

A WAR FOR PEACE: THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION

Background Guide
SSICsim 2017



Director:
Asic Chen

Includes:

Welcome Letter

Background

Character Guides

SSICsim 2016
at the UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



Welcome from the Dias



September 2016
Toronto, ON, Canada

Dear delegates,

I would like to welcome you to the Secondary School Interactive Crisis Simulation and my committee, A War for Peace: the Nixon Administration. Whether you are a novice or an experienced delegate, my staff and I will do our best to make sure you have an exciting and enjoyable conference.

This committee, as its name suggests, follows President Nixon and his closest associates as they were sworn into office in January 1969. Richard Nixon has always fascinated me as a historical figure, as the period in time that is associated with this certain president. It was a time when America as a nation was in great crisis, and President Nixon handled these crises with ruthlessness and brilliance not often seen in a democratically elected leader. Nixon was also arguably the most disgraced president in U.S. history, being the only one to resign from office. Nixon and his inner circle were unmade by the very penchant for secrecy and paranoia that, on some degree, enabled them to achieve greatness.

The characters in this committee are real people. Some four decades ago, they lived, worked, schemed, charmed the public, and spun lies as the most powerful people in the United States government, each with their own agenda. I hope you all have fun bringing those characters to life. Moreover, remember the lessons history has presented us, and attempt with utmost effort to avoid the mistakes these historical figures made.

Happy researching, and I can't wait to meet you in November!

Asic Chen

A War for Peace: the Nixon Administration

Committee Director, SSICsim 2016

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A Letter on the Eve of Inauguration

January 1969
Washington, D.C.

To the President Elect & Associates,

For the past six years, I have had the honor to lead our great nation, as it leads the free world as we know it. We have failed, but also achieved. Our war on poverty has brought millions of Americans above the poverty line.[1] We have carried on President Kennedy's legacy in regards to civil rights, banning racial discrimination in public facilities, housing, the workplace, and immigration by law. On the other hand, our involvement in Indochina has proven to do more harm than good, sucking dry our budget and tearing apart American society.

I am not seeking another term in office for one simple reason: what America needs at the moment is stability, and my name and my policies have been associated directly with the most destabilizing factions in this country. I sincerely hope that the Republican administration will bring some sorely needed security and cohesion to our nation, both at home and abroad.

It is a volatile world we're living in today. Communist states continue to be our greatest challenge in the international order, and we must find a way to bring peace to Indochina before the war escalates further. I hope that you will tread carefully. Remember we're at war. Moreover, remember that the welfare of the American people is our greatest concern.

I wish you all good luck and a successful term in office.

Lyndon Baines Johnson
36th President of the United States of America

Introduction

On January 20th, 1969, Richard Nixon is sworn in as the 37th president of the United States. Immediately, Nixon and his staff have to provide solutions to problems that have driven the American society apart in the past decade. The first and foremost concern is America's war in Vietnam. After the 1968 Tet Offensive, American morale and domestic support for the war is at an all-time low. With half a million troops in a military quagmire, the new president has to come up with a plan to achieve "peace with honour". The Soviet Union, with growing power and growing ambitions (Brezhnev Doctrine, 1968 Czechoslovakia invasion), continues to be the greatest threat to America and her allies. After splitting from the Soviet bloc and acquiring nuclear weapons, Communist China is a wild card that needs to be contained.¹ Elsewhere in Asia, the tension between India and Pakistan continues to brew. The Middle East sees continued Israeli-Arab conflict, exacerbated by Soviet support for Egypt and Syria. Decolonization sparks civil war in Africa while a new anti-Americanism flares in Latin America. Charles de Gaulle's independent foreign policy and Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik are driving apart NATO allies. Domestically, Candidate Nixon has promised to reduce the highest inflation rate since the Korean War and even out the budget deficits brought by Lyndon Johnson's failed Great Society program.² Meanwhile, how the Nixon administration mends a society divided by civil rights and anti-war movements will greatly impact their chances in re-election. After the most tumultuous election year the country has seen, the Nixon administration must answer the question: how to fight a war for peace?

¹ Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *The Rise and Fall of Détente: American Foreign Policy and the Transformation of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2013)

² "Richard Nixon's Top Domestic and Foreign Policy Achievements," *Nixon Foundation*. Accessed on: September 14, 2016. <http://nixonfoundation.org/10-policy-achievements.php>

Background Information & Topics of Discussion

Peace with Honour

The Nixon administration's first order of business is to get the Americans out of Indochina and achieve the "peace with honour" that Nixon repeatedly promised the American people during his campaign.

The Vietnam War has been a concern for the American-led alliances for more than two decades. Prior to the 1950s, Indochina (present Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand) had been under French colonial rule. Following the end of the Second World War, however, nationalists – many of them Communists – began to fight for an independent Vietnam. The French colonial government was weak while a bankrupt Paris could not spare the funds to support a faraway war in Asia. The U.S. started to send more financial support, as well as military advisors, so that Indochina did not become an independent, Communist state. In 1954 at Dien Bien Phu, the French suffered a military disaster at the hands of the Viet Cong, nationalist-communist revolutionaries. The French decided to completely withdraw from Indochina, which marked the end of the First Indochina War. Major powers of the world signed the Geneva Accords, which divided Vietnam by the 17th parallel. The North would be a Communist state under the Viet Minh, while the South would be ruled by former emperor Bao Dai. The Accords also stipulated that an election would be held in two years to determine leadership of a unified Vietnam.³

In 1956, the general election, as mandated by the Geneva Accords, was not held in fear that head of Communist Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, might in fact win the presidency somewhat democratically. This sparked the Second Indochina War. This war was fought on two fronts. The Viet Cong (NLF), a Communist force based in South Vietnam, fought a guerilla war against the Western-backed government in the South. The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) aided the Viet Cong by attacking from the north and sending essential supply through hidden paths by way of Laos and Cambodia (the Ho Chi Minh Trail). The Communist forces received money and equipment from the Soviet Union and China, in addition to a considerable number of Chinese military advisors. South Vietnam, meanwhile, had the support of the U.S. and its NATO allies. Indochina became a manifestation of the American policy of "containment".⁴

American involvement escalated dramatically following the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, in which American and North Vietnamese naval forces exchanged fire. President Johnson immediately gained support from Congress to send conventional troops to Southeast Asia. While in Indochina, the American forces relied much on superior firepower and advanced air support. In the following four years, the American troops achieved some measure of victory, but casualties and expenditure also

³ Peter Van Ness, "Richard Nixon, the Vietnam War, and the American Accommodation with China: A Review Article", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 8, no. 3 (2000)

⁴ Van Ness

skyrocketed. As a result, domestic support for the war in Indochina began to plummet. In 1968 on the day of the Vietnamese New Year, the Viet Cong and the NVA launched a massive surprise attack throughout South Vietnam, which happened to be broadcast on U.S. television. The American public was shocked by the resiliency of the Vietnam communists despite heavy bombing campaigns, and was gradually convinced that the war in Indochina could not be won. Although the U.S. forces managed to negate the grounds gained by the communists during Tet, the loss of public support drove the Johnson administration to seek negotiations that could end the war.

After the brief hiatus in bombing issued by Johnson towards the end of his presidency, the new administration now has the choice to either escalate America's involvement in Indochina (where the war will spread to Cambodia and Laos) or leave the war as it is and try to achieve peace in other ways. Negotiations between the various parties involved in the war have been going on since 1968, but no concrete compromise has been reached. It is perhaps time to find other means to pressure North Vietnam into negotiating in earnest.

Questions to consider:

What is the United States' next course of action in Indochina?

Should the war be expanded to Cambodia and Laos?

How to compel North Vietnam to treat negotiations seriously? How to construct a peace that America's South Vietnamese allies can accept?

Triangular diplomacy & Détente

For many years since the start of the Cold War, American policy makers tended to treat all Communist countries as a united front. Especially, they made little differentiation between the largest Communist states, the Soviet Union and China. Many westerners seemed to believe that Mao's Red China is a faithful follower of the USSR, and therefore cannot be reasoned with independently. Some scholars, however, noticed the dissidence between the two Communist behemoths, and theorized that by offering both China and the Soviet Union some form of good will, the U.S. can play these two countries against each other to America's benefit.

Both Nixon and Kissinger are in line with this school of thought. As early as 1968, Nixon published an article in *Foreign Affairs*, the most prestigious international relations journal, that a post-Vietnam world calls for Communist China's reintegration into the international order.⁵ Kissinger echoed that sentiment in a speech he wrote for Nixon's rival in the Republican primaries, Nelson Rockefeller.

⁵ Margaret MacMillan, *Nixon in China: The Week That Changed the World*, (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2006)

As they settle in the White House, Nixon and Kissinger realize that “in a subtle triangle of relations between Washington, Beijing, and Moscow, we increase the possibilities of accommodations with each”, thus reducing international tensions as well as American military spending.[2] Convinced that “all fundamental problems are interrelated” in international relations, they expect that improved relations with China can force the Soviets to make more concessions as they pursued superpower détente.[3]

Cold War Home Front

Although President Nixon much prefers foreign policy making to domestic affairs, the America he takes over from Johnson in 1969 is still in dire need of social change.

The most pressing issue is the anti-war movement. Starting out as small demonstrations on college campuses, the opposition to the Vietnam War had grown into a significant social movement by 1967. Legacy from the Civil Rights Movement, counter-culture arts forms, draft opposing Baby Boomers who have their strength in numbers add fuel to the anti-war movement until it is a force that the government has to reckon with.

The Civil Rights Movement reached its climax during the Johnson administration, achieving several legislative millstones, such as the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965[4]. However, implementing these laws while maintaining the support from more conservative Republican Americans is a challenge that the Nixon administration must face.

As the New Deal Coalition breaks apart, there is also opportunity to bring about a more conservative form of economy. The Johnson presidency leaves a weak economy with high inflation rates. Nixon and his economics advisors need to implement their own ideas as soon as possible.

All in all, the new administration must put much thought into how to reunited the American public and present a cohesive home front as the United States enters a new stage in the global Cold War.

Questions to consider:

How can the White House help bridge the gaps between generations, races, and self-identified culture groups?

How should the Nixon Administration implement the civil rights legislations passed in the past decade in a manner that befits the Republican party?

Should civil unrest warrant changes in the Nixon administration's commitments abroad?

Characters

1. Richard Nixon

President of the United States

Succeeding L.B. Johnson's disastrous presidency, you're confident that you can bring new prosperity to America and its standing in the world. More interested in foreign affairs than domestic ones, you aspire to control international relations solely from the White House, often bypassing the State Department. Henry Kissinger, John Mitchell, and H.R. "Bob" Haldeman are your most trusted advisors, much to the chagrin of the Secretary of State. In this committee, you have veto power over matters of national security, as well as certain election issues should you seek another term in 1972.

2. Henry Kissinger

National Security Advisor

Formerly a Harvard academic, this foray into Washington politics is your first. Yet as head of the National Security Council (NSC), you already have Nixon's willing ear and great plans for America's role in the world. Aside from public diplomatic events, you will use your immense connections and penchant for secrecy and back channelling to good use in President Nixon's service.

3. Alexander Haig

Deputy National Security Advisor

As a part of the newly formed NSC, you're privy to many of the secret diplomatic channels used by Nixon and Kissinger.

4. Winston Lord

Special Assistant to the National Security Advisor

You're part of the NSC; namely, Henry Kissinger's right hand man and most trusted advisor. With a keen eye and attention to details, you accompany the NSC head in most of his diplomatic meetings.

5. John Holdridge

Senior Staff Member for the Far East, National Security Council

An experienced career diplomat, you have been appointed to the NSC by recommendation of Henry Kissinger. You have the “Nixinger” duo’s trust, and are largely involved with the White House’s communications with Red China.

6. Spiro Agnew

Vice President of the United States

As Richard Nixon’s running mate, you did most of the name-calling and “dirty” tricks during the election. Now in the White House, you have to find your place in the administration and do your best to bridge a foreign-policy-loving President to a domestically troubled nation.

7. William Rogers

Secretary of State

Supposedly the most important man in foreign policy making, you often find yourself sidelined by the President and Kissinger’s National Security Council. Infuriated that you’re kept in the dark in many important decisions and backed by an enormous and equally disgruntled State Department, you are determined to gain back control over America’s foreign relations and do things the more traditional way.

8. Ural Alexis Johnson

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The fourth-ranking personnel of the State Department and the highest-ranking officer of the American Foreign Service. You oversee all geographic and political bureaus. You’re also involved in the State Department’s “power struggle” against Kissinger’s overbearing National Security Council.

9. Richard Helms

Head of the Central Intelligence Agency

You’re often the administration’s most reliable source on the situation in Vietnam and other hot zones. In this conference, you will receive sensitive intelligence that you have to put to good use for the nation’s security.

10. Gerald Ford

Republican - House Minority Leader

You're the administration's most direct link to the legislative branch of government. During the course of Nixon's first term, you have to win over the majority of the Congress on some of the President's more audacious foreign policy plans. You're also heavily involved in the domestic affairs part of the Nixon presidency.

11. H.R. "Bob" Haldeman

White House Chief of Staff

Rising to power in the advertisement industry, you're instrumental in Nixon's road to the White House. As one of his most trusted men, you're sometimes in sole control of the President's public image. From day one of Nixon's first term, you have your eyes on re-election and are determined to turn every foreign relations win into the next selling point for Candidate Nixon.

12. John Enrichman

White House Domestic Affairs Advisor

You are the President's closest advisor aside from Haldeman, Mitchell, and Kissinger, and have his confidence in most domestic affairs. You will be working laboriously to ensure Nixon's success in the re-election.

13. Ron Ziegler

White House Press Secretary

Along with H. R. Haldeman, you are in charge of the President's public image and answer the most difficult questions from the press. In this committee, you're responsible for making press releases and even holding press conferences.

14. David Kennedy

Secretary of the Treasury

The primary economic advisor to the White House, you're responsible for bringing a financial perspective to the administration's policy making. In this committee, you have to balance money spent at home and overseas in America's many geopolitical pursuits (especially the war in Vietnam).

15. Melvin Laird

Secretary of Defense

As head and chief executive officer of the Department of Defense, you assist the President in all matters pertaining to the Department. Tasked with planning a reasonable timeline for U.S. withdrawal from Indochina, you have come up with the idea that more American responsibilities should be transferred to South Vietnamese forces before such a withdrawal can be possible.

16. David Packard

Deputy Secretary of Defense

As the principal civilian advisor to the Secretary of Defense, you're in charge of the day-to-day running of the Department of Defense. You especially oversee the Defense Resources Board, which is concerned with making budgetary recommendations to the Secretary and the President. You're also an accomplished electrical engineer and co-founder of Hewlett-Packard (HP).

17. General Earle Wheeler

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

President Johnson appointed you to the role of the highest-ranking military officer in the country in 1964. Since then, you have overseen and supported the escalation of American involvement in Indochina. You have often backed General Westmoreland's request for more troops and equipment. You're concerned with minimizing casualties for the U.S. ground troops and in favour of heavier bombing campaigns against North Vietnam. After the 1948 Tet Offensive, you have supported General Westmoreland's call for more troops. In this committee, you serve as liaison to the field commander in Indochina, as well as other military chiefs of staff.

18. John Mitchell

Attorney General

You are part of Nixon's "inner circle". You served as Director for Richard Nixon's 1968 presidential election, and happen to be one of Nixon's personal friends. As head of the Department of Justice, your first challenge is the desegregation of Southern schools as part of Nixon's "Southern Strategy", even though you're reluctant to involve the Department with civil rights matters. You're also a believer in strict "law and order" and, like Nixon, a critic of the "hippie" ways of the 1960s.

19. George W. Bush

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations

A rising young Republican, your job is to broker deals with enemies and maintain America's alliances through the official channels of the United Nations. At the moment, the China-Taiwan representation problem is your greatest concern. In this committee, you serve as liaison between the White House and the ambassadors of many smaller countries at the UN.



Committee Mechanics

Timeline

This committee uses a fluid timeline: each committee session in conference represents an indeterminate amount of time in history. However, each session will be marked by important events that happen as part of the plot. The dais will inform the delegates of the precise date and time prior to each committee session.

Debate

Debate in this committee follows normal rules on caucuses and speaker's lists. However, it can be more informal than the typical general assembly due to its nature as a crisis committee.

At certain points in the conference, this committee might take on special formats. For instance, a "press conference" might be held with the White House Press Secretary being interviewed by all the other delegates, who are posing as independent journalists.

Veto power

At the start of the conference, only President Nixon has veto power over all directives passed in this committee. Other delegates may pass private directives without the President's consent if it is in their power to do so.

As the conference proceeds, other delegates may acquire similar "special powers". For example, the delegate who is appointed campaign manager for Nixon's reelection can have more say in all matters pertaining to the campaign.

The President's veto power may potentially be removed by a unanimous decision of the committee or by the dais.

Directives

This committee follows normal rules on private and public directives. Delegates should note that much of the sensitive information involved in this conference should be kept in private directives, yet most major decisions on behalf of the administration need to be passed as public directives.

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Further Readings

Books:

MacMillan, Margaret. *Nixon in China: The Week That Changed the World*

Hanhimäki, Jussi M. *The Rise and Fall of Détente: American Foreign Policy and the Transformation of the Cold War*

Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977

Logevall, Fredrik. *Embers of War: the Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam*

Useful website:

Office of the Historian (<https://history.state.gov/>)

