



IF I WERE PRESIDENT

President and Press Secretary Role Cards

Print Double Sided



THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

You are the President of the United States of America, often said to be the most powerful person in the world. Many countries and peoples look to you and the United States as an example of freedom, democracy and values. You are ending your second term in the White House and have made a profoundly positive impact on American society during your nearly eight years in office. You have continued a tradition of aiding Africa and helping democracy to flourish. Your administration has been strongly supportive of President Ahmed in recent years and he has visited the White House. You were saddened and dismayed when your advisors informed you of the coup d'état by Islamist insurgents and clan warlords that forced Ahmed and his government to flee the country. Having been witness to his reforms and the impact that his efforts have made on the greater whole of Somali society, you want to help restore order, balance and justice; however, there are a few facts that you, as the president, have to face.

First, you are in the final months of your second term as president. Traditionally, it is hard for presidents at this stage to inspire real action. Second, Congress is divided. The House of Representatives is one party and the Senate is another. The Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader do not always see eye to eye and you have had difficulty in getting your agenda through at times. Third, the Senate Majority Leader is running for the presidency and is likely to receive a nomination from the party that is opposite of your own. The Senate Majority Leader has expressed discontent with many of your decisions and policies and you are afraid that some of your greatest accomplishments may be reversed if the Senate Majority Leader wins the election. Fourth, intervention in Somalia is not likely to be a quick process and you are afraid of the impact that it could have on your legacy as well as how differently the situation could be handled with someone else holding the reins of power in the United States. Fifth, the armed forces of the United States are currently engaged in a peacekeeping effort in the Taiwan Strait and around the Spratly Islands of the South China Sea. Tensions between the People's Republic of China (mainland China) and the Republic of China (Taiwan) have been intense in recent months and the multinational military presence there is keeping hostilities between the two nations at bay. Sixth, you are working against the clock. The pirates have expressed a level of hostility and you are fearful that the lives of the hostages may be in increasing danger. Finally, there are going to be two very distinct sides in this decision. Obviously, everyone will be in agreement that the hostages on board the *Shackleton's Courage* must be recovered safely and speedily. But the two distinct sides will be whether to intervene on some level or not.

While you are hesitant to enter a situation that will be left on someone else's plate, you are still a firm believer in upholding freedom, democracy and other unalienable rights. Your gut instinct tells you to intervene, but the situation in the South China Sea is a strain on the armed forces and you are reluctant to be engaged on two fronts. The question that you have to be able to answer, as the president, is whether or not intervention in Somalia is practical for the United States? You believe that is the right thing to do, but there are certain realities with which you face. Listen to your advisors and moderate a genuine discussion that focuses on solutions and not just the problem. Ask for recommendations. Encourage creativity and innovation among your advisors when they are discussing policy. Conditions in Somalia are dire and everyone is aware of that fact. You want to know what the United States can do to help change that and aid in the process of bringing peace and stability to the Republic of Somalia.



THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Timeline of the *If I Were President* Simulation

Setting the Stage (10 minutes)

- You will brief the group on the situation and set the stage for the simulation to occur. The advisors should be reminded of why they have gathered at the White House and the reasons why this is an important decision.

Policy Group Meetings (20 minutes)

- During this time, the advisors will meet with their policy groups (e.g. White House Group, Diplomacy Group, etc.) to discuss ideas and generate a policy recommendation to present.
- As the president, float between the various policy groups and listen to what is being said. Start to get a feel for possible recommendations that the various policy groups will present. Take notes to help keep you organized.

Executive Meeting (20 minutes)

- During this time, you will call all of the advisors to a round table meeting. Remind them to continue to sit with their individual policy groups. Each policy group should have a spokesperson.
- Go around the table and have each policy group present their policy recommendation for one to two minutes. Take notes to help you stay organized.
- After you have heard all of the different recommendations, open the floor for discussion. Challenge your advisors to question one another about the different recommendations. This will aid you in getting more information and hearing more thoughts on your various options to better empower you to make an informed decision.
- Be listening for particular advisors who are firm in their beliefs and have presented an innovative and creative approach to the problem. At the conclusion of the Executive Meeting, you will choose three to four advisors, along with your Press Secretary, to join you in an Oval Office Meeting.
- Be sure to thank your advisors for their thoughts, ideas and participation at the close of the Executive Meeting.

Oval Office Meeting (10 minutes)

- Along with your Press Secretary, call upon your three to four chosen advisors to adjourn from the Executive Meeting with you to meet in the Oval Office.
- During this time, work to iron out the details of your decision. Look at your options from multiple angles and be prepared to answer questions about your decision in the Press Conference.

Press Conference (10 minutes)

- Your Press Secretary will announce you to the White House Press Corps and your advisors will stand alongside you.
- Announce your decision to the White House Press Corps.
- Your Press Secretary will open the floor for questions regarding your decision.



THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

You have been with the president and the administration since the first election victory, nearly eight years ago. You started off as the White House Deputy Director of Communications, before being tapped by the president to serve in the role of the White House Press Secretary. You have great admiration and respect for the president and have always been a careful guardian of the message being broadcast from the White House to the American people and to the world.

The hijacking of the *Shackleton's Courage* is an event that has fueled the fire of the White House Press Corps over the situation in Somalia. The coup d'état against President Ahmed and his government was not terribly surprising, but was still a hot topic with the Press Corps. The hijacking of the *Courage* and the presence of American citizens being held hostage by Somali pirates has made the topic volatile with the Press Corps. The majority of questions you have been asked over the past two days in the Press Room have been in regards to the situation involving the *Courage* and her crew.

You believe that the United States should come to the aid of Somalia. However, you are aware that there are some stark realities facing the president as this decision is being made. The situation between China and Taiwan is a potential powder keg that could ignite at any moment. The armed forces of the United States are in a dangerous position in the Taiwan Strait and the Spratly Islands. Additionally, the approaching end of the president's second term somewhat ties the hands of the administration on what potential actions it is able to take in this situation. The divided Congress and the Senate Majority Leader vying for the presidency further seem to restrict the administration. But one fact remains; that you believe the president may not be seeing. That at this point in time, the president is still very much the president and can make a decision that is in the best interest of the United States of America.

You have often been a voice of support and encouragement for the president. And while you are concerned with the effect this decision could have on the legacy of the president, this is a time for action and not a lack thereof. Remind your colleagues at the White House that legacies aside, there is still a job to do. There is still a country that is struggling towards freedom and democracy and that stability for that country is in the best interest of the world. It is acceptable to be bold and come to the aid of Somalia. Too much progress and reform has been accomplished thanks to the efforts of President Ahmed and his government to allow that to fade into violence and chaos.

You will work with the *White House Group* in the Policy Group Meeting and the Executive Meeting as they discuss the possible policy options. Following the Executive Meeting with all of the president's advisors, you will join the president in the Oval Office Meeting to aid the president and the chosen advisors in making a decision. You will help to prepare the president to announce the decision and to field questions regarding that decision. At the end of the day, your job is to help communicate the will of the president to the American people and to work with the president when the decision is being made.



THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

Timeline of the *If I Were President* Simulation

Setting the Stage (10 minutes)

- The President will brief the many advisors on the situation and set the stage for the simulation to occur.

Policy Group Meetings (20 minutes)

- During this time, the advisors will meet with their policy groups (e.g. White House Group, Diplomacy Group, etc.) to discuss ideas and generate a policy recommendation to present.
- You will meet with your colleagues in the White House Group during this meeting to help craft a policy recommendation for the president that reflects sound logic and reasoning.

Executive Meeting (20 minutes)

- During this time, the president will call all of the advisors to a round table meeting. Each policy group should have a spokesperson. The president will go around the table and have each policy group present their policy recommendation for one to two minutes. Take notes to help keep yourself and the president organized.
- After all of the different recommendations have been heard, the floor will be opened for discussion. This will aid the president in getting more information and hearing more thoughts on the various options to better empower the president to make an informed decision.

Oval Office Meeting (10 minutes)

- You will join the president and three to four advisors in the Oval Office to help the president make a final decision.
- During this time, work to iron out the details of the decision. Look at the options from multiple angles and remind the president to be prepared to answer questions about the decision in the Press Conference.

Press Conference (10 minutes)

- You will announce the president to the members of the White House Press Corps saying, "Ladies and Gentlemen, please rise for the President of the United States." Once the president takes the podium, the members of the White House Press Corps may take their seats.
- The president will announce the decision regarding the situation and give details.
- Announce to the Press Corps that president will now take their questions, and help facilitate that process.