

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Political Science 130aa  
Soviet Successor States

Philip G. Roeder  
Winter Quarter 2007

**Paper Assignment:**  
**Policy Memorandum on American Policy toward Central Eurasia**

Noting the apparent change in the direction of our relations with the Soviet successor states in the past year, your presidential candidate (who expects to win in the 2008 election) has asked you to draft a memorandum outlining a strategy for securing the interests of the United States in Central Eurasia (the Soviet successor states).

Your presidential candidate added, “Send me a memorandum that not only outlines the problems confronting us, but also gives me some sense of the relative urgency of those problems for the United States. Outline the options—that is, alternative strategies—the will be available to the United States Government under my new Administration for securing our national interests in Central Eurasia. Most importantly, present your recommendation for one of these strategies and explain to me how this strategy will give coherence to our many specific policies in this region.”

**Your Research and Analysis**

Your memorandum should be twelve to seventeen double-spaced pages.

Your primary “research” source should be the readings and lectures from this course. You may treat these as all known facts about Central Eurasia for the purpose of writing this memorandum. Your memorandum will be evaluated in large part on the success with which it integrates the different elements developed in the course.

When using the assigned materials, you do not need to use footnotes or include a bibliography. You may simply refer to materials in the readings by the author’s last name. Assume that the material in lectures is common knowledge that does not need to be cited.

If you use sources outside the assigned reading, please give proper credit to the source with [1] either footnotes or in-text citations and [2] either a bibliography or a list of references. (If you are unfamiliar with university policies on plagiarism, please consult the university documents that define these.)

**Submission of Your Paper**

Please complete both of the following submission requirements:

- [1] You should submit a hard copy of your paper no later than **Thursday, March 22, at 11:30 am** in Woodward Lecture Hall 2001.

Please attach a copy of the grading sheet to the front of your paper before you turn in the hard copy.

- [2] You should also submit an electronic copy of your paper as follows:

Go to the website [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)

In the log-in box enter:

Class ID: 1789924

Enrollment Password: 581043

(over)

## What is a Policy Memorandum?

Policy memoranda are prepared by analysts who work in either the public or private sector. These memoranda are consumed by all governmental agencies from the Department of Agriculture to the White House Staff and by a wide array of private clients from banks to charitable-relief agencies. A client typically requests such a memorandum when the client must make a decision to take action (or take no action). Analysts then identify the options available to the client, assess the consequences (both positive and negative) that would follow from each option, and suggest one or the other of the options (or some combination of options).

When preparing your own memorandum you should keep in mind the following guidelines:

1. **Address the client who will receive your memorandum.** You should write your memorandum with a clear sense of the objectives of your client. You must put yourself in the client's position in order to help her/him solve her/his problem (not *your* problem).
2. **Open with a summary of the central points of your memorandum.** You may want to give this section the heading "Summary" or (even better) a section heading that expresses the main point, which is your strategy for American policy toward Central Eurasia. You should state at the very beginning in a few sentences the major point of your memorandum that you want the client to take away. A client is almost always a busy person and you want your main message to grab her/his attention *immediately*.
3. **Frame "the problem."** What is the problem and what interests does the client have at stake? The client in this case has focused this somewhat by asking you to identify our interests or stakes in Central Eurasia. The problem is not some objective fact given by reality; it requires you to view developments in Central Eurasia in light of your view of America's primary foreign policy interests and objectives. If you discover that we cannot serve all our interests simultaneously and particularly if some interests conflict with others, you may need to suggest some priority in the ways in which we address these problems. Different analysts will define this problem in various ways.
4. **Enumerate the options for responding to these problems.** What can the United States do? State the options (alternative strategies) clearly and crisply. Once again, remember that you are trying to grab the attention of a busy person. "Bullets" or numbered lists may make key points stand out, but each bulleted point normally should be at least one complete sentence.
  - a. **Predict the consequences of each alternative.** Most options will have a mixture of desired and undesired consequences. Some options may be ineffective. The consequences of other options may be uncertain. You should identify these consequences and uncertainties. You should attempt to assign some (notional) probability to each consequence; that is, which consequences are highly likely and which are improbable if the client selects a particular option?
  - b. **Provide some "evidence" for your expectations.** Since we cannot know the future (such as the future consequences of our current actions), we develop expectations based on observed consequences of similar actions in the past. What is the evidence for your expectation? (For example, "in the past this worked in . . . when we . . .")
  - c. **Weigh the options with respect to the objectives of your client.** That is, will the net effect of a strategy serve the interests of the United States better than the alternative strategies? Which strategy do you recommend?

When actually writing your memorandum you should probably organize it with [1] information for transmittal (e.g., DATE:, TO:, FROM:, SUBJECT:), [2] an opening paragraph labeled "Summary" or with a punchy phrase that captures the central recommendation, [3] labeled sections such as "The Problem," "Options" (which includes evaluation of each), and "Recommendations." Of course, it might help a busy client, if you add to a generic section label a brief subtitle that expresses the central point of that section. (For example, "Recommendation: The Necessity of X")

Please remember that effective memoranda must be *brief, clear, direct, and crisply formulated*.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_

Letter Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**Buckley Waiver**

\_\_\_\_ Yes. My examination and policy memorandum may be placed in the "pick-up" room.

\_\_\_\_ No.

(signature) \_\_\_\_\_

We assessed the quality of your paper in the five areas listed below. Your final grade was determined by adding up the points in each area.

**#1 Definition of the problem. (A=4 points; B=3 points; C=2 points; D=1 points; F=0 points)**

Does the paper clearly identify the most important interests that the United States has at stake in Central Eurasia?

- 4 Identifies chief threats/opportunities that bear on American interests; provides justification for the choice of priorities.
- 3 One of the above is missing or imprecise.
- 2 Identification of American interests is confusing or unclear; the analysis is confused as well; and there are no priorities.
- 1 A perfunctory assertion of some interest without any elaboration.
- 0 No definition of the American interests at stake and therefore no analysis of these.

**#2 Description and analysis of options (alternative strategies). (A=4; B=3; C=2; D=1; F=0)**

How well does the paper describe and analyze American options?

- 4 Description of options is detailed, analysis is thorough, and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of why each strategy would or would not achieve the US goals identified under #1.
- 3 Description of options is detailed in places but not consistently; analysis of link between these options and the interests identified in #1 is weak or incomplete.
- 2 Vague description of options; options and interests are weakly linked or even incompatible.
- 1 Inadequate description of options; little analysis.
- 0 No options and no analysis.

**#3 Integration of policies in coherent strategies. (A=2; C=1; F=0)**

Do the alternative strategies integrate various specific policies (such as policies concerning alliances, democratization, or counterterrorism in Central Eurasia) in a coherent and consistent direction?

- 2 Each strategy integrates several policies into coherent alternatives.
- 1 Only one strategy represents a coherent option.
- 0 There is no integration of specific policies in coherent strategies.

**#4 Logic in recommendation of a strategy. (A=2; C=1; F=0)**

Does the recommended American strategy follow logically from the analysis of interests and options?

- 2 The recommendation follows logically from the analysis.
- 1 Problems in logic.
- 0 No recommendations.

**#5 Research. (A=4; B=3; C=2; D=1; F=0)**

How well does the paper utilize lectures and readings?

- 4 Readings and lectures are skillfully and extensively used in identification of interests and options and in analysis that leads to policy recommendations.
- 3 Either readings *or* lectures are used in a perfunctory manner, but references are, nonetheless, accurate.
- 2 Both readings *and* lectures are used in a perfunctory manner, and often inaccurately.
- 1 Minimal and often flawed use of readings and lectures.
- 0 No evidence that the student had heard or read a single word in this course.

**Letter grade.** Each memorandum can earn up to 16 points. The letter-grade equivalents are as follows:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>
A	15-16	B+	13	C+	9	D	2-5
A-	14	B	11-12	C	7-8	F	0-1
		B-	10	C-	6		

**Graded by:** Christina Chen Mark Farrales Jen Keister James Long  
**Comments:**