

President as global leader



245244 President as global leader Describe the role of president as global leader. What are the tools given by the U. S. Constitution to the president to be successful in this role?

The following discusses the role of the American President as a global leader. Frequently since the end of the Second World War in 1945 many Presidents of the United States have claimed that they are fulfilling the role of being a global leader. There have been ideological, diplomatic, economic, military, as well as political reasons why it has been claimed or argued that presidents of the United States are indeed global leaders. 1

The concept or notion that the President is a global leader arguably stems from the international and global position of the United States itself. Prior to the onset of the Second World War presidents had only been interested in being leaders in the Western hemisphere, with the Monroe Doctrine asserted that America had the right as well as the duty to interfere with, or lead the countries of Central and Latin America. 2

The only time that an American president tried to be a global leader was when Woodrow Wilson attempted to be one at the end of the First World War. Congress, who vetoed American membership of the League of Nations and returned to a policy of strict neutrality, overturned his efforts. 3

In many respects the American president acting as a global leader was a consequence of American involvement in the Second World War, and also the Cold War, which followed on from it. President Roosevelt was able to portray himself as a global leader during the Second World War until his own death. The American use of the atomic bombs against Japan meant that President Truman could boast of being the most important global leader due to the Americans been the only nuclear power. The onset of the Cold War

also ensured that America could not resort to a neutral foreign policy ever again. American presidents were in affect global leaders of the capitalist Western World, containing the spread of communism. 4

Certainly in the Cold War period the majority of American presidents successfully presented themselves as being global leaders. Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Reagan all made viable claims about their status as global leaders. Presidents Carter and Ford were arguably less successful in that regard. The ability of these presidents to portray themselves as global leaders was shaped by internal and external factors as well as their own personalities. To a large extent all post-war American presidents have had the same constitutional powers as each other.

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In constitutional terms every American president has operated with actual as well as potential blocks to his or her conduct of foreign affairs. American presidents' need congressional approval to declare war, besides having to have defense and foreign policies approved by them as well. Presidents have got Americans involved in conflicts without having declared war, for example Kennedy and Johnson stepped up involvement in the Vietnam War. As the Commander of Chief of American Forces the American president has the power to deploy forces to anywhere it is felt that they are needed to go. 6

Bibliography

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