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Writing assignment: Role of the Federal Government

The system of U.S. power and government is based on the concept of separation of powers, as defined by the Constitution. The framers of the Constitution aimed at creating a system that prevents power from being concentrated within a single individual or authority. Under this system, the primary function of the federal government of the United States is to create and enforce laws that preserve individual freedom and promote stability and order within society. The federal government is comprised of the executive, the legislative, and the judicial branch. The legislature consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives and is tasked with creating laws, while the executive branch is responsible for the implementation of those laws, while the judicial branch judges the constitutionality of the laws.

Together, the branches of the federal government yield a significant influence over the states, each of which operates under its own government. The economy of the nation is under the direct control of the federal government, wherein Congress is allowed the authority to impose duties, taxes, and excises to generate revenue. Similarly, the federal government is responsible to protect the life and property of its citizens and is therefore responsible for national defense. Closely connected to defense is the nation’s foreign policy. The federal government is responsible to develop the nation’s foreign policy to protect its interests abroad.

In recent years, the responsibilities of the federal government have extended to public service, health, and education. The federal government provides funds to states to improve education and healthcare. These include various social welfare programs and initiatives that are funded in tandem with other state programs using federal revenue.

However, a significant portion of the American public holds a negative view of the federal government, citing wastefulness, incompetency, and inefficiency. A reason why the federal government fails at its job is divisions over policy implementation. The government fails to execute the right policies on healthcare, climate change, financial markets, or budget deficits, and in turn, it leads to large scale failures in fulfilling its duty. For instance, the 9/11 attacks were the result of a lack of coordination among federal intelligence agencies and the FBI. Similarly, the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina could have been prevented if the federal emergency services had made preparations before the storm and taken adequate protective measures after it. In terms of foreign policy, the Iraq war was characterized by shocking policy decisions, implementation failures, corruption, and incompetence by U.S. agencies. Likewise in the case of social welfare programs, the federal health care system continues to underfinance certain health care measures, while spending heavily on advanced and expensive technology. At the same time, it has done a poor job working alongside states to rebuild infrastructure and repair bridges, rails, and sewerage systems in a number of states, especially those suffering from the aftermath of storms and hurricanes.

A key reason for the failure of the federal government comes from its reliance on coercion and top-down planning. Policy making and implementation at such levels create winners and losers at various fronts, instead of developing mutually beneficial relationships among various institutions and components of the society. In many cases, federal policies rely on guesswork since there is lesser incentive to make the price-based decision making. At the same time, the federal government launches a number of initiatives and programs that have led to an enormous increase in its scope and size. These programs lead to a significant rise in spending but do not produce as much value, which in turn, leads to tax increases. Although there are no simplified solutions to improve the efficiency of the federal government, it is necessary to begin with cutting down its size and scope.