# Obama Mandate Bad

### Elections DA 1NC

#### Uncanny 2004 analogue suggests Obama will secure a narrow victory

Washington Post, 7-20-12, [“Is the 2012 election the 2004 election all over again?,” Chris Cillizza and Aaron Blake, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/is-the-2012-election-the-2004-election-all-over-again/2012/07/19/gJQAaaU2wW\_blog.html] E. Liu

\* An incumbent president with a job approval score and ballot performance that is consistently under 50 percent. \* A challenger with a resume that seems to fit the times but who has struggled to capitalize on the weaknesses of the incumbent — and yet remains very much in the game due to the same weaknesses of the incumbent. \* A political environment dominated by a single issue (the Iraq war in 2004, the economy in 2012) on which the incumbent is struggling to convince voters he has the right plan going forward. \* A deeply polarized electorate with next-to-no undecided voters who remain entirely unconvinced by either candidate. It’s an uncanny — although not entirely perfect — comparison. The political environment is probably worse for President Obama than it was for Bush — problems at home always trump problems abroad — while the current president is a more gifted and nimble candidate than the man he followed into office. Even with those differences, however, the race at this point, all the way down to the polling data on the horse race, looks damn similar. In a July 25, 2004, Washington Post-ABC News poll, Bush took 48 percent to Kerry’s 46 percent among registered voters. In a July 8, 2012, Post-ABC poll, Obama and Romney were tied at 47 percent. So, if you buy the premise that the 2012 election — at least to this point — looks a lot like the 2004 election, then what lessons can the two campaigns learn from how that one turned out? Let’s start by looking at how the polling in the race between Bush and Kerry played out from now-ish until the election. For much of the summer of 2004, Bush hovered in the mid-40s and slightly behind Kerry. But beginning around Aug. 1 in Post-ABC polling, Bush started to move slowly but steadily up in the ballot test — a trend line that led him to a narrow victory on Election Day.

#### Transportation spending will win Obama the election --- perceived as a job creator.

**Cooper**, 1/25/**2012** (Donna – Senior Fellow with the Economic Policy team at American Progress, Will Congress Block Infrastructure Spending?, Center for American Progress, p. <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/01/infrastructure_sotu.html>)

Just as America refocused its war resources on building our nation’s highway system after World War II, President Barack Obama’s State of the Union address included a courageous call for Congress to redirect half of the funds formerly claimed for the war in Iraq to rebuild our nation’s crumbling infrastructure. His strong pitch for putting Americans to work repairing our infrastructure is an essential element of the president’s strategy to help the middle class grow and prosper. At first glance it would appear that the president’s call to invest in infrastructure should enjoy wide bipartisan support. The leadership of both parties in Congress is on record as strong advocates for rebuilding the nation’s roads, bridges, rail, ports, and airports. On Fox News earlier this week, Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH) said he wants the president to follow the recommendations of the White House Jobs and Competitiveness Council on increasing federal investments in infrastructure (look for the transcript on the speaker's blog). And Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) is on the record saying, “Everybody knows we have a crumbling infrastructure. Infrastructure spending is popular on both sides. The question is how much are we going to spend.” Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) also strongly support President Obama’s infrastructure plans. But bipartisanship isn’t always what it seems, especially when it comes to infrastructure. In 2011 Republicans in the House and Senate unveiled a new strategy that linked new infrastructure investments with divisive environmental proposals. They know this linkage is unacceptable to the president, Senate Democrats, and most of the American public. Yet congressional Republicans are making this push so they can block movement to create jobs and rebuild our infrastructure while sounding like they are in favor of policies that do both. This is a serious claim, but the evidence is clear. In the past year, instead of rolling up their sleeves and drafting long-term highway and aviation spending bills, the House leadership cranked out a package of bills that include measures to weaken clean water and clean air protections and to restrict union organizing. They disingenuously called this a "jobs package." In spite of the compelling evidence that federal investments in infrastructure are an effective tool for creating jobs—the U.S. Department of Transportation 2007 estimates indicated that $1 billion in highway investments can create 27,800 jobs—this “jobs package” included the House-passed fiscal year 2012 budget bill that makes deep cuts in spending for highway and other surface transportation repairs. This package of bills willfully neglects the dire state of our aging infrastructure and the need to create more well-paying construction jobs. They haven’t stopped there. While ignoring the president’s very popular American Jobs Act, they’ve joined the all-out offensive campaign to push the environmentally dangerous Keystone pipeline project, claiming it as their solution to the jobs crisis. This project is more like a jobs pipedream. It’s already three years behind schedule and may never see the light of day due to broad-based U.S. opposition to building the pipeline, including from the Republican governor of Nebraska, who opposes the pipeline route through his state. None of this is news to the House Republicans. They are desperate to shift attention away from their failure to advance legislation to address our nation’s crumbling infrastructure because they are more concerned with blocking a jobs victory for President Obama that would help him win the 2012 presidential election. Emblematic of this strategy was the announcement in a November House leadership press conference where Speaker Boehner indicated that he intended to release a multiyear highway funding bill early in 2012 and fund it with revenues dependent on a massive expansion in oil-and-gas drilling offshore and on public lands, including in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. The only problem is that the House leadership knows that this drilling-dependent approach is likely to be dead on arrival in the Senate. Just this past May, 57 senators voted against a motion to proceed to consider the House bill to permit expanded offshore oil-and-gas drilling. If the House leadership were sincere about creating new construction jobs, then why not start by getting behind a bill that can pass both chambers so that private contractors can get to work repairing more of the 150,000 bridges that need it or the $52.3 billion in improvements needed at the nation’s airports? Instead we are now on the eighth temporary extension of a federal highway bill that expired in 2009 and now only runs through the end of March 2012. Then there’s the Federal Aviation Administration funding bill. Yesterday before the president’s State of the Union address, House Transportation Committee Chairman John Mica (R-FL) held a vote for the 23rd temporary extension of the legislation that will provide funding for our airport safety and construction only through the end of February 2012. These extensions enable the status-quo level of inadequate funding for infrastructure to limp along while our national assets crumble. The House Republicans have blocked the passage of a long-term aviation funding bill for the past two years, demanding that arcane and unfair union election rules be included in the bill. As of today a compromise among all parties takes the union issue off the table. But there are many more details to work out, including the level of funding and what is funded. Given the Republican track record on passing the legislation that is needed to rebuild our infrastructure, it is premature to consider this aviation funding bill a done deal. The House is not the only problem. Sen. Reid late in 2011 put the president’s American Jobs Act, which included $60 billion to repair our schools and fund a National Infrastructure Bank, to a vote, but Senate filibuster rules that require 60 favorable votes to put a bill on the floor for consideration made moving this infrastructure funding bill impossible. After failing to reach that 60-vote threshold, Sen. Reid said, “Republicans think that if the economy improves, it might help President Obama. So they root for the economy to fail and oppose every effort to improve it.” Indeed, Sen. McConnell blocked passage of the Senate version of the Jobs Act while lambasting the president for pointing it out and blasting the Senate Democrats for not working with the House Republicans to reach a compromise. But that statement begs the question of why McConnell isn’t working with his own party’s leadership in the House to make sure the Senate receives a bill that has a chance of a positive vote. The answer is clear: The Republican leadership is very concerned that responding to the American popular call for infrastructure investment will benefit President Obama politically—never mind the pain suffered by the American people and our future economic competitiveness by their failure to act. The president should not be deterred, however, by the roadblocks he faces in Congress. In his speech in Kansas this past December, he summoned the nation to redouble its commitment to an economy that lifts all boats. Echoing President Theodore Roosevelt’s progressive sentiments, he said: We simply cannot return to this brand of "you're on your own" economics if we're serious about rebuilding the middle class in this country. We know that it doesn't result in a strong economy. It results in an economy that invests too little in its people and in its future. We know it doesn't result in a prosperity that trickles down. It results in a prosperity that's enjoyed by fewer and fewer of our citizens.

#### A big Obama win causes sequestration and more defense cuts on top of that

Loren Thompson, Chief Operating Officer of the non-profit Lexington Institute and Chief Executive Officer of Source Associates, Deputy Director of the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University and taught graduate-level courses in strategy, technology and media affairs at Georgetown. I have also taught at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, 1-27-12, [“Defense Plans Will Change, So Don't Bank on Obama Blueprint,” Forbes, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/lorenthompson/2012/01/27/defense-plans-will-change-so-dont-bank-on-obama-blueprint/print/>] E. Liu

On Thursday, Pentagon leaders revealed the details of how they propose to implement President Obama’s new Asia-Pacific military posture. The administration has described the new posture as “a blueprint for the Joint Force in 2020,” so contractors and investors were eager to get the details on which programs would be cut or kept on track. A white paper that policymakers prepared to explain the changes reinforced the notion that the new priorities are part of a long-term plan, stating, “There is no room for modification if we are to preserve the force and capabilities that are needed… A change in one area inevitably requires offsetting requirements elsewhere, unbalancing the overall package.”¶ If you take such assertions seriously, then you must not know much about the history of U.S. defense downturns. The Obama defense blueprint is a snapshot in time that will probably change radically within a few years. Let’s consider all the dynamic factors that stand in the way of implementing a long-term blueprint in America’s notoriously unpredictable political culture.¶ ¶ First of all, none of the substantive changes the administration is proposing can actually be implemented without congressional approval. The House of Representatives is currently controlled by Republicans who don’t like the changes, and the Senate is likely to go Republican too in the next election (two-thirds of the Senate seats being contested this year are held by Democrats, and three-quarters of the senators who are retiring are Democrats). The notion that Congress will simply go along with a defense plan crafted by this White House is fantastic on its face given partisan polarization on every issue in Washington.¶ Second, the President is up for reelection in November, and his job approval in public-opinion surveys has been below 50 percent for a long time. Despite the propensity of Republican primary candidates to alienate every political constituency that isn’t white or wealthy, there’s a real possibility that Mr. Obama and his defense priorities will be gone a year from now. Even if Obama manages to eke out an election victory, he won’t have much in the way of coattails to help put his co-partisans in control of the Congress, so we may be looking at two to four more years of political paralysis in Washington — a poor setting for carrying out long-term plans on anything.¶ Third, a fiscal sword of Damocles is currently hanging over the defense sector in the form of a Budget Control Act mandate to cut $600 billion more out of military spending. That’s on top of the $487 billion that already must be cut from the President’s ten-year defense plan. Additional cuts of that magnitude would force wholesale revisions in the president’s blueprint. Military leaders have embraced the sanguine assumption that the political system will somehow avert a second wave of cuts because it would be so destructive, but as of today the law says the cuts begin next January. A stalemated post-election political system might not be able to amend the law, and the president is insisting that he would veto any legislative effort to do so that failed to provide $1.2 trillion in budget savings the law was crafted to generate. Fourth, if the system is not still paralyzed a year from now, that will probably be because one party has swept the elections. If it’s the Republicans, then the specter of big defense cuts will disappear. Research conducted by Ron Epstein of Merrill Lynch Bank of America has found that Republican control of the White House and Senate has been the single strongest predictor of rising weapons outlays over the past 50 years (Epstein says political control is a more reliable indicator than threats). If it’s the Democrats, then $600 billion in additional defense cuts could be just the beginning as they seek to generate a big “peace dividend” to fund domestic initiatives. Either way, the defense plan would change.

#### Sequestration and military cuts decimate heg – Causes multiple nuclear conflicts and prolif

The Foreign Policy Initiative, Board of Directors consists of Eric Edelman, former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey (2003–2005), former U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Finland (1998–2001), and former Principal Deputy Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs, Robert Kagan, William Kristol, and Dan Seno, et al., American Enterprise Institute, and The Heritage Foundation, 11-17-11, [“Defending Defense ¶ Defense Spending, the Super Committee, ¶ and the Price of Greatness,” <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/11/defending-defense-setting-the-record-straight-on-us-military-spending-requirements>] E. Liu

¶ In turn, Panetta said that sequestration cuts would raise dangerous risks and uncertainties to America’s ¶ national security. In particular, sequestration: ¶ ¶  “Undermine[s] our ability to meet our national security objectives and require[s] a significant revision to ¶ our defense strategy.” ¶  “Generate[s] significant operational risks; delays response times to crises, conflicts, and disasters; severely ¶ limits our ability to be forward deployed and engaged around the world; and assumes unacceptable risk in ¶ future combat operations.” ¶  “Severely reduce[s] force training—[and] threatens overall operational readiness. ¶ ¶ In October 2011, the House Armed Services Committee released a study of the impact of defense cuts that ¶ reached comparable conclusions. ¶ ¶ Amid macroeconomic uncertainty, however, Americans continue to oppose further cuts to the Pentagon. ¶ According to a November 2011 Politico-George Washington University Battleground Poll, 82 percent of ¶ ¶ 7 ¶ respondents either strongly opposed or somewhat opposed the Super Committee “cutting spending on ¶ defense programs, including programs for soldiers and veterans” to meet its deficit-reduction goal. ¶ ¶ The financial impact of deep cuts to the Defense Department will be alarming under any sequestration ¶ scenario. More alarming, however, is what more defense cuts could mean for the future of America’s national ¶ security and longstanding role in preserving global stability. ¶ ¶ ¶ Myth #3: Deep cuts in defense spending won’t impact U.S. global leadership. ¶ ¶ FACT: In order to maintain global leadership, the United States must make commensurate investments in ¶ defense of its national security and international interests. ¶ From the Cold War to the post-9/11 world, U.S. spending on national defense has yielded substantial strategic ¶ returns by: ¶ ¶  protecting the security and prosperity of the United States and its allies; ¶  amplifying America’s diplomatic and economic leadership throughout the globe; ¶  preventing the outbreak of the world wars that marked the early 20th century; and ¶  preserving the delicate international order in the face of aggressive, illiberal threats. ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ No doubt, the United States has invested non-trivial amounts on national defense to help achieve these ¶ strategic objectives. But when viewed in historical perspective, the proportion of America’s annual economic ¶ output dedicated to the Defense Department from 1947 to today has been reasonable and acceptable—¶ indeed, a fraction of what it dedicated during World War II. Figure 4 illustrates this. Moreover, in light of the ¶ various rounds of recent cuts to the Pentagon’s multi-year budget, defense spending as percentage of gross ¶ domestic product (GDP) is on track to reach its lowest point since end of World War II. ¶ ¶ Yet defense cuts in recent years have come despite the fact that the United States is facing new threats in the ¶ 21st century to its national security and international interests. As Robert Kagan of the Brookings Institution ¶ summarized in The Weekly Standard: ¶ ¶ The War on Terror: “The terrorists who would like to kill Americans on U.S. soil constantly search for ¶ safe havens from which to plan and carry out their attacks. American military actions in Afghanistan, ¶ Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, and elsewhere make it harder for them to strike and are a large part of the ¶ reason why for almost a decade there has been no repetition of September 11. To the degree that we ¶ limit our ability to deny them safe haven, we increase the chances they will succeed” (emphasis added). ¶ ¶ The Asia Pacific: “American forces deployed in East Asia and the Western Pacific have for decades ¶ prevented the outbreak of major war, provided stability, and kept open international trading routes, ¶ making possible an unprecedented era of growth and prosperity for Asians and Americans alike. Now ¶ the United States faces a new challenge and potential threat from a rising China which seeks eventually ¶ to push the U.S. military’s area of operations back to Hawaii and exercise hegemony over the world’s ¶ most rapidly growing economies. Meanwhile, a nuclear-armed North Korea threatens war with South ¶ Korea and fires ballistic missiles over Japan that will someday be capable of reaching the west coast of ¶ the United States. Democratic nations in the region, worried that the United States may be losing ¶ influence, turn to Washington for reassurance that the U.S. security guarantee remains firm. If the ¶ United States cannot provide that assurance because it is cutting back its military capabilities, they will ¶ have to choose between accepting Chinese dominance and striking out on their own, possibly by ¶ building nuclear weapons” (emphasis added). ¶ ¶ The Middle East: “… Iran seeks to build its own nuclear arsenal, supports armed radical Islamic groups ¶ in Lebanon and Palestine, and has linked up with anti-American dictatorships in the Western ¶ Hemisphere. The prospects of new instability in the region grow every day as a decrepit regime in ¶ Egypt clings to power, crushes all moderate opposition, and drives the Muslim Brotherhood into the ¶ streets. A nuclear-armed Pakistan seems to be ever on the brink of collapse into anarchy and ¶ radicalism. Turkey, once an ally, now seems bent on an increasingly anti-American Islamist course. ¶ The prospect of war between Hezbollah and Israel grows, and with it the possibility of war between ¶ Israel and Syria and possibly Iran. There, too, nations in the region increasingly look to Washington for ¶ reassurance, and if they decide the United States cannot be relied upon they will have to decide ¶ whether to succumb to Iranian influence or build their own nuclear weapons to resist it” (emphasis ¶ added). ¶ ¶ Meeting these threats will require the United States to remain engaged diplomatically and militarily ¶ throughout the globe. And that will require continued investment in national defense. However, further cuts ¶ to Pentagon spending—especially the “devastating” sequestration cut if the Super Committee effort fails—will ¶ fundamentally undermine America’s strategy to defend its national security and international interests. In ¶ Secretary Panetta’s words, “we would have to formulate a new security strategy that accepted substantial risk ¶ of not meeting our defense needs.” ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ Conclusion: Defense spending and the price of greatness. ¶ ¶ Some today find it tempting to slash investments in America’s national security and international interests, ¶ especially given current efforts to reduce the federal debt and deficit. But as this analysis has argued, ¶ however, defense spending—which has already faced nearly $1 trillion in cuts, arguably more—has done its ¶ part for deficit reduction. Moreover, further cuts to defense spending risks fundamentally eroding America’s ¶ standing and leadership role in the world.

## Uniqueness

### Close Obama Win – 2004 Analogue

#### Uncanny 2004 analogue suggests Obama will secure a narrow victory

Washington Post, 7-20-12, [“Is the 2012 election the 2004 election all over again?,” Chris Cillizza and Aaron Blake, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/is-the-2012-election-the-2004-election-all-over-again/2012/07/19/gJQAaaU2wW\_blog.html] E. Liu

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### Close Obama Win – Polls and Likability

#### Polls and likability give Obama a tiny advantage now

The Hill, 7-24-12, [“Poll gives Romney lead on economy despite Obama’s Bain attacks,” Jonathan Easley, <http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/polls/239663-poll-gives-romney-lead-on-economy-despite-obamas-bain-attacks>] E. Liu

A separate Gallup tracking poll also shows the candidates in a dead heat, with Obama edging Romney with 46 percent support to 45. That mirrors the Real Clear Politics average of polls, which shows Obama leading Romney by 1 percent. While the poll casts doubt on the effectiveness of the Obama campaign ads, there is also evidence that the Romney campaign’s attempt to convince voters Obama is leading a public sector that is overly intrusive on the private sector seems to be working. A record 61 percent said the government is trying to do things that should be left to individuals and free markets, the highest number since Gallup began asking the question two decades ago in 1992. While the poll gives the edge to Romney on the economy, Obama continues to excel in one area that has been an ongoing weakness for the GOP candidate — likability. Americans say Obama is the more likable candidate by a 2-to-1 margin. Romney has suffered from a low favorability rating throughout the Republican primaries and into the general election.

#### Obama will win by narrow margin now- polls prove

Real Clear Politics, 7/25/12, “Krauthammer: Romney Will Win, Obama ‘Has Nothing To Run On’”,

<http://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2012/07/25/krauthammer_romney_will_win_in_november_obama_has_nothing_to_run_on.html>)

Bill O'Reilly, FOX News: If the election were held tomorrow, tomorrow, who would win? Charles Krauthammer: Obama O'Reilly: By? A lot? Krauthammer: No. It will be narrow. If he wins either now or November in your hypothetical, it'll be a narrow win because he will eke it out with these constituencies. O'Reilly: Why would he win tomorrow? Krauthammer: Because you look at all the polls, the average is that you've got a two-point edge in the popular vote. It's almost inconceivable that you would have that strong an excess in the overall vote and lose in the electoral college.

#### Obama’s likeability offsets Romney’s economic edge- secures narrow win

(Gallup, 7/24/2012, “Obama's Character Edge Offsets Romney's Economic Advantage”,

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/156134/Obama-Character-Edge-Offsets-Romney-Economic-Advantage.aspx>)

Americans tend to see Mitt Romney as better able to handle key issues than President Obama is, particularly those relating to the economy. However, Americans give Obama the edge on most character dimensions, especially basic likability.¶ Romney has an edge on four of six issues tested in the July 19-22USA Today/Gallup poll -- all having a significant economic component, including the federal budget deficit, the economy, creating jobs, and taxes. Romney and Obama are tied on healthcare, while Obama's lone lead in the poll is his decided advantage on foreign affairs.¶ On the other hand, Obama is viewed as more likable, more honest and trustworthy, and better able to understand the problems Americans face than Romney is. Romney's only character advantage of the four included in the poll is for being able to "get things done."¶ These differences help explain why Obama and Romney remain closely matched in voters' [general election preferences](http://www.gallup.com/poll/150743/Obama-Romney.aspx). In July 17-23 Gallup Daily tracking, 46% of registered voters say they would vote for Obama and 45% for Romney if the election were held today.¶ Many of the important contextual indicators, such as [national satisfaction](http://www.gallup.com/poll/155765/Satisfaction-Rises-Tying-Highs-2010.aspx) and [economic confidence](http://www.gallup.com/poll/156119/Economic-Confidence-Improves-Slightly-Past-Week.aspx), are below their levels from years in which recent incumbent presidents were re-elected. However, Americans have not warmed to Romney even though they view him as the candidate better equipped to handle economic matters, the public's[overwhelming concerns](http://www.gallup.com/poll/1675/Most-Important-Problem.aspx) this election year.¶ Romney's advantage on economic issues likely stems from Americans' generally negative assessment of Obama's economic stewardship as well as Romney's own business background. Americans continue to be more pessimistic than optimistic about the economy, and President Obama has gotten low marks for his [handling of the economy](http://www.gallup.com/poll/152543/Obama-Economic-Approval-Rating-Improves.aspx) for most of his presidency.¶ And while the Obama campaign has tried to criticize Romney's business record, particularly his time as head of Bain Capital, the public by a wide margin sees his background as a plus. Specifically, the July 19-22 USA Today/Gallup poll finds 63% of Americans saying Romney's business background would cause him to make good decisions about how to deal with economic problems the U.S. would face, while 29% say it would cause him to make bad decisions. A majority of independents say Romney would make good decisions.¶ Given the closeness of the race at this point, it appears having an advantage on the dominant issue of the day is not sufficient to convince voters to elect a candidate. Romney's Achilles' heel may be a significant likability deficit to Obama, both in how Americans view each candidate individually and in their perceptions of who is more likable.¶ Americans overwhelmingly continue to believe Obama is the more likable of the two candidates, by 60% to 30%, a gap basically unchanged from [earlier this year](http://www.gallup.com/poll/154547/Obama-Big-Likability-Edge-Romney.aspx).¶ The differences are smaller when Americans say whether they have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of each candidate individually, though Obama still owns a significant advantage. In two Gallup polls conducted this month, an average of 54% of Americans have a favorable opinion of Obama, while 44% have an unfavorable view. In contrast, Romney's views average out slightly more negative (47%) than positive (43%) in the same two polls.¶ That is a [less positive assessment](http://www.gallup.com/poll/154703/Romney-Registers-Personal-Best-Favorable-Rating.aspx) of Romney than shortly after he won the Republican nomination, but consistent with opinion of him during the [Republican nomination campaign](http://www.gallup.com/poll/152942/Obama-Favorable-Rating-Higher-GOP-Candidates.aspx). Thus, the improved opinion of Romney after he won the nomination -- which usually occurs for the winners -- proved to be short-lived and he is now essentially back to where he was at earlier points in the campaign.¶ Implications¶ With less than four months to go before voters register their final preferences for president in the 2012 election, Romney's and Obama's strengths and weaknesses in the eyes of Americans are coming into focus. Americans view Romney's business background as more of an asset than a liability in terms of his ability to deal with the economy, and they consequently see him as better able to handle economic matters.¶ Yet Americans do not view Romney personally in as favorable a light as they view Obama. While that may not seem as important a consideration for voters as their perceptions of the candidates' competence or their agreement with the candidates' issue positions, the better-liked candidate on the eve of the election [has won each of the last five elections](http://www.gallup.com/poll/111439/Obama-McCain-Two-BestLiked-Candidates.aspx).¶ The candidates still have an opportunity to change voters' perceptions of them and their strengths and weaknesses, including at the upcoming party conventions and in the presidential debates. For now, it appears as if Romney's economic strengths and Obama's likability edge are offsetting one another, as voters are evenly divided in their preferences for whom they want to be the next president.

### Close Election

#### Obama and Romney in a dead heat

CBS 7/18 (CBS, “Obama, Romney, in dead heat in presidential race”, 7/18/12, http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544\_162-57475178-503544/obama-romney-in-dead-heat-in-presidential-race/)

President Obama and Mitt Romney are effectively tied in the race for the presidency, according to a new CBS News/New York Times survey.¶ Forty-seven percent of registered voters nationwide who lean towards a candidate back Romney, while 46 percent support the president. Four percent are undecided. The 1 percentage point difference is within the survey's three-point margin of error.¶ Romney leads by eight points among men; the president leads by five points among women.¶ The president's supporters are more likely to strongly back their candidate. Fifty-two percent strongly favor Mr. Obama, while just 29 percent of Romney voters strongly back the presumptive Republican nominee.¶ More than one in three Romney voters say they are supporting Romney primarily because they dislike Mr. Obama. Only eight percent of Obama supporters say their support for the president is tied to their dislike of Romney.¶ Republicans are more enthusiastic than Democrats when it comes to voting in this election, though just one in three registered voters overall are more enthusiastic than they were in the past. Roughly half of Republicans say they are more enthusiastic compared to past elections - up from 36 percent in March - while just 27 percent of Democrats say they same.¶ One in five registered voters with a candidate choice said they still might change their mind. The percentage of those willing to switch was essentially the same for both candidates.¶ Forty-five percent of registered voters say they are paying close attention to the campaign, and another 38 percent say they are paying some attention. Seventeen percent say they are paying little or no attention.¶ Fifty-four percent of registered voters cite the economy and jobs as "extremely" important in their presidential vote, more than any other issue. Here Romney has the edge: 49 percent of registered voters say he would do a better job handling the economy and jobs, while 41 percent cite Mr. Obama.¶ Romney is also seen as better on the federal budget deficit (50 percent to 36 percent), taxes (47 percent to 42 percent) and illegal immigration (46 percent to 38 percent). Mr. Obama as seen as better on foreign policy (47 percent to 40 percent) and social issues (48 percent to 37 percent). Views of the candidates on health care and terrorism were split.¶ Thirty-eight percent of registered voters say Mr. Obama cares a lot about their needs and problems, compared to 25 percent who say the same of Romney. Registered voters were slightly more likely to say that Mr. Obama says what he believes (45 percent) than to say that Romney says what he believes (37 percent).¶ Only 28 percent believe Mr. Obama has fulfilled his promise to deliver positive change for the country. Fifty-eight percent say he has not delivered change, while 7 percent say he has delivered change that has been bad for the country.¶ Mr. Obama's overall approval rating stands at 44 percent, with 46 percent disapproving. His approval rating on the economy is just 39 percent - 55 percent disapprove - and his approval rating on foreign policy is 41 percent. His approval rating on the economy has dropped five points since April.¶ Both candidates have net unfavorable ratings. Forty-eight percent of registered voters view the president unfavorably, while 36 percent view him favorably. Romney is viewed unfavorably by 36 percent and favorably by 32 percent. Nearly one in three say they do not yet have an opinion about the presumptive Republican nominee.¶ Seven in 10 Americans say the economy is in bad shape. While 24 percent say it is getting better - down from 33 percent in April - 30 percent say it is getting worse. That marks the highest percentage who say the economy is getting worse since December.¶ Two in five Americans say they are very concerned someone in their household will lose their job.

### Close Obama Win Won’t Garner Mandate

#### Obama narrow win won’t secure mandate

National Journal, 7-19-12, [“The Upside Down Smile,” Major Garrett, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/president-obama-as-pit-bull-20120719>]

It’s only July, and President Obama’s campaign has already called Mitt Romney an outsourcing, job-killing, company-bankrupting whiner who may also be a tax cheat and a felon. The brass knuckles are out, the presumptive Republican nominee is bleeding, and Obama is selling off his likability as if it were an inexhaustible commodity.¶ But is it? Can voters tolerate the lurch from preaching hope and change to mocking Romney’s off-key rendition of “America the Beautiful” and hurling contestable allegations that he oversaw the outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries? And even if they do, does Obama’s team see a governing path for a reelected president who has so toxically attacked his rival?¶ In private conversations they will not allow to be quoted, Obama’s top campaign advisers believe that he will win reelection by 51 percent to 49 percent. That’s a smaller popular-vote percentage than Obama’s 52.9 percent in 2008. If this happens, Obama will be the first president since Andrew Jackson to win reelection with a lower percentage of the popular vote than his first election (James Madison was the other one who did this).¶ Even so, Obama will claim a mandate, but it will, by definition, be smaller than the one he captured in 2008. The Republican House, a by-product of voter unhappiness with his first two years in office, will likely remain, although with slightly smaller numbers. The wild card is the Senate. Obama and Romney advisers both expect the chamber to follow the top of the ticket, with a narrow majority either way.

### Obama Second Term Spells Gridlock- Squo

#### Gridlock continues under Obama second term- Republicans will reclaim majority in House and gain in Senate

(**Michigan Daily, 7/22**/2012, “Continued gridlock”, <http://www.michigandaily.com/opinion/michael-spaeth-continued-gridlock>, )

Yet in the midst of the breathless media coverage of the daily back-and-forth of the presidential campaign, political commentators aren’t emphasizing one very important detail: no matter who wins the presidential election, the gridlock that’s currently preventing pretty much anything from getting done in Washington will continue — or even worsen — unless one party gains control of the White House and large majorities in both houses of Congress.¶ The Republicans in the 112th Congress are commonly blamed for Congress’ inability to get any meaningful legislation passed. In an [opinion piece for the Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/lets-just-say-it-the-republicans-are-the-problem/2012/04/27/gIQAxCVUlT_story.html), congressional scholars Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein observed, “When one party moves this far from the mainstream, it makes it nearly impossible for the political system to deal constructively with the country’s challenges.” This statement deserves some consideration because, [as NPR noted in April](http://www.npr.org/2012/04/30/151522725/even-worse-than-it-looks-extremism-in-congress), Mann and Ornstein “have been in Washington for more than 40 years — and they’re renowned for their carefully nonpartisan positions.” Ornstein also told NPR that since President Obama was inaugurated, “when we did get action, half the political process viewed it as illegitimate, tried to undermine its implementation and moved to repeal it.”¶ For example, Congress holds many symbolic votes, which are a blatant waste of time and money. Their time — along with taxpayers’ dollars — should be spent on actually finding solutions to our country’s problems. Shortly after the Supreme Court ruled that the Affordable Care Act was constitutional, the Republican-controlled House voted to repeal the law, despite the fact that the Democrat-controlled Senate definitely wouldn’t repeal the law and that President Obama would veto the repeal if it actually passed both houses of Congress. It was the 33rd time the House tried to repeal all or parts of President Obama’s health care law. [CBS News reported](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18563_162-57470643/health-care-repeal-effort-worth-the-time/?tag=stack) that these efforts have “taken up at least 80 hours on the House floor” and have cost taxpayers “a little under $50 million” total. No wonder Congress’ approval ratings are at historic lows.¶ But don’t expect these kinds of tactics to end if Democrats lose control of either the White House or the Senate. After nearly four years of relentless Republican obstruction, I highly doubt the Democrats are going to conclude that it’s time to let the Republicans do whatever they want now that they control a majority of the governing bodies in Washington. Democrats will instead do everything in their power to block Republican legislation from becoming law. As long as Democrats control the White House, the Senate or the House, the gridlock will continue.¶ It’s even more unlikely that the gridlock will end if President Obama wins a second term, yet the president remains hopeful. In June, he [told donors in Minneapolis](http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/06/obama-says-gop-fever-on-taxes-may-break-in-a-second-term/), “My hope and my expectation is that after the election, now that it turns out the goal of beating Obama doesn’t make much sense because I’m not running again, that we can start getting some cooperation again” on issues like deficit reduction. But while this might conceivably be true for establishment Republicans like House Speaker John Boehner — and that’s only if we’re being extremely idealistic — does anyone believe for a minute that the Tea Party Republicans are suddenly going to relent and start cooperating with President Obama? I'm skeptical.¶ While nobody knows exactly how the 2012 elections will turn out, early estimates indicate that there won’t be any seismic shifts in power in Washington. Using an election forecasting model, Prof. Alan Abramowitz of Emory University concluded in March, [“It would be surprising if Republicans did not hold onto their majority in the House in 2012 and gain at least a few Senate seats.”](http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-early-outlook-for-the-2012-congressional-elections-a-forecasting-perspective/)Democrats will fight hard to prevent Republicans from gaining control of the Senate, implicitly arguing that a divided government is better than a Republican-dominated government. Also, with a Republican Party that’s increasingly influenced by the extremism of the Tea Party, the Democrats’ concerns have some legitimacy.¶ However, if the past two years are any indication of how the next few years will proceed, a divided government isn’t much better.¶ In short, unless the Republicans win control of all three governing bodies in Washington, don’t expect 2012 to be an earth-shattering election. I’m still optimistic about our country’s future, but it’s going to take some time before we can make any real progress.

### No Mandate Now

#### No mandate now- Obama will expend political capital to secure election

National Journal, 7-19-12, [“The Upside Down Smile,” Major Garrett, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/president-obama-as-pit-bull-20120719>]

It’s only July, and President Obama’s campaign has already called Mitt Romney an outsourcing, job-killing, company-bankrupting whiner who may also be a tax cheat and a felon. The brass knuckles are out, the presumptive Republican nominee is bleeding, and Obama is selling off his likability as if it were an inexhaustible commodity.¶ But is it? Can voters tolerate the lurch from preaching hope and change to mocking Romney’s off-key rendition of “America the Beautiful” and hurling contestable allegations that he oversaw the outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries? And even if they do, does Obama’s team see a governing path for a reelected president who has so toxically attacked his rival?¶ In private conversations they will not allow to be quoted, Obama’s top campaign advisers believe that he will win reelection by 51 percent to 49 percent. That’s a smaller popular-vote percentage than Obama’s 52.9 percent in 2008. If this happens, Obama will be the first president since Andrew Jackson to win reelection with a lower percentage of the popular vote than his first election (James Madison was the other one who did this).¶ Even so, Obama will claim a mandate, but it will, by definition, be smaller than the one he captured in 2008. The Republican House, a by-product of voter unhappiness with his first two years in office, will likely remain, although with slightly smaller numbers. The wild card is the Senate. Obama and Romney advisers both expect the chamber to follow the top of the ticket, with a narrow majority either way.¶ To win, senior Obama advisers concede they must impeach the witness, meaning they have to deprive Romney of the ability to speak credibly during the GOP convention or in the three presidential debates about the economy, job creation, or any other financial insights he may possess for these troubled times. The relentless attention focused on Romney’s reign at Bain Capital, his tax returns, a Swiss bank account, a Bermuda corporation, and other exotic financial details is all about the preemptive disqualification of the candidate.¶ “Romney is Exhibit One of why his own argument is false,” said Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley, head of the Democratic Governors Association. “His personal story cuts the knees out from the theory that rich people reinvest and create jobs. This guy doesn’t even buy his own bullshit. He cries crocodile tears in front of factory gates. It would be irresponsible for the president not to point that out.”¶ Doing so is harsh, partisan, and unforgiving—precisely the kind of politics that Obama previously denounced. But some Democrats blame Romney as much as Obama for making the attacks stick so easily. “Remember, this campaign looks tough and negative because the Romney campaign has been so incompetent,” said a top Democratic ad strategist. “There is no muscularity to their response. So it looks like the clubbing of a harp seal.”¶ As for the elasticity of Obama’s likability, Democrats are convinced that there’s no snapping it, that Obama can be as harsh as he needs and survive virtually unscathed. They do acknowledge private fears that if the economic news continues to darken, Obama’s record may prove more disqualifying than the seeds of doubt they plant about Romney.¶ Right now, polling and focus groups support that theory. Obama’s approval rating and likability have not suffered so far. Congress, especially Republicans, register historically low approval ratings. Top advisers say that Obama has weathered the real storms of the recession and three consecutive summers of underwhelming job growth. Getting tough now, they say, just shows Obama’s grit, something worried voters want to see during times of woe.¶ And yet. Even if a scorched-earth campaign bent on crippling Romney’s credibility yields a victory, Obama is almost sure to encounter a new Congress with a shrunken popular-vote mandate, an even more narrowly divided Senate, and a House majority even more ideologically antagonistic than it is now (if that is possible). “It’s a mess,” a senior House Democratic aide said. “I don’t know that there’s any way to predict how we get anything done in the next four years.”¶ Even so, most Democrats are delighted with Obama’s newfound taste for the jugular, one that many say was woefully AWOL during scrapes with Republicans over extending the Bush tax cuts in 2010 or the debt-ceiling showdown in 2011.¶ Lawmakers know that a dizzying array of difficult issues with long political fangs await them after the election: more than a trillion dollars in across-the-board spending cuts over the next decade; the expiration of tax cuts on marginal rates, payroll, dividends, and capital gains; and Medicare doctor reimbursements. Will a divisive campaign fought over Romney’s Bain terrain and 1040 forms yield results in the face of such daunting tasks? Democrats say that’s secondary to victory.¶ “I don’t think the campaign will impact the sense of urgency of addressing the problems after the election,” said Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colo. “What it will affect is who wins. The campaign is going to be scorched earth on both sides. The difference is Obama will still be president.”¶ Top Obama advisers say that the president has no choice but to trade on his likability; preserving it in a losing effort would amount to political malpractice. “Political capital comes from strength,” a top campaign adviser said. “If Obama wins and wins big enough, he’ll have the political strength to push things through. If he wins but is perceived as weak, then the Republicans will block everything he wants to do and he’ll be a four-year lame duck.”¶ Right now, Obama’s team will take any victory, even the narrowest kind that leaves much of Obama’s old persona bleached and battered. Why? Without victory, there is no governing. As Vince Lombardi said: “Show me a good loser, and I’ll show you a loser.”

### No Obama Coattails Now

#### No coattails now- close election means Democrats won’t recapture House

SFC 1/24 (San Francisco Chronicle, “Pelosi's unlikely dream: retake House”, 1/24/2012,

<http://www.lexisnexis.com/lnacui2api/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T15195000738&format=GNBFI&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T15195000742&cisb=22_T15195000741&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=8172&docNo=3>)

House Minority Leader [Nancy Pelosi](http://www.lexisnexis.com/lnacui2api/search/XMLCrossLinkSearch.do?bct=A&risb=21_T15195000738&returnToId=20_T15195000751&csi=8172&A=0.11470900850762378&sourceCSI=9369&indexTerm=%23PE0009XOQ%23&searchTerm=Nancy%20Pelosi%20&indexType=P) is predicting that Democrats will recapture the House in November, a move that could open the possibility of the San Francisco Democrat regaining the speakership and becoming the first politician to return to that office after a defeat since Texas Democrat Sam Rayburn in 1955.¶ Pelosi, 71, needs a net gain of 25 Democrats nationwide, a goal she calls her "Drive for 25." She has predicted gains as large as 35, produced in part by a Democratic romp through California, where the redrawing of legislative districts by a nonpartisan citizens commission promises the biggest shakeup in the state's congressional delegation in two decades, along with gains in Texas, New York, Illinois and Florida.¶ Independent analysts said Pelosi is dreaming. Unless, that is, the Republican presidential nominee, whoever it is, implodes.¶ A disaster at the top of the GOP ticket, analysts said, would hand [President Obama](http://www.lexisnexis.com/lnacui2api/search/XMLCrossLinkSearch.do?bct=A&risb=21_T15195000738&returnToId=20_T15195000751&csi=8172&A=0.11470900850762378&sourceCSI=9369&indexTerm=%23PE000A0BO%23&searchTerm=President%20Obama%20&indexType=P" \t "_parent) down-ballot coattails he doesn't appear to have at the moment. With the GOP primaries turning into a blood feud between former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, the possibility is becoming more tantalizing for Democrats.¶ "What Democrats really need is a poisonous, damaged Republican nominee who not only loses to [Obama](http://www.lexisnexis.com/lnacui2api/search/XMLCrossLinkSearch.do?bct=A&risb=21_T15195000738&returnToId=20_T15195000751&csi=8172&A=0.11470900850762378&sourceCSI=9369&indexTerm=%23PE000A0BO%23&searchTerm=Obama%20&indexType=P" \t "_parent) but causes harm down the ticket," wrote Kyle Kondik, editor at the University of Virginia's Center for Politics.¶ As of now, Democrats stand to gain five to 12 seats, well short of the 25 they need to make Pelosi speaker again, said Nathan Gonzales, deputy editor of the Rothenberg Political Report, a nonpartisan newsletter.¶ "Democrats are most likely going to gain seats, just not the net gain of 25 they need to take the majority," Gonzales said. "I don't think we can rule it out, but it's not the most probable scenario right now."¶ Larry Sabato, director of the Center for Politics, called Pelosi's talk of gaining 35 seats "optimistic even for an optimist." The only way that could happen, he said, would be for [Obama](http://www.lexisnexis.com/lnacui2api/search/XMLCrossLinkSearch.do?bct=A&risb=21_T15195000738&returnToId=20_T15195000751&csi=8172&A=0.11470900850762378&sourceCSI=9369&indexTerm=%23PE000A0BO%23&searchTerm=Obama%20&indexType=P" \t "_parent) to win as convincingly as he did in 2008.¶ Since then, [Obama](http://www.lexisnexis.com/lnacui2api/search/XMLCrossLinkSearch.do?bct=A&risb=21_T15195000738&returnToId=20_T15195000751&csi=8172&A=0.11470900850762378&sourceCSI=9369&indexTerm=%23PE000A0BO%23&searchTerm=Obama%20&indexType=P" \t "_parent) has been rebuked by a GOP landslide in the 2010 midterms, where Republicans netted 63 seats, a record since 1938.¶

#### Close no-mandate election now- spells gridlock

(Daily Beast, 12/29/11, “Obama’s Nightmare: Reelected in 2012 but Republicans Take the Senate”, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/12/29/obama-s-nightmare-reelected-in-2012-but-republicans-take-the-senate.html>)

The American people are deeply frustrated with elected officials in Washington, D.C., right now. But imagine if the Republicans retake the U.S. senate and President Obama squeaks out a narrow no-mandate reelection victory?¶ Will we be destined to witness endless partisan brinksmanship and “small-ball” incrementalism? Will our incapacity to govern efficiently and effectively further weaken our image as a global leader? What will this mean for urgently needed tax reform and creative debt-reduction initiatives?¶ It’s time to start thinking about these questions and possibilities, for the Democrats’ hold on the U.S. Senate is tenuous. Democrats lost six seats in the last cycle, counting Scott Brown’s special-election win in Massachusetts—leaving them well short of the 60-seat “supermajority” needed to pass major and, of late, even ordinary legislation. This November, with 23 seats to defend compared with 10 for Republicans, they risk further losses in tough races in Nebraska, North Dakota, Missouri, Montana, Virginia, and elsewhere.¶ Sure, the Democrats might pick up a seat or two elsewhere, but they can’t bank on this, and just a four-seat swing would shift control to the GOP.¶ Meantime, President Obama’s coattails have been notably short, if not nonexistent, since 2010. Remember Ted Kennedy’s seat? Obama’s seat? Anthony Weiner’s House seat? And of course the Tea Party blowback year in 2010?¶ Can a second term get worse for Obama? For America? History instructs that second terms are marked by more trials and disappointments than triumphs.¶ Quick: Name the two-term presidents whose second terms were measurably better than their first terms? A few such as Washington, Andrew Jackson, and Teddy Roosevelt might qualify, but this is going back a ways.¶ Second terms in the past hundred years have been problematic. Wilson had a stroke and became both a physical and political invalid. FDR’s second term was his least successful (his third term was an exception in so many ways). Nixon was thrown out. Clinton was impeached.¶ Americans like mixed government, and enough people could split their tickets to make this happen.¶ Eisenhower and Reagan had decent seconds terms yet by no means as successful as their first ones. George W. Bush’s later trials and tribulations were the very definition of second-term blues.¶ The 22nd Amendment, limiting presidents to two terms, has the effect, or so many people believe, of having the sun starting to set forever the very day a president’s second term begins.¶ So what are chances for leadership in Washington come 2013? For an embrace of the Simpson-Bowles commission plan for debt reduction and a streamlining of the U.S. tax codes? For responsible immigration reform and smart investments in making Americans more innovative and more competitive?¶ One of Obama’s best hopes for implementing such changes should he win reelection, paradoxically, is that voters, even as they continue to embark on yet another anti-Washington “wave election,” may decide that they will reluctantly retain Obama because next summer’s political forecasts predict a Congress wholly controlled by Republicans to go along with the already red-leaning Supreme Court. Americans like mixed government, and enough people could split their tickets to make this happen.¶ Conventional wisdom suggests we’ll have a lot more gridlock in this scenario—that senators will continue to hold up presidential appointments, House leaders to hold the president over a barrel of artificial deadline crises and short-term budget deals, and the president to try and bypass Congress by governing when possible through executive orders.¶ But some presidents have defied the odds of dealing with an opposition-controlled Congress in their second terms. Eisenhower and Congress worked to enact the Interstate Highway System. Reagan helped broker with Congress a reasonably important (at the time) tax-reform act in 1986. Clinton, even with Gingrich riding high in Congress, made progress on budget and debt issues.¶ Our presidential-congressional separation-of-powers system has traditionally moved slowly, and typically becomes bold only in response to crises. That’s the way it was designed. “Where the country is not sure what ought to be done,” wrote historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., “it may be that delay, debate and further consideration are not a bad idea. And if our leadership is sure what to do, it must educate the rest of us—and that is not a bad idea either.”¶ Presidents, working even with a Congress wholly controlled by the other party, can get important measures passed. The key in almost every case is that a competent teaching president figured out what needed to be done and then creatively collaborated and compromised with the Congress and persuaded the American people about the merits of the proposed action.¶ The presidency often seems an impossible or near-impossible job. It has humbled most of its occupants.¶ But 21st-century America requires presidential leadership. The only way to reduce the need for a strong presidency is to adopt the Ron Paul politics of greatly reducing America’s role in the world, retreat from global economic leadership, and dramatically reduce the size of government. Some people favor this. But this is not going to happen.

### Won’t Solve Sequestration Before Election

#### Partisanship on sequestration means no deal before the election

The Hill, 7-22-12, [“Pre-election deal to avert looming sequestration cuts looks unlikely,” Jeremy Herb, http://thehill.com/blogs/defcon-hill/budget-appropriations/239329-pre-election-deal-to-avert-sequestration-cuts-looks-unlikely] E. Liu

The rhetoric on pending cuts to the Pentagon intensified this week, but the chances of a pre-election deal to avert those spending reductions and others appear unlikely.¶ Both parties are digging into their positions on the across-the-board cuts ahead of the November election, as the cuts are poised to play an increasingly visible role in congressional and the presidential campaigns.¶ But all the messaging and campaigning on sequestration is quickly evaporating what little chance may have existed for a deal to avert some of the cuts before the election, something defense-minded lawmakers in both parties have called on Congress to do.¶ “All the heated and increasingly bitter rhetoric means everybody is digging in their heels deeper, which does not bode well for a grand or even mini-bargain in the lame duck,” said Mackenzie Eaglen, a defense analyst at the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute. “It definitely means nothing will happen before [the election].”¶ Most Republicans and Democrats do not want the cuts through sequestration, roughly $500 billion to both defense and non-defense spending over the next decade, to occur. Yet, they have generated little movement in the past 11 months toward finding alternative deficit reduction since sequestration was included in the Budget Control Act last year as a punitive measure.¶ The week’s events in Congress only entrenched the parties’ ideological disagreements.

## Link

### Mandates Overview

#### 1. Big win is key to cuts – If Obama only captures a minor victory, he won’t have coattails to move his defense cuts through Congress – The plan causes him to sweep the elections and have enough Democrats riding on his popularity to control Congress and get the defense cuts he wants to increase funding for other priorities, that’s Thompson 12

#### 2. Obama will campaign aggressively now – Those cause victory but leave him without popularity to make any policy changes

National Journal, 7-19-12, [“The Upside Down Smile,” Major Garrett, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/president-obama-as-pit-bull-20120719>] E. Liu

Doing so is harsh, partisan, and unforgiving—precisely the kind of politics that Obama previously denounced. But some Democrats blame Romney as much as Obama for making the attacks stick so easily. “Remember, this campaign looks tough and negative because the Romney campaign has been so incompetent,” said a top Democratic ad strategist. “There is no muscularity to their response. So it looks like the clubbing of a harp seal.”¶ As for the elasticity of Obama’s likability, Democrats are convinced that there’s no snapping it, that Obama can be as harsh as he needs and survive virtually unscathed. They do acknowledge private fears that if the economic news continues to darken, Obama’s record may prove more disqualifying than the seeds of doubt they plant about Romney.¶ Right now, polling and focus groups support that theory. Obama’s approval rating and likability have not suffered so far. Congress, especially Republicans, register historically low approval ratings. Top advisers say that Obama has weathered the real storms of the recession and three consecutive summers of underwhelming job growth. Getting tough now, they say, just shows Obama’s grit, something worried voters want to see during times of woe.¶ And yet. Even if a scorched-earth campaign bent on crippling Romney’s credibility yields a victory, Obama is almost sure to encounter a new Congress with a shrunken popular-vote mandate, an even more narrowly divided Senate, and a House majority even more ideologically antagonistic than it is now (if that is possible). “It’s a mess,” a senior House Democratic aide said. “I don’t know that there’s any way to predict how we get anything done in the next four years.”¶ Even so, most Democrats are delighted with Obama’s newfound taste for the jugular, one that many say was woefully AWOL during scrapes with Republicans over extending the Bush tax cuts in 2010 or the debt-ceiling showdown in 2011.¶ Lawmakers know that a dizzying array of difficult issues with long political fangs await them after the election: more than a trillion dollars in across-the-board spending cuts over the next decade; the expiration of tax cuts on marginal rates, payroll, dividends, and capital gains; and Medicare doctor reimbursements. Will a divisive campaign fought over Romney’s Bain terrain and 1040 forms yield results in the face of such daunting tasks? Democrats say that’s secondary to victory.¶ “I don’t think the campaign will impact the sense of urgency of addressing the problems after the election,” said Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colo. “What it will affect is who wins. The campaign is going to be scorched earth on both sides. The difference is Obama will still be president.”¶ Top Obama advisers say that the president has no choice but to trade on his likability; preserving it in a losing effort would amount to political malpractice. “Political capital comes from strength,” a top campaign adviser said. “If Obama wins and wins big enough, he’ll have the political strength to push things through. If he wins but is perceived as weak, then the Republicans will block everything he wants to do and he’ll be a four-year lame duck.”¶ Right now, Obama’s team will take any victory, even the narrowest kind that leaves much of Obama’s old persona bleached and battered. Why? Without victory, there is no governing. As Vince Lombardi said: “Show me a good loser, and I’ll show you a loser.” ¶

#### 3. Big Obama win is key to Congressional gains that facilitates his agenda

Eleanor Clift, contributing editor for Newsweek, 12-23-11, [“Will a Reelected President Obama Face More Gridlock in 2013?,” The Daily Beast, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/12/26/will-a-reelected-president-obama-face-more-gridlock-in-2013.html>] E. Liu

President Obama may have slightly boosted his reelection chances by outmaneuvering the Republicans on the payroll-tax-cut extension. But after a year of Beltway paralysis, that deal simply preserves the status quo for a mere two months—the latest sign of the capital’s utter dysfunction.¶ ¶ So is there any reason to believe that Obama would fare better in a second term?¶ More of the same is not appealing. Yet for Obama to govern with any degree of success, he would need either a big electoral upset—with Democrats regaining the House and maintaining a nominal hold on the Senate—or a chastened Republican Party, newly open to cooperation and willing to set aside the all-or-nothing brinkmanship that has defined its strategy. ¶ The prospect of four more years of gridlock while Obama looks on from the sidelines will hardly energize voters already disappointed by the president’s performance. For now, Obama is benefiting by standing apart from an institution whose approval rating is 11 percent, but mastering the legislative process is a big part of the job of being president, and while Obama squeezed major legislation through Congress in his first two years, this last year has been a disaster all around.¶ ¶ “Unless Democrats win a big victory in Congress, it’s hard to see how a second term would be any better,” says Jack Pitney, an American-government professor at Claremont McKenna College. “Second terms never are.” Pitney was a congressional staffer on the Republican side in 1985, and finds the aftermath of President Reagan’s reelection instructive. “Even though Reagan had won a huge mandate (carrying 49 states), it didn’t translate into much legislative success, with the important exception of tax reform.” Reagan faced a Democratic House and a Republican Senate, a mirror image of the party divisions that frustrate Obama today.¶ Obama is more likely to win in a squeaker than with a Reagan-sized mandate. “You might say if the election of 2008 didn’t persuade Republicans to go along with the majority, why would a narrow Obama victory in 2012 have a better effect?” asks William Galston, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. If the president couldn’t quell fractious lawmakers when he had a 70 percent approval rating and a big electoral mandate, why would he be any more effective in dealing with Congress after a hard-fought reelection campaign in which the GOP has a better than even chance to capture control of the Senate, and keep its hold on the House?¶ Yet in politics, as in life, things rarely turn out as predicted. Unless a major backlash against the GOP restores Democratic primacy in the House and maintains the Democratic Senate, a unified Republican Congress might not be such a bad thing from Obama’s perspective, says Galston. “They would be co-owners of the government, and if they want to get the White House [in 2016] they’ve got to persuade the people they can say yes as well as no.” Given a truly divided government, Galston argues there could be greater cooperation between the Democratic White House and the Republican Congress. That would echo the Clinton presidency when the GOP Congress, led by Speaker Newt Gingrich, served up welfare reform and a balanced budget for Clinton to sign.

#### 4. Congressional balances are on the brink now – A big presidential victory is key to large shifts

Kenneth Silber, senior editor of Research magazine, 5-12, [“The Next Congress,” Research & Research, Lexis] E. Liu

This year's congressional elections hold considerable potential to reshuffle power on Capitol Hill. Neither the Democratic majority in the Senate nor the Republican majority in the House has a secure grip on control of its respective institution. For the financial sector, the stakes include the future of the Dodd-Frank regulatory framework and the composition of the key committees overseeing financial services industries.¶ Congress, indeed, is one of the few institutions rivaling Wall Street in unpopularity at present. An April average of polls tracked by the website Real Clear Politics showed job disapproval ratings for Congress at 78% and approval ratings at 14%.¶ Remarkably, even this dismal public assessment was a slight improvement over polling results earlier in 2012 and in the last five months of 2011, which tended to put congressional disapproval ratings in the low 80s. Prior to August of last year, those negatives had been fluctuating in the 60s and 70s.¶ Last summer's debt ceiling conflict appears to have been an important factor in souring the public about Congress. However, the upswing in negatives continued after a compromise agreement was passed in early August, which suggests that both the standoff and the compromise irritated significant portions of the public.¶ Against this backdrop of widespread popular disenchantment, the two major parties are seeking to protect majorities that could prove fragile. In the Senate, the Democrats currently have a de facto 53-47 majority (two of those seats are held by independents who are part of the Democratic caucus). This year, 23 of those seats are up for election. Senate Republicans, by contrast, have only 10 seats at risk in November.¶ In the House, the GOP now holds 242 seats, and so would need to lose 25 in order to fall short of the 218 needed for a majority. Although many analysts have argued that a shift of that magnitude is unlikely this year, it would hardly be unprecedented; the Democrats lost 63 House seats in 2010. House Speaker John Boehner recently caused a stir by stating there is a "one-in-three chance" of the Democrats winning back the chamber.¶ National Tides¶ The presidential race promises to be a big factor in how the congressional races turn out. A victor at the top of the ticket might have "coattails" on which legislative candidates can ride. One concern expressed by Boehner was that Republican House candidates might fare poorly in "orphan districts," areas where GOP turnout may be weakened since they're in states that President Obama can be confident of winning.

### Demographic Surprise Link

#### Severe GoP weakness with minorities causes centrism and agenda passage

Ryan Lizza, Washington Correspondent for The New Yorker magazine, where he covers the White House, nominated for a National Magazine Award, The New Republic senior editor, 6-18-12, [“The Second Term,” The New Yorker,

<http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=al>] E. Liu

One of the lessons from “Mandate Politics” is that the magnitude of a victory is not as important as defying expectations. Republicans won’t coöperate with Obama simply because he’s won, just as Bush’s 2004 reëlection did nothing to move Democrats. But if the 2012 results reveal that the G.O.P.’s weakness among minority voters, especially Hispanics, is dire, political opportunities that seem unlikely today could quickly become conventional wisdom after November. Romney understands this. “We have to get Hispanic voters to vote for our party,” he recently said at a private fund-raiser, unaware that reporters could hear him. Failure to do so “spells doom for us,” Romney said. A rule that holds up quite well in American politics is that the longer a party remains out of power the more moderate it becomes.

### Control of Congress Key to Agenda

#### Control of congress is key to presidential effectiveness

Kenneth T. Walsh, chief White House correspondent for U.S. News & World Report, 3-29-12, [“Obama Should Not Count on Second-Term 'Flexibility',” <http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/Ken-Walshs-Washington/2012/03/29/obama-should-not-count-on-second-term-flexibility>] E. Liu

There's a fundamental flaw in President Obama's assessment that he would have a lot more room to negotiate with the Russians on missile defense and nuclear policy in a second term than he does now.¶ Historians and political scientists say he may not have as much latitude as he thinks. Newly re-elected presidents generally enjoy a bit of a honeymoon at the start of a second term, maybe about eight months to a year. But after that, a president's effectiveness dims as members of Congress go their own way and treat him as a lame duck, and as official Washington and other world leaders begin looking ahead to his successor.¶ In Obama's case, his effectiveness will depend heavily on who controls Congress, which is up for grabs in November. If the Republicans hold onto their current House majority and take over the Senate, it would severely limit Obama's options and perhaps lead to an extended period of stalemate.

### Big Win Key to Coattails

#### Senate and presidential races are linked

David Paul Kuhn, Chief Political Correspondent for RealClearPolitics, 3-4-12, [“It's Absurd to Think Obama Has Already Won,” http://www.realclearpolitics.com/printpage/?url=http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2012/03/04/its\_absurd\_to\_think\_obama\_has\_already\_won\_romney\_george\_will\_goldwater\_113359-full.html] E. Liu

George Will posits that the GOP should focus on congressional elections. But challenging an incumbent can reduce his coattails. Modern presidential races can rarely be divorced from Senate contests. Since FDR, no incumbent has also won re-election while losing more than two Senate seats. Republicans need four seats to win back the upper chamber. Republicans will make a race of 2012 because they must.¶ We cannot yet know how much of Obama’s 2008 coalition will return to him in this race. His historic gains in 2008 came after the market crash. Those gains were gone as the 2010 midterm election neared. Obama suffered historic losses among whites and independents. He's gained some ground since. It’s still a long way back.

#### Presidential and Congressional races overlap – Turnout spills over

Roll Call, covered Congress since 1955, 11-10-11, [“2012 Battleground: Presidential Coattails,” Christina Bellantoni, <http://www.rollcall.com/features/Election-Preview_2011/election/2012-battleground-presidential-coattails-210226-1.html>] E. Liu

It’s not just Senate Democrats playing defense across the 2012 map — President Barack Obama’s team will spend millions on a wide playing field of states the Democrat won in 2008.¶ Several of those states also have competitive Senate and House contests that will generate tons of attention. That means massive coordinated campaigns from both parties are likely to flood the airwaves with ads and swarm the streets with volunteers.¶ Presidential coattails often become a factor in House races, and both parties are counting on the elevated turnout of a presidential cycle to help them in marquee matchups.¶ Here’s a look at the 2012 battleground’s hottest spots, with a focus on states where the presidential race will overlap with the fight for control of Congress.

#### Obama win is crucial to coattail senators in key swing states – Virginia proves

The Roanoke Times (Virginia), 6-13-12, [“Senate showdown on national radar,” Michael Sluss, Lexis] E. Liu

KEYS TO THE RACE The Senate race coincides with a presidential campaign that is running full tilt in Virginia, a key battleground state. Allen could benefit if voter anxieties about the economy and Obama's leadership transfer to Kaine, who is not backing away from the president. Kaine argues that Allen supported policies that tanked the economy. Kaine also is making a concerted effort to appeal to female voters in a year when issues such as pay equity and abortion rights have stirred national debates. \ WHAT THE PUNDITS SAY n "This will be an important race in the ultimate result for control of the Senate, just as Allen-Webb was so crucial to that in 2006. This time Republicans want to take control, and Virginia is certainly one of the states they have on their list." - Bob Holsworth, former Virginia Commonwealth University professor and state veteran political analyst n "I think they'll both have plenty of money; they'll spend what they need to spend and the race won't turn on who spends a couple hundred thousand more than the other one. It'll turn on the presidential race. I think it's mainly coattail. ... If Obama wins Virginia, then Kaine is almost certain to win the Senate seat." - Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia Center for Politics

### Popularity Key to Coattails

#### Strong economy for the president benefits Congressional democrats

Environment and Energy Daily, 3-14-12, [“CAMPAIGN 2012: Grand Canyon mining controversy could affect Ariz. Senate race,” Manuel Quinones, E&E reporter, Lexis] E. Liu

Merrill, who is now a senior researcher at Arizona State's Morrison Institute for Public Policy, said it could make a difference for the Senate race to coincide with the presidential election, especially if the economy continues improving.¶ "That will tend to benefit Democrats a little bit more than normal," he said, adding that contrary to popular wisdom, "the higher the turnout, the electorate in Arizona is fairly moderate."¶ Obama lost Arizona by 9 points in 2008, when Arizona Sen. John McCain was the Republican nominee. Some Democrats believe Obama has a chance to win the state this time around without a hometown favorite leading the GOP ticket.¶ Speaking of the race to replace Kyl, Dean Debnam, president of Public Policy Polling, said, "Democrats could keep control of the Senate if they take this seat, but it'll be an uphill climb, even with Obama's coattails."¶ In contrast to Flake, who was first elected to Congress in 2000, the Democratic candidates are not well known. The PPP survey gave Bivens a 5 percent favorability rating, compared to 13 percent for Carmona. Still, the pollsters noted that Carmona's favorability rating has gone down. Many voters remain undecided about both candidates.¶ Despite both trailing Flake, Carmona is often seen as the more moderate and electable of the two Democrats. And his Puerto Rican ancestry could help him with Hispanic voters in the state.¶ A high school dropout who grew up in New York City, Carmona entered the military, served in Vietnam and went back to school, eventually earning a medical degree. He served as surgeon general under President George W. Bush, and both parties have tried to recruit him to run for public office since then.¶ "I think he's the real deal from everyone I know who has talked to him," Merrill said. "He's pretty charismatic; he's got an interesting story."

### Key to Coattails – Economy Key

#### Continued strength in the economy is key to Obama’s win and Democratic house on coattails

The Hill, 3-8-12, [“Hoyer: Obama coattails offer ‘reasonably good’ chance of Dem House majority,” <http://thehill.com/homenews/house/215089-rep-hoyer-with-obamas-help-dems-will-take-back-house>] E. Liu

Riding President Obama’s coattails, Democrats will win control of the House in November, Minority Whip Steny Hoyer predicted Thursday.¶ The Maryland Democrat said Obama’s numbers have surged as the economy improves, while congressional Republicans are in “disarray” and Mitt Romney — the leading GOP presidential contender — is “a wounded candidate” after a grueling primary contest that still hasn’t ended. ¶ ¶ “Combine all that together and I think our chances are reasonably good that we can take back the House,” Hoyer told reporters Thursday during a roundtable discussion in his Capitol office. ¶ “And if the economy continues to perform as it’s performed, I think we will take back the House.”¶ The comments reflect a rising optimism among Democratic leaders that winning the lower chamber is in their grasp after just two years in the wilderness. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has vowed to retake the House this year, and Rep. Steve Israel (N.Y.), chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, said recently that the race for House control will be “razor-close.”¶ They have a tough road ahead. After winning the House majority in 2006, Democrats were walloped at the polls in 2010, losing 63 seats and sending the gavel back to the Republicans. To retake the lower chamber, Democrats would need to steal at least 26 seats from the GOP in November. ¶ The Cook Political Report, an election handicapper, said Thursday that 33 Republican seats are threatened, versus 21 seats currently held by Democrats. If all of those seats flipped, the Democrats would pick up only 12 seats — well short of the wave they’d need to retake the chamber.¶ Still, the daunting numbers haven’t prevented Democratic leaders from rallying their troops with optimistic predictions. Hoyer argued Thursday that the cards were stacked against Democrats in 2010, when the economy was much worse and Obama wasn’t on the ticket.

## Impact

### Impact Overview

#### 1. Sequestration cuts decimate hegemony by undermining readiness, force structure and alliances – Those are key to preserve stability in the face of challengers and threats coming now including world wars and chaos in East and Southwest Asia that risk nuclear weapons use and proliferation, that’s Foreign Policy Initiative et al 11

### Goldilocks Trick – Romney Bad

#### The link turn does not make a mandate smaller – Obama is winning by a hair now but the plan is unpopular and causes him to lose – Here’s our impact to Romney winning – Both the link and the link turn have an impact for the neg

#### It leads to China bashing --- results in a trade war

**Palmer**, 3/27/**2012** (Doug, Romney would squeeze China on currency manipulation-adviser, p. http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/28/us-usa-romney-china-idUSBRE82Q0ZS20120328)

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney is looking at ways to increase pressure on China over what he sees as currency manipulation and unfair subsidy practices, a Romney campaign adviser said on Tuesday. "I think he wants to maximize the pressure," Grant Aldonas, a former undersecretary of commerce for international trade, said at a symposium on the future of U.S. manufacturing. Aldonas served at the Commerce Department under Republican President George W. Bush. Romney, the front-runner in the Republican race to challenge President Barack Obama for the White House in November, has promised if elected he would quickly label China a currency manipulator, something the Obama administration has six times declined to do. That would set the stage, under Romney's plan, for the United States to impose countervailing duties on Chinese goods to offset the advantage of what many consider to be China's undervalued currency. Last year, the Democratic-controlled Senate passed legislation to do essentially the same thing. However, the measure has stalled in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, where leaders say they fear it could start a trade war, and the Obama administration has not pushed for a House vote on the currency bill. The U.S. Treasury Department on April 15 faces a semi-annual deadline to declare whether any country is manipulating its currency for an unfair trade advantage. The department, under both Democratic and Republican administrations, has not cited any country since 1994, when China was last named. Asked if Romney was serious about declaring China a currency manipulator, Aldonas answered: "He is."

#### Trade war is key internal link to China war – Protectionism causes it and commerce solves it

Ivan Eland, Senior Fellow and Director of the Center on Peace & Liberty at The Independent Institute, 5-31-05, [“Avoid Threatening China Over Its Currency,” Independent Institute, <http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=1515>]

Some senators are already threatening to raise tariffs against Chinese goods unless China raises the value of the yuan. And according to the Financial Times, the Bush administration is privately passing along that threat to the Chinese, warning that the value of the yuan must be raised at least 10 percent to avoid that protectionist anger in Congress. (The 10 percent figure is an example of government bureaucrats inventing an arbitrary number and applying it to complex international currency markets.) Thus, government interference in the international marketplace can ultimately lead to a trade war among nations. In the 1930s, the Smoot-Hawley legislation that increased tariffs in the United States was followed by retaliation from other nations. Such protectionism deepened the worldwide depression, and that global economic crisis was a contributing factor to the causes of World War II. The United States has enough tension with a nuclear-armed China over the Taiwan issue and dual military buildups without interjecting a trade war into the mix. In fact, a healthy level of international commerce between the two countries could create a peace lobby in each nation and a greater incentive to avoid military confrontation.

#### China war escalates and goes nuclear

Lee J. Hunkovic **--** professor at American Military University, 09, [“The Chinese-Taiwanese Conflict Possible Futures of a Confrontation between China, Taiwan and the United States of America”, American Military University, p.54]

A war between China, Taiwan and the United States has the potential to escalate into a nuclear conflict and a third world war, therefore, many countries other than the primary actors could be affected by such a conflict, including Japan, both Koreas, Russia, Australia, India and Great Britain, if they were drawn into the war, as well as all other countries in the world that participate in the global economy, in which the United States and China are the two most dominant members. If China were able to successfully annex Taiwan, the possibility exists that they could then plan to attack Japan and begin a policy of aggressive expansionism in East and Southeast Asia, as well as the Pacific and even into India, which could in turn create an international standoff and deployment of military forces to contain the threat. In any case, if China and the United States engage in a full-scale conflict, there are few countries in the world that will not be economically and/or militarily affected by it. However, China, Taiwan and United States are the primary actors in this scenario, whose actions will determine its eventual outcome, therefore, other countries will not be considered in this study.

### Goldilocks Trick – Romney Mandate Bad

#### The link turn does not make a mandate smaller – Their uniqueness argument is that Romney is winning now but the plan is unpopular, giving him a big win – He’s our impact to a Romney mandate victory – Both the link and the link turn have an impact for the neg

#### Big Romney win generates coattails and enough votes to crush healthcare reform

Walter Frick, BostInno Business Editor, 7-2-12, [“Obamacare’s Next Great Challenge? A Former Governor from Massachusetts,” BostInno, Boston Tech Website, ¶ <http://bostinno.com/2012/07/02/obamacares-next-great-challenge-a-former-governor-from-massachusetts/>] E. Liu

The 2010 healthcare reform bill — often referred to as Obamacare — cleared a major hurdle last week when the Supreme Court upheld its constitutionality 5-4. So is the law safe? Not yet.¶ Oddly enough, its next challenge comes from a man who helped set the reform effort in motion by architecting a similar bill here in Massachusetts. That man is, of course, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney.¶ Romney’s campaign released a statement immediately following the ruling (read it in full here) saying:¶ What the court did not do on its last day in session, I will do on my first day if elected president of the United States. And that is I will act to repeal Obamacare.¶ As Sarah Kliff reported last week at The Washington Post, that’s hardly an idle threat:¶ Former governor Mitt Romney (R) has repeatedly pledged that, if elected, he would repeal Obamacare on his first day in office. While Congressional procedure pretty much makes that impossible, there is still a lot a Republican president could do to impede or slow the implementation of the Affordable Care Act – especially if he happens to be working with a Republican-controlled Congress.¶ Except it gets even more interesting. Whereas, it has previously seemed that Romney would need 60 votes in the Senate to overcome a filibuster in order to repeal the bill, there’s now talk on both sides of the aisle that, thanks to Chief Justice Roberts’ decision to uphold the individual mandate as a tax, the Senate could use a process known as “reconciliation” to repeal the bill with only 50 votes, a much more plausible scenario for Republicans to reach in the fall.¶ In other words, if Romney prevails in November and Republicans win big on his coattails, Obamacare could be toast.

#### Healthcare repeal destroys the health insurance industry

New York Magazine, 10/12/11, “Will Romney be able to carry out his promise to screw the uninsured?” News and Features

http://nymag.com/daily/intel/2011/10/will\_romney\_be\_able\_to\_carry\_o.html

The most significant long-term outcome of last night’s Republican debate is that Mitt Romney, the likely nominee, committed himself to using budget reconciliation to repeal the Affordable Care Act, thus evading a filibuster: I also say we have to repeal Obamacare, and I will do that on day two, with the reconciliation bill, because as you know, it was passed by reconciliation, 51 votes. This, as Dave Weigel has noted, is a crucial commitment, setting up what will probably be the biggest policy fight of a prospective Romney presidency. But, though Republicans have long been touting this option, it may not be so easy to pull off. First, let me explain what this means. Budget reconciliation is a process in Congress to move budgets. It’s become crucial because it can’t be filibustered, and therefore it can pass with a majority vote in both houses of Congress. Romney says the Affordable Care Act was passed this way, though that’s not actually true. The law passed through the Senate with 60 votes, overcoming a filibuster. Later, both houses used reconciliation to iron out some budget-related differences between the House and Senate versions of the law. Conservatives responded with apoplexy — it was a vile abuse of procedure, a dastardly exploitation of the suddenly sacred principles of budgetary procedure. (Here’s some sample fulmination from National Review, the Heritage Foundation, and Jonah Goldberg, who fumed that Democrats “won dirty.” Romney himself called it “neo-monarchy.” I don’t think that reversing this once-sacred principle will pose even the slightest obstacle to Republicans. (Neo-monarchy, bad. Neo-neo-monarchy, good!) But practical problems may arise. The first problem is that a President Romney would probably also need to use budget reconciliation to extend the Bush tax cuts. The cuts expire at the end of 2012, and, barring a budget deal under the Obama administration, Romney would be looking to extend those low, low tax rates. His best leverage to do so would be to use reconciliation — otherwise he’d need a bunch of Democratic senators to get to 60 votes. Now, Romney could (and probably would) try to combine the two measures into one big bill to cut taxes and repeal health care reform. But the more policy changes you load onto one bill, the bigger the risk of a defection making it all topple over. The second and larger problem is that the Affordable Care Act can’t be completely repealed by reconciliation. Remember, reconciliation can only be used for budget-related changes. The Affordable Care Act included lots of non-budget provisions. In particular, it used both regulation and spending to cover people who lack health insurance. You basically have three categories of uninsured. You have people who are just too poor to afford a regular health insurance plan and don’t get one through their job. You have people who might be able to afford a regular health insurance plan, but have a preexisting medical condition, or perhaps a family member with one, so insurers either won’t cover them at all or will only sell them a plan at exorbitant prices. Then you have generally healthy people who could afford a plan but choose to skip out on it The Affordable Care Act covered those groups in different ways. The poor people just got added onto Medicaid. The sick people had a more complex solution. The Act regulated insurers, so they have to charge everybody the same rate, poor and sick alike. This would create an incentive for even more healthy people to flee the system — why share costs with sick people when you’re healthy? — so the law added a mandate that everybody buy insurance, plus cost subsidies for people who’d have trouble affording a private plan. That’s the same system Romney used in Massachusetts, and was the basis for the Affordable Care Act. Now, if Romney wants to use reconciliation to screw poor uninsured people, he can. Medicaid is a spending program, and he can use a budget bill to cut it. But screwing the non-poor uninsured will be trickier. Regulations forbidding insurers from discriminating against sick people will still be on the books, and you can’t eliminate a regulation with a budget reconciliation bill. If they eliminate the subsidies but leave the regulations in place, you’ll have insurers required to sell policies to people who are sick, but no way to bring healthy people into the risk pool. A few states tried that. It created a cost spiral that collapsed the whole market. Romney would end up screwing the health insurance industry, which is much harder to do, politically, than screwing the uninsured. The industry has lobbyists. Those lobbyists were happy to preserve the old system, which screwed all the uninsured and none of the insurance companies. They were fine with the Obama plan that screwed none of the uninsured and none of the the insurance firms. They're not going to be happy about creating a system that screws some of the uninsured and all of the insurance companies. Now, there is a proviso where this gets complicated. (Okay, even more complicated.) The only thing keeping a party from using reconciliation to pass non-budget things is the Senate parliamentarian. By social custom, the parliamentarian’s rules are always followed. When he struck some parts from the Democrats’ reconciliation bill, they abided his ruling. But Republicans could decide to use reconciliation to repeal the entire Affordable Care Act, and when the parliamentarian rules against them, simply overrule him. That would be a huge, drastic change — essentially it would end the filibuster. That would be a good thing, long-term, and it would also make it easier for Democrats to one day pass health care reform again. (If it weren’t for the filibuster, health care reform would have passed long, long before Obama came along.) But that kind of cultural change might worry Senate Republicans, who cling to the filibuster and other byways of the Senate. And it would be a controversial way for Romney to start his presidency, probably ending any hope of further bipartisan cooperation.

#### Health insurance is critical to the economy – Empirically linked with growth and decline

Rexford Abaidoo, PhD, Assistant Professor of Business Administration and Quantitative methods at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Teaching areas include corporate finance, business statistics, scientific methods in business and computer application in business. Research mainly focuses on dynamics of economic growth and recovery, international finance and competitiveness and consumer behavior, 10-21-11, [“Insurance Industry Is Key In The Economic Recovery And Growth Process,” Clute Institute for Academic Research, <http://insurancenewsnet.com/article.aspx?id=289908&type=lifehealth>] E. Liu

The relative ease with which firms and establishments in the finance, insurance and real estate sectors succumbed to the economic shock of 2008, brought into question the presumed resilience of firms in these key sectors to macroeconomic shocks. The ongoing weak recovery trend continues to heighten concerns about the ability of key sectors of the US economy to propel the economy back onto a steady and sustained growth trajectory after a major shock. According to the Congressional Research Service, ongoing economic recovery process started in mid 2009 after the initial collapse brought about by the 2008 recession. Most analysts at the time (beginning of the third quarter of 2009) expected and projected some semblance of füll recovery by the first quarter of 20 1 1 . However, the recovery process, as evidenced by key economic indicators, has been painfully slow compared to similar rebound conditions characterizing other developed economies around the world. The German and the Canadian economies have for instance made relatively faster progress towards full economic recovery than the US economy. Major macroeconomic indicators still show the US economy is not fully on an upward swing mode toward full recovery anytime soon. Job growth numbers have fluctuated widely since the latter part of 2009. Moderate growth occurring among firms in some sectors of the economy continues to be interrupted by slowdown in other key sectors of the economy. Fluctuations in unemployment numbers and productivity levels, wavering consumer confidence indicators, etc continue to be a feature characterizing the ongoing recovery. With the manufacturing sub-sector of the US economy still reeling from massive outsourcing and ever-expanding potential of the Chinese manufacturing sector, the finance, insurance and real estate sub-sectors were perceived by some analysts as areas where the United States could still maintain its competitive edge. However, with the onset of the 2008 recession and the decimation of the finance and insurance sector which followed, most economists are now skeptical about the finance and insurance sectors' ability to sustain the economy's competitive edge through accelerated recovery toward pre-2007-2008 recession growth trajectory. Most leading indicators currently point to appreciable but fluctuating growth conditions among key sectors of the US economy. No particular sector, however, has emerged as the dominant sector with sustained growth trend to lead the way toward the long awaited full economic recovery. Quarterly sector growth data from Bureau of Economic Analysis documents continued significant growth trend among various sectors and sub-sectors of the economy. This trend has however been gravely unreliable, making it very difficult to point to a single sector of the economy as the engine driving the ongoing recovery process. Sector specific contribution to GDP growth indicators from early part of 2010 for instance, show that growth trend among key economic sectors lag behind levels needed to ensure acceleration towards full economic recovery. Despite these challenges in the recovery process across sectors of the US economy, growth trend among firms in the finance and insurance sectors seems to have emerged as the leading barometer by which most analysts and the average American measures the pace of the ongoing economic recovery. This study estimates this potential to significantly impact economic recovery by key sectors and sub-sector of the US economy after a major shock with the finance and insurance sectors as the focus. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), weakening economic activity in the finance and insurance industry accounted for about half of the stagnation in economic activity in 2007 prior to the economic collapse. Systemic stagnation in activities within the industry, according to the Bureau's briefings, generated conditions which precipitated and ultimately culminated in the 2008 recession. Available data on the industry's contributions to real gross domestic product (GDP) growth from the Bureau (BEA) show that decline in growth among firms in the finance and insurance sector contributed significantly to the 2008 recession. For instance, BEA data show that the finance and insurance sectors' value-added over the period - a measure of the sectors' contribution to GDP fell 0.3 percent in 2007 after rising 9.8 percent in 2006. The data also documents that other sectors of the economy did not fair better during the same period For instance, the construction industry's valueadded (contribution to GDP) declined 12.1 percent in 2007 prior to the economic downturn, after falling 6.0 percent in 2006. Additionally, the real estate, rental and leasing sector's contribution to GDP also slowed to 2.1 percent in 2007 from 3.4 percent growth in 2006. In the mining sector, value addition to GDP grew less than 0.1 percent in 2007 after recording 6.1 percent growth in 2006. These growth dynamics highlights conditions which persisted prior to the onset of what became one of the worse economic conditions witnessed in US economic history. These trends further lends credence to the view that the economic collapse of 2008 was set in motion in part by major decline in growth among firms in key sectors of the US economy.

#### Economic collapse causes global nuclear war

Cesare Merlini, nonresident senior fellow at the Center on the United States and Europe, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Italian Institute for International Affairs (IAI) in Rome, expert in transatlantic relations, European integration and nuclear non-proliferation, with particular focus on nuclear science and technology, April–May 2011, “A Post-Secular World?,” Survival, vol. 53 no. 2, pp. 124, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/articles/2011/04\_international\_relations\_merlini/04\_international\_relations\_merlini.pdf

Two neatly opposed scenarios for the future of the world order illustrate the range of possibilities, albeit at the risk of oversimplification. The first scenario entails the premature crumbling of the post-Westphalian system. One or more of the acute tensions apparent today evolves into an open and traditional conflict between states, perhaps even involving the use of nuclear weapons. The crisis might be triggered by a collapse of the global economic and financial system, the vulnerability of which we have just experienced, and the prospect of a second Great Depression, with consequences for peace and democracy similar to those of the first. Whatever the trigger, the unlimited exercise of national sovereignty, exclusive self-interest and rejection of outside interference would likely be amplified, emptying, perhaps entirely, half-full glass of multilateralism, including the UN and the European Union. Many of the more likely conflicts, such as between Israel and Iran or India and Pakistan, have potential religious dimensions. Short of war, tensions such as those related to immigration might become unbearable. Familiar issues of creed and identity could be exacerbated. One way or another, the secular rational approach would be sidestepped by a return to theocratic absolutes, competing or converging with secular absolutes such as unbridled nationalism.

### Proliferation – Terminal

**Prolif causes nuke war, deterrence theory doesn’t solve**

**Evans & Kawaguchi 9** —President of the International Crisis Group & Former Foreign Minister of Japan, Co-chair of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament and Professorial fellow in the School of Social and Political Sciences @ University of Melbourne AND Kawaguchi Co-chair of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (Gareth AND Yoriko, “Eliminating Nuclear Threats: A Practical Agenda for Global Policymakers,” International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament Report, December)

3.1 Ensuring that no new states join the ranks of those already nucleararmed must continue to be one of the world’s top international security priorities. Every new nuclear-armed state will add significantly to the inherent risks – of accident or miscalculation as well as deliberate use – involved in any possession of these weapons, and potentially encourage more states to acquire nuclear weapons to avoid being left behind. any scramble for nuclear capabilities is bound to generate severe instability in bilateral, regional and international relations. The carefully worked checks and balances of interstate relations will come under severe stress. There will be enhanced fears of nuclear blackmail, and of irresponsible and unpredictable leadership behaviour. 3.2 in conditions of inadequate command and control systems, absence of confidence building measures and multiple agencies in the nuclear weapons chain of authority, the possibility of an accidental or maverick usage of nuclear weapons will remain high. Unpredictable elements of risk and reward will impact on decision making processes. The dangers are compounded if the new and aspiring nuclear weapons states have, as is likely to be the case, ongoing inter-state disputes with ideological, territorial, historical – and for all those reasons, strongly emotive – dimensions. 3.3 The transitional period is likely to be most dangerous of all, with the arrival of nuclear weapons tending to be accompanied by sabre rattling and competitive nuclear chauvinism. For example, as between Pakistan and india a degree of stability might have now evolved, but 1998–2002 was a period of disturbingly fragile interstate relations. Command and control and risk management of nuclear weapons takes time to evolve. Military and political leadership in new nuclear-armed states need time to learn and implement credible safety and security systems. The risks of nuclear accidents and the possibility of nuclear action through inadequate crisis control mechanisms are very high in such circumstances. if this is coupled with political instability in such states, the risks escalate again. Where such countries are beset with internal stresses and fundamentalist groups with trans-national agendas, the risk of nuclear weapons or fissile material coming into possession of non-state actors cannot be ignored. 32 eliminatinG nuclear threats 3.4 The action–reaction cycle of nations on high alerts, of military deployments, threats and counter threats of military action, have all been witnessed in the Korean peninsula with unpredictable behavioural patterns driving interstate relations. The impact of a proliferation breakout in the Middle East would be much wider in scope and make stability management extraordinarily difficult. Whatever the chances of “stable deterrence” prevailing in a Cold War or india–Pakistan setting, the prospects are significantly less in a regional setting with multiple nuclear power centres divided by multiple and cross-cutting sources of conflict.

### Sequestration – Economy

#### Sequestration crushes the recovery – Recovery, employment, long-term growth and economic leadership

Arnold Punaro, Chief Executive Officer of the Punaro Group, LLC, a Washington based firm, senior corporate official responsible for Science Applications International Corporation, Secretary of Defense Panetta to chair the newly constituted Reserve Forces Policy Boar, et al., Micah ¶ Edmond, et al. al., 6-12, [“ Indefensible: The ¶ Sequester’s Mechanics ¶ and Adverse Effects ¶ on National and ¶ Economic Security,” Task Force on Defense Budget and Strategy | White Paper, <http://bipartisanpolicy.org/library/report/sequester>] E. Liu

The economy is mired in a lackluster recovery from the largest recession since the Great ¶ Depression. Employment growth has slowed over the past two months, with only 73,000 ¶ new jobs added per month, sending a stark signal that this country’s economic recovery ¶ continues to fall short of what we need.19 Long-term unemployment figures remain near ¶ their record highs, economic growth remains tepid at best, and businesses continue to hold ¶ back on their investments. ¶ Thus, the government must be careful not to take actions that might stall growth and ¶ exacerbate our current struggles. Yet, the nature and immediacy of the sequester’s cuts to ¶ defense and non-defense spending – indiscriminate and by 15 and 12 percent, respectively, ¶ in FY 2013 – will do precisely that: cause harmful repercussions throughout the economy. ¶ Using CBO multipliers20 and accounting for the haphazard and overnight nature of the cuts, ¶ we estimate that the full defense and non-defense sequester will reduce GDP by roughly ¶ half a percentage point in calendar year (CY) 2013. For reference, CBO projects real GDP ¶ to grow at only 2.1 percent next year21 under a set of plausible policy assumptions.22 ¶ Moreover, this analysis implies that the sequester cuts could cost the economy more ¶ than one million jobs over two years at a time when the unemployment rate is still stuck ¶ above 8 percent.23 Everyone from Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and border patrol ¶ agents, to civilian DoD employees, to doctors, to teachers will face the axe. Further, ¶ because the federal government is much more reliant on contractors today than it was a ¶ few decades ago, a large majority of the layoffs will come from the private sector. ¶ To make things worse, the effects of the sequester are already starting to be felt in certain ¶ sectors of the economy. Government contracts expert Professor Dan Gordon24 notes that ¶ while the sequester “may look like a slow-motion train wreck to the public, industry may ¶ start to experience the impact well before January 2.” Contractors cannot assume that the ¶ sequester will be replaced and must plan ahead. ¶ Unable to plan accurately, these businesses will begin making guesses about where they ¶ think cuts will hit so that they can tighten their belts accordingly. In a highly uncertain ¶ environment, contractors will have to make personnel, investment, and other significant ¶ decisions. ¶ Given the realities of compliance with the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification ¶ (WARN) Act, however, businesses do not have the luxury of postponing some of these ¶ major decisions. The WARN Act mandates that employers with 100 or more employees ¶ provide notification 60 calendar days in advance of mass layoffs. Therefore, on November 3, ¶ only days before the election, if lawmakers still have not acted to resolve the sequester, ¶ many companies likely will begin announcing their plans to fire large numbers of workers. In ¶ fact, Booz Allen Hamilton has already declared that it is taking “a more conservative ¶ approach” to hiring in order to preempt some of the potential damage.25 ¶ The effects of this uncertainty and the sequester itself will trickle down to smaller ¶ subcontractors, many of them small veteran- and women-owned businesses, which are less ¶ able to withstand a substantial loss in revenue. Such businesses are more likely to lay off a ¶ higher percentage of their workers or worse: simply go out of business. In its latest report, ¶ CBO confirmed that the sum total of these actions will begin to have tangible consequences ¶ for the U.S. economy this year.26 The detrimental impacts will become more pronounced as ¶ months go by with no definitive action by policymakers. ¶ The arbitrariness of the FY 2013 sequester, by forcing cuts to even the most important and ¶ efficient federal programs, also has the potential to harm the nation’s long-term growth. ¶ Some of the weapons programs that sequestration delays or cancels now will have to be, in ¶ one form or another, purchased later on. As previously noted, our fleet of ships and planes ¶ is aging, with many of them already in service for longer than originally planned. We cannot ¶ rely on them for our national security indefinitely. ¶ Once new acquisition is halted, however, even if its funding is restored in future years, we ¶ cannot simply restart the programs that are designing and building the next generation of ¶ fighter jets, bombers, aircraft carriers, submarines, and communications systems. There will ¶ be significant new costs to bear. The engineers who design, the skilled workers who ¶ assemble, and the plants that produce defense products are not easily replaced. Once laid ¶ off or shuttered, they require time and money to educate, hire, train, or build. ¶ Moreover, some contractors will begin to search more aggressively for buyers of their ¶ products abroad.27 This would result in American engineering jobs being sent overseas, and ¶ new technological capabilities being delivered to other nations, potentially unfriendly ones. ¶ Heading off the economic shockwaves from the sequester will require action soon, rather ¶ than waiting for the lame duck congressional session following the November elections. ¶ While the U.S. must begin to get its fiscal house in order, and discretionary programs should ¶ not be immune from reforms, the immediacy and indiscriminate nature of these cuts ¶ threaten to derail the fragile recovery.

#### Economic collapse causes global nuclear war

Merlini, nonresident senior fellow at the Center on the United States and Europe, 11

Cesare Merlini, nonresident senior fellow at the Center on the United States and Europe, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Italian Institute for International Affairs (IAI) in Rome, expert in transatlantic relations, European integration and nuclear non-proliferation, with particular focus on nuclear science and technology, April–May 2011, “A Post-Secular World?,” Survival, vol. 53 no. 2, pp. 124, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/articles/2011/04\_international\_relations\_merlini/04\_international\_relations\_merlini.pdf

Two neatly opposed scenarios for the future of the world order illustrate the range of possibilities, albeit at the risk of oversimplification. The first scenario entails the premature crumbling of the post-Westphalian system. One or more of the acute tensions apparent today evolves into an open and traditional conflict between states, perhaps even involving the use of nuclear weapons. The crisis might be triggered by a collapse of the global economic and financial system, the vulnerability of which we have just experienced, and the prospect of a second Great Depression, with consequences for peace and democracy similar to those of the first. Whatever the trigger, the unlimited exercise of national sovereignty, exclusive self-interest and rejection of outside interference would likely be amplified, emptying, perhaps entirely, half-full glass of multilateralism, including the UN and the European Union. Many of the more likely conflicts, such as between Israel and Iran or India and Pakistan, have potential religious dimensions. Short of war, tensions such as those related to immigration might become unbearable. Familiar issues of creed and identity could be exacerbated. One way or another, the secular rational approach would be sidestepped by a return to theocratic absolutes, competing or converging with secular absolutes such as unbridled nationalism.

### Sequestration – Iranian Expansionism

#### Military strength and resources are key to deter Iran’s expansionism – That also prevents need for war

The Hill, 6-20-12, [“Sequestration will weaken US in eyes of Iran, say House Republicans,” Carlo Munoz, <http://thehill.com/blogs/defcon-hill/policy-and-strategy/233883-sequestration-will-weaken-us-in-eyes-of-iran-says-house-republicans>] E. Liu

The threat of U.S. military action to thwart Iran's secretive nuclear program holds no weight in Tehran's eyes because of the massive automatic defense budget cuts expected later this year, according to House Republicans. ¶ Republicans on the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday slammed the Obama administration over the cuts under the so-called sequestration process during a hearing on Wednesday. ¶ The cuts, according to lawmakers, will leave the United Stated ill-equipped to deliver on threats of military action against Iran, should the country acquire nuclear weapons. ¶ "You can't have it both ways," Rep. Randy Forbes (R-Va.) said on Wednesday regarding the $500 billion of looming defense cuts facing the Pentagon and the need to maintain a viable military response to Iran. ¶ The Virginia Republican also took a shot at the White House's decision to shift its military focus from the Mideast to the Pacific. ¶ That shift will drain DOD's already limited resources for U.S. forces in the Mideast from projecting the necessary military power needed to deter Iran's ongoing nuclear work. ¶ To that end, House Republicans on the defense panel pumped billions into weapons and systems that could be used in a potential conflict with Iran in its version of the fiscal 2013 defense bill. The full House approved the legislation in May¶ But Rep. Mike Turner (R-Ohio) openly questioned the administration's willingness to maintain a viable military response to Iran during Wednesday's hearing. ¶ The Ohio Republican expressed concern that the growing mentality within administration circles is that "we don't have to do anything" to check Tehran's nuclear work, adding that the sentiment coming out of the White House is that the situation will fizzle out on its own. ¶ But committee Democrats shot back at GOP claims, with Rep. Hank Johnson (D-Ga.) comparing Republican complaints on military options for Iran to the war rhetoric that led the United States into war with Iraq. ¶ GOP arguments calling for a stronger U.S. response to Iran "appears to me to have parallels with the run-up towards the invasion of Iraq, which, by the way ... the decision to go in [was] based on faulty intelligence," Johnson said. ¶ Committee ranking member Adam Smith (D-Wash.) pointed out that no viable intelligence has surfaced that Iran was seeking a nuclear weapon. ¶ "I think it was seven years ago when I first heard that Iran would have a nuclear weapon within six months. They didn't and they don't," Smith said on Wednesday. "And it's a very complicated for Iran to figure out whether or not to step across that line." ¶ Former Sen. Chuck Robb (D-Va.), now a senior defense adviser at the Bipartisan Policy Center, reiterated Republicans' stance during his testimony before the committee on Wednesday. ¶ Defense cuts under sequestration will "undermine our ability" to ward off Iran's nuclear ambitions via military might, according to Robb. ¶ "No question these [cuts] present enormous challenges" to America's efforts to prevent a nuclear Iran, he said. The White House and DOD cannot afford to "relax our guard or apparent willingness" to take military action against Iran if intelligence shows Tehran has developed a nuclear weapon. ¶ But Stephen Rademaker, a member of the policy center's National Security project, said on Wednesday that the group's concerns over the adequacy of a U.S. military response to Iran was not "a call to war."¶ "We're not calling for a military strike. We're calling for credible indications that force is in prospect," Rademaker told the committee. "Our concern is that we don't think the Iranians actually believe that."¶ Tehran has repeatedly claimed its nuclear program was focused on peaceful means, but has continued to keep its program shrouded in secrecy. ¶ Iranian negotiators have met with members of the P5+1 group — the five members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany — to find a diplomatic solution to the nuclear question. ¶ However, previous rounds of negotiations, along with ongoing talks in Moscow between the parties, have produced little results.

#### Iranian expansion causes nuclear war

Alon Ben-Meir, 07 (“Ending Iran's defiance American pressure at this time will not be taken lightly by Iranian regime”, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3361650,00.html, accessed 6/25/10)-Wey

The fact that Iran stands today able to challenge or even defy the United States in every sphere of American influence in the Middle East attests to the dismal failure of the Bush administration’s policy toward it during the last six years. Feeling emboldened and unrestrained, Tehran may, however, miscalculate the consequences of its own actions, which could precipitate a catastrophic regional war. The Bush administration has less than a year to rein in Iran’s reckless behavior if it hopes to prevent such an ominous outcome and achieve, at least, a modicum of regional stability.   By all assessments, Iran has reaped the greatest benefits from the Iraq war. The war’s consequences and the American preoccupation with it have provided Iran with an historic opportunity to establish Shiite dominance in the region while aggressively pursuing a nuclear weapons program to deter any challenge to its strategy. Tehran is fully cognizant that the successful pursuit of its regional hegemony has now become intertwined with the clout that a nuclear program bestows. Therefore, it is most unlikely that Iran will give up its nuclear ambitions at this juncture, unless it concludes that the price will be too high to bear. That is, whereas before the Iraq war Washington could deal with Iran’s nuclear program by itself, now the Bush administration must also disabuse Iran of the belief that it can achieve its regional objectives with impunity.   Thus, while the administration attempts to stem the Sunni-Shiite violence in Iraq to prevent it from engulfing other states in the region, Washington must also take a clear stand in Lebanon. Under no circumstances should Iranian-backed Hizbullah be allowed to topple the secular Lebanese government. If this were to occur, it would trigger not only a devastating civil war in Lebanon but a wider Sunni-Shiite bloody conflict. The Arab Sunni states, and especially Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan are terrified of this possible outcome. For them Lebanon may well provide the litmus test of the administration’s resolve to inhibit Tehran’s adventurism but they must be prepared to directly support US efforts.   In this regard, the Bush administration must wean Syria from Iran. This move is of paramount importance because not only could Syria end its political and logistical support for Hizbullah, but it could return Syria, which is predominantly Sunni, to the Arab-Sunni fold. Mr. Bush must realize that Damascus’s strategic interests are not compatible with Tehran’s and that the Assad regime knows only too well its future political stability and economic prosperity depends on peace with Israel and normal relations with the United States.   President Assad may talk tough and embrace militancy as a policy tool, yet he is the same president who called, more than once, for unconditional resumption of peace negotiations with Israel and was rebuffed. The stakes for the United States and its allies in the region are too high to preclude testing Syria’s real intentions, which can be ascertained only through direct talks. It is high time for the Administration to reassess its policy toward Syria and begin by abandoning its schemes of regime change in Damascus. Syria simply matters; the Administration must end its efforts to marginalize a country that can play such a pivotal role in changing the political dynamics for the better throughout the region.   Iran could plunge Mideast into nuclear conflagration Although ideally direct negotiation between the United States and Iran should be the first resort to resolve the nuclear issue, as long as Tehran does not feel seriously threatened it seems unlikely that the clergy will at this stage end the nuclear program. In possession of nuclear weapons Iran will intimidate the larger Sunni Arab states in the region, bully smaller states into submission, threaten Israel’s very existence, use oil as a political weapon to blackmail the West, and instigate regional proliferation of nuclear weapons’ programs. In short, if unchecked, Iran could plunge the Middle East into a deliberate or inadvertent nuclear conflagration.   If we take the Administration at its word that it would not tolerate a nuclear Iran and considering these regional implications, Washington is left with no choice but to warn Iran of the severe consequences of not halting its nuclear program.

### Sequestration – Naval Deterrence

#### Sequestration crushes naval funding that is key to deterrence and power projection

Phil Dunmire, national president of the Navy League of the United States, 7-18-12, [“DUNMIRE: Sequestration set to damage defense as no enemy could,” Washington Times, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jul/18/dunmire-sequestration-set-damage-defense-no-enemy-/>] E. Liu

As a maritime nation and with more than 90 percent of global commerce traveling our world’s oceans and seas, the United States is facing a serious threat. This time, the threat is not coming from pirates, rogue nations or extremists — this threat to freedom of our seas is coming from our own Congress.¶ Those in the maritime community and industry know it is our nation’s sea services — the Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps and U.S.-flagged Merchant Marine — that help ensure freedom of the seas. Many often take this for granted or may not even realize the critical role our sea services provide on a daily basis. Though the conflict in Afghanistan is drawing down, it is by no means finished.Likewise, the threats on the open seas and at critical chokepoints around the world remain ever-present. Our national command authority has committed our armed forces to a renewed focus and dominant presence in the Pacific — the world’s largest maritime domain. As our global commitments and threats have increased, our nation is facing unprecedented defense cuts through a process called sequestration that will devastate our ability to provide deterrence and power projection, upsetting the balance that makes would-be aggressors think twice before engaging with the United States. ¶ The defense and maritime industries are being jeopardized from within. When the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction failed to find a savings agreement, the Budget Control Act of 2011 mandated $487 billion in security cuts over the next 10 years and included a small but devastating provision that will trigger $1.2 trillion in automatic spending cuts, effective January 2013. An estimated $492 billion of those cuts will come from security spending in the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, the National Nuclear Security Administration and other defense- and intelligence-related programs. The bottom line is, programs related to our nation’s defense will absorb half of the sequestration costs despite being just 19 percent of the national spending budget.¶ Not only is the sheer size of those cuts — about $54 billion a year, equal to two years’ worth of all Defense Department shipbuilding and maritime systems — a massive problem, but the implementation is leaving budget planners stumped. Nobody knows how those cuts will be applied or even the exact amount. The Office of Management and Budget has issued no guidance, and the Pentagon has stated that it is not making plans for sequestration. The law requires that the cuts be distributed uniformly at the program, project and activity level across every budget account. This directive only adds to the confusion.

#### Naval deterrence prevents great power war

Conway et al 7 [James T., General, U.S. Marine Corps, Gary Roughead, Admiral, U.S. Navy, Thad W. Allen, Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard, “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower,” October, http://www.navy.mil/maritime/MaritimeStrategy.pdf]

Deter major power war**.** No other disruption is as potentially disastrous to global stability as war among major powers. Maintenance and extension of this Nation’s comparative seapower advantage is a key component of deterring major power war. While war with another great power strikes many as improbable, the near-certainty of its ruinous effects demands that it be actively deterred using all elements of national power. The expeditionary character of maritime forces—our lethality, global reach, speed, endurance, ability to overcome barriers to access, and operational agility—provide the joint commander with a range of deterrent options. We will pursue an approach to deterrence that includes a credible and scalable ability to retaliate against aggressors conventionally, unconventionally, and with nuclear forces.

**Win our Nation’s wars.** In times of war, our ability to impose local sea control, overcome challenges to access, force entry, and project and sustain power ashore, makes our maritime forces an **indispensable element** of the joint or combined force. This expeditionary advantage must be maintained because it provides joint and combined force commanders with freedom of maneuver. Reinforced by a robust sealift capability that can concentrate and sustain forces, sea control and power projection enable extended campaigns ashore.

### Sequestration – Perception Key

#### The perception of a weakened military causes global aggression and noncooepration

Jim Yardley, retired financial controller, a Vietnam veteran, 1-7-12, [“The Price of Obama's Peace Dividend Is an Increased Risk of War,” American Thinker, <http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/01/the_price_of_obamas_peace_dividend_is_an_increased_risk_of_war.html>] E. Liu

But the most significant weakness of Obama's plan is that it ignores a basic, but often underappreciated, fact. The perception and appearance of overwhelming strength will make the actual need for that same overwhelming strength unnecessary. The appearance of weakness, on the other hand, is as much an invitation to aggression as pasting a "kick me" sign to your own back.¶ Obama should realize this more than just about any other politician that has ever lived. He is acutely aware, at all times, of how he, himself, is perceived. How the electorate views him is constantly in the forefront of all his decisions. So how he could blunder by ignoring how a reduction of the readiness of U.S. military, no matter the size of the reduction, gives a perception of weakness? ¶ The United States has real enemies who will test just how much weakness there is in actuality, and compare that against their perceptions. Just like your teenage kids will push the envelope to see how much they can get away with, certain countries will attack us, refuse to cooperate with us, or threaten smaller nations in their area of interest with the casual reference to the U.S. military cutbacks. ¶ You can be sure that the foreign offices of such nations are already drafting the diplomatic communiqués that will advise these smaller nations to remember that Uncle Sam will no longer be able to protect them. Strip away all the diplomatic verbal gymnastics, and the message would be in about the same tone as one delivered by Tony Soprano to a small neighbor store: "Nice little country you have here. Be a shame if anything happened to it, now wouldn't it?"¶ Should this prove to be effective (and, historically speaking, it has worked pretty well as a power play since at least the days of Julius Caesar), these same nations would be emboldened to ever greater and more potent actions against American interests, American military and diplomatic personnel that they could reach out and touch, and even attacks on the homeland. ¶ This is the cost of the president's desire to reduce the effectiveness of our military. It may save a few dollars in the short term, but it is like the first move in a game of chess. Unless you are thinking ten moves ahead, you might just as well not play the game at all, because you will lose -- everything.

### Sequestration – Readiness – Persistent Effects

#### Sequestration compromises readiness – Reducing the industrial base means impacts are long-lasting

Brian Slattery, research assistant of defense studies at the Heritage Foundation, 7-24-12, [“Mandated Cuts Will Create “National Security Nightmare”,” Heritage Blog, <http://blog.heritage.org/2012/07/24/mandated-cuts-will-create-national-security-nightmare/>] E. Liu

Constituents at a Great Falls, Montana, town hall meeting understand what many in Congress do not seem to understand: Cuts mandated by budget sequestration will erode the defense industrial base to the point where irreversible damage may be done to military readiness.¶ Recounting a town hall meeting with Congressman Denny Rehberg (R–MT) in Great Falls, Heritage’s James Carafano writes that citizens “were worried about jobs.… What made even less sense to these folks was how the cuts could go forward when leaders on both sides of the aisle know it will create a national security nightmare.”¶ The cuts in question are those mandated by sequestration, which, if left unaddressed, will cut more than $500 billion from national security funding over the next 10 years. The concern is not over jobs or economic stimulation; it is about military readiness. As Carafano notes, the defense industry relies a great deal on “human capital.” Many of the skills that go into building, maintaining, and repairing military equipment often take years to master. Losing these skills harms military readiness, because it often means that programs take longer and are more expensive to build. Furthermore, when these workers leave their respective industries, it can take years to get their skills back.¶ Budgetary uncertainty at the Department of Defense can dramatically affect the suppliers on which it relies. The cuts from sequestration are perceived as so catastrophic that they are already affecting defense contractors. These companies are required by law to give 60-day notices of job terminations. They often rely on long-term planning and buying of raw materials and subcontracting to deliver on time and under cost. The closer we get to sequestration’s deadline, the more these companies will have to cut back in preparation.¶ The Armed Forces are already in dire need of modernization. Sequestration will exacerbate this concern—and not only regarding the planes, ships, and vehicles that the forces will have to retire prematurely. The thousands of defense industry jobs lost due to canceled contracts and less work pose a significant readiness challenge as well. While America has ridden through austere defense budgets in the past, the cuts that will begin in January 2013 could possibly weaken the industrial base to an unprecedented level.¶ While the active duty and reserve forces scramble to figure out how to protect the country with fewer resources, their lifeline—the defense industry—will be scrambling for work elsewhere. The government should fulfill its constitutional responsibility and provide for the common defense. First and foremost, this means stopping sequestration.

### Sequestration – Undermines Military

#### Sequestration prevents our ability to respond to contingencies and causes ally uncertainty

Travis Sharp, fellow at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS). Prior to joining CNAS, he served as Military Policy Analyst at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, where he started as a Herbert Scoville Jr. Peace Fellow, 2-12-12, [“Down Payment¶ Defense Guidance, 2013 Defense Budget and the Risks of Sequestration,” Policy Brief, [www.cnas.org/2013defensebudget](http://www.cnas.org/2013defensebudget)] E. Liu

Breaking the golden ratio also carries strategic ¶ risks that Washington policymakers should not ¶ ignore. Although the United States may seek ¶ to emphasize the Asia-Pacific, security threats ¶ elsewhere – particularly in the greater Middle ¶ East – may be more likely to require a military ¶ response over the next decade. Making additional ¶ cuts to the size and capabilities of U.S. ground ¶ forces, which the Pentagon will be forced to do ¶ if Congress and President Obama do not repeal ¶ sequestration, may leave these forces undersized ¶ and ill-equipped for certain types of major contin-¶ gency operations in the future.16¶ sequestration’s flaws ¶ Despite their merits, the Pentagon’s guidance and ¶ budget present a bundle of contradictions. The ¶ documents seek to project confidence in order to ¶ reassure foreign leaders, American citizens and ¶ members of Congress who are concerned about ¶ defense budget cuts. The documents assert that ¶ the cuts will not prevent the United States from ¶ continuing to undergird global peace and prosper-¶ ity at a time when there is growing unease about ¶ Iran’s nuclear program and China’s intentions. ¶ President Obama raised the stakes by placing his ¶ political imprimatur on the new guidance and ¶ budget during a presidential election year. In ¶ fact, he spoke at the Pentagon press conference ¶ held to release the new guidance – the first time ¶ a president has ever done so.17 At the same time, ¶ the documents express concern about further ¶ cuts in order to encourage allies to carry more of ¶ the international security burden by increasing ¶ their own military capabilities and to moti-¶ vate Congress and President Obama to repeal ¶ sequestration. ¶ By trying to signal confidence and concern ¶ simultaneously, the guidance and budget may not ¶ deliver either message effectively to U.S. allies, ¶ the American public or Congress. Statements ¶ made to date by several U.S. allies suggest that ¶ they are uncertain about what actions they ¶ should take based on the documents.18 Recent ¶ polls show that Americans disagree sharply ¶ about whether reducing defense spending will ¶ erode current levels of military effectiveness.19 ¶ Few members of Congress have spoken out so ¶ far in response to the guidance and budget. Most ¶ of those who have commented did so primar-¶ ily to voice their opposition to DOD’s proposal ¶ for a new round of base realignment and closure ¶ (BRAC), not to address the broader impacts on ¶ the U.S. military.20

### AT: Obama Bad

#### 1. Obama win is inevitable – He’ll be able to eke out a small victory which maens all of his foreign policy priorities are inevitable – However the plan would also give him a Democratic Congress which allows him to push through defense cuts

#### 2. Coattails are key to only defense cuts – Other priorities Obama can implement unilaterally and will be enacted regardless of Obama’s control of Congrses – A large number of aligned congresspeople is key to Obama’s specific defense posture changes, that’s Thompson

### AT: Sequestration Good

#### Even if cutting spending is good, sequestration does it indiscriminately, undermining security

Pete Hegseth, former Executive Director of Concerned Veterans for America, 7-20-12, [“Cut Defense Spending? Good Idea — But Sequestration's Not The Way,” AoL Defense,

<http://defense.aol.com/2012/07/20/cut-defense-spending-good-idea-but-sequestrations-not-the-wa/>] E. Liu

As a concerned citizen, I sympathize with that viewpoint, particularly in light of our staggering $15.8 trillion national debt. But as a U.S. Army veteran who served in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo Bay, I also know we should be careful what we wish for. There's a right way to reduce defense spending and there's a wrong way. Right now, we're on the path to reduce spending in all the wrong ways.¶ Why? Because of automatic spending cuts that go by the unwieldy name of "budget sequestration." These automatic cuts, as dictated by the Budget Control Act passed by Congress and signed by the president in 2011, are slated to reduce defense spending by $500 billion over the next 10 years, with $50 billion in cuts planned to take effect in January 2013. This reduction in defense spending comes on top of almost $500 billion in long-term military cuts already proposed by President Obama. In total, DOD faces nearly $1 trillion in cuts.¶ These automatic spending reductions mean that, instead of a budget scalpel that makes smart, surgical cuts, we're getting what Defense Secretary Leon Panetta memorably described as a "meat ax," bluntly chopping away at key, strategic priorities in the defense budget. In fact, both Democrats and Republicans readily acknowledge that these cuts were intended to be so deep, and so drastic, that Congress would never allow them. But alas, they're upon us. The result? In a time of war and global uncertainty, we will see a dramatic deterioration in our nation's force readiness and future capabilities systemically compromised.

#### Sequestration slashes everything equally – Makes it a poor way to cut spending

Travis Sharp, fellow at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS). Prior to joining CNAS, he served as Military Policy Analyst at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, where he started as a Herbert Scoville Jr. Peace Fellow, 2-12-12, [“Down Payment¶ Defense Guidance, 2013 Defense Budget and the Risks of Sequestration,” Policy Brief, [www.cnas.org/2013defensebudget](http://www.cnas.org/2013defensebudget)] E. Liu

Sequestration also requires DOD to allocate cuts ¶ in equal percentages to every program, project and ¶ activity in its budget during FY 2013 and pos-¶ sibly beyond.23 Every weapons system, research ¶ and development initiative, and training program ¶ would be reduced by the same amount regardless ¶ of its importance to U.S. security. For example, the ¶ training budget for special-operations forces, such ¶ as those responsible for killing Osama bin Laden, ¶ would be cut by the same percentage as the train-¶ ing budget for military bands. With all due respect ¶ to our military musicians, this is a prescription ¶ for mindless slashing, not strategic choices that ¶ preserve important programs. Yet this exact ¶ approach is enshrined in law and will take effect ¶ in January 2013 unless new legislation is passed or ¶ the executive branch pursues greater flexibility by ¶ exploiting controversial loopholes, such as policy ¶ apportionments and budget reprogramming.24¶ For these reasons, leading defense budget experts ¶ almost universally agree that a more gradual ¶ and flexible process is far better than the sudden, ¶ inflexible cuts built into sequestration.25 Even ¶ independent analysts who favor steeper military ¶ budget reductions argue that sequestration is a ¶ suboptimal way to downsize defense spending.26

# Romney Mandate Bad

### Elections DA 1NC

#### Romney will win now, but it will be a narrow and unenthusiastic victory

NYTimes, 7-19-12, [“Romney the Cautious,” Ross Douthat, <http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/19/romney-the-cautious/>] E. Liu

Presidential challengers often expend an enormous amount of energy trying to brand themselves as something new and fresh and different – a New Democrat, a compassionate conservative, an avatar for hope and change. Since he clinched his party’s nomination, though, Romney has been content with the generic Republican mantle. More than content, in fact: To date, his general-election campaign seems carefully constructed to be as cautious and boring and even attention-repelling as possible.¶ His stump speech is competent but entirely platitudinous. His policy positioning is technically quite conservative, but he clearly doesn’t want to engage publicly with any issue where the politics are even remotely unsettled, from gay marriage to immigration. He certainly doesn’t want to talk about his Mormon faith, arguably the most distinctive feature of his biography. He wants to talk only about the economy – but even there, his message is mostly as bland as pottage, a mix of anti-Obama talking points and right-of-center bromides that any Republican could deliver.¶ The contrast with the White House’s recent approach is striking. In effect, the challenger and the incumbent have reversed the traditional roles: Romney is running a kind of Rose Garden strategy, trying to stay above the fray and coast to victory, while the president bobs and weaves like an insurgent, trying to throw his Republican rival off his game.¶ Every week, it seems, Obama has a new narrative, a new gambit, a new stratagem, or a new “game changing” speech. In Romneyland, by contrast, the keel is even and the message is always essentially the same. While the president has been reversing himself on hot-button issues and responding to bad unemployment figures by taking repeatedly to the bully pulpit, the riskiest move the presumptive Republican nominee has made in the last two months was his decision to attend a fund-raiser with Donald Trump – a bad call, in my view, but not nearly as significant as the president’s repositioning on immigration or gay marriage.¶ There are good reasons for Romney’s caution. If the election were held today, with national polls showing a dead heat, the tendency of undecided voters to break against the incumbent would probably translate into a narrow Republican victory. From a certain angle, then, Romney looks like the favorite in this campaign, and for a favorite caution is often the better part of valor. This is particularly true in a political environment where voters are weary of both parties, and where heightened visibility for any politician tends to translate into sagging poll numbers rather than enthusiasm.¶ But it’s also possible that Romney is missing a significant opportunity, in this season of Democratic discontent, to define himself as something more than the just the not-Obama candidate. Recall that many of Romney’s primary rivals were confident that being a not-Romney would be enough to win the Republican nomination, and that ultimately they were all disappointed.¶ It’s clear, for instance, that Obama’s vulnerabilities with working class whites are threatening his position in must-win states like Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan. But these are not voters who tend to respond to conventional Republican talking points, especially when they’re delivered by a multimillionaire private equity honcho. Nor are they voters with particularly fond memories of the economic results that the last Republican administration delivered.

#### Massive public opposition to funding transportation infrastructure

Council on Foreign Relations, June **2012** (Road to Nowhere: Federal Transportation Infrastructure Policy, p. 5)

WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS Though Americans share Obama’s enthusiasm for making infrastructure improvement a priority, nationwide opinion polls suggest they oppose typical options for funding it. A 2011 Rockefeller Foundation poll found that nearly 80 percent of voters agree that “in order for the United States to remain the world’s top economic superpower we need to modernize our transportation infrastructure and keep it up to date.”15 Two out of three voters believed improving the country’s transportation infrastructure is “highly important.” Yet similar margins do not want to have to pay for it: 71 percent oppose increasing the gas tax, 64 percent oppose new tolls on existing roads and bridges, and 58 percent oppose paying more for each mile driven.

#### Big Romney win generates coattails and enough votes to crush healthcare reform

Walter Frick, BostInno Business Editor, 7-2-12, [“Obamacare’s Next Great Challenge? A Former Governor from Massachusetts,” BostInno, Boston Tech Website, ¶ <http://bostinno.com/2012/07/02/obamacares-next-great-challenge-a-former-governor-from-massachusetts/>] E. Liu

The 2010 healthcare reform bill — often referred to as Obamacare — cleared a major hurdle last week when the Supreme Court upheld its constitutionality 5-4. So is the law safe? Not yet.¶ Oddly enough, its next challenge comes from a man who helped set the reform effort in motion by architecting a similar bill here in Massachusetts. That man is, of course, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney.¶ Romney’s campaign released a statement immediately following the ruling (read it in full here) saying:¶ What the court did not do on its last day in session, I will do on my first day if elected president of the United States. And that is I will act to repeal Obamacare.¶ As Sarah Kliff reported last week at The Washington Post, that’s hardly an idle threat:¶ Former governor Mitt Romney (R) has repeatedly pledged that, if elected, he would repeal Obamacare on his first day in office. While Congressional procedure pretty much makes that impossible, there is still a lot a Republican president could do to impede or slow the implementation of the Affordable Care Act – especially if he happens to be working with a Republican-controlled Congress.¶ Except it gets even more interesting. Whereas, it has previously seemed that Romney would need 60 votes in the Senate to overcome a filibuster in order to repeal the bill, there’s now talk on both sides of the aisle that, thanks to Chief Justice Roberts’ decision to uphold the individual mandate as a tax, the Senate could use a process known as “reconciliation” to repeal the bill with only 50 votes, a much more plausible scenario for Republicans to reach in the fall.¶ In other words, if Romney prevails in November and Republicans win big on his coattails, Obamacare could be toast.

#### Healthcare repeal destroys the health insurance industry

New York Magazine, 10/12/11, “Will Romney be able to carry out his promise to screw the uninsured?” News and Features

http://nymag.com/daily/intel/2011/10/will\_romney\_be\_able\_to\_carry\_o.html

The most significant long-term outcome of last night’s Republican debate is that Mitt Romney, the likely nominee, committed himself to using budget reconciliation to repeal the Affordable Care Act, thus evading a filibuster: I also say we have to repeal Obamacare, and I will do that on day two, with the reconciliation bill, because as you know, it was passed by reconciliation, 51 votes. This, as Dave Weigel has noted, is a crucial commitment, setting up what will probably be the biggest policy fight of a prospective Romney presidency. But, though Republicans have long been touting this option, it may not be so easy to pull off. First, let me explain what this means. Budget reconciliation is a process in Congress to move budgets. It’s become crucial because it can’t be filibustered, and therefore it can pass with a majority vote in both houses of Congress. Romney says the Affordable Care Act was passed this way, though that’s not actually true. The law passed through the Senate with 60 votes, overcoming a filibuster. Later, both houses used reconciliation to iron out some budget-related differences between the House and Senate versions of the law. Conservatives responded with apoplexy — it was a vile abuse of procedure, a dastardly exploitation of the suddenly sacred principles of budgetary procedure. (Here’s some sample fulmination from National Review, the Heritage Foundation, and Jonah Goldberg, who fumed that Democrats “won dirty.” Romney himself called it “neo-monarchy.” I don’t think that reversing this once-sacred principle will pose even the slightest obstacle to Republicans. (Neo-monarchy, bad. Neo-neo-monarchy, good!) But practical problems may arise. The first problem is that a President Romney would probably also need to use budget reconciliation to extend the Bush tax cuts. The cuts expire at the end of 2012, and, barring a budget deal under the Obama administration, Romney would be looking to extend those low, low tax rates. His best leverage to do so would be to use reconciliation — otherwise he’d need a bunch of Democratic senators to get to 60 votes. Now, Romney could (and probably would) try to combine the two measures into one big bill to cut taxes and repeal health care reform. But the more policy changes you load onto one bill, the bigger the risk of a defection making it all topple over. The second and larger problem is that the Affordable Care Act can’t be completely repealed by reconciliation. Remember, reconciliation can only be used for budget-related changes. The Affordable Care Act included lots of non-budget provisions. In particular, it used both regulation and spending to cover people who lack health insurance. You basically have three categories of uninsured. You have people who are just too poor to afford a regular health insurance plan and don’t get one through their job. You have people who might be able to afford a regular health insurance plan, but have a preexisting medical condition, or perhaps a family member with one, so insurers either won’t cover them at all or will only sell them a plan at exorbitant prices. Then you have generally healthy people who could afford a plan but choose to skip out on it The Affordable Care Act covered those groups in different ways. The poor people just got added onto Medicaid. The sick people had a more complex solution. The Act regulated insurers, so they have to charge everybody the same rate, poor and sick alike. This would create an incentive for even more healthy people to flee the system — why share costs with sick people when you’re healthy? — so the law added a mandate that everybody buy insurance, plus cost subsidies for people who’d have trouble affording a private plan. That’s the same system Romney used in Massachusetts, and was the basis for the Affordable Care Act. Now, if Romney wants to use reconciliation to screw poor uninsured people, he can. Medicaid is a spending program, and he can use a budget bill to cut it. But screwing the non-poor uninsured will be trickier. Regulations forbidding insurers from discriminating against sick people will still be on the books, and you can’t eliminate a regulation with a budget reconciliation bill. If they eliminate the subsidies but leave the regulations in place, you’ll have insurers required to sell policies to people who are sick, but no way to bring healthy people into the risk pool. A few states tried that. It created a cost spiral that collapsed the whole market. Romney would end up screwing the health insurance industry, which is much harder to do, politically, than screwing the uninsured. The industry has lobbyists. Those lobbyists were happy to preserve the old system, which screwed all the uninsured and none of the insurance companies. They were fine with the Obama plan that screwed none of the uninsured and none of the the insurance firms. They're not going to be happy about creating a system that screws some of the uninsured and all of the insurance companies. Now, there is a proviso where this gets complicated. (Okay, even more complicated.) The only thing keeping a party from using reconciliation to pass non-budget things is the Senate parliamentarian. By social custom, the parliamentarian’s rules are always followed. When he struck some parts from the Democrats’ reconciliation bill, they abided his ruling. But Republicans could decide to use reconciliation to repeal the entire Affordable Care Act, and when the parliamentarian rules against them, simply overrule him. That would be a huge, drastic change — essentially it would end the filibuster. That would be a good thing, long-term, and it would also make it easier for Democrats to one day pass health care reform again. (If it weren’t for the filibuster, health care reform would have passed long, long before Obama came along.) But that kind of cultural change might worry Senate Republicans, who cling to the filibuster and other byways of the Senate. And it would be a controversial way for Romney to start his presidency, probably ending any hope of further bipartisan cooperation.

#### Health insurance is critical to the economy – Empirically linked with growth and decline

Rexford Abaidoo, PhD, Assistant Professor of Business Administration and Quantitative methods at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Teaching areas include corporate finance, business statistics, scientific methods in business and computer application in business. Research mainly focuses on dynamics of economic growth and recovery, international finance and competitiveness and consumer behavior, 10-21-11, [“Insurance Industry Is Key In The Economic Recovery And Growth Process,” Clute Institute for Academic Research, <http://insurancenewsnet.com/article.aspx?id=289908&type=lifehealth>] E. Liu

The relative ease with which firms and establishments in the finance, insurance and real estate sectors succumbed to the economic shock of 2008, brought into question the presumed resilience of firms in these key sectors to macroeconomic shocks. The ongoing weak recovery trend continues to heighten concerns about the ability of key sectors of the US economy to propel the economy back onto a steady and sustained growth trajectory after a major shock. According to the Congressional Research Service, ongoing economic recovery process started in mid 2009 after the initial collapse brought about by the 2008 recession. Most analysts at the time (beginning of the third quarter of 2009) expected and projected some semblance of füll recovery by the first quarter of 20 1 1 . However, the recovery process, as evidenced by key economic indicators, has been painfully slow compared to similar rebound conditions characterizing other developed economies around the world. The German and the Canadian economies have for instance made relatively faster progress towards full economic recovery than the US economy. Major macroeconomic indicators still show the US economy is not fully on an upward swing mode toward full recovery anytime soon. Job growth numbers have fluctuated widely since the latter part of 2009. Moderate growth occurring among firms in some sectors of the economy continues to be interrupted by slowdown in other key sectors of the economy. Fluctuations in unemployment numbers and productivity levels, wavering consumer confidence indicators, etc continue to be a feature characterizing the ongoing recovery. With the manufacturing sub-sector of the US economy still reeling from massive outsourcing and ever-expanding potential of the Chinese manufacturing sector, the finance, insurance and real estate sub-sectors were perceived by some analysts as areas where the United States could still maintain its competitive edge. However, with the onset of the 2008 recession and the decimation of the finance and insurance sector which followed, most economists are now skeptical about the finance and insurance sectors' ability to sustain the economy's competitive edge through accelerated recovery toward pre-2007-2008 recession growth trajectory. Most leading indicators currently point to appreciable but fluctuating growth conditions among key sectors of the US economy. No particular sector, however, has emerged as the dominant sector with sustained growth trend to lead the way toward the long awaited full economic recovery. Quarterly sector growth data from Bureau of Economic Analysis documents continued significant growth trend among various sectors and sub-sectors of the economy. This trend has however been gravely unreliable, making it very difficult to point to a single sector of the economy as the engine driving the ongoing recovery process. Sector specific contribution to GDP growth indicators from early part of 2010 for instance, show that growth trend among key economic sectors lag behind levels needed to ensure acceleration towards full economic recovery. Despite these challenges in the recovery process across sectors of the US economy, growth trend among firms in the finance and insurance sectors seems to have emerged as the leading barometer by which most analysts and the average American measures the pace of the ongoing economic recovery. This study estimates this potential to significantly impact economic recovery by key sectors and sub-sector of the US economy after a major shock with the finance and insurance sectors as the focus. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), weakening economic activity in the finance and insurance industry accounted for about half of the stagnation in economic activity in 2007 prior to the economic collapse. Systemic stagnation in activities within the industry, according to the Bureau's briefings, generated conditions which precipitated and ultimately culminated in the 2008 recession. Available data on the industry's contributions to real gross domestic product (GDP) growth from the Bureau (BEA) show that decline in growth among firms in the finance and insurance sector contributed significantly to the 2008 recession. For instance, BEA data show that the finance and insurance sectors' value-added over the period - a measure of the sectors' contribution to GDP fell 0.3 percent in 2007 after rising 9.8 percent in 2006. The data also documents that other sectors of the economy did not fair better during the same period For instance, the construction industry's valueadded (contribution to GDP) declined 12.1 percent in 2007 prior to the economic downturn, after falling 6.0 percent in 2006. Additionally, the real estate, rental and leasing sector's contribution to GDP also slowed to 2.1 percent in 2007 from 3.4 percent growth in 2006. In the mining sector, value addition to GDP grew less than 0.1 percent in 2007 after recording 6.1 percent growth in 2006. These growth dynamics highlights conditions which persisted prior to the onset of what became one of the worse economic conditions witnessed in US economic history. These trends further lends credence to the view that the economic collapse of 2008 was set in motion in part by major decline in growth among firms in key sectors of the US economy.

#### Economic collapse causes global nuclear war

Cesare Merlini, nonresident senior fellow at the Center on the United States and Europe, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Italian Institute for International Affairs (IAI) in Rome, expert in transatlantic relations, European integration and nuclear non-proliferation, with particular focus on nuclear science and technology, April–May 2011, “A Post-Secular World?,” Survival, vol. 53 no. 2, pp. 124, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/articles/2011/04\_international\_relations\_merlini/04\_international\_relations\_merlini.pdf

Two neatly opposed scenarios for the future of the world order illustrate the range of possibilities, albeit at the risk of oversimplification. The first scenario entails the premature crumbling of the post-Westphalian system. One or more of the acute tensions apparent today evolves into an open and traditional conflict between states, perhaps even involving the use of nuclear weapons. The crisis might be triggered by a collapse of the global economic and financial system, the vulnerability of which we have just experienced, and the prospect of a second Great Depression, with consequences for peace and democracy similar to those of the first. Whatever the trigger, the unlimited exercise of national sovereignty, exclusive self-interest and rejection of outside interference would likely be amplified, emptying, perhaps entirely, half-full glass of multilateralism, including the UN and the European Union. Many of the more likely conflicts, such as between Israel and Iran or India and Pakistan, have potential religious dimensions. Short of war, tensions such as those related to immigration might become unbearable. Familiar issues of creed and identity could be exacerbated. One way or another, the secular rational approach would be sidestepped by a return to theocratic absolutes, competing or converging with secular absolutes such as unbridled nationalism.

## Uniqueness

### Small Win Now

#### Romney will win now, but it will be a narrow and unenthusiastic victory

NYTimes, 7-19-12, [“Romney the Cautious,” Ross Douthat, <http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/19/romney-the-cautious/>] E. Liu

Presidential challengers often expend an enormous amount of energy trying to brand themselves as something new and fresh and different – a New Democrat, a compassionate conservative, an avatar for hope and change. Since he clinched his party’s nomination, though, Romney has been content with the generic Republican mantle. More than content, in fact: To date, his general-election campaign seems carefully constructed to be as cautious and boring and even attention-repelling as possible.¶ His stump speech is competent but entirely platitudinous. His policy positioning is technically quite conservative, but he clearly doesn’t want to engage publicly with any issue where the politics are even remotely unsettled, from gay marriage to immigration. He certainly doesn’t want to talk about his Mormon faith, arguably the most distinctive feature of his biography. He wants to talk only about the economy – but even there, his message is mostly as bland as pottage, a mix of anti-Obama talking points and right-of-center bromides that any Republican could deliver.¶ The contrast with the White House’s recent approach is striking. In effect, the challenger and the incumbent have reversed the traditional roles: Romney is running a kind of Rose Garden strategy, trying to stay above the fray and coast to victory, while the president bobs and weaves like an insurgent, trying to throw his Republican rival off his game.¶ Every week, it seems, Obama has a new narrative, a new gambit, a new stratagem, or a new “game changing” speech. In Romneyland, by contrast, the keel is even and the message is always essentially the same. While the president has been reversing himself on hot-button issues and responding to bad unemployment figures by taking repeatedly to the bully pulpit, the riskiest move the presumptive Republican nominee has made in the last two months was his decision to attend a fund-raiser with Donald Trump – a bad call, in my view, but not nearly as significant as the president’s repositioning on immigration or gay marriage.¶ There are good reasons for Romney’s caution. If the election were held today, with national polls showing a dead heat, the tendency of undecided voters to break against the incumbent would probably translate into a narrow Republican victory. From a certain angle, then, Romney looks like the favorite in this campaign, and for a favorite caution is often the better part of valor. This is particularly true in a political environment where voters are weary of both parties, and where heightened visibility for any politician tends to translate into sagging poll numbers rather than enthusiasm.¶ But it’s also possible that Romney is missing a significant opportunity, in this season of Democratic discontent, to define himself as something more than the just the not-Obama candidate. Recall that many of Romney’s primary rivals were confident that being a not-Romney would be enough to win the Republican nomination, and that ultimately they were all disappointed.¶ It’s clear, for instance, that Obama’s vulnerabilities with working class whites are threatening his position in must-win states like Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan. But these are not voters who tend to respond to conventional Republican talking points, especially when they’re delivered by a multimillionaire private equity honcho. Nor are they voters with particularly fond memories of the economic results that the last Republican administration delivered.

### Close Romney Win – Close Now

#### Obama’s losing popularity now – That means Romney will have a super close win

Michael Medved, nationally syndicated radio talk show host and bestselling author, 7-25-12, [“Obama's Uphill Re-election Bid,” Hispanic Business, <http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/2012/7/25/obamas_uphill_reelection_bid.htm>] E. Liu

Quick, now. Try to name big segments of the electorate, or even prominent individuals, who opposed Barack Obama in 2008 but have joined his campaign for re-election. Difficulty in answering that question caused even the president, in a fleeting moment of candor, to suggest that he could easily lose the White House. On May 10, Obama soured the mood of enthusiastic donors at a Seattle fundraiser by telling them that "this election is actually going to be even closer than the last." In other words, he knows that he has lost supporters, rather than gaining them, during his three-and-a-half years of leadership. A "closer election" means that one of the few iron rules of U.S. politics indicates he'll lose his bid for a second term. History offers not one example of a chief executive whose popular appeal declined during his first term of office but nonetheless managed to eke out a re-election victory, as Obama proposes to do. Among the 24 elected presidents who sought second terms, all 15 who earned back-to-back victories drew more support in bids for re-election than they did in their previous campaigns. In the past century, this base-broadening for re-elected presidents hasn't been modest or subtle. When Woodrow Wilson campaigned for re-election in 1916 (without Teddy Roosevelt as a third party competitor), his percentage of the popular vote soared by 7 points. Franklin Roosevelt in 1936 enhanced his already formidable popularity by 4 percentage points, and Dwight Eisenhower's landslide re-election in 1956 saw his share of the electorate rise from 55% to 57%. Richard Nixon's improvement amounted to a staggering 17 points in 1972, while Ronald Reagan's re-election percentage went up by 8 points.

### Close Romney Win – Declining Obama Support

#### Obama’s losing support from multiple groups – Causes a tiny Romney wni

Michael Medved, nationally syndicated radio talk show host and bestselling author, 7-25-12, [“Obama's Uphill Re-election Bid,” Hispanic Business, <http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/2012/7/25/obamas_uphill_reelection_bid.htm>] E. Liu

In contrast, several of Obama's hope-and-change boosters have deserted his cause and in some cases enlisted with the opposition. Artur Davis, three-term Alabama congressman and Congressional Black Caucus member, delivered a seconding speech for Obama in 2008, but he now backs Romney and has changed his registration to Republican. West Virginia Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin, a former governor, says he can't commit to supporting Obama this time, and the state's incumbent governor, Earl Ray Tomblin, expressed similar sentiments. Colin Powell, who proudly joined the Obama's first historic campaign for the White House, insists he remains uncommitted in 2012. Meanwhile, the tight national polling shows static or declining enthusiasm for Obama in the key constituent groups that made up 2008's victorious coalition. The president still commands big leads among young people, Jewish voters, union households and unmarried women -- but his numbers are down from last time. Even among African-American voters, where candidate Obama drew 95% of the vote in 2008, his backing looks less unanimous and enthusiastic, indicating potentially reduced turnout. The president holds his own with Hispanics (thanks to his new emphasis on immigration) but can't expect significant improvement on the 67% he scored last time. Four years ago, Obama won Catholic voters, but recent polls show this key swing constituency either evenly divided or tilting toward Romney. If the president doesn't compensate for inevitable losses by adding new supporters, he's certain to lose the election: His vote total last time (nearly 52.9% against John McCain) doesn't provide a comfortable cushion against a more formidable opponent and more unified GOP. Democratic strategists must identify elements of the electorate where they can add new votes over 2008 rather than struggling on every front to limit their losses. That's why the president's own prediction of an election "even closer than the last" might have unwittingly revealed his underlying pessimism in approaching November. He broke tradition and made history in 2008 by becoming the first non-white candidate elected to national office. It's also conceivable that he could discredit Romney thoroughly enough to become the only president to win a second term with reduced rather than enhanced support. But the odds, and records of all past campaigns, show that accepting fewer votes in a bid for re-election amounts to a formula for sure defeat rather than a blue-print for narrow victory.

### Close Romney Win – Likely Voters

#### Likely give Romney a slight advantage and undecided voters will go to him

Carter Eskew, Founding Partner and Managing Director of The Glover Park Group (GPG) who has over 20 years of experience in the most high profile corporate and political campaigns, 7-25-12, [“What the election comes down to,” The Insiders, Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-insiders/post/what-the-election-comes-down-to/2012/07/25/gJQABBve9W_blog.html>] E. Liu

We can thank two of the nation's best political pollsters, Democrat Peter Hart and Republican Bill McInturff, for finally putting the 2012 race in clear perspective. Their latest poll for NBC and the Wall Street Journal shows Obama in the lead, nationally by 6 percentage points and in the target states by 8 percentage points. The negatives of both candidates are rising and the electorate is now almost completely polarized. But by digging into the internals of the poll, you find interesting information. In an ominous sign for Obama, among those voters most closely following the race — a proxy for those likeliest to vote — Romney has a slight advantage. But potential trouble for Romney resides in the small pool of undecided voters. I have said previously that undecided voters almost always break strongly against the incumbent. But Hart and McInturff point out that while these voters dislike both candidates, their antipathy for Romney is almost unprecedented. Among undecided voters, Romney’s favorability to unfavorability is 16% to 44%.

### Close Romney Win – New Hampshire

#### Romney is winning New Hampshire and undeclared voter push makes his win really close

National Review, 7-24-12, [“The Battle for Romney’s Backyard,” Robert Costa, <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/310386/battle-romney-s-backyard-robert-costa>] E. Liu

But it wasn’t all fireworks and apple pie. Romney’s appearance also served a political purpose. New Hampshire — the northern neighbor of Massachusetts, the state Romney once governed — is a small but critical battleground, and Romney is eager to secure the state’s four electoral votes. Four years ago, President Obama easily won the Granite State, but after major Republican gains in 2010, Romney’s campaign is optimistic about its chances in New England’s flinty, independent neighborhood. Over the past few months, they have opened multiple offices and call centers across the state. “This is a state that can swing dramatically,” says Ryan Williams, a Romney adviser and a former aide to New Hampshire governor John Sununu. “We think it’s going to be close and that we can win here, especially since the governor has been competing in the primary for a number of years.” Romney’s participation in the past two New Hampshire primary elections has given him a large, sprawling base of support and a network of top-flight political operatives, such as Jim Merill. Twelve years ago, Merrill managed George W. Bush’s successful New Hampshire general-election campaign. Tom Rath, a Romney adviser and a former New Hampshire attorney general, thinks Romney’s fiscal conservatism and suburban appeal will play as well this year as it did for Bush more than a decade ago. “Romney’s temperament and views make him the kind of Republican who wins here,” Rath says. Bush’s 2000 victory, however, was narrow, as was Democrat John Kerry’s New Hampshire win in 2004. Veteran Republican consultants expect the Obama–Romney race to resemble those two tight contests more than Obama’s 2008 sweep, when the Illinois Democrat won all ten counties. “Both parties are taking this state seriously,” says Dave Carney, a New Hampshire–based Republican strategist. “But I think Romney may have an edge. If you watched him on the rope line at the Wolfeboro parade, it was obvious that many people know him on a first-name basis, and that’s invaluable.” Carney says Romney’s close relationship with New Hampshire is similar to George H. W. Bush’s decade-long wooing of New Hampshire voters from 1978 to 1988, between the 1980 and 1988 primary seasons. As with Romney, Bush lived in the region and New Hampshire was key to his presidential hopes. In the polls, Romney has recently closed the gap. The latest New Hampshire poll, published by WMUR, shows Obama leading Romney, 49 percent to 45 percent; but back in WMUR’s April poll, the president led Romney by nine percentage points. Obama’s approval rating in the poll was below 50 percent, a sign of vulnerability. Romney’s competitive standing does not surprise Democrats, who have been organizing in New Hampshire for more than a year, and the Obama campaign has opened 14 field offices. Vice President Joe Biden has made high-profile visits, and President Obama stopped by Durham, N.H., in late June. But much has changed since Obama last painted New Hampshire blue. Two years ago, New Hampshire Republicans won a Senate seat, both of the state’s two congressional seats, record majorities in the state house and state senate, and complete control of the state’s influential executive council. Coupled with Romney’s ground game, the Republican political machine is strong and ready to kick into gear. Romney’s team is focused on generating big Republican turnout in Rockingham and Hillsborough counties, two well-populated areas in the south, and traditional GOP pockets near the coast. “Governor Romney started his campaign in Stratham, N.H., in June 2011, and he just came back here for his bus tour and vacation,” Williams says. “Most voters live south of Concord, the capital, and that’s where we are putting a lot of our effort. But you’ll also see us up north, in Carroll and Coos counties.” As with its national strategy, Romney’s state campaign is underscoring the candidate’s economic message in its outreach and mailings. New Hampshire may have a 5.1 percent unemployment rate, Romney aides say, but it is still a state in transition, moving away from its heavy-industry past. In the final stretch, the Romney campaign will make a hard pitch to “undeclared” voters, who are approximately 40 percent of the state’s electorate. From Bush’s 2000 win to Bill Clinton’s razor-thin victory in 1992, these voters decide elections and whether a campaign snags 270 electoral votes.

## Link

### Mandate Overview

#### 1. Romney has pledged to repeal healthcare reform on his first day, but he needs a Republican Congress to do any real damage to it – Reconciliation is the key for him to repeal it with a low threshold, but a substantial Romney win is key to coattails and gather enough senators to get repeal through, that’s Frick 12

#### 2. A large victory is key to a mandate that is key to the entire GoP agenda

Tom Del Beccaro, Chairman of the California Republican Party, 2-14-12, [“Republicans Should Make 2012 a “Mandate” Election,” <http://www.foxandhoundsdaily.com/2012/02/republicans-should-make-2012-a-mandate-election/>] E. Liu

We live in The Divided Era of American politics – an Era defined by a roughly equal number of Democrats and Republicans, high partisanship and close Presidential elections. Independent voters often hold sway and candidates court the middle in order to win. Close victories, however, come without a mandate – a dynamic usually borne of larger victories. If the Republican Presidential candidate wants a mandate, something necessary if they expect to carry the Senate and break the log jam in Washington, then that candidate must seek that mandate not just victory. Fortunately for Republicans, the path to a mandate is the safest path to victory.¶ The stakes in this election are unusually large. While calling elections the “most important of our lifetime” has become standard fair, this election will likely decide whether Obamacare will remain the law of the land. Combined with the challenge posed by an emerging and erratic Iran, and the need for dramatic action on the economy, 2012 will be in an important election.¶ To be successful in those three quite difficult areas, however, a Republican President will need more than a bear victory – he or she will need a broad consensus – a mandate. The economy will need bold tax and regulatory reform. Repealing Obamacare, while achievable, won’t lead to a broader consensus unless it is accompanied by a meaningful reform alternative. As for dealing with Iran, that will require a strong President whose existence is likely dependent on success in the first two areas.¶ Absent a mandate, or with a victory solely dependent on people turning away from Obama, meaningful success is unlikely for a new Republican President and The Divided Era will continue – as will our problems – not mention a short Republican ascendancy.

#### 3. Controversial Obama policies drag down congressional Democrats

US News, 3-28-12, [“The Obama Factor: How the President's Star Power Could Hurt Vulnerable Democrats,” Lauren Fox, Lexis] E. Liu

In January, the Hillreported that Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown attended to his own previously scheduled meetings in Ohio while the president spoke about the economy at a Cleveland high school. The story also pointed to Sen. Claire McCaskill's decision to stay in Washington to vote instead of campaigning alongside Obama in Missouri.¶ And the Orlando Sentinelreported that Florida Sen. Bill Nelson, who is up for re-election in 2012, also chose to forgo an appearance with the president in January, citing previously scheduled meetings.¶ Wanting to avoid attacks from constituents about high gas prices, Democrats like New York Rep. Bill Owens chided the president for vetoing the Keystone Pipeline in January.¶ "With conflicts overseas driving up prices at the pump and so many Americans out looking for work, I am deeply disappointed that the White House has formally rejected the Keystone XL pipeline permit," Owens said in a statement.¶ Democratic candidates are right to be wary. A GOP official says voters in swing states, the South, and even some parts of New York, Arizona and California will see strategic campaign ads placing Democratic candidates in lockstep with the president on controversial economic and healthcare issues.¶ And even some Democratic officials worry that the "Obama factor" could impact tight races in districts that could go either way.¶ "The reality is that nobody wants to get caught up in the mudslinging that goes on in these races," says Walton Robinson, the communications director for the North Carolina Democratic Party. "I wouldn't begrudge anybody choosing that they didn't want to be sucked up in that vacuum."¶ Robinson says in his state it's not uncommon for the GOP to try to link Democratic congressman to the mess of Washington, and he adds that recent redistricting made the Democrats' job of keeping their seats even tougher. But Robinson remains optimistic.¶ "Our representatives are very much representatives of their districts. At the end of the day, people want to be a voice for their communities," he says. "As far as the party goes, we are going to just work hard on the local level."¶ On the flip side, the National Republican Congressional Committee says unpopular Obama policies have poisoned North Carolinians' taste for Democrats.¶ "There is clearly a bad moon rising for the Democrats who are seeing these seats slipping away from them everyday after being saddled with the albatross of a failed Obama economic Agenda," says NRCC spokeswoman Andrea Bozek.¶ Lumping struggling presidents with members of their party is not a new tactic.

### Obama Unpopularity Causes Negative Coattails

#### Obama unpopularity drags down congressional Democrats

Harry Enten, a recent graduate of Dartmouth College, has previously interned at the NBC Political Unit in Washington D.C. and Pollster.com, 10-27-11, [“History of Presidential Coattails Points to Republicans Keeping the House,”

<http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/hje2011102702/>] E. Liu

Since the upset victory of Republican Bob Turner (NY-9), pundits have argued over the meaning of the results. One of the more popular beliefs is that President Obama’s unpopularity played a large role in the election of a Republican in a Democratic district. Therefore, the reasoning goes, Obama will drag other Democrats to defeat in the 2012 House elections (because of a phenomenon known as negative coattails).

### Mandate Key to Policy – Romney

#### Winning an election successfully is key to bold policies for Romney

John Dickerson, Chief political correspondent for Slate, 6-14-12, [“Commentary: Will Romney run to win or to get a mandate?,” <http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/news/commentary-will-romney-run-to-win-or-to-get-a-mand/nPT23/>] E. Liu

The modern campaign news cycle doesn’t allow candidates to say complex or risky things. Bold policies — even boldly conservative policies — have to be explained. Explaining requires a sympathetic audience willing to at least consider the meaning of adjoining sentences, not merely judge you for what you say in a single sentence.¶ The point of such a campaign, Mr. Romney’s supporters rebut, is not simply to win the election but to have an election that is worth winning — to build a mandate for conservative government. Scott Walker said a key lesson that he learned was that he needed to educate voters before going forward with big solutions. “My problem was I was so eager to fix it I didn’t talk about it. I just fixed it,” Gov. Walker told Jonathan Karl of ABC News.¶ This, you may remember, is almost the exact sentiment that got Newt Gingrich into trouble when he claimed that U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan’s Medicare proposal was “right-wing social engineering.” Mr. Gingrich’s point was that radical change requires educating and convincing voters.¶ If Mitt Romney decides to keep giving speeches about free enterprise and keeping the focus on President Obama it may win him the election. Then he’ll just have to figure out what to do with a country that has not been prepared for the kind of sweeping changes he plans to make. He will be the president who talked about creating an environment where businesses can take risks again, yet never took one himself.

## Impact

### Impact Overview

#### 1. Various tensions and potential conflicts erupt in a world of economic decline – The vulnerable economy would give way to nationalism and unilateralism as controlled disputes spillover into war, that’s Merlini 11

### Goldilocks Trick – Obama Bad

#### The link turn does not make a mandate smaller – Romney is winning by a hair now but the plan is unpopular and causes him to lose – Here’s our impact to Obama winning – Both the link and the link turn have an impact for the neg

#### Obama reelection results in unilateral disarm --- kills deterrence and results in nuclear war.

**Ferrara**, 4/4/**2012** (Peter – Director of Entitlement and Budget Policy for the Heartland Institute and General Counsel of the American Civil Rights Union, served in the White House Office of Policy development under President Reagan, Obama’s Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament, American Spectator, p. <http://spectator.org/archives/2012/04/04/obamas-unilateral-nuclear-disa>)

America's Nuclear Suicide Obama's literally crazy idea is that if we just lead by example and phase out our nuclear weapons, everyone else will realize we mean them no harm, and do the same. As a result, because of the messiah, the lion will lie down with the lamb, and the world will live as one. As Gaffney further explained, "He evidently is prepared to take such a step unilaterally in order to encourage by our example other nations to join his long-standing ambition to 'rid the world of nuclear weapons.'" The problem is if President Obama is reelected, he as the commander-in-chief would be free to carry out this flower child policy on his own authority, without Congressional approval. As Gaffney further explained in the March 27 Washington Times, "Mr. Obama's subordinates are signaling, however, that he is prepared to disarm us unilaterally through what one of them, Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller, recently called 'executive action.'" Gaffney rightly concluded in his February 22 column, "It is an astonishing insight into the President's commitment to 'fundamentally transforming the United States of America' -- in the worst sense of the phrase -- that he is willing to take such steps in the midst of his reelection campaign. Imagine what he would do if the last vestiges of restraining accountability are removed in a second term." In these modern times, a full blown nuclear war would be over in a matter of days. America will not have four years to build up the arsenal of democracy if caught by surprise. A dew-eyed miscalculation on these matters literally threatens your very life, and the lives of your family and children. That is why not only President Obama must be held accountable for this national defense foolishness, but the entire Democrat party that supports and enables him. That includes his contributors, whose names are publicly available, and his voters. This is a Paul Revere moment. The survival of you, your family and your nation is at stake, far more so than even on that April night in 1775. Exercise your rights of freedom of speech and democratic participation while you still have them, indeed, while you are still alive.

### Goldilocks Trick – Obama Mandate Bad

#### The link turn does not make a mandate smaller – Their uniqueness argument is that Obama is winning now and the plan is unpopular, giving him a big win – He’s our impact to a Obama mandate victory – Both the link and the link turn have an impact for the neg

#### A big Obama win causes sequestration and more defense cuts on top of that

Loren Thompson, Chief Operating Officer of the non-profit Lexington Institute and Chief Executive Officer of Source Associates, Deputy Director of the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University and taught graduate-level courses in strategy, technology and media affairs at Georgetown. I have also taught at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, 1-27-12, [“Defense Plans Will Change, So Don't Bank on Obama Blueprint,” Forbes, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/lorenthompson/2012/01/27/defense-plans-will-change-so-dont-bank-on-obama-blueprint/print/>] E. Liu

On Thursday, Pentagon leaders revealed the details of how they propose to implement President Obama’s new Asia-Pacific military posture. The administration has described the new posture as “a blueprint for the Joint Force in 2020,” so contractors and investors were eager to get the details on which programs would be cut or kept on track. A white paper that policymakers prepared to explain the changes reinforced the notion that the new priorities are part of a long-term plan, stating, “There is no room for modification if we are to preserve the force and capabilities that are needed… A change in one area inevitably requires offsetting requirements elsewhere, unbalancing the overall package.”¶ If you take such assertions seriously, then you must not know much about the history of U.S. defense downturns. The Obama defense blueprint is a snapshot in time that will probably change radically within a few years. Let’s consider all the dynamic factors that stand in the way of implementing a long-term blueprint in America’s notoriously unpredictable political culture.¶ ¶ First of all, none of the substantive changes the administration is proposing can actually be implemented without congressional approval. The House of Representatives is currently controlled by Republicans who don’t like the changes, and the Senate is likely to go Republican too in the next election (two-thirds of the Senate seats being contested this year are held by Democrats, and three-quarters of the senators who are retiring are Democrats). The notion that Congress will simply go along with a defense plan crafted by this White House is fantastic on its face given partisan polarization on every issue in Washington.¶ Second, the President is up for reelection in November, and his job approval in public-opinion surveys has been below 50 percent for a long time. Despite the propensity of Republican primary candidates to alienate every political constituency that isn’t white or wealthy, there’s a real possibility that Mr. Obama and his defense priorities will be gone a year from now. Even if Obama manages to eke out an election victory, he won’t have much in the way of coattails to help put his co-partisans in control of the Congress, so we may be looking at two to four more years of political paralysis in Washington — a poor setting for carrying out long-term plans on anything.¶ Third, a fiscal sword of Damocles is currently hanging over the defense sector in the form of a Budget Control Act mandate to cut $600 billion more out of military spending. That’s on top of the $487 billion that already must be cut from the President’s ten-year defense plan. Additional cuts of that magnitude would force wholesale revisions in the president’s blueprint. Military leaders have embraced the sanguine assumption that the political system will somehow avert a second wave of cuts because it would be so destructive, but as of today the law says the cuts begin next January. A stalemated post-election political system might not be able to amend the law, and the president is insisting that he would veto any legislative effort to do so that failed to provide $1.2 trillion in budget savings the law was crafted to generate. Fourth, if the system is not still paralyzed a year from now, that will probably be because one party has swept the elections. If it’s the Republicans, then the specter of big defense cuts will disappear. Research conducted by Ron Epstein of Merrill Lynch Bank of America has found that Republican control of the White House and Senate has been the single strongest predictor of rising weapons outlays over the past 50 years (Epstein says political control is a more reliable indicator than threats). If it’s the Democrats, then $600 billion in additional defense cuts could be just the beginning as they seek to generate a big “peace dividend” to fund domestic initiatives. Either way, the defense plan would change.

#### Sequestration and military cuts decimate heg – Causes multiple nuclear conflicts and prolif

The Foreign Policy Initiative, Board of Directors consists of Eric Edelman, former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey (2003–2005), former U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Finland (1998–2001), and former Principal Deputy Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs, Robert Kagan, William Kristol, and Dan Seno, et al., American Enterprise Institute, and The Heritage Foundation, 11-17-11, [“Defending Defense ¶ Defense Spending, the Super Committee, ¶ and the Price of Greatness,” <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/11/defending-defense-setting-the-record-straight-on-us-military-spending-requirements>] E. Liu

¶ In turn, Panetta said that sequestration cuts would raise dangerous risks and uncertainties to America’s ¶ national security. In particular, sequestration: ¶ ¶  “Undermine[s] our ability to meet our national security objectives and require[s] a significant revision to ¶ our defense strategy.” ¶  “Generate[s] significant operational risks; delays response times to crises, conflicts, and disasters; severely ¶ limits our ability to be forward deployed and engaged around the world; and assumes unacceptable risk in ¶ future combat operations.” ¶  “Severely reduce[s] force training—[and] threatens overall operational readiness. ¶ ¶ In October 2011, the House Armed Services Committee released a study of the impact of defense cuts that ¶ reached comparable conclusions. ¶ ¶ Amid macroeconomic uncertainty, however, Americans continue to oppose further cuts to the Pentagon. ¶ According to a November 2011 Politico-George Washington University Battleground Poll, 82 percent of ¶ ¶ 7 ¶ respondents either strongly opposed or somewhat opposed the Super Committee “cutting spending on ¶ defense programs, including programs for soldiers and veterans” to meet its deficit-reduction goal. ¶ ¶ The financial impact of deep cuts to the Defense Department will be alarming under any sequestration ¶ scenario. More alarming, however, is what more defense cuts could mean for the future of America’s national ¶ security and longstanding role in preserving global stability. ¶ ¶ ¶ Myth #3: Deep cuts in defense spending won’t impact U.S. global leadership. ¶ ¶ FACT: In order to maintain global leadership, the United States must make commensurate investments in ¶ defense of its national security and international interests. ¶ From the Cold War to the post-9/11 world, U.S. spending on national defense has yielded substantial strategic ¶ returns by: ¶ ¶  protecting the security and prosperity of the United States and its allies; ¶  amplifying America’s diplomatic and economic leadership throughout the globe; ¶  preventing the outbreak of the world wars that marked the early 20th century; and ¶  preserving the delicate international order in the face of aggressive, illiberal threats. ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ No doubt, the United States has invested non-trivial amounts on national defense to help achieve these ¶ strategic objectives. But when viewed in historical perspective, the proportion of America’s annual economic ¶ output dedicated to the Defense Department from 1947 to today has been reasonable and acceptable—¶ indeed, a fraction of what it dedicated during World War II. Figure 4 illustrates this. Moreover, in light of the ¶ various rounds of recent cuts to the Pentagon’s multi-year budget, defense spending as percentage of gross ¶ domestic product (GDP) is on track to reach its lowest point since end of World War II. ¶ ¶ Yet defense cuts in recent years have come despite the fact that the United States is facing new threats in the ¶ 21st century to its national security and international interests. As Robert Kagan of the Brookings Institution ¶ summarized in The Weekly Standard: ¶ ¶ The War on Terror: “The terrorists who would like to kill Americans on U.S. soil constantly search for ¶ safe havens from which to plan and carry out their attacks. American military actions in Afghanistan, ¶ Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, and elsewhere make it harder for them to strike and are a large part of the ¶ reason why for almost a decade there has been no repetition of September 11. To the degree that we ¶ limit our ability to deny them safe haven, we increase the chances they will succeed” (emphasis added). ¶ ¶ The Asia Pacific: “American forces deployed in East Asia and the Western Pacific have for decades ¶ prevented the outbreak of major war, provided stability, and kept open international trading routes, ¶ making possible an unprecedented era of growth and prosperity for Asians and Americans alike. Now ¶ the United States faces a new challenge and potential threat from a rising China which seeks eventually ¶ to push the U.S. military’s area of operations back to Hawaii and exercise hegemony over the world’s ¶ most rapidly growing economies. Meanwhile, a nuclear-armed North Korea threatens war with South ¶ Korea and fires ballistic missiles over Japan that will someday be capable of reaching the west coast of ¶ the United States. Democratic nations in the region, worried that the United States may be losing ¶ influence, turn to Washington for reassurance that the U.S. security guarantee remains firm. If the ¶ United States cannot provide that assurance because it is cutting back its military capabilities, they will ¶ have to choose between accepting Chinese dominance and striking out on their own, possibly by ¶ building nuclear weapons” (emphasis added). ¶ ¶ The Middle East: “… Iran seeks to build its own nuclear arsenal, supports armed radical Islamic groups ¶ in Lebanon and Palestine, and has linked up with anti-American dictatorships in the Western ¶ Hemisphere. The prospects of new instability in the region grow every day as a decrepit regime in ¶ Egypt clings to power, crushes all moderate opposition, and drives the Muslim Brotherhood into the ¶ streets. A nuclear-armed Pakistan seems to be ever on the brink of collapse into anarchy and ¶ radicalism. Turkey, once an ally, now seems bent on an increasingly anti-American Islamist course. ¶ The prospect of war between Hezbollah and Israel grows, and with it the possibility of war between ¶ Israel and Syria and possibly Iran. There, too, nations in the region increasingly look to Washington for ¶ reassurance, and if they decide the United States cannot be relied upon they will have to decide ¶ whether to succumb to Iranian influence or build their own nuclear weapons to resist it” (emphasis ¶ added). ¶ ¶ Meeting these threats will require the United States to remain engaged diplomatically and militarily ¶ throughout the globe. And that will require continued investment in national defense. However, further cuts ¶ to Pentagon spending—especially the “devastating” sequestration cut if the Super Committee effort fails—will ¶ fundamentally undermine America’s strategy to defend its national security and international interests. In ¶ Secretary Panetta’s words, “we would have to formulate a new security strategy that accepted substantial risk ¶ of not meeting our defense needs.” ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ Conclusion: Defense spending and the price of greatness. ¶ ¶ Some today find it tempting to slash investments in America’s national security and international interests, ¶ especially given current efforts to reduce the federal debt and deficit. But as this analysis has argued, ¶ however, defense spending—which has already faced nearly $1 trillion in cuts, arguably more—has done its ¶ part for deficit reduction. Moreover, further cuts to defense spending risks fundamentally eroding America’s ¶ standing and leadership role in the world.

### Reconciliation – 50 Votes Key

#### 50 GoP votes is sufficient to repeal healthcare with reconciliation

Doyle McManus, Los Angeles Times Washington Bureau Chief, 7-1-12, [“Obama's victory is now his challenge,” LATimes, Lexis] E. Liu

¶ Now the court, by ruling that the law's penalty for not purchasing insurance is actually a tax, has given the GOP a new line of attack: the charge that the healthcare law was actually a stealthy way of pushing through a tax increase. (In fact, the individual mandate penalty is expected to produce less than 5% of the new revenue in the law after it's phased in; the biggest new taxes, which will fall on high-income taxpayers and insurance providers, were labeled as taxes all along.)¶ ¶ The battle for public opinion isn't over, though. Despite the concentrated assaults and a decidedly weak defense by Democrats, attitudes about the law, while negative, aren't overwhelmingly so. In an NBC News-Wall Street Journal Poll last month, the law was on the losing side of popular support, 41% to 35%, with 24% undecided -- hardly a landslide.¶ ¶ The law's future now depends almost completely on the November election. Romney has promised to work for its repeal on his first day in office if he wins. A Romney victory would probably also produce Republican majorities in both the Senate and the House, making repeal possible, although the Senate's rules that require 60 votes for major action would make it difficult.¶ ¶ Even if the GOP wins only 50 seats in the Senate, a President Romney could try to defund and dismantle key parts of the law through the legislative device known as budget reconciliation. It would require some creativity; a reconciliation bill can deal only with budget measures, and only if it cuts the federal deficit. But GOP aides are already working on such a measure.

### Reconciliation – Every Vote Key

#### Republicans on the brink of gathering Senate votes for reconciliation – Every vote is key

Ben Shapiro, attorney and writer and a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the Freedom Center, 6-29-12, [“The Path to 50,” <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2012/06/29/The-Path-To-51>] E. Li

With Chief Justice John Roberts’ unthinkable decision to uphold Obamacare yesterday, all focus now shifts to repeal for conservatives. In order to repeal Obamacare, two things must happen: Republicans must retake the White House, and they must retake the Senate. ¶ Contrary to popular opinion, Republicans don’t need a 60-vote majority to ram through an Obamacare repeal – as Ken Klukowski pointed out yesterday, “The only way to stop Obamacare now is with a one-page repeal bill that must be passed by the House and Senate. Because it would reduce the deficit you can pass it with 51 votes as a reconciliation bill in the Senate; you don’t need 60 votes.”¶ Republicans currently have 47 seats in the Senate. They only have 10 Senate seats up for re-election, as opposed to Democrats’ 23. Essentially, Republicans need to shift three seats from the Democrats and hold their own in order to win repeal, since the VP is the tiebreaker – although that assumes homogenous Senate Republican support for repeal.¶ Republicans essentially have four vulnerable seats; Democrats have up to ten. The question is how the Obamacare decision will play into these races – if Obamacare is unpopular in these states, that will certainly cut in Republicans’ favor. One thing is clear: swing-state voters do not like Obamacare. First, the Republican toss-up races:¶ Maine: Olympia Snowe’s retirement came as a welcome surprise to many conservatives, but it leaves former Maine governor Angus King as the likely winner in that race. King is running as an independent, but he is clearly a Democrat. The Republican nominee in Maine is Secretary of State Charlie Summers, who is running more than 25 points back of King at this point. ¶ Massachusetts: Scott Brown is running a neck and neck race with Fauxcahontas, Elizabeth Warren. Obamacare is popular in the state, thanks to citizens’ familiarity with Romneycare (even though Romneycare is destroying the state’s finances). The Obamacare decision will have little role here.¶ Nevada: Dean Heller is up against Rep. Shelley Berkley. The race is tight, and Berkley has a history of problems with Congressional ethics. Current polls show Heller up narrowly over Berkley. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is pouring his resources into Berkley’s campaign. According to recent polls, just 34 percent of Nevadans thought that the Supreme Court should rule Obamacare Constitutional.¶ Indiana: The defeat of Richard Lugar in the Indiana primary has put this state in play. Polls show Mourdock and his opponent, Joe Donnelly, essentially tied. Obamacare is massively unpopular in the state; 57 percent of Hoosiers don’t like it.¶ So the prediction for Republicans is that they will lose Maine, and hold the other three. At the worst, Republicans will lose two seats of these four.¶ Now for the Democrats. And this should have Republicans licking their lips:¶ Hawaii: Daniel Akaka retired from his seat in this state, and former Republican Gov. Linda Lingle, who is quite popular, is running for the seat. Both Democratic possibilities, Mazie Hirono and Ed Case, poll well against Lingle – but the last polls done were back in January.¶ Missouri: Claire McCaskill is in serious trouble against whichever Republican emerges from a bruising primary in the state. She runs behind Sarah Steelman, John Brunner, and Todd Akin. And Obamacare is massively unpopular in the state.¶ Montana: Jon Tester is running into an uphill battle against Congressman Denny Rehberg – polls show him trailing by a small to moderate margin. While Tester is a big Obamacare advocate, there’s no polling data indicating which way Montana leans on the issue. ¶ New Mexico: Sen. Jeff Bingaman has decided not to run for re-election, opening the door wide for a Republican challenger. But current polling data has Rep. Martin Heinrich (D) running a few points ahead of Heather Wilson. That polling data is at least three months old. Obamacare as a whole is not popular in the state, which will undoubtedly hurt Heinrich.¶ North Dakota: Sen. Kent Conrad isn’t running this time. That leaves Congressman Rick Berg (R) taking on Heidi Heitkamp in a very tight race – the polls have been bouncing back and forth between the two, although most of the polls showing Heitkamp competitive come from Democrat-leaning pollsters. A full 70 percent of North Dakotans didn’t support Obamacare. Heitkamp did.¶ Virginia: The latest polls have showed a bounce in support for Republican former Sen. George Allen; Tim Kaine, the former governor of the state, has dropped in support at the same time. They’re now running neck and neck. As with other swing states, Obamacare is not popular in Virginia.¶ Wisconsin: Former governor Tommy Thompson is destroying Tammy Baldwin (D) in the polls in Wisconsin; Scott Walker’s big win in the recall effort is a boost for Thompson as well. And Obamacare remains massively unpopular in the state – by a 2-to-1 margin, Wisconsinites thought it should be overturned by the Supreme Court.¶ Florida: Polls show that 50 percent of Floridians didn’t like the Obamacare decision. And Rep. Connie Mack (R) is running even with Sen. Bill Nelson in the latest polls. This could be a significant boost for Mack – although Obama’s immigration decision was popular in Florida, which could be an equal boost for Nelson.¶ Michigan: Senator Debbie Stabenow is running strong against Republican challenger Rep. Pete Hoekstra in current polling. Barring a major upswing for Hoekstra, Democrats will likely hold this seat – although Hoekstra may be able to ride Mitt Romney’s coattails, since Romney is running very strong in Michigan at present.¶ Ohio: Ohio’s one of the toughest races to call. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D) is running against Secretary of State and Republican up-and-comer Josh Mandel, and the polls have been vacillating wildly. Mandel was closing the gap in May polling, but dropped behind again in June, perhaps as a result of President Obama’s frequent campaign stops in the state. Nonetheless, Ohio doesn’t love Obamacare¶ The prediction: Republicans will pick up at least five seats from the Democrats. And with increased conservative excitement and turnout thanks to the fact that the Senate is the crucial battleground for Obamacare repeal, the numbers may be better than that.¶ So, if Republicans can hold two of their four vulnerable seats and take five from the Democrats, they’ll have 50 votes – and the prospective Romney vice president will be the tiebreaker. That will be a difficult task. Repeal of Obamacare will come down to the wire – and in these states, every call, every canvassing, every vote will count.¶ It’s up to these swing state Americans to decide whether we all move further down the path toward nationalization of health care. The opportunity is at hand to repeal Obamacare. It’s an opportunity we can’t afford to blow.

### Reconciliation – More Votes Key

#### More Republican votes is key to reconciliation of healthcare

Las Vegas Sun, Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service, best news website in the nation & DuPont Award for broadcast journalism, 6-29-12, [“Health care ruling strengthens Republican resolve to attack law,” ASSOCIATED PRESS, <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2012/jun/29/health-care-ruling-strengthens-republican-resolve-/>] E. Liu

Democrats didn’t get much time to revel in the Supreme Court’s decision to uphold the Affordable Care Act on Thursday, as Republicans swiftly turned disappointment into a redoubled campaign effort to repeal the law.¶ “I will act to repeal Obamacare,” Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney repledged Thursday morning.¶ The problem: he almost surely can’t.¶ But if things swing the Republicans’ way in November, Congress could do some damage to it.¶ Romney has pledged to use every power at his disposal to undo the health care law if he wins the presidency: issue executive orders, hand out state waivers like candy, and work with Congress to pass a repeal.¶ Repeal is a tricky word for the Republicans, though. On the one hand, it makes for a catchy campaign slogan. On the other, they need enough Republicans in Congress to actually make it work.¶ “I don’t see (a repeal) happening,” said Mark Hutchison, the Las Vegas lawyer appointed by former Gov. Jim Gibbons to fight the health care law. “To replace (the law), we’d have to have the White House, the House and the Senate ... a supermajority in the Senate.”¶ Achieving that in 2012 is all but a mathematical impossibility.¶ It takes 60 votes to overcome the threat of a filibuster in the Senate. There is not an election forecast in existence that gives the Republicans the 13 additional seats they would need to achieve that kind of a supermajority, even if they do manage to win control of the chamber.¶ Without that, a formal repeal is well-nigh impossible. Nonetheless, Nevada Republicans are still promising a repeal in exchange for campaign donations and votes.¶ “Step No. 1 for repealing Obamacare is winning in November,” Sen. Dean Heller’s campaign blasted out to supporters Thursday in a pitch for “$13 today toward victory in November and repeal in 2013.”¶ “This doubles my resolve to repeal what we now know is a tax on every Nevadan who decides to exert their own control over their health care,” Nevada Rep. Joe Heck said in an interview. “The Supreme Court had their word on June 28, but the American people will have the final word on Nov. 6.”¶ But while Republicans can’t deliver on their promise to repeal, they might be able to offer some piecemeal destruction of the bill through an arcane process known as budget reconciliation — if they can secure a simple Senate majority.¶ The budget reconciliation process was used to pass the Affordable Care Act. But it could also come in handy for Republicans trying to pick it apart because the process only requires 51 votes to make changes, so long as one is reducing and not adding tax revenues to the budget.¶ It just so happens that on Thursday, the Supreme Court ruled the health care mandate operates as a tax, constitutional because it falls within Congress’ taxing authority.¶ “There’s no question that if (the mandate) is indeed a tax, you can repeal taxes using reconciliation,” said Robert Dove, who served as the Senate’s parliamentarian through 2001. It’s part of a parliamentarian’s job to act as referee during a budget committee process and determine what sorts of measures senators can and can’t strike down.¶ Even if budget reconciliation eliminated the mandate, the rest of the bill — coverage for pre-existing conditions, eligibility for young adults under age 26 to stay on their parents’ plan and free preventative health care — would stand.¶ “It’s a very narrow rule in terms of what you can put in reconciliation,” Dove explained. “Until the parliamentarian signs off on something, nobody knows anything.”¶ Democrats who had started the day sure that the fight over health care was over did not discount the potential of a post-election threat.¶ ¶ Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid gestures during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, June 28, 2012, after the Supreme Court's ruling on President Barack Obama's health care law.¶ In fact, when asked whether he was concerned about Republicans’ threats to undo the law through the reconciliation process Thursday, Sen. Harry Reid answered with what sounded like a pitch to the American electorate to vote Democrat.¶ “All the more reason that the American people should understand we want to focus on jobs, not taking away benefits,” Reid said. “If they repeal this, it’s a loss of 400,000 jobs ... and we are here to focus on saving those 400,000 jobs and creating more jobs.”¶ The Democrats currently have 53 seats in the Senate, but due to retirements and close contests, need to pick up seats currently occupied by Republicans to maintain a majority.

### Reconciliation – AT: Romney Waivers

#### Any Romney waivers would be delayed

Las Vegas Sun, Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service, best news website in the nation & DuPont Award for broadcast journalism, 6-29-12, [“Health care ruling strengthens Republican resolve to attack law,” ASSOCIATED PRESS, <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2012/jun/29/health-care-ruling-strengthens-republican-resolve-/>] E. Liu

While Hutchison doesn’t see a possibility for repeal, he said “the fastest way to get relief” would be through executive orders waiving state participation in the law.¶ But even that could be problematic for Romney. The executive orders and waivers he’s been threatening to pass are either limited as temporary, not available until 2017 or require states to prove they have a functioning health care system in place that is at least as wide-reaching as the federal health care exchanges.

### Impact – Romney Cuts/Margin Link

#### Massive Romney victory is key to successfully pass major budget cuts

Adam Yoshida, political commentator, BC Director of the Freedom Institute, Author, 5-29-12, [“Romney Should Seek a Big Win,” American Thinker, <http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/05/romney_should_seek_a_big_win.html>] E. Liu

I don't think that's likely. My belief, which I will restate here, is that Mitt Romney is likely to be the 45th president. However, decisions made now will have a profound effect upon what happens after he is sworn into office next January 20. President Romney's first and overriding priority will have to be the restoration of the nation's finances, a program that will require large cuts in the budget and a major entitlement reforms. The larger the mandate that Romney can win -- and the more Republicans whom he can carry into Congress with him -- the more successful he will be in getting his reforms speedily enacted. ¶ Given the Republican tactics used versus President Obama and the increasing polarization of the country, some sort of program of massive resistance to any Republican program of reforms seems to be inevitable. Now, knowing this and expecting this in advance will give a Romney administration some advantages. Advance awareness of the intentions of the opposition will allow the new president to avoid walking into a major ambush and to push through a financial program that will inevitably come down to a majority vote -- probably in the late Spring of 2013 -- on a reform/budget package that will bypass a Democratic filibuster in the Senate by using the budget reconciliation process. Given the increasing tendency of the left around the world -- in Wisconsin, in Greece, and even in Quebec -- to resort to disruptive street demonstrations and worse when they do not get their way about public policy issues, it seems probable that the opposition to Romney's reforms will spill outside the political arena.¶ Given this, the larger the mandate that Governor Romney can win, the better he will be positioned to push back when the inevitable showdown arrives. This means that, without going overboard, the governor's campaign should seek to push beyond the boundaries of the states that George Bush won in his victories. A win in the Bush states will give Romney the White House, but victories in states that Republicans haven't carried in a generation -- in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, and perhaps even places like New Jersey and Oregon -- will give a President Romney the sort of broad national support that he's going to require to win once he's already won the White House.

### Impact – Weaponization

#### Romney would deploy space weapons, collapsing the NSP – His capital and aligned members of Congress are key to overcome the tough fight

Taylor Dinerman, senior editor at Hudson New York, writing for a variety of publications including Ad Astra, The Wall Street Journal and the American Spectator. He was a regular contributor with a weekly piece for Jeff Foust's Space Review and now writes for the Hudson Institute New York, 10-9-11, [“Did Romney Just Endorse Space-Based Weapons?,” National Review, http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/279586/did-romney-just-endorse-space-based-weapons-taylor-dinerman]

In his speech on defense and foreign policy at South Carolina’s Citadel Military Academy on October 7, former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney said: “I will begin reversing the Obama-era missile defense cuts and prioritize the full deployment of a multilayered national ballistic-missile defense system.” If conservatives hold him to this promise, it will be a significant step towards fulfilling the goal of making nuclear weapons “impotent and obsolete” that Ronald Reagan laid out in his famous March 1983 “Star Wars” speech. The key word that Romney pronounced, which heartened missile-defense advocates and almost certainly disturbs the opponents of such defensive systems, is “multilayered.” Once launched, a long-range missile such as an ICBM creates three basic opportunities for a missile-defense system to knock it out. The first and most important is the “boost phase,” just after launch, when the missile is firing its rocket engines and giving off a large amount of easily detected heat. The second targeting opportunity is the “mid-course phase,” when the missile has deployed its warheads and its decoys. This is the most difficult targeting problem that a defense system must solve. It is also the phase during which our currently deployed interceptors, the ones in Alaska and California, are designed to work. The third and final phase is called the “terminal phase,” when the warhead enters the atmosphere and dives toward its target. This is the second-hardest missile-defense problem to solve, because the warhead may maneuver as it approaches its destination. A multilayered missile defense will use a variety of different systems to try and kill the missile and its warhead during each of these phases. Obviously, if a missile is caught and destroyed during the first phase of its flight, the result is better for all concerned. During the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations, this goal led to the so-called Brilliant Pebbles program of space-based heat-seeking interceptors, designed to hit missiles in the boost phase. The program was canceled by Bill Clinton and Les Aspin in 1993. At the time, Aspin reportedly said that he was going to “take the stars out of Star Wars.” Since then, there have been several efforts to develop a non-space-based boost-phase interceptor system. None of them have been satisfactory, since they all require the interceptor to get as close as possible to the target missile and then chase it after it has been launched. As they used to say in the days of sailing navies, “a stern chase is a long chase.” From orbit, however, an interceptor does not have to follow its target; instead, it dives onto it. Brilliant Pebbles relied for its effectiveness on the law of gravity, not on having a bigger rocket engine. George W. Bush never revived Brilliant Pebbles, as the arms-control establishment, liberals in Congress, and the forces of inertia inside the Defense Department successfully blocked any attempt to restart the program. Bush was content to fund the Clinton-designed, ABM Treaty–compliant National Missile Defense mid-course intercept system, which is what we have now. If Romney is elected, and if he is serious about defending the homeland from missile attack, he will have to be ready to spend considerable political capital, as well as time and money, to make it happen. One promising program, the Miniature Kill Vehicle (MKV), which was intended to be launched in large numbers from the ground, was killed by the Obama administration. But a space-based version of MKVs, which are about the size of a loaf of bread, could make space-based missile defense a reality within the first term of a Romney presidency. Earlier this year, Rep. Trent Franks (R., Ariz.) persuaded the House Armed Services Committee to allocate $8 million for the Defense Department “to conduct a study examining the technical and operational considerations associated with developing and operating a limited space-based interceptor capability.” It is doubtful that this will survive the legislative process, and even if it did, the forces inside the Pentagon that have long opposed space-based missile defense will fight hard to ensure that the results of the study will be negative. Still, the mere fact that a few gutsy members of Congress have not given up on effective missile defense shows that if Romney wants to fight this fight, he will not be without allies. Make no mistake: If Mitt Romney is serious about a multilayered national missile defense, he is going to have a major struggle ahead of him. He will have to be prepared to junk Obama’s National Space Policy on January 21, 2013, and will have to fight hard against the arms-control establishment, the liberals, the Russians, the Chinese, and probably also the Europeans. (Officially, the EU is terrified of a so-called and much-hyped “Arms Race in Space.”) Even before the election, Romney will come under serious pressure to promise not to deploy weapons in space, which means conservatives will have a chance to see how he stands up under liberal assault. This should be interesting.

### Weaponization – China Modernization

#### Perception of missile defense causes China to accelerate nuclear modernization

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Chinese analysts and policy makers are discussing whether and how to respond to U.S. missile defense and space weaponization plans. A few Chinese scholars argue that China should not respond at all because the U.S. missile defense program is not feasible and will likely be given up. However, conversations with Chinese experts and officials demonstrate that most Chinese believe that China must respond. Historically, China developed nuclear weapons for the sole purpose of guarding itself against the threat of nuclear blackmail. Many Chinese officials and scholars believe that China should maintain the effectiveness of its nuclear deterrent by every possible means, to negate the threats from missile defense and space weaponization plans.78As one Chinese official stated, “China is not in a position to conduct [an] arms race with [the] U.S. and it does not intend to do so, particularly in the field of missile defense. However, China will not sit idly by and watch its strategic interests being jeopardized without taking necessary measures. It is quite possible and natural for China to review its military doctrine and a series of policies on [its] relationship with big powers, Taiwan issues, arms control and nonproliferation, etc.”79 In response to the pursuit of space weapons by the United States, the first and best option for China—and the option it is now pursuing—is to advocate an arms control agreement. However, if this effort fails and if security concerns perceived to be legitimate are ignored, China will very likely develop responses to neutralize any threat presented by U.S. actions. The timing of such measures is still being debated. Because it is not clear what type of missile defense system the United States will finally deploy, or whether U.S. space control plans will be implemented, it is difficult to identify conclusively China’s specific countermeasures. China’s options for response include: building more ICBMs; adopting countermeasures against boost, mid-course, and terminal phase missile defense; developing ASAT weapons; and reconsidering China’s commitments on arms control. In the discussion below, I examine the types of countermeasures that could be used effectively to neutralize U.S. missile defense and space control plans; China’s technical capabilities in applying those countermeasures; and the other responses, diplomatic or legal, that might be expected. It should be noted that these discussions are based on China’s capabilities, and should not be understood as a characterization of China’s intentions. Build More Warheads One optimal countermeasure for China is to build more ICBMs.80 Although some supporters of U.S. missile defense claim that China’s nuclear modernization will go forward whether or not the system is deployed, many Chinese analysts believe that U.S. missile defense efforts will encourage an acceleration of China’s nuclear modernization and influence its force both quantitatively and qualitatively. China’s strategic nuclear force is among the smallest forces of all declared nuclear powers and also the most outmoded in quality. China’s silo-based, single-warhead ICBMs (the DF-5A), of which there are approximately twenty, are liquid-fueled missiles with warheads and fuel stored separately from the missile. They require about two to four hours of preparation time before launch. China has one nuclear-armed submarine, which entered service in the late 1980s; however, the twelve submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) it carries have a fairly short range (Julang I, with a range of about 1700 km). The submarine patrols close to the Chinese mainland and is infrequently at sea.81China’s pursuit of nuclear modernization is understandable. China initiated its nuclear modernization programs in the early 1980s. Current efforts focus mainly on enhancing the survivability of China’s strategic nuclear force via greater mobility. It is reported that China is replacing its silo-based, liquid-fueled ICBMs with a road-mobile, solid-fueled missile (the Dong Feng-31, or DF-31). China conducted the first flight test of this missile in August 1999, with deployment anticipated to begin over the next several years. It is believed that the DF-31 has a range of about 8000 km and will be targeted primarily against Russia, India, and U.S. bases and facilities in the Pacific Ocean. It will not reach the continental United States.82It is reported that China is also developing the DF-31A, a road-mobile, solid-fueled missile with a range of up to 12,000 km. The Pentagon predicts the DF-31A will be deployed by the end of the decade, although others see this projection as overly optimistic.83In addition, China is reported to have begun work on the development of new nuclear-armed submarines (through Project 094), each carrying 16 Julang II SLBMs that may have intercontinental range. However, deployment of these submarines is most likely many years away. Chinese nuclear modernization has proceeded at a very moderated pace. Were it not for U.S. missile defense plans, the pace might not be expected to change significantly. Because China’s focus is on survivability rather than quantity, the size of its nuclear arsenals would likely be much smaller if they did not have to contend with U.S. missile defenses. China certainly did not rush to bring new missiles into its force in the past. Western sources report that China deployed two ICBMs in 1981, a total of four by 1987, a total of five by 1990, and about 20 by 2004.84Extrapolating from past experience, China would be expected to build no more than 50 ICBMs by 2015. In fact, the unclassified 1999 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on nuclear forces noted that by 2015 China “will likely have tens” of ICBMs capable of attacking the United States, having added “a few tens” since 1999.85In the most recent NIE estimate, China is projected to have about 75–100 ICBMs by 2015.86However, the U.S. intelligence community seems to often overestimate China’s nuclear forces. For example, in 1984, the Defense Intelligence Agency set “the best estimate” for the projected number of Chinese nuclear warheads at 592 in 1989 and 818 in 1994.87In reality, according to western reports, it is estimated that there are approximately 400 warheads in the Chinese arsenal. Given that China is currently focusing on the quality of its force, and not on the number of its ICBMs, it might be expected that without a U.S. missile defense deployment, China would deploy no more than 50 ICBMs by 2015. However, this situation would surely change significantly with the deployment of U.S. missile defenses. To maintain a credible minimum retaliatory capability, China would have to shift the size and quality of its nuclear arsenal. The nature of the response would depend on a number of factors, including technology, cost, and the specific missile defense system. Without knowing the specifications of U.S. missile defense system, including the numbers of interceptors and the firing doctrine, it is difficult to predict an exact response.

#### Modernization makes war go nuclear

Christopher Twomey, co-directs the Center for Contemporary Conflict and is an assistant professor in the Department of National Security Affairs, both at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, Arms Control Association, 1/2-09, [“Chinese-U.S. Strategic Affairs: Dangerous Dynamism,” Arms Control, <http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_01-02/china_us_dangerous_dynamism#Twomey>]

China and the United States are not in a strategic weapons arms race. Nonetheless, their modernization and sizing decisions increasingly are framed with the other in mind. Nuclear weapons are at the core of this interlocking pattern of development. In particular, China is the only permanent member of the UN Security Council expanding its arsenal; it is also enhancing its arsenal. The basic facts of Chinese strategic modernization are well known, if the details remain frustratingly opaque. China is deploying road-mobile, solid-fueled missiles, giving it a heighted degree of security in its second-strike capability. It is beginning to deploy ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs). It is researching a wide range of warhead and delivery systems technologies that will lead to increased accuracy and, more pointedly, increased penetration against ballistic missile defenses. The size of China's deliverable arsenal against the United States will undoubtedly increase beyond the few dozen that it possessed recently.[1] The pace of growth thus far has been moderate, although China has only recently developed reliable, survivable delivery systems. The final endpoint remains mired in opacity and uncertainty, although several score of deliverable warheads seems likely for the near term. These developments on the strategic side are coupled with elements of conventional modernization that impinge on the strategic balance.[2] The relevant issue, however, is not simply an evaluation of the Chinese modernization program, but rather an evaluation of the interaction of that modernization with U.S. capabilities and interests. U.S. capabilities are also changing. Under the provisions of START and SORT, the United States has continued to engage in quantitative reductions of its operational nuclear arsenal. At the same, there is ongoing updating of warhead guidance and fusing systems. Ballistic missile defense systems of a variety of footprints are being deployed. The U.S. SSBN force now leans more toward the Pacific than the Atlantic, reversing the Cold War deployment. Guam's capacity to support heavy bombers and attack submarines has been enhanced. Furthermore, advances in U.S. conventional weaponry have been so substantial that they too promise strategic effects: prompt global strike holds out the promise of a U.S. weapon on target anywhere in the world in less than an hour and B-2s with highly accurate weapons can sustain strategic effects over a campaign. What are the concerns posed by these two programs of dynamic strategic arsenals? Most centrally, the development of the strategic forces detailed above has increasingly assumed an interlocked form. The U.S. revolution in precision guided munitions was followed by an emphasis on mobility in the Chinese missile force. U.S. missile defense systems have clearly spurred an emphasis on countermeasures in China's ICBM force and quantitative buildups in its regional missile arsenals.[3] Beijing's new submarine-based forces further enhance the security of China's second-strike capability in the face of a potential U.S. strike but are likely to lead to increased attention to anti-submarine warfare in the United States. China's recent anti-satellite test provoked a U.S. demonstration of similar capabilities. Such reciprocal responses have the potential to move toward a tightly coupled arms race and certainly have already worsened threat perceptions on each side. The potential for conflict is not simply that of inadvertent escalation; there are conflicts of interests between the two. Heightening threat perceptions in that context greatly complicates diplomacy. Further, the dangers of inadvertent escalation have been exacerbated by some of these moves. Chinese SSBN deployment will stress an untested command-and-control system. Similar dangers in the Cold War were mitigated, although not entirely overcome, over a period of decades of development of personnel and technical solutions. China appears to have few such controls in place today. U.S. deployment of highly accurate nuclear warheads is consistent with a first-strike doctrine and seems sized for threats larger than "rogue" nations. These too would undermine stability in an intense crisis.

### Weaponization – Cooperation

#### Weaponization triggers an arms race, disbanding all international cooperation

Jinyuan Sua, The Silk Road Institute of International Law, School of Law, Visiting Fellow, The Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, 8-4-10, [“The “peaceful purposes” principle in outer space and the RussiaeChina PPWT Proposal,” Space Policy 26, [www.macalester.edu/internationalstudies/Su%202010.pdf](http://www.macalester.edu/internationalstudies/Su%202010.pdf)] E. Liu

However, even in situations short of self-defense, states may try to justify space weaponization by citing the Lotus dictum, namely that in international law what is not explicitly prohibited is permitted.34Proponents of this approach make two assumptions, which must not be overlooked, as their starting points: (1) the completeness of international law, which is far from a decided question; (2) the Lotus dictum as the closing rule for all lacunae in international law. In fact, the International Court of Justice itself has been very cautious in applying the dictum.35In a number of cases, judges have even expressed the view that the principle is an outdated one.36Space weaponization in situations short of selfdefense is against the general principle of maintaining international peace and security, because it would fuel an arms race in space and upset efforts at arms control on Earth by breaking the current strategic balance and stability under the philosophy of “mutually assured destruction” (MAD). It would also fall foul of the current cooperative background to international law, as on the one hand it could result in proliferation of space debris and leave less room for civilian systems in the increasingly crowded realm of low-Earth orbit, 37and on the other the rise of inter-state conflicts would take precedence over issues relating to global well-being, such as global warming, poverty and disease, on international agendas.

#### Space weapons make accidents and war inevitable – Causes massive retaliation

Gordon Mitchell, et al., Associate Professor of Communication and Director of Debate at the University of Pittsburgh, 01, [“Briefing on Ballistic Missile Defence, “Missile Defence: Trans-Atlantic Diplomacy at a Crossroads”, No. 6 July, http://www.isisuk.demon.co.uk/0811/isis/uk/bmd/no6.html]

A buildup of space weapons might begin with noble intentions of 'peace through strength' deterrence, but this rationale glosses over the tendency that '… the presence of space weapons…will result in the increased likelihood of their use'.33 This drift toward usage is strengthened by a strategic fact elucidated by Frank Barnaby: when it comes to arming the heavens, 'anti-ballistic missiles and anti-satellite warfare technologies go hand-in-hand'.34 The interlocking nature of offense and defense in military space technology stems from the inherent 'dual capability' of spaceborne weapon components. As Marc Vidricaire, Delegation of Canada to the UN Conference on Disarmament, explains: 'If you want to intercept something in space, you could use the same capability to target something on land'. 35 To the extent that ballistic missile interceptors based in space can knock out enemy missiles in mid-flight, such interceptors can also be used as orbiting 'Death Stars', capable of sending munitions hurtling through the Earth's atmosphere. The dizzying speed of space warfare would introduce intense 'use or lose' pressure into strategic calculations, with the spectre of split-second attacks creating incentives to rig orbiting Death Stars with automated 'hair trigger' devices. In theory, this automation would enhance survivability of vulnerable space weapon platforms. However, by taking the decision to commit violence out of human hands and endowing computers with authority to make war, military planners could sow insidious seeds of accidental conflict. Yale sociologist Charles Perrow has analyzed 'complexly interactive, tightly coupled' industrial systems such as space weapons, which have many sophisticated components that all depend on each other's flawless performance. According to Perrow, this interlocking complexity makes it impossible to foresee all the different ways such systems could fail. As Perrow explains, '[t]he odd term "normal accident" is meant to signal that, given the system characteristics, multiple and unexpected interactions of failures are inevitable'.36 Deployment of space weapons with pre-delegated authority to fire death rays or unleash killer projectiles would likely make war itself inevitable, given the susceptibility of such systems to 'normal accidents'. It is chilling to contemplate the possible effects of a space war. According to retired Lt. Col. Robert M. Bowman, 'even a tiny projectile reentering from space strikes the earth with such high velocity that it can do enormous damage — even more than would be done by a nuclear weapon of the same size!'. 37 In the same Star Wars technology touted as a quintessential tool of peace, defence analyst David Langford sees one of the most destabilizing offensive weapons ever conceived: 'One imagines dead cities of microwave-grilled people'.38 Given this unique potential for destruction, it is not hard to imagine that any nation subjected to space weapon attack would retaliate with maximum force, including use of nuclear, biological, and/or chemical weapons. An accidental war sparked by a computer glitch in space could plunge the world into the most destructive military conflict ever seen.

# Shared Evidence

## Shared Uniqueness

### Gridlock After Election

#### Tons of legislation and gridlock blocks the agenda in 2013

CNN, 6-8-12, [“Could Congress go from bad to worse after election?,” Halimah Abdullah, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/06/08/politics/congress-worse-election/index.html>] E. Liu

Washington (CNN) -- Think this current climate of political polarization is bad?¶ Things could get even uglier in 2013.¶ With a third of the Senate and every seat in the House up for election this year, each side is already bragging about how likely it is they will win back or take over the next Congress.¶ But if the past three years are any indicator, no matter if the Republicans or Democrats control the House or Senate -- or both -- gridlock, brinkmanship and stalemate could continue to plague the next president and frustrate the American electorate.¶ The ongoing back and forth Friday between the White House and Republican leadership over exactly who is at fault for the weak economy offers a glimpse into what's in store.¶ "One of the things that people get so frustrated about is that instead of actually talking about what would help, we get wrapped up in these political games. That's what we need to put an end to," President Barack Obama said on Friday, a day when politicos on both sides of the aisle played the blame game over the country's fiscal troubles.¶ Voters have been clear in expressing their displeasure with Congress, whose approval ratings -- currently only 15% of Americans polled think Congress is doing a good job -- have been in the basement for much of the past few years. And it doesn't stop there. ¶ The Republican-controlled House's frequent election-year recesses do little to clear the mountain of legislative work off their plates and have rankled such Democratic colleagues as House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-California.¶ "Instead of recessing yet again, the House should remain at work and pass critical legislation that will create jobs for the middle class that will actually be signed into law. Republicans must not run out the clock on the economy," Pelosi wrote in a letter to House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, this week, adding that the upcoming recess is the ninth weeklong break this year.¶ Whether President Obama or Republican Mitt Romney occupies the Oval Office next year, both men are facing an indigestion-inducing plate full of domestic problems.¶ Either one could, for instance, have to preside over a dramatic overhaul of the health care reform law if the Supreme Court strikes down the individual coverage mandate as unconstitutional this month. The original law passed in 2010 without a single Republican vote in the House or the Senate.¶ The backlog of bills that have passed in one chamber but are in limbo in another include the hotly debated transportation bill. Many House Republicans want any deal on the transportation construction measure to include approval of the Keystone XL oil pipeline.¶ In the Senate, both parties are at loggerheads on the best way to address mushrooming student loan rates.

### AT: Big Win Now – Polls

#### Polls tend to overperform – Means wins are smaller than predictd

Nate Silver, 7-22-12, [“Do Presidential Polls Break Toward Challengers?,” 538, http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/22/do-presidential-polls-break-toward-challengers/] E. Liu

Still, we can rerun these numbers with those four years excluded: This evidence is at least a little bit better for the “incumbent rule.” You still see the tendency of the incumbent candidate to overperform polls conducted in July and August. But the challenger has overperformed the polls in the other months. However, it is not clear that this has to do with which candidate is the incumbent and which is the challenger so much as something else. In presidential years, the polls typically break toward the candidate who trails in the polls — that is, there is some regression toward the mean. A candidate who trails by 20 points in July is a favorite to do at least a little bit better than that by Election Day (although, obviously, he is a huge underdog to actually win the election). More often than not — in an election against a true incumbent — it is the challenger who trails, so what looks like the “incumbent rule” may simply be regression toward the mean. You can see this phenomenon fairly clearly if, for instance, you compare the margin in the September polls against the actual election results, as in the chart below. In this chart, I have included only those years in which there was a true incumbent candidate running (1972, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1992, 1996, 2004). The regression line in the chart has a slope of less than one (specifically, it has a slope of about .7). What that means is that the candidate leading in the September polls will typically only realize about seven-tenths of his actual margin on Election Day — so, for instance, the best guess for a candidate who leads by 10 points in September is that he will win by 7 points in November.

## Shared Link

### Landslide Link

#### Landslides in the election are key to a mandate that facilitates any political progress

Chris Cillizza, managing editor of PostPolitics and he writes "The Fix," a politics blog for The Washington Post, 6-17-12, [“Can any president succeed in today’s political world?,” Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/can-any-president-succeed-in-todays-political-world/2012/06/17/gJQAPBFIjV_story.html>] E. Liu

Stan Greenberg, who handled polling for former President Bill Clinton, agreed with Musser generally but said the onus for where the country and its politics goes next lies with Republicans. “Unless one party has a sweep as in 2008 and 2010, we face a moment of decision for the Republicans,” said Greenberg. “Note for a moment, bills freed up for action after 2010. And I think you face a similar moment after 2012 and in 2013.”¶ The scarier scenario — whispered about by political strategists in both parties — is that there is neither a mandate for either side in November nor a post-election catharsis, meaning that the next president gets no honeymoon period and, therefore, policy and/or political progress will fail before it ever has a chance to succeed.

### Margin/Action Link

#### Substantive actions that cause a large victory margin is key to a mandate for policy

Thomas L. Friedman, internationally renowned author, reporter, and columnist—the recipient of three Pulitzer Prizes and the author of six bestselling books, 11-24-11, [“Go big, Obama,” The International Herald Tribune, Lexis] E. Liu

President Obama has a clear choice on how to approach the 2012 election: He can spend all his energy defining Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich or whoever ends up as the Republican nominee in as ugly a way as possible, or he can spend all his energy defining the future in as credible a way as possible. If he spends his energy defining his Republican opponent, there is a chance the president will win with 50.00001 percent of the vote and no mandate to do what needs doing. If he spends his time defining the future in a credible way and offering a hard, tough, realistic pathway to get there, he will not only win, but he will have a mandate to take the country where we need to go.

#### Narrow victories obviate any agenda or mandate

Jonathan Rauch, guest scholar at the Brookings Institution, 7-5-12, [“A Plan That Offers Obama a Fighting Chance,” Brookings, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/07/06-obama-economy-rauch>] E. Liu

But the economic head winds Obama is fighting are much stronger than those faced by Bush, and his approval ratings are lower. In any case, a narrow victory based on electoral salami-slicing and negative advertising would leave Obama without a clear mandate or agenda for his second term. Ask Bush how that works out.

### Margins Link/AT: No Mandate

#### The no mandate argument assumes contemporary narrow margins – A landslide causes policy support

Ezra Klein, editor of Wonkblog and a columnist at the Washington Post, as well as a contributor to MSNBC and Bloomberg, 6-8-12, [“The myth of the presidential mandate,” Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/the-myth-of-the-presidential-mandate/2012/06/08/gJQA0HvVNV\_blog.html] E. Liu

But can you remember the last time it actually worked that way? The U.S. political system makes winning an election a necessary but very insufficient qualification for governing. The frequent elections in the House and staggered elections in the Senate, the expansion of the filibuster, the influence of the Supreme Court and the polarization of the political parties combine to constrain power. You can win an election and quickly find you lack the support to pass major priorities. Recall President Bill Clinton being stymied on health-care reform, or President George W. Bush’s failed run at Social Security privatization.¶ If you consider the mechanics of presidential mandates, it’s clear why they don’t amount to much. For one thing, contemporary elections are decided by narrow margins. Had 3.6 percent of the electorate voted the other way in 2008, Sen. John McCain would be president. In 2004, if 1.25 percent of Bush’s voters had switched sides, Sen. John Kerry would have won. In 2000, well, the winner didn’t even win the popular vote. In 1992 and 1996, Clinton won majorities in the Electoral College, but due to Ross Perot’s popularity, he never won the majority of the popular vote. None of these elections produced the kind of Rooseveltian or Reaganite landslides that cow the opposing party into submission.

### Coattails Yes – 2008

#### Coattails create a favorable congress – 2008 proves that presidential enthusiasm spills over

Casey B. K. Dominguez, received her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California,¶ Berkeley, es courses on American politics at the University¶ of San Diego¶ , 09, [“Mandates, Honeymoons, and the Obama¶ Administration¶ ,” THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION: SETTING UP A GOVERNMENT, The Forum¶ Volume 7, Issue 1¶ 2009¶ Article 4, <http://prof-harrys-bulletin.cocolog-nifty.com/politics/files/mondates_honeymoons_obama_administration.pdf>] E. Liu

The election of 2008 also meets Conley’s other criterion for the ¶ communication of political staying power: Obama had coattails. Not since Ronald ¶ Reagan’s election in 1980 has a new president entered office with more than 20 ¶ new House members of his own party. While this continues a Democratic (or ¶ perhaps anti-Bush or anti-Republican) trend that began in 2006, enthusiastic voter ¶ turnout on the Democratic side, led by the Obama campaign organization, ¶ certainly played a role in some of those victories. ¶ ¶ The coattail effect is even more clearly seen on the Senate side. Democrats ¶ picked up eight seats, more Senate seats than any presidential party since 1980 ¶ and a number exceeded only one other time in the post-war era. Moreover, ¶ Obama’s popularity, turnout operation, and campaign coffers probably directly ¶ affected the outcome of at least four of those races. Obama ran ahead of Udall in ¶ Colorado, Shaheen in New Hampshire, and Merkley in Oregon. He ran slightly ¶ behind Kay Hagan in North Carolina, but few would argue that North Carolina ¶ would have been in play if it had not been for the pro-Obama tide in that state. ¶ And given the closeness of the race in Minnesota, pro-Obama enthusiasm might ¶ have made the marginal difference there, as well.

### Coattails Key

#### Having enough votes to pass legislation is key despite polarization

Ezra Klein, editor of Wonkblog and a columnist at the Washington Post, as well as a contributor to MSNBC and Bloomberg, 6-8-12, [“The myth of the presidential mandate,” Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/the-myth-of-the-presidential-mandate/2012/06/08/gJQA0HvVNV\_blog.html] E. Liu

There is one theory of change that works even in an age of intense polarization: having the votes to pass your agenda. Obama learned this when the Senate approved health-care reform with zero Republican votes. Ryan talks about the “moral authority” to enact fundamental reforms, but if his budget passes, it will do so because Republicans gained control of both chambers of Congress and budgets can’t be filibustered in the Senate. Obama, who is likely to face a divided Congress if he’s reelected, will have to hope that the expiration of the Bush tax cuts and the “trigger” of the spending sequester give him sufficient leverage to force Republicans to work with him.¶ Fiscal policy is a special case in which the consequences of gridlock will make action necessary and Senate rules will make passage easier. On most issues, neither Obama nor Romney would be likely to have the votes or cross-party cooperation to get much done. Washington is too bitterly polarized for that, and the political system is too easy to stymie. If voters don’t like that state of affairs -- if we want elections to produce leaders who can govern effectively -- then the question, really, is what our theory of change is. Because simply turning Democrats and Republicans in and out of office doesn’t seem to be working.

### Mandate Key to Policy

#### Electoral mandate and enthusiasm is key to policy implementation

NYTimes, 7-13-12, [“Candidates Racing for Future, Gaze Fixed Firmly on the Past,” Peter Baker, Lexis] E. Liu

The consequence of that, though, may be a victor who wakes up the morning after Election Day without much of a mandate. Mr. Bush discovered that after the 2004 election when he opened his second term with a plan to restructure Social Security by allowing younger workers to divert some of their payroll taxes to investment accounts. While he had long supported such a move, it was not the centerpiece of his campaign speeches and the idea went nowhere.¶ Mr. Obama, for his part, did talk about big ideas for the future in 2008 and arguably did have a mandate for some of them. Yet he found that despite his election victory, the health care plan he passed did not enjoy public support and his plans to curb greenhouse gases and liberalize immigration rules had little traction in Congress. Now he promises to keep pursuing the same goals, but they do not seem to be motivating core supporters as much as attacks on his opponent.¶ ''Perhaps in part because neither candidate is a classic populist, both camps are conspicuously reigniting old grievances to generate enthusiasm among their bases,'' said Paul Bledsoe, a senior adviser at the Bipartisan Policy Center, a Washington advocacy organization. ''Once they have voter attention this way, they seem to hope their more positive messages can then at least get a hearing from a notably wary electorate.''¶ In effect, then, the campaigns may be laying the groundwork for the conversation after Labor Day. ''In a larger sense, the focus on the past records of the candidates is prologue to the fundamental debate about the future we inevitably will be having in the fall,'' said Geoff Garin, a Democratic pollster working with Priorities USA Action, a super PAC supporting Mr. Obama.

### Weak Mandate Fails

#### Narrow victories incentivize backlash – Belief in regaining opposition support

Casey B. K. Dominguez, received her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California,¶ Berkeley, es courses on American politics at the University¶ of San Diego¶ , 09, [“Mandates, Honeymoons, and the Obama¶ Administration¶ ,” THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION: SETTING UP A GOVERNMENT, The Forum¶ Volume 7, Issue 1¶ 2009¶ Article 4, <http://prof-harrys-bulletin.cocolog-nifty.com/politics/files/mondates_honeymoons_obama_administration.pdf>] E. Liu

On a less hopeful note for Obama, the lack of a honeymoon with ¶ congressional Republicans, while not determinative of legislative success, helped ¶ to drive up Obama’s negative approval ratings quite quickly. Republican ¶ discipline in resisting the stimulus bandwagon may be partly due to the fact that ¶ his electoral victory was not an overwhelming one, or one in which conservative ¶ ideology was soundly or clearly defeated. In essence, the weak mandate may have ¶ emboldened the opposition. Republican members of Congress have reason to ¶ believe that the public might turn back to them, so that they face reduced ¶ incentives to support the new president.

#### Narrow mandate in 08 didn’t help Obama’s policy proposals

Casey B. K. Dominguez, received her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California,¶ Berkeley, es courses on American politics at the University¶ of San Diego¶ , 09, [“Mandates, Honeymoons, and the Obama¶ Administration¶ ,” THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION: SETTING UP A GOVERNMENT, The Forum¶ Volume 7, Issue 1¶ 2009¶ Article 4, <http://prof-harrys-bulletin.cocolog-nifty.com/politics/files/mondates_honeymoons_obama_administration.pdf>] E. Liu

This paper considers whether President Obama won a mandate during the 2008 election, and¶ whether he is experiencing the expected honeymoon with the press, public, and Congress in 2009.¶ It finds that the electorate did instruct him to “fix” the economy, but that given his relatively narrow¶ victory and the electorate’s indecisive rejection of conservative principles, the limited mandate he¶ won is not necessarily going to help him govern. This paper also argues that he is experiencing a¶ normal first-year honeymoon with the press and public, while his partisan advantage in Congress¶ overwhelms any Republican reluctance to be deferential to him. Between the limited mandate,¶ high public approval ratings, and large partisan majorities in Congress, prospects for his first year¶ in office look fairly good.

### AT: Mandate Inevitable

#### Mandates always occur but on a sliding scale – Also senate composition is key and dependent on the elections

National Journal, 7-19-12, [“The Upside Down Smile,” Major Garrett, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/president-obama-as-pit-bull-20120719>] E. Liu

It’s only July, and President Obama’s campaign has already called Mitt Romney an outsourcing, job-killing, company-bankrupting whiner who may also be a tax cheat and a felon. The brass knuckles are out, the presumptive Republican nominee is bleeding, and Obama is selling off his likability as if it were an inexhaustible commodity.¶ But is it? Can voters tolerate the lurch from preaching hope and change to mocking Romney’s off-key rendition of “America the Beautiful” and hurling contestable allegations that he oversaw the outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries? And even if they do, does Obama’s team see a governing path for a reelected president who has so toxically attacked his rival?¶ In private conversations they will not allow to be quoted, Obama’s top campaign advisers believe that he will win reelection by 51 percent to 49 percent. That’s a smaller popular-vote percentage than Obama’s 52.9 percent in 2008. If this happens, Obama will be the first president since Andrew Jackson to win reelection with a lower percentage of the popular vote than his first election (James Madison was the other one who did this).¶ Even so, Obama will claim a mandate, but it will, by definition, be smaller than the one he captured in 2008. The Republican House, a by-product of voter unhappiness with his first two years in office, will likely remain, although with slightly smaller numbers. The wild card is the Senate. Obama and Romney advisers both expect the chamber to follow the top of the ticket, with a narrow majority either way.

# Affirmative

### Close Romney Win – Close Now

#### Obama’s losing popularity now – That means Romney will have a super close win

Michael Medved, nationally syndicated radio talk show host and bestselling author, 7-25-12, [“Obama's Uphill Re-election Bid,” Hispanic Business, <http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/2012/7/25/obamas_uphill_reelection_bid.htm>] E. Liu

Quick, now. Try to name big segments of the electorate, or even prominent individuals, who opposed Barack Obama in 2008 but have joined his campaign for re-election. Difficulty in answering that question caused even the president, in a fleeting moment of candor, to suggest that he could easily lose the White House. On May 10, Obama soured the mood of enthusiastic donors at a Seattle fundraiser by telling them that "this election is actually going to be even closer than the last." In other words, he knows that he has lost supporters, rather than gaining them, during his three-and-a-half years of leadership. A "closer election" means that one of the few iron rules of U.S. politics indicates he'll lose his bid for a second term. History offers not one example of a chief executive whose popular appeal declined during his first term of office but nonetheless managed to eke out a re-election victory, as Obama proposes to do. Among the 24 elected presidents who sought second terms, all 15 who earned back-to-back victories drew more support in bids for re-election than they did in their previous campaigns. In the past century, this base-broadening for re-elected presidents hasn't been modest or subtle. When Woodrow Wilson campaigned for re-election in 1916 (without Teddy Roosevelt as a third party competitor), his percentage of the popular vote soared by 7 points. Franklin Roosevelt in 1936 enhanced his already formidable popularity by 4 percentage points, and Dwight Eisenhower's landslide re-election in 1956 saw his share of the electorate rise from 55% to 57%. Richard Nixon's improvement amounted to a staggering 17 points in 1972, while Ronald Reagan's re-election percentage went up by 8 points.

### Close Romney Win – Declining Obama Support

#### Obama’s losing support from multiple groups – Causes a tiny Romney wni

Michael Medved, nationally syndicated radio talk show host and bestselling author, 7-25-12, [“Obama's Uphill Re-election Bid,” Hispanic Business, <http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/2012/7/25/obamas_uphill_reelection_bid.htm>] E. Liu

In contrast, several of Obama's hope-and-change boosters have deserted his cause and in some cases enlisted with the opposition. Artur Davis, three-term Alabama congressman and Congressional Black Caucus member, delivered a seconding speech for Obama in 2008, but he now backs Romney and has changed his registration to Republican. West Virginia Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin, a former governor, says he can't commit to supporting Obama this time, and the state's incumbent governor, Earl Ray Tomblin, expressed similar sentiments. Colin Powell, who proudly joined the Obama's first historic campaign for the White House, insists he remains uncommitted in 2012. Meanwhile, the tight national polling shows static or declining enthusiasm for Obama in the key constituent groups that made up 2008's victorious coalition. The president still commands big leads among young people, Jewish voters, union households and unmarried women -- but his numbers are down from last time. Even among African-American voters, where candidate Obama drew 95% of the vote in 2008, his backing looks less unanimous and enthusiastic, indicating potentially reduced turnout. The president holds his own with Hispanics (thanks to his new emphasis on immigration) but can't expect significant improvement on the 67% he scored last time. Four years ago, Obama won Catholic voters, but recent polls show this key swing constituency either evenly divided or tilting toward Romney. If the president doesn't compensate for inevitable losses by adding new supporters, he's certain to lose the election: His vote total last time (nearly 52.9% against John McCain) doesn't provide a comfortable cushion against a more formidable opponent and more unified GOP. Democratic strategists must identify elements of the electorate where they can add new votes over 2008 rather than struggling on every front to limit their losses. That's why the president's own prediction of an election "even closer than the last" might have unwittingly revealed his underlying pessimism in approaching November. He broke tradition and made history in 2008 by becoming the first non-white candidate elected to national office. It's also conceivable that he could discredit Romney thoroughly enough to become the only president to win a second term with reduced rather than enhanced support. But the odds, and records of all past campaigns, show that accepting fewer votes in a bid for re-election amounts to a formula for sure defeat rather than a blue-print for narrow victory.

### Close Romney Win – Likely Voters

#### Likely give Romney a slight advantage and undecided voters will go to him

Carter Eskew, Founding Partner and Managing Director of The Glover Park Group (GPG) who has over 20 years of experience in the most high profile corporate and political campaigns, 7-25-12, [“What the election comes down to,” The Insiders, Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-insiders/post/what-the-election-comes-down-to/2012/07/25/gJQABBve9W_blog.html>] E. Liu

We can thank two of the nation's best political pollsters, Democrat Peter Hart and Republican Bill McInturff, for finally putting the 2012 race in clear perspective. Their latest poll for NBC and the Wall Street Journal shows Obama in the lead, nationally by 6 percentage points and in the target states by 8 percentage points. The negatives of both candidates are rising and the electorate is now almost completely polarized. But by digging into the internals of the poll, you find interesting information. In an ominous sign for Obama, among those voters most closely following the race — a proxy for those likeliest to vote — Romney has a slight advantage. But potential trouble for Romney resides in the small pool of undecided voters. I have said previously that undecided voters almost always break strongly against the incumbent. But Hart and McInturff point out that while these voters dislike both candidates, their antipathy for Romney is almost unprecedented. Among undecided voters, Romney’s favorability to unfavorability is 16% to 44%.

### Close Romney Win – New Hampshire

#### Romney is winning New Hampshire and undeclared voter push makes his win really close

National Review, 7-24-12, [“The Battle for Romney’s Backyard,” Robert Costa, <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/310386/battle-romney-s-backyard-robert-costa>] E. Liu

But it wasn’t all fireworks and apple pie. Romney’s appearance also served a political purpose. New Hampshire — the northern neighbor of Massachusetts, the state Romney once governed — is a small but critical battleground, and Romney is eager to secure the state’s four electoral votes. Four years ago, President Obama easily won the Granite State, but after major Republican gains in 2010, Romney’s campaign is optimistic about its chances in New England’s flinty, independent neighborhood. Over the past few months, they have opened multiple offices and call centers across the state. “This is a state that can swing dramatically,” says Ryan Williams, a Romney adviser and a former aide to New Hampshire governor John Sununu. “We think it’s going to be close and that we can win here, especially since the governor has been competing in the primary for a number of years.” Romney’s participation in the past two New Hampshire primary elections has given him a large, sprawling base of support and a network of top-flight political operatives, such as Jim Merill. Twelve years ago, Merrill managed George W. Bush’s successful New Hampshire general-election campaign. Tom Rath, a Romney adviser and a former New Hampshire attorney general, thinks Romney’s fiscal conservatism and suburban appeal will play as well this year as it did for Bush more than a decade ago. “Romney’s temperament and views make him the kind of Republican who wins here,” Rath says. Bush’s 2000 victory, however, was narrow, as was Democrat John Kerry’s New Hampshire win in 2004. Veteran Republican consultants expect the Obama–Romney race to resemble those two tight contests more than Obama’s 2008 sweep, when the Illinois Democrat won all ten counties. “Both parties are taking this state seriously,” says Dave Carney, a New Hampshire–based Republican strategist. “But I think Romney may have an edge. If you watched him on the rope line at the Wolfeboro parade, it was obvious that many people know him on a first-name basis, and that’s invaluable.” Carney says Romney’s close relationship with New Hampshire is similar to George H. W. Bush’s decade-long wooing of New Hampshire voters from 1978 to 1988, between the 1980 and 1988 primary seasons. As with Romney, Bush lived in the region and New Hampshire was key to his presidential hopes. In the polls, Romney has recently closed the gap. The latest New Hampshire poll, published by WMUR, shows Obama leading Romney, 49 percent to 45 percent; but back in WMUR’s April poll, the president led Romney by nine percentage points. Obama’s approval rating in the poll was below 50 percent, a sign of vulnerability. Romney’s competitive standing does not surprise Democrats, who have been organizing in New Hampshire for more than a year, and the Obama campaign has opened 14 field offices. Vice President Joe Biden has made high-profile visits, and President Obama stopped by Durham, N.H., in late June. But much has changed since Obama last painted New Hampshire blue. Two years ago, New Hampshire Republicans won a Senate seat, both of the state’s two congressional seats, record majorities in the state house and state senate, and complete control of the state’s influential executive council. Coupled with Romney’s ground game, the Republican political machine is strong and ready to kick into gear. Romney’s team is focused on generating big Republican turnout in Rockingham and Hillsborough counties, two well-populated areas in the south, and traditional GOP pockets near the coast. “Governor Romney started his campaign in Stratham, N.H., in June 2011, and he just came back here for his bus tour and vacation,” Williams says. “Most voters live south of Concord, the capital, and that’s where we are putting a lot of our effort. But you’ll also see us up north, in Carroll and Coos counties.” As with its national strategy, Romney’s state campaign is underscoring the candidate’s economic message in its outreach and mailings. New Hampshire may have a 5.1 percent unemployment rate, Romney aides say, but it is still a state in transition, moving away from its heavy-industry past. In the final stretch, the Romney campaign will make a hard pitch to “undeclared” voters, who are approximately 40 percent of the state’s electorate. From Bush’s 2000 win to Bill Clinton’s razor-thin victory in 1992, these voters decide elections and whether a campaign snags 270 electoral votes.

### AT: Big Win Now – Polls

#### Polls tend to overperform – Means wins are smaller than predictd

Nate Silver, 7-22-12, [“Do Presidential Polls Break Toward Challengers?,” 538, http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/22/do-presidential-polls-break-toward-challengers/] E. Liu

Still, we can rerun these numbers with those four years excluded: This evidence is at least a little bit better for the “incumbent rule.” You still see the tendency of the incumbent candidate to overperform polls conducted in July and August. But the challenger has overperformed the polls in the other months. However, it is not clear that this has to do with which candidate is the incumbent and which is the challenger so much as something else. In presidential years, the polls typically break toward the candidate who trails in the polls — that is, there is some regression toward the mean. A candidate who trails by 20 points in July is a favorite to do at least a little bit better than that by Election Day (although, obviously, he is a huge underdog to actually win the election). More often than not — in an election against a true incumbent — it is the challenger who trails, so what looks like the “incumbent rule” may simply be regression toward the mean. You can see this phenomenon fairly clearly if, for instance, you compare the margin in the September polls against the actual election results, as in the chart below. In this chart, I have included only those years in which there was a true incumbent candidate running (1972, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1992, 1996, 2004). The regression line in the chart has a slope of less than one (specifically, it has a slope of about .7). What that means is that the candidate leading in the September polls will typically only realize about seven-tenths of his actual margin on Election Day — so, for instance, the best guess for a candidate who leads by 10 points in September is that he will win by 7 points in November.

### Nothing Effects Election

#### Election is really stable – Big events don’t shift polls

Mark Murray, Senior Political Editor, NBC News, 7-24-12, [“NBC/WSJ poll: Negative campaign takes toll on candidates; Obama up six points,” <http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/07/24/12933159-nbcwsj-poll-negative-campaign-takes-toll-on-candidates-obama-up-six-points>] E. Liu

What remains remarkable about this presidential contest, according to the NBC/WSJ pollsters, is how stable it has been, despite everything that has occurred in the past month. For example: The U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding Obama’s health care overhaul; the June jobs report, which showed that just 80,000 jobs were created last month; and the daily campaign attacks and counterattacks (including snipes over Obama’s business views, Romney’s unreleased tax returns, and the Republican’s time at Bain Capital). “So much has happened, and so little has changed,” says Hart, the Democratic pollster.

### Obama Will Push Agenda Regardless of Mandate

#### Second term will break Republican opposition with or without plan

(ABC News, 6/1/12, “Obama Says GOP ‘Fever’ on Taxes May Break in a Second Term”, <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/06/obama-says-gop-fever-on-taxes-may-break-in-a-second-term/>)

President Obama said today that if he wins a second term the GOP “fever” of opposition to tax hikes for deficit reduction may break.¶ He said the Republican Party would, in effect, be forced to embrace “cooperation” and “common sense” which, he suggested, John McCain embodied on some issues four years ago.¶ “A lot of the tussles that we’ve had over the last three and a half years have had to do with this difference in vision, and it will be coming to a head in this election. We’re going to have as stark a contrast as we’ve seen in a very long time between the candidates. I mean, 2008 was a significant election, obviously. But John McCain believed in climate change. John believed in campaign finance reform. He believed in immigration reform. I mean, there were some areas where you saw some overlap,” Obama told a group of donors in Minneapolis.¶ “In this election, the Republican Party has moved in a fundamentally different direction. The center of gravity for their party has shifted,” he said.¶ He discussed Republican refusal to accept any revenue increases to reduce the debt and deficit as a case and point.¶ “I believe that if we’re successful in this election — when we’re successful in this election — that the fever may break, because there’s a tradition in the Republican Party of more common sense than that,” he said.¶ ” My hope and my expectation is that after the election, now that it turns out the goal of beating Obama doesn’t make much sense because I’m not running again, that we can start getting some cooperation again,” Obama argued.¶ “We’re not going to have people raising their hands and saying — or refusing to accept a deal where there’s $10 of cuts for every dollar of tax increases, but that people will accept a balanced plan for deficit reduction.”

### Mandate Key to Economy/Hegemony

#### A political mandate for either party is key to prevent economic collapse and military drawdown

The Business Times Singapore, 12-29-11, [“US needs a clear political mandate in 2012,” Lexis] E. Liu

 ONE way of approaching the coming US presidential (and congressional) election campaign next year is by looking at the bright side of things. The outcome of the race for the White House and the election of a new Congress could create a more stable political environment in Washington that would allow the president and lawmakers on Capitol Hill to finally make the difficult choices required to put America's fiscal house in order.¶ Similar hopes followed the 2008 election of Democratic President Barack Obama who had promised to bring 'change' to Washington, to bring an end of the political gridlock there and to help form a coalition of Democrats and Republicans that would support a bipartisan agenda aimed at providing momentum to a post-Great Recession recovery, by creating incentives for American and global economic growth. But the high expectations at home and abroad in the Obama presidency have not been fulfilled.¶ Certainly, President Obama and his Democratic allies on Capitol Hill were able to push through Congress a large (though perhaps not large enough) government spending programme to stimulate the economy, an ambitious healthcare insurance plan, and a modest reform of the financial regulatory system. But congressional Republicans, energised by their supporters in the Tea Party movement, have rejected President Obama's every other major policy proposal, blasting them as efforts to increase government spending and expand its control over the economy.¶ In recent months, the Democrats, buoyed by the rise of the Occupy Wall Street movement, have charged that the Republicans have been trying to protect the interests of their Wall Street allies and the wealthiest one per cent of Americans, and argued that their own policies would help the large majority of Americans who belong to the middle class.¶ These deep political and ideological divisions in Washington have produced a legislative deadlock which almost brought the federal government to a standstill during the debate over extending the debt ceiling. The failure of the White House and Congress to cut spending or raise revenue enough to reduce record budget deficits has already led Standard & Poor's to downgrade the US's credit rating from AAA for the first time.? And in addition to slowing down the recovery and eroding US global economic influence, the continuing stalemate on Capitol Hill over fiscal policy is also bound to force major cuts in defence spending, and weaken America's geo-strategic position. ¶ Ending the legislative impasse in Washington could only happen if either the Democrats or the Republicans are able to win a clear political mandate in 2012. If US voters do not hand such a mandate to either policy agenda, the prospects for the US economy will be compromised. With the eurozone already in a mess, this is the last thing the global economy needs.

### Obama Mandate Key to Economy

#### Only an Obama landslide can prevent gridlock and help the economy

Ezra Klein, editor of Wonkblog and a columnist at the Washington Post, as well as a contributor to MSNBC and Bloomberg, 6-4-12, [“The Keynesian case for Romney,” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/the-keynesian-case-for-romney/2012/06/04/gJQAIETuDV_blog.html>] E. Liu

Nor is it clear that this will come at the cost of harsh deficit reduction in coming years. There will almost certainly be deep spending cuts if Romney is president, but both the Romney and Ryan proposals include trillions of dollars in unpaid-for tax cuts and defense spending. If Republicans clear that hurdle by simply assuming that deep tax cuts will lead, through supply-side magic, to larger revenues, their deficit-reduction plans might well end up increasing the deficit over the next few years. “Remember,” wrote Business Insider’s Joe Weisenthal, “Republicans were pro-deficit, and pro-entitlement expansion under Bush and Reagan. Deficit cutting only became part of the party’s ideology under Obama.”¶ ¶ Compared to anything Obama is likely to get from a Republican House, that is, at least in the short term, a much more expansionary, Keynesian approach. But it’s also an awful precedent. In a sense, Republicans are holding a gun to the economy’s head and saying, “vote for us or the recovery gets it.”¶ ¶ That might well prove an effective political strategy: The more they say that they’re willing to let the debt ceiling expire and the economy run over the fiscal cliff, the more businesses will pull back and households will stop spending in order to make sure they have enough cash on hand to ride out another crisis. That will further depress the economy this year, making it more likely that Romney wins, and that Republicans embrace the smooth Keynesian glide path that they’re denying Obama.¶ If Obama wins, it’s of course possible that the two sides will come to a swift agreement. That’s the president’s prediction. “I believe that if we’re successful in this election, when we’re successful in this election, that the fever may break, because there’s a tradition in the Republican Party of more common sense than that,” Obama has said. “My hope, my expectation, is that after the election, now that it turns out that the goal of beating Obama doesn’t make much sense because I’m not running again, that we can start getting some cooperation again.”¶ But privately, many top Democrats admit that congressional Republicans, angry after a narrow loss and appealing to a base that is likely to blame the defeat on Romney’s moderate past, might prove just as obstructionist after the election than before it. If that happens, they say, the president can’t keep giving into Republican threats. Much as the government shutdowns in the 1990s discredited Newt Gingrich’s hardball tactics, Obama will have to let voters see the consequences of the Tea Party’s approach. But while that might be sage political advice, the economic consequences could be devastating. ¶ This is the logical conclusion of a system biased toward gridlock: The out-party benefits when the public feels that Washington is failing and it often has the power to make Washington fail. Which, arguably, leads to another unusual reality about this election: Even if you agree with Romney’s policies, it may be that voting for Obama, and delivering a landslide against the GOP’s economic brinksmanship, is the only way to end the dangerous appeal of strategic gridlock going forward.

### Obama Mandate Key to Jobs Crisis

#### Obama mandate is key to prevent jobs crisis that destroy the economy

Thomas L. Friedman, internationally renowned author, reporter, and columnist—the recipient of three Pulitzer Prizes and the author of six bestselling books, 12-11-11, [“The next first 100 days,” The International Herald Tribune, Lexis] E. Liu

Since the only time anything gets done is during the first months of a president's term, someone is going to have to address three job crises at once in early 2013.¶ I've been saying this for a while, but now it feels even more acute: America's democracy has shrunken to ''the only 100 days.'' Since F.D.R., we've measured presidents by their ''first 100 days.'' But now it's really ''the only 100 days.'' Presidents lately seem to have just those 100 days to lay down a transformational agenda and get it passed in their first year - before they have to tailor their politics to the midterm elections - and then, if, as often happens, their party loses the midterms they have to focus on the next presidential election. China has five-year plans. We have 100 days every four. So all I'm thinking about now is how we get the most out of the first 100 days of 2013 - our next quadrennial chance to make serious policy (barring a crisis that forces our hand).¶ Our priority is obvious: jobs. ''We are having three jobs crises at once,'' argues the Harvard labor economist Lawrence Katz, and there is no way we will reduce inequality without addressing all three.¶ The first jobs crisis is the one driven by the steep drop in aggregate demand for goods and services that began with the 2008 subprime crisis, notes Katz. ''Way too many firms are not hiring workers because they just don't see the demand.'' The second jobs crisis grows out of the first. It is long-term unemployment - people who have been out of work for so long ''they've lost their connections to the job market and need help getting back,'' says Katz.¶ The third jobs crisis flows from the merger of globalization and the I.T. revolution. The president described it in his Kansas speech: ''Steel mills that needed 1,000 employees are now able to do the same work with 100 employees, so layoffs too often became permanent, not just a temporary part of the business cycle. ... Today, even higher-skilled jobs, like accountants and middle management can be outsourced to countries like China or India.''¶ So the next president must have a plan to address all three jobs crises in his only 100 days - and an electoral mandate to implement it. The Republican Party intends to run again on a just-cut-taxes-and-that-will-cure-all platform, which we know doesn't work. So the country's only hope is for President Obama - or, if he won't, a third party - to offer the plan we need and not just run on ''I'm not as crazy as that G.O.P. guy.''¶ For starters, we need a focused, near-term stimulus - I call it ''investment'' - that both stokes aggregate demand and expands the job markets of the future. The days when Ford or General Electric would come to your town with a 25,000-person factory are over. That factory, notes Katz, is now 500 people operating machines and robots. Manufacturing can no longer carry America's middle class.¶ We need to think of the future middle class as being generated not by factories ''but by hubs,'' argues Katz. These are networked urban areas like Austin, Texas, Silicon Valley in California, and Raleigh-Durham in North Carolina, where people learn, imagine and create value rapidly by combining universities, high-tech manufacturers, software/service providers and highly nimble start-ups that collaborate and compete to invent things that make people's lives more entertained, productive, healthy, educated and comfortable.¶ The knowledge workers in these hubs will be the big profit generators. Their profits can and will support lots of other middle-class jobs, but those, too, will require more skills. They will require workers to bring something extra, something creative - ''like the artisan'' of old - to whatever job they do, says Katz, and through this extra command more pay. That's the carpenter who learns some design skills, the nursing home employee who can put a smile on the faces of the elderly, the auto mechanic who learns customization. Our wealth as a country, says Katz, will be driven by the goods and services these hubs sell into the global market. But whether that wealth remains confined to an elite group or spreads, he adds, ''will depend to a large degree on the skills our work force develops and the creativity of individual workers.''¶ To spawn more of these hubs, big and small, any stimulus should focus on building telecommunications and infrastructure to support networked cities and on getting more young people access to vocational or college training. Obama has proposed that. But his stimulus will never pass without being integrated with a credible plan to fix our long-term fiscal imbalances by raising taxes and cutting spending - a plan more credible than anything Obama has proposed so far. It has to be a fiscal plan at the scale of our problem that can garner bipartisan support, à la Simpson-Bowles.¶ If we had a stimulus focused on 21st-century jobs, and a credible long-term fiscal reform plan, it would unlock the scale of investment we need to revive the employment market today and address the future. If Obama ran on that big plan, he would win and have an electoral mandate to implement it in his only 100 days. Sadly, he seems intent on playing small ball. He is capable of, and the country needs, much bolder leadership.¶ Oh, well. There's always the first 100 days of 2017.

### Obama Mandate Key to Simpson-Bowles

#### Big Obama victory creates a mandate that facilitates Simpson-Bowles passage

Thomas L. Friedman, internationally renowned author, reporter, and columnist—the recipient of three Pulitzer Prizes and the author of six bestselling books, 4-12-12, [“I'm not Mitt Romney,” International Herald Tribune, Lexis] E. Liu

What do we Americans need from a presidential candidate today? We need a credible plan to do three specific things: cut, tax and invest. As the economy improves, we need to cut spending, including all entitlement programs, to fix our long-term structural deficit. We also need to raise revenue through tax reform so we don't just shred our safety nets and so we still have resources, not only for defense, but to invest in all the things that have made us great as a country: education, infrastructure, quality government institutions and government-funded research.¶ Finally, the plan has to win bipartisan support, so the candidate advocating it not only wins the election but has a mandate to implement his plan afterward.¶ The Ryan-Romney budget fails that test. As Maya MacGuineas, the president of the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, notes: It does not ''protect the truly disadvantaged,'' and it doesn't put tax increases for the wealthy ''on the table,'' so it has zero chance of bipartisan support.¶ Obama has proposed his own 10-year budget. It is much better than Ryan's at balancing the near-term need to revitalize the pillars of American success, by cutting, taxing and investing. But it does not credibly address the country's long-term fiscal imbalances, which require cuts in Medicare and Social Security.¶ Said the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget: ''The president's budget [is] a step in the right direction on deficit reduction, but not nearly sufficient. The president's budget would stabilize the debt as a share of the economy through the second half of the decade, but would do so at too high of a level and without the necessary entitlement reforms to bring down the debt over the long-run. ... It is highly disappointing that the president didn't go further in his proposals and offer a plan that is large enough to deal with the nation's fiscal challenges in the medium and long term.''¶ Or as Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner testified to Congress: ''Even if Congress were to enact this budget, we would still be left with - in the outer decades as millions of Americans retire - what are still unsustainable commitments in Medicare and Medicaid.''¶ So the president, too, lacks a long-term plan to cut, spend and invest at the scale we need in a way to win enough bipartisan support to make it implementable. This gets to my core difference with the president's strategy. I believed he should have accepted his own Simpson-Bowles deficit commission because it offered a plan to cut and tax that was at the scale of the problem and enjoyed at least some G.O.P. support, had the overwhelming backing of independents and even Nancy Pelosi, the minority leader, now says she felt ''fully ready to vote for that.''¶ If Obama had embraced the long-term deficit commission, he would have had a chance of combining it with some near-term stimulus - investments in infrastructure - that would have helped the economy and grown jobs. Without pairing it with Simpson-Bowles, Obama had no chance of getting more stimulus.¶ Obama says his plan incorporates the best of Simpson-Bowles. Not only is that not true, but it misses the politics. Republicans will never vote for an ''Obama plan.''¶ But had Obama embraced the bipartisan ''Simpson-Bowles,'' and added his own stimulus, he would have split the G.O.P., attracted gobs of independents and been able to honestly look the country in the eye and say he had a plan to fix what needs fixing. He would have angered the Tea Party and his left wing, which would have shown him as a strong leader ready to make hard choices - and isolated Romney-Ryan on the fringe.¶ Instead, Obama is running on a suboptimal plan - when we absolutely must have optimal - and the slogan ''I'm not Mitt Romney.'' If he's lucky, he might win by a whisker. If Obama went big, and dared to lead, he'd win for sure, and so would the country, because he'd have a mandate to do what needs doing.

### Balanced Congress Key to Agenda

#### Balance in the Senate forces agreement to get stuff done – Gridlock is thawing now

Ryan Lizza, Washington Correspondent for The New Yorker magazine, where he covers the White House, nominated for a National Magazine Award, The New Republic senior editor, 6-18-12, [“The Second Term,” The New Yorker,

<http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=al>] E. Liu

A¶ lmost every permutation of government control is possible after November. There are plausible scenarios in which either party could be in charge of the House, the Senate, or the White House. If the election were held today, the Democrats likely would gain some seats in the House and lose some seats in the Senate, and Obama would be narrowly reëlected. Under these conditions, the White House is cautiously optimistic that a compromise could be reached.¶ “If both chambers are more evenly divided, it could be a recipe for actually getting some things done,” David Plouffe, Obama’s senior adviser, said. “Because of the closeness, neither party’s going to be able to do anything on its own, so either zero gets done for two years or there is kind of a center.” He argued that, despite the failures of the five bipartisan groups that had tried to negotiate a budget deal last year, there was movement on the toughest issues. For Democrats, the most painful decision is how far to go in making changes to entitlements like Medicare and Social Security. For Republicans, the biggest hurdle is agreeing to higher government revenues. “By the end, more Republicans said they’re open to revenue than at the beginning,” Plouffe said. “And at the beginning Democrats were very cool to any entitlement reform. By the end, they were willing to do something. That’s what we learned.” ¶ Clearly that’s an optimistic spin, given Boehner’s recent remarks. Yet Plouffe and other Obama officials who were involved in the talks insist that the G.O.P. caucus in the House is not as monolithically opposed to a deal as one might think. Last year’s talks taught the White House that there are divisions between the hard-right Tea Party faction that is unilaterally opposed to any tax hikes and more traditional Republicans who are so concerned about the long-term deficit that under some circumstances they would vote for higher taxes. Plouffe said that the key will be whether Boehner is prepared to alienate the Tea Party bloc.¶ “All the paperwork’s done!” he said. “We know what the options are. It’s all been done! It’s not like they’re starting from scratch.”¶ Over in the Senate, there is a hint that the ice could thaw if Obama wins. Several senators from both parties have begun to meet behind closed doors to address the looming fiscal crisis, with the aim of delivering a tax-and-budget package by September. “Everyone is kind of holding their cards, because we realize that it’s not game time yet,” the Tennessee Republican Bob Corker told Politico last week. In late May, Mitch McConnell, an architect of the G.O.P. strategy of non-coöperation since 2009, also told Politico, “I think we have plenty of members in the Senate on both sides of the aisle who fully understand that we weren’t sent here just to make a point—that we were sent here to make a difference.”

### No Coattails

#### Empirics and trends disprove the coattail effect

Harry Enten, a recent graduate of Dartmouth College, has previously interned at the NBC Political Unit in Washington D.C. and Pollster.com, 10-27-11, [“History of Presidential Coattails Points to Republicans Keeping the House,”

<http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/hje2011102702/>] E. Liu

Research by Alan Abramowitz (among others) illustrates that there is little to any evidence that special elections predict the results in the next general House election. The political environment can change from now until November 2012. But what if President Obama remains unpopular through 2012? Will Republicans actually gain seats in the House? The history of presidential year House elections suggests that while we do not know for sure, House Democrats probably will not fare well.¶ It turns out that this coattail effect appears inconsistently in presidential year House elections. We all remember how President Bush’s negative standing three years ago (and Obama’s significant victory) helped Democrats gain 21 seats in the House. Some of us will also recall how Republicans made major gains during President Reagan’s landslide 1980 victory. But for every 1980, there is a 1988. President George H.W. Bush triumphed in 1988, but House Republicans actually lost three seats. More recently in 1996, President Clinton cruised to an easy win, but Republicans lost only a handful of seats and retained control of the House.

### No Mandate – Bipartisanship Key

#### Mandate doesn’t allow passage of partisan legislation – Bush proves

AP, 3-31-12, [“Obama faces host of election-year constraints,” USA Today, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/story/2012-03-31/obama-reelection-flexibility/53909586/1>] E. Liu

Nothing illustrates the dilemma facing a fourth-year president better than Bush's handling of Social Security.¶ After narrowly defeating Kerry in 2004, Bush announced: "I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and now I intend to spend it."¶ In his autobiography, "Decision Points," Bush wrote, "For someone looking to take on big issues, it didn't' get much bigger than reforming Social Security." He said he "embarked on a series of trips to raise awareness about Social Security's problems and rally the American people to insist on change."¶ Such a call to arms, of course, often takes place in an election campaign, not after it. Bush's bid to allow partial privatization of Social Security for younger workers quickly collapsed in the face of strong Democratic opposition and tepid GOP support.¶ "I may have misread the electoral mandate by pushing for an issue on which there had been little bipartisan agreement in the first place," Bush wrote. "The failure of Social Security reform shows the limits of the president's power."¶ Obama may have "more flexibility" to deal with missile defense, immigration and other issues if he wins a second term. Whether he will have a mandate to do so is another question.

### No Mandate – Exaggeration

#### The idea of a mandate is exaggeration – Gridlock is inevitable

IHT, International Herald Tribune, 9-9-11, [“Waiting for a landslide,” ROSS DOUTHAT, Lexis] E. Liu

But there's no guarantee that such a majority will be established in time to walk the United States backward from the fiscal cliff. And in the meantime, America's leaders have a responsibility that transcends their ideological differences: the responsibility to work with one another to keep the United States solvent.¶ The dream of realignment has become the enemy of such compromises. It inspires politicians to claim sweeping mandates from highly contingent victories: think of Dick Cheney insisting on another round of deficit-financed tax cuts in 2003 because ''we won the midterm elections'' and ''this is our due,'' or the near-identical rebukes that President Obama delivered to Eric Cantor (''Elections have consequences - and Eric, I won'') and to John McCain (''the election's over'') during the debates over the stimulus and health care.¶ The losers, meanwhile, wax intransigent, while hoping for a realignment of their own. After all, why cut a deal today if tomorrow you might overthrow your rivals permanently? Better to just say ''no'' flat out, as the Bush-era Democrats did with Social Security reform and the Republicans did with health care, and hope that the next election will deliver you the once-in-a-generation victory.¶ This is how some Republicans are thinking today, as they crow about ''the Obama downgrade'' and imagine all they can accomplish in a Mitt Romney administration. Or a Paul Ryan administration, for that matter: Many conservatives are eager to see their party's leading champion of entitlement reform enter the race, the better to make 2012 feel like a true hinge-of-history moment, a decisive choice between social democracy and free-market capitalism.¶ In reality, the next election may be no more transformative than 2008 turned out to be. The next Republican president may find himself as hemmed in and frustrated as President Obama has become. Meanwhile, America will still have a credit rating to fix, and a deficit to close.¶ None of this means that America's political parties need to give up their deep convictions, their grand plans, or their hopes of winning an enduring mandate.¶ But in the wake of the weekend's downgrade, we need them to govern as though that final victory might never quite arrive.

### No Mandate – History

#### True mandates are extremely rare and represent complete political uphevals

Ryan Lizza, Washington Correspondent for The New Yorker magazine, where he covers the White House, nominated for a National Magazine Award, The New Republic senior editor, 6-18-12, [“The Second Term,” The New Yorker,

<http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=al>] E. Liu

But the idea is mostly a myth. The President and Congress are equal, and when Presidents misinterpret election results—especially in reëlections—they get into trouble. In a 2006 book, “Mandate Politics,” the political scientists Lawrence J. Grossback, David A. M. Peterson, and James A. Stimson apply some fancy methodological techniques to congressional voting patterns and find only two modern cases in which Presidents had true mandates, which they define as elections that push members of the opposition party in Congress toward the President’s positions on key issues. This occurred in 1965, when Johnson passed the Voting Rights Act, and in early 1981, when sixty-three Democrats helped Reagan pass his first budget in the House. The media interpreted those elections as representing tectonic changes in politics, and members of Congress followed along. The changes in congressional behavior didn’t last long, but they enabled both Presidents to achieve major legislative victories in their first year.

### No Mandate – Obstruction

#### Losses incentivize obstructionism to regain power

Ezra Klein, editor of Wonkblog and a columnist at the Washington Post, as well as a contributor to MSNBC and Bloomberg, 6-8-12, [“The myth of the presidential mandate,” Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/the-myth-of-the-presidential-mandate/2012/06/08/gJQA0HvVNV\_blog.html] E. Liu

Finally, when a party does lose an election, it turns its attention to regaining power in the next cycle. In Robert Draper’s book “Do Not Ask What Good We Do: Inside the U.S. House of Representatives,” he reports on a strategy dinner attended by top Republicans, including Rep. Eric Cantor, Sen. Jim DeMint, Rep. Kevin McCarthy and Ryan, on the eve of Obama’s inauguration. “If you act like you’re the minority, you’re going to stay in the minority,” Draper quotes McCarthy saying. “We’ve gotta challenge them on every single bill and challenge them on every single campaign.”¶ McCarthy, of course, was right. Minorities don’t become majorities by helping the other party govern successfully. When things go well, voters reward the party in charge. More often, minorities become majorities by grinding the gears of government to a halt, amping up partisanship and doing everything they can to make sure voters are disgusted with Washington. Given such incentives, the belief that minority politicians will clap their majority colleagues on the back, mutter “good game” and get out of the way is fantasy.

### No Mandate – Votes Unclear

#### Votes aren’t a policy endorsement – Selective decisionmaking and congressional constituents

Ezra Klein, editor of Wonkblog and a columnist at the Washington Post, as well as a contributor to MSNBC and Bloomberg, 6-8-12, [“The myth of the presidential mandate,” Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/the-myth-of-the-presidential-mandate/2012/06/08/gJQA0HvVNV\_blog.html] E. Liu

Nor is it clear what specific policies voters have endorsed when they select a president. Although some go to the ballot box having read every word of their chosen candidate’s agenda, most don’t. A swing voter in Ohio might turn against Romney because of his links to Bain Capital without intending to endorse Obama’s ideas on immigration reform. “In short,” wrote political scientist John Sides in a roundup of academic research on presidential mandates, “we cannot interpret an election outcome as a wholesale endorsement of the winner’s policy proposals (or as a wholesale rejection of the loser’s).”¶ In addition, members of Congress don’t report to a national electorate. They report to their states or districts. If Obama narrowly wins the election but badly loses Kentucky, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell is carrying out the will of his people in organizing relentless opposition to Obama’s policies.

### No Mandate – AT: Landslide Key

#### Even a landslide victory doesn’t solve for gridlock

Michael Medved, nationally syndicated radio talk show host and bestselling author, 1-25-12, [“Obama and the Second-Term Curse,” <http://townhall.com/columnists/michaelmedved/2012/01/25/obama_and_the_secondterm_curse/page/full/>] E. Liu

The president has already anticipated this problem by blaming the frustrations and failures of his first term on intransigent, radical congressional Republicans, suggesting to voters that more cooperation from a more Democratic legislative branch will facilitate the hope and change he promised the first time. The GOP will answer this argument by pointing out that in his first two years the president enjoyed big majorities in both houses and used those majorities to pass signature legislative achievements (the Stimulus Package and Obamacare) that remain widely unpopular and contribute to public perceptions that America’s headed in the wrong direction. ¶ Even if the President defies current projections for a tight, highly competitive electoral battle, and wins a landslide victory combined with big Congressional gains, he can expect no "honeymoon" period with media and public comparable to the euphoria that greeted the early months of his term. The Obama campaign has already acknowledged that they can only win re-election by stressing a "choice," not a "referendum"; they must make use of their billion-dollar war chest to frighten voters about the Republican opposition rather than trumpeting their own first-term accomplishments in some “Morning in America” campaign. This sort of negative and polarizing re-election fight will do nothing to soothe the divisions and bitterness that currently poison the Washington atmosphere and can only exacerbate the unavoidable negative factors that apply to even the most easily re-elected second termers. ¶ Political operatives and spin doctors who argue the necessity of the president's re-election must make the difficult case that their candidate will defy all precedent so that the original installment of his troubled presidential adventure will give way to a more triumphant and optimistic sequel. And those who consider the Obama first term a full-blown disaster, or feel disappointed that the gifted president so clearly underperformed his supporters' soaring expectations, face a grim message regarding a potential second term: you ain't seen nuthin’ yet.

### No Obama Mandate

#### Obama can only win with a tiny margin – Takes out any mandate

Ryan Lizza, Washington Correspondent for The New Yorker magazine, where he covers the White House, nominated for a National Magazine Award, The New Republic senior editor, 6-18-12, [“The Second Term,” The New Yorker,

<http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=al>] E. Liu

“The hope is that some of the moderate Republicans—if there are any left—are like, ‘Look, we tried it your way, we lost the election,’ ” a senior Obama adviser said. “You have to compromise in American politics and divided government. But it depends on whether the interpretation, if Obama wins, is that Republicans didn’t coöperate enough or that they coöperated too much.” One thing is nearly certain: if Obama wins in November, his margin of victory will be among the narrowest in history. Since 1916, seven Presidents have won a second term, and all of them exceeded the percentage of the popular vote that they received in their first election. With each reëlection since Nixon’s, the President’s margin of victory over his opponent has steadily declined. In 1972, Nixon won another term by a popular-vote margin of twenty-three points. In 1984, Reagan won his reëlection by eighteen points. In 1996, Clinton won his by nine points.\* In 2004, Bush beat John Kerry by just 2.5 points, the smallest margin of victory for the reëlection of a President since the nineteenth century. Obama won in 2008 by seven points. If he manages to win this year, it is likely to be by less than that, which would make him the first President in a hundred and twenty-four years to win a second term by a smaller margin than in his initial election. Whatever a mandate is, Obama won’t have one.

### Obama Won’t Use Mandate

#### Even if Obama wins big, he doesn’t know how to use a mandate

Eleanor Clift, contributing editor for Newsweek, 12-23-11, [“Will a Reelected President Obama Face More Gridlock in 2013?,” The Daily Beast, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/12/26/will-a-reelected-president-obama-face-more-gridlock-in-2013.html>] E. Liu

Wilson laid down clear markers before every piece of legislation, and he spent time on Capitol Hill in an office set aside for him. “He was in their faces,” says Galston. An avowed Anglophile, Wilson didn’t bother wooing the other party. The Democrats had won with big margins and Wilson operated more like a prime minister, preferring to work with his own party. Obama also won with big margins, but the Brookings study concludes he was overly deferential to Congress, behaving more like “a stakeholder mediating at arm’s length than the chief engineer of the policies he sought.”¶ There is not much incentive now for Obama to be more hands-on with Congress, but in a second term he might want to reconsider his approach.

### Coattails Doesn’t Ensure Obama Agenda Passes

#### Congressional gridlock continues unless one party seizes presidency and large majorities in House and Senate

(**Michigan Daily, 7/22**/2012, “Continued gridlock”, <http://www.michigandaily.com/opinion/michael-spaeth-continued-gridlock>, )

Yet in the midst of the breathless media coverage of the daily back-and-forth of the presidential campaign, political commentators aren’t emphasizing one very important detail: no matter who wins the presidential election, the gridlock that’s currently preventing pretty much anything from getting done in Washington will continue — or even worsen — unless one party gains control of the White House and large majorities in both houses of Congress.¶ The Republicans in the 112th Congress are commonly blamed for Congress’ inability to get any meaningful legislation passed. In an [opinion piece for the Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/lets-just-say-it-the-republicans-are-the-problem/2012/04/27/gIQAxCVUlT_story.html), congressional scholars Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein observed, “When one party moves this far from the mainstream, it makes it nearly impossible for the political system to deal constructively with the country’s challenges.” This statement deserves some consideration because, [as NPR noted in April](http://www.npr.org/2012/04/30/151522725/even-worse-than-it-looks-extremism-in-congress), Mann and Ornstein “have been in Washington for more than 40 years — and they’re renowned for their carefully nonpartisan positions.” Ornstein also told NPR that since President Obama was inaugurated, “when we did get action, half the political process viewed it as illegitimate, tried to undermine its implementation and moved to repeal it.”¶ For example, Congress holds many symbolic votes, which are a blatant waste of time and money. Their time — along with taxpayers’ dollars — should be spent on actually finding solutions to our country’s problems. Shortly after the Supreme Court ruled that the Affordable Care Act was constitutional, the Republican-controlled House voted to repeal the law, despite the fact that the Democrat-controlled Senate definitely wouldn’t repeal the law and that President Obama would veto the repeal if it actually passed both houses of Congress. It was the 33rd time the House tried to repeal all or parts of President Obama’s health care law. [CBS News reported](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18563_162-57470643/health-care-repeal-effort-worth-the-time/?tag=stack) that these efforts have “taken up at least 80 hours on the House floor” and have cost taxpayers “a little under $50 million” total. No wonder Congress’ approval ratings are at historic lows.¶ But don’t expect these kinds of tactics to end if Democrats lose control of either the White House or the Senate. After nearly four years of relentless Republican obstruction, I highly doubt the Democrats are going to conclude that it’s time to let the Republicans do whatever they want now that they control a majority of the governing bodies in Washington. Democrats will instead do everything in their power to block Republican legislation from becoming law. As long as Democrats control the White House, the Senate or the House, the gridlock will continue.¶ It’s even more unlikely that the gridlock will end if President Obama wins a second term, yet the president remains hopeful. In June, he [told donors in Minneapolis](http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/06/obama-says-gop-fever-on-taxes-may-break-in-a-second-term/), “My hope and my expectation is that after the election, now that it turns out the goal of beating Obama doesn’t make much sense because I’m not running again, that we can start getting some cooperation again” on issues like deficit reduction. But while this might conceivably be true for establishment Republicans like House Speaker John Boehner — and that’s only if we’re being extremely idealistic — does anyone believe for a minute that the Tea Party Republicans are suddenly going to relent and start cooperating with President Obama? I'm skeptical.¶ While nobody knows exactly how the 2012 elections will turn out, early estimates indicate that there won’t be any seismic shifts in power in Washington. Using an election forecasting model, Prof. Alan Abramowitz of Emory University concluded in March, [“It would be surprising if Republicans did not hold onto their majority in the House in 2012 and gain at least a few Senate seats.”](http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-early-outlook-for-the-2012-congressional-elections-a-forecasting-perspective/)Democrats will fight hard to prevent Republicans from gaining control of the Senate, implicitly arguing that a divided government is better than a Republican-dominated government. Also, with a Republican Party that’s increasingly influenced by the extremism of the Tea Party, the Democrats’ concerns have some legitimacy.¶ However, if the past two years are any indication of how the next few years will proceed, a divided government isn’t much better.¶ In short, unless the Republicans win control of all three governing bodies in Washington, don’t expect 2012 to be an earth-shattering election. I’m still optimistic about our country’s future, but it’s going to take some time before we can make any real progress.

### Romney Inevitably Perceives Mandate

#### Romney victory causes him to be celebrated – Makes perceive secure support

The National Journal, 5-23-12, [“How Conservatives Can (Try to) Stop Romney From Governing Like Bush,” Connor Friedsdorf, Lexis] E. Liu

If Romney beats Obama at the ballot box, conservatives will hail him as a conquering hero, like Beowulf after he slayed Grendel. By the time he took the oath of office, Romney could feel much more secure about his support from conservatives than he did during the Republican primary. Given the amount of money it takes to campaign in the modern era, serious primary challenges to sitting presidents are unlikely. A President Romney could very logically make the calculation that conservatives are more or less stuck with him.

### Romney Internal Link Turn

#### Landslide for Romney makes him feel confident in conservative support – Turns him moderate

Philip Klein, senior editorial writer at the Washington Examiner, 5-22-12, [“Romney and the Right,” National Review, <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/300644/romney-and-right-philip-klein?pg=2>] E. Liu

Clearly, a lot of conservatives are skeptical that the formerly pro-choice, pro–gun control, pro-mandate governor is genuinely committed to conservatism. But instead of rehashing the primary campaign, conservatives should look at productive ways they can keep pressure on Romney to make sure he adheres to a limited-government agenda on key issues such as tax reform, entitlements, and health care.¶ Ironically, one of the most frustrating aspects of Romney’s character — a calculating political nature that has enabled him to effortlessly reverse prior statements and positions — could prove essential to conservative efforts to pressure him into doing the right thing.¶ Critics of Romney who argue that he’s really a liberal and boosters who claim that he’s a true conservative both err by attempting to understand Romney through an ideological prism. In reality, he’s a businessman who wants to apply his well-honed management skills to the public sector. If one is to be successful in the business world, the important thing is to satisfy customers and maximize profits.¶ If Romney is convinced that conservatives will enthusiastically support him no matter what, then he’ll make the calculation that he has room to migrate left during the general-election campaign and throughout a potential presidency. But if he feels uneasy about his support among conservatives, he’s much more likely to run and govern from the right.¶ Rather than resting on their 2010 laurels, conservatives should work hard this year to put as many principled lawmakers as possible into Congress — people who won’t merely talk tough about shrinking government when a Democrat is in the White House, but who will be willing to resist calls for party unity and stand up to a Republican president if he tries to expand government.

### Sequestration Good

#### Sequestration is key to military cuts that encourage responsible foreign policy and allow for offshore balancing – Doesn’t undermine security and boosts the economy

Christopher A. Preble, vice president for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute, taught history at St. Cloud State University and Temple University, 7-17-12, [“Let Sequestration Happen,” National Interest, <http://nationalinterest.org/print/blog/the-skeptics/let-sequestration-happen-7204?page=1>] E. Liu

To be clear, sequestration is not the best way to cut the military budget, or federal spending overall. It wasn’t supposed to happen at all; the threat of spending cuts was supposed to compel the various parties to reach a compromise. But it may be the only feasible way to cut spending. And it isn’t going to get any easier in the future.¶ The Democrats are beginning to show their hand: this was never about cutting spending; it was always about raising taxes. Sen. Patty Murray explained yesterday [5] that her party would allow the cuts in defense and nondefense spending to go forward, and the Bush tax cuts to expire, if Republicans didn’t agree to tax hikes on the wealthy. That isn’t likely to happen, and not just because the GOP is being stubborn. A sizable majority of Americans, Republicans and Democrats alike, are in favor [6] of cutting military spending. More than half want to extend the Bush tax cuts [7] for all.¶ Still, there are some Republican politicians who always have been willing to raise taxes in order to protect the Pentagon, despite what the public says it wants. I don’t fault Democrats for holding Pentagon spending hostage as much as I fault Republicans for allowing themselves to be maneuvered into a corner.¶ The GOP has a straightforward way out of the box: allow the defense and nondefense cuts to go forward, refuse a tax increase and renegotiate a debt reduction deal that doesn't leave entitlements—the real drivers of our long-term fiscal calamity—off the table.¶ Sequestration likely won’t be as bad as special interests and those in favor of ever-increasing military spending claim. The reductions would only apply to FY 2013 budget authority, not outlays. The Pentagon and Congress will then have greater flexibility starting in FY 2014 to adjust the reductions under the BCA spending caps. In the meantime, many programs could continue on funding already authorized [8].¶ We also must keep the cuts in proper perspective. The DOD base budget under sequestration would total $469 billion, about what we spent in 2006, not exactly a lean year for the Pentagon. And as for the claim that the military cuts will result in perhaps one million lost jobs, that seems implausible considering that the cuts would amount to less than three tenths of 1 percent of GDP.¶ More to the point, the defense budget should never be seen as a jobs program. In a dynamic, market economy, capital and resources adjust to changing demand. Some regions and municipalities that are relatively more dependent upon military spending might suffer some short-term effects, but there is evidence [9] that economies reliant on the military can recover. Some regions could emerge stronger and more diversified. Other [10] reporting [11] indicates that some businesses are already positioning themselves to weather reduced government spending.¶ Americans spend more today on our military—in real, inflation-adjusted terms—than during the high point of the Reagan buildup. Some might justify these expenditures by claiming that the world is much more dangerous today. But the evidence for that is pretty thin. The Soviet Union on its worst day could do more damage in a few minutes than Al Qaeda has managed to inflict in over a decade. We are safer than most politicians are willing to admit.¶ If they embraced our good fortune, policy makers could cut military spending without undermining U.S. security. Shifting resources from a relatively unproductive and inefficient sector to a more productive one would be good for the economy. And lower military spending could even improve our foreign policy.¶ It simply isn't fair to saddle fewer troops with more missions. If we cut spending and reduced the size of the U.S. military, policy makers would have to be more discriminating in the use of force. But greater restraint by the United States would encourage other countries to take responsibility for their own security and share in the costs and risks of policing the global commons.

### Winning Causes Mandate

#### Any presidential victory results in a mandate

Ezra Klein, editor of Wonkblog and a columnist at the Washington Post, as well as a contributor to MSNBC and Bloomberg, 6-8-12, [“The myth of the presidential mandate,” Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/the-myth-of-the-presidential-mandate/2012/06/08/gJQA0HvVNV\_blog.html] E. Liu

Forget what President Obama and Mitt Romney say they want to do next year. The better question might be: How do they intend to get any of it done? To use a phrase that was popular during the Democratic primary in 2008, what’s their “theory of change”?¶ One common theory is that the two parties are so far apart that this election, finally, will provide a mandate for the winner and shock the losing side into cooperating. “We’re going to have as stark a contrast as we’ve seen in a very long time between the two candidates,” Obama told donors in Minneapolis. “My hope, my expectation, is that after the election, now that it turns out that the goal of beating Obama doesn’t make much sense because I’m not running again, that we can start getting some cooperation again.”¶ Republican Rep. Paul Ryan, speaking at the Reagan Library, was even more emphatic: “If we make the case effectively and win this November, then we will have the moral authority to enact the kind of fundamental reforms America has not seen since Ronald Reagan’s first year.”¶ This is conventional wisdom. Elections are arguments about where the country should go next. The candidate who wins the election wins the argument. The opposition party, disappointed as they may be, has little choice but to step aside. After all, they’re out of power.

### Winning Causes Mandate – AT: Landslide Key

#### Voters inevitably give new presidents a chance – Margin of victory is irrelevant

Chris Cillizza, managing editor of PostPolitics and he writes "The Fix," a politics blog for The Washington Post, 6-17-12, [“Can any president succeed in today’s political world?,” Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/can-any-president-succeed-in-todays-political-world/2012/06/17/gJQAPBFIjV_story.html>] E. Liu

So, what’s a president to do — since throwing up your hands and walking away is, well, not an option? According to a handful of smart Democratic and Republican strategists to whom we put that very question, the only answer — at least at the moment — is to wait and see what the November election brings.¶ “The presidential campaign, even if very close, will open the door to a moment of national catharsis as it does every four years, and the 45 [to] 49 percent of America who opposed the winner will in part give their leader a new chance,” insisted Phil Musser, a Republican strategist. “You need to look no further than Obama’s honeymoon period in 2009 to find that example, albeit short-lived.”

### Winning Causes Mandate/Follow Through on Promises

#### The election itself is a mandate – Also guarantees following through on promised policy

Brian Beutler, TPM's senior congressional reporter. Since 2009, he's led coverage of health care reform, Wall Street reform, taxes, the GOP budget, the government shutdown fight, and the debt limit fight, 2-13-12, [“Obama To Draw Contrast With GOP In Budget¶ President Barack Obama,” Talking Points Memo, <http://tpmdc.talkingpointsmemo.com/2012/02/obama-to-draw-contrast-with-gop-in-budget.php>] E. Liu

The policies Obama will advocate are broadly popular; the GOP’s counter proposals are popular among their conservative supporters. But despite the enormous differences and extraordinary implications for public policy, the winner of the November election will claim a mandate to enact their party’s agenda in toto. In other words, the choice facing voters this election year is much starker than it has been in the past — and much more likely to become law in the future.

## Other

### Obama Gets Super Liberal

Jennifer Rubin, conservative American columnist and a blogger for the Washington Post, 3-27-12, [“How Obama's gaffe sets the stage,” Washington Post, Lexis] E. Liu

Mitt Romney has wasted no time in capitalizing on President Obama's open-mike mega-error - when he was caught Monday telling outgoing Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that he would have "more flexibility" to deal with controversial issues after Election Day and that Vladimir Putin needs to give him "space." (Eric Fehrnstrom should breathe a sigh of relief; a comment this bad from an actual candidate dwarfs whatever an adviser could possibly say.) ¶ The Romney team blasted out an e-mail: "President Obama had a revealing and unguarded moment when he was caught on tape telling Russia's president, 'This is my last election. After my election, I have more flexibility.' President Obama signaled that he's going to cave to Russia on missile defense, but the American people have a right to know where else he plans to be 'flexible' in a second term. Higher taxes, more spending and increased debt are all on the table as long as Barack Obama is in the White House, despite what he says publicly. President Obama needs to level with the American public about his real agenda." ¶ It's remarkable, actually, that Obama could be any more flexible with Russia than he's already been under his "reset" - which is indistinguishable from appeasement. His administration praised rigged Russian elections, helped get Russia into the World Trade Organization, has tried to slow down human rights legislation aimed at Russian perpetrators and yanked missile defense sites out of Eastern Europe. ¶ This is a stunning gift to Romney from the Obama camp. The legitimate concern that Obama will take his reelection as a mandate to head left is likely to become an all-purpose weapon. Romney's team might argue, for example: "Obama says he'll only raise taxes on the rich. But after the election he'll have 'more flexibility.' " Or: "He says he'd never impose a peace agreement on Israel, but after the election he'll have 'more flexibility.' "¶ This comment is so potent because it came from Obama himself and because it is true in the aggregate. Is there anyone who thinks that Obama, if reelected, wouldn't run wild with policies that the majority of the electorate opposes? Otherwise, he'd roll them out now, of course. And what is the left going to say? That Obama won't act on the liberal-agenda wish list if he gets a second term? We can argue about what liberal items would be on the list, but the president can't honestly claim he is not going to try to "finish the work." Given his recent shift left, his "more flexibility" statement is going to be hard to live down. ¶ This election is not simply a referendum on President Obama's actions to date; it's essentially a blank check for the president's second term. Romney should be asking wary independents and moderates: Is there a scintilla of a chance that Obama would be less liberal in a second term?

### Obama Shifts to Center

#### Obama can shift to the center p election

Ryan Lizza, Washington Correspondent for The New Yorker magazine, where he covers the White House, nominated for a National Magazine Award, The New Republic senior editor, 6-18-12, [“The Second Term,” The New Yorker,

<http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=al>] E. Liu

But a President who has won reëlection can also feel less tied to his political base and more free to shift toward the political center. At the start of Reagan’s second term, Kingon advised the White House that the victory had allowed him to pursue policies that would advance only with bipartisan support—a precondition for success, given that Democrats controlled the House. Kingon noted that only twenty per cent of Americans agreed with Reagan’s anti-abortion policy and that many Americans voted for Reagan “knowing that he believes in these things but understanding that he would not push for them.” He argued that this was the implicit promise of the Reagan reëlection campaign. Aggressively pursuing social issues, Kingon wrote, would substantially diminish the President’s political support, and would risk failure in other key areas. “I think it is important to remember that there is a point beyond which popular Presidential support erodes, and he can do nothing, e.g., Jimmy Carter,” Kingon warned.

### Obama Solves the Aff

#### Obama loves infrastructure – He’ll push lots of funding for a signature project

Ryan Lizza, Washington Correspondent for The New Yorker magazine, where he covers the White House, nominated for a National Magazine Award, The New Republic senior editor, 6-18-12, [“The Second Term,” The New Yorker,

<http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/06/18/120618fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=al>] E. Liu

Several White House officials said that the issue that Obama seems most passionate about is infrastructure. (One insider Democrat joked that Obama’s passion for infrastructure is matched only by that of the Vice-President, who loves trains.) Obama wants to spend an extra hundred and fifty billion dollars on infrastructure during the next six years and reform the process by which projects are awarded, so that it’s more about merit than about patronage. In 2009, he was aggravated when he was told that none of the money from the stimulus would be spent on a signature project, a modern-day Hoover Dam or Interstate Highway System. A bold infrastructure package has all the hallmarks of a major Obama policy: it would create jobs, it has a government-reform component, and it could establish a legacy in the form of an upgraded power grid or a high-speed train, with which Obama might forever be associated.

### No Gridlock Key to Solve Sequestration

#### Lack of gridlock post-election is key to solve sequestration cuts

Loren Thompson, Chief Operating Officer of the non-profit Lexington Institute and Chief Executive Officer of Source Associates, Deputy Director of the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University and taught graduate-level courses in strategy, technology and media affairs at Georgetown. I have also taught at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, 1-27-12, [“Defense Plans Will Change, So Don't Bank on Obama Blueprint,” Forbes, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/lorenthompson/2012/01/27/defense-plans-will-change-so-dont-bank-on-obama-blueprint/print/>] E. Liu

Third, a fiscal sword of Damocles is currently hanging over the defense sector in the form of a Budget Control Act mandate to cut $600 billion more out of military spending. That’s on top of the $487 billion that already must be cut from the President’s ten-year defense plan. Additional cuts of that magnitude would force wholesale revisions in the president’s blueprint. Military leaders have embraced the sanguine assumption that the political system will somehow avert a second wave of cuts because it would be so destructive, but as of today the law says the cuts begin next January. A stalemated post-election political system might not be able to amend the law, and the president is insisting that he would veto any legislative effort to do so that failed to provide $1.2 trillion in budget savings the law was crafted to generate.

### Nothing Effects Election

#### Election is really stable – Big events don’t shift polls

Mark Murray, Senior Political Editor, NBC News, 7-24-12, [“NBC/WSJ poll: Negative campaign takes toll on candidates; Obama up six points,” <http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/07/24/12933159-nbcwsj-poll-negative-campaign-takes-toll-on-candidates-obama-up-six-points>] E. Liu

What remains remarkable about this presidential contest, according to the NBC/WSJ pollsters, is how stable it has been, despite everything that has occurred in the past month. For example: The U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding Obama’s health care overhaul; the June jobs report, which showed that just 80,000 jobs were created last month; and the daily campaign attacks and counterattacks (including snipes over Obama’s business views, Romney’s unreleased tax returns, and the Republican’s time at Bain Capital). “So much has happened, and so little has changed,” says Hart, the Democratic pollster.