Lyndon B. Johnson’s Cabinet: 1968

Chair: Hazel Stocco
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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR:

Hello, delegates! My name is Hazel Stocco and I am going to be your chair for LBJ’s cabinet (as well as being the man himself). I am a Senior at Lyons Township this year, and I joined MUN in my Sophomore year. This year I am also head of crisis for MUN conferences.


This committee will be my second time chairing at LYMUN, so I hope things run smoothly for everyone in committee.

Now, with my introduction out of the way, there is some important information needed for the upcoming committee.

First, a list of all positions is listed below, however, personal powers are not. This is because I want individual personal powers to remain secret from others in committee. I highly recommend looking into both your personal and political background when it comes to determining what you can and cannot do. Also, on the day of committee, you will receive a card with some more specific personal powers that you can use in committee.

Second, dates are extremely important for this committee. The starting date is March 1, 1968. Major historical events occur very soon after this date on both topics. Regardless of which topic is chosen, expect a crisis to occur very quickly covering some of these important dates, so be prepared.
Thirdly, history has already been written. There is a known outcome of these topics, however, you have the power to theoretically change history. Don’t try to follow what should happen, use your creativity to create a new history where you come out on top.

And finally (sorry for the long list), I will be the person responding to your crisis pads. So, please be creative. This is your chance to change history, so don’t worry about what is considered “illegal”. Have fun with your personal powers, because it will make committee a lot more entertaining.

I can’t wait to see you all in committee, and good luck!

(My email is sto506203@d204.lths.net if you have any questions or concerns please contact me!)
Members in Committee:

1. Secretary of State: Dean Rusk (D-NY)
2. Secretary of Treasury: Henry H. Fowler (D-VA)
3. Secretary of Defense: Clark M. Clifford (D-MD)
4. Attorney General: Ramsey Clark (D-TX)
5. Postmaster General: Lawrence F. O’Brien (D-MA)
6. Secretary of Interior: Stewart L. Udall (D-AZ)
7. Secretary of Agriculture: Orville L. Freeman (D-MN)
8. Secretary of Commerce: C.R. Smith (D-NY)
9. Secretary of Labor: W. Willard Wirtz (D-IL)
10. Secretary of Wealth, Education, and Welfare: Wilbur J. Cohen (D-MD)
11. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development: Robert C. Weaver (D-Wash. D.C.)
12. Secretary of Transportation: Alan C. Boyd (D-FL)
14. Vice-President: Hubert Humphrey (D-MN)
15. First Lady: Lady Bird Johnson (D)

*Personal powers will be discussed the day of the committee*
A Brief History of LBJ:

Lyndon B. Johnson was originally the Vice-President of John F. Kennedy. However, on November 22nd, 1963, with the sudden assassination of Kennedy, Johnson was sworn in as president aboard Air Force One soon after.

In 1965 Johnson was officially elected as president for his first full presidential term. From there, he built up support from political allies and crafted his Presidential Cabinet (for the sake of committee size there will be a few extra individuals).

From the majority of his second term, Johnson relied on his cabinet for a plethora of issues, ranging from small to large.

As a presidential cabinet, each individual brings forth specialized information regarding their area of expertise. Without them, certain areas of focus would be completely ignored. Each of these individuals has an influence in their own way, whether it be through influence, wealth, or social life, the stature of connections are limitless. Furthermore, with each individual’s appointment to the presidential cabinet, they gain special abilities in order to contribute their expertise to the president in the most efficient manner.

Finally, as with many Presidential Cabinets, positions are prone to change, and should an individual step out too far, they risk being replaced by another. Some positions seem more influential than others, so promotions and power-grabbing run rampant amongst these cabinets.
Topic A: The Vietnam War

Vietnam has a long history under colonial control, most notably and recently being that under the French. However, World War II brought in change to the nation that would start a chain effect to a costly and deadly war.

With the Japanese nearby, Vietnam became one of many territories the Japanese acquired before and throughout the war. With this double occupation of Japanese and French rule, the perfect situation was created for an uprising.

During the war, political leader Ho Chi Minh used Communist and Chinese beliefs to found his own political party, the Viet Minh.
With the fall of Japan at the end of World War II, Vietnam was returned back to French control, and Emperor Bao Dai took control as a French-backed emperor. However, the Viet Minh continued to maintain influence throughout the war, and wanted to ban the French control, and appoint Ho Chi Minh as emperor.

Ho and his supporters retaliated and took control of the Northern city of Hanoi in an attempt to create the government without French influence, and under the communist party. This northern territory became known as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). However, Emperor Bao, who was still backed by Democratic France, attempted to seize back control by taking over the city of Saigon and establishing the state of Vietnam.

Soon, Vietnam became a ground of not only conflicting individuals but also conflicting ideas. Communism vs. Democracy. The east vs. the west. Vietnam became the literal war that was figuratively brewing between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Tensions grew, and violence soon erupted between both sides. The most decisive early battle being the battle of Bien Dien Phu in May 1954. Not only was this battle a northern win for the Viet Minh, but it also signaled an end to French rule in the nation.

Two months later, the historic Geneva Conference split the nation in two at the 17th parallel, placing the two individuals already in power, Ho Chi Minh and Emperor Bao, in charge of their own regions respectively, with the condition that both regions hold nationwide elections for reunification in 1956.
However, before these elections could occur, power shifted in Southern Vietnam. Ngo Dinh Diem, an anti-communist, became the new leader of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam (GVN) in 1955.

The United States’ involvement with Vietnam mirrored its escalation with the Soviet Union and its allies. Then-President Dwight D. Eisenhower pledged support for Diem and Southern Vietnam in 1955.

However, support for Diem from the United States wavered when it was revealed that Diem rounded up 100,000 supposed, communist sympathizers (Viet Cong) and subsequently tortured and executed a majority of them, continuing the brutal violence that followed the war.

Diem soon faced resistance by both the Viet Cong and other parties over his oppressive regime.
In 1960 the National Liberation Front (NLF) was formed by Southern Vietnamese in response to the regime, as an autonomous body. However, the NLF was faced with doubt from the United States as being a puppet organization.

In 1961, John F. Kennedy saw reports of conditions in South Vietnam and decided to start sending military, economic, and technical aid to Southern Vietnam in order to counter the presence of the Viet Cong. This action by JFK signaled a start to the escalation of US troops in Vietnam, and an important turning point in U.S. involvement.

In 1963, just weeks before JFK’s assassination, Ngo Dinh Diem was assassinated by his own generals in an internal coup de’ tat. With the loss of Diem, political instability soon rocked the Southern Vietnamese. This political instability leads to more military support from newly appointed Lyndon B. Johnson.

In 1964, two U.S. Destroyers were attacked by the DRV. The outcome that followed created one of the most powerful military spending bills.

The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution gave President Lyndon B. Johnson the ability to take any measures he deemed necessary in maintaining international peace within Southeast Asia. Essentially, the president had been handed a blank check.

Operation Rolling Thunder went into motion soon after. The periodic bombing of Northern Vietnam increased the number of casualties overall.
However, it wasn’t until March 1965 that Johnson called for more troops to be sent to Vietnam. Hundreds of thousands of troops were sent to Vietnam from the United States in only a couple of years.

Land battles commenced under General Westmoreland. Under Westmoreland, the U.S. focus shifted from attempting to gain enemy land to killing as many enemy soldiers as possible.

By 1966, the violence of war increased to the point that large areas of Southern Vietnam mandated that all civilians leave for their own safety, resulting in millions of displaced individuals within the country.

In 1967, doubt started to seep into the minds of soldiers as more and more were killed or injured. Protests, killings, and mass incarcerations soon followed in not only the United States but also soldiers stationed in Vietnam as well. The U.S. was losing support in the war.

In October 1967, 35,000 American citizens protested outside the Pentagon, arguing that the United States was sponsoring a corrupt dictatorship within Southern Vietnam, rather than fighting for an amicable cause.
On January 31st, 1968, 70,000 DRV soldiers launched attacks on 100 Southern Vietnamese cities, taking both the South and the United States by surprise. This action soon became known as the infamous Tet Offensive and became a leading factor in the loss of support in the war effort.

**Current Issues:**

Election season looms over the Johnson administration, placing the president in a risky situation. The war in Vietnam continues to get more and more violent. The North seems to be making a comeback, and a possible defeat haunts war efforts.

U.S. Civilians are continuing to protest against the war. Without the support of the people, the government risks losing individuals' faith altogether.

The atrocities of war seem to only increase as time wears on, yet the Cold War continues to deepen between the United States and the Soviet Union, so a loss against the Communists would also harm public morale.

The fate of more than just lives are at stake.

“We do this [escalating U.S. military involvement in Vietnam] in order to slow down aggression. We do this to increase the confidence of the brave people of South Vietnam who have bravely born this brutal battle for so many years with so many
casualties. And we do this to convince the leaders of North Vietnam—and all who seek to share their conquest—of a simple fact: We will not be defeated. We will not grow tired. We will not withdraw either openly or under the cloak of a meaningless agreement.”—President Lyndon Johnson, speaking to the nation on April 7, 1965, explaining his decision to send U.S. combat troops to Vietnam.

Questions To Consider:

1. Given the current tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, would giving up the war give the Communists a boost in the Cold War?

2. Is international peace more important than internal peace, or can a happy median be reached?

3. Given the upcoming election year, should the focus of the war shifted to public opinion in order to secure a win in the next election? (Note: The 22nd amendment has a two-term limit, however, a president can have 10 years of presidency, JFK served two years, allowing LBJ to be re-elected for another term.)

4. How should the government react if U.S. soldiers commit war crimes, that become known to the public?

5. Is more force and action needed, or should a less aggressive approach be taken?

6. How should public outcry be counteracted?

7. Given the situation, should police be given the ability to use any action needed to quell protests for the national interest?
Additional resources:

https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-history  (A wonderful and in-depth description of the war - most information is referenced in the background guide)

https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war  (Includes a lot of links about important events that happened during the war)

https://www.cfr.org/blog/vietnam-war-forty-quotes  (This website might have individual quotes from your position on their viewpoints of the war).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_War  (For your most basic of basic understanding of the war, make sure to double-check information)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exVKd-x5OVc  (A quick general summary of the war - it’s a bit fast, however)
Topic B: Civil Rights

America has had a long and persistent history with racial abuse and racial inequality. Dating back to the very founding of the nation itself, individuals have constantly faced some form of prejudice, and the fight for equality came to a boiling point in the 1960s.

In 1619 the first African slaves were brought to the colony of Virginia. While small at first, the number of enslaved people within the United States continued to grow as the agricultural mainframe of the South took hold of the budding nation's economy. And with this growth came a growth of racism and discrimination.

Over 200 years after the first slaves were brought to America, the Civil War broke out surrounding the morality and ideals of the nation. With the North and South separated, the topic of slavery was the center focus of the nation.
One hundred years prior to the civil rights movement, the Civil War came to a close. With thousands dead and slavery officially abolished, society in America faced a substantial shift. Yet, with the end of slavery came new issues. How will the nation and its people treat a group of individuals who had just recently been treated as less than human? The Reconstruction period was viewed as a hopeful answer.

In the early stages of Reconstruction progressive moves were instituted to create a more equal society. Previously enslaved individuals became leaders of their communities, and a few were elected to the senate. Most notably being Hiram Revels, who was elected as the senator of Mississippi, the former position Confederate President Jefferson Davis had held.

Jim Crow laws soon swept the South. African Americas were completely separated in the South and were extremely limited in the realms of society. Separate facilities, separate schools, and limited voting rights, the monumental Plessy v. Ferguson gave judicial power to these laws and created “Separate but equal” accommodations.

Yet, while segregation had laws in the South, that didn’t mean the North didn’t participate too. While on a smaller scale, discrimination reached every corner of the country, no matter where an individual was.
Change remained stagnant for the remainder of the century, and for the majority of the next, it wasn’t until WWII. Many African Americans were often stopped from getting involved in the war effort, however, as the war progressed change was seen. FDR enacted Executive Order 8802 that opened defense jobs to everyone, regardless of color. However, segregation and discrimination still persisted within the armed forces, often with segregated platoons and separate equipment. It wasn’t until the cold war that Harry Truman initiated Executive Order 9981 to end discrimination within the military.

However, while the change was seen in the military, society still felt the confines of segregation. However, segregation in schooling was about to change. Oliver Brown’s daughter was denied entry to the closest school, which was all right at the time, so Brown brought the case to the supreme court, stating the segregated schools did not uphold the separate but equal ruling of Plessy v. Ferguson. In 1954, the ruling of Brown v. The Board of Education made segregation in schools illegal, igniting a new wave of change.

Then, on December 1st, 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for not giving up her seat on the bus. While this kind of incident wasn’t uncommon, the resulting actions helped spark a larger movement. In fact, many historians view this date as the official start of the Civil Rights Movement.

The Montgomery Improvement Association, angered by Parks’ arrest, helped organize the
Montgomery Bus Boycott. This boycott lasted 381 days, ending with the supreme court ruling desegregation on buses to be unconstitutional. The rising member within the boycott? Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Soon, more individuals challenged the segregation faced within America, the only difference this time, is that these individuals succeeded, and the amount of support continued to grow.

In 1957, the Little Rock Nine attended their first day of school, creating the first integrated school in Arkansas. They faced hatred and abuse throughout their time at school. It took them weeks to successfully enter and stay in the school, due to anger and racism from the students and families that attended the school. In response to the tensions, President Dwight D Eisenhower had to call in federal troops to protect the students as they entered the school, an action that was unique for any president.

Eisenhower’s actions helped to fuel debate on both sides, as many viewed his actions as unnecessary or an abuse of power. However one thing was made clear, that the movement of
equality was growing, and more powerful individuals were changing previously held norms, which helped to increase tensions.

However, Eisenhower responded to the increasing debates by making the first major civil rights legislation since Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Act of 1957. The act persecuted anyone who tried to prevent another from voting.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was established in 1960 after the Sit-ins that fought against segregated restaurants in the South. The SNCC encouraged youth to get involved in the Civil Rights Movement, expanding into the next generation.

With the creation of the SNCC, more youth became involved in civil rights than ever before. They helped to arrange protests, sit-ins, rallies, and a series of other forms of racism. They were non-violent, which helped them gain the support of influential individuals, including MLK.

On August 28th, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. presented his famous “I Have a Dream” speech to more than 200,000 people during the March on Washington, creating a slogan and an icon for the movement.
Then, in 1964 surrounded by MLK and other influential civil rights figures, Lyndon B Johnson signed into effect the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which created equal employment for all, limits on literacy tests, and integration of all public places.

However, retaliation soon followed. On March 7th, 1965, 600 protestors were met with brutal retaliation by Alabama local police, resulting in gruesome beating and hospitalizations, soon becoming known as “Bloody Sunday”.

Johnson responded by passing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which banned all literacy tests, opening up voting rights to more individuals.

Yet, more violence continued to follow. on February 25th, 1965, influential civil rights leader Malcolm X was assassinated, resounding across the nation. And soon after in 1966, the Black Panther Party was officially founded.

The Black Panther Party grew in popularity due to its community involvement and its Ten-Point plan, which called for the end of police brutality. The leader viewed the Black Panther Party as a political party, while many news outlets viewed the party as a gang, and while the party strived to do good, controversy followed.
However, the platform of the Black Panther party soon started to change. Non-violence leads the earlier years of the civil rights movement, and some African Americans were feeling as though non-violence is not the answer to racism and discrimination. Essentially, the Black Panthers chose to fight back rather than just watch, which was unique at the time.

**Current Issues:**

Currently, racial tensions continue to grow, as violence continues to ensure. 1967 was a brutal year when it came to police attacks of protestors, and protestors attacks on police. The nation continues to divide over the issues, and anyone’s action could anger any side.

With the future of civil rights issues relatively unknown, violence occurring on both sides, and famous leaders being assassinated, 1968 becomes a boiling point for the issues, and a solution is desperately needed, especially with an upcoming presidential election, political agendas can very easily be changed. Should the Johnson administration choose to re-run for election, public opinion and appearance are extremely important, without such any hope of re-election are gone.

Time is running out, and the government must do something to ease tensions and create a more stable country, however, every action has a reaction, and if the government is not careful enough, matters may turn worse before they get better.
Questions To Consider:

1. How should the government respond to the violence erupting between both sides? Should a middle ground be found? Or should one side be supported more than the other?

2. Should influential civil rights leaders receive protection from the government?

3. How should governmental committees, such as the FBI, be used in order to know about events before they happen? Or should the FBI be used for other purposes?

4. If violence ensues, will military usage be needed? Or should diplomacy be the only answer?

5. How will public opinion play a role in the Civil Rights issues, especially with the upcoming election? (Note: The 22nd amendment has a two-term limit, however, a president can have 10 years of presidency, JFK served two years, allowing LBJ to be re-elected for another term.)

6. Are the Black Panthers truly a threat, or is media sensation to blame?
Additional Resources:

https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement (a general overview of the civil rights movement until mid-19680

https://www.history.com/topics/civil-rights-movement/black-panthers (A brief overview of the Black Panther Party)

https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1964/king/biographical/ (A brief biography of MLK)