

Foreign Policy FRQ Assignment

1. Congress and the president both have a role in making foreign policy. Despite recent expansions in presidential power, there are still limits on presidential decision making in foreign policy.

- a. Describe two enumerated powers Congress has in making foreign policy.
- b. Describe two expressed powers the president has in making foreign policy.
- c. Explain how executive agreements expand the president's ability to implement foreign policy.
- d. Explain how one of the following can limit the president's ability to implement foreign policy.
 1. Elections
 2. Presidential approval ratings

Enumerated powers of Congress regarding foreign policy include the power to officially declare war and the ratification of treaties with a two-thirds majority vote. While the Executive Branch may exercise significant power within the realms of war and treaties, Congress possesses specific enumerated powers that give them leverage over approving any actions the Executive Branch is in favor of, be it declaring war on another country or ratifying a treaty with another country.

The President also has powers in the realm of foreign policy of significant weight. Expressed powers of the President involving foreign policy are those such as assembling troops into foreign territories in his role as commander-in-chief and the power of appointing ambassadors to foreign countries. The President, in this way, can bring soldiers into engaged military conflicts without having to go through Congress, thanks to this power both over foreign policy and the military. Appointing ambassadors is exactly as it says on the tin, enabling the President to choose who is the official representative of the United States within a foreign country.

Executive agreements are utilized by the President in implementing foreign policy because they are effectively equivalent in weight and value to treaties, but do not require Congressional approval. This greatly expands the President's authority over foreign policy, allowing executive agreements to be made without the intervention of an potentially uncooperative Congress. These executive agreements can be made regarding many of the same topics as treaties, effectively bypassing Congress.

When implementing foreign policy, the President can be faced with challenges. Elections affect all levels of government, moving people in and out of the government and potentially shifting the balance of power in Congress. Whenever an election occurs, it may become more difficult for a President to convince Congress to agree to declare war or ratify a treaty, as many Congressional members before the election will be more concerned with maintaining their seat, and after the election, new members of Congress may be opposed to the President's foreign policy ideas. It holds not only for treaties and declarations of war, but all portions of foreign policy that must go through Congress. Elections change the priorities of members of Congress and potentially alter the power that the President holds over Congress.