

# *To Go or Not To Go*

## **The Biden Cabinet: February 2022**



**Crisis Director: Alejandro Madero Fidalgo**

**TUMUN X**

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## Letter from the Crisis Director

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the White House Situation Room on February 24, 2022! My name is Alejandro Madero and I will be your Crisis Director for the weekend. I am a freshman at Tufts studying Mechanical Engineering with a minor in Political Science. I've been doing Model UN for the past seven years and have had the opportunity to experience all kinds of committees as a delegate, on the dais, and as a part of the secretariat.

In this committee you will all be playing a role in President Biden's administration with the overall task of establishing the US's reaction to the invasion of Ukraine. This committee topic is one I find very interesting because it is much more complex than what it seems at first glance. We've all heard about the Ukraine war, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 is no state secret, and neither were Putin's reasons for doing it. This committee will bring out many complexities in the topic overall and the United State's actions regarding the conflict that go further than the superficial headlines that most of us see nowadays and hopefully you will all develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the topic as I have while researching it.

I want to take a moment to point out that this is a crisis committee and will make use of crisis notes and directives as well as traditional moderated and unmoderated caucuses for debate. It's important that as a delegate you are able to manage all these aspects of committee and to not forget that crisis notes can be more impactful than you may think. I will be looking for delegates who show significant presence and leadership in both frontroom and backroom. Ideally delegates would have strong speeches and bloc participation but whose crisis arcs are also creative but plausible. Additionally, no position papers will be required for this committee.

I encourage all of you to see what interesting things you can do with your characters and to have fun with it because at the end of the day you are the ones that make the committee. As a final note, I advise that you not research past February 23, 2022 as that is where this background guide ends. If you have any questions about anything at all feel free to email me. I'm looking forward to meeting you all!

Best of luck,

Alejandro Madero Fidalgo

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## **Technology Policy**

The use of any and all technological devices will not be allowed at any moment during the committee's sessions. As such, delegates should come prepared with the materials they believe will be necessary for them to be able to participate in this committee. This includes but is not limited to printed materials, a binder, post-it notes, note cards, notebooks, legal pads, pens, pencils, highlighters, markers, etc.



## Historical Context

### *The Kyivan Rus & The Russian Empire*

Ukraine's history with Russia begins in the 9th century in the city of Kyiv, the capital of Kyvan Rus. This state was the home to the Orthodox Christian Rus people, the genealogical and cultural ancestors to modern-day Russian and Ukrainian people. Through its history, Kyivan Rus would come to face a multitude of invasions, incursions, and occupations from all sorts of foreign powers which would eventually lead the land to be known as Ukraine.<sup>1</sup> In these centuries, the Russian Empire would come to be formed in Moscow, a force which would end up absorbing Ukraine into its territory.

### *The Ukrainian People's Republic*

The Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution brought the collapse of the Russian Empire, signaling a new era for Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> In 1918 the Ukrainian People's Republic was officially founded; for the first

time in modern history Ukraine would no longer be under the control of another nation.<sup>3</sup> However, this would not last long as the young republic found itself at war against the Russian Bolsheviks which were seeking to unify the previously imperial territories into a communist state. After millions of lives lost, the Ukrainian war of Independence was won by the Bolsheviks and Ukraine would go on to become part of the newly established Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

### *The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic*

In 1922, the USSR was founded with the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukrainian SSR) as one of its founding members. This was a period of much hardship for the republic as many Ukrainians were lost during the Second World War. As a part of the Soviet Union, Ukraine formed part of the Allies fighting against Nazi Germany and had to send soldiers to aid in the war effort. Beyond that, it is estimated that around 2.6 million Jews lived in Ukraine, the majority of which are believed to have been killed by the Nazis

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<sup>1</sup> Kyivan Rus | Definition, map, Vikings, & origin | britannica. Accessed February 2, 2026.  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Kyivan-Rus>.

<sup>2</sup> "What Was the Russian Revolution?" BBC Newsround, November 8, 2017.  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/41904621>.

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<sup>3</sup> "Ukraine Declares Its Independence | January 22, 1918." History.com, May 27, 2025.  
<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/january-22/ukraine-declares-its-independence>.

during the war.<sup>4</sup> After the war, Ukraine would go on to remain part of the Soviet Union and play a crucial part in the Cold War as an industrial and agricultural powerhouse, as it was home to many defense manufacturing plants and vast farmlands which provided food for many parts of the USSR.

Tragedy would once again strike Ukraine in 1986 with the meltdown of reactor no. 4 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. The Chernobyl Accident is considered the worst nuclear disaster in history as it caused the deaths of 30 plant workers and left the area around it with substantial levels of nuclear radiation.<sup>5</sup> Because of the disaster, both the cities of Chernobyl and nearby Pripyat were left abandoned as the radiation levels rendered them uninhabitable by humans.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Malloryk. "The 'Holocaust by Bullets' in Ukraine." The National WWII Museum | New Orleans, January 23, 2022.

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/ukraine-holocaust>.

<sup>5</sup> "Backgrounder on Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant Accident." Backgrounder on Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant Accident | Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Accessed February 2, 2026.

<https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/fact-sheets/chernobyl-bg>.

<sup>6</sup> "Inside the Abandoned City of Prip'yat, 30 Years after Chernobyl – in Pictures." The Guardian, April 5, 2016.

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/gallery/2016/apr/05/inside-abandoned-city-pripyat-30-years-chernobyl-in-pictures>.



### *Ukraine*

In 1991 the Soviet Union would collapse leading to a Ukrainian independence referendum and governmental elections which resulted in the election of Leonid Kravchuk as the first president of a fully independent Ukraine. At this time Ukraine possessed a considerable amount of nuclear weapons, many of the Soviet Union's warheads were on Ukrainian soil, however the launch codes to use them were in the hands of the Russian Federation which wanted the weapons back. In order to accomplish this, Russia told Ukraine that they would recognize Ukrainian sovereignty if they returned their soviet-era nuclear weapons to Russia, additionally the United States and the United Kingdom joined Russia as all three also offered security assurances to Ukraine should they hand over the weapons. Ukraine agreed and the 1994

Budapest Memorandum was born.<sup>7</sup>

Following these events, Ukraine went on to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty meaning they would not produce or transfer nuclear weapons.



### *The Orange Revolution*

In the early 2000s, Ukraine found itself constantly positioned between the spheres of influence of the European Union (EU)/North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and that of the Russian Federation. The first major test for modern Ukraine came along with the 2004 presidential election which put the Russo-Ukrainian relations at the center of the Ballot. Viktor Yanukovich was the candidate for the Party of Regions, a pro-Russian party that mainly tailored to voters in eastern and southern Ukraine; he was a strong advocate for closer

ties with Russia and supported many Soviet-era policies. On the other hand was Viktor Yushchenko, the candidate for the Our Ukraine political bloc, a pro-Western group that advocated for closer ties with the European Union and NATO; the bloc was made up of a group of political parties whose goal was to challenge the pro-Russian movement and strongly promote democratic ideals through Ukraine. The results of the elections had Viktor Yanukovich winning over Viktor Yushchenko, however Yushchenko's supporters suspected foul play from the government which at the time was largely run by Russian sympathisers. As such, people took to the streets wearing orange, Yushchenko's party's color, to protest against the election results. This led to a Supreme Court ruling that invalidated the previous elections. The runoff results were clear, Yushchenko had won 52% of the votes and would become the next president of Ukraine. This, however, was only a short-lived victory as in 2010 Yanukovich would go on to win the next presidential elections.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Kelly, Mary Louise, and Kat Lonsdorf. "Why Ukraine Gave up Its Nuclear Weapons - and What That Means in an Invasion by Russia." NPR, February 21, 2022. <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/21/1082124528/ukraine-russia-putin-invasion>.

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<sup>8</sup> "Profile: Ukraine's Ousted President Viktor Yanukovich." BBC News, February 28, 2014. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25182830>.

### *The Euromaidan Revolution*

Near the end of Yanukovych's presidency Ukraine would face a decisive moment in its history where they were faced with a decision: sign an economic agreement with the European Union and get one step closer to EU and NATO membership or sign an economic agreement with Russia and abandon the west. A few days before the EU agreement was set to be signed, President Yanukovych decided to go back on said agreement and sign the agreement proposed by Russia. Once again, many Ukrainians took to the streets to protest, only this time many were killed and arrested. The crisis came to an end upon Yanukovych's fleeing of Ukraine due to increased violence in protests against him.<sup>9</sup> Yanukovych still lives in Russia to this day and is considered by many to be an asset of the Russian state.

### *Russia Moves In*

After Yanukovych's departure in 2014, Russia invaded the Crimean Peninsula with the goal of capturing it and annexing it. With this new territory, Russia now had expanded access to the Black Sea, granting

them a much greater presence on the naval front. Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, justified this annexation by claiming that they were taking land that is rightfully Russian and that they were acting in the interests of ethnic Russians.

Following the annexation of Crimea, the provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk (collectively known as Donbas) declared themselves to be two independent republics separate from Ukraine. This comes because of pro-Russian separatist movements in the Donbas region, which is also the second most ethnically Russian region of Ukraine, following Crimea. It wasn't until recently, in mid-February, 2022, that Russia decided to recognize the newly formed republics and many believe that part of the reason to do so was to make it easier for Russia to have control of the region.<sup>10</sup> Belief of Russia's malicious intentions only grow with the recent Russian military buildup in the Donbas region, leading some nations such as the United States to believe that this could be a precursor to a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine, using the eastern Donbas region as the staging ground and entry point.

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<sup>9</sup> "Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia." Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed February 2, 2026. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia>.

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<sup>10</sup> Mirovalev, Mansur. "Donetsk and Luhansk: What You Should Know about the 'Republics.'" Al Jazeera, February 22, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/22/what-are-donetsk-and-luhansk-ukraines-separatist-statelets>.

### *A Brief History of United States Involvement*

Throughout the history of this conflict, the United States has had a tendency to take an indirect approach with their level of involvement. Formal collaboration between both nations began in 1994 with the aforementioned Budapest Memorandum in which the United States, along with Russia and the UK, provided Ukraine with security assurances, specifically towards Ukrainian sovereignty. These ties are later strengthened with the creation of the NATO-Ukraine Commission in 1997 and the events of the 2008 Bucharest Summit in which NATO leaders decided that Ukraine would eventually join the alliance.<sup>11</sup>

Following the establishment of these strategic partnerships between Ukraine and NATO, the United States increased their level of involvement in Ukraine whilst maintaining their indirect approach. This primarily consisted of support towards maintaining Ukrainian democracy, support for economic development, and defense assistance against weapons of mass

destruction.<sup>12</sup> Possibly the most important point in this era of collaboration came along with the Orange Revolution as many of the groups supporting Viktor Yushchenko were funded by the United States. Additionally, the US funded many pro-democracy groups whose main goals were to ensure that the elections were fair and just.

Following Russia's annexation of Crimea, the United States began to take a greater security interest in Ukraine since the threat of a Russian invasion would get Russia closer to NATO's borders. As such, in 2014, the United States expanded their involvement in Ukraine by adding military support in the form of military training to Ukrainian troops, provisions of lethal weapons to their military, and the introduction of intelligence operations.<sup>13</sup> All together, these added provisions made it clear to Russia that if they wanted Ukraine they would have to fight for it and that the United States would be involved.

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<sup>11</sup> Creatir, Twitter. "Relations with Ukraine." Site name seo. Accessed February 2, 2026. <https://www.nato.int/en/what-we-do/partnerships-and-cooperation/relations-with-ukraine#:~:text=NATO%20stands%20in%20unwavering%20solidarity,Atlantic%20integration%20and%20related%20reforms>.

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of State. Accessed February 2, 2026. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/36503.htm#:~:text=U.S.%20assistance%20programs%20in%20Ukraine,of%20services%2C%20and%20citizen%20participation>.

<sup>13</sup> Kim, Lucian. "How U.S. Military Aid Has Helped Ukraine since 2014." NPR, December 18, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/12/18/788874844/how-u-s-military-aid-has-helped-ukraine-since-2014>.

## Current Situation

It is February 23rd, 2022. Ukraine is currently being governed by a pro-NATO government headed by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy who has been actively seeking a way for Ukraine to join NATO and the EU. As part of his measures to root out corruption, namely pro-Russian oligarchs in Ukraine, President Zelenskyy targeted Viktor Medvedchuk, a close friend to Putin and one of Russia's largest supporters in Ukraine. As part of this move, Medvedchuk's assets were frozen, his pro-Russian TV channels were shut down, and he himself was charged with treason. Putin interpreted this move as being primarily anti-Russian and he decided that after years of waiting, it was time to act accordingly.

In spring of 2021, Ukrainian and European officials noticed Russian troop movements near the Ukrainian border. In November, satellite images revealed that these moves had not been small, rather Russia had moved upwards of 100,000 troops along with tanks and various weapons towards the Ukrainian border with more likely on the way. Russia claimed they were for training exercises. In December Russia demanded that NATO step back from Eastern Europe and not allow Ukraine to

join. However NATO responded by expanding the security on their Eastern European territories. Putin claims that Ukraine and Russia are one people, united by their shared history, a sentiment not shared by the majority of Ukrainians.

The United States sees the importance of keeping Russia out of Ukraine and considers Ukraine an ally, however, their priority lies in NATO and working with the most important US allies. As such, most of the aid in the region has been in the form of additional support units and supplies to the NATO countries in the area. US troops that had previously been stationed in Ukraine, have recently been repositioned to NATO countries near Ukraine such as Poland, Romania, and the Baltics.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, there has been a complete evacuation of the American Embassy in Kyiv due to Russia's recent activity and suspicions that an invasion may be coming any day now.

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<sup>14</sup> "More U.S. Troops Deploying to Europe, Guard Leaving Ukraine." National Guard, February 15, 2022.  
<https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/2934989/more-us-troops-deploying-to-europe-guard-leaving-ukraine/>.



## Questions to Consider

1. What does your delegation believe the United States should do to properly prepare itself for a possible invasion of Ukraine?
2. What are your delegation's opinions on NATO's eastward expansion and do they think Ukraine should become a member in the near future?
3. Does your delegation believe that the United States should get more directly involved with the situation in Ukraine?
4. Should it come to it, would your delegation be for or against the United States declaring war on Russia because of the situation in Ukraine?



## Role Descriptions

### **Kamala Harris - Vice-President**

Vice-President Harris is the second-in-command in the executive branch. Beyond her duties in the constitution, Harris also serves as one of the president's most trusted advisors.

### **Anthony Blinken - Secretary of State**

As the Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken's main job (when he's not playing his guitar) is to serve as the President's top foreign policy advisor. Above all he is a diplomat, having made a strong emphasis on attempting diplomatic resolutions to the Ukraine situation before the inevitable invasion.

### **Ron Klain - Chief of Staff**

As the President's closest aid and fundamentally his right hand man, Ron Klain has the most access to the President on a daily basis as he is essentially the person in charge of the day-to-day operations of the White House. He has a say in practically all affairs the president encounters.

### **Lloyd Austin - Secretary of Defense**

As a retired general from the Army, Lloyd Austin has a very special appreciation for

the duties he now holds as the nation's highest civilian military leader. He tries to avoid the public as much as possible, focusing more on properly fulfilling his duties than anything else.

### **Janet Yellen - Secretary of Treasury**

Bringing vast amounts of experience in economic institutions, Janet Yellen's approach to the treasury is a very human-centric one. She puts an emphasis on boosting employment and believes in prioritizing fair economic growth with the goal of creating a sustainable economy.

### **Jake Sullivan - National Security Advisor**

As President Biden's top advisor on national security, Jake Sullivan's job is to be up to date on current global affairs, especially those regarding military and intelligence. Sullivan doesn't trust Putin and has been paying careful attention to the military escalation in the Ukrainian border with beliefs of an impending invasion.

### **Jen Psaki - Press Secretary**

Having served as Director of Communications under President Obama (amongst her many other previous roles), Jen Psaki approaches the duties of Press Secretary in the most traditional manner.

She is ever-prepared to report the happenings of the White House to the press and the American people and does so with the highest level of competence and professionalism.

### **Linda Thomas-Greenfield - Ambassador to the United Nations**

As the US ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield's very job puts her in the middle of disputes between Russia and Ukraine as she constantly is looking for diplomatic ways to avoid a conflict between the two nations. She sets herself as a strong supporter of Ukrainian sovereignty and seeks a way to lessen Russia's security concerns.

### **Merrick Garland - Attorney General**

A pillar for the rule of law, Merrick Garland seeks only to ensure that everything is being done legally as to avoid any troublesome situations. He comes in highly prepared, having been nominated for the US Supreme court in 2016 and coming straight from being the chief judge at the DC circuit of the US court of appeals.

### **Samantha Power - USAID Administrator**

When Samantha Power arrived at the White House, her initial focus was to provide

foreign aid with regards to the COVID-19 pandemic, however this would start to change with the military buildup. As of now, her job with the Ukraine situation has been to do everything possible to maintain Ukraine's democracy by providing American support.

### **William Burns - CIA Director**

The CIA has a hand in pretty much everything, including Ukraine. Director Burns has had officers all around the regions in question and had them feeding information to the Ukrainian government. Everything from troop movements, numbers, weapons, and more was under the careful watch of the CIA, and Director Burns intends to keep it that way.

### **Avril Haines - Director of National Intelligence**

As the person in charge of national intelligence, Avril Haines worked to get as much information possible about Russia's invasion plans. Working with different intelligence agencies, Director Haines wants all the information available when it's available so that a defense strategy can be designed around it.

### **General Mark Milley - Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

As the top military adviser to the President and the highest ranking military officer in the United States, General Milley's job is to see the president through all kinds of military operations and give him adequate advice. His insights and analytical point of view are invaluable to the president and offer exactly what the US would need should Russia invade Ukraine.

### **General Christopher Cavoli - Commander of U.S. European Command**

General Cavoli's job takes place in Europe, as such, should something happen, he would likely be the first to know. He also knows Ukraine well as he oversaw training missions there. The General stands strongly with the idea that Russia is a major threat and that they are dangerous and should be watched, as such he believes caution is required in the scenario faced.

### **General Paul Nakasone - NSA Director/U.S. Cyber Command Commander**

The modern military makes heavy use of technology for pretty much everything. His two roles in the government mean that he has had a major role in analyzing the

conflict's developments and ensuring that the US military's technological systems work as they should.

### **General David Berger - Commandant of the Marine Corps**

As the leader of the US Marine Corps, it is General Berger's job to coordinate the branch and lead it. Additionally, the General serves as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and is one of the President's top military advisors, ready to provide guidance whenever he needs it.

### **General John "Jay" Raymond - Chief of Space Operations**

As military strategy moves more into far-range attacks, General Raymond's job is to ensure that the US's space assets are operational. This mainly includes satellites that provide information to intelligence agencies, GPS data, missile tracking, and much more useful data. General Raymond also serves on the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the head of the US Space Force.

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