MID-TERM EXAMINATION ESSAY

The President’s special assistant has asked your boss the following question:

“We are under the impression that the United States has squandered its money in the vain hope of building democracy in the Soviet successor states. Although democracy in these countries would be in the interest of the United States, it is unlikely. Moreover, there appear to be more immediate problems of simply [1] moving beyond personalistic politics to an institutionalized political process that will provide stability to the political regimes and [2] building state capacity that will permit these regimes to provide law and order and basic services to their population. Should we redirect our energies and aid away from democratization and towards these other objectives?”

Your boss has turned to you with the question: “What do I tell the President’s special assistant?”

A few caveats

(a) Your essay will not be graded on whether you take the “correct” stand, but on your skill in developing an argument to support your stance and in using the materials covered in the course to support your argument.

(b) There are a number of valid ways to develop your argument. Most require you to think about the factual characterization of the state of affairs in the successor states—weak institutions, weak democracy, and weak states—and to think about the consequences of each of these.

Instructions

1. You should write an essay of no more than eight typewritten (double-spaced) pages.

2. Your essay should show good expository style: A thesis statement opens the essay (normally in the very first paragraph) with an answer to the essay question. Subsequent paragraphs develop this proposition with explanations for the causal connection you claim. Evidence supports major assertions in the logical development of your thesis.

3. Your answer to this question should draw upon materials found in the lectures and the readings. Your essay should demonstrate that you have actively engaged in critical analysis of facts.

4. You may discuss your answer with other students, the TAs, or me. Your final paper, however, must be your own work. If it is not your own work, this constitutes plagiarism—a violation of academic regulations at this university. Please do not jeopardize your academic career by plagiarism.

5. Before turning in your paper, make a copy for your files. If your paper is lost, this will be the only record.

6. You will probably win the undying gratitude of the TAs if your paper does not have a fancy cover. Simply staple the pages at the upper left-hand corner.

7. Please turn in your essay no later than 2:50 p.m. on Friday, November 5. You may turn in the exam at the regular classroom between 2:30-2:50 p.m. or at the Department of Political Science in Social Sciences Building 301 before that time.