

VEFAMUN'25 HCC: OBAMA'S CABINET - STUDY GUIDE

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Agenda Item: The Capture of Osama bin Laden

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1. Letter from Secretary-General

Most Special Participants of VefaMUN'25,

It is I, Cansu Solmaz Hurşitoğlu, an 11th grader at Vefa High School. As the Secretary-General of

VefaMUN'25, it is my utmost pleasure to welcome you all to the 6th edition of VefaMUN.

I can confidently say that our academic and organization teams have poured their hearts into ensuring that VefaMUN'25 excels in every aspect. We endured sleepless nights, moments of stress, and countless challenges, but in the end, we have created something truly exceptional.

All of our team members burned the candle at both ends, which brings us to today: the best version of ourselves.

We have meticulously designed each committee to provide an enriching academic experience. I have no doubt that you will have an unforgettable time with eight committees, all carefully crafted for your engagement.

I have been taking great care of this heirloom ever since I started carrying it, and I invite you to join our conference as our family.

Welcome once again!

Warmest Regards,
Cansu Solmaz Hurşitoğlu
Secretary-General of VefaMUN'25

2. Letter from Under-Secretary-General and Academic Assistants

Esteemed Participants,

On behalf of the United States of America and under the leadership of President Barack Obama, it is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this exciting and interesting committee. We, as the Under-Secretary General Güney Marol, academic assistants Ataberk Ata and Zeynep Naz Cengiz, worked hard with passion to make this committee a great experience for all of you.

The capture of Osama bin Laden stands as a testament to the United States' commitment to justice, international security, and cooperation with allies around the world. It also reaffirms the importance of diplomacy, intelligence, and precise action in the global fight against terrorism. In the historical crisis committee, you will simulate Barack Obama's cabinet and collaborate to discuss the details of the operation regarding the capture of Osama bin Laden, leader of the terrorist organization al-Qaeda. With critical thinking and your detailed innovative directives, the operation will be successfully conducted and coordinated. We wish you all a great conference. If you have any questions in mind, don't hesitate to contact us via email, guneymarol@hotmail.com.

We wish you all a wonderful conference, see you in the cabinet.

Güney Marol

Under-Secretary-General of HCC: Obama's Cabinet

Zeynep Naz Cengiz & Ataberk Ata

Academic Assistants of HCC: Obama's Cabinet

3. Executive Summary

The late 2000s were a turbulent time for the United States. The superpower, still recovering from the September 11 attacks of 2001, had become in 2007 the starting point of the Great Recession, the largest economic crash since the Great Depression. This came just seven years after the burst of the dot-com bubble, which had caused an economic panic of its own at the turn of the century. This is all to say that the US in the 2000s was not looking exactly prosperous. It was under such conditions that Barack Obama was elected the 43rd President, ending two terms of Republican rule.

He faced two major challenges upon taking office: Reviving a struggling economy and refocusing on the global fight against terrorism. Obama also inherited from Bush the War in Afghanistan, the military operation launched primarily against Al-Qaeda in the wake of the September 11 attacks. At the time, America's global reputation was stained, and confidence in the government was low, adding even more pressure on the new administration.

9/11 and the broader US campaign against religious extremism made finding Osama bin Laden a top priority. Obama's early years consisted of intelligence gathering, which led to actionable information regarding bin Laden's location in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Intelligence gathering was mostly focused on tracking couriers believed to be in close contact with bin Laden and conducting surveillance missions in various locations in Pakistan.

By the late 2010s, the CIA had identified a high-security compound in Pakistan with no telephone or internet connections, raising suspicions about it being bin Laden's hideout. Complete certainty about bin Laden's presence was never reached, even though intelligence analysts worked for months to gather a case strong enough to launch direct military operations.

After years of intelligence gathering and careful deliberation with his Cabinet, President Obama authorized the operation, codenamed Operation Neptune Spear, which was carried out by US Navy SEALs. The mission involved two modified Black Hawk helicopters carrying SEAL Team Six operatives, without informing Pakistani authorities to maintain secrecy. The SEALs breached the compound, overcoming many complications in the process, and ultimately located and killed Osama bin Laden on the third floor. The SEALs also collected vital pieces of intelligence from the site before departing, and bin Laden's body was buried at sea the next day.

The operation was planned to minimize civilian casualties and avoid Pakistani detection to prevent straining diplomatic relations. This operation was successful, becoming a turning point in Obama's presidential career, restoring the sense of trust for many Americans and reshaping the global war on terror.

4. Key Terms and Definitions

The Executive Branch: The American State operates on the separation of powers, with three clearly defined branches of government. The Legislative, The Judiciary, and the Executive. The Executive Branch, headed by the Office of the President, is created by Article Two of the US Constitution. The Constitution vests, by way of the aptly named Vesting Clause, *the executive power in a President of the United States of America*. The chief responsibility of the Executive is to *take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed*, as prescribed by the Take Care Clause. In this context, the President and the President alone are responsible for all Federal Agencies. Important to note, however, is that the right to legislate is exclusive to Congress. Federal Agencies may interpret relevant statutes, but not rewrite them.

Joint Special Operations Command: The JSOC is the joint headquarters designed to study special operations requirements and techniques, ensure interoperability and equipment standardization, plan and conduct joint special operations exercises and training, and develop unique joint operations tactics. For this task, the Joint Communications Unit is tasked to ensure the compatibility of communications systems and standard operating procedures of the different special operations units. It also oversees the Special Mission Units of U.S. Special Operations Command. These ultra-elite special operations forces units conduct highly classified and complex operations.



SEAL Team Six: The Naval Special Warfare Development Group (NSWDG), abbreviated as DEVGRU (Development Group) and known as SEAL Team Six, is the United States Navy component of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). The unit is often referred to within JSOC as Task Force Blue. DEVGRU is administratively supported by the Naval Special Warfare Command and operationally commanded by JSOC. Most information concerning DEVGRU is designated as classified, and details of its activities are not usually commented on by either the United States Department of Defense or the White House. DEVGRU conducts various specialized missions such as counterterrorism, hostage rescue, special reconnaissance, and direct action, often against high-value targets.



The Central Intelligence Agency: The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is a civilian foreign intelligence service of the federal government of the United States tasked with advancing national security through collecting and analyzing intelligence from around the world and conducting covert operations. The agency is headquartered in the George Bush Center for Intelligence in Langley, Virginia. The CIA is headed by a director and is divided into various directorates, including a Directorate of Analysis and a Directorate of Operations. Unlike the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the CIA has no law enforcement



function and focuses on intelligence gathering overseas, with only limited domestic intelligence collection. The CIA is responsible for coordinating all human intelligence activities in the IC. It has been instrumental in establishing intelligence services in many countries and has provided support to many foreign organizations. The CIA exerts foreign political influence through its paramilitary operations units, including its Special Activities Center. It has also provided support to several foreign political groups and governments, including planning, coordinating, training in torture, and technical support. It was involved in many regime changes and carried out terrorist attacks and planned assassinations of foreign leaders.

Al-Qaeda: Al-Qaeda is a pan-Islamist militant organization led by Sunni jihadists who self-identify as a vanguard spearheading a global Islamist revolution to unite the Muslim world under a supra-national Islamic caliphate. Its membership is mostly composed of Arabs but also includes people from other ethnic groups.



Al-Qaeda has mounted attacks on civilian, economic, and military targets of the U.S. and its allies, such as the 1998 US embassy bombings, the USS Cole bombing, and the September 11 attacks.

September 11 Attacks: The September 11 attacks, commonly known as 9/11, were four coordinated Islamist terrorist suicide attacks carried out by al-Qaeda against the United States in 2001. On that Tuesday morning, nineteen terrorists hijacked four commercial airliners, crashing the first two into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and the third into the Pentagon, which is the headquarters of the US Department of Defense in Arlington County, Virginia. The fourth plane crashed in a rural Pennsylvania field during a passenger revolt. The September 11 attacks killed 2,977 people, making it the deadliest terrorist attack in history. In response to the attacks, the United States waged a multi-decade global war on terror to eliminate hostile groups deemed terrorist organizations, as well as the foreign governments purported to support them.

Osama Bin Laden: Osama bin Laden was a Saudi Arabian-born Islamist dissident and militant leader who was the founder and first general emir of al-Qaeda. In the U.S., Bin Laden is a symbol of terrorism and mass murder, reviled for his justification and orchestration of attacks against Americans. He organized the September 11 attacks, which killed nearly 3,000 people. This resulted in the U.S. invading Afghanistan and launching the War on Terror. Bin Laden became the subject of a nearly decade-long international manhunt led by the U.S. During this period, he hid in the mountains of Afghanistan and later escaped to neighboring Pakistan. On 2 May 2011, Bin Laden was killed by U.S. special operations forces at his compound in Abbottabad.



Operation Neptune Spear: The code name for the U.S. military mission that resulted in the killing of Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda, on May 2, 2011, in Abbottabad, Pakistan. The operation was executed by the U.S. Navy's SEAL Team 6 (DEVGRU) and was directed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). It demonstrated the capabilities of U.S. intelligence and special operations forces in carrying out high-stakes missions.

Counterterrorism: Counterterrorism, also known as anti-terrorism, relates to the practices, military tactics, techniques, and strategies that governments, law enforcement, businesses, and intelligence agencies use to combat or eliminate terrorism and violent extremism. If an act of terrorism occurs as part of a broader insurgency (and insurgency is included in the definition of terrorism), then counterterrorism may additionally employ countering urgency measures. The United States Armed Forces use the term "foreign internal defense" for programs that support other countries' attempts to suppress insurgency, lawlessness, or subversion, or to reduce the conditions under which threats to national security may develop.

Safehouse: Osama bin Laden's residence in Abbottabad functioned as his safe house. Constructed between 2003 and 2005, the compound was located in the Bilal Town suburb, approximately 1.3 kilometers from the Pakistan Military Academy. The three-story structure was fortified with high concrete walls topped with barbed wire, had limited windows, and lacked internet or telephone connections to avoid detection. Despite its size and security features, the compound was designed to blend in with the surrounding neighborhood.

Jackpot: This designation was used to refer to the high-value target throughout the operation. In Operation Neptune Spear, the U.S. mission that led to the killing of Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011, the code name "Jackpot" was assigned to bin Laden himself. This designation was used by U.S. forces to refer to the high-value target during the operation. The term "Jackpot" signified the successful identification or acquisition of the primary objective.

Geronimo: The code name Geronimo controversy came about after media reports that the U.S. operation to kill Osama bin Laden used the code name "Geronimo" to refer to either the overall operation, to fugitive bin Laden himself, or to the act of killing or capturing bin Laden. Press reports claimed that "Geronimo" was used in the raid to refer to bin Laden himself, but this was later contradicted by official sources.

Islamabad: Islamabad is the capital city of Pakistan, situated on the Pothohar Plateau in the northern part of the country. In the context of Operation Neptune Spear, which led to the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011, Islamabad's proximity to Abbottabad was significant. The operation's execution near the capital raised questions about Pakistan's intelligence capabilities and the possible presence of bin Laden so close to the nation's political center.

Abbottabad: Abbottabad is a city located in the Hazara region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in northern Pakistan. Abbottabad gained international attention on May 2, 2011, when Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda, was killed by U.S. Navy SEALs during Operation Neptune Spear. Bin Laden had been residing in a fortified compound in the Bilal Town area of Abbottabad, just a short distance from the Pakistan Military Academy. The

compound featured high walls topped with barbed wire and lacked telephone or internet connections, measures intended to avoid detection. The presence of bin Laden in a military town raised questions about how he could have remained undetected for years. Following the raid, the compound was demolished by Pakistani authorities in 2012 to prevent it from becoming a shrine.

5. Historical Context

5.1. Al-Qaeda and Its Relations with the United States of America

Al Qaeda (AQ) is a transnational Sunni Islamist Terror organization which established in 1988 by Osama bin Laden from a network of Arab and foreign veterans of the U.S.-backed Afghan insurgency against the Soviet Union, to support Islamist causes in conflicts around the world. Al Qaeda once had a hierarchical organization and a relatively small and geographically contained membership, with their top priority being loyalty to religion and the organization; loyalty meant being reliable people who could die for the organization and its goals for AQ.

Al at their peak had regional branches such as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), which renamed itself the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in 2006. U.S.-backed Saudi efforts dismantled an AQ branch in the country by 2005, leaving only scattered cells remaining. In 2009, these cells united with Yemeni AQ operatives to form Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

Al-Qaeda was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in 1999 by the United States of America after the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which the USA responded to with airstrike launches against targets in Afghanistan and Sudan. After the designation of Al Qaeda as an FT, Al Qaeda conducted several attacks against the U.S., such as the 2000 attack on the USS Cole in Yemen and the September 11 attacks. AQ attacks against U.S. and Western targets worldwide continued in the years after 9/11, but the group has not successfully carried out a major attack inside the United States since then.

After 9/11, Al-Qaeda became the most important enemy and objective of the U.S. The United States launched military operations against the Taliban government and Al-Qaeda after 9/11.

5.2. Domestic Political Situation of the United States of America

The United States presidential election of 2008 was a crucial event in U.S. history, not just since Barack Obama defeated John McCain and became the first African-American president, but also because his election was the representation of people's desire for change in a country tired of war and economic collapse. Americans continue to require security, and the external terrorist threat, especially from Al Qaeda, is. The failure to kill or capture Osama bin Laden

is a great weight on the national psyche, and if President Obama cannot deliver on this, it can cost him reelection and deal a serious blow to the global image of the American government.

Foreign terrorism is not the only concern, however. The disastrous 2008 economic collapse shook the foundation of trust in government and financial institutions and left millions jobless and anxious, which also helped Obama to be elected because Obama offered empathy and genuine help for middle-class Americans. Americans are not just asking for security abroad, they are demanding healthcare reform, economic relief, and a system that works for them here at home.

Obama did not only because he promised those reforms, but also because the Republican Party was split, burdened by the unpopular Iraq War and the fallout of George W. Bush's presidency. Now, a country's future is riding on Obama's government's ability to deliver on his promises, both by ending the wars responsibly and by finishing what began with 9/11. If he fails, it will not just be his failure; it will be a failure of American leadership in the eyes of the world.

5.3. Importance of 9/11 and the Aftermath

The September 11 attacks were a cornerstone in American history. No other event in U.S. history has shattered the nation's sense of security like the deadly assaults on New York and Washington that took the lives of almost 3,000 people on 11 September 2001. Four coordinated Islamist terrorist suicide attacks by Al-Qaeda, nineteen terrorists hijacked four commercial airliners, crashing the first two into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and the third into the Pentagon, and the fourth crashed in a rural Pennsylvania field during a passenger revolt.

The destruction of the Twin Towers in New York and the severe damage done to the Pentagon by Middle Eastern terrorists signaled a changed world. U.S. responded first with stunned surprise and overwhelming grief, then with outrage and stern refusal to be intimidated. The broader impact of 9/11 meant that the perceived threat of international terrorism dominated governments and their foreign policies.

The September 11 attacks transformed the first term of President George W. Bush and led to what he referred to as the war on terror, officially the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Two years after 9/11, the decision was made to invade Iraq; the invasion of Afghanistan was launched barely one month later, on 7 October 2001. American, British, and Afghan United Front (Northern Alliance) forces were deployed to destroy al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban regime that had harboured the terrorist group in Afghanistan. The September 11 attacks started a chain reaction that changed the American people's and government's opinions and objectives about national security and counter-terrorism, which led to the next decade of the U.S. and caused wars, struggles, and huge socio-economic crises.

The attacks also had immediate and overwhelming effects on the United States population. People began rallying around the popularized phrase, "United We Stand," in hopes of being resilient and keeping the American spirit alive in the face of a devastating attack. Under this phrase, there is a need for the American people to come together, as well as the need to punish those who did this, and if that fails, the response to the government will be devastating.

5.4. Osama bin Laden: The Leader of Al Qaeda

Osama bin Laden or Usama bin Laden was a Saudi Arabian militant leader who was the founder and first general emir of al-Qaeda. He was a pan-Islamist, Jihadist man. Bin Laden was born in Riyadh in 10 of March 1957, to the aristocratic bin Laden family, which has over 60 members and is connected with the innermost circles of the Saudi royal family. The controlling shareholder of the Saudi Bin Laden Group family publicly disowned him in 1994 because of his actions. Osama was one of more than 50 children of Muhammad bin Laden.

Osama studied business administration at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, he also received instruction in religious studies from Muḥammad Qutb, brother of the Islamic revivalist Sayyid Qutb, and Abdullah Azzam, a militant leader. His time at King Abdul Aziz University and connection with Qutb were key to his future because they not only influenced his radical views but also provided him with the skills to market al-Qaeda.

In 1979, Osama began traveling to meet Afghan resistance leaders and raise funds for the resistance because he believed that the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan was an act of aggression against Islam. By 1984, his activities were mostly centered in Afghanistan and Pakistan, he collaborated with Azzam to recruit and organize Arab volunteers to fight the Soviet occupation. Osama stood out among the other militants due to his financial resources, reputation for piety, and bravery in combat, which enhanced his stature as a militant leader. The computer database that he created for listing the names of volunteers in 1988 led to the formation of a new militant network named Al-Qaeda.

In 1989 Osama returned to Saudi Arabia after the Soviet Union's withdrawal he welcomed as a hero but soon government saw him as a radicalist and a potential threat. Bin Laden was outraged when Saudi Arabia relied instead on U.S. troops for protection during the Persian Gulf War, leading to a growing rift between bin Laden and the country's leaders, and in 1991 he left Saudi Arabia, settling in Sudan at the end of the year.

In the early 1990s, bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network began to take action against U.S. dominance in the Muslim world. Osama glorified other groups' attacks on Americans. In 1994, Osama started training Islamist militants to participate in conflicts around the world. At that time, Saudi Arabia revoked his citizenship, and his family disowned him.

In 1996, Sudan expelled bin Laden due to heavy international pressure. He received protection from the Taliban after these events. Osama issued the first of two fatwās, which he declared a holy war (jihad) against the United States and wanted to overthrow the existing world order and establish a single Islamic state.

After the declaration of war, Al-Qaeda trained militants and funded terrorist attacks. In 1998, Osama ordered an operation larger than any previous Al-Qaeda operation, the bombing of U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, which killed 224 people and showed that they were a real threat. Osama ordered several more operations against the U.S., the most significant being the September 11 attacks that resulted in huge consequences. After the capture of Tora Bora, Osama went into hiding, sent some videotape messages, and the great manhunt began.

5.5. Previous Operations Against Osama bin Laden

The operation to kill Osama bin Laden became a crucial topic after the September 11 attacks. Philip D. Zelikow, the executive director of the 9/11 report, identifies several key moments in Clinton's presidency when a different decision might have led to bin Laden's death; in all those situations would lead a very different future that may have prevented immensely important events in U.S. history.

In May 1998, the Tarnak Farms raid plan was rejected. The CIA made a hard effort to capture bin Laden and to bring him to the United States for a trial. But at the last minute, the CIA senior management lost its nerve and never brought the plan to Clinton for a decision. In August 1998, a campaign for continued air strikes was shelved after al-Qaeda attacks two U.S. embassies in Africa. After the embassy attacks, Clinton ordered air strikes against al-Qaeda targets, which were deemed ineffectual. Officials discussed but did not reach an agreement on a campaign of follow-on air strikes. President Clinton signed a Memorandum of Notification authorizing the CIA to let its tribal assets use force to capture Bin Laden and his associates, not to kill them.

In December 1998, a missile strike against Kandahar was rejected. Officials had intelligence on bin Laden's whereabouts, but decided not to allow a missile strike because of fears of civilian casualties. Early in 1999, the CIA received reporting that Bin Laden was spending much of his time at one of several camps in the Afghan desert south of Kandahar. At the beginning of February, Bin Laden was reportedly located in the vicinity of the Sheikh Ali camp U.S. decided not to strike because of diplomatic considerations.

In February 1999 CIA wanted permission to kill Bin Laden if a successful capture operation was not feasible however, President Clinton crossed out key language he had approved in December and inserted more ambiguous language Later in 1999, when legal authority was needed for enlisting still other collaborators and for covering a wider set of contingencies, the lawyers returned to the language used in August 1998, which authorized force only in the

context of a capture operation. In May 1999, another opportunity to do the missile strike on Kandahar presents itself, and top officials again do not pull the trigger, to the intense frustration of lower-level officials.

These were occasions before the September 11 attacks, after the attacks, and killing Osama bin Laden became a top priority for the U.S. However, Osama was hiding in Tora Bora. According to information U.S. started an attack against Tora Bora, which they gained control of the area, but were unable to catch Osama. U.S. executed investigations and interrogations to find Osama's location and finish him.

6. Timeline

6.1. Chronology of Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden

1980s: Origins and Formation of Al-Qaeda

- **1979** - The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi, joins the Afghan resistance (Mujahideen) and funds fighters through his network.
- **1988** - Bin Laden forms Al-Qaeda ("The Base"), a group dedicated to global jihad beyond Afghanistan.

1990s: Al-Qaeda Becomes a Global Terrorist Network

- **1991** - Bin Laden is expelled from Saudi Arabia for opposing U.S. troops in the Gulf War. He moved to Sudan.
 - **1993** - Al-Qaeda is linked to the first World Trade Center bombing in New York.
 - **1996** - The U.S. pressures Sudan to expel bin Laden. He relocated to Afghanistan under Taliban protection.
 - **1998** - Al-Qaeda bombs U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing over 200 people.
 - **1999** - The CIA begins tracking bin Laden closely.
- October 2000 - Al-Qaeda attacks the USS Cole in Yemen, killing 17 U.S. sailors.

2001–2011: 9/11 and the U.S. War on Al-Qaeda

- **September 11, 2001** - Al-Qaeda carried out the 9/11 attacks, killing nearly 3,000 people.
- **October 7, 2001** - The U.S. invades Afghanistan to dismantle Al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban.
- **December 2001** - Bin Laden escapes the Battle of Tora Bora, vanishing into Pakistan.
- **2002–2009**: Al-Qaeda remains active, carrying out bombings in Bali (2002), Madrid (2004), and London (2005).
- **2010**: The CIA identifies bin Laden's courier, Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti, and tracks him to Abbottabad, Pakistan.
- **May 2, 2011**: Bin Laden is killed in Operation Neptune Spear.

6.2. Operations and Key Events to Find Osama bin Laden

December 2001: Battle of Tora Bora - The Missed Opportunity

- Following the U.S. invasion, bin Laden flees to the Tora Bora mountains, a remote, heavily fortified area near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.
- **December 3-6, 2001** - The U.S. launches airstrikes on Al-Qaeda's cave networks.
- **December 10-12, 2001** - The CIA intercepts radio transmissions from bin Laden, confirming his presence.
- **December 13, 2001** - Bin Laden reportedly sends a farewell message to his fighters, hinting at his escape.
- **December 16-17, 2001** - U.S. forces, relying on Afghan militias, fail to block escape routes into Pakistan. Bin Laden and his fighters disappear into the tribal regions.

Aftermath:

- The CIA later confirmed that bin Laden escaped to Pakistan.
- Tora Bora is later seen as one of the biggest missed opportunities to capture bin Laden.

2002–2009: The Long Search

- **2002–2007** - Bin Laden avoids electronic communication, making him difficult to track.
- **2004** - A bin Laden videotape confirms he is alive and still leading Al-Qaeda.
- **2007** - CIA interrogations of captured Al-Qaeda operatives reveal the name Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti, a trusted courier.

2009–2010: Identifying Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti

- **2009** - The CIA intercepts a phone call made by al-Kuwaiti. He speaks in coded language but confirms he is actively working for Al-Qaeda.
- **2010** - CIA tracks al-Kuwaiti's vehicle and follows him to a mysterious high-walled compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

2010: Finding Bin Laden in Abbottabad

- **August 2010** - The CIA begins monitoring the Abbottabad compound:
 - No internet or phone lines inside.
 - A tall, bearded man nicknamed "The Pacer" is seen walking in the courtyard.
 - Analysts estimate a 70-80% chance that it is bin Laden.

February-April 2011 - The U.S. decides on a SEAL Team 6 raid instead of a drone strike.

6.3. Operations to Execute Bin Laden (Operation Neptune Spear)

Delegates are expected to research Operation Neptune Spear and draft details for their operation in the committee on their own.

6.4. Aftermath and Global Impact

Immediate Aftermath (May 2, 2011)

- **3:50 AM (Washington D.C.)** - Obama is informed: "Geronimo EKIA" (Enemy Killed in Action).
- **7:00 AM** - Bin Laden's body is buried at sea from the USS Carl Vinson. Obama announces: "The United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden."

Global Reactions & Consequences

- Pakistan expresses outrage over the raid, claiming it violated its sovereignty. Al-Qaeda confirms bin Laden's death and vows revenge.
- **June 2011** - The U.S. begins an accelerated withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- **August 6, 2011** - An American helicopter is shot down in Afghanistan, killing 30 U.S. soldiers, including 15 SEAL Team 6 members.
- **2014-2019** - Al-Qaeda weakens while ISIS emerges as a major terrorist threat.
- **2022** - Bin Laden's successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri, is killed by a U.S. drone strike in Kabul.

Final Impact of Bin Laden's Death

- Al-Qaeda's influence has declined, but new jihadist groups have emerged.
- The U.S. war in Afghanistan ended in 2021, 20 years after 9/11.
- Pakistan's ties with the U.S. remain strained over accusations of harboring bin Laden.

7. Major Themes and Debate Topics

During the sessions, delegates must be prepared to tackle both the diplomatic and operational dimensions of the missions to capture or kill Osama bin Laden. Members of the Cabinet are expected to balance intelligence gathering, diplomatic maneuvers, military planning, internal policy management, and public relations, all in a constant crisis environment. The long-term interests of the US must be protected, all while planning and executing a high-risk mission.

In addition, delegates must be ready to respond to internal political developments and crises. Public protests, congressional criticism, and a shift in public opinion, along with other developments related to the Obama administration, will emerge in the committee. You must always anticipate what reactions your steps may trigger and plan accordingly.

Below are some major themes and topics that will guide discussions and decisions throughout the committee.

1. The Balance Between Operational Secrecy and Diplomatic Relations

Operational secrecy is a must when it comes to the mission's success, but openness and confidence are necessary to maintain international ties – in this case, with Pakistan. Members of the Cabinet must determine when maintaining secrecy is worth throwing the operation at risk.

Discussion Question: Is it ever appropriate to prioritize operational secrecy over preserving confidence with an allied government?

2. Credibility of Intelligence

Intelligence regarding the operation may sometimes be incomplete, uncertain or outright false. Delegates are expected to determine when intelligence is credible enough to act upon it. This is a constant challenge, due to the high risk of false positives.

Discussion Question: How much certainty in intelligence is required before beginning an operation with such significant political and strategic consequences?

3. Managing Domestic Political and Public Opinion

The American public's patience has decreased due to prolonged wars and economic struggles, and the opposition is eager to criticize any actions of the current government. Political consequences of military actions, civilian casualties, and other internal developments at home must always be kept in mind while conducting a large-scale military operation.

Discussion Question: How can policymakers achieve a compromise between the necessity for bold, and possibly divisive, foreign policy objectives and public anger?

4. Ethical and Legal Boundaries of Counterterrorism Operations

The pursuit of high-value targets like bin Laden raises difficult ethical and legal questions like sovereignty violations, targeted killings, and enhanced interrogation practices. Delegates must navigate between national security targets and upholding international law.

Discussion Question: In the interest of national security, can moral/legal principles ever be violated? If yes, under what circumstances?

5. Technical and Logistical Execution of the Operation

The technical complexities of the mission, such as transportation, stealth requirements, communication protocols, airspace violations, and evacuation plans, must be accounted for. Members of the cabinet must plan the operation realistically: Minimizing exposure and maximizing success against unexpected variables. Every logistical decision carries potential strategic consequences.

Discussion Question: What sacrifices are appropriate to increase the likelihood of mission success, and how should technical and logistical risks be prioritized while organizing a hidden operation?

6. Tactical Planning: Infiltration, Engagement, and Extraction

Planning how the SEAL Team will enter the compound, carry out the operation, and safely remove the target is just as important as locating the target in the first place. Timing, routes and emergency escape plans under enemy fire are all things that delegates need to consider. Inadequate preparation during any of these stages could jeopardize the mission and result in significant diplomatic problems.

Discussion Question: Which phase has the highest chance of mission failure — infiltration, engagement, or extraction, and how should planning be modified to reduce that risk?

7. Planning for Operational Failure / Contingency Management

Even the best-planned missions can fail. Members of the Cabinet must consider scenarios like bin Laden's absence, mission exposure, or civilian casualties while designing contingency plans.

Discussion Question: What are the best ways for an administration to anticipate and lessen the political and security fallout from a compromised or unsuccessful operation?

8. Key Actors

Hillary Clinton - Secretary of State

Hillary Clinton is the U.S. Secretary of State who oversees U.S. foreign policy and international relations, a U.S. senator representing New York from 2001 to 2009, and the first lady of the United States as the wife of Bill Clinton from 1993 to 2001. In mid-November 2008, President-elect Obama and Clinton discussed the possibility of her serving as secretary of state in his



administration. She was initially quite reluctant, but on November 20, she told Obama she would accept the position. On December 1, President-elect Obama formally announced that Clinton would be his nominee for secretary of state. Clinton said she did not want to leave the Senate, but that the new position represented a "difficult and exciting adventure". As part of the nomination and to relieve concerns of conflict of interest, Bill Clinton agreed to accept several conditions and restrictions regarding his ongoing activities and fundraising efforts for the William J. Clinton Foundation and the Clinton Global Initiative.

The appointment required a Saxbe fix, passed and signed into law in December 2008. Confirmation hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee began on January 13, 2009, a week before the Obama inauguration; two days later, the committee voted 16–1 to approve Clinton. By this time, her public approval rating had reached 65 percent, the highest point since the Lewinsky scandal. On January 21, 2009, Clinton was confirmed in the full Senate by a vote of 94–2. Clinton took the oath of office as secretary of state, resigning from the Senate later that day. She became the first former First Lady to be a member of the United States Cabinet.

Her primary duties include conducting diplomacy, negotiating treaties, advising the President on international issues, representing the U.S. abroad, and managing foreign aid and policy initiatives. She also ensures the protection of U.S. citizens and interests worldwide. She played a key role in global issues, including the U.S. response to the Arab Spring and relations with China and Russia.

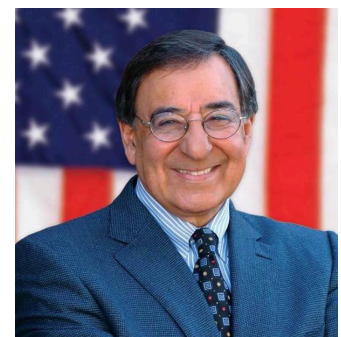
Robert Gates - Secretary of Defense

Robert Michael Gates is an American intelligence analyst and university president who served as the 22nd United States Secretary of Defense from 2006 to 2011. He was appointed by President George W. Bush and was retained by President Barack Obama. Gates began his career serving as an officer in the United States Air Force but was quickly recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Gates served for twenty-six years in the CIA and at the National Security Council and was director of Central Intelligence under President George H. W. Bush from 1991 to 1993. After leaving the CIA, Gates became president of Texas A&M University and was a member of several corporate boards.



In the Department of Defense, he serves as the principal advisor to the President on military and national security matters. Their responsibilities include formulating defense policies, managing the armed forces, and ensuring the security of the nation. They coordinate military operations and strategy in collaboration with military leaders and allied nations.

Leon Panetta - Director of the CIA



Leon Edward Panetta is an American retired politician and government official who has served under several Democratic administrations as director of the CIA, White House Chief of Staff, director of the Office of Management and Budget, as well as a U.S. representative from California. Panetta was a member of the United States House of Representatives from 1977 to 1993. He served under President Bill Clinton as director of the Office of Management and Budget. In January 2009, newly elected President Barack Obama nominated Panetta to be director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Panetta was confirmed by the Senate in February 2009.

They lead the CIA and serve as the principal intelligence advisors to the President and the National Security Council; they ensure the agency's activities align with U.S. laws and policy objectives. Their primary responsibilities include overseeing intelligence collection, analysis, and covert operations to inform national security decisions.

Mike Mullen - Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

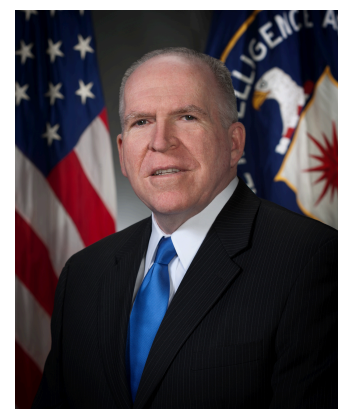
Mullen was the 32nd vice chief of naval operations from August 2003 to August 2004. He was then the commander of both the U.S. Naval Forces Europe and the Allied Joint Force Command Naples from October 2004 to May 2005. From July 2005 to September 2007, Mullen served as the Navy's 28th chief of naval operations. As chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mullen was the highest-ranking officer in the U.S. Armed Forces and diversified the top ranks of the Pentagon.



Mike Mullen plays a key role in military operations and discussions on national security strategies. His primary duties include overseeing U.S. military operations, international military relations, managing military responses to global threats, and providing strategic guidance on conflicts and wars.

John Brennan - United States Homeland Security Advisor

John Brennan had a long career in intelligence and national security, playing a crucial role in shaping U.S. counterterrorism strategy. He joined the CIA in 1980 as an intelligence officer and quickly became an expert in Middle Eastern affairs, serving in key diplomatic and intelligence roles, including as Chief of Station in Saudi Arabia. From 1999 to 2001, he was Chief of Staff to CIA Director George Tenet, and after the 9/11 attacks, he helped establish the National Counterterrorism Center. During the early 2000s, Brennan was a strong advocate for enhanced counterterrorism operations but later distanced himself from the CIA's use of torture. After leaving the CIA in 2005, he worked in the private sector as CEO of an intelligence consulting firm before returning to government as President Obama's top counterterrorism advisor in



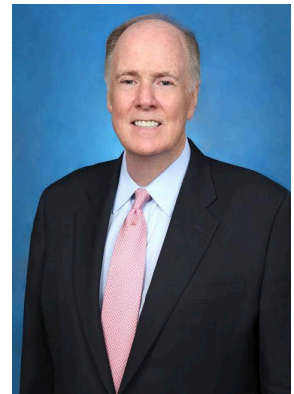
2009. In the same year, he was appointed by President Barack Obama as Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security & Counterterrorism. Throughout his early career, Brennan was known for his deep expertise in terrorism, intelligence analysis, and national security policy, shaping U.S. efforts to combat global threats.

His duties include providing counsel on domestic security threats, emergency preparedness, ensuring collaboration between other agencies to provide security, advising on issues related to border control, law enforcement coordination, and immigration policies. He plays a key role in managing national emergencies such as terrorist attacks, cyber threats, and pandemics.

Tom Donilon - United States National Security Advisor

Tom Donilon serves as the advisor to the President on national security and foreign policy matters. Before his tenure as NSA, Donilon had a long career in government, law, and public policy.

Donilon was involved in foreign policy and national security matters, including working as Chief of Staff to Secretary of State Warren Christopher. He played a role in key initiatives such as NATO expansion and Middle East peace efforts. Donilon worked as executive vice president for law and policy at Fannie Mae, the federally chartered mortgage finance company, as a registered lobbyist from 1999 through 2005. Before his appointment to the Obama Administration, he worked at O'Melveny & Myers, a law firm, where he served as a partner and engaged in international business and legal matters. Donilon was part of President Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, advising on national security and foreign policy issues and contributing to Obama's understanding of global affairs. In 2009, Tom Donilon was appointed as the Deputy National Security Advisor 2009, where he played a central role in shaping U.S. foreign policy during the early years of the Obama administration.



His primary duties include coordinating the National Security Council, providing intelligence briefings, coordination and implementation of national security policies, ensuring cooperation between other agencies to achieve security, and developing strategies to address security challenges. Unlike Cabinet positions, this role does not require Senate confirmation.

Denis McDonough - United States Deputy National Security Advisor

From 1996 to 1999, McDonough worked as an aide for the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs, where he focused on Latin America. He then served as a senior foreign policy advisor to Senator Tom Daschle. After Daschle's reelection defeat in 2004, McDonough became legislative director for newly elected Senator Ken Salazar. McDonough was a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress in 2004. In 2007, Senator Barack Obama's chief

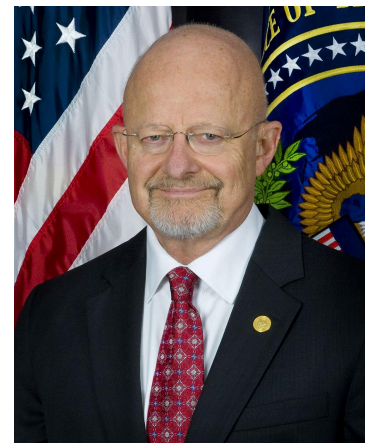


foreign policy advisor, Mark Lippert, a Navy reservist, was called into active duty. Lippert recruited McDonough to serve as his replacement during his deployment to Iraq. McDonough continued to serve as a senior foreign policy advisor to Obama during his 2008 presidential campaign. After Obama was elected president, McDonough joined the administration as the National Security Council's head of strategic communication. He also served as the National Security Council chief of staff.

His primary duties include the coordination and implementation of national security policies, ensuring cooperation between other agencies to achieve security, assisting in handling national security crises, and providing strategic assistance to the National Security Advisor.

James Clapper - Director of National Intelligence

James Clapper is a retired lieutenant general in the United States Air Force and Director of National Intelligence. Clapper has held several key positions within the United States Intelligence Community. He served as director of the Defense Intelligence Agency from 1992 until 1995. He was the first director of defense intelligence within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and simultaneously the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. He served as the director of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency from September 2001 until June 2006. On June 5, 2010, President Barack Obama nominated Clapper to replace Dennis C. Blair as United States Director of National Intelligence. Clapper was unanimously confirmed by the Senate for the position on August 5, 2010.



His duties include coordinating intelligence gathering, ensuring compliance with laws, managing intelligence budgets, and overseeing national intelligence priorities. He establishes national intelligence priorities and directs resources to key threats like terrorism, cyber threats, and foreign espionage. Also, he ensures cooperation between agencies and prevents intelligence failures due to lack of communication.

Marshall Brad Webb - Assistant Commanding General of the JSOC

Marshall Brad Webb graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1984. He is a command pilot with more than 3,700 flying hours, including 117 combat hours in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Bosnia. Before his current position, the general was the Commander of Air Force Special Operations Command and has commanded the 20th Special Operations Squadron, the 352nd Special Operations Group, the 1st Special Operations Wing, the 23rd Air Force, Special Operations Command Europe, and NATO Special Operations Headquarters. His staff assignments include duty at Headquarters AFSOC, the Joint Special Operations Command, and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.



He is responsible for integrating special operations with broader U.S. military and intelligence efforts, execution of special missions, ensuring interoperability between different special operation units, management of counterterrorism, hostage rescue, and direct actions, overseeing joint exercises, combat simulations, and mission rehearsals, co-operating with unit commanders to ensure logistics, equipment, and personnel are mission-ready. He helps coordinate rapid response operations for time-sensitive missions, works on contingency plans for high-value target raids, counter-weapons of Mass Destruction missions, and supervises JSOC's role in national security emergencies.

William M. Daley - White House Chief of Staff

William M. Daley is the President's primary aide and manager of the White House staff who worked as the 24th White House Chief of Staff from January 2011 to January 2012 under President Barack Obama. Before this, he served as the 32nd U.S. Secretary of Commerce from 1997 to 2000 under President Bill Clinton.



Under President Bill Clinton, Daley served as Secretary of Commerce, where he played a significant role in economic diplomacy, advocating for trade agreements, and overseeing U.S. economic policy. Daley was involved in international trade negotiations, contributing to efforts that expanded global trade during the 1990s. President Barack Obama appointed Daley as White House Chief of Staff, following Rahm Emanuel's departure to run for Mayor of Chicago. Daley helped manage the administration during a period of significant economic challenges, particularly in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

His duties include overseeing the daily operations of the White House, managing the President's schedule, coordinating communication between the executive branch and Congress, and advising the President on key decisions. The Chief of Staff often acts as a gatekeeper, controlling access to the President and ensuring the smooth functioning of the administration.

9. Further Reading

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