Ontario Model
United Nations II

LBJ 1963

Committee Summary

The year is 1963. President John F. Kennedy has been assassinated, and America is in grief and shock over the loss of perhaps their greatest leader in a century. The task of Kennedy's successor, former Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson, is not an easy one. He must carry on President Kennedy's legacy while navigating some of the most turbulent times in American history.

The first item on his desk is Civil Rights, where he must attempt to carry forward President Kennedy's efforts while attempting to manage the southern backlash that would inevitably engulf the country upon a civil rights bill's passage. Johnson must deal with a hostile congress that features an incredibly powerful Southern coalition, one that repeatedly was successful in blocking President Kennedy's actions on Civil Rights. It is a good thing then, that Johnson is one of that coalition's own, as one of its great figures during his tenure in the Senate. It is also helpful that Lyndon B. Johnson is one of the greatest legislative minds the country has ever seen. But, as Johnson knows so well, the South will not go down without a fight – in congress, or on the streets.

In addition to the problems at home, abroad the Cold War rages. Its newest front seems to be in Vietnam, where a communist insurgency is gathering strength in the north of the country. It is widely believed among American leaders, including the President, that allowing Vietnam to fall into Communist hands would be the first in a series of dominoes that could lead to a Communist dominated Asia. If you do not intervene here, there may be no stopping the communists' momentum.

Lyndon B. Johnson's Presidential Cabinet has no shortage of problems to deal with. As members of his cabinet, you will be advising the President on the best course of action for him to take. He will, to the best of his abilities, follow the committee's advice. Of course, if you would like to take action independently, the choice is yours. Punishment will follow mistakes. Delegates, it is your job to manage great crises both at home and abroad. World peace and domestic stability are at stake. Good luck – you'll need it.

Powers, Positions, and Portfolios

As you may know, the committee that you will be a part of never formally existed in history, with its closest replica perhaps being President Johnson's famous "Tuesday Lunches". As such, you will have powers also unprecedented in any formal body's history. Essentially, you will be tasked with writing directives that will in turn be signed by as Executive Orders by the President of the United States, or alternatively carried out under the various portfolios of members of this committee.

With regards to those portfolios, you can essentially assume the same powers as your character held in real life. This may mean leadership of a department, contact with business or political contacts in the outside world, and of course control of the various resources at your disposal. These are all important when considering joint directives to pass as a committee, but are perhaps more important when considering personal crisis directives. These private directives are actions taken in secret by any number of delegates, who use their portfolio to affect events in the outside world, and generally do so without informing the committee or the American people (unless they wish to,

or if severe consequences follow their actions). Delegates are encouraged to use these private directives to further the objectives of President Johnson's government, and for any other purposes they wish.

While some of the assignments in this committee have portfolio powers directly concerning the topics in this guide, others do not. However, there are several other events taking place during Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency, such as the Great Society legislative initiatives, that delegates are encouraged to consider in preparation for committee. If their portfolio does not particularly concern the topics in this guide, they can still take action on topics more relevant to their portfolio in committee through private (and public) directives.

Also important to consider is that many members of this committee may be called upon to testify before Congress. Therefore, if individuals want to take an action that they desire to keep secret from the American people (for any of a multitude of reasons), it would probably be smarter to do so in a joint, private directive with other delegates.

Additionally, delegates should remember that the 1964 election is not far away. Ensuring that President Johnson keeps his job beyond that year is integral to ensuring that all of you do as well. And finally, remember that this committee will not necessarily (or likely) follow the historical events of the time period. Delegates must be prepared to adapt to new challenges brought by turbulent times, and respond to crises in all areas.

Positions

Hubert Humphrey – Vice President of the United States

Anthony J. Celebrezze – Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare

William Willard Wirtz – Secretary of Labor

Luther Hartwell Hodges – Secretary of Commerce

Orville Lothrop Freeman – Secretary of Agriculture

Robert F. Kennedy – Attorney General

Robert McNamara – Secretary of Defense

Clarence Douglas Dillon – Secretary of the Treasury

Dean Rusk – Secretary of State

Stewart Lee Udall – Secretary of the Interior

General Maxwell D. Taylor – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

John McCone - Director of Central Intelligence

John Edgar Hoover – Director of the FBI

Harry C. Macpherson – Special Assistant to the President

Bill D Moyers – Special Assistant to the President

McGeorge Bundy – Special Assistant to the President

Mike Mansfield – Senate Majority Leader

Carl Albert – House Majority Leader

Topic I: Civil Rights

Introduction

Ensuring equality between the black and white population has been perhaps the most divisive topic in the United States since the country's inception. After the Civil war ended in 1865, it seemed as though perhaps a true victory for civil rights had been won, and the legislative period called "Reconstruction" - spurred by northern Republican legislators – aimed at finally giving blacks and whites equal rights. But in the 1870s Reconstruction lost momentum, and in 1877 a compromise was struck between Rutherford B. Hayes and the Democratic party to give Hayes control of the White House, but Democrats control of Congress. Hayes pledged to leave the Southern states alone on Civil Rights, and what followed was the institution of Jim Crow Laws in Southern States to formally restrict the rights of African Americans. In 1883 the Supreme Court ruled that the 1875 Civil Rights Act (which guaranteed equal treatment of African Americans in public places such as restaurants and hotels) was not constitutional, and went beyond what was stated in 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments (ending slavery, ensuring full civil rights for all, and ensuring voting rights, respectively). Further, the 1896 Supreme Court case, Plessy vs. Ferguson, legitimized segregation. What followed was a period of intense discrimination, rendering blacks' rights nearly equal to what they were before the Civil War. No blacks served in Congress from 1901-1929 (the southern states have still not elected a black Congressman since 1901), and the disparity in rights was evident in voting power - .5% of eligible Black men could vote in

Louisiana in 1910. The rise of the Ku Klux Klan made it even harder for blacks to improve their standing in society or have a decent quality of life.

As the years progressed, however, progress was made. In 1948, President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981, desegregating the army and federal government, and 1948 and 1949 Supreme Court cases saw victory for the Civil Rights side. Finally, in 1954, a landmark decision was reached in Brown vs. Board of Education, desegregating education.

Despite the ruling, Representative John Williams (D-Mississippi) coined the term "Black Monday" for the day of the ruling, and nearly all of the members of Congress from the former Confederate states signed the "Southern Manifesto", affirming the Congressmen's commitment to fighting for states' rights and segregation. One notable representative from a Southern state whose name was not on the Manifesto was Lyndon B. Johnson (it should also be noted, however, that Johnson played a large part in the defeat of the 1957 Civil Rights Act). Early attempts at school desegregation were controversial, and often met with violence. But gradually, there has been progress, despite some high-profile riots in the South and intense political opposition in response to these attempts. Other key events have included the nationally covered Emmet Till murder trial, successful Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955-56 led by Rosa Parks, and the 1961 Freedom Rides to protest unlawfully segregated Southern Bus terminals.

Current Situation

1963 has been one of the most eventful in the movement's history. Public opinion polls have shown large support for school integration – 62% of

Americans support the measure as of this year – and Martin Luther King Jr.'s August March on Washington culminated with perhaps the greatest event of the movement, his I Have a Dream speech. Additionally, President Kennedy's June 11th Civil Rights Address proposed the full and complete desegregation of America. While the speech was undeniably well received in the north, President Kennedy (and all Presidents before him since the 1870s) failed to pass any meaningful legislation. And now, half a year after the speech, the task of ending segregation has fallen to the new President, and you, his cabinet.

Role of the Cabinet

President Johnson is leaning on you, his cabinet and advisors, to plot out the strategy on the Civil Rights fight. In addition to determining overall strategy for any forthcoming legislation – if you choose to attempt to pass any – you will be tasked with managing any response that will come with any meaningful progress, or lack of it, on the issue. You can be certain that some in the country will feel that the legislation goes too far, and others will say that it does not go far enough. You must strike the optimal balance to resolve the issue, fulfill the President's wishes, and maintain stability.

Questions to Consider

1. What are the greatest barriers to equal rights for all Americans?
2. Is there any way to persuade Southern Congressmen to vote in favor of Civil Rights?
3. How will you manage any fallout from the passage, or lack of, of a Civil Rights Act?

4. How far are you willing to go on Civil Rights legislation?
5. What are your personal beliefs on the issue, and if they do not match the Presidents, how can you advance your side of the issue?

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Topic II: Vietnam

Introduction

Vietnam was, for most of its history, a French Colony. However, in 1945, following World War 2, the Communist Vietminh, under Ho Chi Minh, attempted to gain independence from France. In response, France re-installed former emperor Bảo Đại in a provisional government, and launched a war against the Communist Vietminh. This led to an unstable situation, with a war between the Dai government in the South and the Vietminh in the North. Even worse, the Communist forces defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, which persuaded the French to begin the process of exiting the country. Before they left, the French and Vietminh agreed at the Geneva Conference to partition the country into Northern and Southern sections until a nationwide election was held. However, neither the United States nor the Bảo Đại government (in the south of the country) accepted this agreement. Both hoped to restore Vietnam to its previously unified state. In 1955, Prime Minister Ngô Đình Diệm ran against Bảo Đại in the Southern presidential elections, rigging the election and ousting Đại from power, proclaiming himself President of the Republic of Vietnam. It should also be noted that American generals and diplomats continually advised Diệm throughout his campaign.

1956 was a transition year, with Americans taking over responsibility in South Vietnam from the French, mostly in a military training and advisory capacity. In 1957, Communists began a guerrilla warfare campaign against the South. 13 Americans were wounded in bombings in Saigon, the capital. By 1959, the North Vietnam began to infiltrate men and weapons into South Vietnam via the Ho Chi Minh trail, and the first Americans were killed in the

country. By the end of the year, Diệm had begun a crackdown on Communists and dissidents within the country.

In 1960, Diệm survived a coup attempt, and North Vietnam formed the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam, or “Vietcong." 1961 was another year of hostility between North and South, and was also marked by then Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson’s visit to Saigon. Diem survived another coup attempt in 1962, and Mike Mansfield – current house majority leader – reported back to Washington that he believed that Diem had wasted the two billion dollars America had spent in the country. In early 1963, the Viet Cong scored their first major victory over South Vietnamese forces.

And finally, 1963 saw the recent coup of the President of the Republic of Vietnam, Ngô Đình Diệm. Relations with him were, quite frankly, strained at best. His views on nation-building, democracy, and security against the Communists differed considerably from our own. Additionally, religious unrest was mounting against his rule, with Buddhist protests igniting around the country. Lyndon B. Johnson’s predecessor, John F. Kennedy, felt it was time for a change in leadership. American military and intelligence personnel stood aside as Vietnamese General Dương Văn Minh overthrew the Diem government and assumed power. Three weeks later, President Kennedy was killed.

Current Situation

The issue today is a grave one. Despite Dương Văn Minh’s successful coup, stability is extremely hard to come by. Generals are constantly vying for power, and the likelihood the Minh government can survive without American help is low. You must decide just how much you should be influencing events on

the ground in Vietnam, and who (if anyone) you should be supporting. Also remember that many of you have power to influence events in Vietnam individually, regardless of the decisions of the Cabinet. With North Vietnam and the Vietcong still at war with the South, any weaknesses will be taken advantage of.

Current American troop levels in Vietnam are about 16,000. If North Vietnam and the Vietcong do decide to escalate their war against the South, 16,000 troops will do very little against their combined might – although reports are cloudy on their actual strength. However, it would not be a popular decision at home if the United States sent large amounts of troops into Vietnam unprovoked. It is up to the committee to decide whether more US troops should get involved, and if so, how that will be justified to the world and American public. Remember, delegates. President Johnson, alongside many of you, is convinced of one thing: Vietnam cannot fall to the Communists, especially if suspicions of Chinese and Russian backing are true. Communist hegemony in Southeast Asia must be avoided at all costs.

Role of the Cabinet

The role of this cabinet is simple. You must make recommendations on US policy in Vietnam, including the backing of governments within the country, American troop levels, how American troops will be used, conscription, and general war strategy.

Questions to Consider

1. Who should the United States support in the governance of Vietnam?
2. Should the United States intervene more in Vietnam? If so, how will this be justified?
3. How far should the United States be willing to go in order to win the war against the North?
4. What other means besides the military can Americans use to win the war?
5. Is conscription a legitimate option to procure troops if it becomes necessary?

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