

MEMORANDUM

TO: President of the United States
FROM: []
SUBJECT: Re-organizing the Government to Combat the WMD Threat
DATE: xx / xx / xxxx

The proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons is the most serious threat to U.S. security today, and will remain so far into the future. Whereas combating proliferation is an inherently government-wide mission, the existing national security architecture has resulted in a series of agency-specific efforts that are often poorly coordinated and fail to take advantage of important synergies. Re-organizing the government to meet the WMD threat therefore requires reforms that strengthen White House management of nonproliferation programs, expand interagency counterproliferation capabilities, and improve WMD-related intelligence.

Strengthen White House Management of Nonproliferation Programs

The Departments of Energy (DOE), State, Defense (DOD), Commerce, and Homeland Security (DHS) all contribute to U.S. nonproliferation efforts, but receive insufficient top-level program guidance and coordination. For example, DOE did not learn of Libya's decision to abandon its nuclear program until it was revealed in the press. Moreover, DOE had no plan in place to dismantle Libya's nuclear assets despite its central role in performing such activities. Finally, proliferation detection R&D projects are currently managed by a community of end users that have overlapping needs but rarely communicate with each other.

To prevent future interagency breakdowns, the White House should designate a new senior-level Nonproliferation Policy and Program Director (NPD) to oversee all U.S. government nonproliferation programs. The NPD will chair a new National Security Council Policy Coordinating Committee on Nonproliferation (PCC) that will set overarching nonproliferation goals and priorities, develop an interagency strategic plan to achieve those goals and priorities, identify and assign missions and responsibilities to appropriate agencies, and coordinate program execution. To improve proliferation detection R&D, the NPD and PCC will also design an interagency technology development plan that will integrate and prioritize the needs of various technology end users across the government with the capabilities of the U.S. national laboratory system, private industry, and top universities. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will work with the new NPD and PCC to develop a multi-year interagency nonproliferation program budget, and will apply performance measures to monitor program management and implementation.

Although the NPD and the PCC will require little additional funding, past attempts at White House policy coordination – such as the Office of Homeland Security – have sunk into irrelevance because of agency resistance. To avoid suffering a similar fate, the NPD and PCC must possess clearly delineated authority and high level backing. In particular, the NPD should enjoy unambiguous control over nonproliferation policy and program budgets. The PCC should require agency participation at the Under Secretary level. Most important, the NPD and PCC must receive consistent, visible support from the President.

Expand Interagency Counterproliferation Capabilities

The U.S. military and homeland security communities must be able to rapidly respond to proliferation emergencies. To provide this capability, the United States should create and train "Proliferation Risk Mitigation Teams" – akin to the Department of Homeland Security's Nuclear Emergency Search Teams (NEST) – comprised of DOD special operations forces (SOF), CIA operatives, and DOE technical specialists. These teams will be capable of securing nuclear storage facilities and other sensitive infrastructure during combat operations or in response to the collapse of central authority in states that possess nuclear assets that are attractive to terrorists. They will also provide logistical and operational support to the Energy Department's "Global Cleanout" program that seeks to return stockpiles of weapons-usable highly enriched uranium to Russia and the United States. Finally, they will engage in extensive "red-teaming" simulations in order to foster better situation awareness and preparedness.

Operational control of Proliferation Risk Mitigation Teams will pose a major challenge. Congress may object to placing the teams under CIA control in light of the agency's past abuses. Moreover, DOD will be reluctant to assign SOF personnel to the teams if they will be placed under the command authority of a different agency. Given the types of operations in which the teams are likely to engage, DOD operational control would therefore seem most appropriate. The teams will cost approximately \$500 million annually to train and equip. To provide the necessary funding, the United States should cancel the Missile Defense Agency's Airborne Laser program, which has been plagued by cost overruns and schedule delays.

Improve WMD Intelligence

The effectiveness of U.S. nonproliferation and counterproliferation efforts ultimately depends on the quality of WMD intelligence. Unfortunately, the U.S. intelligence community has a poor track record of detecting both state-level and sub-state WMD proliferation. It failed to anticipate India's nuclear test in 1998, produced flawed assessments of the threat from Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and only belatedly uncovered the nuclear black market smuggling ring of Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan. In addition, the intelligence community remains unable to provide reliable information on the status of nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran.

To improve community-wide WMD intelligence collection and analysis, the United States should, per the recommendation of the recent WMD commission, create a new National Counter Proliferation Center (NCPC). The Center would report directly to the new Director for National Intelligence and set requirements for WMD-related human, imagery, and signals collection for the entire intelligence community. It would also house an analytical division that would provide high-quality, actionable intelligence assessments to customers across the U.S. government, including the new White House NPD.

The NCPC will require approximately \$1 billion in annual funding. Given this price tag, Congress may resist creation of the NCPC until it can determine whether recent legislation will effectively address current intelligence community deficiencies. Moreover, CIA already operates an analytical unit devoted to WMD intelligence (WINPAC) that will fiercely resist encroachment upon its turf. The NCPC should therefore function as both a consumer and independent reviewer of WINPAC intelligence products while avoiding disruptive turf battles. Competition between WINPAC and the NCPC could result in higher-quality intelligence products from both.

Writing effective policy memos

What is a policy memo?

A policy memo is a document that provides analysis and/or recommendations for a particular audience regarding a particular situation or problem. A well-written policy memo reflects attention to purpose; it is well organized; and it has a clear, concise style.

Determining and responding to your audience

In most cases, you will know the audience for your work because (1) you have been hired by that individual or organization or (2) your instructor provides that information to you. Think carefully about the needs and expectations of your audience. For example, if your audience is an elected official seeking analysis on a highly technical matter, you should generally assume that the official lacks substantial technical expertise. You will need to define technical terms and provide enough background about the situation you are discussing that such a “lay” audience can grasp your arguments. On the other hand, if you are writing for a technically trained audience, you will waste time and energy providing background information that your readers already know.

Organizing an effective policy memo

Introduction

One distinguishing characteristic of a policy memo is that a summary of the document’s conclusion(s) and recommendation(s) is placed right at the beginning of the memo. Remember that the purpose of the document is generally to provide your audience advice about a particular decision, project, or policy stance. Thus, you open the memo by summarizing the problem or situation about which you are writing, and by providing a very brief summary of the conclusions/recommendations you have reached during your analysis. The rest of the memo is designed to support the conclusions or recommendations you present.

Background

Keeping in mind that different audiences need different amounts of background information (see above), follow your introduction with a concise summary of any historical or technical that your audience needs to understand the arguments you are building. (It may be that no background information is needed at all.)

Supporting arguments or analysis

Once you have set the stage for your audience, show how this information leads logically to the conclusions/recommendations you have provided.

Style and format

Your ideas will be no more meaningful to the reader of your memo than you are able to make them. Meaning is not just embellished by style; rather, the two must function together. Muddled writing reflects hazy thinking. Your prose should be simple, clear, and easy to read; you will confuse, not impress, your readers with sophisticated vocabulary. Your reader should be able to describe your conclusions and the general arguments you used to reach them after only one reading of your memo.

Some tips on achieving an effective writing style:

- (1) Choose the simplest words available to express your ideas. When discussing technical information, avoid the use of jargon--or at least define your terms clearly.
- (2) Make your sentences "active"; avoid phrases such as "there are" or "it is."
- (3) Use one paragraph to develop one idea or argument. Make that idea or argument explicit within the first one or two sentences of the paragraph.
- (4) **PROOFREAD CAREFULLY.** Don't distract your readers from the content of your memo with poor spelling or grammar.

The format of the memo should be as follows:

- (1) Memos must be typed on 8.5 X 11" or A4 paper with margins of one inch on all sides.
- (2) Paragraphs should be single-spaced and should be separated by a double space.
- (3) You may use any standard conventions for the layout of your memo, including numbering, bullets, indentation, etc. Do address the memo to your audience at the top of the page. See the attached sample for a suggested layout.

Length

The length of your policy memo assignment will be announced in class. Do not exceed this length limit! I am enforcing this rule for several reasons:

- (1) I assume that you will continue to write persuasive documents for clients and/or colleagues in the future. Like you, most of these people are busy. They rarely have time to review lengthy documents; these generally wind up unread in a filing cabinet or waste basket. I'm hoping to help you craft documents that are concise and of use to your clients or colleagues.
- (2) Confining yourself to a particular page limit encourages careful editing, establishing priorities, and paring your arguments down. In general, these practices also improve the flow and impact of your writing.
- (3) Tightly written policy memos have a much better chance of influencing others toward a particular point of view.

Getting help

I strongly recommend that you exchange your memos with other students in the class for proofreading and editing before you submit them. You can help one another with suggestions for clarity and content of your assignments.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Jane Doe, President
Commission for Economic Sustainability

FROM: David R. Ortiz, Analyst

DATE: 7 October 1995

RE: Fuelwood management in Country Central

Introduction

The situation regarding fuelwood availability in Country Central is not yet at a crisis stage. Forests and arable land are readily available for use by the people. Deforestation is minimal compared to our neighboring counties. Yet economic conditions force the majority of the fuelwood to be collected illegally. I propose three major reforms to alleviate the problem of illegal fuelwood collection. First, we should offer individual communities small plots of forest for tenuring. Second, we should establish a network of regional fuelwood management offices to monitor the illegal trade of fuelwood, to encourage fuel efficiency, and to offer technical assistance for the sustainable use of tenured forests. Third, a system of forest plantations should be developed to ensure future fuelwood supplies.

Current land tenure situation in County Central

Residents will continue to collect fuelwood illegally until they are otherwise guaranteed a supply. Land tenure offers the beneficiaries a direct reimbursement for their efforts. A number of key points support a system of land tenure:

- (1) The rural population does not have a financial means to purchase land at this time. Foreign ownership as well as ownership by the wealthy of County Central could lead to limited access to forests for the poor. This maldistribution of forest resources could have long term economic effects.
- (2) Land ownership means power. With recent government changes, we cannot afford to unleash this power to the people at this time. Actual ownership of the land should remain in the hands of the government.
- (3) A system of tenure allows for better government regulation over changes in the forest resource base. Regulation of private forest lands with our limited work force would be impossible.

In lieu of efficiency concerns, a system of community tenured regions would better accommodate current circumstances. The state forest should be divided into regions, each village or community having an assigned region. The concept of a community region is more realistic than individual tenure due to the unmanageable number of technicalities which would be encountered. Ecological impacts are location specific. These regions should be monitored by regional fuelwood management offices.

Regional fuelwood management offices

Management of the harvests of fuelwood will require local regulation. Your proposal should include the establishment of regional fuelwood management offices to facilitate the transition

from an illegal market to legal and organized cooperation. The regional offices will have the following roles:

- (1) Report and regulate the flow of illegal fuelwood to the central government office so that regulations can be modified for improved efficiency;
- (2) Instruct villagers on maximizing use of fuelwood products by encouraging use of efficient stoves and kilns;
- (3) Instruct villagers on proper forest management for long-term goals of sustainability. This instruction could also include the role of proper management in erosion control and watershed protection.

The regional fuelwood management offices should include a number of representative groups. Involvement of the local community is a requirement for success. Local farmers and leaders know the region, its customs and its people. In addition, an administrator from our government should be available to act as a liaison and to provide a political update on the situation. Some technical expertise will be required.

Future issues

Our government must plan for the future energy needs of County Central. The World Bank has proposed a hydroelectric power plant which would supply one quarter of current energy needs. This project should be carefully assessed. Special consideration should be given to ecological impacts of the building of the plant, dependence upon foreign technical expertise, and implications for the debt situation. I am skeptical of its success because of the history of failures of these types of development efforts.

Alternatively, our east coast has tremendous excess of arable land which can be developed for forest energy. Long-term planning should maximize use of this land by developing forest plantations. Coupled with these long-term plans for forest plantations should be a program for infrastructure changes which can assist in transporting the fuelwood to villages throughout the county.

Implementation

The creation of regional fuelwood management offices and the allocation of forest regions will require some time. Due to the lack of other available energy sources, it is recommended that residents be permitted to continue collecting fuelwood as previously practices until the fuelwood management program is implemented.

Implementation of these reforms can only take place with your assistance in quality legislation. Outlined above are three major reforms to improving fuelwood management in County Central: development of a community land tenure program, establishment of regional fuelwood management offices, and development of forest plantations along the east coast. These reforms offer the most viable solutions to fuelwood management.

Policy Memo

Definition of Genre

Policy memos are not like other academic papers. Their main purpose is to provide analysis and/or recommendations regarding a certain issue, and they are written for a specific, often limited, audience. Because of the need for quick, accurate information in the policy world, policy memos are written so that readers can efficiently access fact-based information in order to make an informed decision. Memos should, therefore, try to inform the audience in a concise, organized, and professional manner, while still including the most relevant content.

Writing criteria for policy memos

An effective memo will do its job if the reader comprehends the main points after one quick read or even after reading just the first sentence of each section. To ensure that the memo gets the intended results, pay close attention to the following: (1) content, (2) structure, (3) organization, (4) word choice, and (5) clarity.

Content

Content, of course, is the most important determinant of a good policy memo. Weak or illogical ideas, no matter how well-presented, do no one any good. Therefore, a memo should provide both accurate and relevant information, while also acknowledging the limitations of certain recommendations or analysis. Any recommendations should include honest and realistic alternatives. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Present the most relevant information and state your main ideas and any recommendations clearly.
- Make sure to present opinions as opinions and NOT as facts. Opinions presented should also be substantiated.
- Use logic and facts to support each of your main points and/or to refute opposing points. When citing facts in-text, be accurate.
- Avoid logical fallacies such as appeals to authority, slippery slope arguments, hasty generalizations, and faulty causation.

Structure

1. Header

Structure, simply put, means how a memo looks. Most memos take the general form of an email, and the first page has "To:," "From:," "Date:," and a title that starts with "RE:." Consider the following example (with bolding used to identify the parts):

To: Timothy Geithner, Secretary of Treasury (**Writer's Audience**)
From: Michelle (Min Eun) Jeon, Policy Advisor (**Writer's name and title**)
Date: 2/20/2012 (**Date**)
RE: Overcoming the Obstacle: House Speaker John Boehner (**Title/Main Idea**)

The header as formatted above comes at the beginning of a memo. With the header, the reader will know to whom the writer is writing, what authority the writer has to address the audience, and the most critical message of the memo.

2. Executive Summary

Below the header, a memo generally includes an executive summary, a single paragraph that summarizes the entire memo. After reading the memo just once, the reader can understand what the rest of the memo will explain. The executive summary can stand alone and allow the reader to look at the first paragraph and identify the main points of the rest of the memo.

Sample of an executive summary:

Secretary Geithner's China currency bill depends on House Speaker John Boehner's support since the Speaker chooses which bill to debate in the House of Representatives. Mr. Boehner will only debate the bill after pressure from his financial supporters, security and investment corporations and their lobbyists; and his electoral constituents, Ohio State citizens and the Republican Party.

A few things become obvious after reading this example. First of all, the audience, Secretary Geithner, will understand that he will get a certain bill passed only through pressuring House Speaker John Boehner. Also, Secretary Geithner will be able to predict that the rest of the memo will elaborate on Mr. Boehner's "financial supporters, security and investment corporations and their lobbyists; and his electoral constituents, the Ohio State citizens and the Republican party," the people who will have the most influence on Mr. Boehner. We can assume that the writer will provide statistics on why such groups hold the most power over Mr. Boehner's decision making process as well as a logical recommendation on how to get these groups to pressure Mr. Boehner. *If the reader finds the main point to be very direct and clear in an executive summary, then the writer will have done his or her job well.*

3. Subheading

The rest of the paper will have several sections elaborating on the points indicated in the executive summary. Those sections will start with a subheading, usually in bold-font to make the title eye-catching for the reader. *A subheading should generally be a summary of the section, so the reader will not necessarily have to read the rest of the section to understand the most important information the section contains.*

Example: **Speaker Boehner: Greatest challenge for the currency bill**

Example: **Mr. Boehner's pro-business interests**

Organization

Memo writers should employ a common skill in journalism, called the "inverted pyramid style of writing." This means memos should *place the most important information at the top and have the less significant details follow in order of importance.*

In an academic paper, you would mix up the order, usually having the most important point come last. But in a memo, the most important fact should always come first. To visualize, this is what it would generally look like:

Academic Paper

2
3 (least important)
1 (most important)

Memorandum

1 (most important)
2
3 (least important)

Such prioritization should always occur in every section of the memo, from the general large structure to small sub-sections.

Word Choice

Word choice plays a critical role in making a memo clear and concise. Consider eliminating vague theoretical words and replacing them with more concrete, specific terms. Here are a few examples:

Vague
facilitate
indicate
concept

More Concrete
help/assist
say/show
idea

Clarity

Policy memos must be clear and direct so that readers can understand the main points quickly. If the memo writer has focused on building strong content that is well organized, and if the writing exhibits well-chosen language, then the result is a clear argument.

One way to understand the type of clarity that is required in a policy memo is to compare a memo to a typical history paper. While academic papers focus more on gradually building a solid argument, a memo delivers the important facts in order of priority as concisely as possible. Let's consider the introduction of a history paper as an example.

A True Friendship?: James and the Nature of the Toussaint-Laveaux Relationship

In his groundbreaking book, *The Black Jacobins* (1963), C.L.R. James traces the history of the Haitian Revolution by analyzing the events as they occurred in light of happenings in France, particularly the French Revolution, abolition, and the rise of Napoleon. To accomplish this task, James focuses much attention on the biography of Toussaint L'Ouverture and his relationship with the French government as represented by various white and mulatto leaders. As the reader follows Toussaint's life story, she learns that Toussaint trusted only one man in all his life: Governor-General Etienne Laveaux (James 161). Laveaux was a French nobleman under the old regime, and his life trajectory differed drastically from that of Toussaint. Based on a critical reading of Toussaint's letters to Laveaux, this brief essay explores the nature of the two leaders' relationship and the problem that James's interpretation of their friendship poses.

In this example, the author builds her argument by first presenting the topic and then providing background detail. She then ends her introduction with a sentence that explains what the essay will address. While this type of introduction would work for a history paper, it would not work well for a memo because it lacks a central claim and provides too much detail in the beginning. Instead, memos should lead with central claims in order to ensure clarity. Let's consider another example of a memo executive summary:

Demands for a Solid Economic Policy Towards China

The demand for a policy to resolve the undervalued Chinese Yuan (renminbi) is increasing since the US public attributes the US' economic problems to the depreciation of the Chinese currency. The President and his new trade unit's immediate focus should be to get China to appreciate its artificially undervalued Yuan. Correcting the value of the Yuan will ultimately increase both on-shore jobs and US exports.

In this example, the author gets right to the point. The context she provides is limited to the first sentence. She also presents a recommendation in the second sentence. The reader will expect that the author will provide further context and statistics to support this recommendation in other sections of the memo.

Other Points to Clarify

Because professors and Teaching Assistants (TAs) teaching public policy might have different expectations, clarify the following with each potential grader:

1. Should the titles of sections be in full sentences?
2. Should the paragraphs and sections be divided into several parts or is only a handful better?
3. Do I have to include an executive summary?
4. Is the usage of words such as "But" or "Because" or "However" discouraged?
5. Should I not write any lengthy sentences?

* ***Make sure you read the prompt carefully!*** The prompt will have a lot of the answers to the questions above, since the prompt will reflect the grading criteria. Bringing the prompt with you to the Writing Studio when you have an appointment will also help the tutors understand how to help you.

Good luck on memo writing!