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Plan Popular—Asteroids/Mars Exploration

**Asteroid and mars exploration popular with Obama and Congress**

Smith 2010

(Graham Smith, Mail Online UK, October 12 2010 pg online @ www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1319832/Obama-sets-Nasas-sights-Mars-signs-space-exploration-legislation.html//arjun)

President Barack Obama has signed into law a new vision on U.S. space exploration that aims to send astronauts to asteroids and Mars. Mr Obama signed the Nasa Authorization Act 2010 into law yesterday, following last week's approval by Congress. The legislation instructs Nasa to move forward with an additional shuttle flight to the International Space Station (ISS) next year, before retiring the fleet. Stargazing: Barack Obama signs the Nasa Authorization Act 2010 into law yesterday. The legislation aims to send man to explore asteroids and Mars However, it also aims to send man to explore near-Earth objects - NEO or asteroids - by 2025 and to Mars by 2030. The act also authorises the space agency to commence work on a rocket for deep-space exploration and shelves the George W Bush administration's goal of returning to the moon. By signing the act into law, Mr Obama brings to an end months of furious debate about the future of Nasa on Capitol Hill.

Plan Unpopular—Manned Missions

US manned missions unpopular and controversial

Handberg 7/25

(Roger Handberg, Roger Handberg is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Central Florida, The Space Review, "The beginning of the end or the end of the beginning?," July 25 2011 pg online @ www.thespacereview.com/article/1890/1//arjun)

The Space Shuttle era ended when Atlantis lifted off for the International Space Station (ISS); its return to Earth last week was anticlimactic. What that means is that the US civil crewed space program has moved from a nonpartisan icon to just another toy in the political dustup on Capitol Hill. Any future US civil manned space program will confront the open hostility of elements within the American electorate and in Congress. The national mantra now is deficit reduction, which will largely be extracted from the discretionary component of the federal budget. In the scramble to survive, NASA and its programs are among the weakest, politically speaking. Its interest groups are small and crosscut by conflicting interests and agendas. How the United States got to this point is a multi-administration tale that need not detain us unduly. The important point is to delineate what the world looks like for any successor US space program.

\*\*\* Generic Internal Links \*\*\*

Political Capital Key

Political capital now is key

Mason 11, Julie Mason, White House Correspondent, January 4, 2011. “Obama tapping personal charm, political capital to combat GOP”

http://washingtonexaminer.com/politics/white-house/2011/01/obama-tapping-personal-charm-political-capital-combat-gop

President Obama is sounding optimistic about prospects for the parties to work together, but two key battles await to test the limits of his personal and political capital. "I think that there's going to be politics, that's what happens in Washington," Obama told reporters as he headed back to Washington after 11 days in Hawaii. Among the obstacles awaiting him is a re-energized Republican Party itching for confrontation, with plans to begin chipping away at Obama's signature health care reforms followed by a protracted showdown over the federal budget. "They are going to play to their base for a certain period of time," Obama said of Republicans, "but I'm pretty confident that they're going to recognize that our job is to govern and make sure that we are delivering jobs for the American people and that we're creating a competitive economy for the 21st century." After a string of late-session victories last month that included repealing the ban on gays serving openly in the military, cutting a tax-cut deal with Republicans and ratification of a nuclear arms treaty with Russia, Obama also is politically reanimated. His job approval ratings are back up to 50 percent after a long run in the mid-40s. Obama also has a potent weapon in the arsenal: a high personal approval rating of 73 percent, according to a recent CNN/Opinion Research Corp. poll. Even people who don't approve of the job Obama is doing like him personally. Chris Reardon, a political scientist and pollster at the University of New Hampshire, noted that presidents with high personal likability ratings can often be more effective than their popularity job approval ratings would suggest or political opponents might expect.

Political Capital Finite

Political capital is finite

**Feehery,** President of Feehery Group, a Washington-based advocacy firm for News Corp., Ford Motor Co. and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce,**2009**

July 21, http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/07/21/feehery.obama.matrix/, [Stolarski]

A president enters office with the highest popularity ratings he will ever get (barring a war or some other calamity that brings the country together), which is why most presidents try to pass as much as possible as early as possible in their administrations. The most famous example of that was Franklin Roosevelt's Hundred Days. But there are other examples. Ronald Reagan moved his agenda very early in his administration, George Bush passed his tax proposals and the No Child Left Behind law very early in his White House. They understood the principle that it is important to strike while the iron is hot. President Bush famously misunderstood this principle when he said that he was going to use the "political capital" gained in his re-election to pass Social Security reform. What he failed to understand was that as soon as he won re-election, he was a lame duck in the eyes of the Congress, and he had no political capital. President Obama believes he has a lot of political capital, and perhaps he does. But each day he is in office, his political capital reserve is declining. And each time he goes to the well to pass things like "cap and trade" makes it more difficult for him to pass his more important priorities like health care.

Political Capital High Now

Obama’s political capital is at its highest since inauguration— Bin Laden and birth certificate

**White 5/8**, Deborah White, May 8, 2011.

http://usliberals.about.com/b/2011/05/08/obama-to-use-post-bin-laden-political-capital-on-immigration-reform.htm

Now that the President Obama's political capital is at its highest point since his 2009 inauguration, expect immigration reform to be a pressing priority of the Obama administration. Post-bin Laden and post-birth certificate silliness, President Obama is riding high in public favor. Very high, and likely never higher with conservatives, the voter group most adamantly opposed to loosening U.S. immigration laws. To win reelection in 2012, President Obama must energize and draw a hefty majority of votes from two particular demographic groups: youth, especially college students, and Latinos.

Political Capital k/t Econ

Obama using ALL of his political capital on debt crisis – plan removes his focus and collapses the economy

**AP** **7/15** (7/15/11, "Obama's hands-on negotiation a political necessity ", http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jEh84nbuj\_Ei28mJcPHMRq5ka28A?docId=3d2adbdbf71e456593f0198494d7dc15)

WASHINGTON (AP) — President BarackObama's decision to haul lawmakers in day by day to negotiate a debt deal comes down to reality: He has no other choice. The president has essentially cleared his agenda to deal with one enormous crisis. The threat of an unprecedented government default, combined with the shrinking time left to prevent it, has prompted an extraordinary dynamic in a town of divided government and divisive politics. For five straight days, the president and leaders of Congress have gathered in the Cabinet Room to try to work it out. "It's absolutely remarkable," said Allan Lichtman, a presidential historian at American University. Whether it is working is still in question. From the White House perspective, Obama's all-consuming role as direct negotiator with the top House and Senate lawmakers is essential for maximizing leverage, conveying a sense of urgency and finding the votes in Congress so that both chambers will agree to raise the nation's borrowing limit by Aug. 2. Without that vote, the government says it will not have the money to pay its existing bills, an outcome big enough potentially to wallop the world economy. The Republicans who control the House insist the debt limit should not be raised without a corresponding package to slash the deficit. The debate over the size and composition of such a major debt-cutting package has kept Obama and lawmakers in tense talks for days. So Obama is spending most of his time negotiating, reviewing options with staff, calling lawmakers, making his case in the media. "It's really the only option we have," said White House communications director Dan Pfeiffer. "The consequences of not solving this problem are catastrophic."

Political Capital k/t Agenda

Political capital key to agenda—presidential authority

Schier 09

Schier 09 (Steven E., professor of political science at Carleton College, “Understanding the Obama Presidency”, The Forum, Vol. 7, Issue 1, http://www.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1283&context=forum)

At the center of the conflict lies the desire of presidents to create political “regimes” supported by popular approval and constitutional authority (Schier 2004, 3). A regime is a stable authority structure that reworks Washington power arrangements to facilitate its own dominance. Presidential power is intimately tied to presidential authority, defined as the “expectations that surround the exercise of power at a given moment; the perception of what it is appropriate for a given president to do” (Skowronek 1997, 18). Authority, to Skowronek, rests on the “warrants” drawn from the politics of the moment to justify action and secure the legitimacy of changes. The more stable a president's grant of authority, the easier his exercise of power. If a president claims more authority than he actually possesses, however, he invites challenges from rivals that can reduce his authority and power. Obama, initially at least, has broad grants of power and authority. Yet as his political capital drops, the authority of his office will surely shrink. That has been the case with all recent presidents, and will occur during Obama’s time in the oval office. As adverse events arrive, as they inevitably will, he will find that his warrant of authority will fade first, long before his direct presidential powers face serious challenge.

Political capital is finite and determines agenda success

Sammon 03

Sammon, Washington Times, 03 (Bill, 7-3-3, Washington Times, “Bush White House untouched by scandal; Deprives foes of re-election weapon, p. A4, Lexis)

"Political capital is a very finite commodity and you want to spent it strategically," said Matthew T. Felling of the Center for Media and Public Affairs. "Previous administrations have had to spend their political capital or have just had it deducted from their account through various scandals." For example, when the Clinton scandals reached critical mass beginning with the Monica Lewinsky affair and ending in the first impeachment of an elected president in U.S. history the president was politically paralyzed for more than a year, leaving his agenda largely unfulfilled.

Political capital key to Obama agenda

Cohen 09

Michael Cohen, senior research fellow, New America Founcation, “Momentum Key for Health Care Bill,” POLITICO, 6—22—09, www.politico.com/news/stories/0609/23988.html

Throughout the 2008 presidential campaign, the one criticism heard perhaps more than any other from Republicans was about the cult of veneration that had developed around Barack Obama. He was the “second coming,” the Democrats’ “messiah,” a preening “celebrity,” the political ads joked. But the GOP might have been on to something. For Democrats and their ambitious domestic agenda, it’s all about Obama. There is today a curious disconnect between support for the president’s policy prescriptions and the popularity of the man himself. Fewer than half of all Americans are on board with the president’s health care agenda (although they remain open to persuasion), a majority are uneasy about the burgeoning federal deficit, and voters remain dubious about the very notion that government can solve the country’s problems. But these concerns are not denting Obama’s approval ratings, which remain in the mid-60s. It’s that trust that may be Obama and the Democrats’ most potent political tool in the legislative battles to come. The Democrats’ advantage is heightened by the growing public disapproval of the opposition party. According to one recent poll, Republicans are actually less popular than former Vice President Dick Cheney. As for Democrats, 57 percent of the electorate views them in a favorable light. These polling numbers suggest a yawning “confidence chasm.” Even with concerns over the deficit, voters are still inclined to blame the country’s budget woes on Obama’s predecessor. With the political winds at their back, Democrats seemingly have a unique opportunity to pass a robust legislative package of domestic initiatives. The Politico 44 Story Widget Requires [**Adobe Flash Player**](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/).Yet congressional Democrats seem unwilling to push their advantage. They are increasingly skittish over Republican criticisms of the growing budget gap and remain fearful that if economic prospects remain clouded, they will be vulnerable to Republican criticisms about supporting a Big-Government health care plan that grew the deficit and short-circuited the improving economy.  Obviously, if the economy is performing badly a year and a half from now, Democrats will most likely pay a political price at the polls. But passage of sweeping health care legislation that insures millions of Americans would not only fulfill Obama’s campaign message of change but would also serve as an effective political counterargument. And what if the economy starts to turn around by 2010? An improving economy combined with major health care reform would be a political game changer for Democrats. Indeed, a half-measure bill that leaves millions without access to care and fails to deliver on Obama’s pledge to change the way things are done in Washington could be the worst of both worlds. If Democrats are serious about health reform, why adopt an incrementalist approach when the political opportunity allows for something bigger and possibly better? Unease about the deficit is even more misplaced. Voter trepidation about the budget gap is in direct proportion to the state of the economy: The worse the economy, the greater the concern over the deficit. According to a recent New York Times poll, when asked the most important problem facing the country, 38 percent said the economy and only 2 percent cited the deficit. Whatever the state of the economy in 2010, would Democrats prefer to go to the voters and say, “I shrunk the deficit” or would they rather say, “I passed health care legislation that improves access and care for 50 million people — and, by the way, my opponent voted against it”? This is one argument that Cheney might have gotten right: Deficits don’t matter. Democrats are in an unparalleled political position: They have a sputtering and unpopular opposition and a young and well-liked president trusted by an electorate that is hungry for change. Even if Obama is pushing an agenda that may not be fully embraced by the American people, this is no time for caution. Instead, Democrats must take full advantage of the Obama’s popularity — and the president must use the bully pulpit even more effectively to make the case for change. Democrats, it is often joked, put too much focus on 10-point plans and detailed policy prescriptions. Once again, this seems to be the case. This is one time where their political — and policy — success depends far less on the details and more on building off the perception of change and possibility represented by Obama’s presidency. The most important thing for Democrats going forward will not be the latest deficit numbers but the momentum of political change they have the power to catalyze.

Public support is key – Obama’s agenda rests in reclaiming them

The Hill 09

The Hill, ‘9. “Analysis: July has been disaster for Obama, Hill Dems,” 7-27, <http://thehill.com/leading-the-news/analysis-july-has-been-disaster-for-obama-hill-dems-2009-07-27.html>.

The other misstep that has bogged down the administration on healthcare specifically is Obama's inability to communicate effectively to the American people, Light said. While it is shocking to consider that Obama is anything less than one of the best communicators in modern political history, when it comes to healthcare, he simply has not been able to make the sell to people who do have health insurance. And Wednesday night's primetime press conference was a "disaster," Light said. Light said that for the president to regain political momentum, he needs to reclaim his agenda from Congress and start connecting with the public. "He needs to take this over and own it," Light said.

Political capital key to overcome vested interests

Schier 09

Schier 09 (Steven E., professor of political science at Carleton College, “Understanding the Obama Presidency”, The Forum, Vol. 7, Issue 1, http://www.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1283&context=forum)

In additional to formal powers, a president’s informal power is situationally derived and highly variable. Informal power is a function of the “political capital” presidents amass and deplete as they operate in office. Paul Light defines several components of political capital: party support of the president in Congress, public approval of the presidential conduct of his job, the President’s electoral margin and patronage appointments (Light 1983, 15). Richard Neustadt’s concept of a president’s “professional reputation” likewise figures into his political capital. Neustadt defines this as the “impressions in the Washington community about the skill and will with which he puts [his formal powers] to use” (Neustadt 1990, 185). In the wake of 9/11, George W. Bush’s political capital surged, and both the public and Washington elites granted him a broad ability to prosecute the war on terror. By the later stages of Bush’s troubled second term, beset by a lengthy and unpopular occupation of Iraq and an aggressive Democratic Congress, he found that his political capital had shrunk. Obama’s informal powers will prove variable, not stable, as is always the case for presidents. Nevertheless, he entered office with a formidable store of political capital. His solid electoral victory means he initially will receive high public support and strong backing from fellow Congressional partisans, a combination that will allow him much leeway in his presidential appointments and with his policy agenda. Obama probably enjoys the prospect of a happier honeymoon during his first year than did George W. Bush, who entered office amidst continuing controversy over the 2000 election outcome. Presidents usually employ power to disrupt the political order they inherit in order to reshape it according to their own agendas. Stephen Skowronek argues that “presidents disrupt systems, reshape political landscapes, and pass to successors leadership challenges that are different from the ones just faced” (Skowronek 1997, 6). Given their limited time in office and the hostile political alignments often present in Washington policymaking networks and among the electorate, presidents must force political change if they are to enact their agendas. In recent decades, Washington power structures have become more entrenched and elaborate (Drucker 1995) while presidential powers – through increased use of executive orders and legislative delegation (Howell 2003) –have also grown. The presidency has more powers in the early 21st century but also faces more entrenched coalitions of interests, lawmakers, and bureaucrats whose agendas often differ from that of the president. This is an invitation for an energetic president – and that seems to describe Barack Obama – to engage in major ongoing battles to impose his preferences.

Political capital limited, necessitates trade-off

Thomas and Pika 97

Thomas & Pika (political scientists) ’97 [Norman & Joseph, The Politics of the Presidency, p. 338]

"Political Capital" is the reservoir of popular and congressional support with which newly elected presidents begin their terms. As they make controversial decisions, they "spend" some of their capital, which they seldom are able to replenish. They must decide which proposals merit the expenditure of political capital and in what amounts. Reagan, for example, was willing to spend his capital heavily on reducing the role of the federal government, cutting taxes, and reforming the income tax code, but not on antiabortion or school prayer amendments to the Constitution. Material resources determine which proposals for new programs can be advanced and the emphasis to be placed on existing programs.

Political strength is particularly important in getting legislation through the Senate--vulnerable to breakdown

Chait 09

Jonathan Chait, "Why the Democrats Can't Govern," THE NEW REPUBLIC, April 15, 2009, p. 15+.

A second and related problem is that Democrats are especially susceptible to the dysfunction of the Senate. Congressional scholar Norm Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute penned an article in AEI's magazine titled "Our Broken Senate." Over the last three decades, the filibuster, once a rare weapon used to express unusually strong objections, has dramatically expanded and turned into a routine, 60-vote supermajority requirement. During the same time period, the Senate has developed a new, anonymous one-person filibuster called a "hold." The clubby traditions of the Senate have allowed these new practices to expand unchallenged. "The always individual-oriented Senate," writes Ornstein, "has become even more indulgent of the demands of each of its 100 egotists." The Senate poses a particular obstacle to Democrats. Its structure gives greater voice to residents of low-population states, who tilt more Republican than the country as a whole. If you assume that every senator represents half the population of that state, then the Republican caucus represents less than 38 percent of the public. In electoral terms, we think of that as a tiny, even fringe minority. It's less than the share of the electorate that voted for Barry Goldwater in 1964. But it supports enough senators to block the majority's will.

If Obama spends political capital on the plan, he can't spend it on other agenda items

Edwards 99

Edwards (Prof., Political Science, Texas A&M) ’99 [George, Presidential Policy-Making: An End of Century Assessment, ed. S. Shull, p. 122]

An important element of a president's legislative strategy is to set the agenda of Congress. In the public presidency, this means setting the agenda of the public first. An important component of agenda setting is establishing priorities among legislative proposals. If the president is not able to focus attention on his priority programs, they may become lost in the complex and overloaded political environment. Setting priorities is also important because the White House can lobby effectively for only a few bills at a time. Moreover, the president's political capital is inevitably limited, and it is sensible to focus it on issues he cares most about.

Flip-Shield: Legislation can only hurt capital

Fisher 03

Fisher (staffwriter) 1/6/03 [Kenneth L., “Three’s a Charm,” Forbes, LN]

Having bucked the trend and added midterm power, will President Bush now legislate heavily, voiding the third-year magic? Unlikely. He can build political capital or spend it. Legislating means spending it, hurting his 2004 goals. I'd bet he keeps building capital. Remember, he needs marginal 2004 voters. If he pushes legislation, those he takes from will hate it more than those he gives to will love it. The losers will be energized for 2004 revenge; the winners, placated, will lose their urge to vote or help Bush's campaign.

Pushing through legislation is cumbersome and drains finite political capital

Seidenfeld 94

**Seidenfeld** (Prof., Law, Florida State) 10/**94** [Mark, “A Big Picture Approach to Presidential Influence on Agency Policy-Making,” Iowa Law Review, LN]

The cumbersome process of enacting legislation interferes with the President's ability to get his legislative agenda through Congress much as it hinders direct congressional control of agency policy-setting. A President has a limited amount of political capital he can use to press for a legislative agenda, and precious little time to get his agenda enacted. These constraints prevent the President from marshalling through Congress all but a handful of statutory provisions reflecting his policy vision.

Political capital determines the agenda – above anything else

Light 99

Light 99 Senior Fellow at the Center for Public Service [Paul C., the President’s Agenda: Domestic Policy Choice from Kennedy to Clinton, 3rd Edition] p. 34

In chapter 2, I will consider just how capital affects the basic parameters of the domestic agenda. Though the internal resources are important contributors to timing and size, capital remains the cirtical factor. That conclusion will become essential in understanding the domestic agenda. Whatever the President’s personal expertise, character, or skills, capital is the most important resource. In the past, presidential scholars have focused on individual factors in discussing White House decisions, personality being the dominant factor. Yet, given low levels in presidential capital, even the most positive and most active executive could make little impact. A president can be skilled, charming, charismatic, a veritable legislative wizard, but if he does not have the basic congressional strength, his domestic agenda will be severely restricted – capital affects both the number and the content of the President’s priorities. Thus, it is capital that determines whether the President will have the opportunity to offer a detailed domestic program, whether he will be restricted to a series of limited initiatives and vetoes. Capital sets the basic parameters of the agenda, determining the size of the agenda and guiding the criteria for choice. Regardless of the President’s personality, capital is the central force behind the domestic agenda.

Capital is key – it outweigh ideology, party support, or concessions

Light 99

Light 99 Senior Fellow at the Center for Public Service [Paul C., the President’s Agenda: Domestic Policy Choice from Kennedy to Clinton, 3rd Edition] p. 24-25

Call it push, pull, punch, juice, power, or clout – they all mean the same thing. The most basic and most important of all presidential resources is capital. Though the internal resources time, information, expertise, and energy all have an impact on the domestic agenda, the President is severely limited without capital. And capital is directly linked to the congressional parties. While there is little question that bargaining skills can affect both the composition and the success of the domestic agenda, without the necessary party support, no amount of expertise or charm can make a difference. Though bargaining is an important tool of presidential power, it does not take place in a neutral environment. Presidents bring certain advantages and disadvantages to the table.

Winners Win

Winners win

Bryan W. **MARSHALL,** Miami University, Department of Political Science **AND** Brandon C. **PRINS,** University of Tennessee & Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy, September **2011**

“Power or Posturing? Policy Availability and Congressional Inﬂuence on U.S. Presidential Decisions to Use Force”, Presidential Studies Quarterly, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2011.03885.x/pdf, [Stolarski]

Presidents rely heavily on Congress in converting their political capital into real policy success. Policy success not only shapes the reelection prospects of presidents, but it also builds the president’s reputation for political effectiveness and fuels the prospect for subsequent gains in political capital (Light 1982). Moreover, the president’s legislative success in foreign policy is correlated with success on the domestic front. On this point, some have largely disavowed the two-presidencies distinction while others have even argued that foreign policy has become a mere extension of domestic policy (Fleisher et al. 2000; Oldﬁeld and Wildavsky 1989) Presidents implicitly understand that there exists a linkage between their actions in one policy area and their ability to affect another. The use of force is no exception; in promoting and protecting U.S. interests abroad, presidential decisions are made with an eye toward managing political capital at home (Fordham 2002).

Wins key to public support, which is key to the agenda

**SPITZER 93** Prof of Poli Sci, State University of New York, 93

[Robert J., President and Congress:  Executive Hegemony at the Crossroads of American Government] [Stolarski]

 An important empirical study of the relationship between the President’s public standing and presidential support in Congress concluded that the two are inextricably linked.  Presidents who manage to satisfy public expectations are rewarded by high and stable public support.  In turn, public support translates directly into success for the President in Congress.  According to the data analysis of political scientists Charles Ostrom, Jr., and Dennis Simon, “the cumulative rate of roll-call victories [for the President in Congress] will decline by three points for every ten-point drop in [public] approval.”  In turn, “Presidential effectiveness in the legislative arena is an important component in maintaining public support.”  Naturally, many of the factors that influence the President’s standing are beyond direct control, such as the onset of a sharp economic downturn at the start of an administration.  But Ostrom and Simon conclude that a shrewd President can influence public support and that the typical long-term decline in a President’s public standing is by no means inevitable.

Winning is key—Obama must get victories to rebuild capital

Mitchell ‘09

Lincoln **Mitchell**, Assistant Professor, International Law, Columbia University, “Time for Obama to Start Spending Political Capital,” HUFFINGTON POST, 6—18—**09**, www.huffingtonpost.com/lincoln-mitchell/time-for-obama-to-start-s\_b\_217235.html

Political capital is not, however, like money, it cannot be saved up interminably while its owner waits for the right moment to spend it. Political capital has a shelf life, and often not a very long one. If it is not used relatively quickly, it dissipates and becomes useless to its owner. This is the moment in which Obama, who has spent the first few months of his presidency diligently accumulating political capital, now finds himself. The next few months will be a key time for Obama. If Obama does not spend this political capital during the next months, it will likely be gone by the New Year anyway. Much of what President Obama has done in his first six months or so in office has been designed to build political capital, interestingly he has sought to build this capital from both domestic and foreign sources. He has done this by traveling extensively, reintroducing to America to foreign audiences and by a governance style that has very cleverly succeeded in pushing his political opponents to the fringes. This tactic was displayed during the effort to pass the stimulus package as Republican opposition was relegated to a loud and annoying, but largely irrelevant, distraction. Building political capital was, or should have been, a major goal of Obama's recent speech in Cairo as well. Significantly, Obama has yet to spend any of his political capital by meaningfully taking on any powerful interests. He declined to take Wall Street on regarding the financial crisis, has prepared to, but not yet fully, challenged the power of the AMA or the insurance companies, nor has he really confronted any important Democratic Party groups such as organized labor. This strategy, however, will not be fruitful for much longer. There are now some very clear issues where Obama should be spending political capital. The most obvious of these is health care. The battle for health care reform will be a major defining issue, not just for the Obama presidency, but for American society over the next decades. It is imperative that Obama push for the best and most comprehensive health care reform possible. This will likely mean not just a bruising legislative battle, but one that will pit powerful interests, not just angry Republican ideologues, against the President. The legislative struggle will also pull many Democrats between the President and powerful interest groups. Obama must make it clear that there will be an enormous political cost which Democrats who vote against the bill will have to pay. Before any bill is voted upon, however, is perhaps an even more critical time as pressure from insurance groups, business groups and doctors organizations will be brought to bear both on congress, but also on the administration as it works with congress to craft the legislation. This is not the time when the administration must focus on making friends and being liked, but on standing their ground and getting a strong and inclusive health care reform bill. Obama will have to take a similar approach to any other major domestic legislation as well. This is, of course, the way the presidency has worked for decades. Obama is in an unusual situation because a similar dynamic is at work at the international level. A major part of Obama's first six months in office have involved pursuing a foreign policy that implicitly has sought to rebuild both the image of the US abroad, but also American political capital. It is less clear how Obama can use this capital, but now is the time to use it. A cynical interpretation of the choice facing Obama is that he can remain popular or he can have legislative and other policy accomplishments, but this interpretation would be wrong. By early 2010, Obama, and his party will, fairly or not, be increasingly judged by what they have accomplished in office, not by how deftly they have handled political challenges. Therefore, the only way he can remain popular and get new political capital is through converting his current political capital into concrete legislative accomplishments. Health care will be the first and very likely most important, test.

Winners win

Singer 09

Johnathan **Singer**, editor and JD Candidate, UC-Berkeley, “by Expending Capital, Obama Grows His Capital,” MY DIRECT DEMOCRACY, 3—3—**09**, http://www.mydd.com/story/2009/3/3/191825/0428

Peter Hart gets at a key point. Some believe that political capital is finite**,** that it can be used up. To an extent that's true. But it's important to note**,** too, that political capital can be regenerated -- and, specifically, that when a President expends a great deal of capital on a measure that was difficult to enact and then succeeds, he can build up more capital. Indeed**,** that appears to be what is happening with Barack Obama, who went to the mat to pass the stimulus package out of the gate, got it passed despite near-unanimous opposition of the Republicans on Capitol Hill, and is being rewarded by the American public as a result. Take a look at the numbers. President Obama now has a 68 percent favorable rating in the NBC-WSJ poll, his highest ever showing in the survey. Nearly half of those surveyed (47 percent) view him very positively. Obama's Democratic Party earns a respectable 49 percent favorable rating. The Republican Party, however, is in the toilet, with its worst ever showing in the history of the NBC-WSJ poll, 26 percent favorable. On the question of blame for the partisanship in Washington, 56 percent place the onus on the Bush administration and another 41 percent place it on Congressional Republicans. Yet just 24 percent blame Congressional Democrats, and a mere 11 percent blame the Obama administration. Soat this point, with President Obama seemingly benefiting from his ambitious actions and the Republicans sinking further and further as a result of their knee-jerked opposition to that agenda, there appears to be no reason not to push forward on anythingfrom universal healthcare to energy reform to ending the war in Iraq.

Winners win--Bush presidency proves

Fortier 09

John **Fortier**, research fellow, American Enterprise Intitute, "Spend Your Political Capital Before It's Gone," POLITICO.COM, January 14, 20**09**, lexis.

As Texas governor and, later, as president, George W. Bush studiously avoided the model of his father. He sought to follow up his 2000 election and policy victories with an ambitious legislative agenda where more victories would lead to even more political capital. After unseating Democratic incumbent Ann Richards in 1994, Bush used his gubernatorial victory to push a focused agenda reforming education, legal liability, and the welfare and juvenile justice systems. Success in these areas led Bush to push for an even broader legislative package to change the Texas school funding system. He overreached and fell far short of his original plan, but he did end up making some changes in the state property tax system, snatching a small victory from the jaws of defeat. This modest victory preserved his popularity, which remained high throughout his six years as governor. Bush came into the presidency after a protracted election dispute but acted like a man with a mandate. His election victory, no matter how small, was a form of political capital to be spent, and he pushed his tax and education reform packages through Congress. After the Sept. 11 attacks, Republican victories in the 2002 midterm election and the initial phase of the Iraq war, Bush gained more political capital. And each time, he spent it, going to Congress for more tax cuts, the creation of a Department of Homeland Security and other domestic priorities. Bush developed the image of a winner. Despite narrow Republican majorities in Congress, he succeeded in holding his party together and pulling out one legislative victory after another. He famously did not veto a bill in his first term. Even when Bush veered from a typical conservative agenda on education reform and Medicare prescription drugs, Republicans voted with him, although some held their noses. Republicans in Congress did not want to break the string of Bush's first-term legislative juggernaut. Bush was spending his political capital and, by winning , was getting repaid.

Winning key to capital—use or lose

Lindberg 04

Tod **Lindberg**, research fellow, Hoover Institute, “Spending Political Capital,” WASHINGTON TIMES, 12—7—**04**, p. A21.

Now, in the usual metaphor of political capital, presidents who have it often make the mistake of trying to "hoard" it. They put their political capital in a safe place in order to bolster their personal popularity. They do not "risk it" in pursuit of political victories, whether on their policy agenda or for controversial judicial appointments, etc. And therein, in the conventional application of the metaphor, lies peril. For political capital, when hoarded, does not remain intact but rather diminishes over time through disuse. It "wastes away" - and with it, a president's popularity and reputation. Therefore, again in the conventional use of the metaphor, it is mere prudence for a president to "invest" his political capital. Only by seeking political victories and winning them by such judicious investment can a president maintain and even increase his political capital. Who dares wins.

Winners win: tough victories make the president look like a winner, builds future success

Ornstein 93

**Ornstein** (Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute) 5/27/93 [Norman, “Clinton Can Still Emerge a Winner,” Roll Call, LN]

Winning comes to those who look like winners. This only sounds redundant or cliche-ish. If power is the ability to make people do something they otherwise would not do, real power is having people do things they otherwise wouldn't do without anybody making them - when they act in anticipation of what they think somebody would want them to do. If a president develops a reputation as a winner, somebody who will pull out victories in Congress even when he is behind, somebody who can say, "Do this!" and have it done, then Members of Congress will behave accordingly. They will want to cut their deals with the president early, getting on the winning team when it looks the best and means the most. They will avoid cutting deals with the opposition.

Obama must ‘spend’ his popularity to accumulate capital

Kuttner 09

Robert **Kuttner**, political analyst, “Obama Has Amassed Enormous Political Capital,” HUFFINGTON POST, 4—28—**09**, [www.alternet.org/workplace/138641/obama\_has\_amassed\_enormous\_political\_capital,\_but\_he\_doesn't\_know\_what\_to\_do\_with\_it/?page=2](http://www.alternet.org/workplace/138641/obama_has_amassed_enormous_political_capital,_but_he_doesn't_know_what_to_do_with_it/?page=2)

Barack Obama, after nearly a hundred days, enjoys a huge reservoir of popular good will. He has managed to charm even his detractors, while his supporters are still cutting him a lot of slack. In a national crisis, that initial support is a huge asset but it will not last forever. Public approval of a president is not like a stock of savings. It needs to be invested in great deeds, and earned. Obama has yet to decide what his presidency is for**.**

Obama needs to be a bully to get what he wants

Bloomberg News 09

**Bloomberg News**, staff, 4—29—**09**, www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=apfL8Tl\_aPzk&refer=home

In the coming weeks, Obama plans to revamp federal contracting, fight lending fraud and empower judges to write down mortgages for struggling homeowners, and he wants Congress to pass a tobacco-regulation bill. By his 200th day, he may have the chance to appoint a Supreme Court justice. His success may require a level of combativeness -- toward both Republicans and some of his own party members -- that he hasn’t had to display in his first months in office. “He may have to threaten more and promise more and throw his weight around even more,” said [Stuart Rothenberg](http://search.bloomberg.com/search?q=Stuart+Rothenberg&site=wnews&client=wnews&proxystylesheet=wnews&output=xml_no_dtd&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&filter=p&getfields=wnnis&sort=date:D:S:d1), a Washington-based independent political analyst. “He’ll have to get his hands a little dirtier.”

Winners win – political victories multiply – insiders prove

Ornstein 01

**Ornstein**, American Enterprise Institute 9/10/**01** (Norman, Roll Call “Congress Inside Out”)

The compromise accomplished two ends. First, it changed the agenda base of the issue. Patients' rights went from an issue where the only viable proposal was from Democrats (with GOP co-sponsors), which the President vowed to veto - to one where both Democrats and Bush are for patients' rights and merely differ on the details. Two, it gave the President a victory on the House floor when all the pundits predicted defeat a major momentum builder. In a system where a President has limited formal power, perception matters. The reputation for success - the belief by other political actors that even when he looks down, a president will find a way to pull out a victory - is the most valuable resource a chief executive can have. Conversely, the widespread belief that the Oval Office occupant is on the defensive, on the wane or without the ability to win under adversity can lead to disaster, as individual lawmakers calculate who will be on the winning side and negotiate accordingly. In simple terms, winners win and losers lose more often than not. The set of presidential victories on energy was significant in other ways. The energy bill that emerged on the House floor was put together hurriedly by House Republican leaders who wanted to get one Bush priority on the agenda and give him at least a partial victory. But up until the day before the debate and votes, nearly everyone, including GOP leaders, expected the President to be rebuffed on drilling in ANWR; most thought he would lose on CAFE standards for SUVs.

AT Winners Win

Political capital is finite

**Feehery,** President of Feehery Group, a Washington-based advocacy firm for News Corp., Ford Motor Co. and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce,**2009**

July 21, http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/07/21/feehery.obama.matrix/, [Stolarski]

A president enters office with the highest popularity ratings he will ever get (barring a war or some other calamity that brings the country together), which is why most presidents try to pass as much as possible as early as possible in their administrations. The most famous example of that was Franklin Roosevelt's Hundred Days. But there are other examples. Ronald Reagan moved his agenda very early in his administration, George Bush passed his tax proposals and the No Child Left Behind law very early in his White House. They understood the principle that it is important to strike while the iron is hot. President Bush famously misunderstood this principle when he said that he was going to use the "political capital" gained in his re-election to pass Social Security reform. What he failed to understand was that as soon as he won re-election, he was a lame duck in the eyes of the Congress, and he had no political capital. President Obama believes he has a lot of political capital, and perhaps he does. But each day he is in office, his political capital reserve is declining. And each time he goes to the well to pass things like "cap and trade" makes it more difficult for him to pass his more important priorities like health care.

Perception of being a winner doesn’t matter— Obama still loses political capital in the process

Empirically denied—Obama didn’t get any major wins after healthcare

Winners Lose

Can’t get a win – resources are more important than popularity

**Boulie,** BA, Political & Social Thought, Writing Fellow of The American Prospect, **5/5**

“Political Capital”, http://prospect.org/csnc/blogs/tapped\_archive?month=05&year=2011&base\_name=political\_capital , 5/5/11, [Stolarski]

Indeed, for liberals who want to see Obama use his political capital, it’s worth noting that approval-spikes aren’t necessarily related to policy success. George H.W. Bush’s major domestic initiatives came before his massive post-Gulf War approval bump, and his final year in office saw little policy success. George W. Bush was able to secure No Child Left Behind, the Homeland Security Act, and the Authorization to Use Military Force in the year following 9/11, but the former two either came with pre-9/11 Democratic support or were Democratic initiatives to begin with. To repeat an oft-made point, when it comes to domestic policy, the presidency is a limited office with limited resources. Popularity with the public is a necessary part of presidential success in Congress, but it’s far from sufficient.

Winners lose

**Andres et al,** Dutko Group, Griffin -- Griffin, Johnson, Dover and Stewart, and Thurber, **'2k**

American University, Presidential Studies Quarterly, 30:3) [Stolarski]

Designing a legislative road map to success would be much less daunting if powerful presidents only had to build winning coalitions. Unfortunately, most presidential actions cause reactions in peculiar places, in the world of trade-offs. Winning in one arena may cause a major loss in another. Presidents Bush and Clinton, for example, faced divided party government conditions during most—or in the case of Bush, throughout—their administrations. Each could have offered legislation aimed at the median legislators’ policy position and bargained or offered other inducements to win a simple majority. Yet, that model was unrealistic because of the trade-offs facing both presidents. The most obvious example of this is the trade-off between forging majority coalitions and party building and winning elections. This was a constant struggle for President Bush and his team. Throughout his administration, legislation such as the Clean Air Act Amendments, the Savings and Loan Recapitalization Act, and “fast-track” trade legislation required bipartisan support from Democratic Party committee chairs and rank-and-file members to generate majority support for his policies. Bush’s own party members often met discussions with the Democratic Party leadership with apprehension and suspicion. The White House’s task during these exercises was to balance the needs of the president’s party members for consultation and attention with the demands of the majority to compromise and move legislation forward. Although President Bush could have negotiated with Democratic Party members in furthering his legislative agenda, the need to build and promote his own party’s particular policies and preferences were limiting factors. President Clinton faced similar trade-offs during the last six years of his administration, confronting a Republican majority in Congress. Trade-off problems for a president are not isolated to his own party, however. The trade-off issue faced the Bush administration when he advocated legislation that was more ideologically conservative and attempted to build coalitions with the more moderate Republicans and conservative Southern Democrats. The White House targeted many U.S. House districts represented by conservative Democrats as the best places to pick up additional seats. On several occasions during the height of a White House lobbying push on legislation, conservative Democrats routinely noted to presidential aides as represented in the following quote from one House member: I’ll consider voting with you on this bill, but you need to talk to (an administration political representative) and tell him that he can’t come down to my district and campaign against me this weekend. You guys have got to understand that you can’t ask me for my vote today and then try to beat my brains in politically tomorrow.

Losers Lose

Failure spillsover, crushes rest of agenda

Kuhn 2009

David **Kuhn**, “High Stakes for Obama in Health Care Fight,” REAL CLEAR POLITICS, 6—22—**09**, www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/06/22/obamas\_power\_rises\_or\_falls\_with\_health\_care\_97109.html

It began to sink into the political class last week that Barack Obama's push for health care reform could fail. If it does indeed fail, it would be a stunning knockdown blow to Obama's presidency. He would likely never be as powerful thereafter. A president's bully pulpit is only as powerful as the perception of that power. The history framing Obama, from the first he embodies to the economic collapse, strengthened Obama early on. It also meant that his stature was fragile. His strength was rooted in hope, not accomplishment. And hope can quickly fade without success. Health care reform represents Obama's first major legislative battle. Obama has already won a successful stimulus package. But he faced little real opposition. Health care reform will be far more difficult. And the president realizes it. This Wednesday Obama holds a one-hour "town hall" on his health care agenda, broadcast on ABC News from the White House. A Democratic vision of success likely includes a government-backed health insurance program. Passage would leave Obama politically stronger. Over the long haul it would likely improve the public's perception of government, an existential interest of the political left. In the near term, a successful health care overall would offer momentum to other legislative efforts, from energy to immigration reform. But the converse is no less true. It was four years ago that George W. Bush's effort to reform Social Security began to sink. That year he gave more speeches on Social Security than the Iraq war, all to no avail. The bully was lost from Bush's pulpit. By cause or coincidence--certainly the war in Iraq was the greatest long-term albatross--it was at this point that Bush's approval rating began to slide from bobbing around 50 percent to the low 40s by autumn, and on downward. But it's the lessons of Bill Clinton's failure that consume this White House. There is a tendency in Washington to overestimate the providence of a moment. And in 1993, there was a great deal of hyperbole about Clinton's moment. The Washington Post's David Broder offered a more sober voice. He wrote in September 1993 that Clinton's push for national health care represented the "most ambitious domestic undertaking by a chief executive in many a generation." Broder added that, "The financial, political and lobbying barriers are formidable." Those barriers held. Clinton's failure was not the first, only the most damaging. Health care reform trails back nearly a century. Teddy Roosevelt called for national health care in the 1912 campaign. By 1945 Harry Truman, in a special address to Congress, became the first sitting president to publicly push for a national health care program. The opposition proved too strong for Truman. By 1961, a young Ronald Reagan, as advocate for the American Medical Association (AMA), recorded a roughly 10-minute record arguing that even the partial nationalization of health insurance was an "excuse" to implement "socialized medicine." Today the AMA, like other powerful commercial interests, opposes a public option that competes with private insurers. And it’s possible real reform could depend on the outcome of this private-public debate. The United States is the only industrialized nation without a universal health care system. Americans are not, on average however, healthier than citizens of most other wealthy nations. There were some 37 million Americans without insurance when Clinton pushed for universal health care. That number has risen to 46 million today. At least six presidents have sought some version of health care reform. But only Clinton made it his first major legislative effort. And he lacked the power of Obama. Clinton won with 43 percent of the vote, 10 percentage points less than Obama. He got sidetracked with the debate over gays in the military. And his staff went about reform badly. The overhaul was privately prepared. The bill came out of the White House and not Congress. Clinton did not strongly push for deadlines on the issue. By contrast, Obama left the plan to Congress. He is pushing for legislation this summer. He also benefits from the ongoing nature of the health care debate over the past decade. Many incremental policy battles are fought and resolved. Obama is also, unlike Clinton, not governing in a conservative era. Events of the day, from this recession to issues abroad, also offer Obama moments to appear more presidential and therefore more powerful. But it's also expensive. Last week a government estimate placed the tab at $1.6 trillion over 10 years. The cost caught Democrats off guard. Trimming and tailoring is underway. More problems are likely ahead. The most successful active state presidents of the twentieth century never attempted heath care reform. Not Teddy or Franklin Roosevelt or Woodrow Wilson. Johnson vested early political capital into Medicare and Medicaid. But in time, Vietnam sunk the momentum of Johnson's domestic agenda. This president is more prudent than gambler. He is not Johnson. He won't go all in. And yet he chose health care to make his first big fight. And Obama's later legislative ambitions now ride on his success. Obama has already slipped with the public. His job approval rating, based on the RealClearPolitics average, is now below 60 percent. Any ebb in popularity makes legislative failure all the worse for Democrats. Obama and Democrats have much to gain by significant reform. Therefore Republicans have much to win by a Democratic defeat on any bill of this magnitude. Obama's Democratic majority in Congress, like Clinton, makes success more possible. But it also adds more pressure. Failure would look like another Democratic president unable to corral his party. "That might make the fall that much more severe," as Columbia University political scientist Robert Shapiro put it. And yet the potential fall means compromise is likely. This White House wants some bill to be law. The outcome may be more painkiller than cure. But that’s health care reform, like the industry its politics involve the cold calculus of high risk and trauma.

Agenda losers lose

Light ‘99

**Light** (Director, Center for Public Service) **’99** [Paul C., The President’s Agenda: Domestic Policy Choice from Kennedy to Clinton, p. 223]

Moreover, in the current political environment, Presidents are encouraged to adopt the "move it or lose it" approach. Domestic agenda setting has become a vicious circle: each failure breeds greater pressure for action, which in turn leads to more failure.

Defeats create a climate of agenda weakness

Hunt 97

**HUNT** (staffwriter) 11/11/**97** [Terence, “Trade Vote Loss Sparks Talk of Clinton as a Lame Duck,” Chattanooga Times, LN]

"When you can't prevail on one where you've had weeks to convince recalcitrant lawmakers to go along, then it has implications for the future," Ornstein said. "Just as victories breed victories, defeats can generate the opposite kind of climate."

Losers lose – loss of political clout will crush presidential agenda

Ornstein

Ornstein, American Enterprise Institute fellow and political analyst, 1993 (Norman J., Roll Call, “Clinton Can Still Emerge a Winner; Here's What to Do”, May 27, p. Online)

But the converse is also, painfully, true. If a president develops a reputation for being weak or for being a loser - somebody who says, "Do this!" and nothing happens, who is ignored or spurned by other interests in the political process - he will suffer death by a thousand cuts. Lawmakers will delay jumping on his bandwagon, holding off as long as possible until they see which side will win. Stories about incompetence, arrogance, or failure will be reported always, and given prominence, because they prove the point. Gerald Ford's supposed clumsiness became a metaphor to the press for his weakness; never mind that he had been an All-American football star and was probably the best athlete to occupy the White House in decades. Jimmy Carter's encounter with the "killer" rabbit and his collapse while jogging also became metaphors for presidential bad judgment and weakness.

Presidents lose support when their agenda isn’t moving

Cohen and Collier 99

**COHEN & COLLIER** (Prof., Political Science, Fordham Univ. & Prof., Univ. of Kansas) **’99** [Jeffrey, Presidential Policymaking, p. 48]

All presidents enter office being able to draw upon the natural resource reserves the office bestows on them. But as the administration ages, more and more judgment about the president is based upon the incumbent's experiences, not the office's attributes. When presidents lose the reputation as effective leaders, especially in agenda-setting activities, they may become quite vulnerable. They may look presidentially "incompetent"; "; consequently, they may be less able to influence the public's agenda

Congress abandons losers

Light ‘99

**Light** - Paulette Goddard Professor of Public Service, New York University; Founding Director, Brookings Center for Public Service; Senior Adviser, National Commission on the Public Service; Senior Adviser, Brookings Presidential Appointee Initiative – **1999** (Paul, The President’s Agenda: Domestic Policy Choice from Kennedy to Clinton, p. 29)

How does reputation affect presidential capital? According to Neustadt, professional reputation is a "cardinal factor in the President's own power to persuade": When men in government consider their relationships with him it does them little good to scan the Constitution or remind themselves that Presidents possess potential vantage points in excess of enumerated powers. Their problem never is what abstract Presidents might do in theory but what an actual incumbent will try in fact. They must anticipate, as best they can, his ability and will to make use of the bargaining advantages he has. Out of what others think of him emerge his opportunities for influence with them. If he would maximize his prospects for effectiveness, he must concern himself with what they think (Neustadt 1960, p. 60). For Neustadt, the "greatest danger to a President's potential influence with [Congress] is not the show of incapacity he makes today, but its apparent kinship to what happened yesterday, last month, last year. For if his failures seem to form a pattern, the consequence is bound to be a loss of faith in his effectiveness 'next time— (p. 61).

Losers lose – it’s a downward cycle.

Brody 91

**Brody** - emeritus professor of political science at Stanford University, won the American Political Science Association’s 1992 Woodrow Wilson award as the best Political Science book of 1991 – 19**91** (Richard, Assessing the President: The Media, Elite Opinion, and Public Support, p. 24)

A spiral decline in presidential popularity could work as follows: after a brief "honeymoon," presidential policy mis­steps lead to increased public disapproval. Incremental weak­ness in public support strengthens the opposition of political elites. For example, it reduces the president's capacity to per­suade members of Congress that support for his legislative pro­gram is withheld at their political peril. It also encourages for­eign leaders to take actions that are contrary to the interests of the United States or, at least, the president's foreign policy. In turn, elite policy opposition increases presidential policy fail­ure and, with it, increased public disappointment at the presi­dent's incapacity to fulfill expectations. This directly lowers public approval of presidential performance and sets into mo­tion the next cycle of strengthened elite resistance, faltering presidential program, and reduced public support.

Policy defeats create a cycle of falling power just like wins do

The Hotline 03

The Hotline (nqa) 1/30/03 [staffwriter, “Bush: Walking and Chewing Gum?” LN]

But presidents "ultimately get rewarded for success, not effort. Policy victories, like defeats, can create virtuous or vicious cycles of rising or falling White House power."

Popularity k/t Agenda

Popularity key to the agenda

Jeffrey E. **Cohen,** Professor of Political Science, Fordham University, 18/07/**2011**

“Presidential Rhetoric and the Public Agenda”, American Journal of Political Science, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2111759, [Stolarski]

Presidential influence over the public's policy agenda is a function of his resources and the public's receptivity to his influence attempts. Some presidential resources are constant across presidents-associate with the office, rather than individual occupants. For instance, all presidents have easy access to the mass public. The office is highly prestigious, and the glow of prestige shines on all its occupants. No other politician or office is accorded such a role; none can compete effectively with the president in terms of prestige, status, media access, public attention and interest. Other presidential resources are more variable. They may include experience and preparation for the job, ability to articulate positions, and possession of other political skills. **Perhaps the most important variable resource is popularity,** whose possession may enhance the president's credibility with the public, thereby increasing his ability to influence public opinion

Popularity is key for salient bills

Brandice **Canes-Wrone,** Massachusetts Institute of Technology **and** Scott de **Marchi,** Duke University, **02**

“Presidential Approval and Legislative Success”, THE JOURNAL OF POLITICS, http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=1886900&jid=JOP&volumeId=64&issueId=02&aid=1886892&bodyId=&membershipNumber=&societyETOCSession=, [Stolarski]

Ever since Neustadt (1960) characterized public prestige as a keystone of presidential power, political scientists have been interested in whether approval ratings facilitate presidential success in Congress. Our main contribution has been to establish the necessary conditions for this relationship. In particular, we find that only for legislation that is both complex and salient will popularity translate into policy influence. That different researchers have found varying results when considering bills in the aggregate is thus not surprising. It is only when these attributes are taken into account jointly that the role of presidential approval is explained. This finding resurrects approval as a significant resource for presidents in the legislative arena. Furthermore, our explanation is useful not only for post hoc analysis but also for predicting a president’s chance of capitalizing upon approval for a given legislative item. Moreover, while highly popular presidents may bemoan the finding that approval does not facilitate influence over all types of legislation, a good deal of reassurance can be offered. First, the class of legislation over which approval does facilitate influence is not at all trivial. Even focusing exclusively upon the complex and highly salient sample, it comprises one-third of our data, and we have excluded foreign policy issues, which are generally complex. Second, presidents can increase the salience of issues through plebiscitary activities such as speechmaking (Canes-Wrone 2001; Cohen 1995). Given that even marginal increases in salience augment the impact of approval for complex issues, this capacity offers a valuable means by which presidents can translate popularity into legislative influence. Finally, although presidents cannot alter issue complexity, they have some degree of choice over the legislation that they promote. In the example with which we began this paper, Bush was not forced to expend his historic approval ratings on the simple issue of crime. Our results indicate that a president can capitalize on such popularity if he champions legislation that is salient and complex. Thus, our analysis not only has implications for the relationship between a president’s approval and legislative success, but also for the type of policy agenda that a popular president should adopt.

Popularity key to the agenda

Christine **Gibb,** Illinois Wesleyan University, **09**

“Presidential Success in Congress: Factors that Determine the President's Ability to Influcence Congressional Voting”, Res Publica - Journal of Undergraduate Research, http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1145&context=respublica&sei-redir=1#search=%22presidential%20popularity%20agenda%20success%22, [Stolarski]

Out of Neustadt’s theory of president-centered power of persuasion emerged the widely upheld theory of presidential success in Congress being attributed to president-centered reasons. This theory claims that “the president’s public approval provides leverage with Congress” (Bond, Fleisher and Wood 2003, 92). Neustadt states that good popularity among the electorate does not necessarily guarantee victory for the president, but that it would provide a “leeway” (Neustadt 1962). Although leeway does not guarantee government action, it does encourage it. Other times, a president’s high popularity is seen as a confirmation of his mandate. Members of Congress that take their representative role very literally may see his popularity as validation of the policies that he is trying to pursue. Along with this idea, scholars propose that members of Congress “fear electoral retribution if they oppose a popular president or support an unpopular one” (Bond, Fleisher and Wood 2003, 95). A bad popularity rating, on the other hand, could have more widespread consequences, according to Neustadt and his followers. According to Neustadt, public disapproval increases resistance from members of Congress and leaves the president with “his opportunities diminished [and] his freedom for maneuver checked” (Neustadt 1962, 90). The theory that popularity influences presidential success, while debated by some, has gained wide support. Past research designs have analyzed the “extent to which the president’s leadership skills and popularity with the public influence Congress to do something it otherwise would not have done” (Bond, Fleisher and Wood 2003, 105). It has been found by some that popularity has no significant impact on legislative success but that it may influence other factors, which may in turn influence success in Congress (Marshall and Prins 2007). For example, some scholars have found that greater popularity may encourage a president to pursue complex and salient legislation as well as increase their willingness to take positions on more difficult issues (Marshall and Prins 2007). Less popular presidents, on the other hand, may attempt to champion only the more popular bills. Others, such as Bond, Fleisher, and Wood, have acknowledged that popularity is an accepted influence on presidential success, although they believe that it “has only a marginal effect” (Bond, Fleisher and Wood 2003, 95).

**Obama’s agenda depends on public support**

David Paul **Kuhn**, Chief Political Correspondent for RealClearPolitics, 7/23/**09**

“Obama's Public Support Cracking at 6 Months” Real Clear Politics, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/07/23/obamas\_public\_support\_cracking\_at\_6\_months\_97574.html, [Stolarski]

Obama has legislative victories: the $787 billion economic stimulus package, new government regulation of tobacco products, the expansion of children's health insurance and legislation that makes it easier to win pay-discrimination lawsuits. But the stimulus was a consequence of the recession, not Obama. And none of that legislation was either hard won, or a central tenet of his campaign. Obama's greatest ambitions remain ahead, especially health care reform--which he had hoped to sign into law before the August recess. The tick tock is growing louder. **A president's influence in Congress is directly tied to the perception of his public support**. That bully pulpit is also traditionally strongest during the first year in office. Next year Congress will face midterm elections. At that point, policy becomes only that much more political and legislative victories that much more difficult.

**Popularity key to the agenda**

**SPITZER** Prof of Poli Sci, State University of New York, **93**

[Robert J., President and Congress:  Executive Hegemony at the Crossroads of American Government] [Stolarski]

 An important empirical study of the relationship between the President’s public standing and presidential support in Congress concluded that the two are inextricably linked.  Presidents who manage to satisfy public expectations are rewarded by high and stable public support.  In turn, public support translates directly into success for the President in Congress.  According to the data analysis of political scientists Charles Ostrom, Jr., and Dennis Simon, “the cumulative rate of roll-call victories [for the President in Congress] will decline by three points for every ten-point drop in [public] approval.”  In turn, “Presidential effectiveness in the legislative arena is an important component in maintaining public support.”  Naturally, many of the factors that influence the President’s standing are beyond direct control, such as the onset of a sharp economic downturn at the start of an administration.  But Ostrom and Simon conclude that a shrewd President can influence public support and that the typical long-term decline in a President’s public standing is by no means inevitable.

AT Popularity k/t Agenda

Popularity isn’t key to the agenda

**Boulie,** BA, Political & Social Thought, Writing Fellow of The American Prospect, **5/5**

“Political Capital”, http://prospect.org/csnc/blogs/tapped\_archive?month=05&year=2011&base\_name=political\_capital, 5/5/11, [Stolarski]

Unfortunately, political capital isn't that straightforward. As we saw at the beginning of Obama's presidency, the mere fact of popularity (or a large congressional majority) doesn't guarantee support from key members of Congress. For Obama to actually sign legislation to reform the immigration system, provide money for jobs, or reform corporate taxes, he needs unified support from his party and support from a non-trivial number of Republicans. Unfortunately, Republicans (and plenty of Democrats) aren't interested in better immigration laws, fiscal stimulus, or liberal tax reform. Absent substantive leverage -- and not just high approval ratings -- there isn't much Obama can do to pressure these members (Democrats and Republicans) into supporting his agenda. Indeed, for liberals who want to see Obama use his political capital, it's worth noting that approval-spikes aren't necessarily related to policy success. George H.W. Bush's major domestic initiatives came before his massive post-Gulf War approval bump, and his final year in office saw little policy success. George W. Bush was able to secure No Child Left Behind, the Homeland Security Act, and the Authorization to Use Military Force in the year following 9/11, but the former two either came with pre-9/11 Democratic support or were Democratic initiatives to begin with. To repeat an oft-made point, when it comes to domestic policy, the presidency is a limited office with limited resources. Popularity with the public is a necessary part of presidential success in Congress, but it's far from sufficient.

Flip Flops Hurt Agenda

Flip flops sap influence—Kerry campaign proves

Poupard 7

L. Vincent Poupard, journalist, “Are We in the Year of the Political Flip Flop?” ASSOCIATED CONTENT, 6—18—07, http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/277443/are\_we\_in\_the\_year\_of\_the\_political.html?cat=49

Many political analysts are calling this year the, "year of the Political Flip-Flop." Almost every Presidential candidate is using the flip-flop argument against his or her opponents. When will Americans grow tired of this fairly new campaign strategy? During the last Presidential Election, President George Bush used the flip-flop argument against Senator John Kerry at every opportunity. The goal was to make John Kerry look wish-washy to the American people. Many studies after the Election found that many of the people that did not vote for John Kerry did so because they believed that he easily flip-flopped from one ideal to another. This was the goal of the Bush Campaign, and it was obviously successful. The psychological argument is that if someone is told something often enough, he or she will believe it. When Bush pushed this point over and over again, there were many people that began to question Kerry through the power of suggestion. From a political aspect, people believe that they should not be comfortable with someone who flip-flops on issues. They believe that the President should stand firm on all beliefs. What people do not realize is that all politicians are flip-floppers at some point during their career.

Flip Flops scuttle agenda

Ornstein 01

**Ornstein**, American Enterprise Institute 9/10/**01** (Norman, Roll Call “Congress Inside Out”)

I wouldn't rejoice quite yet if I were in the White House. The President and his allies repeatedly and dismissively waved off all warnings that the inflated projections of surpluses would be proven sharply wrong, and they cannot easily get away from their flat promises and ironclad pledges not to touch either Medicare or Social Security. There may well be good reason to break those promises. Nevertheless, for a president whose father suffered from his infamous "Read my lips" pledge and who ran by contrasting his own integrity with that of his predecessor, and for a Republican Party that was super sanctimonious for eight years when it came to the same issues, broken promises will carry heavy costs. The White House has tried to use the recession codicil to get past the lockbox pledge, but with GDP numbers showing positive, if anemic, growth that excuse doesn't cut it either.

Policy flip-flops destroy a president's agenda – Clinton proves

Jackson 01

**Jackson** (staff) 3/16/**01** [David, “Democrats Pointing to Bush Reversal on CO2 as Promise Broken,” Dallas Morning News, LN]

Modern campaigns force candidates to make hundreds of promises, political analysts said. While most are kept, some cannot be. A high number of flip-flops can bleed a president dry, they added, especially one who campaigned for a "responsibility era" in contrast to the scandal-ridden Clinton era. "His stock-in-trade more than anything else is, 'This is a guy who keeps his commitments, even when it's painful,' " said Norman Ornstein, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

Flip flops bleed presidential credibility and agenda success

Jackson 2001

**Jackson** (staff) 3/16/**01** [David, “Democrats Pointing to Bush Reversal on CO2 as Promise Broken,” Dallas Morning News, LN]

If Bush has any doubt how much damage a broken promise can do, he needs only to ask his father, President George Bush, who hurt himself by reversing his nationally televised "read my lips, no new taxes" pledge. The younger Bush's carbon dioxide pledge came in an energy policy speech, and most of the attention at the time was devoted to his proposal to drill for oil in an Alaska wildlife refuge. Thomas E. Patterson, a professor of government and the press at the Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, said the damage done to Bush depends on what happens in the future. He likened broken campaign promises to "razor cuts." "If you only have a few of them, they really can get lost in everything else that's going on," Patterson said. "It's the accumulation of these razor cuts that starts the real bleeding."

Flip flops drain political capital

**Cohen 99**

Cohen 99 (Jeffrey E., Professor of Political Science at Fordham University, Presidential Responsiveness and Public Policy-Making, p.68, Available via Google books)

A president cannot, without good reason, alter his policy stance. And even if he has good reason to change his policy position on an issue, he may have to bear some costs from doing so. The public and other political elites may view him as waffling, indecisive, uncommitted, and/or duplicitous. This seems very much to be one of the major charges against Bill Clinton’s presidency. After abandoning his campaign promise of a middle-class tax cut because of budget deficit pressures, Clinton reoffered a tax cut in the wake of the devastating 1994 midterm elections, in which his party lost control of Congress. From being publicly cool toward the North American Free Trade pact during his presidential election campaign, he became an ardent promoter of that policy once in the Oval Office. From these, and many other occasions, Clinton has developed an image of a waffling politician, one who is forever changing his mind, perennially trying to stake out the most popular position with the public and not necessarily a president who is able to lead.

Flip Flops Kill Obamas Capital

Jamaica Observer 09

**JAMAICA OBSERVER 09**. [1/27 -- http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/columns/html/20090126T200000-0500\_145308\_OBS\_THE\_DAWNING\_OF\_A\_NEW\_ERA\_FOR\_AMERICA\_.asp]

So many things will have to be corrected and re-built and president Obama may very well spend the first term doing just that before he can really begin to put his own unique stamp on history. But he is starting out with great political capital. However, the reservoir of goodwill that he now has in America and the world can be easily dried up if he veers away from the person he presented himself to be in the election campaign. People expect him to govern on behalf of all Americans. As he himself stated, there is no blue America or red America but the United States of America. He must remain true to his core values and allow integrity to be his watchword.

Flip-flopping crushes political capital – presidents are forced to take consistent positions

Fitts 96

**Fitts 96** Professor of Law, University of Pennsylvania Law School [Michael A., “THE PARADOX OF POWER IN THE MODERN STATE,” University of Pennsylvania Law Review, January, 144 U. Pa. L. Rev. 827]

While the president's singularity may give him the formal ability to exercise agenda control, which public choice scholars see as an advantage of presidential power, his visibility and the influence of the media may also make it more difficult for him to exercise it. When public scrutiny is brought to bear on the White House, surrounding such issues as gays in the military or affirmative action, the president must often take a position and act. 128 This can deprive him of the ability to choose when or whether to address issues. Finally, the unitary president may be less able to rely on preexisting congressional or agency processes to resolve disputes. At least in theory, true unitariness means that he has the authority to reverse the decisions or non-decisions of others - the buck stops [\*866] with the president. 129 In this environment, "no politician can endure opposition from a wide range of opponents in numerous contests without alienating a significant proportion of voters." 130 Two types of tactics illustrate this phenomenon. First, presidents in recent years have often sought to deemphasize - at least politically - their unitariness by allocating responsibility for different agencies to different political constituencies. President Clinton, for example, reportedly "gave" the Department of Justice to the liberal wing of the Democratic party and the Department of the Treasury and the OMB to the conservatives. 131 Presidents Bush and Reagan tried a similar technique of giving control over different agencies to different political constituencies. 132Second, by invoking vague abstract principles or "talking out of both sides of their mouth," presidents have attempted to create the division within their person. Eisenhower is widely reported to be the best exemplar of this "bumbling" technique. 133 Reagan's widely publicized verbal "incoherence" and detachment from government affairs probably served a similar function. 134Unfortunately, the visibility and singularity of the modern presidency can undermine both informal techniques. To the extent that the modern president is subject to heightened visibility about what he says and does and is led to make increasingly specific statements about who should win and who should lose on an issue, his ability to mediate conflict and control the agenda can be undermined. The modern president is supposed to have a position [\*867] on such matters as affirmative action, the war in Bosnia, the baseballstrike, and the newest EPA regulations - the list is infinite. Perhapsin response to these pressures, each modern president has made more speeches and taken more positions than his predecessors, with Bill Clinton giving three times as many speeches as Reagan during the same period. 135 In such circumstances, the president is far less able to exercise agenda control, refuse to take symbolic stands, or take inconsistent positions. The well-documented tendency of the press to emphasize the strategic implications of politics exacerbates this process by turning issues into zero-sum games. 136 Thus, in contrast to **Congress**, the modern president's attempt to avoid or mediate issues can often undermine him personally and politically.

Flip flops bad – attacks on presidential candidates prove

Reuters 07

**Reuters**, 6 / 10 / **07** (No writer given, “It’s the year of the flip-flop in U.S. politics”, June 10, 2007, http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N08360557.htm)

CONSISTENCY, RELIABILITY, PREDICTABILITY "There are several things people are interested in when they're picking somebody to be president -- consistency, reliability and predictability," said a McCain senior adviser, Charlie Black. "You can't be sure what he's going to do when he's president when he has a history of changing positions," Black said of Romney. The Romney campaign is tired of McCain's attacks. "They can keep doing it if they want, and Romney just keeps getting stronger and stronger in the polls," said his adviser, former Missouri Sen. Jim Talent. "I've got to tell you, I'm a Romney guy, but I don't think it's working, these people making all these accusations." It seems that every major candidate has faced charges of switching positions based on the political winds. Besides her stance on Iraq, New York Sen. Clinton is accused of opposing government supports for ethanol, a big issue in the corn-growing and key presidential caucus state of Iowa, before she was for them. One of her Democratic opponents, former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards, is accused of having voted for and against storing nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, and believed Americans were safer against terrorists, but now thinks they are not as safe. Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, who has only been in the Senate for two years, in May voted against a $100 billion Iraq war funding bill, saying it was time to change course in the war. But in April he vowed not to cut funding for U.S. troops. Schulman said the reason flip-flops are of such great interest is because U.S. political campaigns are now more personal. "In this modern world there is such an interest in the personality of the candidate that looking for chinks in the armor, looking for inconsistencies and playing gotcha has become much more prevalent," he said.

AT Flip Flops Hurt Agenda

Non-unique—Obama flip-flopped on corporate-jet taxes

**Oregon Catalyst** **7/5** (7/5/11, " President Obama flip-flops on tax breaks for corporate jets ", http://oregoncatalyst.com/10450-president-obama-flipflops-tax-breaks-corporate-jets.html)

In his press conference last week, PresidentObama made numerous references to corporate-jet owners, including this challenge to Republicans “You go talk to your constituents…and ask them, are they willing to compromise their kids’ safety so that some corporate-jet owner continues to get a tax break?” The problem is, it's PresidentObama's corporate-jet owner tax break. President Obama gave it to corporations in his 2009 stimulus package and again when he signed the 2010 Small Business Lending Fund Act. But based on his press conference last Wednesday, it sounds like President Obama no longer supports his tax breaks for corporate-jet owners. In fact, it appears that now he's trying to hide the fact that he gave those tax breaks to corporations, and he's trying to blame his actions on the Republicans. Unfortunately for President Obama, it wasn’t Republicans. It was Democrats who controlled the US Senate and the US House and the White House when President Obama gave those tax breaks to corporate-jet owners – twice

Bipart k/t Agenda

Bipartisanship is key to rebuilding Obama's political capital--needs GOP support

Schroeder 09

Robert **Schroeder**, "A Return to Bipartisanship Would Pay for Obama," MARKETWATCH, February 19, 20**09**, npg.

President Barack Obama will soon need to get back to promoting bipartisanship if he wants to rebuild the political capital he spent on passing the economic stimulus bill and hasten action on the next big issues on his long-term agenda. At first glance, Obama wouldn't seem to need Republicans to get his agenda through Congress. His poll numbers are sky-high. Democrats control the House and have a slim but significant majority in the Senate. The new president has also weathered flaps over Cabinet and other appointees' problems with taxes. In short, he's off to a great start. "Right now, he doesn't need to reach across the aisle substantively," says pollster Scott Rasmussen, who adds that the stimulus passed because of Obama's own popularity among voters. But, looking ahead, there's ample reason to believe that Obama will need the Republicans he alienated and the capital he burned in getting his huge package approved.

Obama's agenda depends on bipartisanship

Barnes 08

James A. **Barnes**, "Obama's First Year," NATIONAL JOURNAL, December 13, 20**08**, npg.

A dominant feature of Washington since at least the early 1990s has been vicious hyperpartisanship. Obama

campaigned as someone who would depolarize national politics, and many observers suspect that his success as president might hinge on achieving that breakthrough. Some Democratic strategists saw Obama's recent trip to Philadelphia to meet with a bipartisan group of governors as a signal that he wants to work with Republicans whenever possible. "One of the biggest mistakes we made was [that] our very first congressional meeting was Democrats-only," said Marcia Hale, director of intergovernmental affairs in the Clinton White House. "I would be shocked if Obama's first congressional meeting was not bipartisan."

Bipart key to agenda—public wants it

Broder 09

David S. **Broder**, “Obama Will Need Bipartisan Help to Achieve His Goals,” SEATTLE TIMES, 4—10—**09**, http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/opinion/2009020621\_opinb12broder.html

WASHINGTON — It looks like perfect political symmetry — party-line voting in Congress on the first key pieces of Barack Obama's agenda, matching a deep partisan divide within the electorate in judging his performance as president. But, for reasons that require a little explanation, it may be wrong to conclude from this evidence that the center has fallen out of American politics and Obama is on a fool's errand if he continues to pursue bipartisan support. First, the data that shouts that I am wrong. No vote is more important in encapsulating the approach of the two parties to the basic issues of governing than the vote on the budget resolution. It defines the spending priorities and the tax limits, along with many of the policy innovations that will be fleshed out in later legislation. This year, not a single Republican in the House or Senate voted for the Democratic budget resolution and not a single Democrat endorsed the Republican substitute. The Republicans denounced the deficit-spending envisaged by the Obama-endorsed budget and decried the Democrats' habit of voting down every Republican amendment, as if none of the GOP ideas could possibly have any merit. Democrats, for their part, called Republicans "the party of no," pointing out that the GOP members of Congress had been almost as unanimously negative in their reactions to Obama's stimulus bill and the catch-up budget left over from last year's partisan gridlock. As for the voters, the Pew Research Center reported earlier this month on a survey that showed the partisan gap in Obama's job approval scores is the widest in contemporary history. He rated a thumbs-up from 88 percent of the Democrats and only 27 percent of the Republicans in the poll — a gap of 61 points. At a comparable point in their first terms, the gaps for George W. Bush and Bill Clinton were only 51 and 45 points, respectively. A separate Pew poll found that since January, the percentage of voters who think that Democrats and Republicans in Washington are bickering more than usual has grown by 14 points, with a similar trend on the question of whether the country is more politically divided than in the past. By large margins, majorities now answer "yes" to both questions. All this suggests the notion that Obama's election marked a change for the better in the political environment was as fanciful as Michigan State's chances against the mighty North Carolina Tar Heels. But, still, this analysis ignores several potent factors, starting with the fact that the fastest-growing portion of the electorate consists of people who have no strong partisan allegiance. These political independents are now as numerous as self-identified Republicans and are closing the gap on the Democrats. Though badly underrepresented in Congress, where districting rules and campaign-finance practices reinforce the two-party hegemony, the independent voters make up the swing vote in almost every contested election — including the presidential race. It is the reaction of those swing voters — or the politicians' anticipation of their shifting opinion — that drives the outcome of the big policy debates. You've had an example of this already with Obama's cap-and-trade proposal for protecting the environment from carbon discharges. Once political independents, who like the idea of clean air, grasped that cap-and-trade would mean a big tax increase for them, Republican opposition was reinforced and Democratic support weakened to the point that the Obama plan may already be doomed this year. The crucial role of the independents will be demonstrated again and again when Congress takes up Obama's challenge to reform health care, immigration and other broken systems, or renew arms control agreements. Because those independents are impressed when measures find prominent supporters in both parties, it will continue to behoove Obama to woo Republican help — no matter how tough the odds. Presidents who hope to achieve great things cannot for long rely on using their congressional majorities to muscle things through. That is why a strategy based on the early roll calls and polls is likely to fail.

Need bipartisanship to pass the most important and enduring legislative changes

Zelizer 09

Julian E. **Zelizer**, "Will Obama, GOP Make a Deal?" CNN, April 19, 20**09**, lexis.

To be sure, bipartisanship is not always good. The conservative coalition of southern Democrats and Republicans in Congress that lasted from 1938 through the 1970s did much damage in areas such as race relations by blocking progress on civil rights. But there are moments when we need bipartisan deals to be struck so that we can obtain legislation that has the most durable base of political support and long-lasting effects. This is one such moment, as we are living through an extremely volatile economic period and are struggling with structural challenges like skyrocketing health care costs. President Obama has continued to express interest in reaching agreements with the Republican Party. In his first month as president, he agreed to change the economic stimulus bill by making substantial spending cuts which his supporters thought would undermine the impact of the program. Obama did not "nationalize" the banks and instead settled on a financial bailout program that put most of the risk on average taxpayers.

Bipart key to agenda, Obama tone key

Bangor News 08

**BANGOR NEWS**, staff, “Snow, Collins Key Players Across Senate Aisle,” 11—8—**08**, <http://bangornews.com/detail/92899.html>, accessed 3-2-09.

“Democrats are going to have to turn to them,” he said. “This is a great thing for Maine. We have two senators at the very center of power and activity.” Snowe and Collins each said the new political configuration is not much of a change regarding their work in the Senate, as they will keep promoting a bipartisan approach. “This is the way I have always worked,” Collins said. “The difference is the margin. Democrats clearly will be reaching out to moderate Republicans, so it should strengthen the role that I play.” “When it comes to major issues, we have to develop solutions that embrace a bipartisan approach,” Snowe said. “No party has a lock on good ideas. I want to work to fuse those differences and be a catalyst to embrace change to solve issues.” Bass said that although Snowe and Collins have always worked according to what they believed in rather than sticking to the party lines, a change is coming. “I don’t think their philosophy will change, but their influence definitely will,” he said. Snowe and Collins said that cooperation across party lines is more important than ever to address the issues that the country is facing. “Too many issues have been seen as partisan or an opportunity to score political points,” Collins said. “The American people want us to work together.” Snowe said that unlike the past two years, the new Congress has to put aside differences to address the country’s pressing problems. “There is a greater pressure on both sides to answer the overwhelming message sent in the election,” she said. “We have to show that we’ve got it. Too many wanted to play the partisan game, and as a result there was a repudiation of the status quo of the last Congress.” On whether the two parties will actually cooperate, Collins and Snowe are confident but cautious. “I am seeing it [cooperation], but we have to get beyond the talking point,” Snowe said. “It didn’t happen the last two years. If we haven’t heard this message, then something is really wrong.” “I am concerned whether Senator Harry Reid and Speaker Nancy Pelosi will be willing to take a less partisan approach,” Collins said of the Senate majority leader and House speaker. “My hope is that Obama will set a tone that encourages bipartisanship on both sides.”

Shifting away from bipartisanship weakens the Obama agenda

Gerstein 08

Dan **Gerstein**, "Obama the Uniter," FORBES, November 12, 20**08**, www.forbes.com/opinions/2008/11/11/obama-transition-bipartisan-oped-cx\_dg\_1112gerstein.html, accessed 3-2-09.

Obama fully leveraged this failure by putting his new politics at the center of his campaign, and he went on to draw in millions of Americans like myself who were fed up with the partisan and cultural warring of the past two decades. Now, for the moment at least, the tone has finally and clearly changed inside the Beltway. The bitterness of the last two power-switching transitions in 1992 and 2000, not to mention the last three months of this year's campaign, has largely lifted. The rote vows of cooperation have rung much more genuine this November. And while cats are not yet lying down with dogs, even the most partisan warriors on both sides are still marveling at the election of a black president less than 50 years after his predecessors were being lynched with impunity. How long will this hopeful hangover last? Could a new era of good feelings--and more problem-solving--actually be upon us? That depends almost entirely on the hopemonger himself, and how the president-elect takes advantage of this warm window of opportunity to make good on his offer of unity and purpose. It was Obama who created this great expectation. And as much as bipartisanship demands two parties, the reality is that only he has the power and the platform to meet it. So far, the president-elect seems to be saying and doing all the right things. Since Election Day, he has been conspicuously deferential to the man he is about to replace, sticking to his line that there is only one president at a time. He picked a pragmatic, center-left chief of staff--Rahm Emanuel--who, despite his sharp-elbowed reputation, has a proven record of building bipartisan coalitions to pass legislation. He is seriously considering Republicans to serve in high-level posts in his administration such as secretary of defense and state. And just in the last few days, Obama signaled that he wants to keep Sen. Joe Lieberman (my former boss) in the Democratic caucus. This is all being done as much out of self-interest as national interest. Obama is a keen student of the practice of power. He knows that he simply can't mobilize the country to meet the monumental challenges at hand if he governs even vaguely like Bush. You don't stave off a depression or fundamentally change a global power's health care system and energy consumption habits with a 50-plus-one strategy. (See Bush's doomed effort to reform Social Security.) Moreover, Obama will need every bit of political capital he accumulated last Tuesday to move his agenda, and he will surely squander a big chunk of it if he reneges on his promise of a new politics. Rest assured, the Republicans already have those tut-tutting press releases written in their heads. Even history-making honeymoons have their limits. The best way for Obama to avoid that fate, I would argue, is to strike now while the iron is hot and the partisan passions are cool. Don't settle for the sayings and symbols of unity and civility in this transition period. Lead differently now. Be the president-elect of all Americans, to leave no doubt that you will be a president for all Americans, as you pledged in your near pitch-perfect victory speech in Grant Park.

Governing from the center is key to Obama's agenda--necessary to maintain capital and momentum

Sullivan 09

Andrew **Sullivan**, "Don't Hold Your Breath," SUNDAY TIMES, January 4, 20**09**, p. 17.

And yet if you let the actions and inactions speak for themselves, as Americans seem to have done so far, the direction is clear enough: massive stimulus at home, caution and gradualism abroad. It's immensely popular as a formula. Take two huge news stories that exploded on Obama since November 4 - his appointment of the anti-gay evangelical Rick Warren as inaugural invocation speaker and the hilariously baroque Rod Blagojevich, the governor of Illinois, who put Obama's old Senate seat up for auction.. Either could have dominated the early symbolism of the transition, and set a tone for a restless, exhausted press corps. And yet neither story seemed to gain any real traction that hurt Obama. Obama seems to have steered clear of Blago for years and was exonerated in the special prosecutor's initial report; and Warren's emergence created a huge kerfuffle on the blogs but it petered out quickly. The choice of Warren was, in retrospect, shrewd. It remains a symbolic act - asking an evangelical who is an opponent of civil marriage rights for gay couples to say a prayer. But it was also a statement from the White House that it considers the culture war between blue and red states, strident liberals and shrill conservatives, over. This administration is not interested in exploiting divides to gain short-term political hits. The goal is, obviously, to maximise domestic support, amass political capital and bridge the divides that could alone, at this point, undermine Obama's momentum. Hence also the centrist appointments: you don't put a protégé of John McCain such as Jim Jones and a Republican defence secretary, Bob Gates, into a Democratic cabinet and expect to become a hero of the left. But they have made Obama a hero for what's left of the American centre. Obama's approval ratings - a whopping 82% - are now higher than Bill Clinton's or Ronald Reagan's at the same pre-presidential moment. Moreover, a full third in the latest Gallup poll said their opinion of the president-elect has improved since the election. A lot of that support has come from Republican voters who woke up after the election to find that the man their party had called a radical, terror-loving semi-socialist was nothing of the kind.

Bipart key—divided government means cooperation is necessary

Thompson, 07

(Fred Thompson, U.S. Senator, Presidential Candidate, “First Blogger?”, on PajamasMedia blogsite, May 23 2007, http://pajamasmedia.com/2007/05/fred\_thompson\_exclusive\_story.php)

I believe this direct communication and discussion is going to have an enormous impact on our political process. Our nation is facing unprecedented threats, and the challenges of globalization. We have a 70-plus trillion dollar entitlement shortfall and a government that is not effective in important ways. To solve our problems, we have to realize that our country is pretty evenly divided along party lines. With close numbers in the House and the Senate, there will be no real reform without real bipartisanship. Too often, what we are seeing isn’t an effort to find solutions, but rather insults and purely partisan politics. There are many good and responsible people in government who are willing to work together – but the level of bipartisanship needed for real progress can only be achieved when politicians perceive that the American people demand it. I talked about this a bit a couple of weeks ago out in California. I talked about how I’d recently run across an old clipping of a Thomas Sowell editorial. In it, he pointed out that Wendell Willkie received the largest vote of any Republican for President when he lost to Franklin Roosevelt in 1940. After the election, though, he never let partisanship turn him into an enemy of the administration. Instead of trashing the president, he served as Roosevelt’s emissary to Winston Churchill. In the same editorial, Sowell also told a story about Churchill. When British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain died, early in the Second World War, Churchill delivered his eulogy. Though Chamberlain had turned a deaf ear, for years, to all of Churchill’s warnings that could have prevented that war, Churchill praised him. “He acted with perfect sincerity,” Churchill said. “However the fates may play, we march always in the ranks of honor when we have done our best.” Compare that magnanimity to what is going on in Washington and much of the Internet today. Sowell asks us, “In this day and time, can’t we have a responsible adult discussion of issues while the nation’s fate hangs in the balance in its most dangerous hour?” That’s the question. If the answer is going to be “yes,” it will be due in large part to sites like this one. So thank you for all you’ve done here and for all the encouragement you’ve given me. Hopefully, we’ll continue this conversation.

AT Bipart k/t Agenda

Moderate GOP doesn’t matter—democratic unity does

**Walter 8** (Amy, Staff Writer, National Journal, November 18, http://www.nationaljournal.com/njonline/ol\_20081117\_2769.php)

But what does "working across the aisle" really mean? In the Senate, retirements and election losses have substantially reduced the number of Republican moderates. **Olympia Snowe**, **Susan Collins**, **George Voinovich**, **Arlen Specter** and, of course, McCain are the only obvious potential allies Obama will have on the GOP side. Of the 19 Republicans up in 2010, just six -- including Voinovich and Specter -- sit in states Obama won. If Obama is counting on McCain to help broaden that coalition, it's worth asking why. After all, this is a guy who campaigned heavily on his "maverick-ness" and ranted against the corrupting influence of Washington insiders. Team player he was not. Even so, he, like Obama, ended the campaign with high approval ratings and has more political capital than your typical defeated nominee. Obama's potential GOP allies in the House may be an even smaller bunch. There are only five Republicans who sit in districts that **John Kerry** won four years ago: **Mike Castle** (Del.-At Large), **Mark Kirk** (Ill.-10), **Jim Gerlach** (Pa.-06), **Charlie Dent** (Pa.-15) and **Dave Reichert** (Wash.-08). (Note: We are using 2004 stats since we won't have presidential vote by congressional district data for some time). Given Obama's strong showing in places like Neb.-02 (where GOP Rep. **Lee Terry** sits) and New Jersey (home to freshman Rep. **Leonard Lance** in N.J.-07), this list of Republicans sitting in putatively Democratic seats will grow -- but probably not by much. For all the talk of bipartisanship, the reality is that there just aren't that many Republicans left to work with. Herding them may not be Obama's biggest problem. Now, about corralling expectant Democrats ...

Concessions Key

Concessions are key to the agenda—breaks gridlock

BRADY AND VOLDEN 6. [David W. Brady, professor of political science and business, and Senior Fellow and Deputy Director of the Hoover Institute at Stanford University and Craig Volden, assistant professor of political science at the Ohio State University “Revolving Gridlock : Politics and Policy from Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush,” Pg 35]

More often, however, gridlock is maintained through members from divorce districts who are very responsive to the electorate and thus at odds with their fellow legislators. In these cases, gridlock can be overcome only through legislative compromise, and only when status quo policies are outside the gridlock region. When a policy advocate suggests a change so major that supermajorities are difficult to achieve, the change will be stopped by a filibuster or veto. To build the needed coalition for cloture or a vet override, compromises will need to be struck, often taking one of two forms. First, the policy itself could be watered down. This was the main way that President Clinton overcame Republican filibusters in 1993 on issues like the job stimulus package, voter registration, and family and medical leave. A smaller change was more acceptable to moderate Senators. A second possible compromise with these pivotal members needed to build a supermajority involves concessions not on the ideological position of the bill at hand, but on other issues. Often these include distributive budgetary items, like roads, bridges, research labs, and targeted tax cuts. Riders attached to budget bills add these benefits needed to smooth out compromises on earlier bills. Quite clearly, to the extent that budget concessions are needed to build coalitions on all sorts of issues, gridlock is more likely when congress is confronting deficits than when it is ignoring them or facing surpluses.

AT Concessions Key

Concessions to Republicans are net worse—Clinton administration proves

**Parry 8**, Rober Parry, writer for the Baltimore Chronicle, November 11, 2008.

http://baltimorechronicle.com/2008/111108Parry.shtml)

Barack Obama seeks a new era of bipartisanship, but he should take heed of what happened to the last Democrat in the White House – Bill Clinton – in 1993 when he sought to appease Republicans by shelving pending investigations into Reagan-Bush-I-era wrongdoing and hoped for some reciprocity. Instead the Republicans pocketed the Democratic concessions and pressed ahead with possibly the most partisan assault ever directed against a sitting President. The war on Clinton included attacks on his past life in Arkansas, on his wife Hillary, on personnel decisions at the White House, and on key members of his administration. The Republicans also took the offensive against Clinton’s reformist agenda, denying him even one GOP vote for his first budget and then sabotaging Hillary Clinton’s plan for universal health insurance.

\*\*\* Agency Internals \*\*\*

Obama Gets blame

Obama gets blamed for issues concerning spending – empirics

**Washington Post 7/15** (Ezra Klein, 7/15/11, " Sides: Default will hurt Obama ", http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/sides-default-will-hurt-obama/2011/07/11/gIQApy42FI\_blog.html)

For one, I'd be impressed that more Americans say they'll blame theGOP and not Obama if most Americans actually wanted to increase the debt ceiling in the first place. See Mark Blumenthal's thorough rundown of the polls. Second, during the 1995 shutdown, Clinton's popularity went down during this time — although this fact seemingly cannot penetrate the conventional wisdom. See my earlier post. Yes, the polls also weren't kind to Gingrich and the GOP, but it is hard to claim that Clinton benefited in the eyes of voters. There is certainly no evidence that I know of that the shutdown helped re-elect Bill Clinton. It's interesting that McConnell thinks that, if only because it appears to guide his actions now. But I don't think it's true. Finally, even though this fight over the debt ceiling is unusual, I have a hard time imagining that Obama is going to emerge unscathed if the ceiling isn't lifted and the economy suffers. After all, incumbent politicians are punished by voters for a thousand trivial things, even losses in college football games. I am hardpressed to imagine that voters will suddenly exonerate Obama from possible economic disruptions and simply blame the GOP**.** To be clear, I don't think either party would come out of a debt ceiling meltdown smelling like roses. But let's not pretend that Obama will somehow avoid that. Or put it this way: what if the meltdown led to, say, 1-2 months of bond rating markdowns, stock market convulsions, disruptions of key government services, and wall-to-wall media coverage of the same? What happens to Obama's approval rating in that time? My bet is that, just as with Clinton in 1995, it goes down.

Obama gets blamed for bad policies

**AP** **7/15** (7/15/11, " Obama's hands-on negotiation a political necessity ", http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jEh84nbuj\_Ei28mJcPHMRq5ka28A?docId=3d2adbdbf71e456593f0198494d7dc15)

The White House says Obama is the one who has shown leadership and willingness to compromise. Faced with steadfast GOP opposition to tax increases, he asked Republican leaders directly what "shared sacrifice" they were offering. At another point, he used a Republican icon to congratulate himself for his deep involvement in the talks, insisting that Ronald Reagan never spent as much time as he has haggling with lawmakers over policy details. "Obama has got to get this done," Lichtman said. "Even if people blame the Republicans in Congress, he's the president. And **if things go rotten on his watch, he pays for it.** This is his moment. And he knew it was going to be trouble, because Republicans have very little incentive to make a deal."

Further spending is blamed on Obama

**Spokesman Review** **7/16** (7/16/11, " Obama's history lesson ", http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2011/jul/16/obamas-history-lesson/)

Who remembers who was the House majority leader in 1929? Who was the Senate majority leader? Who was the treasurer of the United States? Who was vice president? The answer is nobody remembers. What they do remember about the stock market crash of October 1929 and the beginning of the Great Depression is that Herbert Hoover was president. Hoover and the Great Depression are inseparable in the annals of history. So as President Obama continues to play chicken with the pending debt crisis before us, he should heed this warning. He can blame Speaker Boehner, Eric Cantor, the Tea Party or whoever he chooses. But when the United States credit rating falls, we default on our debt and the subsequent collapse of our economy, history will only blame Obama. History is the only true measure of leadership, or the lack thereof.

AT Obama Gets Blame

Republicans get blame for spending crisis – Obama trying to compromise

**National Journal** **7/15** (7/15/11, " Cook: Blame Republicans for Debt Crisis ", http://www.nationaljournal.com/columns/cook-report/cook-blame-republicans-for-debt-crisis-20110714)

Republicans don’t seem to understand the symbiotic relationships in this negotiation. Democrats hate entitlement cuts just as much as Republicans despise tax hikes. Likewise, just as Republicans dislike defense cuts, Democrats dislike domestic spending cuts. Yet, both are necessary. If Republicans expect Democrats to go along with entitlement cuts, the GOP has to be willing to go along with some revenue increases. If Republicans expect Democrats to swallow deep hits to domestic spending, the GOP has to swallow deep hits to defense. Instead, the Republicans’ position seems to be that they should be allowed to stand on their principles while Democrats are required to compromise theirs. A deal to raise the debt limit will surely pass, and the United States will probably avoid default. But the business community and the financial markets will see no sign that Washington is committed to fiscal sanity. The eventual deal will give them little reason for confidence in the country’s political leadership and economic future, and they will likely keep sitting on the cash in their corporate coffers. The current equation seems to be: Big Hopes and Big Talk = Small Cuts and No Progress. Republicans want to stand on their principles, while Democrats are required to compromise on theirs. Republicans will be able to smugly walk away from the table knowing that they didn’t give an inch, but President Obama may well come out the winner. The public will see the president as having tried to negotiate a balanced approach whereby each side allowed its own ox to be gored and made sacrifices for the broader national good. Washington will not succeed in bending the deficit and debt curve, and Obama will be able to blame Republicans for their unwillingness to meet Democrats halfway.

Obama will blame Republicans to get re-elected

**Asia Times Online** **7/18** (7/18/11, " Obama could stir a Tea Party crisis ", http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Global\_Economy/MG19Dj01.html)

President Barack Obama's best hope of re-election lies in provoking Republicans to force the United States into technical default, engineering a brief but severe financialcrisis in order to appear as crisis-manager-in-chief. The Tea Party movement may be marching into a political ambush, in which Obama will be able to portray the born-again budget-cutters as irresponsible fanatics who threaten to tip America into a new depression. The now unpopular president then would assume the role of national savior in time of crisis. What would happen if August arrives without an increase in the US debt ceiling? There is no good reason for a new financial crisis to erupt. But there are bad reasons. The standard scenario was rehearsed July 15 on the Financial Times' Alphaville blog, [1] which notes that "the United States runs a monthly fiscal deficit totaling $124bn, and that there are almost $60bn of T-bills maturing in the two weeks after August 2, all requiring redemption payments. (Plus a $20bn coupon payment on August 15 - Fitch has said this would be the trigger for restricted default, if missed.)" Technical default is likely, and so perhaps, as the rating agencies have threatened, is permanent loss of America's AAA rating. The bigger danger lies in the "vast role Treasuries serve as collateral - a role which usually sees them safely locked up in the day to day operation of the money markets, but which we already know is vulnerable to a sell-off - a Lehman, 2008-style margin spiral - in the event of the debt ceiling remaining in place. You'd hardly wait for ratings agency downgrades." The market for repurchase agreements (short-term loans against bonds) amounts to $4 trillion globally. If banks, hedge funds and others who borrowed against bonds had to put up more collateral because Treasuries were in trouble, they would have to sell huge volumes of securities into a falling market. That is what happened after the Lehman failure in 2008. Just how that might transpire is up to the central banks. After 9/11 the central banks offered unlimited amounts of short-term financing against any dead cat that financial institutions cared to offer as collateral. There are no automatic triggers in such things: ultimately the question of what collateral is good depends on the say-so of the monetary authorities. In that event, the Obama administration would declare an emergency, summon bankers to Washington for crisis-management sessions, slash every form of spending except for coupon payments on Treasuries, and so forth. Markets would swoon over the uncertainty. And the president would be on television denouncing the lunatics who brought things to this point. Congress would pass emergency legislation, markets would snap back, and Obama would declare himself a national savior. Obama, meanwhile, would play the populist against the banks, demanding tougher government controls, consumer protection, and perhaps even the right to dictate that banks make loans to the Democrats' pet projects in the name of job-creation (just as the Clinton administration forced banks into the subprime market, supposedly to help poor people buy homes). No good crisis should go to waste, Rahm Emanuel said. As Stanley Kurtz documented in his 2011 book Radical-in-Chief [2], Obama is a socialist of pure pedigree, trained by socialists from his university days and promoted by a nexus of socialist foundations in Chicago throughout his political career. He passed up an opportunity to nationalize American banks in March 2009, when Paul Krugman, Simon Johnson and other leftist economists urged him to do so. Evidently he thought that a compromise with Wall Street would benefit the economy and improve his chances of re-election. That did not pan out, and Obama has nothing to lose by running against Wall Street. A new financial crisis would give him the opportunity to do so. If I were an Obama speechwriter, here's what I would put on the teleprompter after a federal default, as stock markets tanked and individuals cashed out their money market funds: My fellow Americans, the Republican party has been in the pocket of the big banks for too long. After the last Republican administration led the country into the worst **economic** crisis since the Great Depression, you elected me to restore the balance in favor of working people. Now the Republicans have pushed America into yet another **crisis,** and again we are faced with the danger of depression.

Nonunique—Obama being blamed now

**International Business Times** **7/12** (7/12/11, " Republicans Blame President Obama For Debt Deadlock ", http://tv.ibtimes.com/republicans-blame-president-obama-for-debt-deadlock/1218.html)

Ahead of a third straight day of White House debt talks, Republicans ratcheted up pressure on Obama and his fellow Democrats who have blamed Republicans for failing to compromise in a budget deal. "After years of discussions and months of negotiations, I have little question that as long as this President is in the Oval Office a real solution is probably unobtainable,” Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell on the Senate floor. Over on the House side of the Capitol, the Republican leader said finding a way to raise the United States' $14.3 trillion debt ceiling before the country runs out of money is Obama’s responsibility. "This debt limit increase is his problem," House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner told reporters. Failure to seal a deal by August 2 could scare investors, causing U.S. interest rates to surge, stock prices to plummet and put the United States at risk of another recession.

NASA Links to Politics

NASA unpopular and controversial in Congress

Handberg 7/25

(Roger Handberg, Roger Handberg is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Central Florida, The Space Review, "The beginning of the end or the end of the beginning?," July 25 2011 pg online @ www.thespacereview.com/article/1890/1//arjun)

The brief historical overview above illustrates what one can call the critical point about NASA and the future of US civil government human spaceflight activities. At different points, there were crises in terms of NASA’s future directions but the debates were largely nonpartisan: one obvious example was President Clinton’s willingness to consider and push the space station program forward. The Space Station Freedom (at that time) was clearly seen as a Reagan Republican legacy program—possibly another “moondoggle” in the terminology of the 1960s regarding the Apollo program transposed forward. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Democratic legislators were generally more skeptical of space activities like Apollo given the dire social needs they felt would be better served by use of the money. The debate over supporting the space station (and by extension the shuttle, whose purpose was to support a space station) was one that split party lines with votes based on constituency interests and broader themes of national prestige and image. The recent Pew poll regarding public support for the US space program illustrates that long-standing split between Democrats and Republicans over the space program: Republicans are more likely support the program and see the space shuttle as a good economic investment. However, when the public, including Republicans, is asked to tradeoff between the space program and other priorities, the other priorities usually win out. If the debate over deficit reduction is real and entitlements (Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid) and defense spending are held harmless or largely protected from significant cuts, NASA’s problems make it an optimal target for severe budget reductions. The more recent events surrounding the US crewed spaceflight program cast the debate into a much more partisan and confrontational situation, which has the potential to make the space program less a center of national pride and prestige than one of partisan warfare. The intensity of the debate is fueled by several factors, including legislators’ fears about lost constituent jobs—fears that are compounded by broader concerns that there exists no foreseeable replacement for the Space Shuttle or any other launch vehicle. What is often forgotten is that the George W. Bush administration started the shuttle shutdown process and acknowledged there would be a gap before the Ares 1 came into service. The difficulty became that the gap grew even longer as Ares 1 problems delayed completion. More recently, NASA has suggested the amount of funding provided and proposed by Congress in future years is insufficient to successfully complete the heavy lifter project in any reasonable time frame. There also exists great hostility to proposed commercial flight options to low Earth orbit, the option suggested by the administration. Ironically, it’s a Democratic president who supports private enterprise for achieving Earth orbit, while Republican legislators support a government program. All of this occurs against the background of an increasingly partisan congressional war over the federal government budget deficit, the federal debt ceiling, and the Obama healthcare plan that Republicans basically want to repeal. NASA is threatened by the first two disputes because the deficit reduction debate focuses mostly on discretionary spending where NASA represents a fairly large target with relatively weak support from a national constituency. Whether the first two issues can be resolved definitively this year remains an unknown (at the time of this writing in mid-July 2011) but if the debate over deficit reduction is real and entitlements (Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid) and defense spending are held harmless or largely protected from significant cuts, NASA’s problems make it an optimal target for severe budget reductions. Such reductions could render the entire debate over shuttle replacement a moot point; the private option would be the only game in town for the US. Except for legislators located immediately around NASA facilities, there is likely to be severe erosion of congressional support for NASA’s budget when measured against other national priorities. That “vision thing” (the deficiency attributed to President George H.W. Bush) has been a long-standing problem in the US space program. Future directions have largely been destination driven (the Space Exploration Initiative and the Vision for Space Exploration, or the various space science missions in the solar system), an outgrowth of the concern with space “firsts” which characterized the early space race. Now, though, most of the obvious locations have been visited at least by robotic missions, so there is nothing under the sun that is completely new except for sending humans down the same trail. The problem is that there is no political will to drive such missions with their large and likely to escalate costs. The American political process at its best has difficulty with long-term government programs when the same program is revisited each fiscal year for the next budget allocation. With partisan animosity growing, NASA is being sucked into the whirlpool of congressional and presidential politics. The reality is that nothing of major significance is likely to happen until after the 2012 presidential and congressional elections. Apollo was a pure and shining moment in US space history when there was national unity on the question of future directions for the US manned space program. That unity proved short-lived as budget issues arose in subsequent years but the differences were never so politically partisan as to endanger future directions for NASA. NASA was clearly supported for idealistic and very mundane political reasons: the Apollo program was a giant technological enterprise whose bounty was spread across numerous states and congressional districts, a technological TVA for the South. Now, in the absence of a viable national space objective, the process is reduced to partisan bickering and self-serving short-term choices. Slowly, the nonpartisan aura of the US human space program is dissipating, leaving a mix of bad feelings and distrust on all sides. How much damage will be done, no one knows.

NASA is politically controversial—it uses up too many funds

Cunningham 2010

(Walter Cunningham, Former Apollo Astronaut Houston Chronicle, "Taking a bite out of NASA," 2010 pg online @ www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/editorial/outlook/6854790.html//arjun)

President Barack Obama's budget proposal may not be a death knell for NASA, but it certainly would accelerate America's downward spiral toward mediocrity in space exploration. Now it's up to NASA's leaders to put the best face possible on this nail that the administration is trying to hammer into their coffin. This proposal is not a “bold new course for human spaceflight,” nor is it a “fundamental reinvigoration of NASA.” It is quite the opposite, and I have no doubt the people at NASA will see it for what it is — a rationalization for pursuing mediocrity. It mandates huge changes and offers little hope for the future. My heart goes out to those who have to defend it. NASA has always been a political football. The agency's lifeblood is federal funding, and it has been losing blood for several decades. The only hope now for a lifesaving transfusion to stop the hemorrhaging is Congress. It is hard to be optimistic. President Obama has apparently decided the United States should not be in the human spaceflight business. He obviously thinks NASA's historic mission is a waste of time and money. Until just two months before his election, he was proposing to use the $18 billion NASA budget as a piggybank to fund his favored education programs. With this budget proposal, he is taking a step in that direction. NASA is not just a place to spend money, or to count jobs. It is the agency that has given us a better understanding of our present and hope for our future; an agency that gives us something to inspire us, especially young people.

AT NASA Links to Politics

Massive congressional support for NASA action—space shuttle program amassed support from multiple senators

**Space Politics 5/25**, May 25, 2011. “[Congressional support for NASA’s MPCV decision](http://www.spacepolitics.com/2011/05/25/congressional-support-for-nasas-mpcv-decision/)”.

http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&cd=7&ved=0CEoQFjAG&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.spacepolitics.com%2F2011%2F05%2F25%2Fcongressional-support-for-nasas-mpcv-decision%2F&ei=uNs1TpeJBY\_TgQeK-7ipDA&usg=AFQjCNHvQsPpZGzty8brynGmqxihW35Z-g&sig2=IzWx\_hJ876S3bBrojkFe0g

The MPCV was included in [the NASA authorization act last year](http://legislative.nasa.gov/PL%20111-267.pdf) with a specific requirement to “continue to advance development of the human safety features, designs, and systems in the Orion project.” There was, then, an expectation that NASA would do what it announced yesterday, and transition its existing Orion contract to the MPCV; there was also some frustration in Congress that NASA was taking a long time to make that decision. Now, though, that NASA has done just that, members of Congress are expressing their support for that move, while pressing NASA to also make a decision soon on the Space Launch System (SLS) heavy-lifter. “This is a good thing,” [**Sen. Bill Nelson** (D-FL) said in a statement](http://billnelson.senate.gov/news/details.cfm?id=332978&). The decision “shows real progress towards the goal of exploring deep space” and also helps Florida, he added, since hundreds will be employed at the Kennedy Space Center to process the MPCV for launch. The release also notes that NASA administrator Charles Bolden called Nelson personally to inform him of the decision. In that call, Bolden told the senator that soon “NASA will be making further decisions with regard to the ‘transportation architecture’ of a big deep space rocket.” Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) also supported the decision. “After more than a year of uncertainty and delay, NASA has come to the same conclusion that it reached years ago — Orion is the vehicle that will advance our human exploration in space,” she said in a statement (not yet posted online.) She reminded NASA, though, that it “must continue to follow law” and announce plans for the SLS. “NASA needs to follow this important step by quickly finalizing and announcing the heavy lift launch vehicle configuration so that work can accelerate and the requirements of the law can be met.” “This was the only fiscally and technologically prudent decision that NASA could make,” [Rep. Pete Olson (R-TX) said in a statement](http://olson.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=129&sectiontree=21,129&itemid=660). “With this decision NASA can continue to build on current projects and investments rather than further delay with unnecessary procurements.” NASA’s decision means that Lockheed Martin’s contract to work on Orion/MPCV will continue, and that’s a relief for people in Colorado, where much of that work is taking place. In a joint statement, Sen. Mark Udall (D-CO) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Rep. Ed Perlmutter (D-CO) noted the decision protects over 1,000 aerospace jobs, and nearly 4,000 total jobs, in the state, which to them appeared to be just as important as the MPCV’s role in future human space exploration. “With the Space Shuttle Endeavor’s [sic] final launch, Orion represents the next frontier in human space exploration and has the potential to stir the imagination of a new generation of young scientists while giving our economy a much needed boost,” Bennet said.

\*\*\* Lobby Internals \*\*\*

Defense Lobby key

Defense industry lobby key – control most powerful congressional votes

Priest 8 (Dana, Washington Post National Security and Intelligence Reporter, WP, 11/13)

Dana Priest: Well, frankly, some of the biggest ticket items are the least important in this world in which threats come less from states than from non-state organization. And our equipment, generally speaking, so far out-paces any adversary you have to question why were still building so much. So, spending pressures could force the government to further transform the military into the lighter, more agile and, incidentally less expensive, force that it needs to be. That said, the state-by-state lobbying effort to make sure this does not happen (defense contractors and subcontractors are conveniently sprinkled throughout the congressional districts of the most powerful lawmakers) will be huge.

Defense contractors have massive political clout

AFP 8 [March 25, Agency French Press, http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=4005316&c=AME&s=TOP]KLS

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Barack Obama on March 24 renewed his vow to cut spending on costly weapons programs, but acknowledged taking on influential defense contractors would be politically "tough." Obama said that there was wide agreement in both political parties that the way the government purchased weapons was plagued by waste, but that defense firms were influential in Congress and had ensured industry jobs were spread across the country. "I think everybody in this town knows that the politics of changing procurement is tough," Obama said at a news conference. "Because you know, lobbyists are very active in this area. Contractors are very good at dispersing the jobs and plants in the Defense Department widely," Obama said.

Military Lobby key

Opposition from military and joint chiefs drains all Obama’s capital

Zenko 9’ (Micah, “Ban the bomb? Ask the generals”, Guardian, 2/25/09)

As any rationale for maintaining an oversized nuclear arsenal – including 450 long-range missiles on hair-trigger alert – further erodes, the goal of nuclear disarmament has spread within the United States from a narrow sliver of left-leaning arms-control activists to a broader bipartisan consensus. One crucially important community, however, has yet to offer its expert judgment: the uniformed military.  Before the civilian leadership in the Obama administration can move toward a world without the bomb, it must initiate a clear and open dialogue with the Joint Chiefs of Staff – the collective heads of the US armed services, charged with protecting the nation and providing military advice to the president. Without the overt support of the Joint Chiefs, no president – much less a Democrat with little national-security experience – will have the political capital to negotiate with the international community, or implement at home, an end to nuclear weapons. Cont… To make the elimination of nuclear weapons a reality, the Joint Chiefs of Staff must formally acknowledge such weapons' limited utility. Fortunately, President Obama has a ready-made forum through which to elicit the Joint Chiefs' opinion. Over the next year, the Obama administration will conduct the third congressionally mandated "comprehensive review of the nuclear posture of the United States for the next 5 to 10 years." The Nuclear Posture Review legislation requires that it "be used as a basis for establishing future United States arms control objectives and negotiating positions."  Once the Nuclear Posture Review has been completed, and the uniformed military are on the record, President Obama will have the political cover to negotiate the series of multilateral treaties that will be required to account for, monitor and verify the dismantlement of the 26,000 nuclear weapons stockpiled in nine countries, including America's 5,400 nuclear warheads – 2,200 of which remain operational. In addition, intensive verification regimes will be necessary for the approximately 40 countries where the fissile material required to make a bomb exists.