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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WHITE HOUSE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20504

MEMORANDUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM

A major national incident has just occurred. Your presence is required immediately in the Situation Room in the West Wing of the White House. You will be briefed on the details when you arrive.

Vice President Bowman is the head of the Crisis Management Team. However, he is not available. He is undergoing a previously scheduled, routine surgery. You will need to work with the other members of the Crisis Management Team. Together, you will set priorities and make time-sensitive decisions on urgent matters.

Sometimes, you will decide together by majority. At other times, you will be the only one making the decision. Feel free to discuss decisions with other members of the Crisis Management Team. They may have different perspectives that you'll want to consider.

As you know, President Alvarez has been in office for four months. She has made big promises that she intends to keep. You will need to pay special attention to these pressing issues:

| ITEM | STATUS UPDATE |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| GLOBAL ENERGY SUMMIT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many foreign leaders are in DC for the Summit.• Alvarez is scheduled to give the keynote address and present a major, multinational alternative energy proposal. |
| ALTERNATIVE ENERGY BILL S.9872 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This bill is due for signing today.• It fulfills a major Alvarez campaign promise.• The bill has risky economic consequences. It barely passed Congress. |
| CONGRESS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congress is in recess and unavailable. |
| FOREIGN AFFAIRS: NORTH KOREA | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Alvarez administration is in negotiations with North Korea's government. The goal is for North Korea to halt its nuclear weapons program. |

ABOUT THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM

The **Crisis Management Team** was appointed by President Alvarez. It is led by Vice President Bowman, who is currently unavailable. For reasons we will soon disclose, the Press Secretary is also unavailable. Because of these circumstances, the team will work closely with the **DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY** to craft messages to keep the press and public informed during the crisis.

The members of the **Crisis Management Team** are:



SECRETARY OF STATE

The **Secretary of State** is a former U.S. Senator and an expert on U.S. relationships with foreign countries. They are currently managing global and domestic threats posed by nuclear weapons that other countries are developing.



SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

The **Secretary of Transportation** is a former commercial airline pilot and a senior executive with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). They are focused on upgrading the nation's aging infrastructure, like highways and bridges.



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

The **Secretary of Defense** is a veteran and a former senior advisor in the Department of Defense. They oversee the military. They are charged with keeping the country safe from both domestic and foreign threats.



ATTORNEY GENERAL

The **Attorney General** is a former federal prosecutor and the former Attorney General of Ohio. They lead the U.S. Department of Justice and oversee the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Their job is to defend and enforce the U.S. Constitution.



SECRETARY OF ENERGY

The **Secretary of Energy** is an engineer and scientist who specializes in nuclear energy. They are currently working with President Alvarez to get alternative energy bill S.9872 signed into law.

Sincerely,



Janine Rhimes
White House Chief of Staff

ROLE DESCRIPTION

As **Deputy Press Secretary**, you act as the spokesperson for the executive branch when the Press Secretary is not available. You speak on behalf of the president and senior executives. You are not a member of President Alvarez's cabinet, but you work closely with her cabinet members to represent the presidential administration to the press and the public. You explain and defend policies. You talk to the media and the public through spoken and written statements. You also post on social media to keep people informed.

ABOUT YOU

- You are only **four months** into your job as Deputy Press Secretary.
- **You knew and admired your boss**, the Press Secretary, before you started working together in the Press Office. You are excited to continue learning from the press secretary.
- You believe that the key to navigating a crisis is **winning the press over** and convincing everyone that we are all on the same team.

YOU'LL BE PLAYING AS:

DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY



WHAT YOU DO

- **You prepare official statements** from the executive branch for the press and public.
- You serve on **the Crisis Management Team** when there is an emergency. You work with your colleagues in the Situation Room to direct the White House response in any crisis.
- **You make decisions** for your position on the press team.

YOUR GOALS

- **Select a narrative** that paints the administration in the best light.
- **Ensure the public feels informed** and prevent panic.
- **Stay loyal to President Alvarez** and try to influence others to follow her agenda, policies, and precedents (the decisions she has made before).



ROLE REFLECTION EXERCISE

ITHRIVE SIM: LEADING THROUGH CRISIS 

STEP ONE: Read about your character, then answer the following questions:

1. What role will you be playing?
2. Based on what you know about the scenario and the role, what are you most curious about?
3. Based on what you know about the scenario and the role, what other information do you wish you had, or do you plan to find?
4. What is one main goal your character is trying to achieve?
5. What's important or intriguing about the role you'll be playing? (**Look on the next page for some information about a real person who's served in that role.**)

STEP TWO: Discuss your responses with one or more members of your role-play team. Your role-play team also may choose to warm up for the simulation by introducing yourselves in character.

COMPLETE THE ROLE REFLECTION EXERCISE

You can access a Google Doc version of this exercise [here](#).

ROLES IN LEADING THROUGH CRISIS: HISTORY'S REAL PLAYERS

DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY

The Deputy Press Secretary is expected to have an in-depth knowledge of the White House and its policies and to represent the executive office well at a moment's notice. Marlin Fitzwater served as the president's spokesman for six years, making him one of the longest-serving press secretaries in history. He's also the only press secretary to have been appointed by two different presidents. He was well-regarded by many for the honesty and good humor he displayed in his role. Can you imagine taking on the task of speaking for the president? How would that feel?

SECRETARY OF STATE

Condoleezza Rice was the first Black woman to hold the post of Secretary of State, serving under former President George W. Bush. She was an influential adviser to Bush following the September 11th terrorist attacks. As Secretary of State, Rice also helped to persuade North Korea to return to the table for talks aimed at dismantling its nuclear weapons program. (Summary paraphrased from [this article](#).)

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

Norman Mineta acted as Secretary of Transportation under President George W. Bush. In his time on the job, he faced a number of major crises, like how to rebuild and reopen highways, seaports, and airports during Hurricane Katrina. He also made decisions regarding the national airspace system during the September 11th terrorist attacks.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Robert McNamara served seven years as the Secretary of Defense. During the month-long Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, McNamara was one of President Kennedy's closest advisors. He advocated for a blockade of Cuba instead of a missile strike. This was a major decision that may have avoided war.

SECRETARY OF ENERGY

President Obama's first Secretary of Energy, Stephen Chu, won the Nobel Prize in physics. During his time as Secretary of Energy, he fought for peaceful nuclear energy development (the Fukushima disaster had just occurred in Japan and had people uncertain about the continuing usage of nuclear energy). He also advocated for a shift from fossil fuels to clean energy sources. He relied on data to back his ideas.

SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

During President George H. W. Bush's administration, Secretary of Commerce Barbara Franklin accomplished a major goal: increasing American exports to powerful countries like China, Russia, and Mexico. She led a mission to China to normalize relations between the U.S. and China, dramatically increasing trade and strengthening the relationship between the two countries.