



The American Presidency

2001-2020

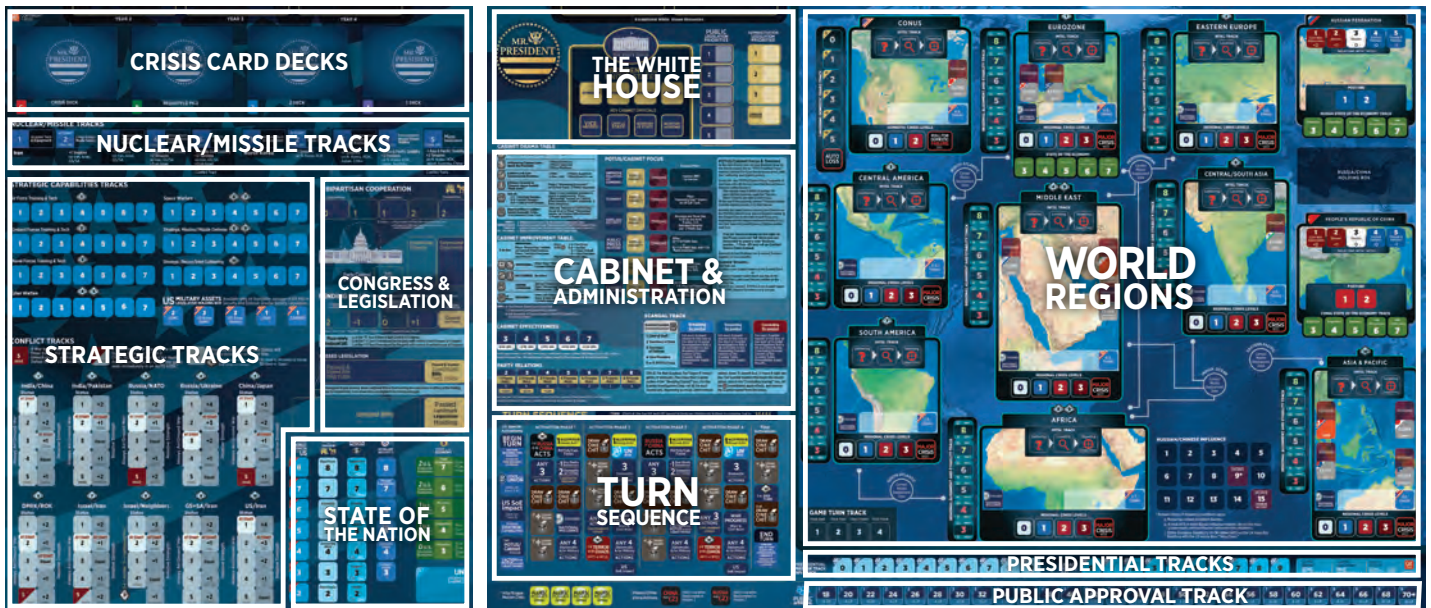
**HOW TO
PLAY**



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the White House. Here you are, in the Oval Office, sitting behind the Resolute Desk. Did you know this desk was a gift to President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880 from Queen Victoria? Or that it's built from the English oak timbers of the HMS Resolute, a British Arctic exploration ship? Of course you did! Many Presidents since Hayes have used it as their official desk, and now you're sitting behind it, ready to begin your Administration.

Mr. President is a game in which you play the President of the United States (POTUS). Your task is to lead your Administration through a term of four years, dealing with the domestic, diplomatic, and military crises and opportunities that arise. If successful, you will leave the country and the world in a better place than when you started, leaving behind a legacy that will rank you as one of America's greatest Presidents.



MAIN SIDE BOARD

Congress/Strategic

You will play on two gameboards. The Main Board contains the international map with the World Regions. There are 8 world regions (Eurozone, Eastern Europe, Central America, Middle East, Central/South Asia, South America, Africa, and Asia & Pacific), 2 Peers (China and Russia) and the Continental United States (CONUS). It also contains the White House and your Cabinet and Administration; the Presidential Tracks, and the heart of the game, the Turn Sequence.

The Main Side Board contains areas for Congress and Legislation; the State of the Nation, the Strategic Tracks depicting the strategic situation in the world, Nuclear and Missile Tracks displaying Iran and North Korea's attempts to develop atomic weapons and missiles, and an area for Crisis Cards.

All of these are explained in more detail in the Governing Manual.

Mr. President is a complex game with many moving parts. Crisis Cards and randomly drawn "Crisis Chits" will present you with an ever-changing set of domestic and international challenges that will be different every time you play the game. You will be confronted with a variety of problems and opportunities, some of which, if not handled properly, will result in your losing the game; there are

MAIN BOARD

POTUS/Administration/Turn Sequence/World Regions

many actions you can take to avoid this, yet, you will never have all the time and resources you need to tackle everything. You will have to prioritize and hope you've done so successfully.

All of this can be overwhelming, at least at first. It will seem that everything is happening at once. To help you, the **TURN SEQUENCE FLIPBOOK** will guide you step-by-step through the Turn Sequence. In time, though, with familiarity, you will be able to play the game without it.

The **GOVERNING MANUAL** is your primary Rules Reference. It contains all the rules of the game, as well as a list of components.

All the tables and charts you need to play (and, yes, there are a lot of them!) will be found in your **DOMESTIC CHARTS BOOKLET**, **WORLD CHARTS BOOKLET**, two **WORLD PEER BOOKLETS**, and the **ALLY AND ROGUE STATES BOOKLET**. You will be referring to them often, though some of the smaller, most-used charts and tables are also included in the **TURN SEQUENCE FLIPBOOK**.

You have four **MASTER ACTION PLAYER AIDS** that outline and describe all the Actions you can take in the game. They are divided into Presidential Actions (only things you can do as POTUS), Domestic Actions (where your Chief of Staff and Vice-President can help you), Diplomatic Actions

(where your Secretary of State and Vice-President can assist), and Military Actions (where your Secretary of Defense can help). If you can do it in the game, it will be on one of the Master Action Player Aids.

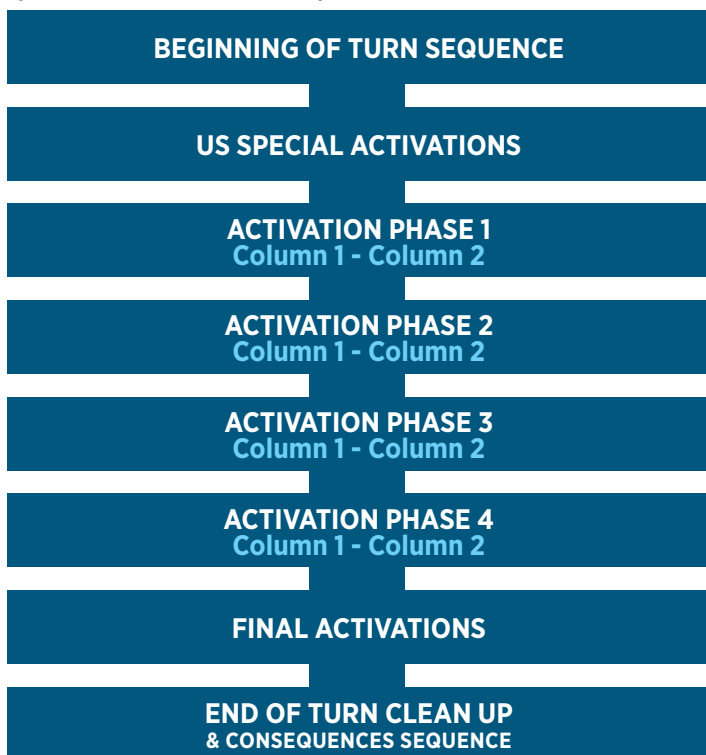
You also have a **PRESIDENTIAL BRIEFING BOOK** which contains helpful strategies and hints for winning (or at least playing) *Mr. President*, as well as Examples of Play and a Counter Manifest. Reading this Briefing Book is entirely optional; it does not contain any rules or other information you need to know to play the game. You may wish to discover your own strategies and figure out how the world of *Mr. President* works on your own. But if you'd like some extra help or are feeling overwhelmed with all the choices before you and aren't sure how to proceed, the Briefing Book is there to give you a hand.

The **SCENARIO SET-UP BOOKLET** gives instruction on how to set up the Core Sandbox Scenario of *Mr. President*. It also contains six historical Scenarios, each of which contains its own set-up instructions, special rules, and Scenario-specific Victory Conditions.

Good luck as President! As the Marine Band strikes up Hail To The Chief, your country and the world await.

HOW TO PLAY

Let's start with an overview of how the game is played. Although it has many moving pieces, at heart it's a simple system. Here is an anatomy of a turn:



TURN SEQUENCE

At the heart of the game is the Turn Sequence, located at the bottom left of the Main Board. You will follow this through all four Activation Phases making up one game Turn (a year).

All Segments in which you may act are colored blue. Segments in which events outside your control take place are brown, red, black or yellow.



To determine where you are in the Turn Sequence, you will move a "Current US Action" counter from Segment to Segment, fully completing the instructions of the Segment you are on before moving to the next Segment. The movement of your "Current US Action" counter through the entire Turn Sequence constitutes a single Turn of the game, representing one year of your Presidential Term of Office.

As indicated by the Turn Anatomy, each turn begins with a "Beginning of Turn Sequence" then "US Special Activations" and ends with Final Activations and an "End of Turn Clean Up & Consequences Sequence." They are described in detail in the Turn Sequence Flipbook.

The Turn Sequence is divided into four main Phases, named Activation Phase 1, 2, 3, and 4. Each Phase contains two Columns, Column 1 and Column 2, each containing five Activation Segments. These Segments tell you what you can do at that moment, what actions you can take, when to draw Crisis Chits, when to consult certain charts and tables, and so on. Activation Phases 2 and 4 are identical. Activation Phases 1 and 3 are almost identical; Activation Phase 3 has one extra part of the Focused National Intelligence Segment: "1 Action for POTUS and Each Cabinet Member."

In each Activation Phase, you will move through and perform all the requirements of the five Activation Segments of Column 1 and then do the same with Column 2. You will repeat this through all four Activation Phases.

HOW TO PLAY

US Special Activations	ACTIVATION PHASE 1	ACTIVATION PHASE 2	ACTIVATION PHASE 3	ACTIVATION PHASE 4	Final Activations
BEGIN TURN PERFORM BEGINNING TURN SEQUENCE PAGE 4 OF TURN SEQUENCE FLIPBOOK	10 1-5 RUSSIA 6-10 CHINA ACTS	1 ALLY/ROGUE Group Acts* POTUS/Cab. Focus	RUSSIA or CHINA ACTS	1 ALLY/ROGUE Group Acts* POTUS/Cab. Focus	10 DRAW ONE CHIT
STATE of the UNION (only on Turns 2-4)	ANY 3 ACTIONS	IF + DRAW AGAIN 1	ANY 3 ACTIONS	IF + DRAW AGAIN 1	IF + DRAW AGAIN 1
US SoE Impact (Not on Turn 1) Improve STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES	1 DRAW ONE CHIT	IF + DRAW AGAIN 1	1 DRAW ONE CHIT	IF + DRAW AGAIN 1	10 1-4 END TURN
Set POTUS/Cabinet FOCUS	IF + DRAW AGAIN 1	ANY 3 ACTIONS Core Support Check	IF + DRAW AGAIN 1	ANY 3 ACTIONS Core Support Check	5-10 DRAW ONE CHIT
1 ACTION FOR POTUS & EACH CABINET MEMBER	IF + DRAW AGAIN 1	WAR PROGRESS Wars & Civil Wars	IF + DRAW AGAIN 1	ANY 4 Diplomatic &/or Military ACTIONS	END TURN PERFORM END OF TURN CLEAN-UP & CONSEQUENCES SEQUENCE PAGE 24 OF TURN SEQUENCE FLIPBOOK
	ANY 4 Diplomatic &/or Military ACTIONS	1-5 TERROR CHAOS 6-10 (WT1 or WT2)	ANY 4 Diplomatic &/or Military ACTIONS	1-5 TERROR CHAOS 6-10 (WT1 or WT2)	
	US SoE Impact	US SoE Impact	US SoE Impact	US SoE Impact	

TURNS

The whole game consists of four Turns. When you reach the “End Turn” Segment at the bottom of the rightmost column, the Final Activations, you will calculate the final consequences of that year in office and then move your counter back to the “Begin Turn” Segment, and begin another Turn (or year). You will do this four times (or eight, if you want to stand for re-election and you win a second term!).

Example: Movement through the Turn Sequence is down one Column, then across and up to the next, then down that Column again, then across and up, and so on to the end, moving through the five Activation Segments in each Column, as shown here.

TURN SEQUENCE FLIPBOOK

The Turn Sequence Flipbook will guide you through the Turn Sequence Activation Segment by Activation Segment, telling you exactly what options you have, what actions you can take or need to take, what charts to consult, what die to roll, and so forth. At the end of the **TURN SEQUENCE FLIPBOOK**, you will have completed one Turn, which represents one Year of your Presidential Term. You will then go back to page one and go through the Turn Sequence Flipbook again. Four trips through the Turn Sequence Flipbook is the same as going through the Turn Sequence four times. If you avoid auto-loss during this time, then at the game’s end in the Core Sandbox Scenario, you will score your Legacy Points to determine your level of victory. The Historical Scenarios each have their own special Victory Conditions.

If you do exceptionally well, it is also possible to achieve an automatic victory before your Term expires.

MASTER ACTIONS

Master Actions are your administrative muscles, Mr. President. The four Master Action Player Aid charts list all the Presidential, Domestic, Diplomatic, and Military Actions you can take during the game to exert your presence in the world and at home. Most of these Actions are “free;” once permitted by the Turn Sequence, you can use them as you wish. Some, however, will require the expenditure of an Action Point (AP), and some may allow you to spend an AP to gain a positive die roll modifier (DRM). (For further details, see the Master Actions Player Aids, page 15 in the Governing Manual.)

These Actions are what you perform to advance your goals in the game, domestically and internationally. Almost everything you do costs an Action (though, to repeat, not necessarily an Action Point). Each Activation Segment on the Turn Sequence will let you know, either implicitly or explicitly, what kind of Actions and how many of them you have to perform that Activation Segment. You will feel you never have enough of them—and you’ll be right!

ACTION POINTS OR APs

Action Points or APs, on the other hand, are a measure of the power and authority you bring to a particular situation when you take an Action. Think of them as your “Political Capital.” Many Actions on the four Master Action Player Aids do not require Action Points and can be taken without any expenditure of APs. But some actions do, and cannot be performed without spending the required APs.



Action Points are tracked by Action Point Counters in different denominations on the Presidential Prestige Track / APs Track underneath the World Map on the Main Board.

APs AND ACTIONS

During any Activation Segment of the turn’s four Activation Phases in which you may Perform Master Actions, you have two options with Action Points, in addition to the other ways they may be used in the game.

1. You may forego an allowed Master Action in order to add one to your Action Point Total.
2. You may spend two Action Points to receive one additional Master Action of any type to perform during that segment.

APs AND RE-ROLLS

You can always spend an AP to re-roll any die roll that occurs as part of a Master Action (Diplomatic, Domestic, Military, or Presidential) - once per roll. In such cases, the re-roll result is final; no further re-rolls are allowed for that die roll.



Crisis Chits and Crisis Cards

The events, crises, challenges, and good stuff that befall you during your Presidency are generally triggered by **Crisis Chits** and by **Crisis Cards**. The two go hand in hand. You will draw a **CRISIS CHIT** when the Current US Action counter is moved onto a “Draw One Chit” Segment. When this happens, randomly draw one Crisis chit from the Crisis Chits Cup, place it on the “Draw One Chit” segment, then perform whatever action(s) that Crisis chit indicates.

If the Crisis Chit you draw has a “+” notation, when you finish resolving what the chit asks you to do, you then draw another Crisis Chit, if demanded by the Activation Segment (some Segments require you to draw only one Crisis Chit, whether it has a “+” notation or not). You could end up drawing as many as three Crisis chit draws as long as the first two Crisis chits you draw contain a “+” notation. You keep drawing Crisis chits and performing actions until you either get a Crisis chit without a “+” or you have drawn a total of three Crisis chits. (Note, some Activation Segments only require and allow you to draw a single Crisis Chit, whatever that Chit says.)

Certain Crisis Chits will instruct you to draw **Crisis Cards**. Crisis Cards are the raw material for Mr. President. They present a particular world or domestic event that will either challenge you (usually) or help you (not that often!). They are what make each play of the game different and unique.

There is a space on the Main Side Board directly above the Nuclear/Missile Track for four piles of cards: the Crisis (or Current Year) Deck, the **Reshuffle Pile**, the **#2 Deck**, and the **#3 Deck**. Each of these is color coded: Red for Crisis (or Current), Green for Reshuffle, Blue for #2, and Purple for #3. These colors correspond to instruction icons on the cards themselves that indicate where and how to play the cards.

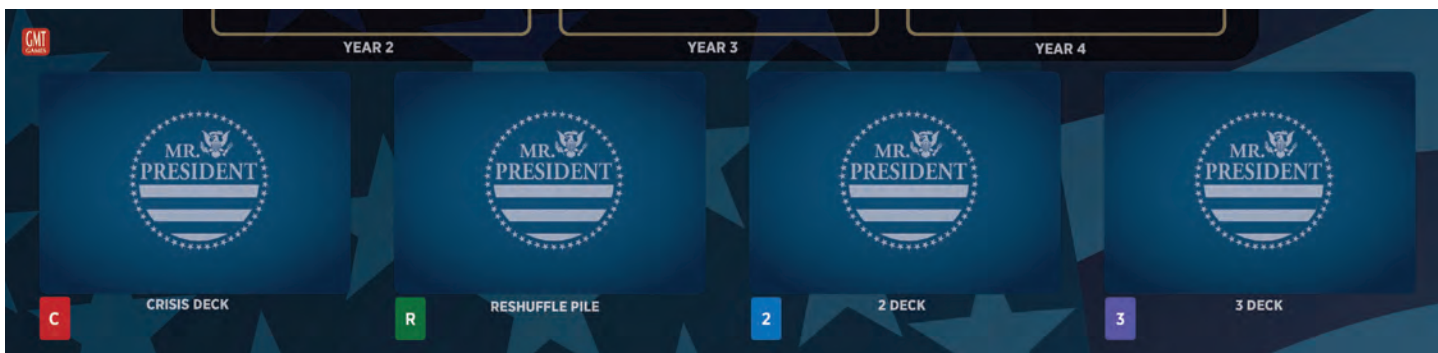
CHARTS AND TABLES

You will frequently be directed to make a roll or look up a result on a chart or table in one of the booklets. To make it easy for you to find the appropriate chart, each booklet has one or more prefixes shown on the front cover, and each chart within that booklet is numbered. The most commonly used booklets and their abbreviations are listed below, and a complete list is in the Governing Manual.

- Domestic Charts Booklet (D)
- World Charts Booklet (WD, WM, WT, and WCT)
- Ally and Rogue States Booklet (WA)
- World Peer Russia Acts Booklet (WPR)
- World Peer China Acts Booklet (WPC)

For example, if you needed to roll on the Cabinet Improvement Table in the Domestic Charts Booklet, you would be instructed to “roll on the Cabinet Improvement Table (D2)” indicating chart 2 in the Domestic Charts Booklet.

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There are five types of cards in the game, differentiated by color and name in a box on the lower-right of each card, and by number. These are:



1. **Exceptional White House Resources cards** (Yellow #1-5).



2. **Natural Disaster cards** (Red #6-13).



3. **Terrorism Event cards** (Black #14-33)



4. **Cascading Event cards** (Teal Green #34-64)



5. **Event cards** (Light Blue #65-180)

When a Crisis Card is drawn, simply follow the instructions on the card. Unless the card is a Cascading Event or it says “place this card in the Reshuffle pile,” the card is discarded (removed) from the game once it has been read and acted upon.

TRACKS

The other important game mechanism in *Mr. President* are the game **Tracks**. They provide crucial and needed information for you about the state of the world, letting you know where you need to focus your attention to forestall a potential crisis or catastrophe.

On the majority of the Tracks in the game, you move the Track’s counter up and down by one box at a time, as directed by various game actions and results.

Some Tracks, though, behave differently. They are called **Trending Tracks**. They change more slowly over time. Each of these has an additional special counter, an “Improving/Worsening” or “Pro/Anti,” counter, which you place to show whether the current value on the Track is trending either higher or lower. It’s important to remember that, barring an instruction on a Crisis Card or chart result, it takes more time to change a Trending Track than a normal track. Either an “Improving” or “Worsening” counter can be on a Trending Track, never both. If instructed to place an “Improving” counter on a Trending Track which already has one, remove it instead and increase the value by one. Likewise, if instructed to place a “Worsen-

ing” counter on a Trending Track which already has one, decrease the value by one. And if you are ever instructed to place an “Improving” or “Worsening” counter on a Trending Track which has the other kind of counter on it, they “cancel each other out” and you simply remove the counter from the Track. For more information about these Tracks and how they function, see page 11 in the *Governing Manual*.

During the game, you will often be instructed to make a Track Check against one of the tracks in the game. When that occurs, find the current number where the track counter is on that track (or the number in the top left corner of the current space, for the Public Approval Track) and make a ten-sided die roll. If the result is equal to or less than the current rating, you have passed the check. If it is greater than the rating, you have failed the check. (For more information on Track Checks, see D18). Consequences of failed checks are indicated on the game’s cards and charts. Most of the time, there will be consequences.

AND THAT IS HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED. The mechanics are simple: just move your US Current Action counter through the Turn Sequence, flipping through the pages of the **TURN SEQUENCE FLIPBOOK** one by one as you go, performing the action of each Activation Segment until you’re done. As the Segments instruct, you will draw crisis chits and crisis cards, check Tracks, roll a die on Charts and Tables, try to pass Legislation, and do what you can by spending Actions and Action Points to shape the world in your favor. *Good luck!*

A LAST WORD

If you are ever playing Mr. President and cannot find a rule covering a situation you are in, feel free to choose randomly from among the possible outcomes. Because Mr. President is a sandbox, it’s impossible to exhaustively cover every possible effect that can interact. Just remember that truth is often stranger than fiction, and whatever outcome you select is just as valid as any of the other possibilities.

WINNING AND LOSING

WINNING

So, how do you win *Mr. President*?

It depends. If you are playing any of the six Historical Scenarios, they have specific Victory Conditions; see the **Scenario Set-Up Booklet** for details. You need to be aware of your Victory Conditions at all times if you hope to prevail and earn an honored place in history. They represent the goals which you need to accomplish.

If you are playing the Core Sandbox Scenario, then you win by amassing Legacy Points. At the end of your time in office, these will allow you to compare your performance to your Presidential predecessors, at least up until the start of the Twenty-First Century. You will find a Victory Level Chart in the **Domestic Charts Booklet** (labeled D16, meaning “Chart 16 in the Domestic Charts Booklet), and in the **Turn Sequence Flipbook** as well, that will enable you to make this comparison. The more Legacy Points you have, the greater your victory.

It is also possible in the Core Sandbox Scenario to achieve an Auto-Victory at the end of any turn in which you performed extremely well (see End of Turn Consequences on page 26 of the Turn Sequence Flipbook). (**Auto-Victory is not possible in any of the Historical Scenarios.**)

front in governing the country and passing legislation that you will forge your Legacy. This leads to the following Golden Rule:

THE GOLDEN RULE OF YOUR PRESIDENCY IN THE CORE SANDBOX SCENARIO:
The World Arena is where you can lose but the Domestic Arena is where you can win.

LOSING

There are two ways of losing in the Core Sandbox Scenario. The first is simply to fail to gain enough Legacy Points to earn a favorable comparison with previous Presidents of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth centuries. You complete your first Term in office but you fail to live up to your own expectations and potentials.

The other, and primary, way of losing is through **auto-loss**. This happens when a game situation or condition arises that causes you to automatically lose the game. An example would be if a war breaks out with Russia or China, or if a Rogue State acquires a Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD), or if too many Rogue States proliferate across the globe, destabilizing the world order. These outcomes are so disastrous that they forever tarnish your legacy.

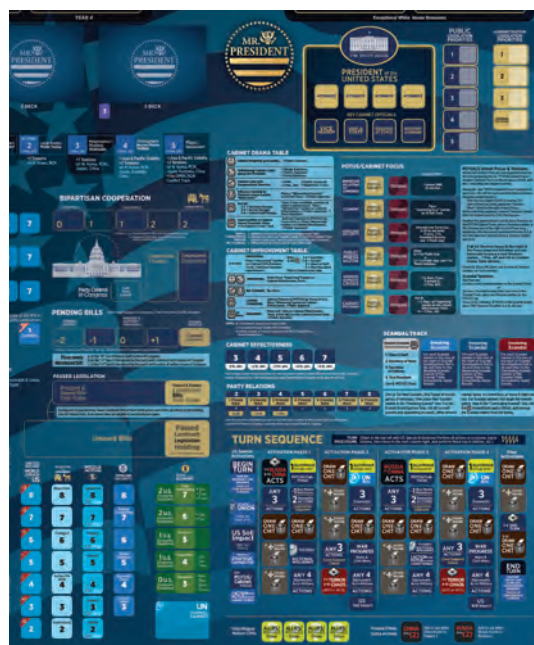
There are fourteen different ways of losing through auto-loss. A complete list is given in your **Governing Manual**.

The International stage is filled with ways of causing auto-loss. You will have your hands full keeping Terror Groups in check, eliminating Rogue States, lowering tensions, enhancing Regional stability, preventing wars (or winning them if you're in one). You have to keep the world moving towards greater peace and stability or most likely, you will lose.

However much attention and however many Action Points you put into world affairs, though, you won't gain many Legacy Points by doing so, if any at all. It's on the domestic



THIS IS WHERE YOU CAN LOSE



BUT THIS IS WHERE YOU CAN WIN

PLAN YOUR STRATEGIES ACCORDINGLY.

The background of the page is a stylized American flag. The top-left corner features a field of white stars on a blue background, while the rest of the page is filled with horizontal stripes in shades of red and white. A white rectangular box is centered on the page, containing text and a numbered list.

GOOD LUCK as President!

May your time in office go down in history as one of our most successful Presidencies. The country and the world will benefit from your success. We all look forward to seeing what you can do.

4 SIMPLE STEPS TO START PLAYING MR. PRESIDENT

1. Select the Core Sandbox Scenario from the Scenario Booklet and set up the Game Boards as instructed.
2. Use the Turn Sequence Flipbook and the Turn Sequence on the Game Board to go through each Activation Segment, one at a time while, if necessary, reading the appropriate rule or rules for that Segment in the Governing Manual. The Turn Sequence Flipbook will tell you almost everything you need to know or do.
3. For hints on game play and strategy and Examples of Play, read the Presidential Briefing Booklet.
4. When you're ready, read the Governing Manual to gain an overview of the game and its different elements.