# Commission CP 2AC Cards

**Links to politics or means the plan doesn't happen**

**Klein 10** – Ezra Klein, awesome political blogger, “Sins of Commission,” February 19, 2010, online: <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/ezra-klein/2010/02/sins_of_commission.html>

There's nothing magic about a commission. Like a congressional committee, it puts together legislation that Congress later votes to accept, reject or delay. And as of now, there's simply no reason to believe that the votes exist for any serious compromise. Republican leaders, for instance, are arguing that the commission simply shouldn't consider tax increases, which makes a deal impossible. That was their rationale for filibustering the very formation of a commission, which is why Obama had to do this through an executive order. But elites still like the idea, in part because elites can see the outlines of a deal that elites would make. Greg Mankiw for instance, thinks Republicans should demand that the commission include a value-added tax and a carbon tax. I would support that. The problem is that the Republican Party opposes both policies, and there's no reason to believe they're going to change their minds.

**Even if the commission is unanimous in its recommendation, it still links to politics because the GOP will assume Senate Democrats will go beyond the commission’s recommendations**

**Hennessey 10** – Keith Hennessey, economic policy analyst, January 20, 2010, “Error of Commission,” online: [http://keithhennessey.com/2010/01/20/error-of-commission/](http://keithhennessey.com/2010/01/20/error-of-commission/g)

The President’s commission does not create any binding fast-track process. Leader Reid cannot unilaterally bind 100 Senators to an up-or-down vote and no amendments. Even if a commission were to produce unanimous recommendations, Republicans should fear that a Democratic Senate majority would use those recommendations as a starting point, substitute even more tax increases for whatever spending cuts are in the recommendations, and then pass the bill. Scott Brown’s election as the 41st vote has little effect on this dynamic, since the changes would probably happen in committee. Any commission created by Executive Order has this weakness: it cannot bind Congress. Only Congress can tie itself to the mast.

**Congress says no---Commission recommendations don’t get adopted unless there’s already consensus about what policy changes need to be made**

**Mayer 7** – Kenneth R. Mayer, Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, December 2007, “The Base Realignment and Closure Process: Is it Possible to Make Rational Policy?,” online: <http://users.polisci.wisc.edu/kmayer/Professional/Base%20Realignment%20and%20Closure%20Process.pdf>

The second question is whether the BRAC model can succeed in other policy areas, where Congress has been similarly unable to act. The success of the BRAC process has spurred many efforts to replicate it on other controversial issues. In 1999, I argued that independent commissions have a poor record; there have been very few instances where they have actually resolved legislative impasses (Mayer 1999).5 The problem is that legislators are usually reluctant to delegate substantial policy authority, at least without strong procedural safeguards and ongoing monitoring. The conditions that made BRAC successful were the consensus on the goals, agreement about what precise policy steps were necessary, and the narrow range (at least initially) of the policy making authority. These conditions are rarely present, and clearly do not apply to, say, efforts to create BRAC-like commissions on entitlement reform, where there is intense controversy over both goals and specific policies.

**CP links to politics --- doesn’t resolve controversy**

**Mayer 7** – Kenneth R. Mayer, Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, December 2007, “The Base Realignment and Closure Process: Is it Possible to Make Rational Policy?,” online: <http://users.polisci.wisc.edu/kmayer/Professional/Base%20Realignment%20and%20Closure%20Process.pdf>

There is simply far too much controversy over what sorts of reforms are necessary. Should benefits be protected, or should cuts be considered? Should taxes be raised, and if so by how much? Should benefits be means tested? The retirement age raised? What should the transition period look like? No legislator is likely to give up decision making rights in the presence of such controversy and uncertainty about the scope of the final policy. And this is how it should be. Automatic delegation comes at the cost of accountability, which as a policy value is at least as important as rationality and efficiency. Delegating authority to an independent body, or governing via an automatic rule, is often a “blame avoidance” mechanism designed to obfuscate the ultimate responsibility and make it difficult for voters to connect cause and effect. As we have seen with BRAC, sometimes this works, at least in the sense of producing a generally preferred but politically difficult outcome that cannot be traced back to the actions of any legislator or group of legislators. But delegation, by itself, does not resolve underlying disagreement and controversies, and the electorate ought to have enough information to assign blame or credit. Ultimately, BRAC arose from an unusual set of circumstances, and it should replicated with great caution.

**Congress says no**

**Campbell 2** – Colton C. Campbell, Associate Professor of Political Science at Florida International University, visiting Professor of Political Science at American University, 2002, Discharging Congress: Government by Commission, p. 19

Lastly, critics focus on congressional motives and suggest that lawmakers rarely use commissions for altruistic reasons. Instead, politicians, pressed to take unpopular action, choose the easy way out. Congress has rewritten President Harry S Truman’s old maxim. Even if you cannot stand the heat, you do not have to get out of the kitchen—you appoint a nonpolitical commission. 75 This indirect method of deliberation is convenient at times. Lawmakers do not have to vote for something that could have potentially damaging repercussions. Instead, they wait out a designated period and get something automatically; members can plead their case for something or criticize a commission’s final determination, portraying themselves as protectors of local interests. In short, members become advocates rather than bearers of bad news and the hard decisions of national policymaking are left to the commission.