

# Congress' First Investigation: General St. Clair's Defeat

For use with the Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy's [Oversight Snapshots](#).

## Comprehension Questions

1) What issue led to Congress' first investigation and when was it held?

*In 1792, Congress investigated the significant military defeat of the US military led by General Arthur St. Clair. His troops were under-prepared and lacked resources which led to a massive loss of life and territory.*

2) Who came into conflict at the Wabash River?

*The US military and additional militia (temporary soldiers) came into conflict with Native American forces representing the Shawnee, Miami, and Delaware tribes.*

3) What debate was sparked by Representative Giles Resolution in 1792?

*Representative Giles wanted President George Washington to investigate the cause of the military losses but there was nothing in the Constitution about the President being able to do this task. Congress was unsure if it was legal to request or conduct this investigation, which led to debate within the representatives.*

4) What effects or impacts did this investigation have?

*Immediately, Quartermaster General Hodgson was removed from his position and held accountable for mismanagement. There were also changes made to US military training and logistics. In addition, this investigation set the precedent for Congress to be able to investigate wrong doing or crises when it needed to.*

## Discussion Questions

1. How did the inquiry into General St. Clair's defeat change the relationship between the President and Congress? Between Congress and the military?

2. How is a congressional investigation an example of a check and balance within our federal government? Do you think our Congress still has this power today?

3. Why is it important that the report from this inquiry was made public? What could happen if a document like this is not public?

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