

## MEMORANDUM

---

**To:** Sara Lasner  
**From:** Timothy Sandole  
**Date:** August 27, 2013  
**Subject:** **Belfer Center Wikipedian Summary**

---

*Note: This document was edited for grammar on 03/21/2014 by Timothy Sandole*

**Purpose:** To provide a summary of my experience as the Wikipedian at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

**Executive Summary:** I was the Belfer Center Wikipedian from August 27, 2012 to August 27, 2013. During that time, I made 80 significant edits to 63 Wikipedia articles, with changes ranging from approximately 1,000 bytes to 17,000 bytes per article.<sup>1,2</sup> I conducted three Wikipedia seminar workshops, each lasting approximately 1.5 hours, and privately consulted with five Harvard Kennedy School staff members/fellows and one student to develop a more hands-on approach to HTML coding, which was necessary for editing articles. The seminars attracted 8-25 participants who overwhelmingly provided positive feedback. Many of those interested in Wikipedia at the Harvard Kennedy School wanted to use the platform for self-promotional purposes, which is a violation of Wikipedia guidelines. My seminars, therefore, focused on articulating those guidelines (e.g., conflict-of-interest, notability, verifiability, no-original-research, etc.) so that participants were aware of what constituted a good encyclopedic article and, most importantly, what Wikipedia was *not*. Elucidating Wikipedia's guidelines was one of the largest benefits I brought to the Harvard Kennedy School community.

**Editing international security-related Wikipedia articles:** Most of my time was dedicated to improving international security-related Wikipedia articles, of which I edited 63. Of the various ways in which a Wikipedian can contribute to an article — WikiGnome, Copyeditor, Maintainer, Mediator, Illustrator, Formatter, and/or Author — my contributions mostly resembled that of an Author. I added new information to Wikipedia articles from books (e.g., *On China* by Henry Kissinger; *Essence of Decision* by Graham Allison); websites (e.g., [www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com)); academic journals (e.g., *International Security*; *Foreign Affairs*) newspapers (*The Economist*; *Financial Times*; *The New York Times*) and other credible primary and secondary sources. I kept Wikipedia articles up to date with the latest research from relevant publications, benefitting anyone who was studying those specific topics. My activity caught the attention of Wikipedia users [Gabriele](#), [Thincat](#), and [JaGa](#), all three of whom provided positive feedback and constructive criticism of the articles I edited. I made the most significant edits — between 4,000 and 17,400 bytes-worth of changes — to the following articles:

Grand strategy (+17,405 bytes): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand\\_strategy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_strategy)

Targeted killing (+16,105 bytes): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Targeted\\_killing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Targeted_killing)

Nuclear terrorism (+15,753 bytes): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear\\_terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_terrorism)

---

<sup>1</sup> An illustrative summary of my work can be found at: <http://tools.wmflabs.org/xtools/pcount/index.php?name=Timothysandole&lang=en&wiki=wikipedia>.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix.

Polarity (+15,178 bytes): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polarity\\_in\\_international\\_relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polarity_in_international_relations)

East Asian foreign policy of the Barack Obama administration (+11,306 bytes):  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East\\_Asian\\_foreign\\_policy\\_of\\_the\\_Barack\\_Obama\\_administration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Asian_foreign_policy_of_the_Barack_Obama_administration)

Opposition to military action against Iran (+10,120 bytes):  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opposition\\_to\\_military\\_action\\_against\\_Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opposition_to_military_action_against_Iran)

Russia-United States relations (+8,772 bytes): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia%E2%80%93United\\_States\\_relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia%E2%80%93United_States_relations)

Cold Start (+6,041 bytes): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold\\_Start\\_%28military\\_doctrine%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_Start_%28military_doctrine%29)

Sino-Japanese Relations (+5,605 bytes): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Japanese\\_relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Japanese_relations)

Cuban missile crisis (+4,593 bytes): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban\\_missile\\_crisis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_missile_crisis)

Eurozone crisis (+4,261 bytes): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurozone\\_crisis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurozone_crisis)

Potential superpowers (+4,123 bytes): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potential\\_superpowers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potential_superpowers)

Iran and weapons of mass destruction (+4,000 bytes):  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran\\_and\\_weapons\\_of\\_mass\\_destruction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran_and_weapons_of_mass_destruction)

**Articles I helped to create:** Two Wikipedia articles, “AirSea Battle” and “Operation Olympic Games,” were stubs before I contributed to them. A “stub” is an article containing only one or a few sentences of text that, although providing some useful information, is too short to provide encyclopedic coverage of a subject. I was inspired to add content to “AirSea Battle” and “Operation Olympic Games” because they are popular in international relations scholarship. The two leading voices on these issues, Andrew Krepinevich and David E. Sanger, happen to be Harvard graduates and affiliates of the Belfer Center.

Andrew Krepinevich is President of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), a defense policy think tank spearheading AirSea Battle strategy and scholarship, which guides President Obama’s rebalancing or “pivot” to Asia. David E. Sanger is the Chief Washington Correspondent for *The New York Times* and author of *Confront and Conceal: Obama’s Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power* (New York: Random House LLC, 2012), which exposed “Operation Olympic Games,” America’s covert cyber campaign that aimed to destroy the centrifuges in Iran’s nuclear facilities.

AirSea Battle (+4,761 bytes): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AirSea\\_Battle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AirSea_Battle)

Operation Olympic Games (+3,049 bytes)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Olympic\\_Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Olympic_Games)

**Wikipedia Seminars:** I taught Wikipedia seminars on September 26, 2012; April 18, 2013; and August 20, 2013. By the third seminar, I attracted a record 25 people. Most of those interested in the seminars were mid-career students (<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/degrees/masters/mc-mpa>) and Executive Education students (<http://ksgexecprogram.harvard.edu/#>) interested in Wikipedia's basics, such as how to create an account, the various ways in which they could contribute to Wikipedia, and what makes for a quality article. That mid-career and executive education students represented the majority of those interested in Wikipedia intrigued me, as they are much older than average Master in Public Policy (MPP) students, who are more likely to be computer savvy. The seminars were successful in that I inspired many individuals to become Wikipedians.

My seminars consisted of a PowerPoint presentation, handouts, and a demonstration of some elementary computer coding techniques using Wikipedia's Sandbox tool. I made my presentations interactive by asking the audience a significant number of questions to keep them engaged. I received unanimous positive feedback. Participants gained a better understanding of what Wikipedia is and what it is not. They were grateful that I clarified Wikipedia's best practices, Wikipedia's guidelines, and violations of those guidelines. I specifically highlighted the following:

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Conflict\\_of\\_interest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Conflict_of_interest): "Do not edit Wikipedia to promote your own interests, or those of other individuals or of organizations, including employers. Do not write about those themes unless you are certain that a neutral editor would agree that your edits improve Wikipedia."
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Notability>: "Wikipedia articles cover *notable topics*—those that have gained sufficiently significant attention by the world at large and over a period of time, and are not outside the scope of Wikipedia. We consider evidence from reliable independent sources to gauge this attention. The notability guideline does not determine the content of articles, but only whether the topic should have its own articles."
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Verifiability>: "Readers must be able to check that Wikipedia articles are not just made up. This means that all quotations and any material challenged or likely to be challenged must be attributable to a reliable, published source using an online citation."
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:No\\_original\\_research](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:No_original_research): "Wikipedia does not publish original thought: all material in Wikipedia must be attributable to a reliable, published source. Articles may not contain any new analysis or synthesis of published material that serves to advance a position not clearly advanced by the sources themselves."

**One-on-one Wikipedia consultations:** The following six Harvard Kennedy School-affiliated individuals privately sought my guidance regarding HTML coding and Wikipedia's guidelines:

- Matthew Bunn, Professor; Co-Principle Investigator, Project on Managing the Atom

- Adam B. Ellick, *New York Times* correspondent; MPA mid-career student
- Bryan Galcik, Program Assistant, Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government
- Alison M. Kommer, Faculty Assistant and Programs Coordinator, Shorenstein Center
- Chuck McKenney, Communications Manager, Center for International Development
- Yvonne Yew, Fellow, Project on Managing the Atom/International Security Program

Professor Matthew Bunn sought my help in creating a new international-security Wikipedia article about his late father, George Bunn, who was consequential in the creation of the global nonproliferation regime, nonproliferation legislation, and nuclear strategy. Bunn collected enough reputable secondary sources to satisfy Wikipedia's notability guideline and wrote an impressive article under my guidance: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Bunn\\_%28diplomat%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Bunn_%28diplomat%29).

**Conclusion:** During my time as Belfer Center Wikipedian, I educated over 50 Harvard Kennedy School-affiliated individuals on what Wikipedia is, how Wikipedia functions, and how anyone can contribute as a Wikipedian. I expanded the pool of those interested in editing international relations/public policy Wikipedia articles, thereby increasing the number of Wikipedians monitoring those articles. Of the 63 articles I edited, I provided timely and credible sources so that anyone searching for those articles had an up-to-date understanding of the issues and an impressive reference guide for further scholarly research.

I enjoyed my time at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. It was a privilege to be the first-ever Wikipedian.

## Appendix

Wikipedia Article
John Mearsheimer
Realism (international relations)
Neorealism (international relations)
Nuclear Terrorism
Cuban Missile Crisis
Belfer Center Wikipedia Presentation
Military Action Against Iran (debate)
Military Action Against Iran (debate)
AirSea Battle
Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution
2012 NATO Chicago Summit
Operation Olympic Games
Military Action Against Iran (debate)
Ansar al-Sharia (Libya)
Evolving German Identity
East Asian Foreign Policy of Obama Administration
Special Operations
Polarity (international relations)
Chinese Century (argument)
Russia-United States Relations
Team B
China's Peaceful Rise Theory
American Primacy
Pakistani WMD program
U.S. Grand Strategy
Cold Start (India military doctrine)
Nuclear Terrorism (second wiki publication)
Iran and WMD
Targeted Killing 1
Targeted Killing 2
Azerbaijan-Iran relations
Limits on Grand Strategy
Congressional war powers
Selective Engagement vs. Primacy
Criticism of American Foreign Policy
Sino-Japanese Relations
Military-Intelligence Convergence
India: Potential superpower?
Obama 'Pivot.' Kevin Rudd et. al. weigh in
Neorealism (international relations)
"Anyone can become a Wikipedian" presentation
Buck Passing
Bandwagoning
Neoliberalism (international relations)
Soft Power
Smart Power
Coercive Diplomacy
Bandwagoning
Grand Strategy
Economy of Turkey
European Sovereign Debt Crisis (Projections)
European Sovereign Debt Crisis (Greece)
European Sovereign Debt Crisis (Spain)
European Sovereign Debt Crisis (Portugal)
Brazil-United States Relations
Abenomics
Economy of Burma
East Asian Foreign Policy of Obama Administration
East Asian Foreign Policy of Obama Administration
East Asian Foreign Policy of Obama Administration
Sino-American Relations
Cyber-security regulation
Sino-American Relations
International reactions to the Syrian civil war
Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons
Sino-American Relations
Accession of Turkey to the European Union
Views on the nuclear program of Iran
Criticism of the War on Terror
Potential Superpowers
Targeted Killing

	Targeted Killing
	Targeted Killing
	Grand Strategy
	Grand Strategy
	Sino-Japanese Relations
	Transatlantic Free Trade Area
	Nadezhda Popova
	Casper Weinberger
	George P. Schultz
	American University 'Peace Speech'
	Global Zero