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New Demo Challenge to Nixon Power

Washington

The Senate Democratic Policy Committee, in a challenge to President Nixon's authority, announced yesterday that it will try to limit the administration's use of "executive privilege" in avoiding the giving of testimony to Senate committees.

The 14-member Democratic policy group tentatively approved a resolution that would require White House aides and cabinet members to "appear and answer all questions" unless Senate committees formally consented to written pleas from the President to excuse the officials from testifying.

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The policy committee resolution was expected to be approved, and perhaps strengthened, by the full Democratic membership of the Senate when its 57 members hold a caucus tomorrow.

The resolution is aimed at forcing key White House officials, such as Henry A. Kissinger, the assistant to the President for national security affairs, and John D. Ehrlichman, Mr. Nixon's chief advisor on domestic matters, to make themselves available to Senate

committee.

Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, the Senate Democratic leader, said that the language of the resolution was still being worked out but that it could include procedures for citing unwilling witnesses for contempt of Congress.

The unanimous decision of the policy committee to take the resolution before the party caucus was only one of several moves by the Democrats yesterday to confront the Republican administration.

Mansfield announced that he was sending letters to several public and "quasi-public" agencies — including the committee for the Re-Election of the President — instructing them that all pertinent documents should be "retained and recovered" for study by a Senate committee investigating the Watergate bugging incident.

The letters suggested that the Democrats were determined to make sure that they would have access to Republican documents bearing on alleged espionage and sabotage of Democratic candidates in the 1972 presidential campaign.

Mansfield said, however, that he did not have the "slightest idea" whether there had been any attempts to destroy pertinent documents.

The Democratic leader said that Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. of North Carolina will conduct the Watergate investigation.

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