



# POTUSO







# Rules of Play

## 1. Composition of the game

The game box contains the following items:

A 18"x24" gameboard
450 playing cards
42 wooden pawns (20 blue, 20 red and 2 yellow)
A countersheet of 48 game markers
Six game pawns of different colors
Bills 1(x30), 5 (x30) and 10 (x30) 50 million dollars.
This Rulebook

# 2. Description of the game

The game is a simulation of the political life in the United States from 1944 to the present day and the struggle for power between the Democrats, party of the donkey (blue color) and Republicans, party of the elephant (red color). The players each represent a lobby group and the politicians it controls (hereafter called «politicians» for simplicity sake).

To win, players must earn «Powerpoints» (hereafter **PP**), primarily by placing their politicians in the prestigious positions of President or Vice President of the United States.

### 3. Basic principles

### 3.1 Victory Conditions:

If a player reaches at least 51 PPs at any point in the game, he wins the game. Otherwise, the one with the most PPs at the end of the game is declared the winner.





Each turn represents the 4 years of a Presidential mandate. The game is divided into three periods of 6 or 7 turns, for historical reasons and to allow for shorter games. It is possible to play several periods in a row or just one or a few of them. Players can also decide on a fixed number of game turns, if they have a short amount of time for play.

On average, a turn lasts about half an hour.

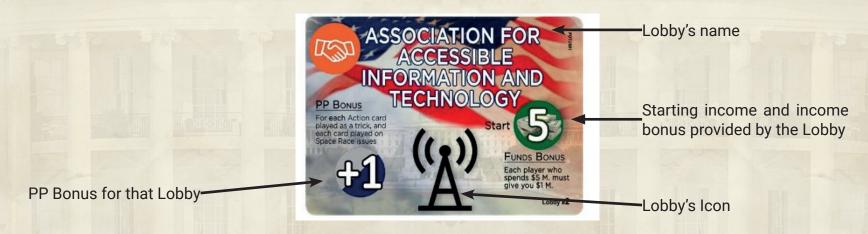
### 3.2 Rounding:

In the whole game, rounding is systematically higher, even for negative numbers.

Example: 3/2 is rounded to 2, and -5 / 2 is rounded to -3

### 3.3 The different types of Cards:

A - Lobbies Cards: twelve in total, each with their own specific advantages.

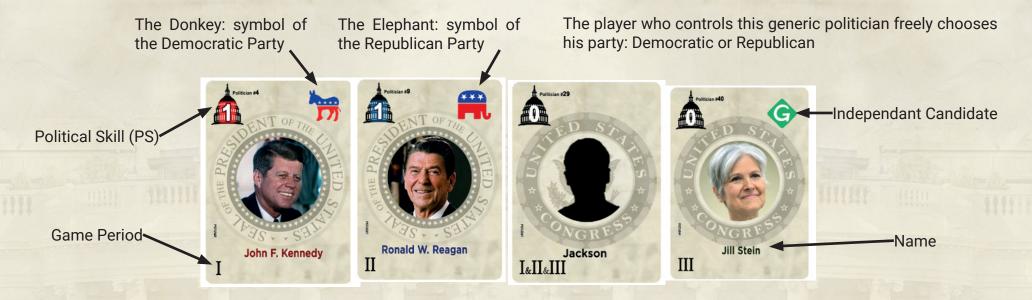


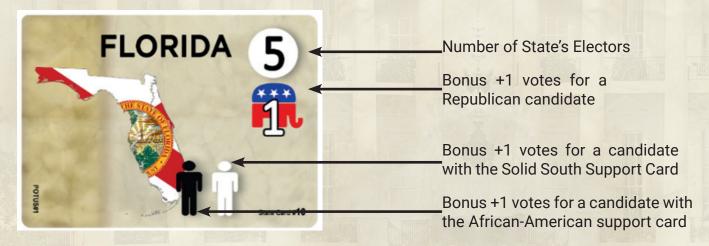
**B - Politicians Cards:** politicians are represented by cards, bearing either a photograph of one of the period's **President of the United States**, or the photo of **an Independent candidate** to the presidential elections, or by a black head silhouette for the **generic politicians** (nb: names on the latter's cards are purely for ease of sorting, they have no connection with actual names of past or living politicians).

**Political Skill of a politician (PS)** is a number written on the top left of the card. In each election, a candidate always receives a voice bonus equal to his Political Skill.









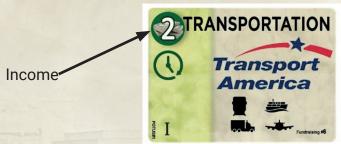
C - State Cards: each showing the geographical shape of the state and its flag in it. The value on the top right indicates the number of electors represented by this state (this is a percentage). Other symbols may appear on these cards to indicate bonus when voting takes place there

**D - Fundraising Cards:** bring income to the politicians who own them.





**E - Support cards:** provide extra vote bonus for the politicians who control them.





Bonus of a voice brought by the support card when voting in a state with this symbol

**F - Crisis Cards:** all bear a symbol showing their category (e.g. Major conflict, Economy, Cold war etc...) and a negative value which is their "strength".

















Authoritarian Civil Rights Cold War Major Conflict Economy Space Race Terrorism Various-Axis

An indication of the time period (I, II or III) is located on the bottom left, inside a black star. These cards represent the issues that the President will have to deal with. Each time one of them is played, it is placed in one of the boxes for Conflicts and Problems (located on the board), and the approval rating of the President (AP) decreases by 1 point while the player who played the card earns 1PP.

IMPORTANT: The President, the Vice-President and the Secretary of State cannot play this type of card (they can only play Executive Cards to solve them – see below).

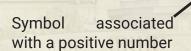
To discard a Crisis card, it must be assigned a number of Executive cards with the same symbol which total value is equal (or higher) to the Crisis Card (negative) value. See SOLVING CRISIS below.

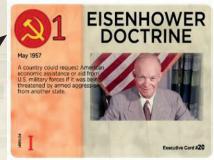






**G - Executive cards:** represent the actions taken to solve the problems posed by the «Crisis» cards. An «Executive» card must be placed on a «Crisis» card with an identical symbol.







When this card resolves a Crisis card, it is not discarded, but returns to the pile.

SOLVING CRISIS: If the total value of all Executive cards assigned to a Crisis card offsets the negative value of the latter, BOTH the Crisis card and ALL the Executive cards assigned to it are discarded, and the President's approval rating increases by 2 points.

Otherwise, AS LONG as the Crisis value is not fully offset by Executive cards, just pile up the latter(s) until the total offset is met

- **H Action Cards:** they come into 2 kinds, Action (or Tricks) and Campaign.
- Action Cards are various and varied event cards whose effect is directly inscribed on them. They can be played at any time of the game
- Campaign Cards allow to modify the result of a vote. They can be played before or after taking the pawns from the bag







I - Fate Cards: a Fate Card is drawn at the beginning of each player's initiative, granting him an immediate bonus or making him suffer an immediate penalty.

# YES WE CAN You can pick 1 Card exposed by another player (not a politician) Fals Card #15

### 3.4 Description of the Gameboard







### 4. Setting up the game

Proceed with the steps below, for a PERIOD I game start (instructions follow for late-start games):

### 4.1. Game board:

Arrange the board so that each player has enough room on the table to spread his cards and funds in front of him.

### 4.2. Treasurer:

designate a player who will act as the «Treasurer» player (unpaid) for the game. He will handle the game money as needed; will make change on demand, while maintaining a strict separation between the game funds and his own.

### 4.3. Setting up the game - Sample with Period I start

- 1) Each player chooses a **color pawn**, then also takes in this same color the corresponding game markers (with the texts «Candidate», «Running Mate», «Vote" and «PP»).
- 2) Distribute two random **Lobbies** cards to each player. Everyone chooses one and return the other to the deck (which will not be used later in that same game).
- 3) Select the **politicians** cards with a president photo of the period I. Distribute at random **ONE** card among the ones with the color photograph of a President of the period, i.e. those numbered from 1 to 4 for 4 players, from 1 to 5 for 5 players or from 1 to 6 for 6 players. Put the remaining cards on the corresponding location of the RESERVE on the board.
- **4)** Now take the remaining politician cards from those generic politicians (cards showing a black head silhouette and the I+ period symbol) and Distribute **TWO** randomly to each player. Place the remaining cards in the RESERVE and reshuffle ALL the cards there...
- 5) Each player assigns a political party to each of his two unaffiliated politicians (the politician with the color picture already has a party), placing a «donkey» marker for the Democratic party or an «elephant» marker for the Republican party on the top right of each card.
- 6) The player with Franklin Delano Roosevelt #1 card is the current President of the United States. He places the «President» marker on Franklin Delano Roosevelt's card. He also places his game marker on the +1 box of the President's approval rating. He finally scores 10 PPs and therefore places his PP counter on box 10 of the board track.
- 7) The player who has Harry Truman #2 card is the current Vice President and therefore places the Vice President marker on this card.





He scores 5 PP. With 6 players, the President appoints a «Secretary of State» among the politicians who belong, if possible, neither to the President, nor to the Vice President, and scores another 5PP.

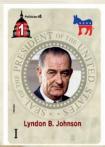
8) Sort the «State» cards into two decks: the first deck with the states valued 1 or 2 and the other with States valued 3 or higher. Randomly distribute to each player TWO cards of the first deck (value 1 or 2) and ONE card of the second deck.

Then put back together all remaining «State" cards in one single deck, shuffle it, and place it face down on the game board in the «Uncontrolled States» box, the flip the first card of that deck and move it to the «First State» box.

- **9)** Each player positions in front of him the 3 politicians he controls and assign each of them ONE State card.
- **10)** Select "Support" cards from those bearing the Period I data. Distribute ONE randomly to each player. He must assign it to one of his politicians. Place the balance Support cards in the corresponding location of the RESERVE.

### Example:

- **11)** Select all "Fundraising" cards from Period I and place them on the corresponding location of the RESERVE.
- 12) Select all other cards from period I. Remove the two Crisis cards labeled **WWII-Europe #1** and **WWII-Asia #2**. Place those cards on the board in the CRISIS box.

















13) Shuffle and place all remaining cards from Period I on the board in the «CARDS» box.





- 14) Set all cards for Periods II and III aside, in two separate decks. Each will replace the current deck of card when that period is over or its current deck is exhausted. That is on TURN #8 for Period II, and on TURN #14 for Period III
- 15) Each player, clockwise from the President, draws TWO cards from the top of the «CARDS» stack.
- 16) Shuffle all Fate cards. Create a deck and set it aside the board, where the cards will be drawn when required.

### 5. Game Turn

### Each game turn is as played as follows:

- 1) Mortality Phase.
- 2) Income Phase.
- 3) Congress Phase
- 4) Presidential Elections Phase

### **5.1 Mortality Phase**

(ignored during the first game turn of EACH new game)

**5.1.1 Procedure:** The President randomly draws a pawn in the bag for each of his

politicians. If it's a yellow pawn, the politician is dead.

If after the death of one or more of his politicians, a player is left with only one politician in play, he immediately takes another in the RE-SERVE to have at least TWO.

**5.1.2** When a politician dies or withdraws from politics (see below), he immediately loses all the cards assigned to him. They are put back into the corresponding decks.

If the politician is generic (i.e. not a character with a photograph), its card is placed in the RESERVE, otherwise it is permanently discarded.

**5.1.3 Death of the President:** in such a case, the Vice President immediately becomes President, and scores 5 PP. He in turn appoints a new Vice-President who must be of the same political party. The new VP also scores 5 PP.

When playing with 6 players, it is possible to appoint as Vice-President the former Secretary of State. In such a case, the President now





has to appoint a new Secretary of State. The same player should not - if possible - perform several functions.

The new President immediately takes the initiative (some players can lose their turn when this happens).

**5.1.4 Death of the Vice President:** in case of death of the Vice President, the current President immediately appoints a new Vice President, whose player scores 5 PP.

### 5.2 Income Phase.

Each player receives a flat \$ 10 million income, plus the income indicated on the fundraising cards already assigned to his politicians and, if any and when applicable, the funds bonus of his Lobby.

### **5.3 Congress Phase**

The Congress Phase is separated into 3 successive **Initiatives**, handled as follows:

### 1st Initiative

Each player, starting from the President, then in clockwise order, will take ONE initiative.

- 1) The player first draws a Fate Card and
- 2) Then undertakes EACH of the following three steps in any order he wants:
- A) PLAY ONE OR TWO CARDS FROM HIS HAND.

It can be either an Action, Crisis or Executive Card.

Crisis: those cards are placed in the CRISIS box. Each such card played and placed in the box lowers the President's approval rating by ONE (-1) point.

Executive: they can be played only on an existing Crisis card located already in the CRISIS box AND only on a Crisis card bearing the same symbol as the Executive card, i.e. being of the same category. If the value of the Crisis is offset by the value of the Executive card, the Crisis is resolved (remove the card from the box) AND the President's approval rating increases by TWO (+2) points. Otherwise, leave the Executive card simply placed on top of the Crisis card (ensure the value of the Crisis card is still visible) and wait till the Crisis is finally solved by placement of more Executive cards whose total will be enough to offset the Crisis value and thus solve it. In other words, it is possible to put several Executive Cards on the same Crisis card in order to solve it.





Action: those cards have their own rules and/or effects directly written on them. Just apply them by following instructions.

### B) CHANGE THE PARTY ALLEGIANCE OF ITS GENERIC POLITICIANS.

Simply flip the donkey or elephant party marker. There are no limits to the number of changes you can make.

### C) DO ONE (AND ONLY ONE) ACTION AMONG:

### C.1- Draw and take the first card from Any ONE pile of the RESERVE: Politician, Support or Fundraising

When a player draws a generic politician, he must immediately declare to which party it belongs by putting a Donkey (Democrat) or Elephant (Republican) marker on that card.

If he draws a Fundraising or Support Card, the card must be placed under one of his current politicians

### C.2 - Take the first card from the «CARD» pile.

### C.3 - Attempt to elect one of his politicians in the FIRST uncontrolled state.

The player designates one of his politicians and allocates its Campaign Expenses (CE, in \$ Million). In every state, the player gains a bonus of ONE (+1) vote for every CE expenditure equivalent to the number of the State's Electors (i.e. the numerical value printed in the white circle on the State card).

Then draw 10 pawns from the bag. Each pawn corresponding to the color of the politician's party brings him ONE (+1) extra vote.

Sum up the politician's above votes thus obtained, the politician's Political Skill (PS), the various Cards bonuses owned.

If the politician obtains the majority of votes, he takes control of the state (put the card under the politician), select the next available State card from the uncontrolled box and move it to the First State box.

### Example:

### 2nd Initiative

When each player has made his First Initiative, the **President gets the Initiative for the second time**. He – and he alone - plays it normally, and an evaluation of his policy is made at the end of this second Initiative, earning or costing him PP. The process is the following

### POLICY EVALUATION - END OF THE PRESIDENT'S 2ND INITIATIVE





To evaluate the President's policy, count and sum up the number of unresolved Crisis on which there is NO Executive Card at all. **The Approval Rating (AR) of the President drops immediately by an amount equivalent to this sum**.

Then, if Executive cards were placed on top of a Crisis card not yet offset, those Executive cards are now placed underneath the Crisis card. They remain assigned to this Crisis, and their value continues to count, but they will no longer prevent the decline in AR (i.e. popularity) during the next Policy Evaluation, IF there is no new Executive card placed anew on this Crisis.

The President scores a number of PP equal to his currently modified AR. Be careful this can be negative. The Vice-President scores a PP number equal to one-half (rounded up) that number.

NB: in a 6 players game, the Secretary of State also scores the same number of PP as the Vice President.

Example: The approval rating of President Jimmy Carter being +3 after his second initiative, he scores 3 PP and the Vice President scores 2 PP (and same for the Secretary of State if 6 players game). To be continued ...

Then, play a complete second round of initiatives in which each OTHER player plays once.

### 3rd (President's) Initiatives

When the 2nd Initiative is over, a third – and last – one starts, and goes to the President. At the end of this 3rd initiative, **another Evaluation of the President's policy is conducted, exactly as described in the second initiative above**.

No other player can play after the President's 3rd initiative.

IN OTHER WORDS, this third initiative of the President marks the end of the Congress Phase, where the President played three times, while the other players played only twice!

### **5.4 Presidential Elections Phase**

In fact, it is solved in two steps, first the Primaries, and then the Presidential Election itself.

### **5.4.1 The Primary Elections**

They always start with the President, who has the floor first. He may choose to run once more, provided that he has not already completed two full terms.

If he fails to get re-elected, he will lose 5PP. But not representing oneself at the end of the first term is equivalent - for the President - to withdrawing from politics.

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If the President chooses to run again, the primaries of his party are over. He counts all the State electors controlled by the politicians of his party (whether owned by the player or other players), then turns face-down the State cards thereof. The player who controls the President places his player pawn on the track box whose number corresponds to the sum of the State's Electors thus acquired.

Example: In 1980, the current President, Jimmy Carter runs for a second term, he immediately gets all the voters of the states controlled by a Democratic politician and places his player pawn on the track box bearing the number corresponding to this sum. To be continued ...

If the President does not run, he must withdraw from political life. The floor then passes to the Vice-President.

If the Vice President does not run either, he remains in play, but passes and announcement for the runner goes to the next player in a clockwise direction.

Each player, in turn and in a clockwise direction, can choose between:

- 1) Pass his turn (only once if he has State cards face up)
- 2) Declare a candidate for the Presidential election.
- 3) Give electors to an already declared candidate.

### Pass.

A player automatically passes if he has returned all his States Cards. Otherwise, one can voluntarily pass only once per election phase.

### Declare a candidate.

The player chooses among the politicians he controls and who have not yet given their vote, ONE (and only one) candidate for the Presidential election. He then places his Candidate marker on the politician's card, turns face-down the State card(s) controlled by that same candidate and places his player pawn on the track box whose value corresponds to the number of State's Electors thus obtained.

Example: In 1980, a player selected Ronald Reagan which controls California as a candidate for the Presidential election. He then places a candidate marker on Ronald Reagan, flips the California State card (10 State's Electors) face-down and places his player pawn on box 10 of the track. To be continued...

In any case, the two main parties - Republican and Democrat - must be represented by at least one candidate. If all the selected candidates are from the same party, if he can, the last player with no candidate is obliged to present a candidate belonging to the other party. If he cannot, it is the previous player who has this obligation and so on.

Give State's Electors to a candidate.





The player turns face-down all State cards controlled by one or more of his politicians and gives to the candidate of his choice - but from the same party - the corresponding number of State's Electors. The candidate's pawn advances by as many boxes on the track.

An independent politician can give his constituents to whomever he wants (i.e. any party).

This goes on until there is no visible State Card left.

The candidate with the most accumulated votes - and therefore with the pawn further ahead on the track - wins the primaries of his party. In the event of a tie, each player draws 10 pawns from the bag for his or her most ahead candidate, the one getting the most pawns of the color of his party being named the official party candidate.

The winner then becomes the sole candidate of this party. He collects all the State's Electors from the other – now beaten - candidates of his party. He moves his player pawn to the box corresponding to the sum of his party's State's Electors.

### 5.4.2 The Presidential Election

There should be by then only one Democratic candidate, one Republican candidate, and possibly one or more Independent candidate (s) remaining in the race for the White House.

### **Selection of the Running Mates**

Each candidate MUST choose another politician from the same party (preferably one he does not control himself) as a Running Mate; putting the relevant marker on the target politician card (the target cannot refuse the appointment). That politician will then become Vice President if the candidate is elected.

Example: In 1980, Jimmy Carter (Democrat) chooses Bill Clinton for running mate. The candidate who won the Republican primary is Ronald Reagan. He chooses as running mate George Bush. To be continued...

### Calculation of the Bonus Votes differential between the candidates.

Each candidate can benefit from Bonus Votes during the elections.

For each candidate, add up.

- 1) His Political Skill (0 or 1)
- 2) The sum of the vote bonus displayed on the Candidate's Support Cards, as well as those Support Cards of his running mate.
- 3) Half of the current President's Approval Rating, but only for the candidate of the same party as the President's.





Example: Jimmy Carter has a PS of +1, his last AR was -1 (-1/2  $\mathbb{Z}$  -1): and the "Catholics" support card for +1, while his running mate has the "Cinema" Support Card for +1, so his final bonus will be +1 -1 + 1 + 1 = +2.

Ronald Reagan has a +1 PS, the "Women" support card for +1, and his mate George Bush has the "Press" support card for +1. The final bonus for Reagan will be +3, a +1 difference from Carter. To be continued...

### State-by-state election results.

Elections are now being held in uncontrolled States (i.e. those not controlled by the respective candidates). One by one.

NOTE: to speed up the process, you can choose to execute the vote first in the big States, i.e. those with more than 2 State's Electors. Then the smaller States (1 or 2 Electors). In such a way, if a majority shows up clearly, there won't be a need to process the whole lot.

### Each vote is conducted as follows:

Candidates can make Campaign Expenses (CE), as during the Primaries. Each CE equivalent to the State's Electors grants a bonus of by +1 (or -1 if invested against the candidate by another player). Everyone (even if not running) can outbid as much as he wants, in favor of one candidate or the other.

The Democratic candidate has a bonus for all states marked with the symbol of the donkey and the Republican candidate for all those marked with the symbol of the elephant. The vote bonus is the number adjacent to the party symbol.

Candidates can also play campaign cards before or after the vote, in order to change the outcome of the election.

### Then draw 10 Pawns in the bag.







Sum up for each candidate the CE bonus, the party State bonus votes, the number of pawns of the color of the candidate's party.

The candidate who obtains the majority of vote wins the State. In case of ties: draw an extra pawn in the bag.

The State card is then placed on the box corresponding to the candidate's party of the board (just for final accounting and tally, the candidate does not actually take control of the State) and the candidate's pawn is advanced on the track by the number of the State's Elector thus obtained (just the number of the card, ignore all else).

Example: Election in the state of New York (6 State's Electors).

Jimmy Carter enjoys as a Democrat +2 bonus in this state and invests \$ 6m (+1). His bonus is +3. Ronald Reagan benefits from the initial





differential of +1 (calculated previously) and he spends \$ 12m (+2), granting him a +3 bonus too. The 10 pawns are drawn: 6 red and 4 blue. Reagan gains thus the majority with 6+3 versus Carter's 4+3, and the state of New York goes to the Republican box, and Reagan's pawn moves forward 6 spaces on the track

To be continued...

In the case where there are only two candidates, the process continues in this way, state by state, until a candidate reaches 51 points (51% of State's Electors).

**Otherwise**, when the deck of Uncontrolled States is exhausted, the winner of the election is the one with the most points on the track. In the rare event of a tie in the largest scores when the State deck is exhausted, an «ultimate» pawn is drawn from the bag to decide the tie.

### Result of the Presidential Election.

The winner of the election immediately becomes the new President of the United States.

He takes the corresponding marker and scores **10 PP**. The running mate becomes Vice President, taking the corresponding marker and scoring **5 PP**.

With 6 players, the President also appoints a «Secretary of state» among the politicians who belong, if possible, neither to the President, nor to the Vice-president. The player owning the selected Secretary of State politician scores 5PP.

The President's popularity rating marker is placed on the +1 box

Special: an Independent candidate always scores PP corresponding to the value of his final votes divided by 3; even in the very unlikely case that he would be elected President. If he is elected President, an independent candidate can choose the Vice-President of his choice, in any party.

If the defeated candidate was the former President, he then disappears from politics (card is removed from play).

Example: In 1980, Ronald Reagan wins the Presidential election with 51% of the vote, he scores 10 PP, his Vice President George Bush 5 PP, John Anderson who ran as an independent candidate won 7% of the vote and scores 3 PP. Jimmy Carter is beaten and, as the former President, withdraws from politics (his card is removed from play) ...

The new President's popularity rating marker is now set on the +1 box.

### 5.5 New Turn

When the presidential election is over and a new President in charge, the next turn starts. Advance the turn marker and process the whole





turn anew.

### 6. Impeachment

In case of Impeachment (called by some of the **Actions** cards), each player (starting from the one who plays the Action card against the President) votes for or against the dismissal of the President.

Each player has one vote per politician card he controls.

If at least two-thirds (rounded up) of the politicians are in favor of the Impeachment of the President, the latter immediately withdraws from politics. Follow the same procedure as when the President dies.

If the vote does not create impeachment, then move on...

# 7. Starting period II and period III.

### PERIOD II.

The procedure is identical to the one described in **4.1 above** for the normal Period I setup, except for the following steps which have changed:

- 3) Select the politicians cards with a president photo of the **period II**. Distribute at random **ONE** card among the ones with the color photograph of a President of the period, i.e. those numbered from #6 to #9 for 4 players, from #6 to #10 for 5 players or from #6 to #11 for 6 players. Put the remaining cards on the corresponding location of the RESERVE on the board.
- 6) The player who holds the **Richard Nixon #6** card is the current President of the United States. He places the «President» marker on his Nixon card. He also places his game marker on the +1 box of the President's popularity rating. He finally scores 10 PPs and therefore places his PP counter on box 10 of the board track.
- 7) The President chooses a Republican Vice-President belonging to **another player**. This one scores 5 PP. With 6 players, the President appoints a «Secretary of State» among the politicians who belong, if possible, neither to the President, nor to the Vice President, and





scores another 5PP.

- 11) Select all Fundraising Cards from **Period I and II**, randomly distribute ONE to each player. Shuffle the remaining cards and place them on the corresponding box of the RESERVE.
- 12) Select all other cards from **Period II**. Take out the two Crisis cards labeled **Recession #39** and **Inflation #40** and place them in a box of the CRISIS section of the board.
- 13) Shuffle all other cards and put them on the «CARDS» box of the board.
- 14) Last put all cards labeled Period III aside, on a separate deck. It will replace the current deck of card when that period is over or its current deck is exhausted. That is on TURN #14 for Period III

### PERIOD III.

The procedure is identical to the one described in **4.1 above** for the normal Period I setup, except for the following steps which have changed:

- 3) Select the **politicians** cards with a president photo of the **period III**. Distribute at random **ONE** card among the ones with the color photograph of a President of the period, i.e. those numbered from #11 to #14 for 4 players, same plus add a generic politician 5 players or same plus add 2 generic politicians for 6 players. Put the remaining cards on the corresponding location of the RESERVE on the board.
- 6) The player who holds the **Bill Clinton #11** card is the current President of the United States. He places the «President» marker on his Nixon card. He also places his game marker on the +1 box of the President's popularity rating. He finally scores 10 PPs and therefore places his PP counter on box 10 of the board track.
- 7) The President chooses a Democratic Vice-President belonging to **another player**. This one scores 5 PP. With 6 players, the President appoints a «Secretary of State» among the politicians who belong, if possible, neither to the President, nor to the Vice President, and scores another 5PP.
- 11) Select all Fundraising Cards from **Period I, II and III**, randomly distribute TWO to each player. Shuffle the remaining cards and place them on the corresponding box of the RESERVE.
- 12) Select all other cards from. Take out the two Crisis cards labeled **Somalia Civil War #63** and **Bosnian War #64** and place them in a box of the CRISIS section of the board.
- 13) Shuffle all other cards and put them on the «CARDS» box of the board.







Yes, you can

Great Again...

Only you can make America

