

Chapter 14: The Presidency in Action

Section 1

Lecture Notes

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

PEARSON

► Objectives

1. Explain why Article II of the Constitution can be described as “an outline” of the presidential office.
2. List several reasons for the growth of presidential power.
3. Explain how the Presidents’ own views have affected the power of the office.

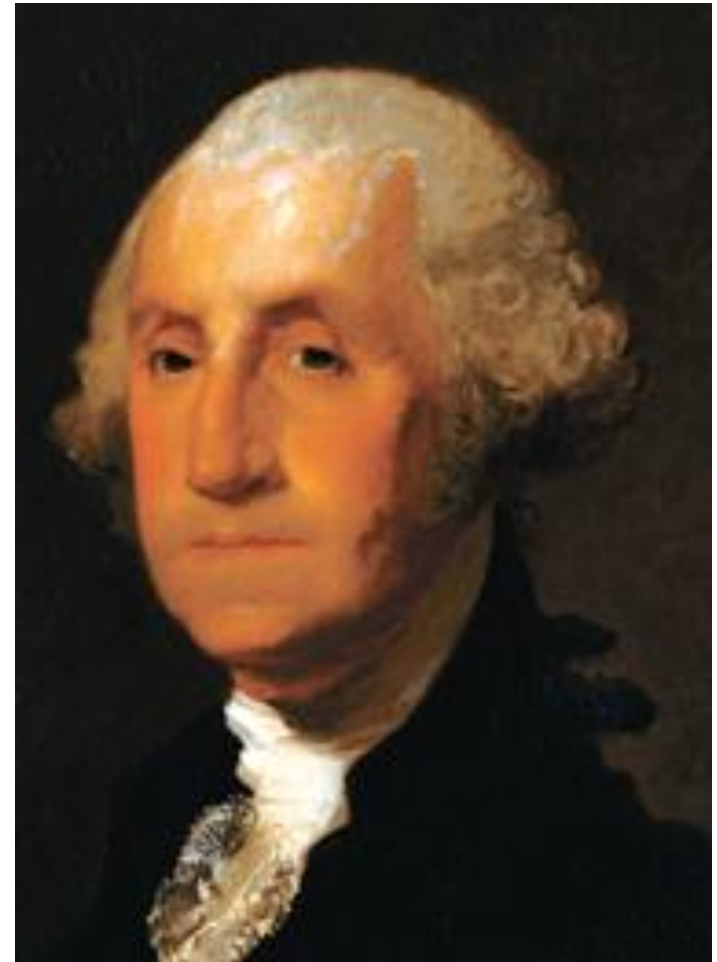
▶ Key Terms

- **Executive Article:** the name given to Article II of the U.S. Constitution, which establishes the office of the President
- **imperial presidency:** a critical view of the presidency that argues that Presidents have become too powerful, isolated from Congress, and unaccountable for their actions

- What factors have contributed to the growth of presidential power?
 - The presidency is a unified office with a focused purpose.
 - Congress has granted more authority to the executive branch.
 - The President can act decisively in times of crisis, increasing his or her influence.
 - The support staff of the President has grown over time.

▶ Article II

- Article II of the Constitution gives the President power to:
 - Command the armed forces
 - Make treaties
 - Approve or veto acts of Congress
 - Send or receive diplomats
 - “Take care that the Laws be faithfully executed.”
- The presidency has been called the “most powerful office in the world.”



▶ Views of the Presidency

- Checkpoint: What two views of the presidency were debated by the Framers?
 - These executive powers are broadly defined and open to interpretation.
 - At the Constitutional Convention, some delegates argued for a weaker chief executive appointed by Congress.
 - They were defeated by delegates supporting a strong, independently elected executive.

▶ Growth of Power

- Presidential power has grown over time. Why has this happened?
 - Compared to Congress, the executive branch is a unified office with one leader, capable of quicker decisions.
 - As the role of the federal government has grown and the country has endured wars and other major crises, citizens have looked to the presidency for decisive leadership.

▶ Growth of Power, cont.

- Congress has **delegated authority** to the executive branch to carry out the many laws passed by the legislative branch.
 - Certain Presidents have used the influence of their office to increase the scope of presidential power.

▶ Growth of Power, cont.

- The **size of the staff** supporting the President has grown, allowing involvement in more areas of government.
 - Presidents have a unique ability to use **mass media**—such as radio, television, and the Internet—to attract public attention to their policies and goals.

► Means of Gaining Power

- The debate continues over how much power the President should have relative to Congress.
 - What is the source of presidential power as shown in this political cartoon?



▶ Gaining Power

- In this cartoon, who is giving the President increased powers?



▶ Limits on Power

- Checkpoint: What limits the growth of presidential power?
 - In 1952, the Supreme Court ruled that President Harry Truman **could not use** his powers as commander in chief to take control of U.S. steel mills during the Korean War. (*Youngstown Sheet & Tube C. v. Sawyer*)

▶ Limits on Power, cont.

- In 2006, the Court ruled that President George W. Bush **could not use** military tribunals to prosecute “enemy combatants” and held that part of his plan violated the Geneva Conventions and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. (*Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*)

▶ Opposing Views

- Presidents like Theodore Roosevelt have supported broad powers.
 - Roosevelt supported the “**stewardship theory**,” arguing that the President should try to do whatever would help the public, using whatever powers could be claimed.

▶ Opposing Views, cont.

- Presidents like William Taft have favored limited presidential powers.
 - Taft felt that Presidents could not simply assume powers that they felt were needed to serve the people. **All executive power had to be based clearly on the Constitution.**



▶ Imperial Presidency

- In recent years, some critics claim that the presidency has grown too powerful.
- They refer to this increase of power as an **imperial presidency** because presidents often take actions without consulting Congress.

▶ Imperial Presidency, cont.

- Supporters of the imperial presidency argue that the President often needs to act more swiftly than would be possible if he or she had to wait for congressional approval.

► Review

- Now that you have learned about the growth of presidential power, go back to the Chapter Essential Question.
 - How much power should the President have?