THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'S

PRESIDENTIAL CABINET

Crisis Committee

HANDBOOK

George W. Bush Cabinet

(2001-2009)

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INDEX

Welcoming Letter **3**
Introduction of the Committee **4**
The 15 heads of the executive departments are: **4**
Secretary of State - Colin Powel 4
Portfolio Powers: 4
Key Resources: 5
Secretary of the Treasury - Paul O'Neill 5
Portfolio Powers: 5
Key Resources: 6
Secretary of Defense - Donald Rumsfeld 6
Portfolio Powers: 6
Key Resources: 7
Attorney General - John Ashcroft 7
Portfolio Powers: 7
Key Resources: 7
Secretary of the Interior - Gale Norton 8
Portfolio Powers: 8
Key Resources: 8
Secretary of Agriculture - Ann Veneman 8
Portfolio Powers: 8
Key Resources: 9
Secretary of Commerce - Donald Evans 9
Portfolio Powers: 9
Key Resources: 9
Secretary of Labor - Elaine Chao 10
Portfolio Powers: 10
Key Resources: 10
Secretary of Health and Human Services - Tommy Thompson 10
Portfolio Powers: 10
Key Resources: 11
Secretary of Education - Rod Paige 11
Portfolio Powers: 11
Key Resources: 12
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development - Mel Martinez 12
Portfolio Powers: 12
Key Resources: 12
Secretary of Transportation - Norman Mineta 12
Portfolio Powers: 13
Key Resources: 13

Secretary of Veteran Affairs - Anthony Principi 13
Portfolio Powers: 13
Key Resources: 14
Secretary of Energy - Spencer Abraham 14
Portfolio Powers: 14
Key Resources: 14
National Security Advisor (NSA) - Condoleezza Rice 15
Portfolio Powers: 15
Key Resources: 15
Director of the CIA - George Tenet 16
Portfolio Powers: 16
Key Resources: 16
Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation - Robert Mueller 17
Portfolio Powers: 17
Key Resources: 17
References: **18**

Welcoming Letter

Dear Secretaries,

It is a true honor for us to cordially welcome you to the United States of America's Presidential Cabinet committee of the thirty-third edition of Mexico Model United Nations (MEXMUN 2025). We are excited to have your participation in this high-impact cabinet, where skills in strategy, critical thinking, negotiation, and leadership under pressure will be put into play.

Throughout the model, you will represent key members of the U.S. presidential cabinet, facing simultaneous crises that will jeopardize national and international stability. Every word you say, every action you take, will have real-time consequences. Remember that this committee operates under a crisis dynamic; there are no rigid rules of procedure, but order, clarity, teamwork, and the correct use of cabinet protocol are expected. Prior preparation, knowledge of the assigned person and their role within the government will be essential.

We recommend that you thoroughly research U.S. foreign policy, its internal security structure, and the Cabinet's public and private positions in similar contexts. Our commitment is to create an intense, fun, and challenging experience. Don't hesitate to contact us with any logistical or conceptual questions. We are here to accompany you on this diplomatic and strategic journey.

Sincerely,

Dulce Brenda Rivas Salinas, Crisis Director

Lorena Marquina Riquelme, Crisis Analyst

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xxx, Crisis Operator

Introduction of the Committee

The President's Cabinet serves as the primary advisory body of the President. It comprises 15 executive department heads, who lead various federal agencies providing guidance on matters within their subjects. Collectively, these members offer counsel on a broad spectrum of issues, ensuring that the President is well-informed and supported in the agenda (The White house, 2017).

It plays a crucial role as a key pillar of the United States government, with the involvement of its most prominent leaders. Moreover, this cabinet is responsible for proposing initiatives, debating significant matters, and making decisions that contribute to ensuring a secure future for the country. It does so by adhering to legal principles and upholding peace among allied nations. Additionally, when addressing crises, it must negotiate agreements and treaties to provide swift responses to both current and future challenges facing the United States.

The 17 heads of the executive departments are:

Secretary of State - Colin Powel

This position is responsible for carrying out the President's foreign policies through the State Department and the Foreign Service of the United States. This secretary is also in charge of advising the President on appointments with ambassadors, ministers, consuls, and other diplomatic representatives (US Department of State, n. d.).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Mobilization of International Support:** Led immediate and sustained diplomatic efforts to obtain global condemnation of the attacks and to build a broad international coalition against terrorism.
- **Communication with Allies:** Reassured U.S. allies of the nation's resolve, coordinated intelligence sharing, and sought commitments for joint actions.

- **Consular Crisis Management:** Ensured the safety and protection of U.S. citizens abroad, and facilitated their return if necessary, especially from regions with heightened security concerns.
- **International Legal Frameworks:** Worked on developing international legal responses to terrorism and ensuring U.S. actions were framed within international law to maintain legitimacy.

Key Resources:

- ❖ Extensive network of embassies and consulates worldwide, providing a global reach.
- ❖ A professional and experienced diplomatic corps capable of rapid engagement.
- ❖ Authority to negotiate and sign international agreements and treaties.
- ❖ Personal relationships and credibility with foreign leaders and international organizations.

Secretary of the Treasury - Paul O'Neill

It's in charge of formulating and recommending domestic and international financial, economic, and tax policy through the Department of Treasury. It serves as a financial agent for the U.S. government in manufacturing coins and currency (US Department of Treasury, n.d.).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Financial Stability:** Worked immediately to stabilize financial markets (orchestrating the closure and subsequent reopening of stock exchanges) and prevent a broader economic collapse or panic.
- **Counter-Terrorism Financing:** Led efforts to track, freeze, and seize the financial assets of terrorist organizations and their supporters globally, in collaboration with international partners.
- **Economic Impact Assessment:** Evaluated the immediate and long-term economic impact of the attacks on various sectors and developed fiscal responses to mitigate the damage.

- **Collaboration with the Private Sector:** Coordinated with banks and other financial institutions to ensure the continuity of critical financial operations and to identify suspicious transactions that might be linked to terrorism.

Key Resources:

- ❖ Control over the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN).
- ❖ Access to vast financial and banking information, both domestic and international.
- ❖ Ability to issue financial sanctions and influence international financial regulations and frameworks.
- ❖ Strong relationships with the Federal Reserve, global financial markets, and key financial institutions.

Secretary of Defense - Donald Rumsfeld

Serves as the primary advisor to the President on defense policy and is responsible for developing overall defense strategies and policies related to the Department of Defense. All the army's departments are under the order of the DOD (U.S Department of Defense, n.d).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Immediate Military Response:** Authorized the deployment of military assets to defend U.S. airspace, scrambled fighter jets, and put military forces on high alert globally
- **Operations Planning:** Initiated the rapid planning and execution of military operations against the perpetrators and their state sponsors
- **Protection of Military Assets:** Secured military bases and personnel in the U.S. and globally, implementing increased force protection measures.
- **Military Intelligence:** Utilized military intelligence to identify threats, assess capabilities of adversaries, and inform operational planning.

Key Resources:

- ❖ The full strength of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, with their global reach, personnel, and advanced weaponry.
- ❖ Operational military chain of command and highly secure global communication systems.
- ❖ Vast intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities dedicated to military objectives.
- ❖ Massive military budget for rapid mobilization and sustained operations.

Attorney General - John Ashcroft

The head of the Department of Justice is in charge of the representation of the United States in legal matters and enforcement of federal laws. Furthermore, advises the president and the other members of the cabinet about legal concerns (U.S Department of Justice, n.d).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Overall Legal Guidance:** Provided legal counsel to the President and the entire Executive Branch regarding the scope of government powers during a national emergency, including the legal basis for domestic and international actions.
- **Coordination of Federal Law Enforcement:** Directed and coordinated the activities of all federal law enforcement agencies under the DOJ to ensure a cohesive response.
- **Legislative Initiatives:** Championed and worked with Congress on new legislative initiatives designed to enhance the government's ability to combat terrorism.
- **Judicial Oversight:** Engaged with the judiciary to ensure that legal actions (like warrants, detentions) were carried out swiftly and effectively while adhering to legal standards.

Key Resources:

- ❖ The entire Department of Justice, including its vast legal expertise and resources.
- ❖ Authority over U.S. Attorneys' Offices nationwide.
- ❖ Ability to issue legal opinions and directives to federal agencies.

Secretary of the Interior - Gale Norton

It is in charge of the national natural resources and domestic affairs through the U.S Department of the Interior. Its main job is to promote thoughtful planning that promotes development and conservation of United States' resources (U.S Department of the Interior, n.d).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Security of Federal Lands:** Ensured the security of national parks, monuments, and other federal properties from potential threats.
- **Natural Resource Management:** Managed natural resources that might be affected by or needed for crisis response.
- **Tribal Nation Coordination:** Coordinated with Native American tribes on security and assistance efforts if their lands or communities were impacted.

Key Resources:

- ❖ National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management.
- ❖ Expertise in natural resource management and environmental protection.

Secretary of Agriculture - Ann Veneman

Responsible for overseeing the nation's agricultural policies and ensuring the stability of the food supply and rural development.Additionally, the Secretary works to support farmers, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and regulate agricultural trade (USDA, n.d).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Food Supply Chain Security:** Ensured the security and integrity of the national food supply chain against potential disruption or attack.
- **Biosecurity:** Worked to prevent and respond to potential biological threats to crops, livestock, and the food supply.

- **Rural Assistance:** Provided assistance to rural communities and agricultural producers affected by a crisis.

Key Resources:

- ❖ Oversight of national agricultural programs and food safety regulations.
- ❖ Expertise in animal and plant health.
- ❖ Data on food production and reserves.

Secretary of Commerce - Donald Evans

Its focus is to search for an improvement for economic growth for all the citizens. Strives to increase job opportunities, competitiveness and enhance industry (U.S Department of Commerce, n.d).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Economic Monitoring:** Monitored the immediate and long-term impact of the attacks on various economic sectors and trade.
- **Business Continuity:** Worked to support business continuity and recovery efforts for affected industries and small businesses.
- **Data and Analysis:** Provided critical economic data and analysis to inform policy decisions during the crisis.
- **Trade Relations:** Managed international trade relations, ensuring minimal disruption to critical imports and exports.

Key Resources:

- ❖ Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and U.S. Census Bureau for economic data.
- ❖ National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for technical standards and infrastructure.
- ❖ Relationships with major industries and business organizations.

Secretary of Labor - Elaine Chao

The duty of the head of the U.S Department of Labor is to support, enhance, and advance the well-being of U.S: workers, job seekers, and retirees to create better working conditions (U.S Department of Labor, n.d).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Workplace Safety and Health:** Ensured the safety and health of rescue and recovery workers at disaster sites.
- **Unemployment Benefits:** Coordinated federal support for emergency unemployment benefits for those who lost jobs due to the attacks.
- **Labor Relations Stability:** Worked to maintain stability in labor relations and prevent disputes that could hinder recovery efforts.

Key Resources:

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
- Workforce development and training programs.

Secretary of Health and Human Services - Tommy Thompson

The Secretary of Health and Human Services is a member of the President's cabinet who oversees the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This department works to safeguard the health of all Americans and deliver essential human services, with a focus on assisting those most in need (U.S Department of Health and Human Services, n.d).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Emergency Medical Response:** Coordinated the public health response, including the deployment of medical personnel, emergency supplies, and care for the injured and affected populations.
- **Medical Disaster Management:** Prepared for and responded to potential secondary public health threats, such as biological or chemical attacks, or the spread of communicable diseases.

- **Mental Health:** Addressed the significant psychological impact of the attacks on the population, first responders, and survivors, providing counseling and support resources.
- **Coordination with States and Locals:** Supported state and local health departments in their immediate and long-term response efforts, providing federal resources and guidance.

Key Resources:

- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, providing expertise in epidemiology and disease control.
- ❖ National Institutes of Health (NIH), for research and medical resources.
- ❖ Federal Emergency Management Agency, a key partner in disaster response logistics.
- ❖ Ability to mobilize extensive medical personnel, equipment, and pharmaceutical resources nationwide.

Secretary of Education - Rod Paige

The Secretary of Education is responsible for leading national education policy, ensuring federal laws are effectively implemented. It works with states to improve student achievement, and promotes equal access to quality education for all. Also includes shaping higher education policy, overseeing federal grants, and advising the President on education issues. (*Margaret Spellings, Secretary of Education*, 2006)

Portfolio Powers:

- **Support for Schools and Students:** Coordinated federal support for schools and students directly affected by the attacks, including mental health resources and continuity of education plans.
- **Dissemination of Information:** Potentially served as a channel for disseminating calming messages and guidance to the educational community nationwide.
- **Youth Programs:** Supported youth programs and initiatives aimed at fostering resilience and community spirit in the aftermath of the tragedy.

Key Resources:

- ❖ Federal education funding and programs.
- ❖ Network of state and local education agencies.

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development - Mel Martinez

The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) oversees federal housing programs that allow citizens to have affordable housing and access to homeownership, enforces fair housing laws, manages public housing, combats homelessness through federal programs, and supports community development (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, n.d).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Emergency Housing Assistance:** Coordinated efforts to provide immediate and long-term housing assistance for populations displaced by attacks, particularly in urban centers like New York City.
- **Urban Recovery and Rebuilding:** Supported federal funding and programs for the recovery and rebuilding of affected urban areas.
- **Community Support:** Provided resources for community and neighborhood recovery, addressing the social impact of a crisis on urban populations.

Key Resources:

- ❖ Access to federal housing programs and disaster relief funds.
- ❖ Coordination with local housing authorities and community organizations.

Secretary of Transportation - Norman Mineta

The Secretary of Transportation functions include supervising, regulating, and ensuring the safety of national transportation systems, air, and public transportation. It manages federal highway funding and infrastructure projects, develops policies to improve transportation efficiency and accessibility (U.S Department of Transportation, n.d).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Airspace Closure:** Issued the unprecedented and immediate order to ground all civilian aircraft in U.S. airspace, a monumental logistical challenge.
- **Transportation Security:** Implemented immediate new security measures at airports, train stations, and other modes of transport to prevent any further attacks.
- **Restoration of Mobility:** Worked to safely and efficiently restore the transportation system across the country once the initial crisis was contained.
- **Management of Transportation Infrastructure:** Ensured the integrity of critical transportation infrastructure, including bridges, tunnels, and highways, for emergency response and recovery.

Key Resources:

- ❖ Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), responsible for air traffic control and aviation safety.
- ❖ Transportation Security Administration.
- ❖ U.S. Coast Guard, responsible for maritime security.
- ❖ Control over federal airports, railways, and highways, enabling rapid decision-making on their status.

Secretary of Veteran Affairs - Anthony Principi

The Secretary of Veteran Affairs is responsible for providing vital services to America's veterans and their families. Thai includes overseeing a nationwide system of healthcare facilities, administering benefits like education and disability compensation, and managing national cemeteries. The Secretary serves as the chief advocate for veterans within the federal government, ensuring they receive care, support, and recognition they have earned through their service. (*James B. Peake - Secretary of Veterans Affairs*, 2007)

Portfolio Powers:

- **Veteran Care Expansion:** Prepared for an anticipated increase in the need for medical care, mental health services, and other benefits for veterans.

- **Support to Military Families:** Provided support to military families affected by deployments or casualties related to the response.
- **Benefits Management:** Ensured efficient processing of benefits for service members and their families impacted by a crisis.

Key Resources:

- ❖ Nationwide network of VA hospitals, clinics, and benefits offices.
- ❖ Programs for healthcare, disability, education, and housing for veterans.

Secretary of Energy - Spencer Abraham

The Secretary of Energy oversees the nation's energy policies and programs, managing the Department of Energy's efforts to ensure reliable, affordable, and clean energy. This includes advancing energy technology, promoting energy security, managing the national nuclear weapons program, and supporting scientific research. The Secretary leads initiatives to balance energy production, environmental protection, and innovation to meet the country's current and future energy needs. (*Samuel W. Bodman, Secretary of Energy*, 2006).

Portfolio Powers:

- **Energy Infrastructure Security:** Ensured the physical and cyber security of critical energy infrastructure, including power grids, oil and gas pipelines, and nuclear facilities.
- **Energy Supply Stability:** Monitored and managed the stability of the nation's energy supply, preventing disruptions and addressing potential shortages.
- **Nuclear Material Security:** Ensured the security of nuclear materials and technology, especially in the context of counter-terrorism.
- **Strategic Petroleum Reserve:** Managed the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to ensure adequate energy reserves in case of prolonged disruptions.

Key Resources:

- ❖ Oversight of the national energy infrastructure and regulatory frameworks.

- ❖ Access to intelligence regarding threats to energy systems.
- ❖ Management of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

National Security Advisor (NSA) - Condoleezza Rice

Provides crucial, strategic advice to a head of state on matters of national security. This role involves managing the flow of information to the leader, coordinating national security policy across different government agencies, and offering counsel on both domestic and international security threats and opportunities. (Notre Dame International Security Center, 2022)

Portfolio Powers:

- **Integrating Intelligence and Action:** Synthesized intelligence information from multiple sources (including CIA, FBI, NSA) and coordinated it with the Departments of Defense, State, and Justice to form a coherent, actionable understanding of the threat.
- **Development of Response Strategies:** Helped formulate the U.S.'s strategic response to the attacks, encompassing immediate defensive measures, law enforcement actions, and long-term counter-terrorism policy.
- **Interagency Security Coordination:** Chaired the National Security Council (NSC) meetings, ensuring all relevant agencies were on the same page, coordinating their efforts effectively, and translating high-level policy into actionable plans.
- **Communication with Foreign Leaders (in coordination with Secretary of State):** Contributed to the formulation of messages to allies and partners, explaining the U.S. response and seeking international cooperation and intelligence sharing.

Key Resources:

- ❖ Direct access to the President and Vice President.
- ❖ Leadership of the National Security Council staff, with dedicated analysts and experts across various fields.
- ❖ Direct lines of communication with the leaders of all intelligence agencies and defense establishments.
- ❖ Ability to convene and direct NSC meetings, forcing interagency collaboration.

Director of the CIA - George Tenet

Coordinating intelligence activities across the U.S. Intelligence Community and advising the President on national security intelligence matters. Also served as the head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). (*Director Of The CIA - CIA*, s. f.)

Portfolio Powers:

- **Global Intelligence Gathering & Analysis:** Directed analysis, and dissemination of intelligence regarding the global networks, motives, capabilities, and future attack plans in a crisis.
- **Briefing the President:** Provided daily and real-time intelligence briefings to the President and National Security Council on evolving threats, global developments, and assessments of hostile actors.
- **Covert Operations:** Authorized and directed covert operations aimed at disrupting terrorist networks abroad, gathering human intelligence, and eliminating high-value targets as directed by the President.
- **Interagency Intelligence Coordination:** Coordinated intelligence efforts across all U.S. intelligence agencies (NSA, DIA, NRO) to ensure a unified and comprehensive picture of the threat.

Key Resources:

- ❖ The vast global network and clandestine capabilities of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).[4]
- ❖ Access to highly classified intelligence sources, methods, and information from across the entire intelligence community.
- ❖ Authority to conduct covert actions as directed by the President, with significant operational flexibility.
- ❖ Direct lines of communication with other intelligence agency heads and national security leadership.

Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation - Robert Mueller

The FBI, or Federal Bureau of Investigation, serves as the primary domestic intelligence and security service for the United States, and also acts as its principal federal law enforcement agency. (*DOJ: JMD: MPS: Functions Manual: Federal Bureau Of Investigation*, s. f.)

Portfolio Powers:

- **Lead Domestic Investigation:** Directed the immediate and massive federal investigation on U.S. soil, leading efforts to identify the hijackers, their accomplices, and any broader domestic terror networks.
- **Counterterrorism Intelligence:** Transformed the FBI into a primary intelligence-gathering agency focused on preventing terrorist attacks within the U.S., including directing intelligence collection and analysis.
- **Law Enforcement Action:** Oversaw federal law enforcement actions, including arrests, detentions, and searches, to disrupt terrorist activities and bring perpetrators to justice.
- **Coordination with the Intelligence Community:** Served as the critical link between domestic law enforcement and the broader U.S. Intelligence Community (CIA, NSA), ensuring intelligence sharing and coordinated efforts.

Key Resources:

- ❖ The nationwide network of FBI field offices and agents.
- ❖ Vast investigative powers, including surveillance, arrests, and evidence collection.
- ❖ Dedicated counterterrorism units and intelligence analysts.
- ❖ Strong working relationships with the Department of Justice and local law enforcement agencies.

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