not as free to make appointments as Senate must approve all of these, an example of this being their rejection of Clinton’s nomination of Zoe Baird. Richard Neustadt noted that “the main power of President is the power to persuade,” and though this power is formidable it is also subject to many constraints.

The Supreme Court also imposes many impositions upon President. The Youngstown Steel Company vs. Sawyer case limited Truman’s control over the situation in Korea and is an example of this. The PM is not as subject to this sort of scrutiny.

Unlike the PM the President is entrenched by the constitution and thus is subject to it.