

The abuse of presidential power



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A president's success is marked by the accomplishments he makes while serving his term however it can be scarred by acts that don't benefit our nation, such as scandals and corruption. A president can be categorized as a successor or a failure, or either a Saint or a Sinner. Over the years, the United States has had its equal share of both types. There have been many presidents that one may refer to as a Saint such as Abraham Lincoln and George Washington (Bailey 1981). On the other hand, there have been many presidents that one may refer to as a Sinner such as Ulysses S. Grant or Richard Nixon.

Presidential power is an important concept. The dominance of presidential power is an even more important concept. A president should not and could not have more power of Congress. If a president is superior over congress then the United States would be a monarch taking orders from one man (Woodward and Bernstein 2005). This all starts with presidential scandals and could lead to a much bigger thing. This blaze of presidential scandal has to be stopped at its core, starting with the president, before it blossoms into a wildfire. The United States recognizes that the decision that the president makes represents the nation and the president must stand behind every decision he makes rather it may be a good one or a bad one. Everyone has their own opinion on if the president is making the right choice or not but the president makes the decision he feels best would serve a nation.

Presidential power has always been an interesting topic to review. People may feel that the president have the right to do anything he wants but this is not the case. The president has to answer to someone in every decision he makes and that someone is congress. I feel that scandals are an interesting

topic because they showcase the abuse of presidential power. A president may try to gain an edge or become superior by being involved in a scandal. Presidential scandals also threaten the trust that people have in their nation. The dominance of presidential power has to be recognized so our society won't become a monarch (Woodward and Bernstein 2005). Congress is dominant over the president so the House is the only party able to judge the president as fit or unfit to lead. One scandal that stands out in the United States is the Watergate scandal which everyone should know about. To me this was the case that had the most significance on our nation.

II: Literature Review

Presidential Classifications:

An interesting novel to read is *Presidential Saints and Sinners*. While reading this book one would come across all of the United States presidents. The novel grades the United States presidents labeling them a saint or a sinner depending on their term. A classification like this can only be made by seeing what they president got accomplished hence how a president is a “ saint”. A sinner can be classified if scarred by a scandal. *Presidential Saints and Sinners* had some of the most meaning people in the United States. The “ original G” George Washington, father of the United States was listed first. “ I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain the character of an honest man. (Bailey 1981)” This is a famous quote said by George Washington that explains his character. George Washington is the type which appeals to all. One of these reasons is his contribution in commanding the American Army in the War of Independence. When the office of the presidency was being created by the framers he was thought of

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first which can tell readers of the type of man he is. Although, there were two scandals that surfaced during Washington's presidency involving cabinet members Randolph and Hamilton he is still an honest man. People respected Washington for his honesty so he is definitely a Saint in the eyes of citizens of the United States. A president that stands out in the history of the United States is Richard Nixon. The entire nation knows about the Watergate scandals. The facts seem to be clear but the details are sketchy. Is Nixon to blame or does the blame go on his administration? This is a hovering question that been with the United States for decades and now is the time for it to be addressed. Nixon is categorized as a Sinner according to Thomas Bailey but this judgment may be put to question.

Background on Watergate:

When Nixon was running for re-election during the year of 1972 five men were arrested at 2: 30 am for breaking into the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate hotel. The authorities had seized a walkie-talkie, 40 rolls of unexposed film, two 35 millimeters cameras, lock picks, pen size tear-gas guns, and bugging devices (Bernstein 1974). The five men that were taken in custody were attempting to bug the phone and steal classified information. When the men were taken in custody they took an oath of silence and one of them claimed they had CIA ties. The problem with the break-in was that " There was no immediate explanation as to why the five suspects would want to bug the Democratic National Committee offices, or whether or not they were working for any other individuals or organizations (Bernstein 1974)." A man named Bob Woodward made a great contribution towards revealing the case. Woodward, being a reporter

examined the case thoroughly. He found the name and phone number of Howard Hunt which is a white house consultant in the address book of two of the burglars. They were hired by the CRP which is the Committee for the re-election of the President. After they were charged, Congress decided to get to the bottom of the case and catch the big fish. The fact that a check from the CRP was found in the bank account of one of the burglars raised eyebrows and drew questions. The origins of this money have to be recovered and it must be answered for.

Why was Watergate the most talked about and important scandal?

President Nixon's Watergate scandal wasn't the first or last of presidential scandals but it had the most impact on our nation. The major cover up of the scandal is what really stood out. This corruption is bigger than just Nixon. This corruption is centered on the abuse of power and how Richard Nixon tried to be dominant over Congress. The evidence that had been piled up by authorities didn't put Nixon in a good place. The connection between the burglars and members of Nixon's administration was major. The evidence spoke to the United States and said that these men were paid by the Nixon administration for breaking into the Watergate hotel. Numerous white house officials were forced to resign or even serve time in prison because of their involvement in the Watergate scandal. The scandal eventually led to the resignation of President Nixon on August 9, 1974, which is the only resignation of a U. S. President (Bailey 1981). The scandal also resulted in the conviction and incarceration of many of Nixon's top administration officials.

Who was involved?

The five men were Bernard Barker, Virgilio R. Gonzalez, Eugenio R. Martinez, James W. McCord, Jr, Frank A. Sturgis who were charged with burglary and attempted interception of telephone (Bernstein 1974). Other than the 5 men arrested for the break-in many people of Nixon's administration was involved. The linking force in the scandal was Howard Hunt, white house consultant, his name was found within one of the guy's arrested possession. Howard Hunt's name and phone number was found in the pocket of two of the men. President Nixon became involved when he tried to cover it up. A check for 25, 000 dollars from Nixon re-election committee was found in the bank account of one of the burglars. Someone that is responsible for revealing this scandal and it the people involved is referred to as " Deep Throat". Who is this man? This is the man that blew that whistle on the scandal but he is still an invisible man who gets silent recognition for his deed. The question that Woodward and Bernstein answers move to answer is where this money came from. Woodward and Bernstein discovered that these men were connected to the CRP (Bernstein 1974). Additionally money brought in from the campaign was used to support the burglar's travel costs. On March 1, a prosecutor charged seven of Nixon's former aides on various charges related to the Watergate. It was an abuse of presidential power and an obstruction of justice. Some of Nixon's administration, including White House counsel John Dean, testified before a grand jury about the president's crimes. People also testified that Nixon had secretly taped every conversation that took place in the Oval Office. In July, the Supreme Court ordered Nixon to turn over the tapes. Nixon's case had been looked at

members of Congress. Members wanted to impeach Richard Nixon for obstruction of justice, criminal cover up and several other offenses. Before being impeached Nixon resigned which was a great decision but made him look guilty. Throughout his presidency, Nixon denied his involvement in the Watergate scandal and he claimed he was such an innocent man. The fact that he was re-elected was also a surprise, it shows that the nation believes in him and had faith that he was innocent. When all of the details of the case began to reveal, Nixon moved to resign before being impeached.

III: Research Statement

Presidential scandals can have a major effect on our nation. The president has to be the role model for citizens so he must lead by example. The Watergate scandal involving President Nixon and his administration is one that the United States would never forget. A scandal can make a nation seem weak and make it as there is no trust. Presidents try to expand their power and become dominant over society (Woodward and Bernstein 2005). By being corrupt a president only look forward in their own interest and not society like they've took the oath.

The line of corruption of the Watergate scandal is longer than the Mississippi river. This scandal left the United States shocked and looking for answers. The effect of the scandal was tremendous and was the topic of discussion for years. How did the Watergate scandal affect the United States? The effect that scandals have on a nation changes the nation forever. A presidential scandal is an attempt for a president to be dominant not just over citizens but also over congress (Woodward and Bernstein 2005). The thing that presidents fail to realize is that we live in a democracy not a monarchy so <https://assignbuster.com/the-abuse-of-presidential-power/>

the dominance will not be tolerated. In what ways did President Richard Nixon try to expand his power and become dominant?

The dominance of presidential power has to be recognized so our society won't become anarchy. The affected of presidential power abused has to be examined closely. Nixon's abuse of presidential power had a negative effect on American political life which created an atmosphere of distrust. The nation was just getting over the war and this scandal offered more disdain. The significance in this Watergate scandal comes from the great deal of high ranking officials involved. This scandal made it seem as if the entire white house was corrupted (Bernstein 1974). This was the first time in our nation where this amount of officials was involved in such a scandal led by Richard Nixon.

IV: Research Findings

The person responsible for blowing the whistle on the Watergate just started to come forward a few years ago. Apparently this person has been hidden for 33 years and just decided to come forward with information on the scandal (Woodward and Bernstein 2005). The person is referred to as "Deep Throat". According to "The Secret Man" Nixon's White House had some huge political pressures. It was referred to as corrupt and sinister. These are some quite vivid words to describe this administration that some are agreeing with. The trace of many during the Nixon era is very important to the Watergate scandal. Money from the campaign funds were used to pay the burglars. People knew that Nixon was too smart to be involved directly but they knew he was the big fish behind it all but it had to be proven. Many people were in the CREEP and they committed many criminal offenses other

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the Watergate scandal. “ They were bugging, following people around, canceling campaign rallies, investigating workers’ private lives, planting spies, stealing documents and planting provocateurs.” These acts were looked into by the FBI.

The FBI established that the bugging had come from a massive campaign of political spying and sabotage on behalf of Nixon’s administration. These acts came were aimed at all the major democratic contenders who was in competition with Nixon and this was a common basic strategy of Nixon’s re-election efforts. A man named Herman Kalmbach, had paid about 35, 000 of the campaign money to finance his spying and sabotage campaign. There were even reports that Nixon personally threatened Dean himself. The money spent to pay off Howard Hunt, Liddy, and the five burglars totaled up to about 1 million dollars (Woodward and Bernstein 2005). Most of the informants and sources were low level people who really didn’t have a major role in the scandal. The people were just involved in small conspiracies in the Watergate scandal. Whether not the people had a major role or a minor role they were still involved in the scandal. Whether they knew about it or claimed they didn’t. Nixon administration knew of the scandal and most of them had involvement. Even Nixon’s treasurer resigned when pressured by authorities. The “ Deep Throat” is referred to as a ghost. People say it’s like he doesn’t even exist. “ Deep Throat is not even human.” Deep Throat had appeared out of thin air and disappeared just as he came. This man or woman still lives among our society but no one knows who it is. It was a smart idea the Deep Throat informant didn’t come forward. If the informant would have came forward then he would’ve probably been paid off or even

killed. No good deed goes unnoticed. The efforts of Deep Throat and Frank Wills, security guard at the Watergate hotel, helped convict the people responsible. Frank Wills noticed the door had been taped twice and he called the authorities. He was recognized for his good deed and honored with rewards. Frank later died of a brain tumor. Many people speculated who they thought the Deep Throat source could've been but his identity had been protected for many years. This person may have been honored in society for his efforts or he might have been looked down upon. The fact that Nixon resigned was also significant. Richard Nixon stood by his nation and promised that he was not involved. Nixon said that he was an honest man but let down his nation. Everyone looked up to Nixon as a leader but he failed to deliver. This scandal was indeed a major event that changed a lot in the nation of the United States.

The years after the Watergate scandal were some crucial years. These are the years in which our nation was affected a great deal. There is a reoccurring question among the people of the United States. How did the Watergate scandal affect the United States? After the Watergate scandal there were new laws enforced against presidential power. Congress enforced to laws to make the president remain lower than them. The Watergate scandal also hurt the image of the United States. The scandal made the nation look weak (Bernstein 1974). The way the people had view the United States was different. All of the trust that the people had invested into politics had been tarnished. The trust of these people had to be won back. The only way to get this trust back was to develop new laws so things like this

wouldn't happen again. The integrity of the nation was at risk during this time.

Also, this was a time when the nation was recovering from the war. This scandal created more distrust and disheartened the nation. People didn't know who to trust and where to turn. New reforms were also brought about (Woodward and Bernstein 2005). These new reforms were aimed at rebuilding the nation of the United States.

Congress is no able to look deeper in the bank accounts of officials (Woodward and Bernstein 2005). They are also able to monitor political funding more closely. These new changes to the laws are a contribution to the nation of the United States. These are changes that tend to rebuild the United States and bring the nation out of the scum that it's in. The effect of Watergate is major and has constructed the United States in a good way rather than a bad way. The fact that the nation is much stronger than it used to be is a major advantage and it's going to stay that way.

This was a case in which the president tried to be dominant above Congress (Woodward and Bernstein 2005). This example was the first in the United States. People in the United States wonder why this case is so talked about and it's because it illustrates the abuse of presidential power.

In what ways did President Richard Nixon try to expand his power and become dominant? President Nixon administration was involved directly and this was a first time when members of the cabinet had been involved in such a scandal so talked about. This case showed that no one is above the law not even the president (Woodward and Bernstein 2005). The refusal of

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dominance in the United States is an important concept that has to be examined closely.

Members of the white house of Nixon administration viewed the democrats as a threat so they wanted to keep an open eye on their every move. This method is still used in politics today. Individuals tend to keep their enemies close. There was power dominant enough to protect Nixon and his administration from impeachment. Congress wanted to make an example and show that no power or executive privilege can go before the law (Woodward and Bernstein 2005). Executive privilege can only go so far in society. There is a thin line in politics of being discrete and being corrupt. The administration went about things the wrong way. The fact that they knew how they were to act and what was expected out of them is also an important concept. Presidential power should and could not be abused. The Watergate scandal was a bad thing but it taught the United States new things. The nation learned from its mistake and the abuse of presidential power in scandal is decreasing drastically.

V: References

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