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PRESIDENTIAL  
CABINET  
TOPIC BULLETIN

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CHAIRS

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# Academy Model United Nations

- THE TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE -

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Dear Delegates,

I hope that you enter this conference with an ideal mindset: to question, to resolve, and to learn from intellectual conversations about the world around you. I am incredibly excited to meet you all—my name is Katie Vandermel, and I am going to be co-chairing your committee! I am a junior in the Academy for Business and Finance and have been engaging in such conversations provided to me by MUN since freshman year. I hope you all can take away what I have after your AMUN experience: that walking away with a genuine understanding about what is happening around you is far more rewarding than winning. I look forward to meeting you all at the conference. Don't hesitate to reach out for any questions or concerns!

Good luck,  
Katie Vandermel, Co-Chair, FDR's Cabinet  
[katvan21@bergen.org](mailto:katvan21@bergen.org)

Dear Delegates,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you all to AMUN XXI! My name is Anindita Sisodiya and I am so excited to be your co-chair this year. I am currently a junior at BCA's science academy and have been doing MUN since freshman year. Ever since I went on my first MUN trip to Yale, MUN has become an integral part of my life and broadened my global perspective. I hope that through the thought provoking discussions you will partake in AMUN this year, you are able to gain a new perspective on the topics debated in this committee. As your co-chair, I hope to make your AMUN experience as memorable as possible, so don't hesitate to ask any questions you may have regarding the committee. I am really looking forward to how you all will combat issues faced by FDR's cabinet and can't wait to meet you all!

Best of luck,  
Anindita Sisodiya, Co-Chair, FDR's Cabinet  
[anisis21@bergen.org](mailto:anisis21@bergen.org)



## Committee Overview:

In this committee you will each be representing a member of FDR's cabinet during the Great Depression and into World War II. Committee structure is similar to that of a GA; delegates are expected to follow the same parliamentary procedures. However, instead of passing working papers, you will be passing bills, which will be your solutions to the issues discussed. There is no limit to how many you can pass, however we would like to see around 5-10. Your goal in this committee is to pass bills to help get the U.S. out of the Great Depression and World War II while also adhering to your character's portfolios (set of skills/expertise). Committee is expected to address the Great Depression on the first day, from which we will shift into addressing World War II. For every one real-world hour, approximately one committee year will go by. This means that by the end of the 2-days of AMUN, this committee will end around the end of FDR's Presidency. Keep in mind that this committee will begin on January 20, 1933 - the same day FDR was sworn in as the 32nd President of the United States.

## Parliamentary Procedure:

This committee will follow the standard parliamentary procedure. A majority of the time spent in committee will be in moderated caucuses, but there will also be unmoderated caucuses as the committee sees necessary, motioned by delegates. The chair reserves the discretion to make final calls before voting on motions. Resolutions will be passed in the form of "bills", which are essentially shorter draft resolutions that cover a specific topic more in-depth. There is no limit to the number of bills the Cabinet may pass.



# Topic History:

The Great Depression has been characterized as the worst economic chapter of American history, beginning after the stock market crash of 1929. This sent Wall Street into a scramble and depleted the assets of millions of investors. Over the next several years, consumer spending and investment dropped, causing steep declines in industrial output and employment. As a result, failing companies laid off workers. By 1933, when the Great Depression reached its lowest point, some 15 million Americans were unemployed and nearly half the country's banks had failed.

The election of 1932 was held on November 8th, 1932, after the advent of the Great Depression. It may be seen as a realigning election: it concluded the Fourth Party System, which had been formerly succeeded by a string of Republicans and put Democrats into power. Incumbent Republican President Herbert Hoover was defeated in a landslide by Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was currently the Governor of New York. In his political campaigns, Roosevelt leveraged the shortcomings of the Hoover administration and promised economic rehabilitation with the "New Deal" for America.

The Second World War erupted in 1939, spanning until 1945. The war involved over 100 million people from over 30 countries, and predominantly affected the largest of military superpowers: nations such as Germany, and Japan.

The New Deal was a series of programs, public work projects, financial reforms, and regulations enacted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Congress between 1933 and 1936. These reforms were constructed in response to the need for recovery and recalibration from the Great Depression. Such programs provided support to farmers, the elderly, youth, and the unemployed populations of the nation. Projects that garnered significant attention were the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Farm Security Administration



(FSA), the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 (NIRA) and the Social Security Administration (SSA).

The New Deal's financial safeguards included efforts to re-inflate the economy. Because the economy was destabilized by bank failures followed by credit crunches, this led to the enactment of the Emergency Banking Act and formation of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). These actions served to better financial stability by securing loans and granting deposits, thereby reducing public discontent. There was also a monetary reform, in which the U.S. economy abandoned the gold standard which weakened purchasing power and the overall American banking system.

Another critical component was farm and rural programs, which focused on raising crop prices and re-stimulating the agricultural industry. By legislation including the Tennessee Valley Authority, governments were able to subsidize farmers and boost economic productivity and wages.

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# Character Profiles:

This part will be brief bios about the members of FDR's cabinet at the beginning of his term. Although there were only ten Cabinet members other than FDR and his vice president, we are taking creative liberties and are adding a few more characters to make the committee more dynamic. Here, you will briefly describe each character, what their goals are, their priorities, and their portfolio powers (what they can do that makes them powerful and differentiates them from other characters). Also, keep in mind that we will be starting at the beginning of his first term, and some cabinet members were switched over the course of his four terms.

## **Secretary of State Cordell Hull**

*Cordell Hull is known as the father of the UN. On March 4, 1933, FDR appointed Hull as his Secretary of State. Hull was a long time advocate for tariff reduction and helped secure the passage of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act (RTAA), which gave the President the power to personally negotiate bilateral tariff reduction. Hull also advocated for closer relations with Latin America, as well as the need of a postwar multinational institution with the sole purpose of promoting peace and security (now known as the United Nations).*

## **Secretary of the Treasury William H. Woodin**

*From 1927 to 1932, Woodin served as the director of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. In 1933, FDR appointed him as his Secretary of Treasury. During the Great Depression, he was tasked with restoring public confidence in the government and to promote FDR'S New Deal policies.*

## **Secretary of War George H. Dern**

*George H. Dern was appointed by FDR to serve in his cabinet as Secretary of War. As Secretary of War, Dern advocated greater efficiency and*



*readiness amongst the troops, specifically aiming to increase strength of army air corps. He also initiated a five year plan to equip the army with better access to ammunition and other resources.*

### **Attorney General Homer S. Cummings**

*Senator Thomas J. Walsh's sudden death caused FDR to appoint Cummings to the Department of Justice. As attorney general, Cummings has announced the capture of Bruno Hauptmann, who was responsible for the murder of the Lindbergh baby, built Alcatraz, strengthened the federal investigative units (this eventually led to the creation of the FBI), and has fought constant battles in support of the New Deal legislation.*

### **Postmaster General James A. Farley**

*James A Farley became secretary of the New York State Democratic Committee in 1928, where he was responsible for organizing FDR's successful campaign. As a reward, FDR appointed Farley as his Postmaster-General.*

### **Secretary of the Navy Claude A. Swanson**

*Claude A. Swanson was Senator of Virginia until 1933. He supported economic and social reforms, including the child labor reforms, banking laws, reduced tariffs, federal funding of highway construction, as well as the expansion of the Norfolk Naval Base and the League of Nations. However, Swanson did publicly oppose granting women the right to vote. In 1933, he was appointed as FDR's Secretary of the Navy.*

### **Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes**

*By being able to swing liberal Republicans in favor of their opposition, Ickes was appointed by FDR as his Secretary of the Interior. In this post, Ickes advocated for the preservation of natural resources in opposition to the exploitation by private interests.*



### **Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace**

*Wallace's agricultural expertise, combined with him being able to shift "conservative Iowa" to support the "radical New Deal", made FDR appoint him as Secretary of Agriculture in 1933. As Secretary of Agriculture, Wallace formulated the Agricultural Adjustment Act, which was designed to raise and stabilize farm prices, conserve soil, store reserves, and control production.*

### **Secretary of Commerce Daniel C. Roper**

*Daniel C. Roper was appointed as Secretary of Commerce in 1933 to FDR's cabinet, during which he is credited with establishing the Business Advisory Board.*

### **Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins**

*In 1933, Frances Perkins became the first woman to be appointed to a president's cabinet. As Secretary of Labor, she remained a firm advocate for the creation of unemployment insurance and having close government supervision of economic policy. Perkins also assisted FDR in creating the Civilian Conservation Corps, drafted the Social Security Act, and supervised the Fair Laborers Act.*

### **New York City Governor Herbert H. Lehman**

*During World War I, Lehman was a part of the General Staff Corps in Washington D.C., after which he immersed himself in politics, serving as FDR's lieutenant governor from 1929 to 1932. Although he was known to be a dull politician, he had gained a reputation for non partisanship as governor. During his time as NYC's governor, Lehman helped initiate the "Little New Deal" and aimed to institute public assistance programs to provide safety to New Yorkers.*

### **Speaker of the House - Henry Thomas Rainey (D)**

*Roosevelt elected Rainey to be Speaker of the House after former Speaker*



*Garner became Vice President. As Speaker, Rainey allowed the Roosevelt administration to carry out the New Deal, with little to no interference.*

### **Senate Majority Leader and Democratic Conference Chairman Joseph T. Robinson (D)**

*As Minority Leader, Robinson encouraged Hoover to take on more public works projects. When the Democrats took over Congress in 1933, Robinson became the Senate's Majority Leader.*

### **House Majority Leader Joseph W. Byrns (D)**

*After his unsuccessful attempt at running for district attorney in 1902, Byrns was given and eventually elected as the Democratic nomination for US Representative. He succeeded Henry Thomas Rainey as the House Majority Leader in 1933, when FDR became President.*

### **“Brain Trust” Advisor Adolf Berle**

*Berle was one of the original members of Roosevelt's Brain Trust. He served as Roosevelt's informal advisor on issues ranging from his campaign strategy to the nation's economic recovery. He even wrote Roosevelt's “Commonwealth Club Address”.*

### **“Brain Trust” Advisor Rexford Tugwell**

*A member of Roosevelt's Brain Trust, Tugwell's position changed from Assistant Secretary in 1933 to Undersecretary of the USDA in 1934. During his time in office, he helped create the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), Soil Conservation Service, and the Resettlement Administration (RA).*

### **“Brain Trust” Advisor Harry Hopkins**

*Hopkins served as Roosevelt's Federal Relief Administrator in addition to being on his Brain Trust. While in this position, he oversaw the FERA, CWA, and WPA.*



## **“Brain Trust” Advisor Raymond Moley**

*A member of Roosevelt’s Brain Trust, Moley helped FDR write his speeches and helped FDR to implement his policies, such as that of agriculture regulations.*

\*\*For the “Brain Trust” Advisors: FDR’s “Brain Trust” was a group of academic advisors whom he gathered to help with his 1932 Presidential Campaign and were later appointed as some of his closest advisors. Many of these delegates held positions within FDR’s Administration, but keep in mind that this committee will be beginning immediately after FDR’s swearing-in ceremony.

## Questions to Consider:

Did the New Deal Programs help end the Great Depression or World War II? Why?

To what extent did American isolationism result in World War II?

What action could FDR have taken to prevent World War II? Was World War II a good thing for the United States in the long run?

Did World War II help the United States out of the Great Depression from the decade before?

In what ways was the New Deal integral to America’s long term economic prosperity? In what ways may it seem detrimental?

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