



Divergent Options Article Template

In 1,000 words or less, we provide unbiased, dispassionate, candid articles that describe a national security situation, present multiple options to address the situation, and articulate the risk and gain of each option.

Our intended audience is National Security Practitioners worldwide. We keep our articles short and to the point because we know that Practitioners have a limited amount of time and are likely reading our content on a digital device during a commute, a lunch break, or in-between meetings.

We designed our template to breakdown national security situations to their most fundamental elements. Using our template, even the busiest author is able to write as little as one paragraph per day without worrying about styles and standards. Our template encourages author participation in national security dialog without an undue investment of the most valuable resource: time.

Reminder: Our articles are 1,000 words maximum not counting title, byline / content statement, headings, the final recommendation, or endnotes.

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.

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.

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