

 **TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC"**  
**MORE POWER TO THE  
EXECUTIVE BRANCH?**  
**(Be careful what  
you wish for!)**



By Stephen L. Bakke  April 26, 2015

*Here's what provoked me:*

*A opinion was published which made a strong push in favor of strengthen Obama's authority so that important things can be accomplished. He implies his plea is for "a return to normal" because presidential authority has been eroding over the years. Actually, what has been happening is a return to more limited presidential power, as intended by the Constitution. One might not like that, but it's true.*

*Here's my response:*

**More Power to the Executive Branch? (Be careful what you wish for!)**

Steven Rattner's "Power to the president – please?" (4-21, Opinion Exchange) argued in favor of giving the president much more power. What prompted this was congressional action requiring Obama's Iran nuclear agreement to be approved in Congress. He gratuitously claims his suggestion isn't limited to democrat administrations – but I seriously doubt he would have written this article when George "W" was president.

Rattner's argument comes easily if you philosophically support an activist president and believe that government is the preferred conduit for growth and prosperity. In support of his argument he uses the example of Woodrow Wilson to emphasize the frustration many presidents experience because of their lack of authority.

Anyone evaluating Rattner's suggestion should remember and consider:

- Congress was justified in its "Iran agreement" action because Obama implied he would bypass the Senate in favor of the United Nations if a nuclear "deal" were reached. Senate approval is required for all treaties, and this deserves that status.
- Progressive President Woodrow Wilson was a frustrated president – he knew best and disliked constitutional roadblocks.
- Rattner isn't asking for a "return to normal," as he implies. Reigning in presidential power is a movement in the direction of Constitutional intent. Presidential power and abuses culminated during the Nixon years and since then, agenda ridden and uncooperative presidents have fallen out of favor, and are being given more oversight.

What has been happening, like it or not, is a return to restraining any governmental branch that is committed to acting unilaterally.