GECMUN XIII

BACKGROUND GUIDE

United States Congress Committee

The Wake of the Watergate Scandal: Examining the Abuse of Presidential Power and Executive Transparency

SDG: 10. Reduced Inequality, 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, 17. Partnerships for the Goals

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Committee Introduction

The US Congress, established in 1789 by Article I of the US Constitution, is a legislative branch of the US federal government. It is a bicameral body consisting of two separate chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate. In this crisis committee, where all delegates represent senators, a thorough understanding of your role and political stance is crucial for a successful debate.

The primary objective of the senators would be to pass a bill, or a documented proposal, containing laws they wish to enact. Proposed bills will be voted on by both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and once they are mutually agreed upon, they will be passed and enacted as laws. Simultaneously, the senators must respond to Crisis Updates and manipulate the plot through drafting directives based on the updates to maintain an advantageous position and a clear path to resolution. Managing to pass effective legislation while following a complex, erratic plot can be difficult, requiring rapid adaptability and clear contextual awareness among senators.

Meanwhile, in the backroom, chairs and directors will process the content of private directives and the accumulative impact they have on the context of the committee. Based on the senators' input, the backroom will manipulate the storyline and announce such changes through Crisis Updates.

In responding to political and constitutional crises such as the Watergate Scandal, Congress often becomes a powerful tool for investigation, creating specialized investigative committees and utilizing subpoenas and congressional checks. While senators are expected to maintain diplomacy and formality, assertive interrogation and effective use of such tools are also necessary for a more comprehensive investigation.

Agenda Introduction

In the 1972 United States presidential election, President Richard Nixon of the Republican Party was running a reelection campaign against Democratic Party candidate George McGovern. Although Nixon faced political burdens from his first term, such as Vietnamization and troop withdrawal, he benefited from being the incumbent president and from a relatively strong economy.

June 17th, 1972, five men were arrested at the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters at the Watergate complex for burglary. The issue became a major constitutional and political crisis as it turned out those five individuals were operatives connected to President Richard Nixon's reelection campaign and broke into the DNC headquarters to plant listening devices.

The first public reporting was done by The Washington Post on June 18th with a simple crime factual report about the DNC burglary, which was followed by the possible connection of the burglary and the Committee for the Re-Election of the President (CRP). A deep investigation of the burglary revealed the involvement not only of the CRP and the Republican National Committee (RNC), but also allegations and concerns regarding a CIA connection to the crisis, as all five burglars, including James McCord, Bernard Barker, and Eugenio Martinez, were highly affiliated with the CIA. This increased the significance of the issue as clear abuse of presidential authority, involving its party members and a major government institution.

Major political controversies and doubts about government honesty, transparency, and accountability arose with the public reports of the Watergate burglary and connection to the Nixon administration. The Watergate scandal wasn't an international crisis, yet it was a significant threat and defiance of the system of checks and balances in the United States.

Therefore, we, as the Senate, bear the responsibility of examining the Watergate scandal and strengthening oversight to defend transparency, accountability, and the separation of powers of this nation.

Letter from the Chairs

Dear Senators,

Welcome to the United States Congress Committee (USCC) of the GECMUN XIII. We are thrilled to introduce you to the first-ever historical agenda in GECMUN USCC history! It is our great honor to support and guide you through the conference.

My name is Michaela Cho Kwon, a Senior from Korea International School Jeju, who will be serving as your President of the Senate for GECMUN XIII. Congress and Assembly types of committees are my personal favorites to participate in and confer through, although they are extremely rare and complicated. Participating in the uncommon type of committee of USCC, I hope this experience will enhance your skills as a MUNer and successfully lead you into a deeper interest and passion, as it did for me. I hope you will take away some unforgettable moments and connections from this conference, and I look forward to it.

My name is Minkyo Kim, a sophomore from St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju, and I will be serving as your President Pro Tempore. This is my first time chairing a Congress committee, and I am looking forward to some insightful debates and interesting plots. I hope that this experience will be as fresh and exciting for you as it is for me. See you at the conference!

My name is Soobin (Clara) Bae, a senior attending Korea International School Jeju, and it is my pleasure to serve as your Backroom Chair. I am fully committed to ensuring that our committee fosters meaningful and productive discussions, and I hope that this conference provides each of you delegates with the opportunity to challenge yourselves and broaden your perspectives. I encourage you to approach debate with diplomacy while striving to develop innovative solutions through collaboration. I look forward to witnessing your dedication throughout the conference. I am confident that your contribution will make our committee memorable.

My name is Yoonsun Jung, a senior from Korea International School Jeju. I will be serving as your Backroom Chair. It is my pleasure to work with you for this conference, and I am looking forward to seeing the engaging debates and legislation you will bring to the table. I am excited to meet each of you and wish you the best of luck in your preparation. See you in committee!

Sincerely,

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Key Terms

Disarmament
The reduction or withdrawal of military forces and weapons.

Executive Privilege
The legal principle allowing the President and high-ranking executive officials to withhold certain communications and confidential information from Congress or the courts to protect national security or executive branch deliberation.

Separation of Powers
The constitutional division of government responsibilities into distinct branches (Legislative, Executive, Judicial) to prevent any single branch from gaining absolute power.

Checks and Balances
The constitutional mechanisms that allow each branch of government to limit, amend, or overturn the actions of the other branches.

Abuse of Power
The exercise of government authority or official privileges for corrupt, partisan, or illegal self-serving purposes rather than the public good.

Contempt of Congress
An act of obstructing or refusing to comply with a congressional investigation, subpoena, or order.

Impeachment
The formal constitutional power of the House of Representatives to charge a federal official (including the President) with "Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors," followed by a trial in the Senate.

Smoking Gun Tape
The specific 1972 recorded audio proof revealing Nixon ordering the FBI to halt the Watergate investigation, sealing his political fate.

Committee to Re-elect the President (CRP)
President Richard Nixon’s official campaign organization for the 1972 election, heavily implicated in fundraising irregularities, espionage, and political sabotage.

White House Plumbers
A covert, highly secretive internal security team established inside the Nixon White House in July 1971. Nicknamed the "Plumbers" because their original task was to stop ("plug") unauthorized press leaks, most notably following Daniel Ellsberg’s leak of the Pentagon Papers, the group quickly morphed into an illegal political espionage and covert operations unit directly accountable to high-ranking executive aides.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

The foreign intelligence service of the US government, whose past ties to the Watergate burglars raised major concerns about the domestic misuse of federal security agencies.

Hush Money

Illegal or covert payments made to individuals (such as the Watergate burglars) to buy their silence and prevent them from implicating higher-ranking officials.

Break-in

The illegal forced entry into the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters on the sixth floor of the Watergate Office Complex in Washington, D.C. Executed by five operatives linked to the Committee for the Re-Election of the President (CRP), the operation was meant to wiretap phones, steal political documents, and repair previously installed listening devices that were malfunctioning.

Cover-Up

Systemic, illicit efforts by government officials to hide crimes, obstruct investigations, alter documents, or silence witnesses to protect political power.

Historical Background

Before the Watergate break-in, the Nixon administration functioned in an environment of political tension about leaks of classified government information. The Vietnam War had raised the stakes and brought public controversy, and the administration became increasingly concerned about unauthorized disclosures regarding U.S. foreign policy. That tension increased in June 1971 when The New York Times began publishing the Pentagon Papers which is a secret Department of Defense study of U.S. involvement in Vietnam that was leaked by Daniel Ellsberg.

The publication of the Pentagon Papers inspired the Nixon administration to prevent further leaks. In July 1971, the White House established the Special Investigations Unit, which later was called the "Plumbers," to investigate leaks of classified information. The unit included figures like E. Howard Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy, who would later be directly associated with the Watergate scandal. The unit investigated Ellsberg and took part in the September 1971 break-in at the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist Lewis Fielding in an effort to obtain information about him.

Meanwhile, Nixon's reelection campaign was building its own political intelligence operations. The Committee to Re-Elect the President (CRP) ran and paid for Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign, and people connected to the campaign became involved in plans to gather information on political opponents. Many of those involved in earlier White House intelligence activities, especially Hunt and Liddy, later were associated with CRP operations. These developments formed a crucial connection between the administration's earlier efforts to control information and the political operations that culminated in Watergate. The National Archives holds records pertaining to both CRP material and the activities of the Plumbers.

Current State of Affairs

The Watergate burglary is now publicly reported via *The Washington Post*. The public understands the basic facts of five men being arrested at the Watergate complex, with the charge of burglary of the Democratic National Committee headquarters. The incident, at this moment, remains uncertain but initially appears isolated from the political events. Not only the Republican Party, but also the Democratic Party recognizes the burglary as isolated from the upcoming presidential election, especially with the vehement denial of Nixon and White House of their relation. The connection of the burglary to political matters, especially to the Republican Party, is still just a suspicion.

Nevertheless, with the prospect of the Watergate burglary having political motives, the ongoing presidential election has become crucial in the investigation of the incident. The current president, Richard Nixon, from the Republican Party, is running for re-election against the Democratic candidate George McGovern.

The possibility of burglary being relevant to the presidential election adds pressure for an efficient investigation, as it could develop into a political scandal that could significantly undermine public trust in the federal government. The president announced at his press conference on August 29, 1972, that they “want it cleared as soon as possible” and “[burglary] has no place whatever in [their] political process,” though one of the arrested burglars, McCord, was the “salaried security coordinator for President Nixon’s reelection committee.”

Unfortunately, the significant lack of transparency is preventing a rapid and comprehensive investigation of the incident. Not only the public, but even members of Congress do not yet have a full explanation of the burglary, nor is information about the incident being reported up-to-the-minute. Without any acceptable explanations, Congress is facing blockage from accessing key documents, FBI files, and the active investigation process. Consequently, accountability remains difficult while access to information is restricted.

Stances of Parties

Sam J. Ervin (D-NC)

Senator Ervin described himself as a 'country lawyer,' with strict support for states' rights, conservative values, and strict constitutionalism. As a member of the Senate's Southern Caucus, he was strictly against Civil Rights movements and legislation for civil rights: the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964, and the Equal Rights Amendment of 1971, filibustering all that legislation and the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. He emphasized the constitutional importance of checks on executive power as a member of the Senate Watergate Committee. He had previously supported President Nixon on the Vietnam War and opposed him on federal spending on social programs even as a Democrat. He had experience investigating wiretapping and surveillance abuses as chairman of the Judiciary Committee and Constitutional Rights Subcommittee, and readily created the framework for the Watergate Committee for "the very undergirding of our democracy." He also chaired the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities.

Daniel Inouye (D-HI)

Senator Inouye is a veteran of World War II who received the WWII Medal of Honor and lost an arm in combat. He is the first Japanese-American to be elected to Congress and highly emphasized national defense and appropriations over civil liberties, being part of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Defense of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, and the Appropriations Committee. Resisted four times being appointed to the Watergate Committee, but was assigned by the Democratic leader to the Watergate Committee with his highly institutionalist and defense-policy specialist image.

Joseph Montoya (D-NM)

Senator Montoya focused his career on constituent service and appropriations work. He served on the Judiciary Committee, focusing on supporting his state and rural side of the country through sponsoring legislation on farm subsidies, support for wheat and cotton, and retraining for unemployed farmworkers. He joined the Appropriations Committee in 1969, after he worked on Public Works, Agriculture and Forestry, and Government Operations. Along with Senator Inouye, he was one of the junior senators without national recognition or prior oversight or investigative work, which became one of the reasons he was chosen to be part of the Watergate Committee. He is also known for supporting campaign-finance accountability, encouraging Nixon to personally cover his legal costs rather than use campaign funds.

Herman Talmadge (D-GA)

Senator Talmadge focused on his Senate career on agricultural issues, starting his first term in the Senate as a member of the Agriculture Committee, eventually rising to chair of the Agriculture Committee in 1971. He focused on framing the price guidance for products such as peanuts, cotton, and wheat, continuing to chair the committee after it was renamed the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. Rooted in the Deep South, he was pro-segregation, elected on a platform defending segregation and opposing civil rights. He is known to be a strict interpreter of the Constitution, stating back to the legitimate principle of law." He was a member of the Watergate Committee, handpicked by Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, after being recognized as respected and fair, and able to investigate like a member of the jury.

Ted Kennedy (D-MA)

Senator Kennedy is one of the authors of S. Res. 60 of the 93rd Congress, "A resolution to establish a select committee of the Senate to investigate and study illegal or improper campagin activiist and the 1972 presidential election." He is recognized as one of the senators who has built the most substantive domestic-policy record, with policies such as the Immigration Act of 1965 that ended the quota system, and being an active supporter of voting rights, fair housing, and national health insurance. He harshly criticized Nixon, commenting that Nixon's health proposal is "a partnership between the administration and insurance companies." Though not part of the Watergate Committee, he was one of the most active and earliest members of the Senate urging for the Senate investigation. Another notable connection with Nixon is his family line rivalry, as his brother, John F. Kennedy, lost the presidential election against Nixon in 1960.

Mike Mansfield (D-MT)

Senator Mansfield is the Senate Majority Leader of the Congress, who holds control of the floor agenda and committee assignments. He handpicked members of the Watergate Committee, prioritizing clean political backgrounds and previous known connections with Nixon over experience in the Senate. He is known for a long political background, dating back to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, as he was their Asian (China and Japan) foreign policy advisor. He was a member of the Foreign Relations Committee and a politician who always urged diplomatic solutions over military disputes, referring to war as a "grotesque mistake." He had open disagreement with Nixon regarding the Vietnam War, highly encouraging full troop withdrawal as it is the "best possible end of a bad war," which Nixon refused. He then became the co-sponsor of the War Powers Act of 1973, ending the institutional conflict against Nixon regarding presidential troop control power.

John C. Stennis (D-MS)

Senator Stennis focused his whole Senate career on military and defense, being appointed to Armed Services, chairing subcommittees on manpower, military personnel, and military construction. He was also part of the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, contributing to the early missile-defense program. After he became the chairman of the full committee, he advocated for military and defense budgets, preventing the Senate's movement to cut defense spending. He is a conservative and an institutional loyalist, known as a close ally of Nixon and often described as 'hawkish.' Nixon also described him as "strongest and most dependable supporters in foreign affairs," being one of two members of Congress who got prior notice on Cambodia bombings.

Robert C. Byrd (D-WV)

Senator Byrd is recognized as the only Congress member who has taken 10 years of night classes as a Senator to earn a law degree from American University in 1963. While he didn't study in college immediately after graduating from high school, he learned about society through working as a butcher, gas station attendant, and shipyard worker during WWII in Baltimore and Tampa. He is a member of the Appropriations Committee, Rules and Administration Committee, and Judiciary Committee, holding noticeable legislative influence through his Senate career. He is a Senate Majority Whip and a full supporter of strict constitutional interpretation, believing everything in Congress should be based on the process written in the Constitution. He is also a conservative who filibustered the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and organized a KKK chapter in the 1940s.

George McGovern (D-SD)

Senator McGovern is the Democratic presidential nominee for the 1972 Presidential Election. After the DNC break-in, he referred to Nixon as "the most corrupt president in history." He focused on domestic affairs through his Senate career, serving on the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, the

Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, and the Nutrition and Human Needs Committee, most notably with legislatures such as the Food for Peace Program under President Kennedy. He is also recognized for legislatures for Native Americans, advocating improvements in their education, economic, and employment opportunities. He opposed the Vietnam War actively, arguing that participation of American to Vietnam War is a waste of resources and a sacrifice of American blood for unnecessary involvement in civil conflict.

J. William Fulbright (D-AR)

Senator Fulbright focused on foreign policy through his Senate career, being the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. While his political career emphasized foreign matters, he claimed and highlighted the limits on the "imperial presidency." He was part of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964 during the Vietnam War and became critical of the administration as the war expanded. After opposing the Nixon Administration's decision to continue the war in Vietnam, he supported the War Powers Act of 1973 to limit the executive power over foreign policy and military control. He supported the creation of international relations, such as NATO, while remaining a conservative who opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Russell B. Long (D-LA)

Russell B. Long viewed Watergate mainly as a fiscal problem involving illegal corporate contributions and laundered money rather than a constitutional crisis. He preferred to address the issue through the tax code instead of new federal agencies. He was likely to propose closing loopholes that let corporations move money through shell committees or foundations, and to support IRS enforcement of penalties for illegal contributions. As Chairman of the Finance Committee, he controlled any provision involving taxation, including the public financing system funded through the tax checkoff. This gave him significant power over how far the bill's public financing provisions could go.

Birch Bayh (D-IN)

Birch Bayh treated Watergate as a constitutional crisis tied to presidential succession and the limits of executive power. He called for full disclosure and an independent special prosecutor. He was likely to propose stronger legal protections for special prosecutors so future presidents could not remove them, along with clearer penalties for obstruction of justice by executive officials. As a senior member of the Judiciary Committee and chair of its Constitutional Amendments Subcommittee, he had direct jurisdiction over these questions, making him central to any provision addressing executive privilege or succession.

Carl Curtis (R-NE)

Carl Curtis was one of Nixon's most consistent defenders. He argued the scandal had been exaggerated and that removing Nixon would damage political stability. He was likely to resist broad disclosure or public financing requirements and instead propose narrow amendments limited to specific crimes such as bribery. His seats on the Finance Committee and the Rules and Administration Committee, which has direct jurisdiction over federal elections, gave him real ability to slow or narrow the bill. His standing as a trusted Nixon ally also made him a natural point of resistance among conservatives.

James Allen (D-AL)

James Allen approached Watergate as a procedural and constitutional question about executive authority rather than a moral one. He was skeptical of reforms that would centralize power

in a new federal agency. He was likely to propose narrower definitions of campaign expenditures to exempt party-building activity, and to require balanced partisan representation on any new enforcement body. His reputation as one of the Senate's most skilled parliamentarians meant his influence often came through amendments and procedural maneuvers on the floor rather than through committee work.

Mike Gravel (D-AK)

Mike Gravel connected the Watergate to a broader concern about executive secrecy and the misuse of intelligence agencies, a concern he had already raised by reading the Pentagon Papers into the Congressional Record. He was likely to push for restrictions on using agencies such as the CIA or FBI for domestic political purposes, along with stronger protections for whistleblowers and the press. His influence came less from a committee chairmanship and more from his willingness to force floor votes and use procedural tools like the filibuster to draw attention to an issue.

Walter Mondale (D-MN)

Walter Mondale viewed Watergate as evidence of an overly powerful presidency and called for full disclosure and an independent special prosecutor. After Ford pardoned Nixon, he also proposed allowing Congress to review presidential pardons. He was likely to support strict contribution limits and public financing of campaigns to reduce dependence on large donors. His seat on the Government Operations Committee gave him institutional standing on oversight questions, and his national profile added visibility to his proposals.

Howard Baker (R-TN)

Howard Baker began the hearings hoping to defend the administration, but the evidence convinced him that serious wrongdoing had occurred, a shift captured by his question to John Dean about what the president knew and when he knew it. He was likely to help broker compromise language, such as pairing contribution limits with safeguards to keep enforcement bipartisan. As Vice Chairman of the Watergate Committee, he held on of the most consequential seats in the investigation, and his credibility with both parties made him well positioned to bring wavering Republicans toward a final bill.

Edward J. Gurney (R-FL)

Edward J. Gurney was the Watergate Committee's most consistent Nixon defender. He disputed that the White House had directed the coverup and argued the investigation had gone beyond its proper scope. He was likely to propose amendments narrowing the bill or adding due process protections for anyone accused of violations. His seat on the Watergate Committee gave him a formal role in the investigation's findings and dissenting views, though his influence was limited mainly to shaping minority objections rather than the bill's core provisions.

Lowell Weicker (R-CT)

Lowell Weicker broke early with the administration and treated the evidence of the break-in and cover-up as a genuine threat to constitutional government. He questioned witnesses aggressively during the hearings. He was likely to support the bill's toughest provisions, including strict contribution limits, mandatory disclosure, and criminal penalties for campaign related misconduct. As a Republican willing to break with his party, his support gave any reform bill added bipartisan credibility.

Hugh Scott (R-PA)

As Senate Republican Leader, Scott initially worked to manage the party's response to Watergate, but as evidence mounted he grew concerned about Nixon's declining support. He eventually joined Barry Goldwater and John Rhodes in telling Nixon that his support in Congress had nearly disappeared. His contributions to the bill were likely to game through leadership rather than specific amendments, negotiating compromise language that Republican Senators could accept. As party leader, he controlled scheduling and the party;s overall negotiating position, making him essential to passing any bill that required significant Republican votes.

Jacob K. Javits (R-NY)

Jacob Javits urged Nixon to avoid treating impeachment as a partisan contest and discussed a voluntary transition of power under the Twenty Fifth Amendment. He consistently linked Watergate to broader concerns about executive power. He was likely to propose stronger congressional oversight mechanisms, including expanded subpoena authority and clearer limits on executive privilege. His long tenure on the Foreign Relations and Labor and Public Welfare Committees gave him credibility as a moderate voice, and his standing among Northeastern Republicans let him influence votes that party leadership could not always secure on its own.

Bob Dole (R-KS)

Bob Dole defended Nixon while serving as a chairman of the Republican National Committee and dismissed early criticism as partisan. After the release of the smoking gun tape, he accepted that the president could no longer remain in office. He was likely to propose provisions giving campaigns clearer internal accountability structures to prevent hidden misconduct from surprising party leadership again. His experience as a former party chairman and his seat on the Finance Committee gave him practical insight into how campaign money moved through party organizations, which was useful for drafting workable disclosure requirements.

Charles Mathias (R-MD)

Charles Mathias was among the earliest Republicans to demand a serious investigation of Watergate, describing it as a constitutional crisis involving the limits of presidential power. He was likely to support strong, uniform disclosure requirements and public financing, along with enforcement mechanisms independent of both parties. His reputation as one of the chamber's most independent Republicans gave him credibility to support bipartisan legislation that more partisan members might hesitate to back.

Edward Brooke (R-MA)

Edward Brooke became the first Republican senator to call for a special prosecutor to investigate Watergate. He argued that it was "inconceivable" that Nixon had remained unaware of the campaign's illegal activities and later stated that the president had lost the public's confidence. He was likely to support whistleblower protections and public disclosure, and to insist that any new enforcement agency remain independent of whichever party controlled the White House. His early break with Nixon demonstrated that opposition extended beyond Democrats, which helped build momentum for bipartisan reform.

Barry Goldwater (R-AZ)

Barry Goldwater delivered the decisive Republican warning that ended Nixon's presidency. After reviewing the evidence and speaking with Republican senators, Goldwater joined Hugh Scott and John Rhodes at the White House on August 7, 1974. He told Nixon that only a small number of senators would vote to acquit him after impeachment, making clear that resignation had become

inevitable. His instincts favored limited government, so he was likely to support only narrow reforms related to specific criminal conduct rather than broader regulation of ordinary political activity. As the leading figure of the conservative movement and one of the three senators who visited Nixon on August 7, 1974, his endorsement or opposition to any bill carried influence well beyond his formal committee assignments.

Peter H. Dominick (R-CO)

Peter H. Dominick criticized what he viewed as excessive attention to the Watergate scandal and described it as "insignificant". He defended the administration against accusations of widespread wrongdoing and argued that Congress and the media were allowing the scandal to overshadow the more important national issues. He was likely to propose amendments limiting disclosure requirements to only very large contributions and narrowing the bill's overall scope. His committee work on Labor and Public Welfare gave him standing on domestic policy generally, but on this issue his role was mainly to help build minority opposition to expansive reform.

James B. Pearson (R-KS)

James Pearson addressed concerns about the scandal through debates over campaign finance and the limits of presidential authority. He participated in the broader Senate discussion about how Congress should respond to political misconduct and how reforms could prevent future abuses of campaign and government. He was likely to contribute moderate technical amendments, such as clearer reporting deadlines and treasurer accountability. His influence came less from a prominent role in the hearings and more form his reputation for prudent, bipartisan legislative work, which made his support useful for building a durable coalition.

Roman Hruska (R-NE)

Roman Hruska remained one of Nixon's most persistent Senate defenders. He challenged the allegations involving the CIA and the White House coverup and continued defending Nixon even after he resigned. Hruska claimed that investigators and opponents had magnified the scandal beyond its practical offenses. He was likely to resist expanding investigative authority over intelligence agencies and to favor a narrow bill focused only on already established criminal conduct. As a senior member of the Judiciary Committee, he had direct jurisdiction over criminal justice provisions, giving him leverage to narrow enforcement mechanisms during committee markup.

Mark Hatfield (R-OR)

Mark Hatfield became one of the earliest Republicans to advocate for Nixon's resignation. He criticized Nixon's firing of Archibald Cox during the "Saturday Night Massacre" and described the scandal as a failure that had seriously damaged public trust in the government. He was likely to support strict statutory protections for special prosecutors against removal by the president, along with strong public financing provisions to reduce the influence of wealthy donors. His early opposition to Nixon and his seat on the Appropriations Committee gave him credibility both as a reform advocate and as someone able to help fund new enforcement mechanisms through the budget process.

Charles H. Percy (R-IL)

Charles H. Percy urged Nixon to disclose the full truth about Watergate and introduced a Senate resolution requesting an independent prosecutor outside the executive branch. He was likely to sponsor the bill's core independence provisions, including statutory protection for special prosecutors and an independent Federal Election Commission structured to avoid control by either party. The

Senate approved his proposal. Percy argued that the executive branch should not investigate itself. He became one of the most visible Republican senators advocating for a more impartial investigation.

Possible Solutions

One possible solution is to strengthen congressional oversight and make clearer procedures for enforcing congressional subpoenas. Congress has a number of ways to respond when witnesses or executive officials refuse to give requested information and in some circumstances civil enforcement through the federal courts. But disagreements over subpoenas can turn into conflict between the legislative and executive branches. Effective enforcement is important, for without a practical means of compelling compliance, a congressional subpoena may be more of a request rather than an enforceable demand. Congress could thus impose more uniform procedures where executive officials refuse subpoenas. Congress may also want to consider other remedies such as civil enforcements.

At the same time, enhanced oversight would have to consider legitimate executive authority. Some confidential presidential communications may be protected by executive privilege. The Constitution also limits congressional investigative power. CRS defines executive privilege as qualified, thus leading to frequent disputes over balancing Congress's need for information with executive confidentiality. Instead of defaulting to obstruction, Congress could require committees to try to work through a formal accommodation process. If negotiations do not work, there is an established process for judicial review or congressional enforcement. This could enhance oversight while also limiting the potential for oversight itself to become unchecked intrusion.

Another approach is to prevent the political misuse of government agencies. Congress could require more systematic documentation when politically sensitive investigative powers are put into play. This could strengthen oversight by congressional committees. Oversight could be restricted to determining whether agencies were following established procedures. Too much political control by Congress could create the problem the reform is meant to solve. The aim would be to help detect improper political pressure while preserving the operational independence that law enforcement need to perform their legitimate duty.

Questions to Consider

Constitutional Boundaries & Executive Power

- To what extent does the Constitution grant explicit and implicit powers to the Executive, and where must Congress step in to prevent overreach?
- Where does the Constitution draw the line between executive privilege and an unconstitutional shield against legislative oversight?
- What standard of evidence must be met to substantiate a President's claim that covert operations were conducted for national security rather than political self-interest?

Congressional Oversight & Authority

- How can Congress prevent executive agencies such as the FBI and CIA from being weaponized for political surveillance while still maintaining their vital intelligence and law enforcement functions?
- How should Congress reform campaign finance, political committee transparency (such as CREEP), and convert fundraising mechanisms to eliminate structural incentives that enabled the Watergate break-in?
- When executive officials refuse to comply with congressional subpoenas or withhold evidence under administrative secrecy, what mechanisms can Congress enact to enforce compliance without creating a prolonged constitutional deadlock in the courts?

Institutional Integrity & Public Transparency

- What legislative measures can Congress implement to ensure governmental transparency and rebuild public trust in federal institutions without undermining the stability of executive governance?

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