



# The Government In Congress' Hands

Joseph Alsop

**T**HE NEWLY fashionable American liberal doctrine is that the powers of the presidency must be reduced, and the main task of government should be left to Congress.

At this fairly ghastly juncture in the Republic's affairs, moreover, the newly fashionable doctrine has already had a good test. For close to a year, President Nixon has had little time left over to think of anything but his own defense against the drive for his impeachment.

In the Congress, meanwhile, large Democratic majorities have controlled both the House and Senate. Hence the presidency's wicked hand should not have been able to obstruct really constructive action by the senators and representatives. If Congress were capable of handling the reins of government, Congress should have been handling them.

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**S**O WHAT has happened? In one area of public business, and only one, we have seen remarkable feats. The really hair-raising challenges of the Yom Kippur War were met with great courage and wisdom. The aftermath has been handled with extreme brilliance, to the point of promising a healthy transformation in the affairs of the strategically vital Middle East.

It is wholly unjust, moreover, as the Secretary of State has endlessly pointed out, to say that "All that was done by Henry Kissinger." The Presidency ought to get the credit.

In all other areas of public business, meanwhile, the situation has gone steadily

from bad to worse. Despite the profound national danger inherent in the long term energy problem, we have no serious energy policy. Instead, Congress has mainly busied itself making the development of a serious energy policy all but impossible.

Despite the profound national danger inherent in the current inflation, nothing very serious is getting done to halt inflation. Instead, Congress has just yielded to hard pressure from old George Meany, and has struck down the most elementary stand-by wage and price controls.

One could go on in this manner for several more paragraphs. To balance the enormous sins of omission, moreover, we have things that will console no one if the half-expected serious depression gets us in its grips, or if the present horrifying rate of inflation goes on rising without check.

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**T**HIS DOES NOT mean that any individual on Capitol Hill is at fault. It means that the Congress of the United States is unfitted to handle the reins of a one-hoss shay, much less the reins of government.

On great matters like energy policy, and inflation control, and the fate of the dollar, and the stagnation of the economy, Congress is in fact incapable of taking serious initiatives, as it is equally incapable of dealing independently with great problems of foreign policy. Ours is a presidential government and it always has been. The role of Congress is to amend, and dissent, and resist, and applaud, and prod, as, the case may require.