

American Government and Politics • Cabinet Unit

Overview

Day 1 - Why does the President need a cabinet?

Skill Objective: Pattern recognition - category creation. Reflective writing. Research and summarization.

Content Objective: Students will gain an understanding of the scope of responsibilities of the executive branch and how they are organized by cabinet position.

Simulation setup - create groups, distribute headers, give instructions. **10 min**

Play game. **35 min**

Clean up and clarify reflection assignment. **10 min**

If early, students can start their reflections.

Homework: Written or recorded reflection on the question - what is a cabinet for?

Day 2 - Researching a single cabinet position

Skill Objective: Internet research.

Content Objective: Learn about a single cabinet department.

Do now: From the simulation yesterday, which cabinet position that your team created would you most like to serve as? Why? **10 min**

Assign each student a real cabinet position. Give instructions on how to research and fill out the cabinet info sheet. **5 min**

Open time to research and fill. **40 min**

Teacher task: Compile the info sheets into a packet, print, staple, and give back to students on Day 3.

Day 3 - Learning about other cabinet positions

Skill Objective: The activity here is really in service of the content objective but it is nice to give students a low-stakes way to practice the unpacking of test-like questions.

Content Objective: Learn about other cabinet departments.

Warm-up by having students go around in a circle and share one reason why they chose the cabinet position they worked on in Day 2. (Backup - if students won't give anything other than "because no one else had chosen it" you can revert to "share one thing you learned about the cabinet position you chose to study. **5 - 10 min**

Distribute the Cabinet reference guide from Day 2 to students. Give them a copy of the Cabinet "quiz." This is an activity designed to get them reading the reference guide. All of the answers to the questions can be found in the reference guide. We call this a quiz so that students will work individually, not because any of the questions are intended to trick them or test their memories. If they have questions they *can* ask the teacher. **45-50 min**

Day 4 - How important is the cabinet?

Skill Objective: Identifying aspects of a written text or video that apply to a task at hand. Paraphrasing and/or interpreting evidence. Evaluating the context and potential bias of a source. Students will get practice voicing their ideas about a selection from a text in a group setting.

Content Objective: Students will be able to explain the evolution of the presidential cabinet's importance.

Warm-up - finish reviewing questions from Day 3.

Source Analysis

- Cabinet secretaries versus the White House staff

Activity - Save the Last Word for Me - in whole class group

Day 5 - How important is the cabinet continued

- Digital #Ham4Ham 3/23/16 --The West Wing Cabinet Battle - Youtube - March 23, 2016
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1mYfsNFtGI>
- Inside the White House: The Cabinet - Youtube - December 11, 2009
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxSvi6JCCfk>

Overflow Activity - Save the Last Word for Me - in small groups

Day 6 - The cabinet in the news - How important are cabinet decisions now?

Skill Objective: Day 4 and 5's objectives plus synthesis of evidence into a short essay.

Content Objective: Students will be able to discuss current events as pertains to the cabinet.

Source Analysis

- The Lead with Jake Tapper Cold Open - SNL - December 11, 2016
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-w5wbu7GBE>
- Trump's Cabinet: 'Goldman, generals and gazillionaires'

Activity - Essay evaluating the concern over Trump's cabinet choices.

Grades

Simulation Participation - 5

Simulation Reflection - 5

Individual Research - 10

"Quiz" - 12

Source Notes - 10

Essay - 25

Every new president gets to choose ambassadors to live in foreign countries and represent the United States and our presidential administration to the foreign government. We need to find the right people to assign to over 180 foreign countries.

1

A giant hurricane in the Atlantic Ocean made landfall in Rhode Island, destroying large portions of Providence. The governor of Rhode Island has asked the federal government for immediate relief and long-term assistance in rebuilding.

2

The giant wall on the Mexican-American border has collapsed in several places. In the past, presidents have addressed similar problems by doubling border patrols in those areas while rebuilding the wall. This has been effective but expensive. Should we continue the policy?

2

Ever since health care shifted to a single payer system (i.e. only the government offers health insurance), the operation of that system has become a big national issue. During the last administration, the private company contracted to do payroll for health care workers was found to be embezzling or stealing money. We need to start the process of hiring a new company to handle payroll for government health care.

3

Congress recently passed a constitutional amendment, ratified by three quarters of the states that makes the United States trilingual with English, Spanish, and French all as official languages. To support this policy, our country's schools should be providing instruction in all three. We need a plan to make this happen.

2

Wind, solar, and water powered energy have all become a major part of our energy infrastructure. The last president favored solar by giving large tax-breaks to solar energy providers. We need to decide whether to continue that policy, even out the government subsidies, or favor a different technology.

2

The long-rumored hyperloop train technology has finally been proven. It's time to create a national network of high speed hyperloops. This is an enormous infrastructure project, the likes of which we haven't seen since the building of the interstate highway system in the middle of the 20th century.

4

City, town, and suburban living has all become unpopular. The new thing is platform living -- houses on top of giant platforms over rivers and lakes. These new neighborhoods are owned by giant corporations who have been accused of racial discrimination in their application process.

2

Scientists have recently discovered that almost everything we thought we knew about what foods are healthy and what foods are unhealthy is wrong! We need to put together a program to education the American people about this new discovery.

3

We have gotten intelligence from an undercover source in a terrorist organization that our food supply is their next target. We need to start doing a better job of protecting our farms, canning plants, and grocery stores from any potential attacks.

5

Although few people use Snapchat anymore, the company has stayed profitable by charging former users thousands of dollars to erase their posts from the public, searchable Snapchat database. Some users claim this is illegal blackmail. Snapchat says it's within their rights.

1

A group representing the farm workers of America is demanding to have their work week limited to 35 hours for reasons of safety. We need to listen to what they want, reach out to a group of farm owners, and suggest a reasonable law.

2

One of the things you campaigned on was your ability to create new jobs and new types of jobs for the American people. One way to do that is to create partnerships with Universities on the forefront of new technologies. Who will lead this effort?

1

A rare but very contagious bacteria has been found in Kiwis from New Zealand. 500,000 Kiwis from that country are imported every year to the Unites States. The government is responsible for inspecting the kiwis to make sure they are safe. Who will do this?

2

After the widespread collapse of the automotive industry in Detroit, the number of people needing food assistance in that area has skyrocketed. We will have to triple the number of staff we have in the area that handle the food stamp program.

2

Oil is discovered inside Yellowstone National park. Texaco has offered the United States a one-time purchase price of over ten billion dollars for ownership of the land where oil was found. The country could really use the money, but should we sell the land?

1

Massachusetts has just joined a growing list of states to legalize recreational marijuana. This goes against federal law. You decide that, despite some earlier presidents choosing not to make an issue out of this, you want to actively prosecute people who break this federal law, regardless of what their state government thinks.

1

The United States Senate has refused to hold hearings for your Supreme Court nominee for almost a year. You are sick of waiting and would like to overrule the Senate and appoint your choice to the court. You need legal advice about whether this is constitutional or not.

3

As president, one of the things you would like to do is create a new national park in South Carolina. The only problem is, there are a few hundred people living within what would be your new park. You think that you should be able to buy them new homes elsewhere and kick them out. Before you do it though, you need to make sure it's legal.

2

The World Health Organization has been battling an outbreak of Ebola in Liberia. Its mission has been interrupted several times by guerilla fighters coming over from the war-torn neighboring country of Cote d'Ivoire. The World Health Organization has officially asked for United States troops to come in and secure the border between the two countries in order to avoid the spread of the disease. Should we send our troops?

2

North Korea just launched over forty missiles at neighboring countries. Most of them were aimed at South Korea and some at Japan, both American allies. We have an aircraft carrier in the Pacific. It could be in place to attack North Korea in seven hours. Should we tell it to start moving? When it gets there, what should it do?

5

A unit of the Canadian army that was supposed to be doing a training mission has driven into Minnesota and fired at a few office buildings, killing several people and injuring others. Although they may not know it, they're now heading toward a place where a dozen of our nuclear weapons are stored. What is our military reaction?

3

Global sugar prices have dropped drastically in the last 90 days. Although this may sound great, it's actually a crisis. Many big sugar producers will go out of business and hundreds of thousands of Americans will lose their jobs.

5

Germany, England, and the Netherlands have all eliminated their paper money entirely and have saved millions of dollars. It's time to study this issue and seriously consider it.

3

During the campaign, you made many promises about simplifying the tax code. Now you need to do it! This is a big task.

5

Due to repeated human rights violations, we have decided to invade Belgium and overthrow their government. We need to make the case for the rightness of this decision to the Congress and directly to the people of the United States.

4

A revolution has overturned the democratic government in India. We need to make sure that Americans who travel to India for business or vacation know what has happened and what to watch out for.

1

With the loss of many coastal cities to the oceans, including Miami, New Orleans, Baltimore, and Boston in the United States, the international community has a newfound appreciation for the consequences of climate change. Our government has to negotiate a new international agreement on carbon emissions.

1

Bolivia and Chile have had a six-month war that started over a border dispute. This war is causing great harm to their countries and to the global economy. We need someone to talk to both sides and try to broker a peace treaty.

2

Russia wants to assign a guy named Sergey Ivanovich Kislyak to be their Ambassador to the United States. We need someone to research Mr. Kislyak's past to make sure he is a legitimate candidate and not a spy.

1

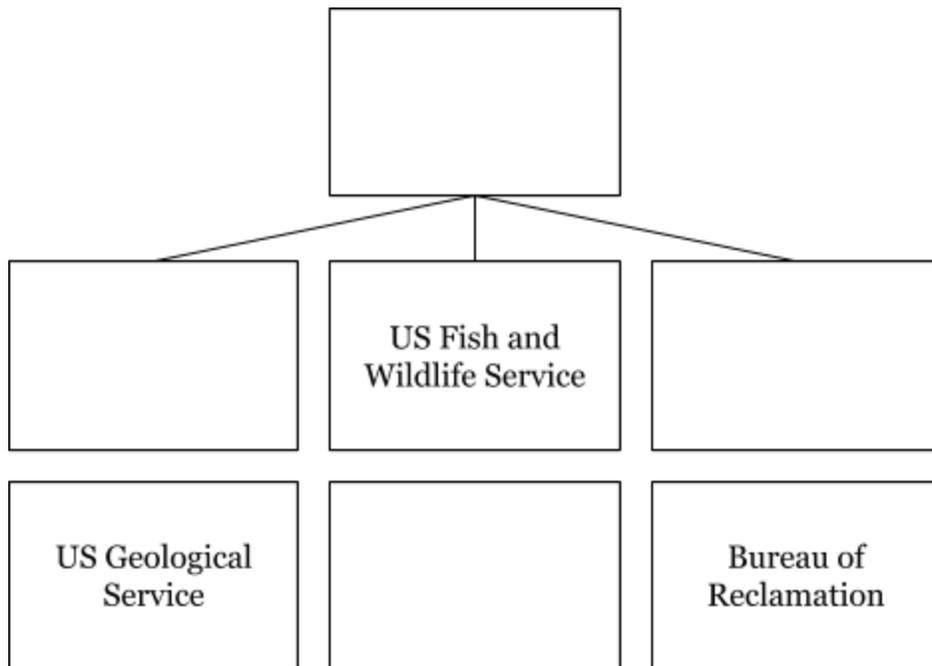
American Government and Politics Cabinet Quiz

Name:

1. James Schlesinger was Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Secretary of Defense before becoming the first person to hold this cabinet position created in 1977. What cabinet position was it?
2. What cabinet department is responsible for regulating our country's nuclear power plants?
3. What cabinet department employs more people than any other employer in the world?
4. This woman, who was the first Secretary of Education in 1979, was also rumored to be a top pick for the Supreme Court!
5. From what cabinet position was Frances Perkins instrumental in establishing the first minimum wage, overtime laws, and defining the forty hour work week as a standard?
6. As the first Secretary of Health and Human Services, this woman approved Jonas Salk's groundbreaking polio vaccine. What was her name?
7. If you and your colleagues at your job were having an issue with the company that hired you, and you could call one cabinet member for help, who would it be and why?
8. This man, with a "strange" middle name, served for over seven years in two presidents cabinets.

9. President Elect Donald Trump will need Congress to change a law in order to confirm his choice for this important cabinet position. What is the department? Who is the nominee? Why will the law need to change? What is your opinion about why it was put in place originally?

10. Fill in the rest of the boxes in the organizational (org) chart for this cabinet position.



11. After John F. Kennedy appointed his brother, Robert to this cabinet position, a law was put in place that prevents future presidents from appointing members of their family to cabinet positions. What position did JFK give RFK?

12. What cabinet position is responsible for managing both student loans and ensuring that all students have equal opportunities?

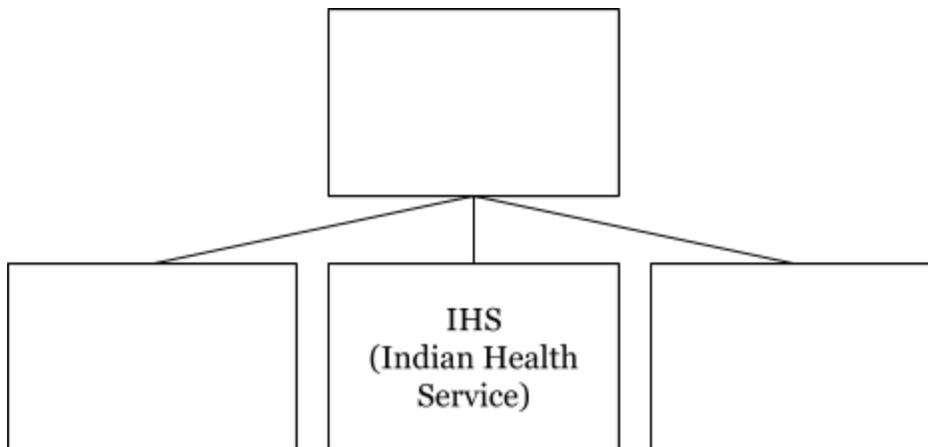
13. This is what Senator Bernie Sanders (I - Vermont) says about Wall Street: “The six largest financial institutions in this country today hold assets equal to about 60% of the nation’s gross domestic product. These six banks issue more than two-thirds of all credit cards and... hold more than 40% of all bank deposits in the United States. These institutions have acquired too much economic and political power, endangering our economy and our political process. We must break up too-big-to-fail financial institutions.” If you were advising Sanders, which cabinet member would you tell him to talk to and why?

14. Although the Veteran's Administration was founded in 1930 under President Hoover and an important veteran's law was passed in 1944 for veterans returning from World War II, this department only became a cabinet level position in 1989. Ed Derwinski was the first person to serve in the cabinet as secretary of this department. Please write the name of the department here and correct the year founded and first office holder in your packet.

15. The last two Democratic candidates for president who lost have both held this job in President Obama's cabinet. What job is it?

16. What cabinet member would take the lead on negotiating the Iran nuclear deal?

17. Fill in the rest of the boxes in the organizational (org) chart for this cabinet position.



18. What cabinet position is the oldest current cabinet position that was not established by President George Washington in 1789. What year was it established in? Bonus: Why do you think it was established then? What was going on around that time?

19. As important federal law enforcement agencies, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) report to which cabinet position?

20. What cabinet department was created by President George W. Bush in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks?
21. What cabinet department is responsible for inspecting food to make sure it is safe?
22. As part of his overall desire to make the federal government stronger, Alexander Hamilton wanted to create a national bank. Although Hamilton was never President of the United States, he did serve as a cabinet member. What cabinet position did he hold?
23. Last question! After reading about all of these cabinet departments, which would you most like to work in and why?

Name:

Question: How important is the presidential cabinet?

Our goal today is to investigate the question of how important the presidential cabinet is. We will evaluate three sources. The first is an article written for the Brookings Institute, a nonprofit research group. This article gives a history of the cabinet and its importance. The next two are videos - one of the cast of Hamilton doing a bit from their musical during a visit to the White House and the other produced by the Obama administration in 2009. For the text, highlight evidence and draw a line to your written explanation, commentary, or analysis. For the videos, paraphrase an observation instead of highlighting.

Cabinet secretaries versus the White House staff

by James Pfiffner, University Professor of Public Policy, George Mason University
Brookings Institute, Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Who do you think the audience of this piece is meant to be?

What is the goal of the author or authors?

What bias might they have?

Text

Over most of U.S. history cabinet secretaries have been among the most important formal advisers to presidents, and they exercised important managerial roles in implementing government policies and programs. With the large expansion of the government's role in the economy in reaction to the Great Depression, Congress provided authority for the creation of the White House staff, which was formalized in the creation of the Executive Office of the President in 1939. The official White House staff began with six advisers to the president, but Presidents Truman and Eisenhower continued to rely heavily on their cabinet secretaries for policy advice.

This began to change when Presidents Kennedy and Johnson began to centralize policy making and advice in the White House staff, though the turning point in the modern presidency was the Nixon administration. Due in part to his distrust of the career bureaucracy, which he thought was biased against his conservative

Explanation/Commentary/Analysis

policy goals, President Nixon vastly expanded the White House staff and centralized control in the White House. In foreign policy, National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger recruited a large staff and centralized control, overshadowing the State Department. Nixon's major foreign policy priorities—the Vietnam peace talks, the SALT Treaty, and the opening to China—were all tightly controlled from the White House. In domestic policy, John Ehrlichman recruited the Domestic Policy Council staff, giving the White House an independent policy development capacity that did not depend on the departments and agencies for analysis. For example, among Nixon's domestic policy initiatives, the Family Assistance Plan, was developed in the White House by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, not in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

After Watergate, the next three presidents—Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan—each promised to return power and importance to their cabinet secretaries. But the White House staff had grown to more than 500 people, and these presidents were unable and unwilling to reverse the trend of centralization. The White House staff gave presidents tighter control and more attention to their political needs. Cabinet secretaries, however, were subject to centrifugal pressures from congressional committees, departmental clientele, and their own departmental bureaucracies.

Thus, by the late 20th century, major policy functions that used to be performed outside the White House were now integrated into the White House:

- Domestic policy development that had been done in the policy shops and by the staffs of departmental secretaries was now dominated by the White House domestic policy staff.
- National Security policy advice and planning had moved from the Departments of State and Defense into an expanded National Security Council staff.

- Legal advice to the president, which had been dominated by the Department of Justice, was now provided by the White House Counsel and a team of White House lawyers.
- Trade policy, which had been developed in departments such as State, Commerce, and Agriculture, was now centralized in the US Trade Representative's Office in the Executive Office of the President.

Additionally, political functions that had previously been performed by the political parties and in Congress were now located in the White House:

- Recruitment of political appointees, which had been dominated by political parties and heavily influenced by members of Congress was now centralized in the Office of Presidential Personnel, with a large staff during transitions and a significant role throughout a presidential administration.
- Outreach to interest groups, which had been done by political parties, was now conducted by the Office of Public Liaison in the White House.
- Party politics, which had been dominated by the Republican and Democratic National Committees, was now centralized in the White House Office of Political Affairs.
- Building coalitions in Congress has, since the 1950s, been done by the Office of Legislative Liaison in the White House Office.

There were reasons for these changes, of course; the executive branch is huge, comprising a plethora of conflicting and overlapping bureaucracies, and presidents need a coordinating and integrating capacity to rein in and control policy direction in the executive branch. Presidents now, however, take for granted that these functions are in the realm of the White House staff.

Meanwhile, cabinet secretaries understandably resent "interference" from White House staffers. Presidents

fill their cabinets with experienced leaders from around the country. These leaders must have some combination of executive experience, policy expertise, partisan credentials, or personal loyalty to the president. They symbolize presidential priorities, represent demographic groups and marshal the support of the clientele of the department they will be leading.

Once in office, cabinet secretaries are seen as advocates for their policy domain, champions for the workers in their departments, and aggressive seekers of budget resources. Predictably, they want presidential attention for their own policy priorities. In recruiting cabinet secretaries, presidents often tell them that they are essential to the success of the administration, that they will be the primary advisers in their policy areas, and that they will have a reasonable amount of discretion in choosing their political appointees. Recent history, however, shows that presidents seldom can keep these promises.

The reality is that cabinet secretaries' duties and inclinations often put them on a collision course with White House staffers, who are trying to rein them in and harness them to presidential priorities. As Charles Dawes, the first director of the Bureau of the Budget put it "cabinet secretaries are assistant presidents for spending, and as such are the natural enemies of the president."

Cabinet secretaries naturally resent being overshadowed by White House staffers, who are usually younger than they are and are often seen as political loyalists rather than policy experts. Staffers have access to the president and seem to impose their personal preferences on the cabinet. President Obama's cabinet secretaries did not appreciate chief of staff Rahm Emanuel treating them as his "minions."

To illustrate this dynamic, when President Obama came to office, he initially intended to delegate legal

policy on detainees at Guantanamo to his attorney general and friend, Eric Holder. Holder accepted the position with the understanding that he would make legal decisions independently of the White House, though of course the president would have the final say. In delegating some of the key legal decisions regarding detainee policy to Attorney General Holder, President Obama wanted to be seen as not letting politics interfere with legal principles. Obama told Holder to make legal decisions on the merits of the law rather than on political grounds.

Exercising his delegated authority, Holder decided to try some 9/11 terrorist suspects in criminal court rather than by military tribunals, and he chose New York City as the venue. The decision caused a political uproar, with congressional leaders threatening legislation to mandate military commissions at Guantanamo and not in the continental United States. Holder's decisions reinforced White House staffers' suspicion that he was not sufficiently sensitive to the president's political interests. Ultimately, the White House staff, particularly chief of staff Emanuel, convinced Obama that the political repercussions of Holder's decisions were more important than Holder's legal judgments and his independence from the White House. Obama's experiment with delegation foundered at the hands of the White House staff, illustrating the imperative of centralized White House control of policy.

Thus President Obama continued the 20th century trend of centralizing control in the White House staff, ensuring the frustration of cabinet secretaries. But in the modern presidency, coordination of administration policy from the president's perspective is essential. The challenge is to maintain a healthy balance between too much centralization and the opposite problem of lack of coordination of policy making and implementation in departments and agencies.

Source: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2015/03/24/cabinet-secretaries-versus-the-white-house-staff/>

Digital #Ham4Ham 3/23/16 --The West Wing Cabinet Battle

Youtube - March 23, 2016

Who do you think the audience of this piece is meant to be?

What is the goal of the author or authors?

What bias might they have?

Evidence/Supporting Detail

Explanation/Commentary/Analysis

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1mYfsNFtGI>

Inside the White House: The Cabinet

Youtube - December 11, 2009

Who do you think the audience of this piece is meant to be?

What is the goal of the author or authors?

What bias might they have?

Evidence/Supporting Detail

Explanation/Commentary/Analysis

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxSvi6JCCfk>

The Lead with Jake Tapper Cold Open

Saturday Night Live - December 11, 2016

Who do you think the audience of this piece is meant to be?

What is the goal of the author or authors?

What bias might they have?

Evidence/Supporting Detail

Explanation/Commentary/Analysis

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-w5wbu7GBE>

Trump's Cabinet: 'Goldman, generals and gazillionaires'

by Susan Page, USA TODAY, December 11, 2016

Who do you think the audience of this piece is meant to be?

What is the goal of the author or authors?

What bias might they have?

Text

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump ran for the White House as an outsider and a pragmatist. But he's quickly putting together an administration that will be the most fiercely conservative of any in decades.

After campaigning as the least ideological presidential contender in modern times, Trump is naming a Cabinet and senior White House staff that is dominated by retired military leaders, wealthy business executives and partisan activists who oppose the historic mission of the departments they are poised to head. While the president-elect issued few policy blueprints while he was seeking the job, his nominees for key posts already have been leading the charge to dismantle President Obama's initiatives on health care and climate change.

"I call it the three 'G' Cabinet: Goldman, generals and gazillionaires," Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill, a Democrat, said mockingly Sunday on ABC's This Week, a reference to multiple Trump appointees who have worked at the Wall Street firm Goldman Sachs.

On Fox News Sunday, Trump said he was "very, very close" to naming his pick for the Cabinet's biggest prize, secretary of State, speaking favorably of ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson. "He's much more than a business executive," Trump said of Tillerson, reported to be the frontrunner for the job. "I mean, he's a world-class player." The president-elect also

Explanation/Commentary/Analysis

favorably mentioned two other prospects, 2012 presidential nominee Mitt Romney and Senate Foreign Relations chairman Bob Corker.

Trump's unorthodox campaign, dominated by a promise to "make America great again" and attacks on Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton, gave limited insights about what a Trump administration would look like. But in the past four weeks, he has reassured Republicans and alarmed Democrats by appointments that largely reflect GOP orthodoxy — from a Labor secretary-designate who opposes raising the minimum wage to a Housing and Urban Development secretary-designate who warns that subsidized housing fosters dependency.

His domestic team would have been a good fit for just about any of his Republican primary rivals, though Trump's friendly stance toward Russia and its provocative president, Vladimir Putin, is at odds with GOP tradition and the party's leading congressional voices on foreign policy.

So far, Trump's choices — including top jobs for a trio of veterans of Goldman Sachs, a firm he blasted at campaign rallies — haven't reflected the populist impulses that fueled his appeal to some white working-class voters or his vow to "drain the swamp" in Washington of donors and other insiders.

"I think we're going to have one of the great Cabinets ever put together," Trump boasted. The nominations, announced via Twitter and at campaign-style rallies, provide clues about how he will operate and what he will do after the Inauguration.

Here are some things we're learning:

- 'I like generals'

"I think generals are terrific, you know?" Trump said in Sunday's interview on Fox News. "They go through schools and they sort of end up at the top of the pyramid, and it's like a test. They passed the test of life." He's picked three of them to top jobs: retired Marine Corps Gen. James "Mad Dog" Mattis as secretary of Defense, retired Marine Corps Gen. John Kelly as secretary of Homeland Security, and retired Army Gen. Michael Flynn as national security adviser.

He's also met at Trump Tower with retired Army Gen. David Petraeus and retired Navy Adm. James Stavridis as he weighed the possibilities for secretary of State.

- Corporate command

Not since the Eisenhower administration have so many business executives landed top government jobs, making Trump's Cabinet the wealthiest in American history. "I want people that made a fortune because now they're negotiating with you," he told supporters in Des Moines Thursday during his "thank you" tour. "It's not different than a great baseball player or a great golfer."

He has designated former Goldman Sachs banker Steve Bannon as his senior White House strategist, Goldman veteran Steve Mnuchin as Treasury secretary, billionaire investor Wilbur Ross as Commerce secretary and billionaire activist Betsy DeVos as Education secretary. Another billionaire, Chicago Cubs co-owner Todd Ricketts, has been named deputy Commerce secretary.

Linda McMahon, a former CEO of World Wrestling Entertainment, has been chosen to head the Small

Business Administration. A millionaire who is married to a billionaire, she contributed \$7 million to pro-Trump super PACs this fall.

- Climate-change campaign in the crosshairs

Last week, environmental activists were encouraged when Trump met with former vice president Al Gore and actor Leonardo DiCaprio, both activists on climate change. Then the president-elect selected as head of the Environmental Protection Agency Oklahoma attorney general Scott Pruitt — a skeptic of climate change who repeatedly has sued the EPA to push back regulations aimed at reducing emissions from coal-fired power plants.

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.), an ally of the fossil-fuel industry, is reported to be Trump's choice to lead the Interior Department. She has supported legislation to open the Atlantic Ocean to drilling and prevent the Interior Department from regulating hydraulic fracturing.

Trump, who during the campaign called climate change "a big scam," now says it's up for debate and decries the burden of regulations on businesses. (Mainstream scientists overwhelmingly agree that the climate is changing, in part due to human activity.) "I'm still open-minded," Trump said Sunday. "Nobody really knows."

He complained that China, Mexico and other countries were "eating our lunch" because of environmental regulations. "We can't let all of these permits, that take forever to get, stop our jobs," he said, adding that he was studying whether to pull the United States out of the Paris Climate Agreement. "I don't want that agreement to put us at a competitive disadvantage with other countries."

- Russian roulette

Trump's stance on Russia, including his call for more cooperation with Putin, puts him at odds with many of the Republicans allied with him on other fronts. Some of the top appointments he has made or is considering are aligned with his views. Flynn sat next to Putin last year during a paid appearance in Moscow for Russia Today, a TV network financed by the Kremlin. Tillerson, who has negotiated business deals with Putin for years, was awarded Russia's Order of Friendship in 2013.

Trump disputed the conclusion in an unpublished CIA report that Russia tried to intervene in the election to boost his prospects. "I think it's ridiculous," he said. "I don't believe it."

Senate Armed Services chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) disagreed. "It's clear the Russians interfered," he said on CBS' Face the Nation. He called for a select congressional committee to investigate Russia's efforts and expressed concern about Tillerson's ties to Moscow. "It's a matter of concern to me that he has such a close personal relationship with Vladimir Putin, and obviously they've done enormous deals together," McCain said. "That would color his approach to Vladimir Putin and the Russian threat."

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, one of Trump's primary rivals who happens to be on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that will consider his nomination for secretary of State, on Sunday signaled his concern in a Trump-like way — on Twitter. "Being a "friend of Vladimir" is not an attribute I am hoping for from a #SecretaryofState," he posted.

Source: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2016/12/11/trumps-cabinet-goldman-generals-and-gazillionaires/95299216/>

Activity

Write an essay evaluating the concern over Trump's cabinet choices. What are some concerns about their backgrounds or experience? How are these cabinet choices different from past people chosen for those jobs? How important are these decisions based on what you now know about the cabinet? How important is the cabinet?

Your essay must make clear references to at least three of the sources we have evaluated over the past two days. When you refer to a text, use a direct quote. When you refer to a video, provide a paraphrase of the part of the video you are referring to before you go into your analysis. This is your chance to put together everything you've learned about the cabinet over the past several classes. If you'd prefer, you can type this or use extra paper.