



Divergent Options **Options Paper Template**

Divergent Options is a non-politically aligned national security website that, in 1,000 words or less, provides unbiased, dispassionate, candid articles that assess a national security situation, present multiple options to address the situation, and articulate the risk and gain of each option.

Please note that while we assess a national security situation and may provide options, we never recommend a specific option.

All articles at Divergent Options use a template. For our writers, this template allows them to fit writing into their busy schedule by writing one paragraph or so per day. For our readers, this template makes our articles easy to read when they are on the go.

Below is the template for our Options Paper. With our Option Paper, a writer assesses a national security situation, describes its significance, and presents multiple options to address the situation while articulating the risk and gain of each option.

Please send your articles to submissions@divergentoptions.org

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National Security Situation: Russian Activities in Europe / Chinese Activities in the South China Sea / Civil War in Syria.

Date Originally Written: Month, Day, Year.

Date Originally Published: Month, Day, Year.

Author and / or Article Point of View: Author is a retired military member. Author believes in Responsibility to Protect. And / or the article is written from the point of view of Latvia towards Russia, Vietnam towards China, or the U.S. towards the Civil War in Syria.

Background: A tightly-worded description of the national security situation and the driving forces[1].

Significance: Why does this national security situation matter? What is the impact? To whom does the national security situation matter?

Option #1: Something that could be done to address one or more aspects of the national security situation[2].

Risk: What is the risk to undertaking Option #1?

Note: *Risks can take a variety of forms. Here are some examples:*

- *Political (e.g. ruin a reputation or alliances or cause distrust in the international community)*
- *People (e.g. military or civilian deaths)*
- *Resources (e.g. spending money on an endless war)*
- *Organizational (e.g. focusing on counterinsurgency so long that you forget how to fight a conventional war)*
- *Balancing present and future challenges (e.g. if we do X now, we won't be able to do Y in the future, and Y has worse ramifications in the future than X does now)*

Gain: What is the gain to undertaking Option #1?

Option #2: Something different from Option #1 that could be done to address one or more aspects of the national security situation.

Note: *The focus is on being DIFFERENT from Option #1. As an example, there were two dominant options for how to address the national security situation of an insurgency in Iraq in late 2006 through early 2007. One option involved deploying additional U.S. troops to Iraq. The other option involved maintaining current U.S. troop levels in Iraq but withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraqi cities and turning security duties over to the Iraqi army. There was a choice between two different options in the same national security situation. When developing options, think differences--not variations on a theme. Another example of differences is U.S. Army General Stanley McChrystal's preferred Afghanistan strategy, which involved a troop increase to secure the population from the Taliban whereas U.S. Vice President Joe Biden preferred a reduced U.S. troop commitment in support of a counterterrorism-centric approach that focused primarily on Al Qaida.*

Risk: What is the risk to undertaking Option #2?

Gain: What is the gain to undertaking Option #2?

Note: *Authors must provide at least two options. Each option must be different, articulate risk and gain, and the overall article must still be 1,000 words or less.*

Other Comments: Provide any other comments here that did not fit into the format above. If you have none type "None." Please keep this short as the majority of the 1,000 words or less content should be above this area.

Recommendation: None.

Note: *The recommendation field will always be last, always be present, and always be "None." At Divergent Options we want to provide options and articulate risk and gain only. We do not recommend options.*

Endnotes

[1] Something In APA Format

[2] Something Else in APA Format