# \*\*\*\*\*ELECTIONS DA\*\*\*\*\*

# \*\*\*NEG\*\*\*

### Elections 1NC

**Romney can’t discredit Obama in a growing economy- massive deficit increases give him leverage to swing voters**

**Murray, 5-15-12**, Sara, “Romney Warns of ‘Debt and Spending Inferno’,” <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2012/05/15/romney-warns-of-debt-and-spending-inferno/>, KHaze

DES MOINES, Iowa–Mitt Romney likened the federal government’s freewheeling spending to an “inferno” Tuesday, warning it could engulf the nation if policymakers don’t tame the budget. “I will lead us out of this debt and spending inferno,” Mr. Romney said. “We will stop borrowing unfathomable sums of money we can’t even imagine from foreign countries we’re never even going to visit.” As he laid out the challenges the nation faces, Mr. Romney said, “We need a big turnaround here.” But Iowa highlights a conundrum for Mr. Romney that’s sure to challenge him in other battleground states: If you’re the economic turnaround candidate, what do you say in a state with a healthy economy? The Romney campaign struggled to hit the right tone Tuesday as Mr. Romney gave a speech on spending and the deficit while his campaign released a web video highlighting unemployed and underemployed workers here — a state with one of the healthiest economies in the nation. The Hawkeye State’s unemployment rate, 5.2%, was the fifth lowest in the country in March, and last year, workers in Iowa saw one of the biggest jumps in personal income in the nation. Mr. Romney’s economic message will face similar challenges in swing states such as New Hampshire, where unemployment also stood at 5.2% in March, as well as Virginia, where the jobless rate was a tame 5.6%. **The solution**, at least for now, **seems to be focusing on the federal government’s ballooning debt load**. Mr. Romney compared the interest on the national debt to the subprime mortgage crisis and tore into President Barack Obama on entitlement reform. Mr. Romney briefly touched on his plan to decrease benefits for future retirees who are higher on the income scale.

**If the Obama administration thinks they’re losing the election, he’ll attack Iran.**

**Watson 11-4**

[Paul Joseph, Author of Order out of Chaos, http://www.prisonplanet.com/obama-tells-allies-u-s-will-attack-iran-by-fall-2012.html]

Barack Obama has told America’s allies that the United States will attack Iran before fall 2012 unless Tehran halts its nuclear program, a time frame that suggests Obama is willing to use war as a re-election campaign tool to rally the population around his leadership. A subscriber-only report by DebkaFile, the Israeli intelligence outfit which has been proven accurate in the past, reveals that shortly after the end of NATO operations in Libya at the start of this week, “President Barack Obama went on line to America’s senior allies, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Israel and Saudi Arabia, with notice of his plan to attack Iran no later than September-October 2012 – unless Tehran halted its nuclear weaponization programs.” According to the report, the window of opportunity for an attack before Iran moves the bulk of its nuclear processing underground is quickly evaporating. Obama’s directive contributed to the flurry of reports this week about NATO powers putting their Iran war contingency plans on standby. “Obama’s announcement was not perceived as a general directive to US allies, but a guideline to blow the dust off the contingency plans for a strike against Iran’s nuclear facilities which stayed locked in bottom drawers for three years,” states the report, adding that “Obama’s announcement spurred Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Israel into girding their navies, air forces, ballistic units and anti-missile defense systems for the challenges ahead.” The imminent withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq is part of a program to re-arrange the United States’ presence in the Gulf. This dovetails with numerous reports over the past few weeks that large numbers of U.S. troops are being stationed in Kuwait. “Military sources in the Gulf report that NATO and Persian Gulf leaders are treating the prospect of a US strike against Iran with the utmost seriousness,” states the article, adding that America plans to rebuild its Gulf presence as part “of a new US focus on cutting Iran down to size.” The timing of a potential fall 2012 attack would of course coincide with Obama’s attempt to secure a second term in the White House. If by that time the United States has embarked on yet another military assault in the Middle East, it would undoubtedly play to Obama’s advantage, just as George W. Bush cited U.S. involvement in Iraq as a reason for voters not to “change horse” in the middle of a race back in 2004. [As we have previously reported](http://www.prisonplanet.com/obama-is-being-blackmailed-into-attacking-iran.html), influential neo-cons within the U.S. have made it clear to Obama that they will give him political cover and an opportunity to resurrect his flagging political career if he launched an attack on Iran.

**Iran strikes fail and trigger US-Iran war**

**Melman, 7-5-11,** Yossi, Haaertz (Israel newspaper), cites Meir Dagan, former Israel Defense Forces officer and former Director of the Mossad, “Former Mossad chief: Israel air strike on Iran 'stupidest thing I have ever heard',” <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/former-mossad-chief-israel-air-strike-on-iran-stupidest-thing-i-have-ever-heard-1.360367>, KHaze

Dagan emphasized that attacking Iran would be different than Israel's successful air strike on Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981. Iran has scattered its nuclear facilities in different places around the country, he said, which would make it difficult for Israel to launch an effective attack. According to Dagan, there is proof that Iran has the capability to divert its nuclear activities from place to place in order to take them out of the watchful eye of international supervision and intelligence agencies. No one in Iran would have any problems in building a centrifuge system in a school basement if they wished to, he said. The IAF's abilities are not in doubt, Dagan emphasized, but the doubts relate to the possibilities of completing the mission and reaching all targets. When asked about what would happen in the aftermath of an Israeli attack Dagan said that: "It will be followed by a war with Iran. It is the kind of thing where we know how it starts, but not how it will end." The Iranians have the capability to fire rockets at Israel for a period of months, and Hizbollah could fire tens of thousands of grad rockets and hundreds of long-range missiles, he said. At the same time, Tehran can activate Hamas, and there is also a danger that Syria will join the war, Dagan added.

**Global nuclear war**

Jorge **Hirsch**, Professor of Physics at the University of California--San Diego, 200**6**

[“Nuking Iran,” ZNet, April 10 http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=10071]

Iran is likely to respond to any US attack using its considerable missile arsenal against US forces in Iraq and elsewhere in the Persian Gulf. Israel may attempt to stay out of the conflict, it is not clear whether Iran would target Israel in a retaliatory strike but it is certainly possible. If the US attack includes nuclear weapons use against Iranian facilities, as I believe is very likely, rather than deterring Iran it will cause a much more violent response. Iranian military forces and militias are likely to storm into southern Iraq and the US may be forced to use nuclear weapons against them, causing large scale casualties and inflaming the Muslim world. There could be popular uprisings in other countries in the region like Pakistan, and of course a Shiite uprising in Iraq against American occupiers. Finally I would like to discuss the grave consequences to America and the world if the US uses nuclear weapons against Iran. First, the likelihood of terrorist attacks against Americans both on American soil and abroad will be enormously enhanced after these events. And terrorist's attempts to get hold of "loose nukes" and use them against Americans will be enormously incentivized after the US used nuclear weapons against Iran. Second, it will destroy America's position as the leader of the free world. The rest of the world rightly recognizes that nuclear weapons are qualitatively different from all other weapons, and that there is no sharp distinction between small and large nuclear weapons, or between nuclear weapons targeting facilities versus those targeting armies or civilians. It will not condone the breaking of the nuclear taboo in an unprovoked war of aggression against a non-nuclear country, and the US will become a pariah state. Third, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will cease to exist, and many of its 182 non-nuclear-weapon-country signatories will strive to acquire nuclear weapons as a deterrent to an attack by a nuclear nation. With no longer a taboo against the use of nuclear weapons, any regional conflict may go nuclear and expand into global nuclear war. Nuclear weapons are million-fold more powerful than any other weapon, and the existing nuclear arsenals can obliterate humanity many times over. In the past, global conflicts terminated when one side prevailed. In the next global conflict we will all be gone before anybody has prevailed.

## \*\*Impacts\*\*

### AT: Obama Bad Impact Turns

**GOP president means repeal of Obamacare – incites partisanship that gridlocks the whole presidency.**

New York Magazine**, 10-12**

[<http://nymag.com/daily/....able_to_carry_o.html>]

The most significant long-term outcome of last night’s Republican debate is that Mitt Romney, the likely nominee, committed himself to using budget reconciliation to repeal the Affordable Care Act, thus evading a filibuster. I also say we have to repeal Obamacare, and I will do that on day two, with the reconciliation bill, because as you know, it was passed by reconciliation, 51 votes. This, as [Dave Weigel](http://www.slate.com/blogs/weigel/2011/10/12/romney_shows_republicans_how_not_to_fret_the_filibuster.html) has noted, is a crucial commitment, setting up what will probably be the biggest policy fight of a prospective Romney presidency. But, though [Republicans have long been touting](http://keithhennessey.com/2011/02/02/how-to-repeal-obamacare/) this option, it may not be so easy to pull off. First, let me explain what this means. Budget reconciliation is a process in Congress to move budgets. It’s become crucial because it can’t be filibustered, and therefore it can pass with a majority vote in both houses of Congress. Romney says the Affordable Care Act was passed this way, though that’s not actually true. The law passed through the Senate with 60 votes, overcoming a filibuster. Later, both houses used reconciliation to iron out some budget-related differences between the House and Senate versions of the law. Conservatives responded with apoplexy — it was a vile abuse of procedure, a dastardly exploitation of the suddenly sacred principles of budgetary procedure. (Here’s some sample fulmination from [National Review](http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/print/229262), the [Heritage Foundation](http://blog.heritage.org/2010/02/18/reconciliation-and-obamacare-a-%E2%80%9Cbad-mix%E2%80%9D/), and [Jonah Goldberg](http://articles.latimes.com/2010/mar/23/opinion/la-oe-goldberg23-2010mar23), who fumed that Democrats “won dirty.” [Romney himself](http://www.dailykos.com/story/2011/10/12/1025554/-Romney-vows-to-repeal-the-health-care-law-he-inspired-with-a-process-he%C2%A0opposed?via=blog_1) called it “neo-monarchy.”I don’t think that reversing this once-sacred principle will pose even the slightest obstacle to Republicans. (Neo-monarchy, bad. Neo-*neo*-monarchy, good!) But practical problems may arise.

The first problem is that a President Romney would probably also need to use budget reconciliation to extend the Bush tax cuts. The cuts expire at the end of 2012, and, barring a budget deal under the Obama administration, Romney would be looking to extend those low, low tax rates. His best leverage to do so would be to use reconciliation — otherwise he’d need a bunch of Democratic senators to get to 60 votes. Now, Romney could (and probably would) try to combine the two measures into one big bill to cut taxes and repeal health care reform. But the more policy changes you load onto one bill, the bigger the risk of a defection making it all topple over. The second and larger problem is that the Affordable Care Act can’t be completely repealed by reconciliation. Remember, reconciliation can only be used for budget-related changes. The Affordable Care Act included lots of non-budget provisions. In particular, it used both regulation and spending to cover people who lack health insurance. You basically have three categories of uninsured. You have people who are just too poor to afford a regular health insurance plan and don’t get one through their job. You have people who might be able to afford a regular health insurance plan, but have a preexisting medical condition, or perhaps a family member with one, so insurers either won’t cover them at all or will only sell them a plan at exorbitant prices. Then you have generally healthy people who could afford a plan but choose to skip out on it The Affordable Care Act covered those groups in different ways. The poor people just got added onto Medicaid. The sick people had a more complex solution. The Act regulated insurers, so they have to charge everybody the same rate, poor and sick alike. This would create an incentive for even more healthy people to flee the system — why share costs with sick people when you’re healthy? — so the law added a mandate that everybody buy insurance, plus cost subsidies for people who’d have trouble affording a private plan. That’s the same system Romney used in Massachusetts, and was the basis for the Affordable Care Act. Now, if Romney wants to use reconciliation to screw poor uninsured people, he can. Medicaid is a spending program, and he can use a budget bill to cut it. But screwing the non-poor uninsured will be trickier. Regulations forbidding insurers from discriminating against sick people will still be on the books, and you can’t eliminate a regulation with a budget reconciliation bill. If they eliminate the subsidies but leave the regulations in place, you’ll have insurers required to sell policies to people who are sick, but no way to bring healthy people into the risk pool. A few states tried that. It created a cost spiral that collapsed the whole market. Romney would end up screwing the health insurance industry, which is much harder to do, politically, than screwing the uninsured. The industry has lobbyists. Those lobbyists were happy to preserve the old system, which screwed all the uninsured and none of the insurance companies. They were fine with the Obama plan that screwed none of the uninsured and none of the insurance firms. They're not going to be happy about creating a system that screws *some* of the uninsured and *all* of the insurance companies. Now, there is a proviso where this gets complicated. (Okay, *even more* complicated.) The only thing keeping a party from using reconciliation to pass non-budget things is the Senate parliamentarian. By social custom, the parliamentarian’s rules are always followed. When he struck some parts from the Democrats’ reconciliation bill, they abided his ruling. But Republicans could decide to use reconciliation to repeal the entire Affordable Care Act, and when the parliamentarian rules against them, simply overrule him. That would be a huge, drastic change — essentially it would end the filibuster. That would be a good thing, long-term, and it would also make it easier for Democrats to one day pass health care reform again. (If it weren’t for the filibuster, health care reform would have passed long, long before Obama came along.) But that kind of cultural change might worry Senate Republicans, who cling to the filibuster and other byways of the Senate. And it would be a controversial way for Romney to start his presidency, probably ending any hope of further bipartisan cooperation.

## \*Iran\*

### Obama Module

**If the Obama administration thinks they’re losing the election, he’ll attack Iran.**

**Watson 11-4**

[Paul Joseph, Author of Order out of Chaos, http://www.prisonplanet.com/obama-tells-allies-u-s-will-attack-iran-by-fall-2012.html]

Barack Obama has told America’s allies that the United States will attack Iran before fall 2012 unless Tehran halts its nuclear program, a time frame that suggests Obama is willing to use war as a re-election campaign tool to rally the population around his leadership. A subscriber-only report by DebkaFile, the Israeli intelligence outfit which has been proven accurate in the past, reveals that shortly after the end of NATO operations in Libya at the start of this week, “President Barack Obama went on line to America’s senior allies, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Israel and Saudi Arabia, with notice of his plan to attack Iran no later than September-October 2012 – unless Tehran halted its nuclear weaponization programs.” According to the report, the window of opportunity for an attack before Iran moves the bulk of its nuclear processing underground is quickly evaporating. Obama’s directive contributed to the flurry of reports this week about NATO powers putting their Iran war contingency plans on standby. “Obama’s announcement was not perceived as a general directive to US allies, but a guideline to blow the dust off the contingency plans for a strike against Iran’s nuclear facilities which stayed locked in bottom drawers for three years,” states the report, adding that “Obama’s announcement spurred Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Israel into girding their navies, air forces, ballistic units and anti-missile defense systems for the challenges ahead.” The imminent withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq is part of a program to re-arrange the United States’ presence in the Gulf. This dovetails with numerous reports over the past few weeks that large numbers of U.S. troops are being stationed in Kuwait. “Military sources in the Gulf report that NATO and Persian Gulf leaders are treating the prospect of a US strike against Iran with the utmost seriousness,” states the article, adding that America plans to rebuild its Gulf presence as part “of a new US focus on cutting Iran down to size.” The timing of a potential fall 2012 attack would of course coincide with Obama’s attempt to secure a second term in the White House. If by that time the United States has embarked on yet another military assault in the Middle East, it would undoubtedly play to Obama’s advantage, just as George W. Bush cited U.S. involvement in Iraq as a reason for voters not to “change horse” in the middle of a race back in 2004. [As we have previously reported](http://www.prisonplanet.com/obama-is-being-blackmailed-into-attacking-iran.html), influential neo-cons within the U.S. have made it clear to Obama that they will give him political cover and an opportunity to resurrect his flagging political career if he launched an attack on Iran.

**Iran strikes fail and trigger US-Iran war**

**Melman, 7-5-11,** Yossi, Haaertz (Israel newspaper), cites Meir Dagan, former Israel Defense Forces officer and former Director of the Mossad, “Former Mossad chief: Israel air strike on Iran 'stupidest thing I have ever heard',” <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/former-mossad-chief-israel-air-strike-on-iran-stupidest-thing-i-have-ever-heard-1.360367>, KHaze

Dagan emphasized that attacking Iran would be different than Israel's successful air strike on Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981. Iran has scattered its nuclear facilities in different places around the country, he said, which would make it difficult for Israel to launch an effective attack. According to Dagan, there is proof that Iran has the capability to divert its nuclear activities from place to place in order to take them out of the watchful eye of international supervision and intelligence agencies. No one in Iran would have any problems in building a centrifuge system in a school basement if they wished to, he said. The IAF's abilities are not in doubt, Dagan emphasized, but the doubts relate to the possibilities of completing the mission and reaching all targets. When asked about what would happen in the aftermath of an Israeli attack Dagan said that: "It will be followed by a war with Iran. It is the kind of thing where we know how it starts, but not how it will end." The Iranians have the capability to fire rockets at Israel for a period of months, and Hizbollah could fire tens of thousands of grad rockets and hundreds of long-range missiles, he said. At the same time, Tehran can activate Hamas, and there is also a danger that Syria will join the war, Dagan added.

**Global nuclear war**

Jorge **Hirsch**, Professor of Physics at the University of California--San Diego, 200**6**

[“Nuking Iran,” ZNet, April 10 http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=10071]

Iran is likely to respond to any US attack using its considerable missile arsenal against US forces in Iraq and elsewhere in the Persian Gulf. Israel may attempt to stay out of the conflict, it is not clear whether Iran would target Israel in a retaliatory strike but it is certainly possible. If the US attack includes nuclear weapons use against Iranian facilities, as I believe is very likely, rather than deterring Iran it will cause a much more violent response. Iranian military forces and militias are likely to storm into southern Iraq and the US may be forced to use nuclear weapons against them, causing large scale casualties and inflaming the Muslim world. There could be popular uprisings in other countries in the region like Pakistan, and of course a Shiite uprising in Iraq against American occupiers. Finally I would like to discuss the grave consequences to America and the world if the US uses nuclear weapons against Iran. First, the likelihood of terrorist attacks against Americans both on American soil and abroad will be enormously enhanced after these events. And terrorist's attempts to get hold of "loose nukes" and use them against Americans will be enormously incentivized after the US used nuclear weapons against Iran. Second, it will destroy America's position as the leader of the free world. The rest of the world rightly recognizes that nuclear weapons are qualitatively different from all other weapons, and that there is no sharp distinction between small and large nuclear weapons, or between nuclear weapons targeting facilities versus those targeting armies or civilians. It will not condone the breaking of the nuclear taboo in an unprovoked war of aggression against a non-nuclear country, and the US will become a pariah state. Third, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will cease to exist, and many of its 182 non-nuclear-weapon-country signatories will strive to acquire nuclear weapons as a deterrent to an attack by a nuclear nation. With no longer a taboo against the use of nuclear weapons, any regional conflict may go nuclear and expand into global nuclear war. Nuclear weapons are million-fold more powerful than any other weapon, and the existing nuclear arsenals can obliterate humanity many times over. In the past, global conflicts terminated when one side prevailed. In the next global conflict we will all be gone before anybody has prevailed.

### Romney Module

**Romney victory causes Iran war**

**Sarkisian, 2-2-12,** Joseph, graduate student in international relations at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, where he is also a teaching assistant for political science. The focus of his research is U.S.-Iranian relations. “Examining the advisors: Is a vote for Romney a vote for going to war with Iran? ,” <http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/02/02/examining_the_advisors_is_a_vote_for_romney_a_vote_for_going_to_war_with_iran>, KHaze

Lately a lot of journalists have been pointing out the neo-conservative return from the grave manifested in Mitt Romney's foreign policy team. The list is a who's who of advisors under the most recent Bush administration -- 15 of the 22 of them -- including six former members of the "Project for a New American Century." If you recall, this was the same group of policy "experts" that advocated the war in Iraq with confidential reasons to bust OPEC by privatizing Iraq's oil infrastructure, removing the Saudis' ability to set prices, and flooring the price of crude. Clearly this never came to pass and Iraq has remained a member of OPEC. However, although the neo-conservatives lost in their war with the State Department and oil industry to privatize Iraq, a campaign against Iran would give them another shot. While conflict with Iran may partly be attributed to its nuclear program, it isn't the whole story. Just like with the Baathist regime, the powers that were and may be again are unhappy that an authoritarian regime with a hatred for Israel to boot is having so much say in the price America pays for a barrel of oil. In 2003, the surface motivation was about Iraqi WMD, and today the surface motivation is about Iranian WMD. This unsubstantiated fear proved to be the catalyst the OPEC-busters needed to move on Iraq. That same catalyst could be used to move on Iran. Iran is much **more easily vilified** simply because it actually has a nuclear program, unlike Iraq did. Therefore public support for a campaign to make sure Iran never develops a nuclear weapon is winning against non-intervention. But the neo-conservative constituency isn't appeased with the setting back of Iran's nuclear program. In fact, some of them advocate for full-scale regime change. The neo-cons moan over the uselessness of sanctions, and on this point they may be correct, but not for the right reasons. The issue as they state it is Iran having adequate time to put together a nuclear device. This may or may not be the case, but it certainly is the case that regardless of the Ayatollah's plans for his fissile material, the rhetoric keeps oil prices high, as potential kinetic conflict over the issue becomes more of a possibility. A back and forth approach to ceding some ground on the nuclear issue keeps the price of oil up, which is good strategy for Iran. However, if prices get too high, the regime may effectively commit suicide if a conservative White House loses its temper. Therefore, the current price of oil is close to ideal since it keeps Iran in the sweet spot of dividing the world over whether or not to intervene. Although sanctions are appearing to hurt the Iranian economy, higher oil prices will benefit them if they can strike a deal with China and India to buy what the EU leaves sitting on the tanker. They'll have six months to figure it out. None of this bodes well for neo-cons who understand that this back and forth will keep oil expensive for the foreseeable future. Therefore, a plea for regime change in Iran would make sense in their eyes, just like it did in 2003. And why not? Public opinion seems to favor at least intervention at this point, Israel is more than happy to help out, and Iran is easier to sell than Iraq ever was. It wouldn't be hard to put Mitt Romney on a plan to privatize Iran's oil infrastructure given the opportunity; he is a businessman after all. But as we've seen, neo-conservatives aren't much interested in the consequences of action; only the consequences of inaction by others that they believe are too "soft" on Iran, which is pretty much everyone but themselves. They fail to realize that Iran is not Iraq and that it can defend itself. Regime change doesn't happen from the air. Considerable ground forces would be necessary for such a campaign, and Iran has a trained insurgency at the ready that would make Iraq look like Grenada. This would undoubtedly drive the price of oil skyward for an extended period of time, just like it did in 2003. One entity may be powerful enough to oppose such grand plans (and sadly it isn't the American voters): Big Oil. They shut down the plan to privatize Iraq in 2003 and may be able to do the same thing in Iran if there were an attempt to do so. No OPEC means more competition in the market place, which means lower prices. Translate that to lower profit for oil companies and one can see the connection. Keeping oil in the ground makes more sense to an oilman than taking it out when there is excess supply. It may be rhetoric in an election year as some have posited, but Israel's involvement and the alignment of many on Romney's foreign policy team with AIPAC and Israeli interests points to a long lasting commitment to taking on Iran in one way or another, whether it is good for American interests or not. Only time will tell, but it is **very hard to believe** that given the chance, the neo-conservatives wouldn't try and bust OPEC to achieve their goal of reclaiming the almighty American empire one more time.

**Iran strikes fail and trigger US-Iran war**

**Melman, 7-5-11,** Yossi, Haaertz (Israel newspaper), cites Meir Dagan, former Israel Defense Forces officer and former Director of the Mossad, “Former Mossad chief: Israel air strike on Iran 'stupidest thing I have ever heard',” <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/former-mossad-chief-israel-air-strike-on-iran-stupidest-thing-i-have-ever-heard-1.360367>, KHaze

Dagan emphasized that attacking Iran would be different than Israel's successful air strike on Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981. Iran has scattered its nuclear facilities in different places around the country, he said, which would make it difficult for Israel to launch an effective attack. According to Dagan, there is proof that Iran has the capability to divert its nuclear activities from place to place in order to take them out of the watchful eye of international supervision and intelligence agencies. No one in Iran would have any problems in building a centrifuge system in a school basement if they wished to, he said. The IAF's abilities are not in doubt, Dagan emphasized, but the doubts relate to the possibilities of completing the mission and reaching all targets. When asked about what would happen in the aftermath of an Israeli attack Dagan said that: "It will be followed by a war with Iran. It is the kind of thing where we know how it starts, but not how it will end." The Iranians have the capability to fire rockets at Israel for a period of months, and Hizbollah could fire tens of thousands of grad rockets and hundreds of long-range missiles, he said. At the same time, Tehran can activate Hamas, and there is also a danger that Syria will join the war, Dagan added.

**Global nuclear war**

Jorge **Hirsch**, Professor of Physics at the University of California--San Diego, 200**6**

[“Nuking Iran,” ZNet, April 10 http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=10071]

Iran is likely to respond to any US attack using its considerable missile arsenal against US forces in Iraq and elsewhere in the Persian Gulf. Israel may attempt to stay out of the conflict, it is not clear whether Iran would target Israel in a retaliatory strike but it is certainly possible. If the US attack includes nuclear weapons use against Iranian facilities, as I believe is very likely, rather than deterring Iran it will cause a much more violent response. Iranian military forces and militias are likely to storm into southern Iraq and the US may be forced to use nuclear weapons against them, causing large scale casualties and inflaming the Muslim world. There could be popular uprisings in other countries in the region like Pakistan, and of course a Shiite uprising in Iraq against American occupiers. Finally I would like to discuss the grave consequences to America and the world if the US uses nuclear weapons against Iran. First, the likelihood of terrorist attacks against Americans both on American soil and abroad will be enormously enhanced after these events. And terrorist's attempts to get hold of "loose nukes" and use them against Americans will be enormously incentivized after the US used nuclear weapons against Iran. Second, it will destroy America's position as the leader of the free world. The rest of the world rightly recognizes that nuclear weapons are qualitatively different from all other weapons, and that there is no sharp distinction between small and large nuclear weapons, or between nuclear weapons targeting facilities versus those targeting armies or civilians. It will not condone the breaking of the nuclear taboo in an unprovoked war of aggression against a non-nuclear country, and the US will become a pariah state. Third, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will cease to exist, and many of its 182 non-nuclear-weapon-country signatories will strive to acquire nuclear weapons as a deterrent to an attack by a nuclear nation. With no longer a taboo against the use of nuclear weapons, any regional conflict may go nuclear and expand into global nuclear war. Nuclear weapons are million-fold more powerful than any other weapon, and the existing nuclear arsenals can obliterate humanity many times over. In the past, global conflicts terminated when one side prevailed. In the next global conflict we will all be gone before anybody has prevailed.

### Iran- GOP IL 2NC

**A Republican presidency means a pre-emptive strike on Iran occurs and causes backlash**

**Traub 12** (James, "Foreign Affairs," Jan/ Feb 2012, [www.washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/january\_february\_2012/features/foreign\_affairs034475.php?page=3#](http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/january_february_2012/features/foreign_affairs034475.php?page=3))

For all Obama’s efforts, his Iran policy is at best a qualified success; the leadership there is still enriching uranium, still apparently seeking to design a warhead, still posing a profound threat to Israel. The Republican candidates insist that Iran hasn’t capitulated because Obama has not applied enough pressure. They would, of course, cut out the deferential language and the holiday greetings. They would attempt regime change, if from a distance. But the real difference between a hypothetical Republican president and Obama—and it is a very important one—is that a Republican would be prepared to launch an attack on Iran designed to slow their development of nuclear technology, or would give Israel the go-ahead to do so. Yes, Obama has said that “all options are on the table,” but he might not be prepared to attack Iran. The Republicans say they would. “If we reelect Barack Obama,” Mitt Romney said in Spartanburg, “Iran will have a nuclear weapon. And if you elect Mitt Romney, Iran will not have a nuclear weapon.” At bottom, Obama’s policy is designed to buy time in hopes that the collective bite of sanctions will change the Iranian calculus, or that some as yet unforeseeable change inside Iran will produce a new policy. He seeks, in Cold War language, to contain Iran. Romney and others argue that the U.S. doesn’t have the luxury of containment—that Iran represents an existential threat, which must be stopped now. But airstrikes, whether by the U.S. or Israel, would not wholly eliminate Iran’s nuclear program, and would provoke very serious blowback. Leon Panetta, Obama’s defense secretary, has warned the Israelis of possible “unintended consequences” of such a mission, including attacks on American soldiers, diplomats, and assets across the Middle East. And while some Arab elites might welcome an attack, ordinary citizens in the Middle East would be enraged. The U.S. could thus pay a very grave price for a relatively modest gain.

### Strikes Bad- Economy

**Iran war crushes the economy- greatest and most probable risk of collapse- current sanctions don’t trigger the spikes**

**Hargreaves, 4-11-12,** Steve, CNN, “Iran-fueled oil price spike biggest threat to economy,” <http://money.cnn.com/2012/04/11/news/economy/oil-price-economy/index.htm>, KHaze

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- An oil price spike caused by a confrontation with Iran is now seen as **the biggest threat to the U.S. economy.** That's according to nine out of 18 economists surveyed recently by CNNMoney. They say rising oil prices now outweigh the risks posed by the European debt crisis, ongoing gridlock over the budget in Washington and fears of a slowdown in China. "An Iranian disruption of oil supplies could send oil prices to $200 a barrel," said Lynn Reaser, chief economist at the Fermanian Business & Economic Institute. "It's something we're really concerned about," said Chris Lafakis, an economist at Moody's Analytics. "A military confrontation could push prices to $180 a barrel, which would precipitate a *recession*." The economy, it appears, can handle oil around $100 a barrel and gas prices near $4 a gallon. While these prices are relatively high, consumer spending continues to rise. President Obama seems keenly aware of this, and has been working to strike the right balance in sanctioning Iran over its nuclear program. The sanctions, phased in gradually, are designed to crimp Iran's oil industry just enough to get the country to the negotiating table, but not so much that they cause oil prices to spike or trigger an armed conflict. So far it appears to be working. Iran recently agreed to new talks, although whether they will be successful in getting the country to curtail its nuclear program is an open question. Iran says its nuclear ambitions are for peaceful purposes, although many suspect they are intended to produce a bomb. To be clear, most economists don't think a confrontation with Iran and the resulting oil price spike is likely. They just think it's more likely than the other scenarios. "Out of all the things that could derail the economy, **that has the highest probability** of actually occurring," said Lafakis. By comparison, only five economists in the CNNMoney poll cited the a meltdown in financial markets due to sovereign debt crisis in Europe as the biggest risk to the U.S. economy.

### Strikes Bad- 1NC Iran Prolif

**Even if strikes succeed they lead to worse prolif**

**Walt, 12-27-11,** Stephen M., the Robert and Renée Belfer professor of international affairs at Harvard University and a blogger at ForeignPolicy.com, “Why attacking Iran is still a bad idea,” <http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/12/27/why_attacking_iran_is_still_a_bad_idea>, KHaze

Let's assume, however, that all goes according to plan and we knock out virtually all of Iran's nuclear facilities. As Kroenig acknowledges in his Foreign Affairs article, even a completely successful war would not end Iran's capability to build nuclear weapons once and for all. We would merely have bought ourselves a few years, because the Iranians--who would probably be mad as hornets--would surely set out to build nuclear weapons in a secure location to deter the United States from attacking their homeland again. All of this is to say that we cannot prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons if it wants them badly enough, and attacking them in the immediate future is likely to make them want those weapons even **more**. Nuclear weapons are the ultimate deterrent, after all, which is why Israel, the United States, and several other countries have nuclear arsenals today and no intention of getting rid of them anytime soon.

**Iran prolif causes extinction- comparatively biggest risk**

**Miller, 10-17-11,** Paul, assistant professor of international security studies at the National Defense University. Prior to stepping behind a lectern, he served as director for Afghanistan on the National Security Council staff from September 2007 to September 2009. Before working as a policymaker, he previously served as a political analyst in the U.S. intelligence community, specializing in South Asia. He also serves as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve and was deployed to Afghanistan in 2002. “This is no time to cut defense,” <http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/10/17/this_is_no_time_to_cut_defense>, KHaze

The threats are equally apocalyptic. Nuclear war with the Soviet Union was the gravest danger we ever faced, and we came perilously close to it in 1962. Nuclear war with Iran or North Korea would be almost equally dangerous, especially after they have acquired longer-range ballistic missiles capable of hitting U.S. allies and even the U.S. homeland. (Yes, the Soviet Union had thousands of warheads, but you only need a few nukes to cause more damage to us **than all the wars** we have fought **in history, combined**, and only a few dozen to effectively wipe out the United States. And if I were a new nuclear power, I wouldn't announce my capability until I already had a few dozen to make sure I could withstand an attack on my arsenal. Which means that North Korea and Iran (when it announces) will almost certainly be existential threats). The difference is that war with them or their proxies may be more likely to actually happen. The latter two countries may be less deterrable, less predictable, and more prone to transfer nuclear technology to proxies and non-state groups, given their history of erratic behavior, sponsoring terrorism, and proliferation. All told, the chances of a nuclear detonation in New York City are higher, not lower, today than twenty years ago. Unfortunately, we do not have a team of patriotic mutant superheroes to avert disaster this time.

### Strikes ==> Prolif 2NC

**Strike causes nationalist backlash- increases risk of prolif**

**Miller, 11-8-11,** Aaron, public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and a former U.S. Middle East negotiator. His new book, Can America Have Another Great President?, will be published 2012. “Trouble over Tehran,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/11/07/trouble_over_tehran?page=full>, KHaze

2. No one can prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Except Iran. The fact is that India, Pakistan, North Korea, and even Israel -- nations with both a profound sense of insecurity and entitlement -- have **all developed nuclear weapons secretly.** Iraq and Syria were on their way, too. Iran, under the Shah, was also committed to a nuclear program and might, over time, have tried to weaponize. But denying Iran a weapon means more than taking away the toys; it means changing the national calculation and motivation of a power that historically has imagined itself as a great nation. Even in the unlikely event Iran became a democracy, its own regional image and ambitions might still impel it to develop a nuclear capacity. At a minimum, denying Iran nuclear weapons means fundamentally changing the mullahcracy in Tehran; a military strike by the Israelis might do just the opposite -- further legitimizing it, particularly if there were civilian casualties. There's no better way to mobilize a divided polity or bring out its nationalist and unified character than to demonize a foreign enemy. And the Israelis would be the target of a massive Iranian propaganda effort across the Arab world, an effort that would likely win a great deal of sympathy.

### Iran Strikes Escalate

**Iran strike would escalate to all-out war- several warrants**

**Kahl, 1-17-12,** Colin H., From February 2009 to December 2011, Prof. Kahl was the **Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East at the Pentagon.** In this capacity, **he served as the senior policy advisor to the Secretary of Defense for** Egypt, **Iran**, Iraq, Israel and the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, and six other countries in the Levant and Persian Gulf. He was **responsible for strategy development and policy oversight of the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq,** the Department's efforts to counter Iran's destabilizing activities, security enhancements to support Israeli security and facilitate the Middle East Peace Process, and efforts to build an integrated regional security architecture in the Gulf. **In June 2011, he was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service by Secretary Robert Gates.** From 2000-2004 and 2006-2007, he was an assistant professor of political science at the University of Minnesota. In 2005-2006, Prof. Kahl was a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, where he worked on issues related to counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and responses to failed states. In 1997-1998, he was a National Security Fellow at the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University. Associate professor in the Security Studies Program in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, where he teaches courses on international relations, international security, the geopolitics of the Middle East, American foreign policy, and civil and ethnic conflict. Current research projects include a study of the evolution of U.S. counterinsurgency practices in Iraq and a separate study on the emerging U.S. regional security architecture to counter Iran. He has published articles on U.S. policy and military conduct in the Middle East in Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, International Security, the Los Angeles Times, Middle East Policy, the National Interest, and the New York Times, and has published several reports for the Center for a New American Security, a Washington-based think tank. He is a regular consultant for the Department of Defense and the Intelligence community. “Not Time to Attack Iran,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137031/colin-h-kahl/not-time-to-attack-iran?page=show>, KHaze

RIDING THE ESCALATOR Kroenig's discussion of timing is not the only misleading part of his article; so is his contention that the United States could mitigate the "potentially devastating consequences" of a strike on Iran by carefully managing the escalation that would ensue. His picture of a clean, calibrated conflict is a mirage. Any war with Iran would be a messy and extraordinarily violent affair, with significant casualties and consequences. According to Kroenig, Iran would not respond to a strike with its "worst forms of retaliation, such as closing the Strait of Hormuz or launching missiles at southern Europe" unless its leaders felt that the regime's "very existence was threatened." To mitigate this risk, he claims, the United States could "make clear that it is interested only in destroying Iran's nuclear program, not in overthrowing the government." But Iranian leaders have staked their domestic legitimacy on resisting inter-national pressure to halt the nuclear program, and so they would inevitably view an attack on that program as an attack on the regime itself. Decades of hostility and perceived U.S. efforts to undermine the regime would reinforce this perception. And when combined with the emphasis on anti-Americanism in the ideology of the supreme leader and his hard-line advisers, as well as their general ignorance about what drives U.S. decision-making, this perception means that there is little prospect that Iranian leaders would believe that a U.S. strike had limited aims. Assuming the worst about Washington's intentions, Tehran is likely to overreact to even a surgical strike against its nuclear facilities. Kroenig nevertheless believes that the United States could limit the prospects for escalation by warning Iran that crossing certain "redlines" would trigger a devastating U.S. counterresponse. Ironically, Kroenig believes that a nuclear-armed Iran would be deeply irrational and prone to miscalculation yet somehow maintains that under the same leaders, Iran would make clear-eyed decisions in the immediate aftermath of a U.S. strike. But the two countries share no direct and reliable channels for communication, and the inevitable confusion brought on by a crisis would make signaling difficult and miscalculation likely. To make matters worse, in the heat of battle, Iran would face powerful incentives to escalate. In the event of a conflict, both sides would come under significant pressure to stop the fighting due to the impact on international oil markets. Since this would limit the time the Iranians would have to reestablish deterrence, they might choose to launch a quick, all-out response, without care for redlines. Iranian fears that the United States could success-fully disrupt its command-and-control infrastructure or preemptively destroy its ballistic missile arsenal could also tempt Iran to launch as many missiles as possible early in the war. And the decentralized nature of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, especially its navy, raises the prospect of unauthorized responses that could rapidly expand the fighting in the crowded waters of the Persian Gulf. Controlling escalation would be no easier on the U.S. side. In the face of reprisals by Iranian proxies, "token missile strikes against U.S. bases and ships," or "the harassment of commercial and U.S. naval vessels," Kroenig says that Washington should turn the other cheek and constrain its own response to Iranian counter-attacks. But this is much easier said than done. Just as Iran's likely expectation of a short war might encourage it to respond disproportionately early in the crisis, so the United States would also have incentives to move swiftly to destroy Iran's conventional forces and the infrastructure of the Revolutionary Guard Corps. And if the United States failed to do so, proxy attacks against U.S. civilian personnel in Lebanon or Iraq, the transfer of lethal rocket and portable air defense systems to Taliban fighters in Afghanistan, or missile strikes against U.S. facilities in the Gulf could cause significant U.S. casualties, creating irresistible political pressure in Washington to respond. Add to this the normal fog of war and the lack of reliable communications between the United States and Iran, and Washington would have a hard time determining whether Tehran's initial response to a strike was a one-off event or the prelude to a wider campaign. If it were the latter, a passive U.S. approach might motivate Iran to launch even more dangerous attacks -- and this is a risk Washington may choose not to take. The sum total of these dynamics would make staying within Kroenig's proscribed limits exceedingly difficult. ***Even if Iran did not escalate***, purely defensive moves that would threaten U.S. personnel or international shipping in the Strait of Hormuz -- the maritime chokepoint through which nearly 20 per- -cent of the world's traded oil passes -- would also create powerful incentives for Washington to preemptively target Iran's military. Of particular concern would be Iran's "anti-access/area-denial" capabilities, which are designed to prevent advanced navies from operating in the shallow waters of the Persian Gulf. These systems integrate coastal air defenses, shore-based long-range artillery and antiship cruise missiles, Kilo-class and midget submarines, remote-controlled boats and unmanned kamikaze aerial vehicles, and more than 1,000 small attack craft equipped with machine guns, multiple-launch rockets, antiship missiles, torpedoes, and rapid-mine-laying capabilities. The entire 120-mile-long strait sits along the Iranian coastline, within short reach of these systems. In the midst of a conflict, the threat to U.S. forces and the global economy posed by Iran's activating its air defenses, dispersing its missiles or naval forces, or moving its mines out of storage would be too great for the United States to ignore; the logic of preemption would compel Washington to escalate. Some analysts, including Afshin Molavi and Michael Singh, believe that the Iranians are unlikely to attempt to close the strait due to the damage it would inflict on their own economy. But Tehran's saber rattling has already intensified in response to the prospect of Western sanctions on its oil industry. In the immediate aftermath of a U.S. strike on Iran's nuclear program, Iranian leaders might perceive that holding the strait at risk would encourage international pressure on Washington to end the fighting, possibly deterring U.S. escalation. In reality, it would more likely have the opposite effect, encouraging aggressive U.S. efforts to protect commercial shipping. The U.S. Navy is capable of keeping the strait open, but the mere threat of closure could send oil prices soaring, dealing a heavy blow to the fragile global economy. The measures that Kroenig advocates to mitigate this threat, such as opening up the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve and urging Saudi Arabia to boost oil production, would be unlikely to suffice, especially since most Saudi crude passes through the strait. Ultimately, if the United States and Iran go to war, there is no doubt that Washington will win in the narrow operational sense. Indeed, with the impressive array of U.S. naval and air forces already deployed in the Gulf, the United States could probably knock Iran's military capabilities back 20 years in a matter of weeks. But a U.S.-Iranian conflict would not be the clinical, tightly controlled, limited encounter that Kroenig predicts.

**Regional states will escalate the strike**

**Kahl, 1-17-12,** Colin H., From February 2009 to December 2011, Prof. Kahl was the **Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East at the Pentagon.** In this capacity, **he served as the senior policy advisor to the Secretary of Defense for** Egypt, **Iran**, Iraq, Israel and the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, and six other countries in the Levant and Persian Gulf. He was **responsible for strategy development and policy oversight of the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq,** the Department's efforts to counter Iran's destabilizing activities, security enhancements to support Israeli security and facilitate the Middle East Peace Process, and efforts to build an integrated regional security architecture in the Gulf. **In June 2011, he was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service by Secretary Robert Gates.** From 2000-2004 and 2006-2007, he was an assistant professor of political science at the University of Minnesota. In 2005-2006, Prof. Kahl was a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, where he worked on issues related to counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and responses to failed states. In 1997-1998, he was a National Security Fellow at the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University. Associate professor in the Security Studies Program in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, where he teaches courses on international relations, international security, the geopolitics of the Middle East, American foreign policy, and civil and ethnic conflict. Current research projects include a study of the evolution of U.S. counterinsurgency practices in Iraq and a separate study on the emerging U.S. regional security architecture to counter Iran. He has published articles on U.S. policy and military conduct in the Middle East in Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, International Security, the Los Angeles Times, Middle East Policy, the National Interest, and the New York Times, and has published several reports for the Center for a New American Security, a Washington-based think tank. He is a regular consultant for the Department of Defense and the Intelligence community. “Not Time to Attack Iran,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137031/colin-h-kahl/not-time-to-attack-iran?page=show>, KHaze

SPILLOVER Keeping other states in the region out of the fight would also prove more difficult than Kroenig suggests. Iran would presume Israeli complicity in a U.S. raid and would seek to drag Israel into the conflict in order to undermine potential support for the U.S. war effort among key Arab regimes. And although it is true, as Kroenig notes, that Israel remained on the sidelines during the 1990-91 Gulf War, the threat posed by Iran's missiles and proxies today is considerably greater than that posed by Iraq two decades ago. If Iranian-allied Hezbollah responded to the fighting by firing rockets at Israeli cities, Israel could launch an all-out war against Lebanon. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad might also try to use the moment to divert attention from the uprising in his country, launching his own assault on the Jewish state. Either scenario, or their combination, could lead to a wider war in the Levant. Even in the Gulf, where U.S. partners are sometimes portrayed as passive, Iranian retaliation might draw Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates into the conflict. The Saudis have taken a much more confrontational posture toward Iran in the past year, and Riyadh is unlikely to tolerate Iranian attacks against critical energy infrastructure. For its part, the UAE, the most hawkish state in the Gulf, might respond to missiles raining down on U.S. forces at its Al Dhafra Air Base by attempting to seize Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb, three disputed Gulf islands currently occupied by Iran. A strike could also set off wider destabilizing effects. Although Kroenig is right that some Arab leaders would privately applaud a U.S. strike, many on the Arab street would reject it. Both Islamist extremists and embattled elites could use this opportunity to transform the Arab Spring's populist antiregime narrative into a decidedly anti-American one. This would rebound to Iran's advantage just at the moment when political developments in the region, chief among them the resurgence of nationalism in the Arab world and the upheaval in Syria, are significantly undermining Iran's influence. A U.S. strike could easily shift regional sympathies back in Tehran's favor by allowing Iran to play the victim and, through its retaliation, resuscitate its status as the champion of the region's anti-Western resistance.

### AT: Iran Won’t Rebuild

**Iran would rebuild its nuclear program post-strike**

**Kahl, 1-17-12,** Colin H., From February 2009 to December 2011, Prof. Kahl was the **Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East at the Pentagon.** In this capacity, **he served as the senior policy advisor to the Secretary of Defense for** Egypt, **Iran**, Iraq, Israel and the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, and six other countries in the Levant and Persian Gulf. He was **responsible for strategy development and policy oversight of the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq,** the Department's efforts to counter Iran's destabilizing activities, security enhancements to support Israeli security and facilitate the Middle East Peace Process, and efforts to build an integrated regional security architecture in the Gulf. **In June 2011, he was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service by Secretary Robert Gates.** From 2000-2004 and 2006-2007, he was an assistant professor of political science at the University of Minnesota. In 2005-2006, Prof. Kahl was a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, where he worked on issues related to counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and responses to failed states. In 1997-1998, he was a National Security Fellow at the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University. Associate professor in the Security Studies Program in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, where he teaches courses on international relations, international security, the geopolitics of the Middle East, American foreign policy, and civil and ethnic conflict. Current research projects include a study of the evolution of U.S. counterinsurgency practices in Iraq and a separate study on the emerging U.S. regional security architecture to counter Iran. He has published articles on U.S. policy and military conduct in the Middle East in Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, International Security, the Los Angeles Times, Middle East Policy, the National Interest, and the New York Times, and has published several reports for the Center for a New American Security, a Washington-based think tank. He is a regular consultant for the Department of Defense and the Intelligence community. “Not Time to Attack Iran,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137031/colin-h-kahl/not-time-to-attack-iran?page=show>, KHaze

THE COST OF BUYING TIME Even if a U.S. strike went as well as Kroenig predicts, there is little guarantee that it would produce lasting results. Senior U.S. defense officials have repeatedly stated that an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities would stall Tehran's progress for only a few years. Kroenig argues that such a delay could become permanent. "Those countries whose nuclear facilities have been attacked -- most recently Iraq and Syria," he writes, "have proved unwilling or unable to restart their programs." In the case of Iraq, however, Saddam Hussein restarted his clandestine nuclear weapons program after the 1981 Israeli attack on the Osirak nuclear reactor, and it required the Gulf War and another decade of sanctions and intrusive inspections to eliminate it. Iran's program is also more advanced and dispersed than were Iraq's and Syria's, meaning it would be easier to reconstitute. A U.S. strike would damage key Iranian facilities, but it would do nothing to reverse the nuclear knowledge Iran has accumulated or its ability to eventually build new centrifuges. A U.S. attack would also likely rally domestic Iranian support around nuclear hard-liners, increasing the odds that Iran would emerge from a strike even more committed to building a bomb. Kroenig downplays the "rally round the flag" risks by noting that hard-liners are already firmly in power and suggesting that an attack might produce increased internal criticism of the regime. But the nuclear program remains an enormous source of national pride for the majority of Iranians. To the extent that there is internal dissent over the program, it is a discussion about whether the country should acquire nuclear weapons or simply pursue civilian nuclear technology. By demonstrating the vulnerability of a non-nuclear-armed Iran, a U.S. attack would provide ammunition to hard-liners who argue for acquiring a nuclear deterrent. Kroenig suggests that the United States should essentially ignore "Iran's domestic political tussles" when pursuing "its vital national security interest in preventing Tehran from developing nuclear weapons." But influencing Iranian opinion about the strategic desirability of nuclear weapons might ultimately offer the only enduring way of keeping the Islamic Republic on a peaceful nuclear path. Finally, if Iran did attempt to restart its nuclear program after an attack, it would be much more difficult for the United States to stop it. An assault would lead Iran to distance itself from the IAEA and perhaps to pull out of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty altogether. Without inspectors on the ground, the international community would struggle to track or slow Tehran's efforts to rebuild its program.

### AT: Obama Won’t Risk It

**Obama will take military action- foreign policy history proves**

**Rothkopf, 11-4-11,** David, blogs for Foreign Policy and is the author of Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power. His next book, due out in early 2012, is Power, Inc.: The Epic Rivalry Between Big Business and Government -- and the Reckoning That Lies Ahead. “The world is misreading Obama on Iran,” <http://rothkopf.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/04/the_world_is_misreading_obama_on_iran>, KHaze

The British assumption that the President would not take this action close to the election is mistaken on two levels. First, from the most cynical perspective possible, a strong action right before the election in response to a genuine threat after an extended effort to pursue more peaceful options to resolving the issue might well work very well for the President politically. The American people's reaction to an attack at any time is likely to give the President the benefit of the doubt. That said, it would be a mistake to think this President would make such a cynical analysis. Should he act on an issue like this, he will do so without making any political calculus. He's a politician to be sure. But on national security matters he has grown both increasingly self-confident and proven himself to be exceptionally disciplined. Indeed, the calculus as to what he might do needs to factor in that he has achieved some success taken strong military actions of a focused nature. The "no more Middle East wars" notion went out the window with Libya. The "Obama is timid on these matters" thesis was actually silently put to an early death when the President, just in office, ordered the ultimately successful effort to eliminate Osama bin Laden. Finally, the Israelis are wrong if they think that U.S. cooperation on this issue will restore the bond between the two nations. They may work side-by-side on this as they did on the Stuxnet intervention. They share close ties. But so long as Israel pursues settlements and other policies that inflame the Palestinian situation and make a solution less likely, this administration will be more divided internally in its views on Israel than its public statements may suggest. Further, the reality is that history is moving against the Israelis. Not only are America's strategic priorities shifting -- the end of the Cold War and the War on Terror were both blows to the "indispensability" of Israel to the U.S. -- but other countries, like China and India, are gaining more influence in the region as they become more important consumers of the region's oil. And they view the Israeli-Palestinian issue as an irritant, a risk to their interests and a matter that needs to be disposed of, one way or another, whichever serves their ultimate goal of stable, cheap supplies of energy. In fact, paradoxically, it is probably a nuclear Iran that stands the best chance of keeping Israel more relevant to America. None of this means America will act. But it would be a mistake to bet against it or to consider U.S. threats to be mere posturing.

### AT: Iran Strike Good

**Strikes fail- Iran can move their nuclear facility and they’re too spread out to be effective- Melman**

**Strikes will fail**

**Miller, 11-8-11,** Aaron, public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and a former U.S. Middle East negotiator. His new book, Can America Have Another Great President?, will be published 2012. “Trouble over Tehran,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/11/07/trouble_over_tehran?page=full>, KHaze

1. There's no good end state. Striking Iranian nuclear sites is like mowing the grass. Unless a strike succeeded in permanently crippling the Iranian capacity to produce and weaponize fissile material, the grass would only grow back again. And no strike -- or even series of strikes -- can accomplish this. Iran's hardened sites, redundancy of facilities, and secret locations present significant obstacles to a successful attack. Even in the best-case scenario -- an incomplete strike that, say, set back the Iranian nuclear program by two to three years -- the Iranians would reseed it with the kind of legitimacy and urgency that can only come from having been attacked by an outside power. Self-defense would then become the organizing principle of Iran's nuclear program; it would resonate tremendously throughout the Middle East and even in the international community.

**Strikes would fail – poor intelligence**

**Albright 8** (David. “Can Military Strikes Destroy Iran’s Gas Centrifuge Program? Probably Not”, ISIS Report, Institute for Science and International Security, Washington, DC, August 7, 2008, <http://www.isis-online.org/publications/iran/Centrifuge_Manufacturing_7August2008.pdf>)

The use of military strikes to try to cripple Iran’s enrichment efforts assumes that the attacker knows what to attack. Gaps reportedly exist in U.S. and foreign intelligence on the precise location and vulnerabilities of Iran’s nuclear facilities. U.S. participants reportedly left recent meetings between senior U.S. and Israeli military commanders “unconvinced that the Israelis have enough intelligence on where to strike, and with little confidence that they will be able to destroy the nuclear program.” 1 The IAEA has considerable knowledge of Iran’s centrifuge activities at the Natanz enrichment facilities and the Esfahan uranium conversion plant. However, it lacks information about where P1, IR-2, and IR-3 centrifuge components are currently made. In addition, Iran might have facilities containing centrifuge cascades unknown to the IAEA.

**Iran wont prolif in the squo- undermines their military**

**Walt, 11-16-11,** Stephen M., the Robert and Renée Belfer professor of international affairs at Harvard University and a blogger at ForeignPolicy.com, “Stopping an Iranian bomb,” <http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/15/stopping_an_iranian_bomb>, KHaze

I'm against the former and would favor the latter if necessary, but I do not think it is a foregone conclusion that Iran will actually go forward and acquire a nuclear weapons capability. In particular, I can think of two good reasons why a smart Iranian leader would not want to cross the nuclear threshold. First, an Iranian nuclear weapons capability means that they will automatically be suspected if a nuclear detonation takes place anywhere in the world. Right now, Iran does not have to fear retaliation should an act of nuclear terrorism occur, because we know with high confidence that they have no weapons at present. But if the Islamic Republic were known to have a nuclear weapons capability, and a terrorist used a weapon somewhere, I'd bet that it would be pretty high up on the suspect list. Nuclear forensics could in theory rule them out, but these techniques are not perfectly reliable and it's not obvious how clearly anyone would be thinking at that awful moment. Powerful countries like the United States have a way of lashing out when they are attacked, and they might not be all that careful to make sure they had the right perpetrator. After all, Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with 9/11, but the Bush administration used that attack as a pretext to gin up a campaign against him. So Iran might want to think twice about crossing the nuclear threshold and inviting retaliation, even for acts in which it was not involved. Second, and equally important, Iran has by far the greatest power potential of any country in the Persian Gulf. It has more people, more economic potential, and plenty of oil and gas too. If it ever had competent political leadership it would easily be the strongest conventional power in its neighborhood. But if it gets an overt nuclear capability, that act would raise the likelihood that other states in the region (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, even Iraq) would follow suit. It is far from certain that they would, but it would certainly make it more likely. And if they do, this step would partially negate Iran's conventional advantages.

### AT: Israel will Strike

**No US or Israeli strikes coming- Iran’s nuclear program weak now**

**Hosenball 11** (Mark. Foreign Correspnondent. U.S. agencies believe Iran's nuclear efforts have slowed Reuters. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/12/us-iran-nuclear-idUSTRE70B79P20110112>)

Reuters) - U.S. intelligence agencies believe Iranian leaders have not yet decided to build a nuclear bomb, and some officials say recent problems affecting Tehran's nuclear equipment and personnel have set back Iran's nuclear program by two years or more. The latest assessments, based at least in part on Israeli intelligence, appear to have eased political pressures on Israeli and American leaders for a military strike against Iran's nuclear infrastructure, according to current and former officials familiar with the intelligence. These developments have also given the administration of President Barack Obama breathing room to pursue a two-pronged strategy of seeking greater diplomatic engagement with Tehran while also threatening increased economic sanctions, they said.

**Israel will never strike Iran absent US approval**

**Uri**, **2010**, The Palestine Chronicle, “Hold Me Back! – But Will Israel Attack Iran,” April 4, <http://palestinechronicle.com/view\_article\_details.php?id=15863> http://palestinechronicle.com/view\_article\_details.php?id=15863, last accessed 1.21.11 [RG]

 It is dangerous to prophesy in such matters, especially when we are dealing with people not all of whom are wise and not all of whom are sane. Yet I am ready to maintain: **there is no possibility whatsoever** that the governmentof **Israel will** send the air force to **attack Iran.** I am not going to enter into military matters. Is our air force really capable of executing such an operation? Are circumstances similar to those that prevailed 28 years ago, when the Iraqi reactor was successfully destroyed? Is it at all possible for us to eliminate the Iranian nuclear effort, whose installations are dispersed throughout the large country and buried far below the surface? I want to focus on another aspect: is it politically feasible? What would be the consequences? First of all, a basic rule of Israeli reality: the State of **Israel cannot start any large-scale military operation without American consent**. Israel depends on the US in almost every respect, but in no sphere is it more dependent than in the military one. The aircraft that must execute the mission were supplied to us by the US. Their efficacy depends on a steady flow of American spare parts. At that range, refueling from US-built tanker aircraft would be necessary. The same is true for almost all other war material of our army, as well as for the money needed for their acquisition. Everything comes from America. In 1956, Israel went to war without American consent. Ben-Gurion thought that his collusion with the UK and France was enough. He was vastly mistaken. One hundred hours after telling us that the “Third Kingdom of Israel” had come into being, he announced with a broken voice that he was going to evacuate all the territories just conquered. President Dwight Eisenhower, together with his Soviet colleague, had submitted an ultimatum, and that was the end of the adventure. **Since then, Israel has not started a single war without securing the agreement of Washington**. On the eve of the Six-day War, a special emissary was sent to the US to make sure that there was indeed American agreement. When he returned with an affirmative answer, the order for the attack was issued. On the eve of Lebanon War I, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon rushed to Washington to obtain American consent. He met with Secretary of State Alexander Haig, who agreed – but only on condition that there would be a clear provocation. A few days later there just happened to be an attempt on the life of the Israeli ambassador in London, and the war was on. The Israeli army’s offensives against Hezbollah (“Lebanon War II”) and Hamas (“Cast Lead”) were possible because they were cast as part of the American campaign against “Radical Islam”. Ostensibly, that is also true for an attack on Iran. But no. Because an Israeli attack on Iran would cause a military, political and economic disaster for the United States of America. Since the Iranians, too, realize that Israel could not attack without American consent, they would react accordingly. As I have written here before, a cursory glance at the map suffices to indicate what would be the immediate reaction. The narrow Hormuz Strait at the entrance of the Persian (or Arabian) Gulf, through which a huge part of the world’s oil flows, would be sealed at once. The results would shake the international economy, from the US and Europe to China and Japan. Prices would soar to the skies. The countries that had just begun to recover from the world economic crisis would sink to the depths of misery and unemployment, riots and bankruptcies. The Strait could be opened only by a military operation on the ground. The US simply has no troops to spare for this – even if the American public were ready for another war, one much more difficult than even those of Iraq and Afghanistan. It is even doubtful whether the US could help Israel to defend itself against the inevitable counter-stroke by Iranian missiles. T**he Israeli attack on a central Islamic country would unite the entire Islamic world**, including the entire Arab world. The US, which has spent the last few years laboring mightily to form a coalition of “moderate” Arab states (meaning: countries governed by dictators kept by the US) against the “radical” states. This pack would immediately become unstuck. No Arab leader would be able to stand aside while the masses of his people were gathering in tumultuous demonstrations in the squares. All this is clear to any knowledgeable person, and even more so to the American military and civilian leaders. Secretaries, generals and admirals have been sent to Israel to make this clear to our leaders in a language that even kindergarten kids can understand: No! Lo! La! Nyet!

## \*Nuclear Arsenal\*

### 1NC Nukes

**Obama win reduces the nuclear arsenal – solves prolif, nuclear terror, and the economy**

**Korb & Rothman, 2-15**

[Lawrence J. Korb: Senior Fellow @ American Progress; senior advisor, Center for Defense Information, Georgetown University Prof. Alex Rothman: Special Assistant w/ National Security & International Policy team, American Progress. http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/02/15/426332/obama-plan-to-reduce-nukes-is-good-for-budget-boosts-moral-authority-on-global-nonproliferation/?mobile=nc]

The Obama administration is [reportedly](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jLpTYbb95M3laDHbWsTgvkNs7e3g?docId=dc96c170fe2c4d5986ac70ee6d9e1c16) considering major reductions in the size the U.S. nuclear arsenal. The administration has reportedly asked the Pentagon to evaluate three options for further cuts: to approximately 1100, 800, or 400 weapons. Any of these scenarios would take the United States well below the ceiling imposed by the New START treaty, which requires the United States and Russia to reduce their nuclear arsenals to no more than 1,550 deployed weapons. In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that the strategic value of the U.S. nuclear stockpile has declined significantly in the 21st century. Nuclear weapons have been useless in all of the U.S.’s recent military campaigns — Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. And they offer no protection against terrorist groups and subnational actors, two of the most significant threats facing the United States today. In fact, the Pentagon’s own strategic thinkers have noted that the strategic landscape has changed and that the U.S.’s Cold War-sized arsenal may exceed the country’s current needs. The Defense Department’s [strategic guidance document](http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/02/15/426332/obama-plan-to-reduce-nukes-is-good-for-budget-boosts-moral-authority-on-global-nonproliferation/The%20Pentagon%E2%80%99s%20strategic%20guidance%20document%2C%20released%20in%20early%20January%2C%20states%20), released in early January, states that “it is possible that our deterrence goals can be achieved with a smaller nuclear force, which would reduce the number of nuclear weapons in our inventory as well as their role in U.S. national security strategy.” Moreover, according to [strategists](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/24/opinion/24schaub.html) at the Air War College and the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, the U.S. could draw down its arsenal to 311 survivable reliable weapons and still maintain a credible deterrent. For two reasons, President Obama is wise to reevaluate the size of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. First, our massive nuclear arsenal is tremendously expensive and diverts funds away from programs designed to bolster the U.S.’s long-term health of the U.S. economy and military. The budget for “nuclear weapons activities” is projected to grow by 6 percent to $18 billion next year in FY 2013. It will be 20 percent higher in real terms than President Reagan’s largest nuclear weapons budget. Further, unless the Pentagon reduces the number of deployed nuclear weapons significantly, it will have to modernize all three legs of the triad at a cost of over $100 billion. Protecting and modernizing our exponentially larger nuclear stockpile adds to the national debt and sucks up taxpayer dollars that could be used to bolster our economy, put people back to work, or invest in technologies that support our men and women serving around the globe. Adopting the Air War College recommendation would save the Pentagon at least $11 billion per year. Second, significant reductions in the U.S. nuclear arsenal would give the Obama administration the moral authority to push for stronger international commitments control the spread weapons-usable nuclear technology and material. President Obama has called nuclear terrorism the “single biggest [threat](http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2010/04/obama-kicks-off-nuclear-summit-with-five-leader-meetings/1) to U.S. security, both short-term, medium-term and long-term.” Demonstrating that the United States is serious about controlling the size of its own nuclear stockpile would breathe life into the global nonproliferation regime, thereby decrease the chances of a terrorist group acquiring a nuclear warhead without undermining U.S. security. Given the fiscal problems facing our nation and historic highs in defense spending, the Obama administration has been right to downsize or eliminate out-dated weapons systems that do little to further American security, like the F-22 and [EFV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expeditionary_Fighting_Vehicle). Surplus nuclear weapons, which are expensive to maintain and protect, should be no exception. Last week, State department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland [criticized](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2012/02/183639.htm) the Iranian government, stating it “would rather spend money on a nuclear weapons program than on the welfare of its people.” Reducing the size of the U.S. nuclear arsenal to more strategically reasonable levels will allow the Obama administration to practice what it preaches.

### Obama Solves Nukes 2NC

**Obama can reduce nukes- re-election is key**

**Traub, 2-17-12,** Jams, fellow of the Center on International Cooperation. "Terms of Engagement," his column for Foreign Policy, runs weekly. “Fumbling the Nuclear Football,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/17/fumbling_the_nuclear_football?page=full>, KHaze

Now, however, the market may have shifted in Obama's favor. Thanks chiefly to the killing of Osama bin Laden, Obama is no longer under the onus of proving his toughness on national security issues. Voters preoccupied with the economy don't care that much about foreign threats. And with half a trillion dollars in Pentagon budget cuts scheduled for the next decade, senior military officials are engaged in triage, and they will be prepared to get rid of weapons they never expect to use in order to preserve ones, like aircraft carriers and new-generation fighters, they believe they need. It is possible, in short, that the very economic crisis that has bedeviled Obama's entire presidency will afford him the opportunity to achieve the historic change he has sought. Obama has asked the Pentagon to provide him with options for reducing the number of warheads below the 1,550 stipulated in the New START agreement. Administration officials won't talk about the highly secret document now apparently moving through the interagency process; none of the congressional staffers or arms control experts I talked to had seen it or heard a reliable account of its contents. A Feb. 14 Associated Press article made the startling claim that the administration was considering options ranging from a low of 300 weapons to a high of 1,100. This is almost certainly wrong, or misleading. One expert I spoke to said that he would be "staggered beyond belief if the president were seriously considering going to 300" -- a figure that would put U.S. forces at about the level of France. And Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, pointedly told a House committee that "the status quo" -- 1,550 -- "is always an option and one that is in play." (The view inside the arms control world is that a Republican staffer leaked the story in order to give conservatives a target to attack.) What is the "right" number of warheads? (See today's article by Joseph Cirincione.) Of course, the "right" number depends on the threats that can be deterred only by the reciprocal threat of a nuclear attack. At a recent panel discussion, Morton Halperin of the Open Society Foundations sarcastically asked whether we believe the Russians will wake up and say, "Oh, it's Easter Sunday; the Americans are at rest. We can launch a surprise attack, and it will be successful." The answer, save perhaps to some Republican members of Congress who haven't yet acknowledged the end of the Soviet Union, is obvious. The country's targeting strategy, which foresees the simultaneous obliteration of 250 industrial centers across Russia and China, is a grotesque relic of the Cold War. Obama has the chance to finally put it to rest. The numbers matter, but the underlying doctrine matters just as much. In a recent article, arms control expert Hans Kristensen listed the policy choices Obama could make to justify a smaller nuclear force: He could, among other things, reduce the category of targets or "the number and diversity of strike options," change the declared mission to one of responding only to nuclear threats, take warheads off high-alert status, eliminate one leg of the triad -- or do all of the above. In short, Obama now has the opportunity to review the decisions he made in the Nuclear Posture Review and thus make the sharp break with the Cold War that he vowed to do in Prague. He has, in short, a second chance. Will he take it? Republican hawks have already begun to warn of the "reckless lunacy" of deep cuts. Obama could take any number of exit ramps from the transformational highway, for example by insisting that any additional cuts be negotiated with the Russians in a new treaty -- which the Senate would almost certainly reject. He might postpone the decision until after the election -- which would be fine, so long as he wins. But he must choose between making perfectly reasonable excuses for the half-measures he adopts and taking the risks that come with historic change.

### Terrorism Impact 1NC

**Nuclear terror causes extinction.**

**Sid-Ahmed ‘4** [Mohammed, Political analyst for Al-Ahram Newspaper for more than 20 years and author of several books on Middle East issues, 8/1, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/705/op5.htm]

A nuclear attack by terrorists will be much more critical than Hiroshima and Nagazaki, even if -- and this is far from certain -- the weapons used are less harmful than those used then, Japan, at the time, with no knowledge of nuclear technology, had no choice but to capitulate. Today, the technology is a secret for nobody. So far, except for the two bombs dropped on Japan, nuclear weapons have been used only to threaten. Now we are at a stage where they can be detonated. This completely changes the rules of the game. We have reached a point where anticipatory measures can determine the course of events. Allegations of a terrorist connection can be used to justify anticipatory measures, including the invasion of a sovereign state like Iraq. As it turned out, these allegations, as well as the allegation that Saddam was harbouring WMD, proved to be unfounded. What would be the consequences of a nuclear attack by terrorists? Even if it fails, it would further exacerbate the negative features of the new and frightening world in which we are now living. Societies would close in on themselves, police measures would be stepped up at the expense of human rights, tensions between civilisations and religions would rise and ethnic conflicts would proliferate. It would also speed up the arms race and develop the awareness that a different type of world order is imperative if humankind is to survive. But the still more critical scenario is if the attack succeeds. This could lead to a third world war, from which no one will emerge victorious. Unlike a conventional war which ends when one side triumphs over another, this war will be without winners and losers. When nuclear pollution infects the whole planet, we will all be losers.

### Terrorism Risk High

**Risk of terrorism is higher than ever**

**Berger, 2-14-12,** J.M., author of Jihad Joe: Americans Who Go to War in the Name of Islam and editor of Intelwire.com. “Al Qaeda's Merger,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/14/al_qaedas_merger?page=full>, KHaze

The disturbing truth is that al-Shabab has had more success recruiting Americans than any of al Qaeda's other franchises. The newest official addition to the terrorist network's family includes around 40 Americans, in addition to dozens more involved in support activities on U.S. soil, as well as those with more casual connections to the United States. That support network dwarfs the American presence in "al Qaeda Central," which was largely terminated after the 9/11 attacks. Al-Shabab's numbers and its extensive support network mean al Qaeda is now better positioned to carry out strikes on the U.S. homeland than at **any point in the last 10 years**. The majority of al-Shabab's American recruits are ethnic Somalis -- first- and second-generation immigrants with still-fresh ties to their ancestral home -- but the group also enjoys significant support from radicalized Muslim converts from diverse backgrounds, who are attracted by its efforts to carve out a domain ruled by a harsh interpretation of Islamic law. The media's confusion about al-Shabab's relationship with al Qaeda is not surprising. The murkiness surrounding definitions of al Qaeda and its franchises can make it difficult, even for experts, to sort out what it means to be a member of the group, how they should be distinguished from a mere ally, and how much weight these different incarnations should carry. Once the definitions are resolved, you then run smack into the data problem. Estimates of the size and composition of jihadi groups abound, usually sourced to anonymous officials of various governments, but hard numbers are fleeting. But incomplete data is better than no data, and what we do know suggests that al-Shabab's merger with the most infamous terrorist organization in history should be a source of concern. According to our best estimates, as of today there are now more Americans who consider themselves part of al Qaeda than ever before.

### Prolif Impact 1NC

**Proliferation ensures extinction**

**Utgoff, 2002** (Victor, Deputy Director of the Strategy, Forces, and Resources Division of the

Institute for Defense Analyses, Survival, v44, n2)

Thus, both history and human nature suggest that nuclear deterrence can be expected to fail from time to time, and we are fortunate it has not happened yet. But the threat of nuclear war is not just a matter of a few weapons being used. It could get much worse. Once a conflict reaches the point where nuclear weapons are employed, the stresses felt by the leaderships would rise enormously. These stresses can be expected to further degrade their decision-making. The pressures to force the enemy to stop fighting or to surrender could argue for more forceful and decisive military action, which might be the right thing to do in the circumstances, but maybe not. And the horrors of the carnage already suffered may be seen as justification for visiting the most devastating punishment possible on the enemy.7 Again, history demonstrates how intense conflict can lead the combatants to escalate violence to the maximum possible levels. In the Second World War, early promises not to bomb cities soon gave way to essentially indiscriminate bombing of civilians. The war between Iran and Iraq during the 1980s led to the use of chemical weapons on both sides and exchanges of missiles against each other’s cities. And more recently, violence in the Middle East escalated in a few months from rocks and small arms to heavy weapons on one side, and from police actions to air strikes and armoured attacks on the other. Escalation of violence is also basic human nature. Once the violence starts, retaliatory exchanges of violent acts can escalate to levels unimagined by the participants beforehand.8 Intense and blinding anger is a common response to fear or humiliation or abuse. And such anger can lead us to impose on our opponents whatever levels of violence are readily accessible.In sum, widespread proliferation is likely to lead to an occasional shoot-out with nuclear weapons, and that such shoot-outs will have a substantial probability of escalating to the maximum destruction possible with the weapons at hand. Unless nuclear proliferation is stopped, we are headed toward a world that will mirror the American Wild West of the late 1800s. With most, if not all, nations wearing nuclear ‘six-shooters’ on their hips, the world may even be a more polite place than it is today, but every once in a while we will all gather on a hill to bury the bodies of dead cities or even whole nations.

### Prolif Impacts 2NC

**Speed difference between proliferating states ensures miscalc, causes war before and after nukes are ready, and leads to bio-weapons**

**Utgoff, 2002** (Victor, Deputy Director of the Strategy, Forces, and Resources Division of the

Institute for Defense Analyses, Survival, v44, n2)

Many readers are probably willing to accept that nuclear proliferation is such a grave threat to world peace that every effort should be made to avoid it. However, every effort has not been made in the past, and we are talking about much more substantial efforts now. For new and substantially more burdensome efforts to be made to slow or stop nuclear proliferation, it needs to be established that the highly proliferated nuclear world that would sooner or later evolve without such efforts is not going to be acceptable. And, for many reasons, it is not. First, the dynamics of getting to a highly proliferated world could be very dangerous. Proliferating states will feel great pressures to obtain nuclear weapons and delivery systems before any potential opponent does. Those who succeed in outracing an opponent may consider preemptive nuclear war before the opponent becomes capable of nuclear retaliation. Those who lag behind might try to preempt their opponent’s nuclear programme or defeat the opponent using conventional forces. And those who feel threatened but are incapable of building nuclear weapons may still be able to join in this arms race by building other types of weapons of mass destruction, such as biological weapons. Second, as the world approaches complete proliferation, the hazards posed by nuclear weapons today will be magnified many times over. Fifty or more nations capable of launching nuclear weapons means that the risk of nuclear accidents that could cause serious damage not only to their own populations and environments, but those of others, is hugely increased. The chances of such weapons falling into the hands of renegade military units or terrorists is far greater, as is the number of nations carrying out hazardous manufacturing and storage activities. Increased prospects for the occasional nuclear shootout Worse still, in a highly proliferated world there would be more frequent opportunities for the use of nuclear weapons. And more frequent opportunities means shorter expected times between conflicts in which nuclear weapons get used, unless the probability of use at any opportunity is actually zero.

**Bioweapons cause extinction**

**Ochs 02** [Former president of the Aberdeen Proving Ground Superfund Citizens Coalition, member of the Depleted Uranium Task force of the Military Toxics Project, member of the Chemical Weapons Working Group

“Biological Weapons Must Be Abolished Immediately,” <http://www.freefromterror.net/other_articles/abolish.html>]

Of all the weapons of mass destruction, the genetically engineered biological weapons, many without a known cure or vaccine, are an extreme danger to the continued survival of life on earth. Any perceived military value or deterrence pales in comparison to the great risk these weapons pose just sitting in vials in laboratories. While a "nuclear winter," resulting from a massive exchange of nuclear weapons, **could** also kill off most of life on earth and severely compromise the health of future generations, they are easier to control. Biological weapons, on the other hand, can get out of control very easily, as the recent anthrax attacks has demonstrated. There is no way to guarantee the security of these doomsday weapons because very tiny amounts can be stolen or accidentally released and then grow or be grown to horrendous proportions. The Black Death of the Middle Ages would be small in comparison to the potential damage bioweapons could cause. Abolition of chemical weapons is less of a priority because, while they can also kill millions of people outright, their persistence in the environment would be less than nuclear or biological agents or more localized. Hence, chemical weapons would have a lesser effect on future generations of innocent people and the natural environment. Like the Holocaust, once a localized chemical extermination is over, it is over. With nuclear and biological weapons, the killing will probably never end. Radioactive elements last tens of thousands of years and will keep causing cancers virtually forever. Potentially worse than that, bio-engineered agents by the hundreds with no known cure could wreck even greater calamity on the human race than could persistent radiation. AIDS and ebola viruses are just a small example of recently emerging plagues with no known cure or vaccine. Can we imagine hundreds of such plagues? HUMAN EXTINCTION IS NOW POSSIBLE. Ironically, the Bush administration has just changed the U.S. nuclear doctrine to allow nuclear retaliation against threats upon allies by conventional weapons. The past doctrine allowed such use only as a last resort when our nation’s survival was at stake. Will the new policy also allow easier use of US bioweapons? How slippery is this slope?

**Frequency of wars involving nuclear powers proves it’s most probable**

**Utgoff, 2002** (Victor, Deputy Director of the Strategy, Forces, and Resources Division of the

Institute for Defense Analyses, Survival, v44, n2)

To be sure, some theorists on nuclear deterrence appear to think that in any confrontation between two states known to have reliable nuclear capabilities, the probability of nuclear weapons being used is zero.3 These theorists think that such states will be so fearful of escalation to nuclear war that they would always avoid or terminate confrontations between them, short of even conventional war. They believe this to be true even if the two states have different cultures or leaders with very eccentric personalities. History and human nature, however, suggest that they are almost surely wrong. History includes instances in which states known to possess nuclear weapons did engage in direct conventional conflict. China and Russia fought battles along their common border even after both had nuclear weapons. Moreover, logic suggests that if states with nuclear weapons always avoided conflict with one another, surely states without nuclear weapons would avoid conflict with states that had them. Again, history provides counter-examples. Egypt attacked Israel in 1973 even though it saw Israel as a nuclear power at the time. Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands and fought Britain’s efforts to take them back, even though Britain had nuclear weapons. Those who claim that two states with reliable nuclear capabilities to devastate each other will not engage in conventional conflict risking nuclear war also assume that any leader from any culture would not choose suicide for his nation. But history provides unhappy examples of states whose leaders were ready to choose suicide for themselves and their fellow citizens. Hitler tried to impose a ‘victory or destruction’ policy on his people as Nazi Germany was going down to defeat.4 And Japan’s war minister, during debates on how to respond to the American atomic bombing, suggested ‘Would it not be wondrous for the whole nation to be destroyed like a beautiful flower?’5

**Prolif-filled world leads to adventurism, miscalculation from fear, and is the only impact that bypasses all checks on war**

**Utgoff, 2002** (Victor, Deputy Director of the Strategy, Forces, and Resources Division of the

Institute for Defense Analyses, Survival, v44, n2)

If leaders are willing to engage in conflict with nuclear-armed nations, use of nuclear weapons in any particular instance may not be likely, but its probability would still be dangerously significant. In particular, human nature suggests that the threat of retaliation with nuclear weapons is not a reliable guarantee against a disastrous first use of these weapons. While national leaders and their advisors everywhere are usually talented and experienced people, even their most important decisions cannot be counted on to be the product of well-informed and thorough assessments of all options from all relevant points of view. This is especially so when the stakes are so large as to defy assessment and there are substantial pressures to act quickly, as could be expected in intense and fast-moving crises between nuclear-armed states.6 Instead, like other human beings, national leaders can be seduced by wishful thinking. They can misinterpret the words or actions of opposing leaders. Their advisors may produce answers that they think the leader wants to hear, or coalesce around what they know is an inferior decision because the group urgently needs the confidence or the sharing of responsibility that results from settling on something. Moreover, leaders may not recognise clearly where their personal or party interests diverge from those of their citizens. Under great stress, human beings can lose their ability to think carefully. They can refuse to believe that the worst could really happen, oversimplify the problem at hand, think in terms of simplistic analogies and play hunches. The intuitive rules for how individuals should respond to insults or signs of weakness in an opponent may too readily suggest a rash course of action. Anger, fear, greed, ambition and pride can all lead to bad decisions. The desire for a decisive solution to the problem at hand may lead to an unnecessarily extreme course of action. We can almost hear the kinds of words that could flow from discussions in nuclear crises or war. ‘These people are not willing to die for this interest’. ‘No sane person would actually use such weapons’. ‘Perhaps the opponent will back down if we show him we mean business by demonstrating a willingness to use nuclear weapons’. ‘If I don’t hit them back really hard, I am going to be driven from office, if not killed’. Whether right or wrong, in the stressful atmosphere of a nuclear crisis or war, such words from others, or silently from within, might resonate too readily with a harried leader.

**Prolif causes nuclear terror- it’s possible and they’ll do it**

**Pallathra, 2007**, Ryan Andrew, junior at Tufts University major in International Relations, “Nuclear Weapons: A Source of Peace in World Politics or an Unjustified Risk to International Security?” <http://www.polisci.ufl.edu/UF_Review/documents/Pallathra-%20Nuclear%20Weapons.doc>, KHaze

In the last few decades, we have seen a spike in terrorist activities unlike ever before. With the growing strength of religious fundamentalist movements and the upswing in attacks by organizations like Al-Qaeda, one of the biggest fears of the global community is that terrorist organizations might get their hands on nuclear weapons. Waltz and the optimists try to quash this serious concern by claiming that terrorists would be, for the most part, unwilling to enter into a business so vast. The optimists argue that doing so would require loosening their veil of secrecy. In addition, Waltz suggests that is it wrong to assume that just because it is possible, it must be destined to occur. He furthermore contends that terrorists are committed and patient in their efforts of working towards their political goals, and thus would not be willing raise such threats nor desire to implement them . All in all, these arguments are too idealistic and narrow-minded. Terrorists are known for their dedication and their willingness to outdo one another in hopes of creating higher and higher levels of destruction on their intended targets. The key for terrorists is to create the greatest “shock-value” possible. It is naïve to believe and hope that terrorists would unwilling to go the extra distance and make the most devastating impact possible. History can show us that this has already happened. The famous A.Q. Khan network of nuclear weapons and technology spread around the world to more than 18 countries and some believe Khan may have even offered his assistance to Al-Qaeda when they were based in Afghanistan. This is proof that terrorists who are willing can easily and potentially acquire significant levels of arms . If gradually rogue and clandestine terrorist got their hands on these weapons, there would be little reason to believe that they would not jump on the opportunity to use them in order to make a bigger political statement. They do not need to protect any sovereign land, and therefore they do not have the same responsibilities or concerns as nation-states. Also, as more states acquire weapons, it will become increasingly difficult to identify the terrorists responsible for an attack (if one were to occur). This is not completely inconceivable or impossible, as it has been publicly made known that stockpiles in places like Russia and Pakistan are not properly secured. Finally, it is important to emphasize again that terrorist and religious fundamentalists do not operate using the same concept of “rationality” and the set of norms that the secular world is used to. While it may appear that the non-use of weapons so far can be attributed to taboos and norms, irrational leaders who seek out the use of terror are not bounded by those same constraints in moral judgment.

**Global nuclear war**

Mohammed **Sid-Ahmed**, Political analyst for Al-Ahram Newspaper for more than 20 years and author of several books on Middle East issues, 8-1-**04** [http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/705/op5.htm]

A nuclear attack by terrorists will be much more critical than Hiroshima and Nagazaki, even if -- and this is far from certain -- the weapons used are less harmful than those used then, Japan, at the time, with no knowledge of nuclear technology, had no choice but to capitulate. Today, the technology is a secret for nobody. So far, except for the two bombs dropped on Japan, nuclear weapons have been used only to threaten. Now we are at a stage where they can be detonated. This completely changes the rules of the game. We have reached a point where anticipatory measures can determine the course of events. Allegations of a terrorist connection can be used to justify anticipatory measures, including the invasion of a sovereign state like Iraq. As it turned out, these allegations, as well as the allegation that Saddam was harbouring WMD, proved to be unfounded. What would be the consequences of a nuclear attack by terrorists? Even if it fails, it would further exacerbate the negative features of the new and frightening world in which we are now living. Societies would close in on themselves, police measures would be stepped up at the expense of human rights, tensions between civilisations and religions would rise and ethnic conflicts would proliferate. It would also speed up the arms race and develop the awareness that a different type of world order is imperative if humankind is to survive. But the still more critical scenario is if the attack succeeds. This could lead to a third world war, from which no one will emerge victorious. Unlike a conventional war which ends when one side triumphs over another, this war will be without winners and losers. When nuclear pollution infects the whole planet, we will all be losers.

### AT: Prolif defense/prolif Good

**Lesser nuclear states undermine nuclear deterrence**

**Blackwell, 2011,** Summer, James; Dr. James Blackwell is special advisor to the assistant chief of staff, strategic deterrence and nuclear integration, Headquarters, US Air Force. He received his PhD and MALD from the Fletcher School of International Law and Diplomacy and BS from the US Military Academy. He previously served as executive director of the Secretary of Defense Task Force on DoD Nuclear Weapons Management. He co-edited, with Barry Blechman, Making Defense Reform Work (Brassey’s, 1990) and has also authored numerous books and articles.

**“**Deterrence at the Operational Level of War,” <http://www.au.af.mil/au/ssq/2011/summer/blackwell.pdf>, KHaze

This means that lesser nuclear states and nonstates add increased risk of **catalytic effects**. Gone are the days when proliferation could be considered a good thing. The historic reasoning was if two countries were mutually deterred from going to war with each other by possession of nuclear weapons, then stability would increase as more countries acquired them. There would be fewer wars, and more countries would likewise be deterred. In reality, today’s proliferated world is the opposite case, with the most immediate and extreme dangers being nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. Defiant proliferators seek nuclear weapons not to deter but to employ. At the same time, lesser nuclear states are much more likely to use the few nuclear weapons they possess. In a conflict situation, once deterrence has failed, lesser nuclear states’ incentives are to use nuclear weapons first, before greater and medium powers remove them by other means. Once such an adversary initiates use of nuclear weapons, it is not likely to be restrained from further use of a limited arsenal, since there will be enormous pressure to use them or lose them. Nuclear proliferators are also more risk-acceptant than responsible nucleararmed states. They are more likely to adopt a first-use policy, to use all they have, and to provoke their use by others. Another complicating factor is coalitions of nuclear states. Coalitions of lesser nuclear states can disperse the effects of a response from a larger opponent and thus absorb more destruction and suffer more punishment than could a single larger nuclear state. Responsible nuclear powers must develop concepts of deterrence operations that will prevent such opponents from taking those risks by deterring the smaller power’s use of nuclear weapons. US joint forces will therefore need new operational concepts for military capabilities to prevent such conflict and for operating on battlefields characterized by limited use of nuclear weapons.

**Poor transparency, defense, and protection creates lopsided nuclear rivalries- triggers war**

**Pallathra, 2007**, Ryan Andrew, junior at Tufts University major in International Relations, “Nuclear Weapons: A Source of Peace in World Politics or an Unjustified Risk to International Security?” <http://www.polisci.ufl.edu/UF_Review/documents/Pallathra-%20Nuclear%20Weapons.doc>, KHaze

Regional Hostilities and Instabilities & Rogue Regimes Throughout the world, there are major regions that have long and deeply heated histories of internal strife, rivalries, hostilities and violence. Some of those include the Indian-Pakistani relationship, North and South Korea, Arab-Israeli hostilities and most currently the worries over Iran’s hostile rise in the Middle East. In light of the constraints of this paper, it will be helpful to just look at a couple of them, even though all of them provide justifiable concerns that hostilities will continue. In regards to the Indian-Pakistani feud, there are still reasons to be apprehensive about not only their willingness to out-compete the other but also because their nuclear forces are not adequately secured and could be accessible to outside parties. With the tension over the Kashmir region, one that is of the utmost importance to both countries, there is little reason to believe that either country will eventually back down. Additionally, due to the fact that neither has the most sophisticated of arsenals, they are both susceptible to strong retaliatory attacks and risk of **improper use.** For Pakistan, there are two major issues that are of great worry. For many years now the country has lacked decent levels of civil and bureaucratic transparency and has failed to arduously pursue internal terrorists. Secondly, Pakistani officials have admitted that the state lacks sophisticated systems of safeguarding of weapons and the skills needed to seize back weapons if they were stolen.

**Their defense doesn’t assume terrorism, suicide, and irrationality**

**Pallathra, 2007**, Ryan Andrew, junior at Tufts University major in International Relations, “Nuclear Weapons: A Source of Peace in World Politics or an Unjustified Risk to International Security?” <http://www.polisci.ufl.edu/UF_Review/documents/Pallathra-%20Nuclear%20Weapons.doc>, KHaze

There are many flaws in these arguments. While there is no denying the point that nuclear weapons increases a state’s sense of security, Waltz does not provide concrete reasons justifying why our society should allow for the continued use and production of weapons that could cause world-wide devastation. The nuclear optimists rely heavily on the rationality of leadership and the strict calculations of cost-benefit rations. This, again, is naïve because in the 21st century we are surrounded by irrational leaders and terrorist organizations that do not operate under the same sets of norms and values. Religious fundamentalist terrorists, suicide bombers and hostile rogue states like Iran and North Korea are willing to go the extra distance to cause maximum harm. Some optimists might argue that because deterrence worked between two giant nuclear states during the Cold War, it can continue to operate and provide peace. While this may seem easy to believe at first, it does not take into proper consideration that our society today is quite different. Although the nuclear optimists have some validity in their points, and although it may appear that we are currently living in peace, they do not properly account for the overwhelming and real chances of the theft of loose and unsecured nuclear weapons, the spreading of knowledge and technology and the willingness of some to initiate catastrophic damage, even at the expense of risking their own existence. Ultimately, there exist far too many reasons to believe that nuclear weapons pose significant and dangerous threats for international security. In the following section, I will explain why they deserve to be acknowledged and properly dealt with.

## \*Warming\*

### Warming 1NC

**Obama solves warming – GOP destroys environment.**

**Sustainable Business News, 2011**

**[**2-11, <http://www.sustainablebusiness.com/index.cfm/go/news.display/id/21871>]

Congressional Republicans on Wednesday released a budget plan that would impose deep cuts on energy efficiency and renewable energy, scientific research and environmental protection. Energy efficiency and renewable energy programs would lose $899 million. In addition, Republicans want to cut $1.4 billion from a program that guarantees construction loans for new energy projects, such as nuclear reactors, electric transmission lines and solar arrays. Also on the list of proposed energy cuts are $1.1 billion in the Office of Science, which funds advanced clean energy research; and $186 million for the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which is leading development of technical standards for smart grid installations and cyber protection, and $169 million for nuclear energy. They want to cut Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds to the tune of $1.6 billion (32%) - the largest cut in their budget - to impede its ability to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.  EPA chief Lisa Jackson notes that about half of the EPA's budget is used to enforce our nation's environmental laws. In total, Republicans want to eliminate over 60 programs for the environment, energy, health care and law enforcement. The Obama administration's [proposal for a high-speed rail development](http://www.sustainablebusiness.com/index.cfm/go/news.display/id/21861) is among those on the chopping block. They want a 20% funding reduction for the Department of Energy Office of Science, which funds basic research. This at a time when President Obama has called for a renewed push in science and clean energy technology to keep the country competitive globally.

**Warming magnifies every impact and causes extinction**

**Burke '8** (Sharon, sr fellow and dir of the energy security project at the Center for a New American Security, Chapter 6 of Climatic Cataclysm: The Foreign Policy and National Security Implications of Climate Change, edited by Kurt Campbell, p 157-165)

At the same time, however, the implications of both trends for human society and survival raise the stakes; it is crucial to try to understand what the future might look like in one hundred years in order to act accordingly today. This scenario, therefore, builds a picture of the plausible effects of catastrophic climate change, and the implications for national security, on the basis of what we know about the past and the present. The purpose is not to "one up" the previous scenarios in awfulness, but rather to attempt to imagine the unimaginable future that is, after all, entirely plausible. Assumed Climate Effects of the Catastrophic Scenario. In the catastrophic scenario, the year 2040 marks an important tipping point. Large-scale, singular events of abrupt climate change will start occurring, greatly exacerbated by the collapse of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (MOC), which is believed to play and important role in regulating global climate, particularly in Europe.8 There will be a rapid loss of polar ice, a sudden rise in sea levels, totaling 2 meters (6.6 feet), and a temperature increase of almost 5.6°C (10.1°F) by 2095. Developing countries, particularly those at low latitudes and those reliant on subsistence, rain-fed farming, will be hardest and earliest hit. All nations, however, will find it difficult to deal with the unpredictable, abrupt, and severe nature of climate change after 2040. These changes will be difficult to anticipate, and equally difficult to mitigate or recover from, particularly as they will recur, possibly on a frequent basis. First, the rise in temperatures alone will present a fundamental challenge for human health. Indeed, even now, about 250 people die of heatstroke every year in the United States. In a prolonged heat wave in 1980, more than 10,000 people died of heat-related illnesses, and between 5,000 and 10,00 in 1988.9 In 2003, record heat waves in Europe, with temperatures in Paris hitting 40.4°C (104.7°F) and 47.3°C (116.3°F) in parts of Portugal, are estimated to have cost more than 37,000 lives; in the same summer there were at least 2,000 heat-related deaths in India. Average temperatures will increase in most regions, and the western United States, southern Europe, and southern Australia will be particularly vulnerable to prolonged heat spells. The rise in temperatures will complicated daily life around the world. In Washington, D.C., the average summer temperature is in the low 30s C (high 80s F), getting as high as 40°C (104°F). With a 5.6°C (10.1°F) increase, that could mean temperatures as high as 45.6°C (114.5°F). In New Delhi, summer temperatures can reach 45°C (113°F) already, opening the possibility of new highs approaching sO.sOC (123°F). In general, the level of safe exposure is considered to be about 38°C (lOO°F); at hotter temperatures, activity has to be limited and the very old and the very young are especially vulnerable to heat-related ill­ness and mortality. Sudden shifts in temperature, which are expected in this scenario, are particularly lethal. As a result of higher temperatures and lower, unpredictable precipitation, severe and persistent wildfires will become more common, freshwater will be more scarce, and agricultural productivity will fall, particularly in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean, and the western United States. The World Health Organization estimates that water scarcity already affects two- fifths of the world population-s-some 2.6 billion people. In this scenario, half the world population will experience persistent water scarcity. Regions that depend on annual snowfall and glaciers for water lose their supply; hardest hit will be Central Asia, the Andes, Europe, and western North America. Some regions may become uninhabitable due to lack of water: the Mediter­ranean, much of Central Asia, northern Mexico, and South America. The southwestern United States will lose its current sources of fresh water, but that may be mitigated by an increase in precipitation due to the MOC col­lapse, though precipitation patterns may be irregular. Regional water scarcity will also be mitigated by increases in precipitation in East Africa and East and Southeast Asia, though the risk of floods will increase. The lack of rainfall will also threaten tropical forests and their dependent species with extinction. Declining agricultural productivity will be an acute challenge. The heat, together with shifting and unpredictable precipitation patterns and melting glaciers, will dry out many areas, including today's grain-exporting regions. The largest decreases in precipitation will be in North Africa, the Middle East, Cen tral America, the Caribbean, and northeastern South America, including Amazonia. The World Food Program estimates that nearly 1 billion people suffer from chronic hunger today, almost 15 million of them refugees from conflict and natural disasters. According to the World Food Program, "More than nine out of ten of those who die I of chronic hunger] are simply trapped by poverty in remote rural areas or urban slums. They do not make the news. They just die." Mortality rates from hunger and lack of water will skyrocket over the next century, and given all that wiII be happening, that will probably not make the news, either--people will just die. Over the next one hundred years, the "breadbasket" regions of the world will shift northward. Consequently, formerly subarctic regions will be able to support farming, but these regions' traditionally small human populations and lack of infrastructure, including roads and utilities, will make the dra­matic expansion of agriculture a challenge. Moreover, extreme year-to-year climate variability may make sustainable agriculture unlikely, at least on the scale needed. Northwestern Europe, too, will see shorter growing seasons and declining crop yields because it will actually experience colder winters, due to the collapse of the MOC. At the same time that the resource base to support humanity is shrinking, there will be less inhabitable land. Ten percent of the world population now lives in low-elevation coastal zones (all land contiguous with the coast that is 10 meters or less in elevation) that will experience sea level rises of 6.6 feet (2 meters) in this scenario and 9.8 feet (3 meters) in the North Atlantic, given the loss of the MOC. Most major cities at or near sea level have some kind of flood protection, so high tides alone will not lead to the inundation of these cities. Consider, however, that the combined effects of more frequent and severe weather events and higher sea levels could well lead to increased flood­ing from coastal storms and coastal erosion. In any case, there will be saltwa­ter intrusion into coastal water supplies, rising water tables, and the loss of coastal and upstream wetlands, with impacts on fisheries. The rise could well occur in several quick pulses, with relatively stable peri­ods in between, which will complicate planning and adaptation and make any kind of orderly or managed evacuation unlikely. Inundation plus the combined effects of higher sea levels and more frequent tropical storms may leave many large coastal cities uninhabitable, including the largest American cities, New York City and Los Angeles, focal points for the national economy with a combined total of almost 33 million people in their metropolitan areas today. Resettling coastal populations will be a crippling challenge, even for the United States. Sea level rises also will affect food security. Significant fertile deltas will become largely uncultivable because of inundation and more frequent and higher storm surges that reach farther inland. Fisheries and marine eco­systems, particularly in the North Atlantic, will collapse. Locally devastating weather events will be the new norm for coastal and mid-latitude locations-wind and flood damage will be much more intense. There will be frequent losses of life, property, and infrastructure-and this will happen *every year.* Although water scarcity and food security will dis­proportionately affect poor countries-they already do-extreme weather events will be more or less evenly distributed around the world. Regions affected by tropical storms, including typhoons and hurricanes, will include all three coasts of the United States; all of Mexico and Central America; the Caribbean islands; East, Southeast and South Asia; and many South Pacific and Indian Ocean islands. Recent isolated events when coastal storms made landfall in the South Atlantic, Europe, and the Arabian Sea in the last few years suggest that these regions will also experience a rise in the incidence of extreme storms. In these circumstances, there will be an across-the-board decline in human development indicators. Life spans will shorten, incomes will drop, health will deteriorate-including as a result of proliferating diseases-infant mortality will rise, and there will be a decline in personal freedoms as states fall to anocracy (a situation where central authority in a state is weak or non­existent and power has devolved to more regional or local actors, such as tribes) and autocracy. **The Age of Survival: Imagining the Unimaginable Future** If New Orleans is one harbinger of the future, Somalia is another. With a weak and barely functional central government that does not enjoy the trust and confidence of the public, the nation has descended into clan warfare. Mortality rates for combatants and noncombatants are high. Neighboring Ethiopia has intervened, with troops on the ground in Mogadishu and else­where, a small African Union peacekeeping force is present in the country, and the United States has conducted military missions in Somalia within the last year, including air strikes aimed at terrorist groups that the United States government has said are finding safe haven in the chaos." In a July 2007 report, the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia reported that the nation is "lit­erally awash in arms" and factional groups are targeting not only all combat­ants in the country but also noncombatants, including aid groups. Drought is a regular feature of life in Somalia that even in the best of times has been difficult to deal with. These are bad times, indeed, for Somalia, and the mutually reinforcing cycle of drought, famine, and conflict has left some 750,000 Somalis internally displaced and about 1.5 million people-17 per­cent of the population-in dire need of humanitarian relief. The relief is dif­ficult to provide, however, given the lawlessness and violence consuming the country. For example, nearly all food assistance to Somalia is shipped by sea, but with the rise of piracy, the number of vessels willing to carry food to the country fell by 50 percent in 2007.u Life expectancy is forty-eight years, infant mortality has skyrocketed, and annual per capita GDP is estimated to be about six hundred dollars. The conflict has also had a negative effect on the stability of surrounding nations. In the catastrophic climate change scenario, situations like that in Soma­lia will be commonplace: there will be a sharp rise in failing and failed states and therefore in intrastate war. According to International Alert, there are forty-six countries, home to 2,7 billion people, at a high risk of violent con­flict as a result of climate change. The group lists an additional fifty-six nations, accounting for another 1.2 billion people, that will have difficulty dealing with climate change, given other challenges. 12 Over the next hundred years, in a catastrophic future, that means there are likely to be at least 102 failing and failed states, consumed by internal conflict, spewing desperate refugees, and harboring and spawning violent extremist movements. More­over, nations all over the world will be destabilized as a result, either by the crisis on their borders or the significant numbers of refugees and in some cases armed or extremist groups migrating into their territories. Over the course of the century, this will mean a collapse of globalization and transnational institutions and an increase in all types of conflict-most dramatically, intrastate and asymmetric. The global nature of the conflicts and the abruptness of the climate effects will challenge the ability of govern­ments all over the world to respond to the disasters, mitigate the effects, or to contain the violence along their borders. There will be civil unrest in every nation as a result of popular anger toward governments, scapegoating of migrant and minority populations, and a rise in charismatic end-of-days cults, which will deepen a sense of hopelessness as these cults tend to see no end to misery other than extinction followed by divine salvation. Given that the failing nations account for half of the global population, this will also be a cataclysmic humanitarian disaster, with hundreds of mil­lions of people dying from climate effects and conflict, totally overwhelming the ability of international institutions and donor nations to respond. This failure of the international relief system will be total after 2040 as donor nations are forced to turn their resources inward. There will be a worldwide economic depression and a reverse in the gains in standards of living made in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. At the same time, the probability of conflict between nations will rise. Although global interstate resource wars are generally unlikely;" simmering conflicts between nations, such as that between India and Pakistan, are likely to boil over, particularly if both nations are failing. Both India and Pakistan, of course, have nuclear weapons, and a nuclear exchange is possible, perhaps likely, either by failing central governments or by extremist and ethnic groups that seize control of nuclear weapons. There will also be competition for the Arctic region, where natural resources, including oil and arable land, will be increasingly accessible and borders are ill defined. It is possible that agreements over Arctic territories will be worked out among Russia, Canada, Norway, the United States, Iceland, and Denmark in the next two decades, before the truly catastrophic climate effects manifest themselves in those nations. If not, there is a strong probability of conflict over the Arctic, pos­sibly even armed conflict. In general, though, nations will be preoccupied with maintaining internal stability and will have difficulty mustering the resources for war. Indeed, the greater danger is that states will fail to muster the resources for interstate cooperation. Finally, all nations are likely to experience violent conflict as a result of migration patterns. There will be increasingly few arable parts of the world, and few nations able to respond to climate change effects, and hundreds of millions of desperate people looking for a safe haven-a volatile mix. This will cause considerable unrest in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Russia, and will likely involve inhumane border control practices. Imagining what this will actually mean at a national level is disheartening. For the United States, coastal cities in hurricane alley along the Gulf Coast will have to be abandoned, possibly as soon as the first half of the century, certainly by the end of the century. New Orleans will obviously be first, but Pascagoula and Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, and Houston and Beaumont, Texas, and other cities will be close behind. After the first couple of episodes of flooding and destructive winds, starting with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, the cities will be partially rebuilt; the third major incident will make it clear that the risk of renewed destruction is too high to justify the cost of reconstruction. The abandonment of oil and natural gas production facilities in the Gulf region will push the United States into a severe recession or even depression, probably before the abrupt climate effects take hold in 2040. Mex­ico's economy will be devastated, which will increase illegal immigration into the United States. Other major U.S. cities are likely to become uninhabitable after 2040, including New York City and Los Angeles, with a combined metropolitan population of nearly 33 million people. Resettling these populations will be a massive challenge that will preoccupy the United States, cause tremen­dous popular strife, and absorb all monies, including private donations, which would have previously gone to foreign aid. The United States, Canada, China, Europe, and Japan will have little choice but to become aggressively isolationist, with militarized borders. Given how dependent all these nations are on global trade, this will provoke a deep, persistent eco­nomic crisis. Standards of living across the United States will fall dramatically, which will provoke civil unrest across the country. The imposition of martial law is a possibility. Though the poor and middle class will be hit the hardest, no one will be immune. The fact that wealthier Americans will be able to manage the effects better, however, will certainly provoke resent­ment and probably violence and higher crime rates. Gated communities are likely to be commonplace. Finally, the level of popular anger toward the United States, as the leading historical contributor to climate change, will be astronomical. There will be an increase in asymmetric attacks on the American homeland. India will cease to function as a nation, but before this occurs, Pakistan and Bangladesh will implode and help spur India's demise. This implosion will start with prolonged regional heat waves, which will quietly kill hundreds of thousands of people. It will not immediately be apparent that these are cli­mate change casualties. Massive agricultural losses late in the first half of the century, along with the collapse of fisheries as a result of sea level rise, rising oceanic temperatures, and hypoxic conditions, will put the entire region into a food emergency. At first, the United States, Australia, China, New Zealand, and the Nordic nations will be able to coordinate emergency food aid and work with Indian scientists to introduce drought- and saltwater-resistant plant species. Millions of lives will be saved, and India will be stabilized for a time. But a succession of crippling droughts and heat waves in all of the donor nations and the inundation of several populous coastal cities will force these nations to concentrate on helping their own populations. The World Food Program and other international aid agencies will first have trouble operating in increasingly violent areas, and then, as donations dry up, will cease operations. Existing internal tensions in India will explode in the latter half of the century, as hundreds of millions of starving people begin to move, trying to find a way to survive. As noted above, a nuclear exchange between either the national governments or subnational groups in the region is possi­ble and perhaps even likely. By mid-century, communal genocide will rage unchecked in several African states, most notably Sudan and Senegal, where agriculture will com­pletely collapse and the populations will depend on food imports. Both nations will be covered with ghost towns, where entire populations have either perished or fled; this will increasingly be true across Africa, South Asia, Central Asia, Central America, the Caribbean, South America, and Southeast Asia. Europe will have the oddity of having to deal with far colder winters, given the collapse of the MOC, which will compromise agricultural productivity.

### Solves Warming

**GOP victory ends checks on runaway climate change**

**Becker, 11** Director of the Presidential Climate Action Project, 5/18(Bill, “In 2012, vote for climate courage”, 5/18/2011, accessed 6/24/2011 <http://thinkprogress.org/romm/2011/05/18/208113/2012-vote-climate-courage/> )

Almost every prominent Republican who has announced or is considering a run for the presidency has changed position on carbon cap and trade, even though it is a “market-based” approach once promoted by GOP leaders. Here’s how The Atlantic describes current climate politics: Supporting a cap-and-trade approach to greenhouse gas regulation is basically taboo in the GOP these days, but most of the top-tier Republican presidential contenders have backed it in the past”¦ Nowadays, you’d be hard pressed to find a Republican who supports the policy, after conservatives railed for two years against “cap-and-tax” as a job-killing government overreach… Republican candidates campaigned against cap-and-trade en masse in 2010, and it worked out in their favor. After all that, Republican White House hopefuls have revised their previously held energy stances. The flip-floppers include Tim Pawlenty, Mitt Romney, Sarah Palin and Newt Gingrich. The Atlantic notes that Palin was obligated to give climate change a cool embrace while she campaigned two years ago with John McCain. Now Palin can claim she did it for the ticket and her feet are planted firmly in denial again. McCain has no excuse. He was once one of the Republican Party’s most outspoken advocates of climate action. He cosponsored an early cap-and-trade bill with Joe Lieberman in 2003 and reintroduced the legislation in 2005 and 2007. He said then: I have proposed a bipartisan plan to address the problem of climate change and stimulate the development and use of advanced technologies. It is a market-based approach that would set reasonable caps on carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions, and provide industries with tradable credits…offering a powerful incentive to drive the deployment of new and better energy sources and technologies”¦ In April 2007, setting the stage for his presidential race, McCain gave an energy policy speech in which he described global warming and America’s dependence on foreign oil as national security issues. Two years later after losing the election, the maverick apparently had been beaten out of him. McCain joined other climate deserters in his Party and slammed President Obama’s approach to cap and trade. By November 2009, he was criticizing another prominent cap-and-trade proposal – the Graham-Lieberman bill in the Senate — as “horrendous”, a “monstrosity” and a “cap-and-tax” scheme. As Politico reported it: Former aides are mystified by what they see as a retreat on the issue, given McCain’s long history of leadership on climate legislation. McCain’s reversal was so dramatic that Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman, writing in the New York Times, called the Senator a “climate coward”. When he was in the House in 1989, Newt Gingrich authored HR 1078, the “Global Warming Prevention Act”. Its judgment about climate change was unequivocal: The Earth’s atmosphere is being changed at an unprecedented rate by pollutants resulting from human activities”¦. global warming imperils human health and well-being (and is) a major threat to political stability, international security and economic prosperity. Gingrich published a book titled “Contract with the Earth” and called for green conservatism. In 2007, he said he would strongly support a carbon cap-and-trade regime, “much like we did with sulfur”. In 2008, he appeared in a television spot in which he and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, sitting together on a couch like chums, agreed that “America needs to do something about global climate change.” The ad was part of Al Gore’s campaign to rally public support for climate action. But by 2009, Gingrich was distancing himself from Gore, calling for more oil production and endorsing “green coal”. In congressional testimony, he strongly disputed Gore’s interpretation of climate science and called cap-and-trade a “tax” and “secular socialism”. He blasted Obama’s support for carbon cap-and-trade, saying it “would have the effect of an across-the-board energy tax on every American”. (Then there’s Donald Trump [or there was]. So far as I know, he hasn’t flip-flopped on climate change. He’s just flopped. Trump says the big snowstorms last winter in New York prove that Al Gore should be stripped of his Nobel Peace Prize. Actually, Trump just proved he doesn’t know enough about the science to talk about it. He complains that cleaning up pollution would make us “totally non-competitive” with China, Japan and India, who are “laughing at America’s stupidity”. Oh, and he has a piece of coastal real estate he wants to sell us.)

**GOP victory destroys effective warming regulations.**

**Capiello, ‘11**

[Dina, 5-27, Associated Press, MSNBC, “GOP Presidential Hopefuls Shift on Global Warming” <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43192439/ns/politics-decision_2012/t/gop-presidential-hopefuls-shift-global-warming/>)

WASHINGTON—For Republican presidential contenders who once supported combatting global warming, the race is heating up. Faced with an activist right wing that questions the science linking pollution to changes in the Earth's climate and also disdains big government, most of the GOP contenders have **stepped back from** their **previous positions** on global warming. Some have apologized outright for past support of proposals to reduce heat-trapping pollution. And those who haven't fully recanted are under pressure to do so. The latest sign of that pressure came Thursday when New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said he was pulling his state out of a regional agreement to reduce greenhouse gases, saying it won't work. While Christie, a rising GOP star, has said he won't run for his party's presidential nomination, some in the party continue to recruit him."Republican presidential hopefuls can believe in man-made global warming as long as they never talk about it, and oppose all the so-called solutions," said Marc Morano, a former aide to Oklahoma Sen. James Inhofe, one of the most vocal climate skeptics in Congress. Morano now runs a website called Climate Depot where he attacks anyone who buys into the scientific consensus on climate change. Enemy No. 1 for Morano these days is Newt Gingrich, the former House speaker who in 2008 shared a couch with then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in a TV ad backed by climate change guru Al Gore. In it Gingrich says, "We do agree that our country must take action on climate change."Since that appearance, Gingrich, who once ran an environmental studies program at a Georgia college, has called for the abolition of the Environmental Protection Agency. He's also spoken out against a Democratic bill that passed the House in 2009 that would have limited emissions of greenhouse gases and created a market for pollution permits to be bought and sold. But that hasn't been enough to satisfy conservative critics. Gingrich, who in 2007 told The New York Times that it was conceivable human beings were playing a role in global warming, went further in a recent interview when he said he doubted there was a connection between climate change and the burning of fossil fuels. "The planet used to be dramatically warmer when we had dinosaurs and no people," Gingrich told The Macon (Ga.) Telegraph last week. "To the best of my knowledge the dinosaurs weren't driving cars." Where Gingrich has waffled, other GOP contenders have conceded on the issue of climate. Mitt Romney, Tim Pawlenty and Jon Huntsman potentially come into the race with even more climate baggage, since all three supported as governors regional "cap-and-trade" programs to reduce greenhouse gas pollution. All have since abandoned that stance.

### Warming Impact – Economy

**Warming would bankrupt the world**

**Brown**, Lester (World-renowned environmental analyst and head of the non-profit research organization the Earth Policy Institute based in Washington DC. p.64: “Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization” http://www.earth-policy.org/Books/PB3/pb3ch3.pdf) 20**08**

As the climate changes, more extreme weather events are expected. Andrew Dlugolecki, a consultant on climate change and its effects on financial institutions, notes that damage from atmospherically related events has increased by roughly 10 percent a year. “If such an increase were to continue indefinitely,” he notes, “by 2065 storm damage would exceed the gross world product. The world obviously would face bankruptcy long before then.” Few double-digit annual growth trends continue for several decades, but Dlugolecki’s basic point is that climate change can be destructive, disruptive, and very costly.69 If we allow the climate to spin out of our control, we risk huge financial costs. In a late 2006 report, former World Bank chief economist Nicholas Stern projected that the long-term costs of climate change could exceed 20 percent of gross world product (GWP). By comparison, the near-term costs of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to stabilize climate, which Stern estimates at 1 percent of GWP, would be a bargain

**Climate Change destroys the financial system**

**Stern 2007** Nicholas (British economist and academic. He was the Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President of the World Bank from 2000 to 2003, and was recently a civil servant and government economic advisor in the United Kingdom. “Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change.” http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent\_reviews/stern\_review\_economics\_climate\_change/stern\_review\_report.cfm) 2007

Abrupt shifts in climate and rising costs of extreme weather events will affect global financial markets. Well-developed financial markets will help richer countries moderate the impacts of climate change – for example hedging with derivatives to smooth commodity prices. Such markets help to spread the risk across different regional markets and over time, but cannot reduce the risks by themselves. In addition, they are at risk of severe disruption from climate change: Physical risks. The world’s major financial centres (London, New York and Tokyo) are all located in coastal areas. The insurance industry estimates that in London alone at least $220 billion (£125 billion) of assets lie in the floodplain.38 Correlated risks. At higher temperatures, climate change is likely to have severe impacts on many parts of the economy simultaneously. The shock may well exceed the capacity of markets and could potentially destabilise regions.

### Warming Impact – Blackouts

**Warming causes blackouts**

**Ecobridge**, 10-5-**06**, “Evidence of Global Warming” <http://www.ecobridge.org/content/g_tht.htm>

Increasing Power Outages or Rolling Blackouts More intense heat waves will have a further impact. More severe heat waves will bring heavy use of air-conditioning, increasing the probability of more blackouts, as power grids are strained beyond the limit. The combination of increasing severity of heat waves, together with a trend of electricity supply not keeping pace with demand, ultimately will lead to increases in blackouts. In a CNN.com article on July 1, 2000, 'Heat waves likely to bring more rolling blackouts', it was reported that U.S. consumption of electricity has risen 35% during the past decade, while newly generated electric power has risen by only 18%. "During the last several summers (as of July, 2000) utilities in some parts of the country have been stretched to the limit," says Energy Secretary Bill Richardson. (68) A study by the New York think tank, Allied Business Intelligence (ABI), says that in the next ten years, energy sources will be insufficient to meet demand throughout the U.S., except for Middle America. With a robust economy spurring the building industry, especially plans currently anticipating the building of half a million new commercial buildings annually, demand for energy is swiftly outpacing supply. According to ABI, 150 gigawatts (150 billion watts) will be needed by 2007 in the U.S. Plans call for meeting only half of that demand, says ABI. (66) The Alliance to Save Energy, a coalition of business, environmental, consumer and government leaders, says that a continuing trend of higher temperatures and more severe heat waves will have a role in producing more blackouts in the coming years. [71] On June 24, 2003 Italian utilities ordered power cuts for the first time since 1981, as a heat wave pushed the national power grid close to collapse. Further blackouts were planned into July. The blackouts resulted from a nationwide heavy demand in use of air conditioners and fans, affecting 6 million people. The unrelenting heat and an accompanying drought have disrupted Italian electricity production, as diminished water power has impacted hydroelectric plants. Demand for electricity set a new summer Italian record of 52,000 megawatts.

### Warming Impact – Infrastructure

**Destruction of infrastructure from more intense storms causes heavy financial burdens**

**Stern, 2007**Nicholas (British economist and academic. He was the Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President of the World Bank from 2000 to 2003, and was recently a civil servant and government economic advisor in the United Kingdom. “Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change.” http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent\_reviews/stern\_review\_economics\_climate\_change/stern\_review\_report.cfm) 2007

By increasing the amount of energy available to fuel storms (Chapter 1), climate change is likely to increase the intensity of storms. Infrastructure damage costs will increase substantially from even small increases in sea temperatures because: (1) peak wind speeds of tropical storms are a strongly exponential function of temperature, increasing by about 15 - 20% for a 3°C increase in tropical sea surface temperatures;68 and (2) damage costs typically scale as the cube of wind-speed or more (Figure 3.10).69 Storms and associated flooding are already the most costly natural disaster today, making up almost 90% of the total losses from natural catastrophes in 2005 ($184 billion from windstorms alone, particularly hurricanes and typhoons).70 A large proportion of the financial losses fall in the developed world, because of the high value and large amount of infrastructure at risk (more details in Chapter 5).

## \*Heg\*

### Impact- Interventionism

**Obama re-election key to Heg- Democrats will backlash to Republican efforts**

**Walt, 2-14-12,** Stephen M., the Robert and Renée Belfer professor of international affairs at Harvard University and a blogger at ForeignPolicy.com “Why hawks should vote for Obama,” http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/02/14/our\_new\_strategic\_experiment, KHaze

If you are someone who is inclined to favor hawkish responses to foreign policy problems, then your choice for president should be Barack Obama. Not because Obama is especially hawkish himself, or interested in prolonging costly and failed commitments in Iraq or Afghanistan. For that matter, his administration is making a modest and fiscally necessary effort to slow the steady rise in Pentagon spending, and they seem to understand that war with Iran is a Very Bad Idea. (It is of course no accident that military action there is being promoted by the same folks who thought invading Iraq was a Very Good Idea. But I digress.) So why should hawks vote for Obama? As Glenn Greenwald and Greg Sargent have argued most forcefully, it's because Obama can do hawkish things as a Democrat that a Republican could not (or at least not without facing lots of trouble on the home front). It's the flipside of the old "Nixon Goes to China" meme: Obama can do hawkish things without facing (much) criticism from the left, because he still retains their sympathy and because liberals and non-interventionists don't have a credible alternative (sorry, Ron Paul supporters). If someone like John McCain, Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, Newt Gingrich or George W. Bush had spent the past few years escalating drone attacks, sending Special Forces into other countries to kill people without the local government's permission, prosecuting alleged leakers with great enthusiasm, and ratcheting up sanctions against Iran, without providing much information about exactly why and how we were doing all this, I suspect a lot of Democrats would have raised a stink about some of it. But not when it is the nice Mr. Obama that is doing these things.

**Key to solve nuclear conflict.**

**Kagan, 7 (**senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Robert, "End of Dreams, Return of History", 7/19, <http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2007/07/end_of_dreams_return_of_histor.html>)

Nationalism in all its forms is back, if it ever went away, and so is international competition for power, influence, honor, and status. American predominance prevents these rivalries from intensifying -- its regional as well as its global predominance. Were the United States to diminish its influence in the regions where it is currently the strongest power, the other nations would settle disputes as great and lesser powers have done in the past: sometimes through diplomacy and accommodation but often through confrontation and wars of varying scope, intensity, and destructiveness. One novel aspect of such a multipolar world is that most of these powers would possess nuclear weapons. That could make wars between them less likely, or it could simply make them more catastrophic.It is easy but also dangerous to underestimate the role the United States plays in providing a measure of stability in the world even as it also disrupts stability. For instance, the United States is the dominant naval power everywhere, such that other nations cannot compete with it even in their home waters. They either happily or grudgingly allow the United States Navy to be the guarantor of international waterways and trade routes, of international access to markets and raw materials such as oil. Even when the United States engages in a war, it is able to play its role as guardian of the waterways. In a more genuinely multipolar world, however, it would not. Nations would compete for naval dominance at least in their own regions and possibly beyond. Conflict between nations would involve struggles on the oceans as well as on land. Armed embargos, of the kind used in World War i and other major conflicts, would disrupt trade flows in a way that is now impossible. Such order as exists in the world rests not merely on the goodwill of peoples but on a foundation provided by American power. Even the European Union, that great geopolitical miracle, owes its founding to American power, for without it the European nations after World War ii would never have felt secure enough to reintegrate Germany. Most Europeans recoil at the thought, but even today Europe 's stability depends on the guarantee, however distant and one hopes unnecessary, that the United States could step in to check any dangerous development on the continent. In a genuinely multipolar world, that would not be possible without renewing the danger of world war

### AT: GOP Interventionist

**GOP win destroys American interventionism- neocons have no influence with the candidates**

**Lobe 11**

[Jim Lobe, Foreign Policy Analyst, “NeoCons Losing hold over Republican Foreign Policy” 6/16/11, <http://original.antiwar.com/lobe/2011/06/15/neocons-losing-hold-over-republican-foreign-policy%C2%A0/>]

WASHINGTON, Jun 15, 2011 (IPS) - Nearly ten years after seizing control of Republican foreign policy, neo- conservatives and other hawks appear to be losing it. That is at least the tentative conclusion of a number of political analysts following Monday’s first nationally televised debate of the party’s declared Republican candidates - none of whom defended the current U.S. engagement in Libya, while several suggested it was time to pare down Washington’s global military engagements, including in Afghanistan. "This sure isn’t the Republican Party of George Bush, [former Vice President] Dick Cheney, and [former Pentagon chief] Donald Rumsfeld," exulted one liberal commentator, Michael Tomasky, in the ‘Daily Beast’. "The neo-cons are gone." "Is the Republican party turning isolationist for 2012?" asked ‘Washington Post’ columnist Jackson Diehl, a liberal interventionist who has often allied himself with neoconservatives in support of "regime change" against authoritarian governments hostile to the U.S. or Israel. "All in all, this first Republican debate offered a striking change of tone for a party that a decade ago was dominated, in foreign policy, by the neoconservative movement, which favoured [and still does favour] aggressive American intervention abroad," Diehl wrote on his blog. Of particular note during the debate was a comment about Afghanistan by former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, who is widely acknowledged to be the current front-runner in the Republican field. "It’s time for us to bring our troops home as soon as we possibly can, consistent with the word that comes to our generals that we can hand the country over to the [Afghan] military in a way that they’re able to defend themselves," Romney said, adding, perhaps fatefully, "I also think we’ve learned that our troops shouldn’t go off and try and fight a war of independence for another nation." What precisely he meant by the latter sentence was left unclear, but it was sufficiently negative for one prominent neoconservative, Danielle Pletka, to tell ‘Politico’ that her inbox had been flooded Tuesday morning with emails calling Romney’s remarks a "disaster". "I’d thought of Romney as a mainstream Republican - supporting American strength and American leadership, but this doesn’t reflect that," Pletka, who heads the foreign policy and defence division of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), told ‘Politico’, adding that perhaps the front-runner was "a little bit of a weathervane". Whatever Romney meant, Monday’s debate - and the candidates’ apparent lack of enthusiasm for the military adventures of the near-decade that followed the 9/11 attacks - marked at least an "incremental… shift", as the ‘New York Times’ put it, in the party’s foreign-policy stance from "the aggressive use of American power around the world" to a "new debate over the costs and benefits" of deploying that power, particularly in a time of "extreme fiscal pressure". Since the mid-1970’s, Republicans have been divided between aggressive nationalists, like Cheney, and Israel-centred neoconservatives - who also enjoyed the support of the Christian Right - on the one hand, and isolationists and foreign-policy realists on the other. The balance of power between the two groups has shifted more than once in the nearly four decades since. Under most of President Ronald Reagan’s tenure, for example, the nationalists and neoconservatives largely prevailed until they were overcome by the combination of the Iran-Contra scandal, Secretary of State George Shultz, and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Under President George H.W. Bush, the realists gained virtually total control. The two factions spent much of President Bill Clinton’s eight years fighting each other. Indeed, it was during that period that the nationalists, neoconservatives, and Christian Rightists formed the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) - initially to counteract what they saw as growing isolationism and anti-interventionism among Republican lawmakers in Congress. PNAC’s founders, neoconservatives Robert Kagan and Bill Kristol, backed John McCain in the 2000 Republican primaries, against George W. Bush - whose calls for a "more humble" and "modest" foreign policy conjured bad memories of his father. Once in office, however, President George W. Bush chose leaders of both factions as his main advisers - most importantly Cheney and Rumsfeld, both nationalists surrounded by neoconservatives; and Colin Powell, a classic realist, as his secretary of state. For the first eight months, the two sides locked horns on virtually every major foreign-policy issue. But the 9/11 attacks changed the balance of power decisively in favour of the hawks who, even as they gradually lost influence to the realists within the administration during Bush’s second term, retained the solid support of Republicans in Congress for all eight years. The fact that McCain, whose foreign-policy views were distinctly neoconservative, won the party’s presidential nomination in 2008 testified to the hawks’ enduring strength. But the Sep 2008 financial crisis - and the economic distress it caused - laid the groundwork for the resurgence of the party’s realist-isolationist wing, according to political analysts. "The economic duress is undermining the national greatness project of Bill Kristol and the neo-cons," according to Steve Clemons, a national-security expert at the New America Foundation (NAF), whose washingtonnote.com blog is widely read here. "What we are seeing evolve among Republicans is a hybrid realism with some isolationist strains that believes the costs of American intervention in the world at the rate of the last decade simply can’t be sustained," wrote Clemons. That evolution has gained momentum in the past few months, particularly since President Barack Obama yielded to pressure from a coalition of neoconservatives, liberal interventionists, and nationalists like McCain, to intervene in Libya, and, more importantly since the May 2 killing by U.S. Special Forces of the Al-Qaeda chief in Pakistan. The killing of Osama bin Laden, according to Charles Kupchan of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), "symbolised a closure in some ways to the wars that began after the 9/11 attacks." Indeed, in just the last month, 26 Republican congressmen deserted their leadership and joined a strong majority of Democrats in calling for an accelerated withdrawal from Afghanistan, while last week, in an action that drew charges of "isolationism" from the neoconservative ‘Wall Street Journal’, 87 Republicans voted for a resolution that would require Obama to end military action in Libya within 15 days. And each new day seems to offer a story about yet another Republican insisting that the defence budget should not be exempt from major cuts to reduce the yawning federal deficit. "The party was moving in this direction quite decidedly before 9/11, and then 9/11 silenced the voices of restraint and neo-isolationism," Kupchan told IPS. "And now, they are finally coming back with a vengeance." "That emergence may make for some interesting alliances across partisan lines where you have left- leaning Democrats uncomfortable with the use of force lining up with Republicans interested in bringing down the deficit," Kupchan noted. Tomasky observed, Republican candidates might now be changing their tune not so much out of conviction as out of the desire to win elections. Just last week, the Pew Research Center released its latest poll on U.S. foreign policy attitudes which found that "the current measure of isolationist sentiment is among the highest recorded" in more than 50 years. While, for much of the Bush administration, only one in four Republicans said the U.S. should "mind its own business" internationally, that percentage has nearly doubled since Bush left office. The Pew survey also found a 50 percent increase in Republican support for "reducing [U.S.] military commitments overseas" - from 29 percent in 2008, to 44 percent in May, 2011. Moreover, 56 percent of Republicans said they support reducing those commitments as a way to cut the budget deficit. Similarly, Republicans appear to have lost virtually all interest in promoting Bush’s and the neoconservatives’ "Freedom Agenda" abroad. According to the Pew poll, only one in ten Republicans said they believe democracy-promotion should be a long-term U.S. priority.

### AT Obama Bad – Hardpower/Heg

**Not unique – Obama’s been president for 3 years…**

**Rachman ev is terrible – only rhetoric and no warrant why Obama seems weak. Bin Laden death disproves.**

**Turn – GOP will withdraw and make us look weak.**

**Lobe 11**

[Jim Lobe, Foreign Policy Analyst, “NeoCons Losing hold over Republican Foreign Policy” 6/16/11, <http://original.antiwar.com/lobe/2011/06/15/neocons-losing-hold-over-republican-foreign-policy%C2%A0/>]

WASHINGTON, Jun 15, 2011 (IPS) - Nearly ten years after seizing control of Republican foreign policy, neo- conservatives and other hawks appear to be losing it. That is at least the tentative conclusion of a number of political analysts following Monday’s first nationally televised debate of the party’s declared Republican candidates - none of whom defended the current U.S. engagement in Libya, while several suggested it was time to pare down Washington’s global military engagements, including in Afghanistan. "This sure isn’t the Republican Party of George Bush, [former Vice President] Dick Cheney, and [former Pentagon chief] Donald Rumsfeld," exulted one liberal commentator, Michael Tomasky, in the ‘Daily Beast’. "The neo-cons are gone." "Is the Republican party turning isolationist for 2012?" asked ‘Washington Post’ columnist Jackson Diehl, a liberal interventionist who has often allied himself with neoconservatives in support of "regime change" against authoritarian governments hostile to the U.S. or Israel. "All in all, this first Republican debate offered a striking change of tone for a party that a decade ago was dominated, in foreign policy, by the neoconservative movement, which favoured [and still does favour] aggressive American intervention abroad," Diehl wrote on his blog. Of particular note during the debate was a comment about Afghanistan by former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, who is widely acknowledged to be the current front-runner in the Republican field. "It’s time for us to bring our troops home as soon as we possibly can, consistent with the word that comes to our generals that we can hand the country over to the [Afghan] military in a way that they’re able to defend themselves," Romney said, adding, perhaps fatefully, "I also think we’ve learned that our troops shouldn’t go off and try and fight a war of independence for another nation." What precisely he meant by the latter sentence was left unclear, but it was sufficiently negative for one prominent neoconservative, Danielle Pletka, to tell ‘Politico’ that her inbox had been flooded Tuesday morning with emails calling Romney’s remarks a "disaster". "I’d thought of Romney as a mainstream Republican - supporting American strength and American leadership, but this doesn’t reflect that," Pletka, who heads the foreign policy and defence division of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), told ‘Politico’, adding that perhaps the front-runner was "a little bit of a weathervane". Whatever Romney meant, Monday’s debate - and the candidates’ apparent lack of enthusiasm for the military adventures of the near-decade that followed the 9/11 attacks - marked at least an "incremental… shift", as the ‘New York Times’ put it, in the party’s foreign-policy stance from "the aggressive use of American power around the world" to a "new debate over the costs and benefits" of deploying that power, particularly in a time of "extreme fiscal pressure". Since the mid-1970’s, Republicans have been divided between aggressive nationalists, like Cheney, and Israel-centred neoconservatives - who also enjoyed the support of the Christian Right - on the one hand, and isolationists and foreign-policy realists on the other. The balance of power between the two groups has shifted more than once in the nearly four decades since. Under most of President Ronald Reagan’s tenure, for example, the nationalists and neoconservatives largely prevailed until they were overcome by the combination of the Iran-Contra scandal, Secretary of State George Shultz, and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Under President George H.W. Bush, the realists gained virtually total control. The two factions spent much of President Bill Clinton’s eight years fighting each other. Indeed, it was during that period that the nationalists, neoconservatives, and Christian Rightists formed the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) - initially to counteract what they saw as growing isolationism and anti-interventionism among Republican lawmakers in Congress. PNAC’s founders, neoconservatives Robert Kagan and Bill Kristol, backed John McCain in the 2000 Republican primaries, against George W. Bush - whose calls for a "more humble" and "modest" foreign policy conjured bad memories of his father. Once in office, however, President George W. Bush chose leaders of both factions as his main advisers - most importantly Cheney and Rumsfeld, both nationalists surrounded by neoconservatives; and Colin Powell, a classic realist, as his secretary of state. For the first eight months, the two sides locked horns on virtually every major foreign-policy issue. But the 9/11 attacks changed the balance of power decisively in favour of the hawks who, even as they gradually lost influence to the realists within the administration during Bush’s second term, retained the solid support of Republicans in Congress for all eight years. The fact that McCain, whose foreign-policy views were distinctly neoconservative, won the party’s presidential nomination in 2008 testified to the hawks’ enduring strength. But the Sep 2008 financial crisis - and the economic distress it caused - laid the groundwork for the resurgence of the party’s realist-isolationist wing, according to political analysts. "The economic duress is undermining the national greatness project of Bill Kristol and the neo-cons," according to Steve Clemons, a national-security expert at the New America Foundation (NAF), whose washingtonnote.com blog is widely read here. "What we are seeing evolve among Republicans is a hybrid realism with some isolationist strains that believes the costs of American intervention in the world at the rate of the last decade simply can’t be sustained," wrote Clemons. That evolution has gained momentum in the past few months, particularly since President Barack Obama yielded to pressure from a coalition of neoconservatives, liberal interventionists, and nationalists like McCain, to intervene in Libya, and, more importantly since the May 2 killing by U.S. Special Forces of the Al-Qaeda chief in Pakistan. The killing of Osama bin Laden, according to Charles Kupchan of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), "symbolised a closure in some ways to the wars that began after the 9/11 attacks." Indeed, in just the last month, 26 Republican congressmen deserted their leadership and joined a strong majority of Democrats in calling for an accelerated withdrawal from Afghanistan, while last week, in an action that drew charges of "isolationism" from the neoconservative ‘Wall Street Journal’, 87 Republicans voted for a resolution that would require Obama to end military action in Libya within 15 days. And each new day seems to offer a story about yet another Republican insisting that the defence budget should not be exempt from major cuts to reduce the yawning federal deficit. "The party was moving in this direction quite decidedly before 9/11, and then 9/11 silenced the voices of restraint and neo-isolationism," Kupchan told IPS. "And now, they are finally coming back with a vengeance." "That emergence may make for some interesting alliances across partisan lines where you have left- leaning Democrats uncomfortable with the use of force lining up with Republicans interested in bringing down the deficit," Kupchan noted. Tomasky observed, Republican candidates might now be changing their tune not so much out of conviction as out of the desire to win elections. Just last week, the Pew Research Center released its latest poll on U.S. foreign policy attitudes which found that "the current measure of isolationist sentiment is among the highest recorded" in more than 50 years. While, for much of the Bush administration, only one in four Republicans said the U.S. should "mind its own business" internationally, that percentage has nearly doubled since Bush left office. The Pew survey also found a 50 percent increase in Republican support for "reducing [U.S.] military commitments overseas" - from 29 percent in 2008, to 44 percent in May, 2011. Moreover, 56 percent of Republicans said they support reducing those commitments as a way to cut the budget deficit. Similarly, Republicans appear to have lost virtually all interest in promoting Bush’s and the neoconservatives’ "Freedom Agenda" abroad. According to the Pew poll, only one in ten Republicans said they believe democracy-promotion should be a long-term U.S. priority.

### AT: 2nd Term Obama Will Cave

**2nd term Obama won’t engage in co-operation**

**Drezner, 3-26-12,** Daniel W., “The dirty little secret about second-term presidents,” <http://drezner.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/03/26/the_dirty_little_secret_about_second_term_presidents>, KHaze

Rubin's logic seems pretty clear: Obama is really a liberal, and free of political constraint -- particularly on the foreign policy remit -- he'll revert to type. There's just one problem: based on recent evidence, there's an excellent chance Obama will be less liberal in the second term. Consider the last three two-term presidents: Reagan, Clinton, and Bush 43. I'll grant this is a very small sample, but bear with me. Did their second-term policies look different from their first-term? You bectha. Reagan tacked in a decidedly liberal direction with respect to the Soviet Union, switching from rhetoric about the "evil empre" to cutting substantive arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. Clinton, on the other hand, tacked in a more conservative direction. After being enamored of multilateralism and leery of using fore in his first term, he became more comfortable with using force and using it outside of UN strictures in his second term. Finally, Bush 43's second terms was decidedly more liberal. In his first term, he declared an "Axis of Evil" and invaded Iraq without UN support. In his second term, however, the Bush administration was decidedly more dovish, working through the UN on both Iran and North Korea, demonstrating a willingness to directly negotiate with the Iranians, and refusing to use force in Syria. This, by the way, is why claiming a continuity between Bush 43 and Obamas is not quite as much of a political jab as people like to claim. The dfifferences between Bush in 2003 and Bush in 2008 were massive. Now, these narratives are not really as clean as the last paragraph suggests. Reagan also embraced Iran/Contra in his second term. In Clinton's second term he pushed hard to address US arrears to the UN. And Bush had some elements of compasionate conservatism liberalism in his first term, what with PEPFAR and a refusal to declare a clash of civilizations following the 9/11 attacks. What's striking, however, is that recent second-termers have not reverted to their ideological bliss point -- if anything it's been the reverse, they've tacked away from their starting point. Part of this is circumstances. Reagan had, in Gorbachev, a real negotiating partner in his second term. Bush had to be more circumspect on Iran and North Korea after the cost and constraint of military operatons in Iraq and Afghanistan. All three presidents had less favorable legislatures in their second term than their first. Still, it's not all about circumstances. What gives? I'd argue that precisely because presidents have fewer foreign policy constraints than dometic ones, they feel free to pursue their preferred set of policies from day one. Reality, however, quickly determines which ideas are working and which do not have any staying power. Over time, therefore, presidents change tack until they hit on a more successful formula. This usually means overcoming one's personal ideology and embracing new ideas. I've argued that this is exactly what Obama has done in his first term -- and I'm hardly the only one. And, so, yes, contra Rubin, I think the notion that a second-term of President Obama will be the second coming of the Kellogg-Briand Treaty requires a willful misreading of Obama's first term of foreign policy -- as well as ignorance of the last thirty years of American foreign policy. Am I missing anything?

## \*Torture/Pre-emption\*

### General Impact

**Obama victory key to solve the environment, economy, pre-emptive wars, torture, and equality**

**Matthews, 10-4-11,** Chris, MSNBC, host of Hardball, “'Hardball with Chris Matthews' for Monday, OCtober 3rd, 2011, 7 pm show,” <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/44772720/ns/msnbc_tv-hardball_with_chris_matthews/t/hardball-chris-matthews-monday-october-rd-pm-show/#.T2DGcMUgcvl>, KHaze

Think of the stakes. If he gets it right, and the Democrats get four more years to get the economy finally back on track with full employment again the norm, the country heading forward to greener pastures and bluer skies, continuing the long, good march toward a cleaner environment, a protected climate, a more human, more tolerant, fully employed society. If he blows it, the Tea Partiers and neocons come roaring back into Washington, emptying out the Heritage Foundation and American Enterprise Institute, erecting statues to Dick Cheney, celebrating the death penalty, elevating torture, ending environmental protection as we know it, breaking unions, punishing gays, starting more wars, enacting one more giant tax cut for the rich -- or worse.

**Torture undermines moral culpability- that makes war inevitable**

Haque, 2007, University of California Press, New Criminal Law Review: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal, Vol. 10, No. 4, “Torture, Terror, and the Inversion of Moral Principle,” JSTOR, KHaze

This article began with the distinction between means and ends and the suggestion that the phrase “War on Terror” differentiates the two sides of the conflict it describes not by the ends they embrace but by the means they employ. The subsequent adoption of torture and coercive interrogation as routine methods of intelligence gathering has caused many “to doubt the moral basis of our fight against terrorism.” Yet absent such a basis, there is no right side and no wrong side to the conflict; there is only our side and their side. The article defends the view that legitimate ends cannot make up for illegitimate means. The article presents a new interpretation of the doctrine of double effect which escapes traditional criticisms, withstands contemporary challenges, and provides a moral basis for rejecting torture and terrorism with equal force. Neither the doctrine of criminal complicity nor the distinctive moral agency of states nor the theory of threshold deontology provides a basis for permitting let alone requiring the routine use of torture. Neither the intentional killing of noncombatants nor the criminal prosecution of lawful combatants can be justified by their responsibility for the unjust threat produced by their political and military leaders. It is not easy, for a writer or for a reader, to dwell at such length and with such dispassion on the death and degradation of our brothers and sisters in humanity. Substantive criminal law is concerned with the prohibition of destructive tactics rather than with the development of creative strategies. Yet strategic innovation is desperately needed to restrict the scope and contain the consequences of global conflict. Ideas can change the world. But when ideas fail to change the world as promised they are discredited and people look for new ones with which to imagine a better future. In the past five years two very old ideas have resurfaced: that the purpose of government is not to implement principles of justice but to keep its citizens safe; and that national security can be achieved with military force and without moral credibility. On the basis of these ideas many embraced preventative war and punitive diplomacy, racial profiling and warrantless surveillance, indefinite detention and torture. But the purchase of safety at the price of liberty and the exchange of justice for expediency has yielded disappointing returns. It is time to invest in a national security strategy that pursues long-term peace and stability through the skillful alignment of diverse interests and the development of political integration and economic interdependence among states as well as political participation and economic opportunity among individuals. Only when each nation has a stake in the security of every nation and each person has a stake in the stability of their society can future generations live safe from war and free from fear.

### Torture Impact 2NC

**Torture breeds violence, terrorism, and wars- rejecting it is key**

**Bennoune, 2008,** Karima, Associate Professor at Rutgers School of Law - Newark. “ARTICLE: Terror/Torture,” Lexis, KHaze

To allow for torture in exceptional situations is quite simply to allow torture. 175 [\*36] Hence, absolute opposition to it remains essential. As the Convention against Torture sets out in one of its most important articles, No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture. 176 The choice of language here is deliberate. Without it, we have no real prohibition of torture. This is precisely the sort of norm whose literal language we need to protect in the current moment. However, like many international lawyers, 177 I subscribe to an ethical, humanist understanding of this prohibition, beyond literal language. My commitment to combating these practices is both a rules-based and a values-and goals-driven one. Still, it is not necessary for others to share my underlying reasoning to arrive at the same conclusion. There are additional, pragmatic reasons to champion the absolute ban on torture. Playing the counter-terrorism game outside the rules of international law often makes the situation worse as a practical matter. 178 The most recent and worrying example of this is found in the view of U.S. intelligence agencies that the "war on terror" as fought in Iraq has increased the risk of terrorism. 179 Respect for international norms could have helped to avoid or mitigate that outcome. Undoubtedly, the absolute position against torture is also integral to absolute positions against terrorism. The two halves of terror/torture are interdependent. Though they are set out in opposition to one another in the war against terrorism-era debate about torture, they are much the same at root. As noted above, both torture and terror are based on the identical philosophical assumption: the permissibility of instrumentalizing severe and deliberate human suffering. Similarly, the rejections of terrorism and of torture also share the same premise: that there is something apart about intentionally inflicting such suffering. There can be no room for justifications of either half of terror/torture; apologia for one provokes and sustains apologia for the other. Another shared aspect of the two practices is the unbridled coerciveness of [\*37] both terror and torture. 180 Both the High Level Panel definition of terrorism and the Convention against Torture definition of torture turn on notions of intimidation, compulsion, and coercion. As sociologist Lisa Hajjar has argued, the right not to be tortured "invests people, regardless of their social status, their political identity or affiliations, with a kind of sovereign right over their bodies and minds ... ." 181 This right is implicated by one of McDougal's explanations of his understanding of human dignity, that is that it "refers to a social process ... in which private choice, rather than coercion, is emphasized as the predominant modality of power." 182 Such a social process then can leave no room whatsoever for terror or torture. To get around these absolutes, the distinction sometimes made is that the victims of terror are "innocent" whereas the victims of torture, we are assured by the proponents of its use in exceptional cases, are "guilty," or at least possess guilty knowledge. Of course terrorists and their apologists often suggest that the "innocent" civilian victims are somehow culpable, whether because they voted for governments, or failed to overthrow them, or benefit from those governments' policies which the terrorists claim to oppose, or perhaps they are guilty merely by identity. 183 The latter is an unspoken assumption made by the justifiers of torture as well. In the current moment, when we talk about torture as a tool of counter-terror, we often assume we are discussing treatment to be meted out to brown-skinned foreign Muslim men, after all. Discrimination may then shape notions of "guilt" and indeed of acceptable conduct toward terror suspects. What is essential about both norms against torture and those against terrorism is that they reject these extra-legal categorizations of innocent versus guilty and deem instead that certain treatment cannot be meted out to any person, [\*38] or at least in the case of some terrorism rules, to any civilian. 184 They embrace the absolute and universal nature of human dignity. Furthermore, these same distinctions of guilt and innocence, read as good motives versus bad, provide no license for any would-be perpetrators of either practice. Righteousness is no requirement for protection from torture or terror, nor is it a justification for performing either. Any arguments that break down these holistic constructs vis-a-vis torture give ammunition to those who seek to insert analogous distinctions in definitions of terrorism (such as the attempts to carve out "freedom fighter" exceptions in the Comprehensive Convention's definition of terrorism). Whatever the values they seek to defend, the intellectual proponents of weakening the absolute ban on torture in order to confront terror fail to grasp that, as explained above, diluting the prohibition of torture inherently destabilizes the notion of terror and why it is wrong. In a transnational debate, we cannot convince the requisite broad constituency to oppose a practice selectively, on the mere basis of shared ideas about innocence or guilt of the victims; but rather only on the basis that, as profoundly simple as it sounds, human beings must not do certain things to other human beings, no matter what. I think back to the film El Manara. Ramdane, the young fundamentalist who raped his abducted friend Asma, had himself been tortured during a previous detention by the state. Fawzi, who had previously denounced state torture while a young activist, became a torturer himself when confronted with the horror of his wife's captivity. Easy assumptions about guilt and innocence cannot help us out of this morass. Instead, in the context of the "war on terror," it is imperative that we staunchly reject utilitarian justifications for deliberately inflicting severe suffering. 185 Such a rejection is an essential part of defusing potential ticking time bomb situations in the first place. Furthermore, it is the only universalizable position, a truth that becomes starkly obvious when one recognizes the likeness and interconnection between terror and torture. The same arguments can be made by many terrorists and torturers to justify their violence: the argument that severe instrumental violence against an individual or a group of individuals, though perhaps regrettable, is necessary to save the lives, or protect the rights, of [\*39] many more. 186 As D.H. Munro wrote in his critique of ethical egoism, "Other people are likely to feel justified in treating us as we treat them, so that the actual consequence of adopting a particular policy is, as a rule, to be on the receiving end of it." 187 Ultimately, utilitarian rationalizations of torture in the name of fighting terror fail because they are not universalizable. The utilitarian argument here is not only morally repugnant, but it will justify the very practice that its proponents claim they seek to combat. 188 More torture may produce more ticking bombs in the long run, just as more hypothetical ticking time bombs will produce more torture.

**Allowing torture in any instance justifies exceptions that make suffering inevitable**

**Bennoune, 2008,** Karima, Associate Professor at Rutgers School of Law - Newark. “ARTICLE: Terror/Torture,” Lexis, KHaze

Some legal academics have contributed to the environment that facilitates such abuses by assaulting the absolute position against torture, often while claiming to oppose the practice in general. Famously, Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz has hypothetically suggested the use of dental drills on un-anaesthetized teeth a la the Nazi dentist of The Marathon Man in the interrogation of certain terrorist suspects. 153 Rather than being denounced, he appears [\*32] everywhere, and Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel has even lauded his book. 154 Dershowitz has gone so far as to call for judicial torture warrants that would legalize the use of some torture in what he sees as extreme cases. 155 Though the Harvard Professor is most famous for this, Oren Gross of the University of Minnesota Law School has expressed a similar view. In his oral presentation at the American Society of International Law (ASIL) 2005 Annual Meeting, he urged his audience to confess that if their children were kidnapped, they would want the abductors tortured to elicit information that could locate them. 156 I thought about Gross's argument when I saw the film El Manara several months later in Algiers. The impulse he ascribed to his audience was exactly that which led Fawzi to apply a blow torch to Ramdane in the movie, to disastrous effect. 157 How dangerous it is to suggest that the extreme human emotions provoked by unbearable risks to our own families become official policy. Much like the attempt to force Michael Dukakis in his 1988 debate with George H.W. Bush to endorse the death penalty for his wife's hypothetical rapist and murderer, Gross at the ASIL meeting exhorted his audience to show they cared (about their children) by embracing brutality - a frequent refrain in this debate. 158 He insisted, as do many who make similar arguments, that we all really want exceptions to the ban on torture if we truly search our hearts. 159 And thus the completely understandable reactions of individual family members were conflated with acceptable responses of the state, much like what happened so tragically in El Manara. Yet, paradoxically, Gross insisted that he was otherwise in complete agreement with Nigel Rodley, former U.N. Special Rapporteur on torture, with whom he shared the podium at the ASIL meeting. 160 Alan Dershowitz too claims that he does not advocate torture, while suggesting scenarios in which sterile needles could be inserted under terror suspects' fingernails during interrogation. 161 [\*33] In the pre-September 11 environment, such intellectual justifications of torture were largely recognized as outside the parameters of decency, ineluctably an affront to human dignity. 162 However, among its many terrible legacies, September 11 has shifted those parameters. Media commentators from left and right demonstrate this sad reality. For example, in November 2001, the liberal columnist Jonathan Alter wrote a much-discussed piece for Newsweek entitled Time to Think About Torture. In this article, he suggested we should not be too squeamish about interrogation practices (though he protested that he was not actually condoning torture) and he actually advocated the consideration of what have become known as "extraordinary renditions." 163 In 2005, after the Abu Ghraib scandal had broken, after serious allegations of U.S. human rights abuses surfaced in the Washington Post 164 and elsewhere, the Wall Street Journal published a commentary on U.S. detention practices in the "war on terror," by conservative author Heather MacDonald, called Too Nice for Our Own Good. In it, she railed: Our terrorist enemies have declared themselves enemies of the civilized order. In fighting them, we must hold ourselves to our own high moral standards - without succumbing to the utopian illusion that we can prevail while immaculately observing every precept of the Sermon on the Mount. 165 Here, in the name of exigency, we see undermined the basic notion that [\*34] human dignity is not only technically non-derogable, but also an essential value, a timeless and central goal and as such non-negotiable. This notion is all too a propos when Congress passed legislation in 2006 that may or may not have legalized certain acts of torture and CIDTP, 166 but at the very least has clearly excised the judicial safeguards that might prevent these practices. 167 In such a universe, only an absolute rejection of torture constitutes any opposition to the practice at all. Just as there is no room in a definition of terrorism for a "freedom fighters" exception, there is no room for exceptions in the definition of torture, even - and perhaps especially - in fighting terror. For the most part, in most situations, it is precisely in the allegedly "exceptional" moments (albeit sometimes writ large) that torture is used: on political opponents who pose "unique" threats to order, on particularly evil criminals who are concealing especially vital information, on the much discussed suspect with information about ticking bombs. (This last is a hypothetical I have never understood because, except on television, we will never know for sure whether we are in such a situation until after the fact, and in any case, nowadays most bombs do not tick. 168)

## \*\*Uniqueness\*\*

### 2NC U- Prefer

**Prefer our evidence: non-poll data based on professorial statistical analysis**

Charles **Tien**, Political Science Prof, Hunter College **&** Michael **Lewis-Beck,** Political Science Prof, U Iowa, **‘11**

[12-19, <http://prospect.org/article/obama-winsif-election-was-today>]

In contrast to the usual election forecasting approaches, we offer nowcasting. An electionnowcast predicts what would happen if the election were held “now” (Lewis-Beck, Nadeau, Bélanger, 2011). Thus, the nowcast acts as an invaluable early warning device, signaling what will come to pass unless things change. The nowcast comes from a relevant statistical model, whose parameter estimates are held valid across current moments. That is, the model (with its fixed constant and slope values) predicts the election outcome based on current (changing) X values, as the final contest approaches. Nowcasting, then, is dynamic, and election predictions may be issued on a quarterly, monthly, or even daily basis, with updates until the actual election occurs. For example, a nowcast of the November 2012 US presidential election can be issued “now” (November 2011) twelve months before the actual election , in December 2011 (eleven months before), or in January 2012 (ten months before), and so on to the eve of the actual contest itself. To illustrate, our contemporary nowcasts (of about one year before the election) predict a narrow victory for Obama: the November 2011 nowcast = 51.0 percent for Obama, the December 2011 nowcast = 51.9 percent for Obama. We will continue to issue further monthly nowcasts until the election has past, to signal the increasing (or decreasing) likelihood of an Obama victory. Below, we explicate the theory and data behind our nowcast equation, which we label a proxy model. THEORY US presidential election forecasting models abound (see the recent review in Lewis-Beck and Tien, 2011). Virtually without exception these models base themselves on substantive explanations of the presidential vote. Our nowcasting approach, however, does not depend on a substantive model. Instead, it rests on identification of a variable that proxies the presidential vote share. Through location of such a proxy, precise prediction of that vote share becomes possible. Proxy variables are standard econometric fare. If a variable is unobservable, as is a future election outcome, then a proxy for it may be sought. For the proxy to be a good one, it must correlate highly with the unobserved variable. In a forecasting context, that means the proxy must approach empirical redundancy with the variable proxied. One successful example of a proxy model in presidential forecasting comes from the French case (Nadeau, Lewis-Beck, and Bélanger, 2011). Here we use a proxy model as the basis for our nowcasts of the US presidential election outcome. PRACTICE Our proxy notion expresses itself in the following equation, Vote = ƒ (Vote Proxy). (eq. 1) where Vote = the two-party popular presidential vote share; Vote Proxy = an observed indicator of the unobserved vote. We offer as a proxy the National Business Index (NBI), yielding Vote = f(NBI) (eq.2) where NBI = the percentage of respondents who say “business conditions are better” minus the percentage of respondents who say “business conditions are worse,” as measured in the national University of Michigan Survey of Consumers. This variable shows itself to be quite sensitive to actual US business conditions. For example, in the Great Recession year of 2008, it achieves its maximum negative value, at -81 (meaning overwhelmingly see worse business conditions). At the other extreme is its maximum positive value, at +47, registering the prosperous year of 1984. This NBI, measured in April six months before the November election, correlates highly with incumbent vote share, r = .83. Figure 1 shows this strong link, in a scatterplot over the election sample, 1980-2008. From a forecasting perspective, the six-month lead time offers considerable advantage. Firstly, its high accuracy comes at an impressive distance from the election itself, far from the trivialities day-before (or month-before) forecasts offer. Moreover, this longer lead performs better empirically than the commonly used three-month lag (r = .70). The strength of the six month lead comes as no surprise. Other forecasting work, in the US, UK, and France suggests it is in fact optimal; Lewis-Beck and Rice, 1992; Nadeau, Lewis-Beck, and Bélanger, 2010; Gibson and Lewis-Beck, 2011). The regression estimation (ordinary least squares) of this Proxy Model yields the following: Vote = 51.67\* + .09\* NBI t-6 + e (eq.3 (48.23) (3.69) R-sq. = .69, Adj. R-sq. = .64, SEE = 2.96 D-W = 2.45, n = 8, where the variables are defined as with eq. 2; the asterisk indicates statistical significance at .05, two-tail; the figures in parentheses are t-ratios; the R-squared = the coefficient of multiple determination; the Adj. R-squared = the R-squared adjusted for degrees of freedom;SEE = the standard error of estimate; D-W = the Durbin-Watson test; n = 8 observations on US presidential elections 1980 -2008. The Proxy Model of eq.3 has promising properties. In addition to the fit statistics (of the R-squared, the Adjusted R-squared, and the SEE), it is worth examining the error produced from predicting the individual elections under study. Here are these within sample errors: 1980 = -1.06, 1984 = 3.49, 1988 = 1.33, 1992 = -1.61, 1996 = 2.39; 2000 = -5.08; 2004 = -1.02; 2008 = 1.56. Note that the most extreme NBI year, 2008 = -81, is still predicted with little error (under 2 points). Further, we see that, with the exception of 2000, the winning party is correctly predicted, though one could argue that the 2000 popular vote winner was correctly predicted. Moreover, the exceptional case itself encourages acceptance of the model, since virtually all forecasting efforts for the Gore vs. Bush contest were well off, (LewisBeck and Tien, 2001). In addition, a healthy distribution of residuals can be observed, with four positive and four negative signs. Overall, we see the mean absolute error (MAE) is only about 2.19 points. And, if the series is trimmed, by removing the curious 2000 case, the MAE falls to 1.78 points. These results suggest that the model can pick the winner in all but the closest races. A final diagnostic is that its fit could not be improved, despite the addition of other obvious variables, i.e. incumbency and presidential popularity, at different lags. In particular, it should be noted that presidential popularity fails to add significantly to the model, due to its high collinearity with NBI e.g., r = .85 in October. The interesting implication is that the effects of popularity are absorbed by NBI. As well, the effects of the macro-economy appear transmitted by NBI, e.g., for the correlation of NBI and GNP growth, r = .68 in October. (Nadeau and LewisBeck, 2001, show that NBI outperforms standard macro-economic measures in predicting presidential vote support). One implication is that the strong correlation between presidential vote share and NBI is far from spurious. Instead, NBIsucceeds in empirically capturing fundamentals that operate on voters, such as presidential popularity and the macro-economy. NOWCASTS FROM THE PROXY MODEL The Proxy Model has several desirable properties as a forecasting equation: complete parsimony, long lead time, ease of replication and good model fit (Lewis-Beck, 2005). In the nowcasting context, we simply apply the proxy model as if the election were upon us – this month, or next month, or the month after – so generating a series of nowcasts stretching to the election itself. To begin, let us employ it to generate a current month nowcast, assuming the current month is November 2011. Then, the equation estimates the (November 2011) election outcome from the NBI six months before (April 2011), as follows: Vote nov 2011 = 51.67 + .09 (-8) (eq.4) = 50.95 Nov 2011 nowcast where the prediction equation is as with eq.3, and – 8 is the NBI for April 2011 (indicating that more people thought the economy “worse” than “better.”). As a further example, consider the nowcast for the subsequent month of December 2011 from the May 2011 NBI (when slightly more respondents thought the economy was “better” than thought it “worse”): Vote dec 2011 = 51.67 + .09 (2) = 51.85 Dec 2011 nowcast. CONCLUSION On the basis of nowcasts, about one year away from the actual election, President Obama looks like a winner, although the margin of victory will be quite small.  These results provide an early warning signal to Republicans, implying that unless things change they will not occupy the White House this coming fall.  Of course, things can still change, and those changes will be tracked in our subsequent nowcasts as the months pass, and we move closer to the actual November 2012 election.  We plan to offer monthly, up-to-date nowcasts on these pages, until the election arrives.  Of course, as we approach April 2012, which affords the NBIdata four our “final” prediction, confidence in these nowcasts will increase.  Will Obama hold his lead?  As the months unfold, we shall see.

### Obama Wins

**Obama will win swing states but it will be close**

**Easley, 6-13-12,** Jonathan, The Hill, “Poll: Obama leads in swing-state Nevada,” <http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/polls/232649-poll-obama-leads-in-swing-state-nevada>, KHaze

President Obama leads Mitt Romney in the critical battleground state of Nevada, but the race is tightening, according to a survey from left-leaning Public Policy Polling released on Wednesday. Obama leads Romney 48 percent to 42 in Nevada. That’s down from the same poll in March that showed Obama leading 51 to 43. Obama is helped by a positive approval rating in Nevada, while Romney remains underwater. The president is also buoyed by his support from female voters, although Romney has clawed back into the race on the strength of male voters and independents. Nevada is one of 12 battleground states — the others are Michigan, Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, Colorado, Wisconsin, New Mexico, Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Hampshire — that will be critical in determining the outcome of the 2012 election. While Obama held an early lead in a handful of those states, polls show the contests in swing states have ***tightened significantly*** in recent weeks, which is more in line with the national race, where the candidates are ***neck-and-neck***.

**Obama will win a close race now- electoral predictor consensus**

**Cohen, 6-14-12**, Micah, New York Times, “Readers See Obama Slightly Ahead, With Ohio Crucial for Romney,” <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/14/readers-see-obama-slightly-ahead-with-ohio-crucial-for-romney/>, KHaze

In our overview of the state-by-state electoral projections issued by other media outlets, we asked FiveThirtyEight readers to weigh in using The Times’s build-your-own electoral map interactive. Twenty-seven readers obliged, and over all they see the race as most others do, including the FiveThirtyEight model: very close with a faint advantage to President Obama. Twenty-three of the 27 maps submitted had Mr. Obama winning re-election, but 18 of those 23 had him winning fewer than 300 electoral votes (it takes 270 to win). And more than half of the respondents predicted that the final Electoral College margin will be within 40 votes, whether Mr. Obama or Mr. Romney wins. The average of readers’ electoral projections almost perfectly matched the current numbers from FiveThirtyEight. The reader average had Mr. Obama winning 280 votes to Mr. Romney’s 258. The FiveThirtyEight model has Mr. Obama with 286.8 votes to Mr. Romney’s 251.2. There were a few readers who expect the election to break wide open. Valleyforge, for example, predicted that Mr. Romney would win 360 electoral votes, one more vote than Mr. Obama would earn if he won all the states he did in 2008. Valleyforge has Mr. Romney winning Oregon, New Mexico, Minnesota, Michigan and every tossup state. That might seem unlikely, but Valleyforge says it shouldn’t: It’s easy to forget that Republicans haven’t won a presidential election by more than 2.5 percent since 1988, and our view of the Electoral College is clouded by an assumption that Republicans aren’t competitive in some regions. But from 1980 to 1988 the Republican won 489, 523 and 421 electoral votes. And as much as Valleyforge’s map — if it came to fruition — would demoralize Democrats, he sees even darker times ahead for the left: “In 2016, add NJ, IL (now free to follow its Midwestern neighbors), WA, ME, DE and CT. 418 Romney, 120 for Cuomo, doing his best to channel Dukakis,” he wrote. Looking at readers’ predictions state-by-state, there was a near consensus on the status of most states. Only a few states seemed to divide readers in roughly even groups. Not a single reader expects Mr. Obama to carry Florida, even on the maps that have him winning more than 300 electoral votes. The current FiveThirtyEight projection is indeed bearish on Mr. Obama’s odds in the Sunshine State, but it still gives him a 35 percent chance to win there. Only one reader gave Mr. Obama the 15 electoral votes from North Carolina, where FiveThirtyEight gives the president a 26 percent chance of winning. Iowa and Ohio were the two states that seemed to cause the most disagreement. Indeed, Ohio is as close to too-close-to-call as any state in FiveThirtyEight’s projections, which give Mr. Obama a 51 percent chance to win there. But of the four maps predicting a Romney victory, all four have Mr. Romney winning Ohio, suggesting readers see it as a virtual necessity for him. According to the FiveThirtyEight model, there is a 20.4 percent chance that Ohio provides the winning electoral vote, placing it second to Virginia among FiveThirtyEight’s top tipping point states. MGD, a reader in New York, agreed: “If Romney takes Ohio, he has a good chance. ***If Obama takes Ohio, it’s 99 percent game over for Romney.”***

**Obama will beat Romney now but the gap is closing**

**Jackson, 6-14-12,** Herb, The Political State, “Poll: Obama well ahead of Romney, despite slippage,” <http://blog.northjersey.com/thepoliticalstate/3360/poll-obama-well-ahead-of-romney-despite-slippage/>, KHaze

President Barack Obama is still comfortably ahead of Republican nominee Mitt Romney in a head-to-head matchup, but a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released Thursday shows the Democrat’s numbers slipping and the Republican’s rising. The poll found 55 percent of registered voters had a favorable opinion of Obama, which is down 5 percentage points from February. Obama’s unfavorability rating was 33 percent. Some 32 percent of New Jersey voters have a favorable impression of Romney, up 4 percentage points since February. A larger number, 46 percent, have an unfavorable view of him. If the election were held today, 56 percent would support Obama and 33 percent would support Romney. A poll in March showed Obama winning 58 percent to 31 percent. Women in New Jersey prefer Obama 58 percent to 30 percent; for men, it’s 53 percent to 36 percent. Eagleton Poll Director David Redlawsk said the state “is simply not competitive.” “While Obama’s numbers have slipped slightly, mirroring some national trends, Romney is not yet getting enough traction here to catch up,” he said. The poll of 1,065 registered voters was taken May 31 to June 4, and has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.9 percentage points. Asked about character traits they want in a candidate, voters clearly preferred Obama in every category except “strong leader,” where 46 percent preferred Romney and 45 percent Obama. Given the choice, “strong leader” was chosen as most important by Romney voters, over a candidate to “share my values,” “care about people like me,” have “high moral character,” be “consistent in his beliefs” and “bring people together.” Democrats, Republicans and independents said “the economy and jobs” was the most important issue. It got 61 percent support among those surveyed, followed by health care (11 percent), education (9 percent), the federa budget deficit (8 percent), homeland security and terrorism (4 percent), and immigration (1 percent). Obama was seen as best on the economy b[y] a 53 percent to 36 percent margin.

### Obama Wins Economy

**Obama will beat Romney in economic issues**

**Knox, 6-13-12,** Olivier, ABC News. “Poll shows swing voters down on Obama economic policy,” <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/OTUS/poll-shows-swing-voters-obama-economic-policy/story?id=16557484#.T9qI8LWZ2-g>, KHaze

The ABC News/Washington Post poll found that moderate voters see Obama's proposals favorably by a razor-thin 48-46 percent margin, and rate Romney's unfavorably 47-37 percent. And Obama has more liberals on board with his approach — they support his policies by a two-to-one edge — than Romney has conservatives, who favor the former Massachusetts governor's approach 53-34 percent. The survey had an error margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

### AT: U Overwhelms

**1. Uniqueness *is* the link – Obama wins because he proves he cares about the American public’s jobs concerns. Obama loses if he seems to be busy ballooning the deficit**

**2. Final election will be close- multiple factors**

**Fineman, 4-10-12,** Howard, Huffington Post Politics. “Why The Obama Campaign Shouldn't Declare Victory Just Yet,” <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mobileweb/2012/04/10/obama-campaign-mitt-romney-matchup-reelection_n_1413529.html?icid=hp_front_art_related>, KHaze

 WASHINGTON -- As the air war begins in earnest between the president and Mitt Romney, the Obama campaign in Chicago called itself, in the words of campaign official David Axelrod, "**confident, but realistic**." "***It is a tough environment***," Axelrod told The Huffington Post. "There are events that are beyond our control. And we have the super PACs bearing down on us. But we have confidence in our candidate. We have confidence in our message. And we have confidence in our organization." A second reelection staffer declined to be named, perhaps because he put a more attack-oriented spin on the strategy. "**This thing will be close**," he said. "But I would say that we are confident that the more this is a choice, the better off we are. And the more people focus on Romney, the less they will like that choice." So: combative, realistic, girding for a $2 billion drone war, but confident. Some would say cocky. But should they be? There are reasons for saying yes. The president is a superb campaigner. He will have as much, if not more, money than the Republicans, a rare advantage for a Democrat. The economy is headed -- slowly, to be sure -- in the right direction. As Vice President Joe Biden has said, this is the administration that killed Osama bin Laden and saved General Motors. There is no love lost between the American people and the GOP, especially on social issues and especially among women, who favor the president by double-digit margins. But there are a number of reasons why the Obama team might -- and should be -- more worried than they claim and why they should not take anything for granted between now and November. Here are some: Romney Should Be Further Behind. The man likely to wrap up the GOP presidential nomination one of these days (although probably not officially until late May or June) has to be regarded as one of the weakest party standard bearers since Michael Dukakis strapped on a tank helmet. Romney is the almost absurdly exact embodiment of an out-of-touch Republican rich guy. Evangelical Christians, for a generation the shock troops of the Reagan-Bush party, distrust him. He has had trouble putting away a weak field of adversaries. He is oblivious to the music, stagecraft and human drama of politics. He has been on so many sides of so many issues that it is hard even for diligent reporters to keep it straight. He has been under attack for months by his GOP competitors, who have called him every name in the book. There is an unknown, but not insignificant, number of voters who are unlikely to ever vote for a Mormon for president. And **yet Romney is only about 5 percentage points or less behind in poll match-ups against Obama**, and more important, both men are under 50 percent -- meaning the presidential race is ***up for grabs***. Basic Numbers Remain Bleak to Meh. At this point in their presidencies, Bill Clinton (54 percent) and George W. Bush (52 percent) had Gallup job approval numbers higher than Obama (46 percent) has. Recent presidents who were under 50 percent at this point (Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush, each of whom had 39 percent job approval) lost their reelection bids. Everyone knows the unemployment numbers remain bleak. But so do the housing numbers (11 million homeowners underwater) and the country's "right direction/wrong track" number. In the Real Clear Politics polling average, the latter assessment is at 60 percent wrong, 33.7 percent right. That's a significant improvement over where the American spirit stood when the president took office (69.3 wrong/23.1 right), but it's still nearly a 2-1 negative view of the future. The Hunger Games Campaign. The 2008 general election was, relatively speaking, rather mild in tone. Sen. John McCain, the GOP nominee who had been the victim of a viciously racist campaign in 2000, made it clear in 2008 that he wouldn't stand for one if he had anything to do with it. And the anti-Obama industry hadn't had four years to gear up. Now it has, and now the brief glimpse of harmony in those times is long gone. The president himself is no wallflower. He ran more negative ads against his 2008 rival, Hillary Clinton, than she did against him, and his campaign attacked McCain furiously. But this time he's up against a foe in Romney who has no compunction about slinging fact-free mud. And the fully empowered, "independent," Supreme Court-enabled super PACs will produce a war of attack ads unlike anything the country has ever seen. The president seems a bit uncomfortable stepping into the accusatory environment in person. Mitt couldn't care less. Still the Pied Piper? The president won in 2008 in part because of the enthusiasm of millennials and their older siblings. But it's going to be hard to reignite that wave. Why? The dismal job market, the inescapable (boring) fact of Obama's incumbency, and the arrival in the electorate of the millennials' younger brothers and sisters. The 18-to-29-year-old slice of the electorate is more supportive of the president (54 percent, according to Gallup) than any other, but will they turn out? Not clear. Taxes. The president, for now, seems determined to make his plan to raises taxes on the rich the centerpiece of his campaign. It's true that 72 percent of those surveyed in a recent Washington Post/ABC News poll support the idea of raising taxes on those who make more than $1 million a year. It's also true that Rep. Paul Ryan's budget plan, which Romney supports, would give the biggest tax breaks to those same millionaires and relatively paltry percentage cuts to the middle class. And Obama had some success with this populist theme in 2008. But making a tax hike -- any tax hike -- the central message of your campaign is still a risky strategy, especially for Democrats. It feels good. It's populist and angry. Getting it right, however, and scraping away two generations of Republican attacks on "big-spending liberals" is tough. The GOP slices up the electorate at will, with great precision and cynicism. Democrats haven't really been good at it since Harry Truman and remain vulnerable to the "class warfare" trope. Even Karl Rove's operatives concede that the Democrats are making some headway by attacking the GOP as a plutocracy that conspires against average Americans. The election will hinge on whether the president can complete this sale by placing it in a larger context than tax rates alone. Race Will Be Part of the Race. Obama won in 2008 partly because he raised the hope that he could, by his very presence in the White House, heal the racial history of the nation, as magically as balm descending in a silver parachute. It was unrealistic, and most of us probably admitted as much to ourselves. Now that time is gone, and a grimmer, older reality has resurfaced. Will the bleaker atmosphere help or hurt the president? It may help if, as is likely, the GOP's allies overplay their hand, and the worst angels of our nature appear in the campaign. It wouldn't be much fun to win reelection that way. But this is not going to be a fun campaign.

**Final battle will be extremely close.**

**Heilemann 2-10**

[John, NY Magazine writer, http://nymag.com/news/politics/powergrid/obama-reelection-heilemann-2012-2/]

Yet no one with half a brain in his head—and certainly no one with access to Obama’s ear—is under any illusion that a general election against Romney would not be a close-run thing. (A contest against Gingrich or Rick Santorum, by contrast, summons mental images of a stroll along a road paved with red-velvet cake.) For all the damage inflicted so far on the former Massachusetts governor, he is still running even with Obama in many battleground states and with independents nationally. Among registered voters, Romney is rated more highly than the president in terms of his ability to manage the economy and pare down the monstrous federal deficit.

## \*AT Thumpers\*

### AT: Brokered GOP Convention

**Obama still wins barring any changes to his SQ campaign.**

**Klein 2-16**

[Ezra, Washington Post columnist, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/imagining-a-brokered-convention/2011/08/25/gIQA9SbsHR_blog.html>]

Let’s say it happens. Let’s say there’s actually a brokered convention this year. Who wins?

The Democrats, probably. A brokered convention is most often considered as part of a white-knight scenario. The idea is that Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, Newt Gingrich and Ron Paul take this all the way to Tampa, and none of them have enough delegates to win on the first ballot. At that point, one of the Republican Party’s heavyweights — Mitch Daniel or Paul Ryan or Chris Christie or Jeb Bush — jumps in to unite the GOP and challenge Obama. But this is rarely looked at from the perspective of the potential draftee. To him, this would be a suicide mission. The Republican Convention begins on Aug. 27. The election is on Nov. 6. A candidate who emerged during the convention — or even slightly before it — would have two months and some change to hire a national campaign staff, raise money, get on the air, craft a message, study up on the issues, decide on an agenda, introduce himself to voters, build out a ground game, etc. They would have two months, in other words, to become competitive with Obama’s ferocious campaign organization. And none of the potential candidates have ever run national campaigns before. In Ryan’s case, he’s never even run statewide in Wisconsin. Nor would this candidate have had a smooth coronation some imagine. Brokered conventions are, almost always, angry, ugly things. The candidates who have been campaigning for the nomination don’t give up without a fight. Their supporters aren’t happy seeing months and months of work tossed aside so the establishment can choose someone new. Dozens of party actors — like Sarah Palin, who has been pushing the brokered convention idea hard — need to be bought off or otherwise mollified. The press is swarming everything, writing about the tensions and conflicts and doubts and concerns.

### AT: Electoral

**Obama wins electoral college – most qualified & comprehensive study proves.**

**Rothchild & Smith, 2-17**

[Dr. David, Yahoo Labs economist, Dr. of applied economics: Wharton School business; Chris, editor of The Signal, http://www.zimdiaspora.com/index.php?option=com\_content&view=article&id=7766:obama-likely-to-win-2012-election-with-303-electoral-votes&catid=96:international&Itemid=342]

With fewer than nine months to go before Election Day, The Signal predicts that Barack Obama will win the presidential contest with 303 electoral votes to the Republican nominee's 235. How do we know? We don't, of course. Campaigns and candidates evolve, and elections are dynamic events with more variables than can reasonably be distilled in an equation. But the data--based on a prediction engine created by Yahoo! scientists--suggest a second term is likely for the current president. This model does not use polls or prediction markets to directly gauge what voters are thinking. Instead, it forecasts the results of the Electoral College based on past elections, economic indicators, measures of state ideology, presidential approval ratings, incumbency, and a few other politically agnostic factors. We'll dip into what the model says in a moment, but first a note about models in general: there are a lot of them, from complex equations generated by nerdy academics (like the team at The Signal) to funny coincidences like the [Redskins Rule](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redskins_Rule), which holds that the incumbent party keeps the White House if Washington's football team wins its last home game. (This is true in 17 of the last 18 elections!) Every year, some of these models are right and some are wrong, and the difference is often just luck. As a result, models get a bad rap as being very good at predicting the past and [lousy at predicting the future](http://www.slate.com/articles/briefing/articles/2000/05/the_phony_science_of_predicting_elections.html). But every election gives researchers more data to work with and a better idea of what works and what doesn't. Not all models are bogus just because many of them are. Our model combines powerful scientific algorithms with both real-time and historical data sources. We have examined the last 10 presidential elections and found that the Yahoo! model, which is the work of Yahoo Labs economists Patrick Hummel and David Rothschild, would have correctly predicted the winner in 88 percent of the 500 individual state elections.

### AT: Eurozone Crisis

**Greece won’t hurt Obama- worst case scenarios won’t happen before November**

**Kirkegaard, 5-7-12,** Jacob Funk, Peterson Institute for International Economics, “Why President Obama Can Stop Worrying About Europe,” <http://www.piie.com/realtime/?p=2750&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=%24%7bfeed%7d&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+%24%7bupdate%7d+%28%24%7bPIIE+Update%7d%29>, KHaze

Fortunately for President Obama, however, he can now scratch the euro area of the list of potential pre-election risks. First, the recent decisive deployment of the European Central Bank (ECB) balance sheet—expanded 45 percent since August 2011—to support the euro area economy though purchases of government bonds and the unlimited three-year liquidity for the European banking system have calmed regional financial markets. Consequently, the looming risk of a “European Lehman moment,” in which a large European bank would suddenly collapse and cause widespread systemic turmoil—and possibly have required a federal bailout of another US bank—has been dispelled for the foreseeable future. No large European bank is going to go bust for at least as long as it enjoys the benefits of the ECB’s long-term liquidity injections. This fact takes us well beyond November 2012. As a result, neither the Fed nor the Treasury needs to worry about an intervention that would be exceedingly unpopular with voters. Second, it is clear that euro area growth in 2012 will be very slow, although the region looks likely to narrowly escape recession for the year as a whole. However, the ECB’s actions have prevented a large credit crunch in Europe and hence effectively acted to prevent a repeat of the terrible decline in the euro area economy in 2009. The euro area will not slump, and slow growth for the year is now priced into the markets, which means diminished chances of further negative shocks to the global and US economic outlook. Consequently, the euro area stagnation in 2012 is unlikely to materially affect the US economy and hence the election campaign. Third, the imminent Greek bond swap will effectively take the private sector out of Greece and eliminate another potential source of contagion from Europe to the global financial system. Certainly, there is plenty of scope for continuing volatility in Greece. But from now on the instability will mostly stem from an intra-euro area fight between the tax payers in Greece and those of the rest of the currency union, without huge immediate market impact. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose largest shareholder is the US government, has become the senior official creditor for Europe, but it will not in any case face losses. Whether the Greek bond swap takes place as a voluntary or coercive restructuring, or triggers the use of credit default swaps for investors, it will largely be a non-event with no noteworthy negative effects on financial markets. The system is protected by the limited scope of outstanding sovereign Greek credit default swaps (just over $3 billion) and the well-funded status of euro area banks accessing the long-term refinancing operations (LTRO) of the ECB. Even the worst case scenario for Greece, in which it fails to implement its new IMF program and faces a possible loss of IMF support later this year, is unlikely to have a material impact on the US economy ahead of the election. Moreover, another worst-case possibility—the small chance that Greece might decide to quit the euro area—***looks unlikely to happen or metastasize until around November at the earliest***. This suggests that any potential for a Greek exit and the market contagion risk of such a move will not occur until ***after the US election***. Greece, for all its serious problems, therefore looks quite unlikely to harm President Obama. Fourth, while some uncertainty surrounds the two other IMF programs in Portugal and Ireland, both countries have been adhering to their IMF programs and look likely to continue to do so. This will mean that both—in line with repeated euro area statements—will get more funding should they not regain market access upon finishing their current IMF programs. As is the case of post-bond swap Greece, this is therefore an issue between taxpayers in different euro area countries with next to no spillover potential to the United States or global economy. Fifth, the ECB’s decisive action has bought time for euro area leaders to solve the underlying structural problems facing the common currency. These problems include the urgent need to overhaul labor markets to restore job opportunities, press on with the recapitalization of the euro area banking system, and continue the institutional integration of the euro area. Without such progress, employment will not rise, euro area banks will remain zombies, and the euro area will still be a half-built house. In such a terrible scenario for Europe, the opportunity from the ECB’s recent action to calm markets will have been wasted by euro area policymakers—a failed gambit by central bank leaders in Frankfurt. There are therefore plenty of risks still lingering in the euro area and there is plenty for leaders to do. However, all of these structural issues are of longer-term concern and will not be resolved ahead of November and will therefore not pose a material downside for the Obama reelection campaign. Sixth, leaving aside Greece, where domestic policy may take a dramatic negative turn in 2012, the political calendar in Europe until November does not look particularly risky. The only major election looming is in France, where the concerns in the markets surrounding the possible election of Socialist president Francois Hollande are overblown. If elected, Hollande would not be able to stop the Fiscal Treaty in Europe, although he might be able to demand an additional “growth protocol” attached to it. Nor will his election cause the Franco-German relationship to shatter. France is too weak to dictate policy to Germany today, and the two countries are so closely intertwined that an awkward first meeting between Hollande and Merkel will overcome any lingering mutual anxieties. Concerning the “European firewall”—the establishment of financing mechanisms to stabilize markets and stop contagion—the politics are slowly falling into line, too. Last week the euro area leaders confirmed their commitment to re-assess the adequacy of the overall ceiling of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and its offshoot, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), by the end of the month. In addition, they agreed to accelerate, through national parliamentary procedures, the payment of the paid-in capital for the ESM, starting with the payment of two tranches in 2012. A revised timeframe for the payment of the remaining tranches will be agreed upon by the end of the month. These commitment show that the leaders want to see the result of the Greek bond swap and let domestic politics cool off a little after recent votes over the second Greek bailout. But their statements mean that there will be more European money coming into the ESM and faster before the IMF/World Bank spring meetings on April 20–22. In other words, Europe and the IMF look likely to have the money for a bigger firewall well before any new shenanigans in Greece and well ahead of the crucial final stretch of the US election.

**Anti-Greece collapse measures solve**

**Appelbaum, 5-17-12,** Binyamin, New York Times, “A Greek Exit? Euro Zone May Be Ready,” <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/18/business/global/chance-of-greece-exiting-euro-grows.html?pagewanted=2&pagewanted=all>, KHaze

 WASHINGTON — It is increasingly conceivable that Greece may leave the euro zone, not just because of its own political dysfunction but also because the consequences of such an exit for the rest of the Europe and the global economy no longer seem quite so scary. The foot-dragging and brinkmanship of the last few years have won the other members of the currency union valuable time to prepare for life without Greece. Banks have recorded losses on Greek investments, companies are making contingency plans and Europe has bolstered rescue funds for other vulnerable nations like Portugal, Ireland and Spain. Those measures also have reduced the risks for the United States, making it less likely that a “Lehman moment” will spread panic through global financial markets. American investment funds and banks have also sharply reduced their investments in Europe. But some experts say Europe’s preparations remain incomplete and the potential costs of a Greek exit are highly uncertain and potentially substantial. That reality helps to explain why Germany continues to profess its determination to keep Greece in the currency union if at all possible. Still, European leaders are increasingly willing — even eager — to comment publicly on the possibility that Greece will leave, something they long refused to countenance, not just because relations with Greece continue to deteriorate but also as a result of their own preparations. “We’ve worked hard to mitigate against such a scenario,” the Dutch finance minister, Jan Kees de Jager, told reporters after a meeting of European finance ministers early this week. “That’s why the contagion risk would be far, far smaller than one and a half years ago.” What once seemed unthinkable is being reduced to a budget line. Economists at a German bank recently estimated that a Greek exit would cost the German government about 100 billion euros ($127 billion), or about 3 percent of the nation’s annual economic output. François Baroin, the departing French finance minister, said this week that a Greek exit would cost France up to 50 billion euros — a similar share of its economic output. “Greece is not a big deal in itself. It’s not a major risk and our banks and insurance companies certainly would be able to absorb it,” Mr. Baroin told Europe 1, a French radio station on Tuesday. The more pressing question, as Mr. Baroin went on to say, regards the consequences for the other struggling nations at the bottom end of Europe. He warned that the departure of any member could spread “doubt and distrust” in the minds of foreign investors over the health of the euro. Stock markets have declined worldwide on fears that Europe will unravel. The first job of a finance minister is to convince the markets that everything is under control, and in recent days, European officials have lined up to insist that the euro would survive. “They seem fairly at ease, fairly resigned to the fact that they would be able to deal with it, which I think is a result of the months that they have had to prepare,” said Jacob Funk Kirkegaard, a fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics here. He said the current round of talks was intended primarily to influence the outcome of the Greek elections next month, but he added that he thought Europe was legitimately in a better position to handle a worst case. But Kenneth S. Rogoff, a professor at Harvard and former chief economist of the International Monetary Fund, said Europe had made progress but still was not adequately prepared to control the fallout. He said Europe lacked sufficient mechanisms to ensure that loans remained available to other troubled countries, like Spain and Italy. Furthermore, there is no political consensus about support for borrowing by local governments and private companies. And, he said, there is no credible long-term plan to ensure the viability of the euro. “These are difficult political decisions that they just aren’t ready for,” he said. “They should be. They’ve had two years to think about it. But they’re not ready.” Uri Dadush, director of the international economics program at the Carnegie Endowment for World Peace here, and formerly director of economic policy at the World Bank, said Europe had made significant strides. An agreement this year reduced the value of outstanding Greek government debt by roughly 90 percent, limiting the potential for further losses. A range of corporations have acknowledged that they are preparing for the possible return of a Greek currency. Europe has significantly expanded the scale of its various emergency lending programs. Still, he said, “the bottom line is that it remains a risky proposition.” If a Greek departure is interpreted as a sign that the euro zone is crumbling, depositors in other troubled countries could start to withdraw their money from the local banks, and interest rates could continue to rise. Italian companies are already struggling to compete against rivals in other countries because of the higher interest rates that they are forced to pay. “How do you prevent the disease from spreading?” Mr. Dadush asked. “That’s the big question for the Europeans if the Greeks go out.” The United States mostly is watching from the sidelines. The Federal Reserve chairman, Ben S. Bernanke, has said repeatedly that problems in Greece would have little direct impact on the American financial system. Domestic banks have eliminated more than two-thirds of their investment in Greece over the last two years, paring their exposure to $5.8 billion at the end of 2011 from $18 billion at the end of 2009, according to the most recent available data from federal financial regulators. The banks have also reduced their exposure to other troubled countries, including Spain (down 21 percent), Ireland (16 percent) and Italy (14 percent).

**Neither Obama nor Romney will all a focus on the Eurozone- can’t affect the election**

**Rediker, 6-12-12,** Douglas Rediker is a senior fellow at the New America Foundation and a former member of the International Monetary Fund's executive board. David Gordon is head of research at Eurasia Group and former director of policy planning at the U.S. State Department. “12 Signs of the Europocalypse,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/12/12_signs_of_the_europocalypse?page=full>, KHaze

5. The United States keeps quiet. Here's a not-so-well-kept secret: The United States doesn't possess the inclination, the ideas, or the financial capacity to materially influence the endgame in Europe. Here's an even less-well-kept one: The White House is enormously concerned about a European implosion damaging the fragile U.S. economy and taking President Barack Obama's reelection chances with it. The Federal Reserve has played an enormously important and somewhat unsung role in Europe, keeping large U.S. dollar swap lines open for the European Central Bank that have been crucial for supporting banks in the European periphery. But the Obama administration maintains a public stance that the Europe crisis is largely for Europe to solve on its own. Not only are U.S. coffers empty, but even benign efforts to think creatively about ways to address Europe's problems often meet with public criticism on the continent, with the oft-repeated refrain "Get your own house in order first." In any case, despite Obama's speech last Friday, June 8, ***you won't hear much about Europe on the campaign trail***. The president will limit talk about it for fear of highlighting America's inability to solve a major economic crisis with its European brethren, while Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney doesn't want to appear to give the president an "out" on responsibility for any setbacks in the U.S. economy. All in all, Washington will be speaking softly, but without any stick to back it up.

### AT: Florida

**Obama wins 2012 even without Florida**

**Patrick 2-29**

[Craig, http://www.myfoxtampabay.com/dpp/news/politics/model-predicts-obama-win-in-2012-02292012]

TAMPA - We have a new prediction in the Presidential race. The Moody's election model predicts Republicans will win Florida, but not the White House. The model  [is based on economic forecasts in each state](http://www.economy.com/dismal/article_free.asp?cid=228803&tid=5FCB4BBF-D759-422D-BD25-BFF7D505D457&refsite=twitter) , and would have correctly predicted the winner of the past seven elections. This year, Moody's election model predicts President Obama will lose the state of Florida, but win re-election. Analysts have repeatedly said Republicans cannot win the Presidential election without winning Florida. But Democratic strategists say the president can lose Florida and still get the 270 electoral votes he needs. "We can't just have a Florida strategy, but Florida is the easiest way to 270 electoral votes," said Obama campaign manager Jim Messina. Messina [shared five paths to victory in a web video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7Y-Q9ZY5Ao) (and only one of those paths leads through Florida). Those paths are based on the assumption Obama will win all the states John Kerry carried in 2004. Obama can win simply by adding Virginia and North Carolina. "We put the Democratic Convention in Charlotte in part because we believe so deeply in this map," Messina said. Obama could also win by holding the states Kerry won and adding three swing states in the west, plus either Iowa or Arizona. He could also retain the Kerry states and then pair Ohio with Iowa. The Moody's forecast assumes a slow economic recovery that would help Obama win Ohio. But if the economy changes, the map could also shift. Moody's listed three states that hold the key to the election: Virginia, Ohio and Florida.

### AT: Foreign Policy

**Obama wins a foreign policy fight in the squo**

**Armbruster, 5-7-12,** Ben, ThinkProgress Security, “POLL: VOTERS PREFER OBAMA OVER ROMNEY ON FOREIGN POLICY,” <http://thinkprogress.org/security/2012/05/07/479037/poll-prefer-obama-foreign-policy/>, KHaze

A new Politico/George Washington University poll out today found that President Obama holds a double digit lead over presumptive GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney on the question of which candidate will better handle foreign policy. Fifty-one percent chose Obama, while 38 percent chose Romney. Politico notes that “[t]he poll was in the field during intensive coverage of the one-year anniversary of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden.” Overall, the poll found Romney currently edging Obama in a head-to-head election match up with 48 percent of likely voters saying they’d pick Romney and 47 percent choosing to reelect Obama.

**Obama will beat Romney of foreign policy leadership**

**Cohen, 4-12-12,** Michael A., regular columnist for Foreign Policy's Election 2012 Channel and a fellow at the Century Foundation. “Tale of the Tape,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/12/tale_of_the_tape?page=full>, KHaze

This cycle might be a little different; the very fact that it's actually debatable is a rather large problem for Mitt Romney. Imagine if the Democrats were dragged into a real fight with Republicans as to which party will better protect Social Security. To get a sense of how bad things are on this point, consider this: according to a recent ABC News/Washington Post poll, voters give the president a 17-point edge over Romney in "handling international affairs." That's the biggest advantage Obama has on any one issue, with the exception of "addressing women's issues," a topic that has been in recent weeks a disaster for Republicans. Voters also view Obama as a stronger leader (albeit by a more narrow margin). In short, while Republicans like to compare Obama to past failed Democratic presidents, Jimmy Carter he is not. Of course, none of this has stopped Romney from constantly telling voters that, unlike Barack Obama, he won't go around the world apologizing for America. The fact that this blatantly untrue has hardly been a deterrent -- and Romney likely won't let up on it over the next seven months. Republicans have using the "we love America more"/"we're stronger" card for generations -- and no self-respecting Republican running for the nation's highest office would cast it away so easily. As well they shouldn't. Political stereotypes die hard and Romney's only real hope of taking back some of the foreign policy advantage from Obama is to try to re-activate this toxic perception of Democrats. And it might just work among voters not favorably impressed by the president. The dilemma for Romney is not only that he is facing a candidate who is more immune to it than maybe any Democrat in recent history, but also that his own lack of foreign policy background makes it an even more difficult case to make. Still, old habits die hard. On this one, you have to give Romney a puncher's chance. Just don't count on him scoring a knockout. Advantage: Obama (slightly)

### -AT: Rove and Gillespie

**Foreign policy fights means Obama owns- their authors are idiots**

**Rosner, 2-29-12,** Stanley Greenberg and Jeremy Rosner are, respectively, CEO and executive vice president of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, a Democratic strategy and polling firm. Greenberg served as pollster and strategist for Bill Clinton during the 1992 presidential campaign and in the White House. Rosner served as a senior staff member of Clinton's National Security Council. “From Strength to Strength,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/29/from_strength_to_strength?page=full>, KHaze

Karl Rove and Ed Gillespie's recent article in Foreign Policy urges the Republican presidential aspirants to attack President Barack Obama more vigorously on his national security record. It's a debate that the president and Democrats should welcome. At the outset, leave aside the source of the counsel -- listening to top aides to President George W. Bush proffer advice on foreign policy is a bit like hearing Mrs. O'Leary and her cow lecture about urban planning, after they've burned down Chicago. The real problem with their advice is that it badly misreads both the president's record and how the public assesses it. Americans may be sharply polarized on many issues, but they are relatively aligned on their confidence in Obama as commander in chief. Over 60 percent approve of the job Obama is doing handling terrorism -- and this was true even before the May 2011 raid that killed Osama bin Laden. According to a February ABC/Washington Post survey, voters trust Obama to handle international affairs more than the Republican Party's likely standard-bearer, Mitt Romney, by an outsized **19-point margin**. What explains these strong ratings? Historically, Americans are fairly non-ideological on foreign policy. Above all, they want results, and that is what Obama has produced. Bin Laden is dead, along with 22 of al Qaeda's other top 30 leaders, including Anwar al-Awlaki, who encouraged Nidal Malik Hasan, accused of killing U.S. soldiers at Fort Hood. Obama ended America's war in Iraq, as he pledged, while waging the war in Afghanistan with far greater focus and intensity, enabling the United States to plan for a handover to Afghanistan's own security forces. The president skillfully supported the democratic uprisings of the Arab Spring and helped build a NATO-led force that put an end to Muammar al-Qaddafi's dictatorship. Squarely recognizing the danger Iran's nuclear program poses -- to the United States, Israel, and the entire Middle East -- Obama has persistently worked to put in place the toughest-ever international sanctions on Iran, significantly undercutting Tehran's economic resources and its ability to build nuclear weapons, while also being clear that he is leaving all options, including the use of force, on the table. Even as military spending falls with the winding down of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Obama administration is ensuring America's military strength remains unrivaled, increasing support for veterans and their families, and using precision drones, Navy SEALs, and other special operations forces to sustain the U.S. military edge against diverse new threats around the globe. Reliance on foreign oil is at a 16-year low, making it harder for oil producers in the Middle East or elsewhere to hold U.S. foreign policy hostage. And America's image abroad has bounced back from the historic lows it reached under Bush. In declaring America "the one indispensable nation in world affairs," Obama has refuted any notion that he is a declinist or apologist for American strength and leadership. How voters feel about America's standing in the world is ultimately linked to the strength of the economy, and Obama also has scored accomplishments abroad that should help the economic recovery gain strength. In particular, his administration has reached new trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama, which will help expand U.S. exports, while also belying the Republican portrayal of him as a protectionist. Certainly, many voters remain angry that the administration has not done more about China and its trade practices, though Obama will be able to point to an aggressive record of filing trade cases against China in the World Trade Organization. Given such accomplishments, the Republican candidates' attacks against Obama on national security are likely to have limited resonance. In January and February, our firm and the centrist think tank Third Way conducted focus groups on national security with swing voters in two electoral battleground areas, Cincinnati and Tampa. Like voters nationally, this group was about evenly split on which party does better on foreign policy; many had real qualms about Democrats generically on these issues, due to what they saw as missteps by some past Democratic administrations. But their view of Obama was markedly different and better. In our focus groups, the swing voters give Obama strong marks not only for what he accomplished abroad, but also how: for assembling a strong, bipartisan national security team, with figures like Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former Defense Secretary Robert Gates; listening carefully to the counsel of his military advisors; sorting out complex intelligence, as in the bin Laden raid; working through NATO and other alliances when he can, but not hesitating to act alone -- as in ordering the two rescues of Americans from the hands of Somali pirates -- when needed. We tested arguments that Rove and Gillespie insist will work against Obama -- that he is cutting defense too deeply or doesn't believe in American strength and leadership -- and they generally fell flat. Indeed, after hearing a balanced set of national security arguments from Obama and the Republican candidates, these participants by a three-to-one margin feel Obama has the better case. The main reason is that the president's record speaks for itself. As one older woman in Tampa said about Obama, "He has done a lot.… He has proven himself." And when it came to Obama on national security, these middle-of-the-road voters repeatedly use the phrase "pleasantly surprised." But the Republican candidates aren't only struggling against Obama's solid national security record. They also face two other obstacles of their own making. The first is the disastrous legacy of the Bush administration, which has cut deeply into the GOP's historical image as the party of national security. Voters in our groups continue to criticize Bush for taking the United States to war in Iraq over weapons of mass destruction that did not exist, for mismanaging the war once he started it, and for a general sense of "arrogance in the world," as a Cincinnati man put it. In part because of that Bush record, when these voters hear statements from Mitt Romney or the other Republican contenders calling for a more bellicose approach abroad, such as in Iran, many of them worry that another Republican president would disregard facts, underuse diplomacy, be "trigger happy," and mire the United States in another avoidable and expensive war. Only the most die-hard Republican primary voters seem to be looking for a return to the Bush foreign-policy playbook. Second, when it comes to national security, Republicans are struggling with incoherence and deep divisions among their own candidates. Romney calls for a huge expansion of U.S. military forces and spending, while Ron Paul calls for giving up virtually all of America's military bases abroad. Various Republican contenders criticize Obama for winding down the war in Afghanistan (and the one in Iraq), but none has offered a plan for how to achieve a better outcome. Rove and Gillespie are right on one point, though. Even at a time when voters are chiefly concerned about the state of the economy, foreign policy will still play a big role in the coming presidential contest. Americans know that the world remains dangerous, that the terrorist threat remains, and that U.S. efforts abroad do much to shape opportunities at home. That's precisely why the president -- along with the rest of the Democratic Party -- should welcome a fight over national security and foreign policy in this year's campaign. Given Obama's record and deep doubts about the competence of the GOP candidates, what used to be Republican terrain is now an area of growing Democratic strength.

### -AT: Afghanistan

( ) Afghanistan is irrelevant – American’s oppose the war

Lindsay 1/23/12 **(James M. Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Policy and Obama’s State of the Union Address”)** [**http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137051/james-m-lindsay/foreign-policy-and-obamas-state-of-the-union-address?page=2**](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137051/james-m-lindsay/foreign-policy-and-obamas-state-of-the-union-address?page=2)

Regarding the war in Afghanistan, Obama's surge policy has left both conservatives and liberals dissatisfied. The former complain that he undercut the surge by beginning to draw down U.S. forces before the Taliban were defeated. The latter assert that he never should have surged troops in the first place. Fortunately for Obama, the conservative complaints about his Afghanistan policy are not resonating with the American public now -- and are not likely to in the future. According to Quinnipiac University and CNN/ORC International surveys, two out of three Americans oppose the war. So Obama will likely stress that he is winding down the United States' involvement in Afghanistan in a deliberate and responsible fashion that transfers authority to the Afghans themselves while protecting U.S. national security interests.

( ) We will pull out before the elections – won’t be a loss for Obama

Feldman 3/18/12 **(Noah, Law Prof @ Harvard University, “Afghanistan Setbacks May Lead to Pre-Election U.S. Exit”)**

In terms of U.S. politics, concern with losing American lives is coming to outweigh desire for salvaging some sort of victory. Should the Obama administration decide to abandon ship this year, it is not even clear who will object. Yes, it will be a black day for Afghanistan women, human-rights advocates and all those who bravely and perhaps a little foolishly took the side of democracy and hope. But it is hard to imagine any very great criticism of Obama, even from a Republican candidate in a heated election. The American public knows the war is over. The Afghan public knows it. The tragedy, unfortunately, is just beginning.

### -AT: Iran

**American’s aren’t paying attention to Iran**

**Lindsay 1/23/12** (James M. Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Policy and Obama’s State of the Union Address”) <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137051/james-m-lindsay/foreign-policy-and-obamas-state-of-the-union-address?page=2>

Obama's saving grace is that Americans are not paying much attention to Iran right now. To limit the political damage to his campaign in the event that they start to, he will undoubtedly reiterate a firm commitment to keeping the country from acquiring a nuclear weapon. He will likely point to his success in building the broad-based international coalition that is currently poised to impose crippling sanctions on Iran. He will also note that his persistent diplomacy has persuaded even Beijing to join the chorus of voices warning Tehran against going nuclear. Finally, he will surely repeat what has become his administration's well-worn talking point: When it comes to Iran's nuclear program, all options are on the table.

### -AT: Terrorism

**Terrorism issue means Obama wins**

**Cohen, 4-12-12,** Michael A., regular columnist for Foreign Policy's Election 2012 Channel and a fellow at the Century Foundation. “Tale of the Tape,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/12/tale_of_the_tape?page=full>, KHaze

It's not 2004 anymore, when terrorism and the threat from al Qaeda was front and center in American politics, but that doesn't mean the issue will be off the radar screen in 2012 -- particularly if the Obama camp has anything to say about it. With the killing of Osama bin Laden (an issue that featured prominently in Davis Guggenheim's recently released short film about the Obama presidency) and, even more important, the lack of any serious terrorist incident since Obama took office, this is perhaps the killer foreign policy uppercut for the incumbent. Indeed, by one measure, it is the single issue on which Obama earns the strongest marks from voters -- 63 percent of Americans approve of the manner in which the president has handled terrorism. For Obama, his effectiveness at "fighting terrorism" is more than just an issue advantage, it's a key validator of his foreign policy performance, his leadership, and his fortitude in keeping America safe (or at least that's how the White House will spin it). His continued ramping up of the drone war only reinforces the message that he's not about to waver in the fight with al Qaeda or its affiliates and while there's certainly criticism to made of the president over his failure to close Guantanamo Bay or his lack of fealty to protecting basic civil liberties -- these are hardly place in which a Republican nominee not named Ron Paul is going to try and jab him. In short, Romney will have few opportunities to lay a glove on Obama on the issue of terrorism; the less he says about it, probably the better. Advantage: Obama

### -AT: Withdrawal

**Withdrawal debate means Obama wins**

**Cohen, 4-12-12,** Michael A., regular columnist for Foreign Policy's Election 2012 Channel and a fellow at the Century Foundation. “Tale of the Tape,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/12/tale_of_the_tape?page=full>, KHaze

Ending America's wars: Generally speaking, a Democrat incumbent who ended one war and wound down another during his presidency might be considered vulnerable to traditional Republican attacks of foreign policy weakness. Not this cycle. Let's face it, Americans don't agree on much these days. If Barack Obama says the sky is blue, a Republican might be inclined to argue "no, in fact it's green ... and blue is a socialist plot." The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are two notable exceptions. **By wide margins**, Americans are supportive of the U.S. pull out from Iraq and the beginning of the drawdown from Afghanistan -- even a majority of Republicans supported the president on the full withdrawal from Iraq. On Afghanistan, a majority of the country wants the United States to get out now, even before completing its current training mission of the Afghan Army. Another 60 percent now believes the war "was not worth fighting." Amazingly, these data points have not really dented Obama's approval on this issue -- which is just under 50 percent. That the president has escaped such little blame for a policy that is so deeply unpopular and has been so badly managed, is truly one of the great enigmas of his presidency. Nonetheless, the drawdown from Iraq and Afghanistan are both sources of support for president's foreign policy performance -- so much so that the Obama campaign has already begun attacking Romney for suggesting that the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq was precipitous and, in his words, "tragic." All of this leaves Romney in the rather unpleasant position of playing defense. If he criticizes the president for too rapidly withdrawing from Afghanistan or -- as he has been prone to do -- hits him for supposedly putting politics ahead of the advice of his generals it will beg the question, "Does Romney want to stay longer in Afghanistan?" That hardly seems like a winning political stance for any candidate this cycle. So on this issue, Obama has not only a nearly impenetrable defense; he's got a few good left hooks in the arsenal. Advantage: Obama

### AT: Gas Prices

**Gas prices won’t hurt Obama**

**LeVine, 3-13-12,** Steve, blogger for Foreign Policy’s Channel “Oil and Glory”, “Republicans won't like it, but why Obama will release stockpiled oil anyway,” <http://oilandglory.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/03/13/republicans_wont_like_it_but_why_obama_will_release_stockpiled_oil_anyway>, KHaze

Assuming gasoline prices continue their relentless upward climb, President Obama will be forced to release oil from the [Strategic Petroleum Reserve], especially if he can point to some international developments to justify the move -- increased tension in the Middle East, mounting violence in Nigeria, and the like. Also, expect him to give full approval to Shell's drilling this summer in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas off Alaska, and accelerated drilling in the deepwater Gulf of Mexico. You might also see him give tentative approval to offshore drilling off the coast of Virginia. But wouldn't these be just political gestures with no actual impact? Klare: Releasing oil from the [Strategic Petroleum Reserve] would have a modest temporary effect, but the other moves will have no immediate effect and will only be for political show. He is under enormous pressure to respond to Republican taunts that he is not doing enough -- both to lower prices and generate new jobs. For the record, the petroleum reserve, called the SPR for short, currently contains about 695 million barrels, short of its 727-million-barrel capacity because Obama released some 30 million barrels last summer during the panic over Libya. I asked Michael Levi, who runs the energy shop over at the Council on Foreign Relations, what he thinks of such forecasts. I'm not sure whether they'd go for an SPR release right now -- it's a complicated calculation. An SPR release would lower gasoline prices in the near term, but its longer term impact (even later this year) would be unclear. By deterring people from putting oil into private stocks, it could leave the economy more exposed to later shocks. None of the other steps would lower gas prices this year. Yet **that is not the calculus**. Voters, regardless of their nationality, often **will give an incumbent the benefit of the doubt for trying**. It is when they see nothing being done that they seethe.

( ) Gas prices won’t drastically change the election – it’s all GOP hype

National Post 3/7/12 **(“Here’s why high gasoline prices wno’t derail Obama’s re-election bid”)**

Only Republican frontrunner Mitt Romney has shown some restraint, stating that while the President can’t set oil prices, he should be blamed for restricting drilling and creating an energy shortage. While Republican Presidential candidates may have earned brownie points by highlighting a hugely important economic issue for average Americans, it may not be big enough issue to oust Obama from the White House come November. In fact, at least five Republican-stronghold states may, paradoxically, benefit from high oil prices. “All but three states considered electoral locks for President Obama face gasoline prices higher than the national average, and all but three Republican strongholds pay less than average at the pump,” wrote Trevor Houser, an analyst at Rhodium Group. “While this isn’t good news for Democrats’ pocket books, it doesn’t necessarily harm their election prospects this November.” However ‘battleground’ states — where the outcome is not clear — paint a mixed picture. Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Nevada are paying more than the national average, and these four account for 71 electoral college votes, Mr. Houser says. The remaining eight swing states pay less than national average (though not much less in the case of Ohio, North Carolina and Wisconsin) for a total of 80 electoral college votes. “Before Republicans get too excited… it’s not the price of gasoline alone that matters to drivers, but how much they buy. And while my parents in Wyoming get the cheapest gas in the country, they have to drive six hours each way to find a half-decent shopping mall,” says Mr. Houser. Mapping gasoline expenditures as a share of personal income against the Partisan Voting Index shows voters from Democrat-aligned states typically spend far less on gas as a percentage of their income compared to voters from Republican states.

( ) GOP states benefit from high gas prices –

National Post 3/7/12 **(“Here’s why high gasoline prices wno’t derail Obama’s re-election bid”)**

Finally, some Republican states may even emerge as big winners if oil prices remain high. “While the vast majority of US states lose from higher oil prices – and lose big – six states could potentially gain. Five are Republican strongholds – Alaska, North Dakota, Wyoming, Mississippi and Alabama,” says Mr. Houser. And in Texas, Louisiana, and Montana – three Red states — oil revenue could offset the pain from higher oil prices.

### AT: Gay Marriage

**Gay marriage announcement has no effect**

**Easley, 5-15-12,** Jonathan, The Hill, “Obama campaign manager claims bias in gay-marriage poll,” <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/227405-obama-campaign-manager-claims-bias-in-new-poll>, KHaze

 “So I think that the results of that poll are probably pretty off,” Cutter continued. “There’s another poll out today, an ABC-Washington Post poll, that shows the gay-marriage decision was **basically a wash**, and I think that’s probably accurate. At the end of the day the president came out and said what he felt was right for this country, his personal belief for this country — at the end of the day, though, ***this isn’t going to decide the election***; the economy is still the central question in this election.” Polls and ballot initiatives suggest the same-sex marriage endorsement was a risky move — it’s presently unpopular in several battleground states, including North Carolina, where last week voters overwhelmingly approved an amendment banning gay marriage. Democrats will hold their national convention there in September.   However, Obama’s public pronouncement on the issue has energized the gay community and secured for him the kind of campaign donations that his super-PACs had yet to deliver.

**Economic issues matter more**

**AP, 5-15-12,** Associated Press, “Obama says economy, not gay marriage, will determine the fall election,” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/obama-says-economy-not-gay-marriage-will-determine-the-fall-election/2012/05/15/gIQA7AYsQU_story.html>, KHaze

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama says it is “hard to say” whether his new stance supporting same sex marriage will hurt his re-election. He says there’s a major difference between himself and Republican challenger Mitt Romney on the issue, but says **the economy will ultimately determine the** outcome of the **election**.

### AT: HC Means Obama Loses

**Voters prefer Obama on healthcare**

**Beadle, 5-21-12,** Amanda Peterson, Think Progress, “VOTERS PREFER OBAMA OVER ROMNEY ON HEALTH CARE,” <http://thinkprogress.org/health/2012/05/21/487668/voters-prefer-obama-over-romney-on-health-care/>, KHaze

According to a new Gallup poll, voters prefer President Obama over Mitt Romney 51 percent to 44 percent when it comes to health care. It was one of the top three issues, along with unemployment and the budget deficit, that a large majority of voters said they cared about. Romney beats Obama 54 to 39 percent on the budget deficit, but the two are tied on unemployment, with voters preferring Obama 48 percent to 47 percent. **Eighty-four percent** of voters polled by Gallup said health care is ***an extremely important*** or very important ***issue*** that the country is facing.

### AT: Kill List/Iran Leak

**Kill list/Iran covert ops only help Obama**

**Cohen, 6-6-12,** Michael A., columnist for Foreign Policy's Election 2012 channel and a fellow at the Century Foundation. “Killing It,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/06/killing_it?page=full>, KHaze

Both stories speak to the lack of transparency in the Obama White House on matters of national security -- as well as to the president's somewhat promiscuous use of force against declared and undeclared enemies of the United States. But if one puts aside the many good reasons to be concerned about such policies on legal and moral grounds, it's highly unlikely that Obama will be hurt politically by these revelations: if anything, quite the opposite. While some members of the president's own party might be offended by Obama's actions, the great majority of Americans seem blithely unconcerned. The stories will, in fact, neutralize Republican attack lines and bolster the president's already strong public ratings on national security. In a country that still maintains ill will toward Iran for the hostage crisis 30-plus years ago and fears the potential machinations of jihadi terrorists, **Obama's actions are political winners.** To understand why the existence of a presidential kill list won't do much to dent Obama's strong foreign-policy standing, it's important to remember that Americans don't just like drone warfare -- they love it. A Washington Post poll this February found that 83 percent of Americans approve of Obama's drone policy. (It's hard to think of anything that 83 percent of Americans agree on these days.) In addition, a whopping 77 percent of liberal Democrats support the use of drones -- and 65 percent are fine with missile strikes against U.S. citizens, as was the case with the Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, killed last September by a drone. The popularity of unmanned vehicles is not difficult to understand. They're cheap; they keep Americans out of harm's way; and they kill "bad guys." That unnamed and unseen civilians may be getting killed in the process or that the attacks stretch the outer limits of statutory law are of less concern. Indeed, rare is the American war where such legal and humanitarian niceties mattered much to the electorate. And, in fairness to Obama, nothing about the drone war should be a major surprise to the American people. Throughout the 2008 campaign, then-Senator Obama was a loud, uncompromising advocate of ramping up cross-border drone attacks against al Qaeda in Pakistan. His August 2008 acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention didn't feature a passionate call to close the Guantánamo Bay prison or wind down the war on terror. Rather, Obama said this: "I argued for more resources and more troops to finish the fight against the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and made clear that we must take out Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants if we have them in our sights. You know, John McCain likes to say that he'll follow bin Laden to the gates of Hell -- but he won't even go to the cave where he lives." Not a lot of subtlety there, but then again not much in the way of ambiguity about Obama's plans as president. As for cyberwarfare with Iran, this falls into a similar category as drones. Americans don't like Iran; they are deeply concerned about Tehran getting a nuclear weapon and have demonstrated a surprising willingness to countenance a military solution to stopping Iran from getting a bomb. In fact, a March 2012 poll indicated that 53 percent of Americans support taking military action against Iran "even if it causes gasoline and fuel prices in the United States to go up." And no one likes when gas prices go up. Given those numbers, it's not hard to imagine that an overwhelming majority of Americans would be fully supportive of a stealth cybercampaign as a cheap and efficient way to thwart Iran's nuclear aspirations. That such a move might represent an act of war by the United States against Iran is again likely of peripheral concern. If anything, it's a mark in Obama's political favor -- a sign of his seriousness in keeping Americans safe from terrorists, from Iranians with nuclear weapons, or from other hyped-up potential threats to the United States. Beyond the immediate political benefit of proving Obama's toughness, both New York Times stories have the added benefit of undercutting a key Republican critique. If there is any one issue on which Obama is somewhat vulnerable to GOP attack it is on Iran and the notion that he has not been tough enough in preventing that country from developing a bomb. Indeed, Republicans have been clamoring for increased covert action against Iran for months. Now, the cyberwar story demonstrates that Obama is doing precisely that. And the drones story is a further reminder that Obama has taken the fight to al Qaeda, which includes the killing of Osama bin Laden and now the terrorist group's No. 2, Abu Yahya al-Libi. The White House can hardly go wrong in reminding Americans of that fact. The final piece of the puzzle for the White House is that neither Obama's drone war nor his secret war against Iran engages any serious partisan passions. Republicans are hardly going to be critical of kill lists or covert war against Iran. They might keep their praise to a minimum, but these are precisely the sorts of policies that Republicans have long supported. Even presidential candidate Mitt Romney, who has been anything but consistent in his attacks on Obama, would find it difficult to hit Obama on these fronts. In reality, there is a disquieting political consensus in support of these policies. If there is any place where Obama is likely to get grief, though, it is from his own liberal base. Since the revelations appeared in the New York Times, the outcry from the president's left wing has been unremittingly harsh. But it's hard to imagine that the Obama campaign in Chicago is worrying much about such criticism. That Obama's national security policies upset liberals only further confirms his image as not your typical Jimmy Carter/Michael Dukakis/John Kerry liberal afraid to use American power. These, of course, are political canards, but potent ones -- and they have clearly shaped the Obama administration's thinking on foreign policy since the day he took office. In the end, there are plenty of legitimate policy reasons for the course that Obama has set in fighting terrorism and restraining Iran's nuclear program. But it doesn't take a cynic to recognize there is a tangible political benefit here as well. After all, these stories weren't leaked to the New York Times by accident.

### AT: Religion

**Religious backing doesn’t matter**

**Clement, 2-15-12,** Scott, polling analyst for the Washington Post. The poll-watcher analysis series on American public opinion on foreign policy is cross-posted at the Behind the Numbers blog. “One Nation Under God,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/15/one_nation_under_god?page=full>, KHaze

But Catholics, like Protestants and other religious groups in the United States, are far from monolithic. Only one in three self-identified Catholics reported attending Mass every week in a January Washington Post-ABC News poll. And even that figure may be an overestimate -- given Americans' tendency to say they are more churchgoing than they actually are. Obama's popularity among Catholics hasn't taken a big hit, at least in the short term. His overall approval rating among Catholics in Gallup polls ticked down from 49 to 46 percent amid the controversy, a change within the margin of sampling error. While most Catholics in a Pew poll released this week said religiously affiliated employers should not be required to pay for contraceptives, just 15 percent said they believe using contraceptives is morally wrong. So how much could this affect the 2012 campaign? Catholics represent just one aspect of America's complex religion and politics calculus. Among Protestants, white evangelicals are a cornerstone of the Republican base, while white mainline (or non-evangelical) Protestants represent a key swing voting group. Black Protestants are overwhelmingly Democratic. For white evangelicals, religion seems to be making more of a difference in the Republican primary than it will when Obama is on the ballot. Romney has struggled to win evangelicals in early primary contests in Iowa and South Carolina, but national polls show evangelicals overwhelmingly back Romney in a matchup against Obama. For many religious voters, specific religious issues may play less of a role than long-held partisan loyalties. And in the general election, one key factor will be how voters with no religion cast their ballots. This group has grown and voted increasingly Democratic over the past two decades, and backed Obama over McCain by a 52-point margin in 2008, according to exit polls. **Over six in 10 of religiously unaffiliated voters approved of Obama** in a Washington Post-ABC News poll released last week, marking a shift from November last year, when just as many disapproved as approved.

### AT: Unemployment Rate

( ) Unemployment rate is giving Obama a bump

Dorning 3/10/12 **(Mike, “Edmonton Journal, “Jobs Report Bolsters Obama’s Re-Election Chances”)** [**http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/Jobs+report+bolsters+Obama+election+chances/6282251/story.html**](http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/Jobs%2Breport%2Bbolsters%2BObama%2Belection%2Bchances/6282251/story.html)

A surge in new jobs last month that held the U.S. unemployment rate to 8.3 per cent highlights a strengthening economy that bolsters President Barack Obama as he approaches the November election. The jobs report "is another plus for the president," said Stu Rothenberg, editor of the non-partisan Rothenberg Political Report in Washington. "These numbers suggest the economy is moving in the right direction," he said. "It's likely to make people more optimistic, and that's always, always good for an incumbent president." Employers added 227,000 jobs in February, more than forecast, the Labor Department reported Friday in Washington. The median projection of economists in a Bloomberg survey called for a 210,000 increase. Job growth was revised upward for the prior two months. The unemployment rate held steady after dropping for five consecutive months from 9.1 per cent in August. "For voters who are used to an un-employment rate that starts with a nine, this looks like progress," said Dan Schnur, a campaign adviser to Republican presidential candidate John McCain's first bid for the White House in 2000. "It might not be a huge victory for Obama's re-election campaign. But it's not going to be a significant drag on him either."

( ) All economic indicators are on the rise – so are his poll numbers

Dorning 3/10/12 **(Mike, “Edmonton Journal, “Jobs Report Bolsters Obama’s Re-Election Chances”)** [**http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/Jobs+report+bolsters+Obama+election+chances/6282251/story.html**](http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/Jobs%2Breport%2Bbolsters%2BObama%2Belection%2Bchances/6282251/story.html)

The strengthening economy is beginning to translate into greater public optimism, even with recent increases in gasoline prices. Consumer confidence climbed to a four-year high last week, according to the Bloomberg Consumer Com-fort Index. For a fifth straight week, half of those surveyed also rated their personal finances as positive, bolstered by a resilient stock market, faster job growth and rising wages. The Commerce Department last week reported that the economy grew at a three-per-cent annual pace in the final quarter of 2011, up from a 1.8-per-cent gain the prior three months. A pickup in economic growth during an election year is helpful to an incumbent president such as Obama, said Christopher Wlezien, a political science professor at Temple University in Philadelphia and co-author with Robert Erikson of the forthcoming book The Timeline of Presidential Elections. "It matters more and more as time goes by. It probably matters more now than it did three months ago," he said.

### AT: Women

**Religious debate balances against lack of women support for Romney**

**Temp, 5-16-12,** Henrik, TheAmerican, The Online Magazine of the American Enterprise Institute, “The gender gap in religion and what it means for 2012,” <http://blog.american.com/2012/05/the-gender-gap-in-religion-and-what-it-means-for-2012/>, KHaze

The chart below, from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, reveals that there is a significant gender gap on religious issues, with women more likely to hold a more religious opinion on a wide variety of measures. A few standout results: A 12 point gap on absolute belief in God or a universal spirit, a massive 17 point gap on praying at least daily, and a 14 point gap on saying religion is very important in their lives. You can see the full results here. These findings suggest that the Obama campaign may have made a very serious mistake by pushing to force religious institutions to cover contraceptive services which they find morally reprehensible. Although the Democrats and the media (assisted by Rush Limbaugh’s “slut” comment about Sandra Fluke) have largely been successful at painting this as a women’s health issue, the findings above suggest that if the GOP can redefine the narrative as one of religious freedom, **they may be able to turn the table on the president with women voters.** The data also suggests that Republicans may be able to narrow the overall gender gap somewhat by strengthening their defense of religiosity and spirituality in America and by portraying the Democrats as a secularist, anti-religious party. While very few Americans want to rehash the culture wars in the midst of a sputtering economy, the GOP could get a lot of traction by portraying itself as a reasonable defender of religious lifestyles and institutions against an encroaching and increasingly secularist federal government. I’m thinking the GOP could say something along these lines, “Although we’d prefer to focus the campaign on economic issues, we cannot stand idly by while President Obama and the Democrats pass regulations infringing on the independence and liberty of religious organizations and people. No matter your particular denomination or faith, spirituality is a core American value, the importance of which cannot be overstated. We wholeheartedly believe that a strong spiritual life provides America with economic and moral benefits, and that a strong spiritual life is impossible unless we guarantee the liberty of religious institutions and individuals to operate in a manner which is consistent with their values and beliefs. Over the past four years, the president and his party have shown that they disagree, that they believe the federal government trumps religious organizations. The president’s contraception mandate, which forces religious institutions to provide services which are antithetical to their values, is only the most blatant example of this.” Framed in this way, as a defense of religious independence from government regulation, the GOP could harness women’s spirituality while avoiding the type of moralistic preaching that often gets the party in trouble with less religious voters. Moreover, it portrays the Democrats as the aggressors in a new culture war; given that most people think cultural issues are unimportant this election year, voters are more likely to punish the party that is perceived as injecting these issues into the race.

## \*\*Links\*\*

### Link Uniqueness

**No chance of transportation debates in the election**

**Halsey, 4-23-12,** Ashley, III, The Washington Post, “Infrastructure projects need public support, transportation experts say,” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/experts-want-to-build-public-support-for-infrastructure-projects/2012/04/23/gIQAvmMXcT_story.html>, KHaze

With long-term transportation funding measures languishing on Capitol Hill and infrastructure getting **little notice** in the presidential campaign, “the tradition of broad bipartisan support for investments in surface transportation has largely broken down,” the group said.

### Link 2NC- Prefer Our Ev

**Empirics go Neg- Obama’s push for infrastructure 2 months before the 2010 election failed to win seats and let the GOP spin it as wasteful stimulus**

**Stolberg, 2010,** September, Sheryl Gay, New York Times, “Obama Offers a Transit Plan to Create Jobs,” <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/07/us/politics/07obama.html>, KHaze

MILWAUKEE — President Obama, looking to stimulate a sluggish economy and create jobs, called Monday for Congress to approve major upgrades to the nation’s roads, rail lines and runways — part of a six-year plan that would cost tens of billions of dollars and create a government-run bank to finance innovative transportation projects. With Democrats facing an increasingly bleak midterm **election season**, Mr. Obama used a speech at a union gathering on Labor Day, the traditional start of the campaign season, to outline his plan. It calls for a quick infusion of $50 billion in government spending that White House officials said could spur job growth as early as next year — if Congress approves. That is a big if. Though transportation bills usually win bipartisan support, hasty passage of Mr. Obama’s plan seems unlikely, given that Congress has only a few weeks of work left before lawmakers return to their districts to campaign and that Republicans are showing little interest in giving Democrats any pre-election victories. Central to the plan is the president’s call for an “infrastructure bank,” which would be run by the government but would pool tax dollars with private investment, the White House says. Mr. Obama embraced the idea as a senator; with unemployment still high despite an array of government efforts, the concept has lately been gaining traction in policy circles and on Capitol Hill. Indeed, some leading proponents of such a bank — including Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Republican of California; Gov. Ed Rendell, Democrat of Pennsylvania; and Michael R. Bloomberg, the independent mayor of New York — would like to see it finance a broader range of projects, including water and clean-energy projects. They say such a bank would spur innovation by allowing a panel of experts to approve projects on merit, rather than having lawmakers simply steer transportation money back home. “It will change the way Washington spends your tax dollars,” Mr. Obama said here, “reforming the haphazard and patchwork way we fund and maintain our infrastructure to focus less on wasteful earmarks and outdated formulas, and more on competition and innovation that gives us the best bang for the buck.” But the notion of a government-run bank — indeed, a government-run anything — is bound to prove contentious during an election year in which voters are furious over bank bailouts and over what many perceive as Mr. Obama pursuing a big government agenda. Even before the announcement Monday, Republicans were expressing caution. “It’s important to keep in mind that increased spending — no matter the method of delivery — is not free,” said Representative Pat Tiberi, an Ohio Republican who is on a Ways and Means subcommittee that held hearings on the bank this year. He warned that “federally guaranteed borrowing and lending could place taxpayers on the hook should the proposed bank fail.” The announcement comes after weeks of scrambling by a White House desperate to give a jolt to the lackluster recovery, and is part of a broader package of proposals that Mr. Obama intends to introduce on Wednesday during a speech in Cleveland. The transportation initiative would revise and extend legislation that has lapsed. Specifically, the president wants to rebuild 150,000 miles of road, lay and maintain 4,000 miles of rail track, restore 150 miles of runways and advance a next-generation air-traffic control system. The White House did not offer a price tag for the full measure or say how many jobs it would create. If Congress simply reauthorized the expired transportation bill and accounted for inflation, the new measure would cost about $350 billion over the next six years. But Mr. Obama wants to “frontload” the new bill with an additional $50 billion in initial investment to generate jobs, and vowed it would be “fully paid for.” The White House is proposing to offset the $50 billion by eliminating tax breaks and subsidies for the oil and gas industry. After months of campaigning on the theme that the president’s $787 billion stimulus package was wasteful, Republicans sought Monday to tag the new plan with the **stimulus label**. The Republican National Committee called it “stimulus déjà vu,” and Representative Eric Cantor of Virginia, the House Republican whip, characterized it as “yet another government stimulus effort.”

## \*Links- Spending\*

### Link- Ship Jumping

**Democrats will abandon Obama’s 2013 budget in response to deficit increases- that gives the GOP a political football**

**Wasson, 5-15-12,** Eric, The Hill, “Voting on budget will provide 2012 ammo,” <http://thehill.com/homenews/senate/227351-voting-on-budget-will-be-12-ammo>, KHaze

Senate Republicans and Democrats alike are poised to use budget votes as election-year ammunition. Republican senators are expected to force a vote this week on President Obama’s fiscal 2013 budget plan, while Democrats are relishing a roll call on Rep. Paul Ryan’s (R-Wis.) budget blueprint. The GOP initiative is intended to embarrass the White House by painting the president’s budget as so weak on fiscal issues that his own party cannot support it, and to highlight the inability of the Senate Democratic majority to produce a budget. It has been more than 1,100 days since the Senate cleared a budget resolution. GOP aides say that if Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) tried to rally support for Obama’s budget, he could get a dozen yes votes at best. That estimate may be low, though there is a clear contrast in how congressional Democrats dealt with Obama’s budget in 2009 and this year. Three years ago, the Democratic-led Senate passed Obama’s budget 55-43. Obama’s approval ratings were much higher at the time, which fostered strong Democratic unity on Capitol Hill. Some centrist Democrats, including Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-N.D.), have said they prefer a budget with **deeper deficit cuts** than Obama presented. Vulnerable Democratic senators are seen as unwilling to vote for the tax increases detailed in the White House budget.

### Link- Debt Ceiling Fight

**New spending re-ignites debt ceiling fights and makes Obama look hypocritical- undermines voter confidence in him**

**Cowan, 5-15-12,** Richard, Reuters, “UPDATE 1-US House Speaker Boehner links debt hike to spending cuts,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/15/usa-congress-debt-idUSL1E8GF77820120515>, KHaze

WASHINGTON, May 15 (Reuters) - U.S. House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner drew an election-year battle line on Tuesday, saying he would back an increase in the government's borrowing authority again **only if there was just as much in new spending cuts.** Drawing quick fire from President Barack Obama's Democrats, Boehner said he would insist "on my simple principle of cuts and reforms greater than the debt limit increase." His remarks, in a speech prepared for delivery later in the day at a Peterson Foundation fiscal forum, reopened last year's battle over the raising the debt limit, which allows the government to spend more than the revenues it takes in. Boehner staked out the same position during that fight, bringing the United States to the brink of an historic default on Treasury debt before an 11th-hour deal to force $2.1 trillion in spending cuts over 10 years in exchange for a $2.1 trillion increase in the borrowing cap. Senate Charles Schumer, a member of Democratic leadership, said: "It is pretty galling for Speaker Boehner to be laying down demands for another debt ceiling agreement when he won't even abide by the last one." Schumer, who has accused Boehner of backing away from what Democrats contend were mutually agreed spending levels, said, "The last thing the country needs is a rerun of last summer's debacle that nearly brought down our economy." Boehner also stuck to his position that he would accept no tax increases in deficit reduction talks. He said that the Republican-led House would vote on a plan before the Nov. 6 elections to stave off the year-end expiration of tax cuts enacted under former Republican President George W. Bush. This will buy time for Congress to pass a comprehensive tax reform bill in 2013 to reduce tax rates and eliminate many deductions and credits, Boehner said. "Any sudden tax hike would hurt our economy, so this fall - before the election - the House of Representatives will vote to stop the largest tax increase in American history," Boehner said. "If we do this right, this will be the last time we ever have to confront the uncertainty of expiring tax rates," Boehner said. "We'll have replaced the broken status quo with a tax code that maintains progressivity, taxes income once, and creates a fairer, simpler code." Obama and fellow Democrats have insisted on a **balanced package** to address the country's deficit problems**,** including getting more tax revenues from the rich. Failing to do so, they argue, puts too much pressure on the poor and middle class for reining in budget deficits that top $1 trillion a year. SAME FIGHT, DIFFERENT YEAR Some conservative "Tea Party" activists in Congress, who were elected on promises to drastically shrink government, had urged Boehner and other Republican leaders to allow a default last August rather than fail to rapidly slash U.S. debt levels ballooned by a deep recession and slow recovery. But the U.S. Treasury is expected to reach the $16.4 trillion debt ceiling sometime after the elections and early in 2013, with timing dependent on the strength of revenues. U.S. debt is currently about $800 billion below the limit. U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, speaking at the same fiscal forum, urged Congress to address "unsustainable" U.S. deficits in the near term to ensure the continued confidence of financial markets. Last year's debt-limit fight cost the United States its coveted Triple-A credit rating from Standard and Poor's. "Only Congress of course can act to raise the debt limit. We hope they do it this time without the drama, and the pain and the damage they caused the country last July," Geithner said. Boehner also will reaffirm his call for reforms to squeeze savings out of large government "entitlement" programs such as the Social Security retirement and Medicare healthcare programs for the elderly, according to Republican aides. Boehner said in his excerpts that Obama "lost his nerve" in the debt limit talks last year by failing to enact far-reaching reforms to such programs. "We shouldn't dread the debt limit. We should welcome it," Boehner said of the debate that is sure to consume Congress at year's end. Boehner called it "an action-forcing event." Representative Steny Hoyer, the House's No. 2 Democrat, called Boehner's insistence on a dollar of cuts for every dollar in increased borrowing "simplistic." Hoyer also said it ignores Republicans' insistence on maintaining defense spending at current levels. "We need to have a big, bold, balanced deal. The speaker, in my view, believes that as well," Hoyer told reporters. "The speaker's party does not believe in balanced." At year's end, Congress will be confronted with other important decisions besides the debt limit and the expiration of the 2001 and 2003 Bush tax cuts, which Democrats and Republicans have both referred to as a dangerous "fiscal cliff." A payroll tax cut backed by Obama also is set to expire then and Congress already has begun looking at ways to replace automatic spending cuts that are set to kick in at the New Year. Meanwhile, Congress might still be grappling with funding many day-to-day government operations in the fiscal year that starts on Oct. 1. These unresolved issues are contributing to **nervousness and indecision** **among** investors, businesses and **voters**.

### Link- Extremism

**Massive new extremist changes cause Obama to lose moderates and independents- they’re key**

**Galston, 1-19-12,** William A., Senior Fellow, Governance Studies, The New Republic “The Biggest Challenge Facing Both Romney and Obama,” <http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2012/0119_romney_galston.aspx>, KHaze

A similar trend, though somewhat more muted, has occurred among Independents, who now constitute a record-high 40 percent of the electorate: moderates’ share (though still a plurality) is down, and conservatives’ up (Table 4). Although Independents are relatively unlikely to be social conservatives, they are nonetheless remarkably heterogeneous. In New Hampshire, where they constituted 47 percent of the Republican primary electorate, 31 percent backed Ron Paul’s libertarian-leaning candidacy, while 30 percent supported the moderately conservative Mitt Romney and 22 percent, the more moderate-sounding Jon Huntsman. Still, the modest rightward tilt noticeable among Independents at the end of 20th century has intensified, with almost twice as many identifying as conservatives than liberals. In part because many voters have decided that Obama is more liberal than they thought during his first presidential campaign, he will be hard-pressed to repeat his remarkable 2008 showing among Independents (52 percent) this fall. Table 4: Independents 2000 2011 Difference Moderate 44 41 -3 Liberal 21 20 -1 Conservative 29 35 +6 In the context of a more polarized electorate, both Obama and Romney will be challenged to maintain a precarious balance between the full-throated liberalism and conservatism that their respective bases are demanding and the stances that can appeal to the increasing group of Independents and shrinking but still pivotal band of moderates. However one may characterize this diverse assemblage of non-base voters, one thing is clear: their voting pattern has become increasingly volatile, producing three consecutive “surge” elections in which control of large numbers of congressional seats (and in 2008 the presidency as well) shifted from one party to the other. If one of the presidential candidates can convincingly portray the other as outside the mainstream, the 2012 election may well be the fourth.

### Link- New Spending

**Obama’s approval rating high enough to maintain – BUT new spending now upsets key independents – makes them vote GOP.**

**Gould and Walter ‘11**

[Martin & Kathleen, Newsmax writers, 7-12, <http://www.newsmax.com/Headline/Gillespie-Obama-economy-leadership/2011/07/12/id/403350>]

4

Voters in the focus groups mainly still give Obama a positive job approval rating but believe he spent too much of his first two years in office concentrating on healthcare instead of jobs and the economy, Gillespie said. But Gillespie warned Republicans that efforts to repeal Obamacare also will be seen as a distraction unless the party couches it the right way. “There’s a need for Republicans to educate voters that there’s a direct connection between the enactment of the Obama healthcare bill with its punitive mandates, and the job-killing impact of that. “If we repeal Obamacare, we will help unleash job creation in the economy. But we need to make that connection more clear to independent voters,” he said. Independents are very concerned about government spending, Gillespie said. “They are not in favor of any blank check when it comes to raising the debt ceiling. They want to see reforms made and spending cuts made before any increase in the debt ceiling, they don’t want to see business as usual,” he said. “They see it as a huge disconnect between Washington, D.C., and their daily lives. When I run up against the limit on my credit card, I don’t just get to say I’ll increase the limit by $2,000, I have to cut back on my spending and change my habits. “In Washington, they don’t seem to have those kind of rules and it’s very frustrating to these voters.”

### Link- Econ Blame

**Obama will win 2012 because he can currently blame the nation’s economic problems on GOP obstructionism. Only plan changes this.**

**Berkin 12-15**

[George, NJ Voices writer, <http://blog.nj.com/njv_george_berkin/2011/12/obama_why_barack_obama_will_wi.html>]

With the nation's debt skyrocketing and unemployment hovering around 9 percent, President Obama will not win this election on economic recovery. Everyone agrees the economy is bad. A reasonable think-through would suggest that the man in the White House for the past three years must have something to do with the mess. But in politics, what counts is not how bad the situation is. Rather, who can be believably blamed for the problem? It seems evident that President Obama has no intention of actually fixing the problem before Election Day. (He refused to engage the debt reduction super-committee, for example.) Rather, he will concentrate his efforts on promoting a narrative that casts Republicans as the culprits in the nation’s economic woes. Expect much of the media to cooperate, as they did last time around. How might the Electoral College numbers play out? According to the Washington Post, Obama expects to get the same votes that John Kerry received in his 2004 loss to President Bush, and then pick up the two dozen extra votes needed in Florida or a combination of other swing states.In my view, President Obama has not chosen his preferred reelection strategy out of rational calculation that it might be a winning hand. Rather, I suspect Barack Obama’s Kansas speech is how he really sees the world. The strategy in 2008 was invented as a deliberate ruse. This time around, he’s for real.**Why Obama will win:** President Obama’s “pick-up” electoral strategy pans out. He persuades a majority of the public that Republicans, representing “the wealthy,” are the main culprit in the nation’s continuing economic woes. His coalition of minorities, labor unions, liberals and gays holds together. He is credited with ending the war in Iraq, taking out Osama bin Laden, and encouraging the positive aspects of the Arab Spring.**Why Obama won’t win:** None of the possible “pick-ups” takes place. The tide of the midterm elections continues in the Republican’s favor. The country swings more to the right and Obama’s left of center agenda is rejected. The public tires of high unemployment and dismal economic outlook, and Republicans make a compelling case that Obama’s policies are to blame for our economic woes.

## \*X Key\*

### Econ Focus Key

**Economy focus key**

**Clement, 1-25-12,** Scott, polling analyst for the Washington Post. The poll-watcher analysis series on American public opinion on foreign policy is cross-posted at the Behind the Numbers blog. “Home Front,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/01/25/home_front?page=full>, KHaze

A slender nine percent of Americans say that President Barack Obama should focus on foreign policy, while 81 percent prefer a domestic focus, according to a Pew Research Center poll released on Monday. It's the most lopsided result in 15 years of Pew polls, underscoring that no matter what financial troubles brew in Europe or how fractious the diplomatic skirmishes with Iran, Americans' first priority is dealing with problems on the home front. It's no surprise, then, that Obama spent only six minutes of his hour-long State of the Union speech addressing foreign policy issues (See the Washington Post's neat graphic breaking down the speech by topic). In a Washington Post-ABC News poll released last week, about half of Americans volunteered jobs and the economy as the most important election issue in 2012; fewer than one in 20 named international issues. Two percent named terrorism and illegal immigration alike. Not all foreign policy issues are seen as unimportant, however. Asked individually, nearly seven in ten (69 percent) in the Pew poll say terrorism is a "top priority" for Obama and Congress this year, though that's down 11 points in the past five years. Four in ten name illegal immigration, "strengthening the U.S. military," or global trade as key priorities for the president. Global warming ranks lowest on the list of 22 issues, with only one in four calling it a top priority. Of course, unexpected international crises can rise to the forefront of political debates (see, Egypt and Libya, 2011). We noted last week that Iran may be just such a sleeper issue, as Americans are broadly concerned with the possibility that Tehran will acquire a nuclear weapon. Nearly three in ten Americans (28 percent) now say Iran represents the "greatest danger" to the United States in the new Pew poll, topping China (22 percent) -- and more than double the number who said this in 2011 (12 percent). So, overall it still may be the economy, stupid -- but individual issues do matter. Gingrich, the diplomat? Newt Gingrich is catching up to Mitt Romney in Florida according to a poll from Quinnipiac University released Wednesday, which also shows that Gingrich holds a two to one advantage among likely GOP voters on foreign affairs. Fully 53 percent of likely voters in next Tuesday's primary say Gingrich would do the best job on foreign policy, while 26 percent pick Romney. It's his biggest advantage over Romney across 11 issues and attributes tested in the survey, and a confirmation of strength for the former Speaker of the House that initially appeared in November polls. That said, international issues appear to be on the back burner for many voters, with the economy dominating many debates. And in Florida, Romney holds a wide advantage over Gingrich in terms of which candidate voters prefer to handle the economy.

### Minorities Key

**Minority votes key to Obama’s re-election**

**Frey, 2012,** May, William H., Senior Fellow, Metropolitan Policy Program, Brookings Institution, “Why Minorities Will Decide the 2012 U.S. Election,” <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/05/01-race-elections-frey>, KHaze

Obama and the Democrats believe demography is on their side. Census 2010 made abundantly clear that racial and ethnic minorities, especially Hispanics, are dominating national growth and will for decades to come. The Democratic agenda— favoring broader federal support for medical care, housing, and education seems designed to curry the favor of these groups, which played a huge role in tipping the balance in his favor in several key swing states. But while demography is often destiny, it’s not necessarily a slam dunk that minorities can carry the day for Obama this time. The reasons have to do with the complications of translating pure demographics into votes and the outsized role that the nation's still large white population can exert on national politics. The 2010 midterm Republican surge is an example. With the economy in freefall and disenchantment with early Obama initiatives rising, even sympathetic white voting blocs—like college graduate women— fled the Democrats in what The National Journal’s Ron Brownstein termed a “white flight.” Of course the president's public approval ratings have risen since then, and the economy has picked up some. The country is clearly not at the same place economically as it was in 2008 or 2010. Recently released Census Bureau Current Population Survey data from January 2012 permit a simulation of this year’s election under different white and minority voting scenarios. They show that Obama’s reelection is even more dependent on minority support than in 2008—and not just in the most racially diverse states. Two factors are key to translating minority population into votes in 2012: eligibility and turnout. The minority/eligible voter disconnect. The minority representation in the total population overstates its presence among eligible voters because our fastest growing minorities are either too young to vote or are less likely to be citizens, even when here legally. For every 100 Hispanic residents in the United States, only 44 are eligible voters aged 18 and over and U.S. citizens. In contrast, 78 of every 100 white residents are able to vote. In this respect, Asians are more like Hispanics and blacks are more like whites. So even though minorities are growing faster than whites overall, the latter are more heavily represented among eligible voters (71 percent) than in the total population (63 percent). This disparity is even larger in many fast growing “new minority” states. In Nevada, whites comprise 51 percent of the population but fully 61 percent of eligible voters. Other states where minority voters are strongly underrepresented include Arizona, California, Texas, and Florida (Table 1). Further diminishing minority electoral clout is lower voter turnout. In each of the last two elections, the share of eligible minority voters who voted was 15 to 20 percent less than for whites. Turnout rates were smallest for the fast growing Hispanic and Asian populations. As a consequence, the white share of actual voters will be even larger than it is among eligible voters (estimated to be about 75 percent of voters in November). Why minorities mattered in 2008. Minorities mattered in 2008 for three reasons: first, their relative sizes compared with whites increased in each state; second, their enthusiasm for the Democratic candidate was greater than in 2004; and third, white support for the Republican candidate (John McCain) waned in comparison to the previous election. The uptick in minority enthusiasm for the first black presidential candidate resulted in higher turnout rates, and larger Democratic vote margins nationally than in 2004. This was the case in most but not all states, including Nevada and Florida, where Hispanics, blacks, and other minorities turned the tide toward the Democrats. Often overlooked, but just as important, was weaker white Republican support in terms of both turnout and margin. Although whites dominated the electorate in states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana, their tepid support for McCain opened the door for those states’ much smaller minority populations to tip the balance to Obama. In more diverse states like North Carolina and Virginia, minorities would not have made the difference were it not for sharply lower white Republican support than in 2004. Minorities and the 2012 election. As we approach November, minorities will account for a slightly larger share of eligible voters than in 2008. At the same time, white support for the Republican candidate may be greater than in 2008. Which dynamic will prevail? Three simulations—based on January 2012 eligible voter populations in every state (Table 2), but with different assumptions about white and minority turnout and voting—provide clues as to November’s possible results Each simulation assesses how many states and Electoral College votes Obama and Romney would win, and for which states minorities are responsible for the win (states where whites voted for the losing candidate). Scenario A, the best case for Democrats, assumes that the 2008 turnout and voting patterns again apply to new population. If that occurs, Obama wins with 29 states and 358 electoral votes. These are the same states he took in 2008—changing racial demographics did not put any new states in his column. As with the 2008 win, 10 state victories (representing 39 percent of his electoral votes) can be attributed to minority voters. These states put him over the winning 270 electoral vote threshold. Scenario B, the best-case for Republicans, applies 2004 turnout and voting patterns to the 2012 population. This time, Romney beats Obama with 286 electoral votes in 30 states. The stronger white support for Republicans here, compared with Scenario A, is evident even in big states taken by Democrats, like California, New York and Illinois where whites voted Republican and minorities were responsible for the wins. Scenario C signals something closer to what this year’s election promises—strong partisan participation for both whites and minorities. Whites in each state are assumed to mimic their 2004 turnout and voting patterns, reflecting higher levels of enthusiasm for the Republican nominee than in 2008. Minorities are presumed to follow their strong 2008 turnout and voting margins. The results favor an Obama win—but barely. Obama squeaks by with 292 electoral votes spread among 24 states. Of these votes, 230 are attributable to 14 states where the minorities were responsible for his victory (including eight where whites voted for Obama in 2008). In essence, ***about four-fifths of Obama’s electoral votes are attributable to states won by minorities***. Among the new states where Obama depends on minorities under this scenario are California, New York, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. Among the 14 states, Obama’s victories in Florida, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Oregon (66 electoral votes total) would be particularly close. This scenario awards Romney five states that Obama won in 2008: Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia, Indiana and Colorado. The 27 states (and 246 electoral votes) that Romney gains under this scenario are not all decisive wins either. While whites vote Republican in each, overall margins are very close in Ohio and Missouri, large states with substantial minority populations. Whatever scenario comes to pass, minorities are going to matter in November. The new demography of the electorate guarantees it. Their significance lies not just in racially diverse battleground states on the coasts, Southeast, and Mountain West. If the white Republican base turns out in full force, the votes of African Americans and growing Hispanic populations will be necessary for Democratic wins in a slew of interior states with largely white electorates. The 2012 election will most assuredly be a battle of turnout and its outcome will greatly depend on the enthusiasm of minority voting blocs.

### Swing Votes Key

**Independents are key- 1/5 of the electorate**

**Galston, 3-12-12,** William A., Senior Fellow, Governance Studies The New Republic, Brookings “Ignore Swing Voters at Your Peril!” <http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2012/0312_vote_galston.aspx>, KHaze

Still, there are some aspects of independents’ decision-making and weight that these aggregate statistics don’t quite capture. Consider the stark difference between two recent off-year elections—2006 and 2010. In 2006, 93 percent of Democrats voted for Democratic candidates, and 91 percent of Republicans for Republicans, while independents favored Democratic candidates 57 to 39. In 2010, as in 2006, overwhelming majorities of partisans went with their partisanship—91 percent for Democrats, 94 percent for Republicans. But this time, 56 percent of independents voted for Republican candidates (up 17 points from 2006) while only 37 percent favored Democrats (down 20 points). To be sure, independents’ share of the electorate rose from 26 percent in 2006 to 29 percent in 2010. But even if every additional independent voter had gone Republican, that wouldn’t be nearly enough to explain the dramatic shift. At least when it came to these congressional races, independents were a lot swingier. In addition, Teixeira doesn’t explore in any detail those swing voters who don’t consider themselves independents at all. The Swing Voter in American Politics, the anthology of essays to which Teixeira refers in passing, suggests that there are quite a few. One political scientist—William Mayer—finds that swing voters averaged 23 percent of the electorate between 1972 and 2004, with considerable variation from year to year. Using a somewhat different methodology and metric, another political scientist—James Campbell—found about 17 percent. Because pure (swing) independents are only about 7 percent of the electorate, these results suggest that more swing voters are partisans than independents. (All other things being equal, however, independents are more likely than partisans to be swing voters.) On their face, these findings also suggest that national campaigns can rarely afford to ignore swing voters. While there are some years (2004, for example) when they are less numerous, not speaking directly to a group that averages one-fifth of the electorate is hardly a formula for optimal results. It turns out that the attitudes of swing voters are more distinctive than their demographics. Compared to non-swing voters, swing voters report being more moderate and less politically engaged. And they tend to be in the middle range on information—better informed than non-voters, less informed than voters who have made up their minds. But—and this is crucial—they have a solid enough base of information to understand, and be influenced by, additional information they receive during campaigns. And they are much easier to reach than non-voters. The bottom line: While Teixeira rightly debunks the myth of free-range independents, it would be wrong to conclude that the politics of mobilizing core supporters is all that matters. **Even in these hyperpolarized times**, there are lots of voters who remain open to a politics of persuasion—more than enough to determine the outcome—and campaigns ignore them at their peril.

## \*AT: Link Turns\*

### AT: Link Turns

**Hatred of spending overwhelms support for infastructure**

**MSNBC, 2011,** February, 17, “Poll: Support for infrastructure spending, but not paying for it,” <http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2011/02/17/6075671-poll-support-for-infrastructure-spending-but-not-paying-for-it?lite>, KHaze

But support **plummeted** to 40% when respondents were asked if they would support replacing the per-gallon gasoline tax, which has stayed at the same level since 1993, with a fee based on the number of miles driven. While a gas-tax hike would be a quick way to increase revenue, its unpopularity among voters means it’s unlikely to become a reality in Congress, Campbell said. “This is really the rock and a hard place for lawmakers,” he said. “Voters say our infrastructure is lacking, they say it should be modernized, they say it should be improved, **but they resist paying for it.”**

**Quick passage ensures public backlash- perceive the plan as a wasteful bailout to Wall Street**

**Luntz, 2009,** Frank, LA Times, “Infrastructure: It's Job 1 to Americans,” [http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-luntz23-2009jan23,0,2761866.story](http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-luntz23-2009jan23%2C0%2C2761866.story), KHaze

But there's more: Accountability. The poll found that Americans are far less interested in doing [infrastructure] projects quickly than in doing them right. "Don't screw it up" would be a more popular rallying cry than "get it done." Washington should not mistake the message of the November election and the desire for change with an "at all cost" mentality. In the poll, 61% chose "accountability" as their first or second priority in any government investment -- **not the creation of jobs (34%)** and not that the investment be truly national in scope (25%). The context of the poll is clear: ***Americans have a serious case of bailout fatigue***. They've seen government pony up to Wall Street and Motor City. Yet the stock market continues to fall, jobs continue to disappear and the **spending just plain continues**. Top executives received their Christmas bonuses, and the rest of America was left asking, "Where's my bailout check?"

**Public only supports piecemeal funds for infrastructure- the plan would be a 15 fold increase**

**The Economist, 4-28-11,** “Life in the slow lane,” <http://www.economist.com/node/18620944>, KHaze

But modern America is stingier. Total public spending on transport and water infrastructure has fallen steadily since the 1960s and now stands at 2.4% of GDP. Europe, by contrast, invests 5% of GDP in its infrastructure, while China is racing into the future at 9%. America’s spending as a share of GDP has not come close to European levels for over 50 years. Over that time funds for both capital investments and operations and maintenance have steadily dropped (see chart 2). Although America still builds roads with enthusiasm, according to the OECD’s International Transport Forum, **it spends considerably less** than Europe on maintaining them. In 2006 America spent more than twice as much per person as Britain on new construction; but Britain spent 23% more per person maintaining its roads. America’s dependence on its cars is reinforced by a shortage of alternative forms of transport. Europe’s large economies and Japan routinely spend more than America on rail investments, in absolute not just relative terms, despite much smaller populations and land areas. America spends more building airports than Europe but its underdeveloped rail network shunts more short-haul traffic onto planes, leaving many of its airports perpetually overburdened. Plans to upgrade air-traffic-control technology to a modern satellite-guided system have faced repeated delays. The current plan is now threatened by proposed cuts to the budget of the Federal Aviation Administration. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that America needs to spend $20 billion more a year just to maintain its infrastructure at the present, inadequate, levels. Up to $80 billion a year in additional spending could be spent on projects which would show positive economic returns. Other reports go further. In 2005 Congress established the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission. In 2008 the commission reckoned that America needed at least $255 billion per year in transport spending over the next half-century to keep the system in good repair and make the needed upgrades. **Current spending falls 60% short of that** amount**.**

### AT: Russia Threat

**Public doesn’t hate Russia**

**Clement, 3-28-12,** Scott, polling analyst for the Washington Post. The poll-watcher analysis series on American public opinion on foreign policy is cross-posted at the Behind the Numbers blog. “The Not-So-Evil Empire,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/03/28/the_not_so_evil_empire?page=full>, KHaze

Just over two decades ago, many Americans would have agreed with Romney's severe assessment. But the idea that Russia is America's biggest enemy has very little caché with the American public in the 21st century. In the early 1980s, Americans were pretty vitriolic towards the Soviet Union. In a 1983 Harris poll, fully 93 percent said the U.S.S.R. was unfriendly to the United States or an enemy. In 1990, 32 percent of Americans said Russia (then the Soviet Union) represented the greatest danger to the United States, according to a Pew Research Center survey (then called Times-Mirror). Negative views softened dramatically in the ensuing years, with two-thirds actually saying Russia was friendly to the United States or an ally in 1993. Today, there's virtually **no consensus** any more that Russia is the bad guy. This year, for instance, a scant 2 percent picked Russia as America's arch-nemesis. Yes, there's a resistance against being too trustful -- fewer than one in five have called Russia an "ally" at any point in time -- but calling Russia America's "number one geopolitical foe" makes Romney seem anachronistic, if not stuck in the Cold War. In the past couple of years, ratings of Russia have bounced around. They turned sharply negative in a summer 2008 Washington Post-ABC News poll following a highly publicized conflict with Georgia, a former Soviet territory. But positive ratings recovered last year, when six in 10 said Russia was friendly or an ally in a similarly worded CNN survey. Gallup polls track less dramatic changes in recent years, with 50 percent holding favorable views of Russia in their February 2012 poll. Not surprisingly, older Americans with memories of the Cold War may be less willing to bury the hatchet than their offspring. The May 2011 CNN poll found that 47 percent of those over age 50 thought Russia to be unfriendly toward the United States. By contrast, 70 percent of younger adults saw Russia positively -- more than a 2 to 1 margin. The end of the Cold War surely played a role in softening attitudes towards Russia in the 1990s, but Americans have also trained their eye on new dangers. In addition to the threat of international terrorism, Iran has surged to become one of America's least-liked nations. Perhaps it's also due to Russia's declining global influence: While most Americans see China as a major economic threat to the U.S., a scant 1 percent in a 2011 Gallup poll predicted that Russia would be the world's leading economic power in 20 years time. Mitt Romney's assertion that President Obama was "caving" in negotiations with Russia over U.S. security interests may turn out to be a point of attack. And certainly, there's no question that Obama wishes he could take that hot mic slip up back. But with around half of Americans holding positive attitudes towards Russia, negotiations with a friend -- even those overheard in error -- are probably not enough to dent Obama that badly.

### AT: F.P. Win

**Foreign policy is always a loss – it’ll never get him a re-election**

**Shields 11** (Mark, For Obama, The Road to Re-Election Does Not Go Through Cairo”)

But if the Obama team is planning to emphasize the incumbent president's foreign policy strengths in the 2012 campaign, they can save money, time and effort by forgetting about it. When the economy is bad, the economy is only the issue in American presidential politics. Foreign policy successes do not by themselves re-elect presidents faced with immediate problems on the domestic front. Look at Harry Truman, whose Truman Doctrine providing military aid to Turkey and Greece and saved both of those countries from falling under Soviet control, who rebuilt a war-devastated Western Europe through the plan named for his Secretary of State, Gen. George C. Marshall, who crafted NATO and the European defense system and, through a bold airlift, saved Berlin. With sagging poll numbers, economic strife and a revolt in his own Democratic Party, Truman did not even run for re-election in 1952. Or what about George H.W. Bush? After Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990, President Bush, with his Secretary of State Jim Baker, assembled a genuine international coalition of 32 nations, and won endorsement for actions from the United Nations and from a Democratic-controlled Congress. In an impressive four-day military blitz in late February 1991, the U.S. and coalition forces drove the Iraqi troops out of Kuwait and crippled Iraq's military capacity. During this President Bush's first and only term, the Berlin wall came down, after 45 years Germany was reunited, democracy peacefully bloomed in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union broke up. This is truly the stuff of history. And this remarkable record of foreign policy triumphs meant nothing to U.S. voters, plagued by a faltering economy and unemployment. They elected Democratic Gov. Bill Clinton, whose foreign policy credentials, earned from his mastery of the historic boundary dispute between Arkansas and Oklahoma over who owned Fort Smith, must have impressed voters in Philadelphia and Fresno. Finally, take the case of Jimmy Carter, whose skill, mastery of details, endless capacity for hard work and singular stubbornness were all indispensable through 13 days of secret negotiations to broker the 1978 Camp David agreements, which led the following year to the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. One year later, when the "misery index" (the sum of the nation's inflation and unemployment rates) pushed 22 percent and the Ayatollah Khomeini held power and American hostages in Iran, the Camp David miracle was forgotten. The lesson: A perceived foreign policy failure can defeat a president, but even a celebrated foreign policy success will not re-elect him if Americans aren't working.

**Foreign policy wins aren’t enough**

**Clement, 2-1-12,** Scott, polling analyst for the Washington Post. The poll-watcher analysis series on American public opinion on foreign policy is cross-posted at the Behind the Numbers blog. “The Bin Laden Bounce,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/01/the_bin_laden_bounce?page=full>, KHaze

Obama and his team clearly see eliminating bin Laden as a top administration achievement. It's nearly conventional wisdom at this point that this refrain will be repeated throughout the forthcoming presidential campaign as a singular success. Who doesn't like getting bad guys? But do Americans really reward at the ballot box presidents who take down their bogeymen? The answer may be disappointing. Less than a month before bin Laden was killed, Obama held a 47 percent job approval rating in a Washington Post-ABC News poll. Immediately after the successful raid, it shot up to 56 percent. But only one month later, Obama's approval was back at 47 percent again -- and he fell as low as 42 percent in the next six months amid continuing economic troubles. Simply put, no matter the patriotic fervor, there are other issues that matter much more to voters. Even on the issue of terrorism, Obama's ratings have settled back to pre-bin Laden levels. They spiked to a remarkably high 69 percent immediately after the raid, but slipped to 60 percent the next month. Currently, 56 percent approve of Obama on terrorism, according to a January Washington Post-ABC poll, exactly where they were in February of last year. As we've noted before, his relatively strong reviews on terrorism haven't buoyed ratings on foreign policy in general, nor those on his handling of Iran's nuclear ambitions. But perhaps we should have known this already. When it comes to presidents seeing diminished returns for catching the bad guy, there's a good deal of precedent. George W. Bush got a 4-point bounce when Saddam Hussein was captured in December 2003. But only two months later, his job approval rating sank below where it was before Saddam's roundup. His father could have warned him. The elder Bush ended a long-running feud with Panama's Gen. Manuel Noriega in early 1990 with a swift invasion and capture, rocketing his already high 66 percent job rating up to 79 percent in a Post-ABC poll. But it sunk back to 65 percent in July before rising the next month with the onset of the Gulf War (also considered a big success by Americans). Of course, Obama would kill for numbers like these now. The point is that neither military feat kept voters from ousting Bush senior from the White House under the banner of "it's the economy, stupid." Even though Noriega was sentenced to 40 years in prison just months before the 1992 election, voters didn't go to the voting booth to reward his capture. So, while Obama shouldn't expect voters to reelect him for taking out bin Laden, there is a reason he won a rousing standing ovation from the joint session of Congress last Tuesday, Jan. 24: Many Americans think of it as his best accomplishment. In a Washington Post-ABC poll last June, finding and killing bin Laden was the No. 1 action Obama did "especially well" as president, some four times the proportion naming any other single accomplishment. It also may have had a real effect on how safe Americans feel from terrorism. Fully 64 percent of Americans in a September Washington Post-ABC poll said their country was safer from terrorism than before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, up 16 points from 2010 and near the highest on record. But Americans don't necessarily punish a president for failing to track down an archnemesis. Running against Bush in 2004, Sen. John Kerry said he "would have made Osama bin Laden the priority" rather than focusing on Iraq. The complaint may have fallen on deaf ears. Nearly six in 10 Americans approved Bush's handling of terrorism in a September 2004 Washington Post-ABC poll, and he led Kerry by more than 20 points when it came to whether the public trusted him to handle the issue. The harsh reality of taking down bogeymen is that once they've been removed from action, Americans may turn to judge the president on other issues. As with Bush in 1992, **Obama's 2012 fate hinges on how voters think he's handling the economy**, not his vanquishing of America's most despised enemy.

### AT: Israel

**Israel is irrelevant.**

**Clement 12-7**

[Scott, Foreign Policy writer, <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/07/does_israel_matter_in_us_elections?page=full>]

President Obama and Republicans have [repeatedly clashed](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/campaigns/obama-gop-candidates-scrap-over-israel-as-they-fight-for-jewish-support-heading-into-2012/2011/12/06/gIQA4qWgYO_story.html) over policy towards Israel, incited most recently by comments from the U.S. ambassador to Belgium, who [argued](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/national-security/envoys-anti-semitism-analysis-creates-new-problem-for-obama-administration-with-jewish-groups/2011/12/07/gIQA7z1lcO_story.html) that some anti-Semitism was rooted in territorial tensions between Israel and its neighbors. On Wednesday, Republican presidential hopefuls looked to court Jewish supporters at a [forum held by the Republican Jewish Coalition](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/election-2012/post/romney-says-obama-has-chastened-israel-he-would-visit-nation-in-first-trip-as-president/2011/12/07/gIQA8qWbcO_blog.html). The entire hubbub raises a critical question: How important is Israel as a voting issue? In short, not very. Domestic concerns are reigning supreme in 2012 and Jewish voters -- who may be naturally more concerned about the state of Israel -- make up a very small portion of the electorate, even in key swing states. But the low-interest issue could help clarify choices for Republicans, who see Israel relations as a higher national priority. More than eight in 10 Americans cited domestic issues as their top voting issue in 2012 in a November [Washington Post-ABC News poll](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/postabcpoll_110311.html), while less than two percent volunteered international issues. Even among international issues, Israel takes a back seat. None of the 1,004 adults interviewed for the survey **mentioned** Israel as the most important issue in their vote.

### AT: Women Voters

**They are OVERWHELMING voting for Obama – no risk of a unique link turn**

**The Christian Science Monitor 3/19/12** (“Election Poll: Cavenous Gender Gap Gives Boost to Obama”)

The gender gap between [President Obama](http://www.csmonitor.com/tags/topic/Barack%2BObama) and Republican candidates: "There is a cavernous gender gap in the horse-race poll…. Obama leads [[GOP](http://www.csmonitor.com/tags/topic/U.S.%2BRepublican%2BParty) front-runner [Mitt](http://www.csmonitor.com/tags/topic/Mitt%2BRomney)] Romney by 20 points among female voters. And [Obama] leads [candidate Rick] Santorum by 26 points among female voters." RECOMMENDED: [Getting bin Laden and five other boosts to Obama's reelection bid](http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Elections/President/2011/0509/Getting-bin-Laden-and-five-other-boosts-to-Obama-s-reelection-bid) The expectations gap between Democratic voters and Republican voters: "More than 80 percent of [Democrats](http://www.csmonitor.com/tags/topic/U.S.%2BDemocratic%2BParty) anticipate a victory for Obama regardless of [the Republican] candidate. But Republicans have mixed views. Just 60 percent of Republicans think that Romney will beat Obama, and only 46 percent think that Santorum will beat Obama."

## \*\*ATs\*\*

### AT: Election is Too Far Away

**Perhaps historically that may have been true, but this election is different – all that matters now is that Obama undermines Romney’s ability to paint him as a deficit ballooner- The plan DESTROYS that *focus*.**

**No it’s not – Obama standing up and being forced to defend an infrastructure bill that the public thinks would cost hundreds of billions of dollars, in a time where ALL they care about is the deficit and their work would nail Obama’s coffin- 1NC WSJ**

**GOP will take advantage and spin the plan in their favor – won’t let people forget.**

**Gotthardt 12-14**

[Karl, Canadian Politics & Military Affairs Editor, <http://www.politisite.com/2011/12/14/gallup-poll-suggests-republicans-enthusiastic-than-democrats-for-2012-election/>]

Needless to say the President will not have as easy a campaign as he did in 2008.   Regardless, Republicans should not let their guard down.  This will be one of the dirtiest campaigns in history.  Above all candidates need to grow a thick skin and continue to point at Obama’s record on the economy and refute the democratic spin.

**Current predictions are accurate that Obama will win**

**Pethokoukis 3/6/12 (**James, “Yahoo! Election Model Predicts a Narrow Obama Win, GOP Takes senate”) <http://blog.american.com/2012/03/yahoo-election-model-predicts-a-narrow-obama-win-gop-takes-senate/>

Are Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, Newt Gingrich, and Ron Paul—not to mention Republican voters across the nation—wasting their time today on Super Tuesday? Washington insiders from both parties think that with the formerly moribund economy finally picking up, the election is President Obama’s to lose. It’s an opinion reflected in political betting markets such as Intrade, which currently gives Obama around a 60 percent chance of winning a second term. But does a mild economic recovery really guarantee Obama four more years? I looked at three election forecasting models that key off the economy. Two of them give the election to the GOP, one to Obama. But they’re all real close. And, of course, different economic forecasts produced different results. So when possible, I assumed a so-so recovery, though better than what we saw in 2011. 1. The Yahoo! model. Yahoo! Labs economists Patrick Hummel and David Rothschild have devised a model that they say would have correctly predicted the winner in 88 percent of the 500 individual state elections during the past 10 presidential elections. (Note: That sounds incredibly impressive, but recall that there are relatively few swing states in any given election year.) The Yahoo! model assumes the following: a) Obama’s approval rating will stay the same between now and mid-June, b) each of the 50 states will report personal income growth that’s average for an election year, and c) that certain key indicators of state ideology will remain unchanged this year.

**Predictions aren’t too far out – they can be done accurately**

**Cherry 3/2/12** (“Two Economists from Yahoo Labs Predict the 2012 Election”) <http://spectrum.ieee.org/podcast/at-work/innovation/obama-wins>

But the mother lode of predictions this year is the 2012 U.S. elections. Two billion dollars might easily be spent between now and November, so if you think it’s too soon to predict Super Bowl XLVI, you probably also think it’s too early to call the presidential race. You’d be wrong. President Obama will be reelected with 303 votes in the Electoral College, winning 26 states and the District of Columbia, including California and New York by wide margins and squeaking out a win in key battleground states Ohio, by 50.3 percent, and Pennsylvania, by just under 52 percent. So [predict](http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/signal/obama-poised-win-2012-election-303-electoral-votes-202543583.html) two economists at Yahoo Labs, Patrick Hummel and [David Rothschild](http://researchdmr.com/RothschildCV), who is my guest today. He has a Ph.D. in applied economics from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, where his dissertation involved creating forecasts just like this one. He’s been with Yahoo Labs, in New York City, since May of last year, and he joins us by phone from there.

**Predictions are accurate**

**Cherry 3/2/12** (“Two Economists from Yahoo Labs Predict the 2012 Election”) <http://spectrum.ieee.org/podcast/at-work/innovation/obama-wins>

David Rothschild: Sure. This is a fundamental model, and the basis of fundamental models are dropping out polls and prediction markets and thinking about fundamental data that’s available well before the election. And so this is based off such things as presidential approval ratings in mid-June, economic indicators, incumbency, ideological indicators, biographical details, and of course past election results. Those are the main categories, and what you’ve just read off was making some expectations on what those economic indicators and presidential approval will be later in the summer. But there’s really two main reasons to be making fundamental models like this. The first is that it does allow us to make fairly accurate predictions **well ahead of the election**, which is fun and interesting but also meaningful to those people involved in elections. And the second thing is that by making these fundamental models that take away polls and prediction markets, it lets us look and see how this fundamental data does correlate with election results. These are things that pundits knock back and forth on a regular basis, and here we can add a little bit of data and clarity to those discussions.

### AT: Obama Spent Tons of $$$

**The plan is unique – yes Obama has spent lots of $ this term, but he’s now totally focused on reducing the deficit and painting the GOP as obstructionist. The plan is a totally random insertion of a INFASTRUCTURE policy that the public thinks costs hundreds of billions of dollars which directly trades off with money that could be spent on creating relevant jobs or reducing the deficit**

**That economic focus is key.**

**Munro 11-28**

[Neil, Daily Caller writer, <http://dailycaller.com/2011/11/28/obamas-2012-campaign-builds-quiet-momentum/2/>]

The president has raised more than $150 million for his own campaign, and has held 55 campaign-style events in swing states this year. On Wednesday he will fly to Pennsylvania, another crucial swing state, to attend his 56th event in Scranton. The visit is touted as a speech to promote an extension of the tax holiday for payroll taxes, which are intended to fund the Social Security retirement program. Obama’s pace far exceeds his predecessors’. President Bill Clinton held 40 events between Jan. 1 and November 17 in 1995, while President George W. Bush held 49 events during the same period in 2003, according to a new survey by the Wall Street Journal. White House spokesman Jay Carney has repeatedly described these campaign-style visits merely as non-election political advocacy. “As I’ve said many times before, the President is out talking to the American people, hearing from them and explaining to them his ideas for moving this country forward, growing the economy and creating jobs,” he said Nov. 2.

**Public only supports piecemeal funds for infrastructure- the plan would be a 15 fold increase**

**The Economist, 4-28-11,** “Life in the slow lane,” <http://www.economist.com/node/18620944>, KHaze

But modern America is stingier. Total public spending on transport and water infrastructure has fallen steadily since the 1960s and now stands at 2.4% of GDP. Europe, by contrast, invests 5% of GDP in its infrastructure, while China is racing into the future at 9%. America’s spending as a share of GDP has not come close to European levels for over 50 years. Over that time funds for both capital investments and operations and maintenance have steadily dropped (see chart 2). Although America still builds roads with enthusiasm, according to the OECD’s International Transport Forum, **it spends considerably less** than Europe on maintaining them. In 2006 America spent more than twice as much per person as Britain on new construction; but Britain spent 23% more per person maintaining its roads. America’s dependence on its cars is reinforced by a shortage of alternative forms of transport. Europe’s large economies and Japan routinely spend more than America on rail investments, in absolute not just relative terms, despite much smaller populations and land areas. America spends more building airports than Europe but its underdeveloped rail network shunts more short-haul traffic onto planes, leaving many of its airports perpetually overburdened. Plans to upgrade air-traffic-control technology to a modern satellite-guided system have faced repeated delays. The current plan is now threatened by proposed cuts to the budget of the Federal Aviation Administration. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that America needs to spend $20 billion more a year just to maintain its infrastructure at the present, inadequate, levels. Up to $80 billion a year in additional spending could be spent on projects which would show positive economic returns. Other reports go further. In 2005 Congress established the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission. In 2008 the commission reckoned that America needed at least $255 billion per year in transport spending over the next half-century to keep the system in good repair and make the needed upgrades. **Current spending falls 60% short of that** amount**.**

### AT: No Post-Election Bill

**Obama win causes makes the GOP fall apart- grants him the capital to pass anything**

**Harwood, 1-24-12,** John, New York Times, “State of the Union? More Like State of the Campaign,” <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/25/us/politics/state-of-the-union-more-like-state-of-the-campaign.html?_r=1>, KHaze

And if the president’s feisty rhetoric about tax fairness and inequality helps win him a second term, he might even find Republicans easier to negotiate with. “At that point,” Mr. Simpson said, “they will realize that they spent four years in one noble cause, which was to defeat him. And they didn’t.”

# \*\*\*AFF\*\*\*

## Case Turns DA

### Terrorism Turns Elections

**Terrorist attack makes Obama lose**

**Friedman, 5-24-12,** Uri, associate editor at Foreign Policy. “5 World Events That Could Swing the U.S. Election,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/05/24/five_world_events_that_could_swing_the_us_election?page=full>, KHaze

The United States has not suffered a major terrorist attack during Obama's presidency, and the administration has foiled several plots -- most recently an attempt by al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to bomb a U.S.-bound plane. The president has taken out several high-profile terrorists through drone strikes and touted the killing of Osama bin Laden as one of his signal achievements -- much to Mitt Romney's chagrin. But an attack on American soil could instantly shatter the armor Obama has built up on national security, reverse the public's declining concern about terrorism, and transform the campaign. And such a scenario isn't out of the question. Two of the most high-profile attacks in recent years -- the Christmas Day bombing attempt in 2009 and the Times Square bombing attempt in 2010 -- were thwarted by luck as much as anything else, with the perpetrators failing to detonate their explosives (and, in the case of the Times Square bomber, a street vendor spotting a smoking SUV). As the Washington Post's Chris Cillizza and Aaron Blake recently pointed out, foreign policy has proven pivotal in only one of the last five presidential elections: the 2004 contest, which was the first race after the worst terrorist attack on American soil in U.S. history. And we all know how that one turned out.

## \*\*AT: Impacts\*\*

### AT: Post Election Bill

**Snowe’s resignation kills any bills for next term**

**Yakabuski, 3-1-12,** Konrad, “Departure of U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe a blow to bipartisanship,” <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/worldview/departure-of-us-senator-olympia-snowe-a-blow-to-bipartisanship/article2355200/>, KHaze

She has been the go-to girl for legislators seeking to build bipartisan coalitions in Congress. But with the surprise retirement of Maine’s Olympia Snowe, one of the last moderate Republicans in the Senate, the era of across-the-aisle constructiveness fades further into the past. Ms. Snowe, 65, who has spent a combined 34 years in Washington in both chambers of Congress, announced on Tuesday night that she will not seek a fourth term in the Senate this year. The news hit hard in the capital, where everyone immediately knew the subtext of her decision. “I have had to consider how productive an additional term would be,” Ms. Snowe said. “Unfortunately, I do not realistically expect the partisanship of recent years in the Senate to change over the short term.” With Ms. Snowe’s departure in January, the Senate will become a lonelier place for her Maine GOP colleague Susan Collins, who often crossed the aisle with her. Indeed, **several** of the upper chamber’s centrist players will not seek re-election in 2012. They include conservative Democrats such as North Dakota’s Kent Conrad and Nebraska’s Ben Nelson and independent Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman. Their voluntary departures follow the involuntary ones of Republicans who could not survive primary challenges from their party’s right wing during the 2010 midterm elections. That includes Utah’s Robert Bennett and Mike Castle, the ex-Delaware congressman who lost the GOP Senate nomination to Christine O’Donnell. The result is **a record degree of polarization** in the Senate, which had long been considered a collegial body where party identification was a secondary consideration in passing bills.

### No Compromise 1AR

**Declining centrism in Congress kills any future bills**

**Bendavid, 3-1-12,** Naftali, Wall Street Journal, “Political Center Shrinks in Congress,” <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204571404577253874186956952.html>, KHaze

 The surprise retirement of Sen. Olympia Snowe is the latest sign that the political center is disappearing from Congress. Ms. Snowe, a Maine Republican, cited the chamber's growing "polarization" in announcing her retirement Tuesday. She joins other departing Senate centrists, including Ben Nelson (D., Neb.), Joseph Lieberman (I., Conn.) and Jim Webb (D., Va.). Sen. Scott Brown (R., Mass.) faces a tough re-election race, as does Sen. Jon Tester (D., Mont.). Both face challenges by a purist from the other party. Ms. Snowe is one of an increasingly rare breed of senator willing to back legislation crafted by the other side. After President Barack Obama came to office, she supplied a crucial vote for his stimulus plan and supported his health law in committee, though she later opposed it on the floor. She also backed the New Start arms-reduction treaty at the end of last year. If Ms. Snowe is one of the Senate's least orthodox Republicans, Mr. Nelson is one of its least reliable Democrats. Former Sen. Bob Kerrey (D., Neb.) said Wednesday that he is reversing an earlier decision and will seek Mr. Nelson's seat. Mr. Kerrey has a profile as something of a maverick. It isn't clear whether he will depart from the Democratic line as frequently as Mr. Nelson. "This is just a further step in the same direction that has been going on for a long time—the center has collapsed," said former Sen. John Danforth (R., Mo.). "It's gone in American politics. It's gone in the Senate." In decades past, the Senate had its share of liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats. That changed as political traditions gave way to a closer alignment of party and ideology. The parties themselves are becoming more doctrinaire. A new analysis by the National Journal ranks Ms. Snowe the 46th most-conservative senator, placing her on the fault line between the two parties. Many of her colleagues said her departure reflects poorly on the chamber. "If you can't [work together], what good is the United States Senate?" said Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D., Calif.). Sen. Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.) said he still hopes the two parties can work together, likening himself to an optimist who sees a pile of manure and looks for a pony. "I still believe there's a pony in the middle of this mess," Mr. Graham said. But he confessed, "Some days I have a harder time believing that than others." The consequences of a vanishing center are clear. Many in both parties agree the deficit should be cut by $4 trillion over the next decade or 12 years, but they seem unable to agree on how. A "gang of six" senators from both parties labored for months to craft a detailed plan last year, as did a bipartisan 12-member "supercommittee." Both failed. This week, senators from both parties are backing a highway bill but it has snagged in the Senate over an unrelated amendment to provide a "conscience exemption" for employer health plans, which is dividing the parties. Some challenge the image of the disappearing centrist, saying many senators, among them Ron Wyden (D., Ore.) and Rob Portman (R., Ohio), are willing to cross party lines. "I think the Senate is the only place left in our government where you have a constructive center," said former Sen. Judd Gregg (R., N.H.). But bipartisan bills often fail to become law, and sometimes the sponsors pay a price. Former Sen. Robert Bennett (R., Utah) worked with Mr. Wyden on a health-care bill, only to be ousted last year by the Utah GOP, which replaced him with Republican Sen. Mike Lee, who doesn't have the same track record of working across the aisle.

**2012 election will increase polarization and prevent any significant bill**

**AP, 3-1-12,** Associated Press, “Analysis: Snowe’s departure may fuel anger at Congress that puts partisanship before solutions,” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/analysis-snowes-departure-may-fuel-anger-at-congress-that-puts-partisanship-before-solutions/2012/03/01/gIQAFT0tjR_story.html>, KHaze

WASHINGTON — The surprising retirement of moderate Republican Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine moves congressional centrists a step closer to **extinction** and highlights the great paradox of American politics. Voters say they want bipartisan solutions to the nation’s problems. But they congregate and vote in ways that ensure partisan warfare, driving the GOP further right and the Democratic Party further left. Even with her party standing a good chance to regain the Senate majority, Snowe wanted no more of **the endless gridlock** that has rendered Congress barely able to carry out the most basic functions, such as keeping the federal government’s doors open. She expressed frustration “that an atmosphere of polarization and ‘my way or the highway’ ideologies has become pervasive in campaigns and in our governing institutions.” She told MSNBC on Wednesday that “the political paralysis has overtaken the environment,” hurting the country. Some congressional scholars said Snowe’s retirement is discouraging but not surprising. “It puts a human face on a sad truth,” said William Galston, a former Clinton White House aide and co-founder of the bipartisan advocacy group No Labels. That truth, he said, is that “especially in Congress, the polarization of our party system has now reached the point where building bridges has become almost impossible when the issue is one of **any significance**.” “On most fundamental issues,” Galston said, “the center has disappeared for all practical purposes.” Snowe is one of the few remaining moderate Republicans, a group that once dominated the Northeast and vied for control of the national GOP under leaders such as Nelson Rockefeller. She was instrumental in forcing President George W. Bush to limit the size of his 2001 tax cut. She was one of three Senate Republicans who backed President Barack Obama’s 2009 stimulus plan. But Snowe found it increasingly difficult to reach across party lines that kept moving further apart. She joined all other Senate Republicans in opposing the final version of Obama’s 2010 health care overhaul. And she grew weary of the constant pressure to bash Democrats on everything and to expect the same in return. “She just quit in disgust,” even though she easily could have won a fourth term this fall, said Matt Bennett of the centrist-Democratic group Third Way. “It’s very, very bad for the institution to be losing the dean of Republican moderates, if there are any,” Bennett said. Reasons for the polarization in Congress are well known, even if they are rarely explored in day-to-day conversations and reporting about legislative impasses and voter frustration. Race relations that followed integration moved the great majority of Southern whites into the Republican Party, while blacks solidified their Democratic loyalties sown by Franklin Roosevelt. As Sun Belt conservatives ascended in the GOP, they drove away Northeastern liberals and moderates. In state legislatures throughout the country, both parties colluded to redraw U.S. House districts to make them either safely Republican or safely Democratic. With nothing to fear but a loss in their own party’s primary, Democrats drifted further left and Republicans shifted right, protecting their flanks and widening the gulf in Washington. Mobile Americans exacerbated this trend by settling among like-minded people. Big cities, the West Coast and the Northeast became increasingly Democratic. The South and Great Plains became increasingly Republican. And industrial states such as Ohio and Pennsylvania, plus retiree haven Florida, became perennial battlegrounds. Activists in both parties, meanwhile, took greater control of the nominating process. Some tea partyers in particular vowed to punish anyone who dared compromise with Democrats. Long-time Republican Sen. Bob Bennett of Utah became their first victim, sending a chill throughout the party. Centrist and independent voters, who paid little attention to primaries, became increasingly frustrated with a partisan-driven Congress unable to reach accord on taxes, spending, Medicare reform and other issues. “The public wants people to work together, and yet we keep electing people who don’t do that,” said Mickey Edwards, a former Republican House member from Oklahoma who now writes about Congress. The problem, he said, is that congressional candidates “first have to get through a party primary in which relatively small numbers of people are voting. They tend to be more extreme people.” “Candidates who might be willing to work across the aisle don’t get elected because they can’t get through the primary,” said Edwards, whose forthcoming book is titled “The Parties vs. the People.” As examples he cited Bennett and Mike Castle, the former House Republican who lost the Delaware Senate primary to tea party favorite Christine O’Donnell, who in turn lost a general election Castle was favored to win.

### AT: Iran Strike

**Public won’t allow an Iran invasion**

**Clement, 2-22-12,** Scott, polling analyst for the Washington Post. The poll-watcher analysis series on American public opinion on foreign policy is cross-posted at the Behind the Numbers blog. “Asking the Right Question,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/22/asking_the_right_question?page=full>, KHaze

All these numbers come from polls in the past year, but can they be trusted? And since most Americans aren't foreign policy wonks, are these results even meaningful? And what about when polls show contradictory findings -- like on what to do about Iran's nuclear threat? Let's start with the good news. By and large, polls boast a strong record of accuracy and there's evidence that poll respondents are doing their part as well. "The public has meaningful opinions on foreign policy issues like domestic issues," says Robert Y. Shapiro, a political science professor at Columbia University, at least where respondents possess a "minimum amount of information on which to base their opinions." Even on issues where there is very little public debate (like, say, on U.S. democracy promotion in Central Asia), poll results in the aggregate can represent a meaningful reaction to a policy. This is often the case with foreign policy issues, about which few have ruminated laboriously and even fewer know all the facts. The wording of a given question plays a big role in framing the way poll respondents think about the issue and, thus, their answers. Even balanced questions sometimes get varying results, making it difficult to sort out what the public actually wants. Take the latest controversy over Iran's nuclear buildup. Americans said by nearly 2 to 1 in a Pew survey this month that it is more important to "prevent Iran from developing weapons, even if it means taking military action" than to "avoid military conflict, even if Iran may develop nuclear weapons." One could read this result as an implicit call to arms. But a contemporaneous CNN/ORC poll found just 17 percent supporting "military action right now." Some 60 percent of those polled favored "economic and diplomatic efforts" and an additional 22 percent supported "no action at all. This poll, then, gives the sense that **an invasion is remarkably unpopular.** The poll discrepancy may be driven by two underlying attitudes. The American public is quite averse to joining in another military conflict -- nearly six in 10 respondents in a 2011 Pew poll said that "good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace." But Americans also see Iran as a serious security threat - 88 percent of voters said as much in a November Quinnipiac University poll. What gives? "It's a question of how the issue is framed," says Shapiro. The public picks diplomacy when the question is framed as a choice between going to war with Iran and a solution by other means. But most prefer action when the choice is between "avoiding conflict" and allowing Iran to obtain nuclear weapons. This calculus is colored by the nation's doubts that diplomacy is working. A majority of voters saw economic sanctions against Iran as an ineffective deterrent in a November Quinnipiac poll. Nevertheless, over half the public at that time still believed that Iran threat could be contained with diplomacy, according to a CBS News poll. How the public responds is affected by information coming from political leaders, says Shapiro, and people use this as a shortcut to forming their own beliefs. He notes that conservatives have made arguments for using military force with Iran. And, of course, nearly all the GOP presidential candidates talk tough when it comes to Iran. It's no surprise, then, that Republicans (who are largely conservative) are most supportive of military action in both the Pew and CNN polls. The Obama administration, meanwhile, has been more inclined to speak softly and carry a big stick while it puts diplomatic and sanctions pressure on Tehran. Thus, Democrats are more positive toward sanctions and less keen on taking on Iran militarily. There also may be a machismo factor to issues of war and peace, at least for presidential contenders. Just over half the public called Obama a strong leader in a January Washington Post-ABC News poll, and Republican presidential contenders have hammered Obama for not being tougher with Iran, clearly sensing weakness. The next nine months will tell whether that line of attack is potent of not.

### No Iran Strike 1AR

**US won’t first strike Iran, ever**

**Haddick, 10-14-11,** Robert, managing editor of Small Wars Journal, “This Week at War: Waiting for the First Punch,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/14/this_week_at_war?page=full>, KHaze

Even so, the U.S. Justice Department did charge Gholam Shakuri, a member of the Quds Force, with a long list of conspiracy offenses and thus connected the Iranian government to the plot. Even though this particular bombing attempt seems amateurish, it should be little comfort that elements of the Iranian intelligence service now seem to have Washington in their cross hairs. Indeed, this week U.S. soldiers in Iraq were targets of the Quds Force; according to the New York Times, on Oct. 12 militants trained by the Quds Force wounded three U.S. troops in a rocket attack in southern Iraq. U.S. policymakers will now be under pressure to find ways to actively prevent or deter future attacks. However, a variety of barriers will prevent the Obama administration from taking any strong action against Iran, at least until a major attack actually succeeds. Washington will thus have to brace for the big first punch. After the United States levied unilateral sanctions on four Quds Force officials this week, U.S. diplomats fanned out across the world to rally international support for deepening the sanctions against Iran. However, according to the New York Times, the ham-fisted nature of the plot is undercutting the U.S. plea for cooperation. In this case, the Quds Force may ironically be receiving protection from the incompetence it allegedly exhibited in this case -- the plot's seeming implausibility is causing the diplomats' pleas to fall on deaf ears. In addition, memories of the failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq in 2003 apparently continue to weigh on the international audience that U.S. diplomats are struggling to persuade. Without an attack having actually occurred, with the plot seemingly out of character for the elite Quds Force, and with U.S. intelligence claims now suspect, U.S. diplomats seem unlikely to get cooperation on additional sanctions that would alter the behavior of Iranian policymakers. What about military retaliation, such as a night of airstrikes against Quds Force targets inside Iran? The purpose would be to correct the impression seemingly held by policymakers in Iran that they don't risk consequences from a bomb attack on Washington. If, on the other hand, the Washington plot was engineered by midlevel "rogues" in the Quds Force, military retaliation would be a signal to top-level Iranian officials that they will be held responsible for their subordinates' actions. My FP colleague Will Inboden noted that in 1993 President Bill Clinton ordered the destruction of Iraq's intelligence headquarters after a failed attempt to assassinate former President George H.W. Bush. The message this time would be that Quds Force operations are no longer risk-free. However, the Obama administration, with undoubtedly much support from the Pentagon brass, is in no mood right now to start another shooting war. Airstrikes on Quds Force targets would appear to the rest of the world as a severe overreaction to an inept bomb plot, with the aforementioned international skepticism of U.S. intelligence only adding to the doubt. Diplomatically, the United States would be on its back foot from the start. Air strikes were likely **never a serious consideration** inside the White House. Pentagon planners will resist having to execute an air operation while they are in the midst of the final withdrawal from Iraq and attempting to manage a fragile situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. They also know that a U.S. strike would not be the last move -- Iran's response to the attack would likely affect Saudi Arabia, Israel, Afghanistan, and others. If such an action has to occur, Pentagon planners likely prefer it to happen some other time and under more favorable logistical and diplomatic circumstances.

**Democrats will block Republican foreign policy- prevents strikes**

**Walt, 2-14-12,** Stephen M., the Robert and Renée Belfer professor of international affairs at Harvard University and a blogger at ForeignPolicy.com “Why hawks should vote for Obama,” http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/02/14/our\_new\_strategic\_experiment, KHaze

If you are someone who is inclined to favor hawkish responses to foreign policy problems, then your choice for president should be Barack Obama. Not because Obama is especially hawkish himself, or interested in prolonging costly and failed commitments in Iraq or Afghanistan. For that matter, his administration is making a modest and fiscally necessary effort to slow the steady rise in Pentagon spending, and they seem to understand that war with Iran is a Very Bad Idea. (It is of course no accident that military action there is being promoted by the same folks who thought invading Iraq was a Very Good Idea. But I digress.) So why should hawks vote for Obama? As Glenn Greenwald and Greg Sargent have argued most forcefully, it's because Obama can do hawkish things as a Democrat that a Republican could not (or at least not without facing lots of trouble on the home front). It's the flipside of the old "Nixon Goes to China" meme: Obama can do hawkish things without facing (much) criticism from the left, because he still retains their sympathy and because liberals and non-interventionists don't have a credible alternative (sorry, Ron Paul supporters). If someone like John McCain, Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum, Newt Gingrich or George W. Bush had spent the past few years escalating drone attacks, sending Special Forces into other countries to kill people without the local government's permission, prosecuting alleged leakers with great enthusiasm, and ratcheting up sanctions against Iran, without providing much information about exactly why and how we were doing all this, I suspect a lot of Democrats would have raised a stink about some of it. But not when it is the nice Mr. Obama that is doing these things.

### AT: Nuclear Cuts

**Obama won’t reduce the nuclear arsenal- too partisan**

**Traub, 2-17-12,** Jams, fellow of the Center on International Cooperation. "Terms of Engagement," his column for Foreign Policy, runs weekly. “Fumbling the Nuclear Football,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/17/fumbling_the_nuclear_football?page=full>, KHaze

Obama now has the chance -- perhaps his last chance -- to finally make good on his Prague pledge. He has ordered a review of the U.S. strategic arsenal, to be delivered to him in the coming weeks. The president must decide how many nuclear weapons the United States really needs. Arms control advocates think that this time, finally, Obama will grasp the nettle and accept that the country needs far fewer deployed warheads than the 1,760 or so it now has. I hope he does. But the mottled history of the last three years should give any disarmament advocate **pause**. According to the extraordinarily ambitious strategy Obama laid out in Prague, the United States would adopt a new policy to "reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy," pursue arms reduction in treaty negotiations with Russia, pass the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the so-called Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty to control the production of enriched uranium and plutonium, and strengthen the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Of all these measures, the only one wholly within Obama's own powers was the new policy statement, to be embodied in a document called the Nuclear Posture Review. I followed this debate closely throughout 2009; then, administration officials told me that the document would furnish a clear "narrative" of a fundamental, directional change toward eliminating nuclear weapons. Advocates inside the administration hoped that the new document would change "declaratory policy" to stipulate that the United States would only use nukes against a nuclear threat rather than, for example, against a rogue state or a terrorist group that it feared might obtain weapons of mass destruction (as current policy now foresees); that it would end the terrifying but archaic Cold War requirement that hundreds of warheads be available for launch "on warning"; and that it would eliminate one leg of the nuclear "triad" of bombers, missiles, and subs (probably bombers). None of those things happened. As I noted at the time, even Sam Nunn, the hawkish former U.S. senator, said that he was "disappointed" with Obama's caution and specified that the unwillingness to "de-alert" the nuclear force "went beyond what I thought was rational." The Nuclear Posture Review, published in April 2010, was **blunted** by skeptics in the Pentagon and perhaps the White House, as well as by opposition in the nuclear laboratories. The disarmament negotiations over the New START agreement, however, faced external resistance -- first from the Russians, who dragged out the talks over months, delaying Obama's planned trajectory, and then from Senate Republicans, many of whom treated the modest agreement to limit each side to 1,550 deployed strategic warheads as a radical act of unilateral disarmament. To win them over, the administration had to promise to make exorbitant investments in the nuclear labs in Los Alamos and elsewhere. We live with that decision today: The Energy Department's 2013 budget includes a 5 percent increase for refurbishment of the equipment that produces warheads and their nuclear "pits," upkeep of the weapons themselves, and training for nuclear scientists and the like, at a time when discretionary spending is frozen. Over the next decade, the United States is now projected to spend over $180 billion on nuclear modernization. The administration had been prepared to offer such a deal for Republican acceptance of much tougher agreements, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. But once it had to pay that price for New START, there was no currency left for the future; in any case, Republicans weren't about to accept anything beyond the nuclear reductions agreement. Opposition from Pakistan and several other states then took the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty off the table. Spirited American diplomacy did salvage a consensus document at the 2010 conference reviewing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. There, as elsewhere, the Obama administration has taken what the market will give and has very good excuses for what it hasn't achieved. But a transformational president doesn't wish to be judged by the quality of the rationales he can furnish.

### AT: Warming

**Obama can’t stop efforts to prevent clean energy**

**Gordon, 6-14-12,** Kate, Director of Advanced Energy and Sustainability at the Center for the Next Generation. She is also a CAP Senior Fellow. “Can America Overcome Its Split Personality On Energy?” <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/06/14/499497/can-america-overcome-its-split-personality-on-energy/>, KHaze

The past two weeks have brought home this country’s split personality when it comes to our energy policy. Maybe it’s because I just moved from Washington, D.C. to California that I’m unusually focused on the entrenched differences between national and state policy, but it sure seems like America will never overcome the two separate identities: one that recognizes the need to continue moving toward a more secure, diversified, and sustainable energy future, and one that clings to the status quo. Here’s an example. Last week the House of Representatives voted to pass the 2013 appropriations bill for energy and water programs, which essentially determines national spending level for key water and energy infrastructure next year. Here’s what the measure does: it cuts $75 million — nearly one-third of the entire program budget — from the popular ARPA-E program, which funds some of the most critical cutting-edge research on new and advanced energy technologies so that they can be commercialized in the U.S. and bring back jobs and profits to U.S. companies. It cuts funding by half a billion dollars for the Department of Energy’s Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy program, which provides targeted support for advanced vehicles, advanced manufacturing and other clean energy programs that are revitalizing regions like Detroit, Toledo, and Richmond California. It cuts funding for basic research and scientific data collection from the Energy Information Administration and the Office of Science. These reductions may seem small in the overall budget debate, but they’re critical for America’s energy future — and, in fact, for our overall competitiveness. We are an innovation-based economy facing one of the world’s greatest challenges in the threat of climate change. We can’t afford to undermine our own universities, labs, and entrepreneurs as they work to find creative answers to that threat, and to turn those answers into profitable, commercializable, exportable products for the global market — a market, by the way, that saw record investments in renewable energy last year. It’s sheer lunacy to gut these programs, which leverage billions in private financing while creating jobs and homegrown industries. That’s why a bipartisan group of 165 House members opposed the bill when it came to a vote last Wednesday, and why the White House has flat out stated it will veto the bill if it comes to the President’s desk in its current form. But wait: America has a whole other personality that’s forging ahead toward a new energy future. States like California are leading the way on innovative energy solutions. Last week, as Congress was sticking its head in the sand, the Environmental Defense Fund and Collaborative Economics released a report showing that California’s major clean energy sectors have been booming since the 1990s. These sectors, including renewable energy, efficiency, clean transportation, and energy storage, haven’t just grown in the past 20 years — they’ve outpaced growth in the state’s economy as a whole, even during the worst years of the recession: Employment in these sectors has jumped 109 percent since 1995, while employment in the state as a whole grew only 12 percent. And these numbers will only go up once the state implements its program to cap carbon emissions, known as A.B. 32. Importantly, the largest share of new jobs in California was in firms that mostly do advanced manufacturing, in clean energy and also more traditional industries. The manufacturing sector, as I’ve argued before, contributes more to our overall innovation and competitive edge than any other sector in the American economy. So what’s going on here? Apparently, America has a split personality: one side, clutching to the fading glory of a fossil fuel-driven past, believing the best energy policy is to cut off support for new ideas and solutions; the other side, eager for innovation and the jobs it creates, is turning to California and other states that are leading the way toward America’s advanced energy future. According to the Cleveland Clinic, multiple personality disorders usually occur after some kind of trauma, and the affected person adopts a new personality to find a “temporary mental escape.” Perhaps Congress, faced with the enormity of climate change, is simply looking for a way to cope. Or maybe our national leaders truly believe that energy policies supporting natural resource extraction and export serve our future better than more advanced, more sustainable policies that support invention, sophisticated manufacturing and advanced energy technologies that can serve the booming global energy marketplace. Whatever is causing Congress’s mental state when it comes to energy, the result is undermining America’s climate stability, energy security, and economic prosperity. It’s time to seek therapy, and to do what’s right to get America on a healthy track to leading the energy future.

### AT: 2nd Term Heg

**Second term Obama won’t be stronger on foreign policy**

**Miller, 4-11-12,** Aaron David, distinguished scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. His new book, Can America Have Another Great President?, will be published this year. "Reality Check," his column for Foreign Policy.com, runs weekly. “The Second-Term Illusion,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/11/the_second_term_illusion?page=full>, KHaze

According to popular legend, an American president, unshackled by the politics of reelection, is more willing and able to do forceful Arab-Israeli diplomacy (read: pressure on Israel) during a second term. Over the years, this notion and its rallying cry ("Wait until after November") has encouraged and sustained the hopes, dreams, and fears (in some cases) of Americans, Israelis, Arabs, Palestinians, assorted Europeans, and anyone else frustrated by the lack of progress and persuaded that domestic politics is the albatross around the president's neck. But of all the urban legends swirling around the presidency and America's Middle Eastern policy, few are as compelling (or as wrong) as that of the empowered two-term president. Like the belief in the existence of a peace-process tooth fairy, **it's more myth than reality**, and here's why. No precedent: That something has never happened doesn't mean it can't happen. Life's full of uncertainties and surprises. But the fact that the second-term fantasy has never played out makes you wonder about the viability of the whole idea. Why is it that in 50 years of U.S. involvement in the peace process, that fantasy has never been tested, let alone realized? History tells a different and more grounded tale. Most of the toughest diplomacy, particularly with the Israelis, occurred in a president's first term, not the second. In 1975, barely a year into his short presidency, the much-underestimated Gerald Ford used very tough diplomacy with then Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to secure a second Sinai disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt. Three years later, Jimmy Carter pushed early in his first term on Arab-Israeli diplomacy partly because he believed that the odds against a breakthrough would grow longer if he waited. He was encouraged in this view by his National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, who reckoned that it was better to have a battle with the pro-Israel community sooner rather than later. Likewise, the tough diplomacy leading to the 1991 Madrid peace conference, including the denial of housing-loan guarantees to the Shamir government, also occurred during George H.W. Bush's first and only term -- he never got a second one to test the proposition (and no, Israel wasn't the reason -- it was the economy, stupid). Of all the second-term diplomacy undertaken by various American presidents, none really fits the model of the empowered, tough-minded two-termer. Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger's diplomacy (two Arab-Israeli disengagement agreements in 18 months, from 1973 to 1974) did occur in the president's second term, but under very strange circumstances. The October 1973 war created the opportunity, and Nixon, weakened by Watergate, wanted to show that American foreign policy was still vibrant and effective. In 1988, Secretary of State George Shultz pushed a peace initiative during Reagan's second term, but you'd be hard pressed to call it forceful. Shultz did help engineer a late-in-the-game second term recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization, but only after its leader Yasser Arafat had met U.S. conditions. And Bill Clinton did undertake a serious diplomatic effort in his second term at Camp David, but it certainly wasn't tough and determined, and certainly wasn't designed to squeeze the Israelis. If anything, he pressed the Palestinians, whom he judged to be evasive and withholding. The fact is, there's just **no historical basis** to the proposition of an empowered second-term president getting tough on Arab-Israeli peacemaking or pushing the Israelis around. Regional conditions matter far more than those in Washington. Same old, same old: Let's assume for the sake of this thought experiment that Obama does decide that nothing is more important to his second term than Israeli-Palestinian peace (a dubious assumption, but I'll humor myself). And let's further stipulate that he's determined to find a way forward. Domestic politics will be the least of the obstacles that stand in his way, truly more a speed bump than a Mount Everest. A willful president is critical to success. But more important is the situation in the region and the calculations of Arabs and Israelis. Today, three challenges impede a two state solution: an Israeli prime minister who's very far from either Obama's or the Palestinian position on a deal, a divided Palestinian national movement, and the uncertainties of an Arab Spring that will further limit Israel's flexibility. All will still be there in 2013. And then there's Iran. Assuming we get through the end of this year without an Israeli military strike (a pretty good bet) or a negotiated solution (another safe wager), the nuclear issue will be front and center in January 2013. The president's effort to buy time and space to allow sanctions and diplomacy to work to preempt a military solution may be a good idea, but it has created a longer-term problem. In shifting from the rhetoric of containment to prevention, Obama has laid the groundwork for making Iran's nuclear program an American problem and maybe paved the way for a military solution too. With Israel and now America focused so much on the mullahs' putative nuclear capacity, it's hard to see how any Israeli prime minister -- particularly this one -- would make any concessions on peace with the Palestinians until the Iran situation were much clearer. Add to that the southward-bound direction of the Israeli-Egyptian relationship and you have 1,001 reasons to avoid decisions on the Palestinian issue. What you see is what you get: I believe Obama really cares about the Israeli-Palestinian issue; I also think he's terribly frustrated by the lack of progress and holds Israel, specifically Netanyahu, primarily responsible. He'd really like to get tough. At the same time, Obama has proven himself to be a cautious, pragmatic, and deliberate man. Like FDR, he wanted to be a transformative political figure and alter the trajectory of American domestic and foreign policy. But his nature is more the transactor and the dealmaker. That's who he is. The president isn't a man of any extreme -- the community organizer, campus radical, alien president trope is a bunch of partisan mumbo jumbo. What's important about Obama's storyline is Harvard Law School, the U.S. Senate, two best-selling books, and succeeding in American politics. To do so, let alone become president, he had to be a man of the system. When it comes to the Arab-Israeli issue, a second term is more likely to see Obama the unchanged, not the unchained. He's plenty frustrated by Netanyahu. But Obama lacks FDR's partisan toughness and fight; public anger doesn't come naturally, nor does going for the jugular. Instead, he's a compromiser always looking for middle ground and balance, even when it seems naive. That's where his vision of the truth (and solutions) lie. He has gotten emotional on one issue and that's health care, and he was prepared to fight for it. As for Israelis and Palestinians? He'll take a look in 2013, see where the lay of the land is, and carefully calculate the odds of success or failure. Remember, for a two-term president, legacy cuts both ways: You want to be remembered as the hero, not the goat, and that means leaving a vapor trail of kudos, not stumbles, let alone outright failures. And going all out on Arab-Israeli peace when the conditions just aren't there has failure written all over it. The reality of the second term: Every administration is different, but there's a reason the second term doesn't produce unchained presidents throwing their weight and influence around. First, they don't have as much of either. The first day after Inauguration 2.0, two clocks start ticking: the legacy clock and the lame-duck clock. The first measures what a president can accomplish in the time he has left with the street cred and reputation he's developed; the second watches those assets slip away. It's a race, really. Presidents and their staffs also get tired, are scandal-prone, and start making mistakes in a second term (see: Reagan and Iran-Contra; Clinton and Monica Lewinsky). And then there's the problem of how America's allies and adversaries perceive the president's waning power. Arafat's decision to pass up Clinton's proposals on final-status deals in December 2000 was clearly driven partly by his galactic miscalculation that he'd get a better deal and a tougher line against Israel from the son of George H.W. Bush. The fact that Obama won't get a third term may even work against him. Beginning Jan. 21, if not Nov. 5, the Arabs and the Israelis will begin to take the measure of a president who now has a guaranteed expiration date. If there's anything the locals are really good at, it's evasion, delay, and maneuver in the face of initiatives they don't like. And they'll be taking Barack Obama's measure to see how serious he really is. What they'll conclude, of course, depends on how the president behaves. But the obstacles standing in the way of a two-state solution are formidable and growing. More than likely, the second-term illusion will remain just that. And in assessing Obama's intentions, credibility, and drive on Middle East peace, the Arabs and Israelis [others] may well conclude that if it swims, has feathers, and quacks, it's more than likely a duck -- and a lame one at that.

### AT: Torture

**Obama won’t end torture**

**Global Research, 2009,** May, “Torture Continues under Obama,” <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=13672>, KHaze

While torture under the Bush administration was horrible, at least it has stopped. Right? Wrong. Jeremy Scahill (the reporter who broke most of the stories on Blackwater) says that a military police unit at Guantanamo regularly brutalizes unarmed prisoners, including gang-beating them, breaking their bones, gouging their eyes and dousing them with chemicals. Specifically, whenever there is "disobedience" by the detainees - which can include praying, or having 2 styrofoam cups in their cell instead of 1, or refusing medication or failing to immediately respond when spoken to - the "Immediate Reaction Force" (IRF) is sent in. Scahill describes what happens next: When an IRF team is called in, its members are dressed in full riot gear, which some prisoners and their attorneys have compared to "Darth Vader" suits. Each officer is assigned a body part of the prisoner to restrain: head, right arm, left arm, left leg, right leg... [The IRF teams then mete out brutal punishment, including] gang beating them, forcing their heads into toilets, breaking bones, gouging their eyes, squeezing their testicles, urinating on a prisoner's head, banging their heads on concrete floors and hog-tying them -- sometimes leaving prisoners tied in excruciating positions for hours on end... [One prisoner was sprayed directly in the eyes with mace and gouged in the eyes and was then refused medical treatment, which resulted in permanent blindness in one eye. He also endured a "sexual attack". Another prisoner had a third prisoner's feces spread on him.] There was also torture using water: The ERF team came into the cell with a water hose under very high pressure. He was totally shackled, and they would hold his head fixed still. They would force water up his nose until he was suffocating and would scream for them to stop. This was done with medical staff present, and they would join in. Scahill says that these are not "a few bad apples": The IRF teams "were fully approved at the highest levels [of the Bush administration], including the Secretary of Defense and with outside consultation of the Justice Department," says Scott Horton, one of the leading experts on U.S. Military and Constitutional law. This force "was designed to disabuse the prisoners of any idea that they would be free from physical assault while in U.S. custody," he says. "They were trained to brutally punish prisoners in a brief period of time, and ridiculous pretexts were taken to justify" the beatings. Scahill's allegations are being confirmed by the Spanish torture investigation. Indeed: "Up to 15 people attempted to commit suicide at Camp Delta due to the abuses of the IRF officials," according to the Spanish investigation. One particular incident shows how brutal the IRF interrogators are: In January 2003, Sgt. Sean Baker [an active-duty U.S. soldier and Gulf War veteran] was ordered to participate in an IRF training drill at Guantánamo where he would play the role of an uncooperative prisoner. Sgt. Baker says he was ordered by his superior to take off his military uniform and put on an orange jumpsuit like those worn by prisoners. He was told to yell out the code word "red" if the situation became unbearable, or he wanted his fellow soldiers to stop. According to sworn statements, upon entering his cell, IRF members thought they were restraining an actual prisoner. As Sgt. Baker later described: They grabbed my arms, my legs, twisted me up and, unfortunately, one of the individuals got up on my back from behind and put pressure down on me while I was face down. Then he -- the same individual -- reached around and began to choke me and press my head down against the steel floor. After several seconds, 20 to 30 seconds, it seemed like an eternity because I couldn't breathe. When I couldn't breathe, I began to panic and I gave the code word I was supposed to give to stop the exercise, which was 'red.' … That individual slammed my head against the floor and continued to choke me. Somehow I got enough air. I muttered out: 'I'm a U.S. soldier. I'm a U.S. soldier.' Sgt. Baker said his head was slammed once more, and after groaning "I'm a U.S. soldier" one more time, "I heard them say, 'Whoa, whoa, whoa,' you know, like … he was telling the other guy to stop." According to CBS: Bloodied and disoriented, Baker somehow made it back to his unit, and his first thought was to get hold of the videotape. "I said, 'Go get the tape,' " recalls Baker. " 'They've got a tape. Go get the tape.' My squad leader went to get the tape." Every extraction drill at Guantanamo was routinely videotaped, and the tape of this drill would show what happened. But Baker says his squad leader came back and said, "There is no tape." The New York Times later reported that the military "says it can't find a videotape that is believed to have been made of the incident." Baker was soon diagnosed with traumatic brain injury. He began suffering seizures, sometimes 10 to 12 per day. "This was just one typical incident, and Baker was recognizable as an American," says Horton. "But it gives a good flavor of what the Gitmo detainees went through, which was generally worse." If they did that to a U.S. soldier during a training exercise, one who was given a special code word to have the interrogation stop, what they did to actual detainees had to have been much worse. The torture by IRF teams is continuing under the Obama administration. In fact, it is actually getting worse: The Center for Constitutional Rights released a report titled "Conditions of Confinement at Guantánamo: Still In Violation of the Law," which found that abuses continued. In fact, one Guantanamo lawyer, Ahmed Ghappour, said that his clients were reporting "a ramping up in abuse" since Obama was elected.

## \*Uniqueness/Link\*

### Obama Lose

**Obama loses- minority base is deteriorating**

**LoGiurato, 6-13-12,** Brett, Business Insider (editorial) “Obama's Stunning Loss Of African-American Support Has Extended To Nevada,” <http://www.businessinsider.com/obama-african-american-black-nevada-north-carolina-2012-6#ixzz1xosxKRha>, KHaze

A day after a poll in North Carolina showed a stunning loss of support for President Barack Obama among African-American voters, a new poll from the same firm finds the same thing is happening in Nevada. The survey, from Democratic-leaning Public Policy Polling, gives Obama 69 percent of the African-American vote. Republican nominee Mitt Romney gets 28 percent. If these numbers are accurate, than **this is astounding**. In the North Carolina poll released Tuesday, Obama got 76 percent of the African-American vote, to Romney's 20 percent. Much like North Carolina, Obama garnered the vast majority of African-American support in Nevada in the 2008 election. He received 94 percent to John McCain's 5 percent. Public Policy Polling Like North Carolina, Obama's favorability in Nevada among African-Americans is also down from PPP's last poll of the state. In March, his approval rating stood at 81 percent. Now, it's 69 percent. Meanwhile, Romney's favorability has jumped from 14 percent to 41 percent among African-Americans. Jim Williams, a polling analyst at PPP, told Business Insider Tuesday that these polls could be "statistical noise." And in Nevada, the sample was even smaller than that of North Carolina — 8 percent of 500 voters. But Williams said it was also not something that PPP had ever seen before. "Seventy-something percent is obviously low," Williams said, of the North Carolina. "It's not something we've ever seen before. It's definitely something we're going to monitor." Overall, Obama leads Romney in Nevada, 48 percent to 42 percent, down from an 8-point lead he held in March. These struggles in the poll probably stem from Nevada's terrible economy, which is one of the worst in the country. Only 37 percent of those polled said they think the economy has gotten better since Obama took office, compared with 41 percent who think it has gotten worse.

**The economy will doom Obama**

**Knox, 6-13-12,** Olivier, ABC News. “Poll shows swing voters down on Obama economic policy,” <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/OTUS/poll-shows-swing-voters-obama-economic-policy/story?id=16557484#.T9qI8LWZ2-g>, KHaze

On the eve of a high-stakes speech to defend his handling of the weak economy and attack Mitt Romney, President Barack Obama got another dose of bad news on Wednesday in the form of a new ABC News/Washington Post poll that found independent swing voters decidedly bearish on his approach. Only 38 percent of those up-for-grabs Americans have favorable views of Obama's economic plans, with a majority (54 percent) disapproving. The good news for the embattled president? They aren't much more impressed by Romney's economic ideas -- 47 percent rate his approach unfavorably, with just 35 percent in favor. While the five-month gap between now and election day is a proverbial eternity in politics, the survey highlighted Obama's challenges as he pleads with struggling Americans to give him a second term. The president's arguments on the economy, fleshed out over scores of campaign events in the past few months, boil down to saying that the Great Recession was deeper than he anticipated, that his policies have helped turn things around, that he understands deep voter frustration over the stop-start nature of the recovery, and that Romney would return to the policies that helped cause the meltdown in the first place. The incumbent also aims to convince voters to view the election as a choice, rather than a referendum on his policies. Obama planned to deliver a speech on his economic policy Thursday in the critical battleground of Ohio. Officials have made clear that he won't unveil any major new proposals — and Democrats are increasingly grumbling that Republicans in Congress won't sign on to any White House proposals for tackling 8.2 percent unemployment before the election. "The president will outline the choice in this election: between a vision for moving our country forward, ensuring that our economy is built to last and restoring economic security for the middle class, and Mitt Romney's vision, based on the same failed economic policies that brought on the worst crisis since the Great Depression," said the Obama campaign in a preview of the remarks, to be delivered at Cuyahoga Community College Metropolitan Campus in Cleveland. The ABC News/Washington Post poll found that moderate voters see Obama's proposals favorably by a razor-thin 48-46 percent margin, and rate Romney's unfavorably 47-37 percent. And Obama has more liberals on board with his approach — they support his policies by a two-to-one edge — than Romney has conservatives, who favor the former Massachusetts governor's approach 53-34 percent. The survey had an error margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Another new poll, this one by Reuters/Ipsos, found that deep worries about the economy had ***wiped out Obama's previous edge*** over Romney nationally in the presidential race. The news agency reported that Obama's ratings fell most sharply among independents, from 48 percent last month to 35 percent. A Gallup public opinion poll released last week found Obama's job approval rating averaged 47% in May — below the 50% mark seen as critical for incumbents seeking reelection.

**Coming recession dooms Obama**

**Pethokoukis, 6-1-12,** James, The Enterprise Blog, a subset of the American Enterprise Institute, “Miserable May jobs report suggests U.S. in recession red zone,” <http://blog.american.com/2012/06/miserable-may-jobs-report-suggests-u-s-in-recession-red-zone/>, KHaze

The May jobs report was a complete and utter disaster for the economy and, perhaps, President Obama’s chances for reelection. Employers created just 69,000 jobs last month, the Labor Department said on Friday. That’s the fewest since May of last year. Economists had been expecting nonfarm payrolls to increase by 150,000. (In fact, the result was lower than what any economist polled by Reuters had predicted.) Moreover, companies added 49,000 fewer jobs than previously estimated in March and April. Talk about a slowdown. The average monthly gain was 226,000 in first quarter vs. an average of just 73,000 in April and May. Oh, and the U-3 unemployment rate rose to 8.2% from 8.1%. The broader U-6 gauge, which also measures underemployment, rose to 14.8% from 14.5%. The labor force participation rate did, finally, tick up to a still-low 63.8%, lending credence to the idea that the shrinking workforce reflects discouraged workers and not just demographics. The econ team at Barclays Capital sums things up nicely (bold for emphasis): The May employment report suggests that the labor market recovery has lost significant steam in recent months. In our view, this raises the likelihood that the Fed will embark on a renewed round of policy easing, although market developments and the tone of other economic data in the coming weeks remain important. … In the establishment survey, payrolls rose just 69k, well below the 150k we and the consensus had expected and the weakest since May 2011. The details were equally soft, not least the 38k downward revision to April (to 77k from 115k), which followed an eight-month sequence of upward revisions to the previous month. By sector, goods-producing firms cut 15k jobs, with a 12k rise in manufacturing more than offset by a 26k drop in construction. This can no longer be put down to weather effects to any significant degree so it would appear that construction employment prospects remain very weak … The picture of lost momentum was also evident in hours worked data. The workweek fell one tenth to 34.4 hours and aggregate hours worked rose just 1.0% 3m/3m, down from 3.0% in April. … Bottom line: A clearly soft report that suggests a loss of momentum in the labor market recovery across jobs, hours worked and the unemployment rate. So what is the true state of the labor market? – If the size of the U.S. labor force as a share of the total population was the same as it was when Barack Obama took office—65.7% then vs. 63.8% today—the U-3 unemployment rate would be 10.9%. (Now, this doesn’t take into account the aging of the Baby Boomers, which should lower the participation rate due to rising retirements. But is that still a valid assumption given the drop in wealth since 2006?) – If you take into account the aging of the Baby Boomers, the participation rate should be trending lower. Indeed, it has been doing just that since 2000. Before the Great Recession, the Congressional Budget Office predicted what the participation rate would be in 2012, assuming such demographic changes. Using that number, the real unemployment rate would be 10.5%. – Of course, the participation rate usually falls during recessions. Yet even if you discount for that and the aging issue, the real unemployment rate would be 9.5%. – We continue to be stuck in the longest period of 8% unemployment or higher since the Great Depression, 40 consecutive months. – And, as the above chart shows — originally from Obama economists Christina Romer and Jared Bernstein in January 2009 –the current 8.2% unemployment rate is 2.5 percentage points above where Team Obama predicted it would be right now if Congress passed his trillion-dollar stimulus plan. – The median duration of unemployment rebounded to 20.1 weeks in May, and 42.8% were unemployed for longer than a half year. – Total hours worked fell 0.2% on weakness in the work week. – Average hourly earnings rose just 0.1%. Coupled with a very stable overall inflation rate, real wages were likely flat in May. The big question now: Does this report suggest the U.S economy is heading into recession, especially given the sharp slowdown in global economic activity from Europe to India to, perhaps most worrisome, China? Consider this: Last year, the U.S. grew at just a 1.7% pace. Research from the Federal Reserve finds that that since 1947 when year-over-year real GDP growth falls below 2 percent, recession follows within a year 70 percent of the time. **We are firmly within the Recession Red Zone.** The political implications are clear: If the White House wasn’t already in a panic about the spring swoon, it sure is now. Another Recovery Bummer. If you punch in a mild recession into the higher regarded Fair-Yale forecasting model, Mitt Romney wins 53-47 over Obama in the two-party vote share. But given the example of Jimmy Carter, who suffered a mild recession in his 1980 reelection year, the Fair model might be ***underestimating*** the damage to Obama from a double dip.

**Greek debt default dooms Obama**

**Friedman, 5-24-12,** Uri, associate editor at Foreign Policy. “5 World Events That Could Swing the U.S. Election,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/05/24/five_world_events_that_could_swing_the_us_election?page=full>, KHaze

The prospect of a Greek anti-austerity party winning new elections in June has sparked widespread fear that Greece will default on its debt and exit the eurozone, which could spread contagion in southern Europe and plunge the global economy back into recession. But there's a debate about the extent to which the European debt crisis will influence the U.S. election. If a Greek exit precipitates the collapse of the eurozone, Brookings Institution scholar William Galston argues in the New Republic, it will be disastrous for Europe and the United States. But he adds that U.S. GDP growth would probably slow and the unemployment rate would likely stagnate even if the European monetary union remains intact after Greece's departure. "These developments would make it harder for Obama to argue that we're heading in the right direction, and ... I suspect that economic growth at these depressed levels would mean victory for Mitt Romney," he writes. Or, as the Washington Post's Ezra Klein noted earlier this year, Obama's reelection "will be largely decided by the state of the economy. And the state of the economy will largely be decided by events in Europe. **And Europe's not looking so good."**

### AT: Greece Solution Now

**Greece fallout plan isn’t sufficient**

**Appelbaum, 5-17-12,** Binyamin, New York Times, “A Greek Exit? Euro Zone May Be Ready,” <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/18/business/global/chance-of-greece-exiting-euro-grows.html?pagewanted=2&pagewanted=all>, KHaze

But Kenneth S. Rogoff, a professor at Harvard and former chief economist of the International Monetary Fund, said Europe had made progress but still was not adequately prepared to control the fallout. He said Europe lacked sufficient mechanisms to ensure that loans remained available to other troubled countries, like Spain and Italy. Furthermore, there is no political consensus about support for borrowing by local governments and private companies. And, he said, there is no credible long-term plan to ensure the viability of the euro. “These are difficult political decisions that they just aren’t ready for,” he said. “They should be. They’ve had two years to think about it. But they’re not ready.” Uri Dadush, director of the international economics program at the Carnegie Endowment for World Peace here, and formerly director of economic policy at the World Bank, said Europe had made significant strides. An agreement this year reduced the value of outstanding Greek government debt by roughly 90 percent, limiting the potential for further losses. A range of corporations have acknowledged that they are preparing for the possible return of a Greek currency. Europe has significantly expanded the scale of its various emergency lending programs. Still, he said, “the bottom line is that it remains a risky proposition.” If a Greek departure is interpreted as a sign that the euro zone is crumbling, depositors in other troubled countries could start to withdraw their money from the local banks, and interest rates could continue to rise. Italian companies are already struggling to compete against rivals in other countries because of the higher interest rates that they are forced to pay.

### No Link

**Obama will lose and there’s no link – all that matters is literal money in people’s pockets. They don’t care about the plan. Most qualified.**

**Reens 2-7,** cites Patrick Anderson, predictor of 21 of the last 24 Presidential elections, [Nate, <http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2012/02/economist_barack_obama_will_lo.html>]

]

GRAND RAPIDS – If Patrick Anderson had to make a prediction today in this year's presidential race, Barack Obama should fold up the re-election campaign early and head back to Illinois. It's a big if though, said Anderson, a Lansing economist who has developed a “pocketbook” guide to presidential politics that has successfully predicted 21 of the last 24 commander-in-chief elections. “That's our best guess right now, as of February, and we don't even know the name of the Republican candidate,” said Anderson. “Of course, things could change before the election.” Anderson's model accounts for income growth, unemployment, inflation, war and third-party candidates, [ignoring polls, strategy and policy proposals](http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2012/02/pocketbook_issues_dominate_pre.html). The theory is that people vote with their wallet over anything else. “It is the dominant measure of voters' satisfaction with a president of the United States,” Anderson said Tuesday night in an address at Grand Valley State University's Charles Loosemore Auditorium. “Voters directly reward, or punish, the incumbent.” All the factors studied trend negative to neutral for Obama's chances. That means pocketbook voters, who account for about 75 percent of the popular vote, will cast ballots against the incumbent. Butunemployment numbers are improving and voters tend to weigh the final year of the incumbent party's term over the first three. “There is a good news factor,” Anderson said. “Things that happen recently are going to be more vivid for them. “It could swing voters back.”

**No link: 4 factors external to the plan will be crucial to the outcome of the election, and they’re all out of the President’s control.**

**Heilemann 2-10**

[John, NY Magazine writer, http://nymag.com/news/politics/powergrid/obama-reelection-heilemann-2012-2/]

And then there are those potential shocks I referred to earlier. Now, it’s true that external variables are always present in any presidential campaign, and that dealing with them is a persistent challenge for any incumbent. But rarely are they as likely or as potentially threatening as the ones that may confront Obama before November 6. To my mind, there are four: **1. Iran.** Early this month, the redoubtable Washington *Post* columnist David Ignatius reported that Defense Secretary Leon Panetta believes there is a growing likelihood that Israel will attack Iran in the next few months in an effort to dash its nuclear ambitions. If that scenario does indeed unfold, the ensuing crisis and its implications for American domestic politics would be huge—and thoroughly unpredictable. **2. Europe.** As of this writing, the fate of the proposed $170 billion Greek financial bailout was unclear, with the country’s political leadership having accepted new austerity measures but elements of its parliament refusing to go along. Yet even if the bailout happens, the risk that a crisis in the eurozone will cascade across the global economy and impact the American recovery will only diminish, not disappear. **3. Unemployment.** There are plenty of economic forecasters now predicting that the jobless rate, currently at 8.3 percent, will be below 8 percent by the end of 2012. And if that is the case, it will plainly benefit Obama politically. But at the end of January, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that unemployment would rise again in the second half of this year, to 8.9 percent—and threaten the perception that Obama and his team, at last, have the economy moving in the right direction. **4. Third Party.** Both the White House and the Republican campaigns are keeping a close eye on Americans Elect, the well-funded outfit that is on its way to securing ballot access in all 50 states for an independent, bipartisan “unity ticket.” The group’s online nominating process is now under way, though its outcome won’t be known until early this summer. It’s possible, of course, that the Americans Elect ticket—assuming it winds up with two credible, non-crazy personages on it—will take away equally from both Obama and his Republican rival or take more votes from the latter. But it’s more likely, given the kinds of potential candidates that the group has been recruiting, that a vaguely center-left ticket will emerge, thus posing a greater threat to the president.

### Public Likes Infastructure

**Public loves infrastructure reform- outweigh wasteful spending fears**

**Halsey, 4-23-12,** Ashley, III, The Washington Post, “Infrastructure projects need public support, transportation experts say,” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/experts-want-to-build-public-support-for-infrastructure-projects/2012/04/23/gIQAvmMXcT_story.html>, KHaze

The plan to energize public support was outlined Monday in a report by transportation experts brought together by the Miller Center at the University of Virginia. After a conference this past November, the group concluded that most Americans are aware of the infrastructure crisis and support spending to address it. “Recent public-opinion surveys have found **overwhelming support** for the idea of infrastructure investment,” the report said. “After the ‘bridge to nowhere’ controversies of recent years, the public has become sensitized to issues of pork-barrel spending and understandably demands to see a clear connection between federal expenditures, actual transportation needs, and economic benefits.” **Despite apprehension about wasteful spending,** the report said, more than ***two-thirds*** of voters surveyed by the Rockefeller Foundation said infrastructure improvement was important and 80 percent said spending on it would create millions of jobs.

### Plan Popular 1AR

**Everyone loves infrastructure- they don’t care about spending increases**

**MSNBC, 2011,** February, 17, “Poll: Support for infrastructure spending, but not paying for it,” <http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2011/02/17/6075671-poll-support-for-infrastructure-spending-but-not-paying-for-it?lite>, KHaze

Democrats, Republicans, and independents would all support new government spending on U.S. transportation infrastructure, but are not interested in footing the bill themselves, according to a new poll. The survey, conducted by Democratic polling firm Hart Research and Republican firm Public Opinion Strategies, was released days after President Obama submitted his 2012 budget request, which includes $53 billion over six years towards high-speed rail projects and $30 billion a year to fund a national infrastructure bank. The survey found wide bipartisan support for legislators to seek common ground on infrastructure improvements: 71% of all respondents -- including 74% of Democrats, 71% of Republicans and 69% of independents -- said they wanted elected officials to work together on the issue. Support was also strong among respondents who identified themselves as part of the Tea Party, an affiliation that connotes a strong anti-government spending attitude, with 66% supporting infrastructure investment. “**The bipartisan,** or even tripartisan, **nature of the issue comes through loud and clear**," said Jay Campbell of Hart Research, who, along with Public Opinion Strategies, conducted the poll for state-centric think tank the Rockefeller Institute. This support also extended into specific policy proposals that would control how transportation dollars are spent. In the poll, 90% supported the idea of holding all levels of government accountable for making sure infrastructure projects stay on time and budget, as well as allowing local regions to have a greater say in how transportation funds are used in their area. **Even some spending increases**, like more competitive grants for transportation projects and money for developing public transportation systems and bike paths, **were met with high approval numbers**.

**Nothing is more popular than infrastructure**

**Luntz, 2009,** Frank, LA Times, “Infrastructure: It's Job 1 to Americans,” [http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-luntz23-2009jan23,0,2761866.story](http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-luntz23-2009jan23%2C0%2C2761866.story), KHaze

The survey's findings were **unlike any other issue** I have polled **in *more than a decade***. Iraq, healthcare, taxes, education -- they all predictably divide and polarize Americans into political camps. ***Not infrastructure***. Consider this: A near unanimous 94% of Americans are concerned about our nation's infrastructure. And this concern cuts across all regions of the country and across urban, suburban and rural communities. Fully 84% of the public wants more money spent by the federal government -- and 83% wants more spent by state governments -- to improve America's infrastructure. And here's the kicker: 81% of Americans are personally prepared to pay 1% more in taxes for the cause. It's not uncommon for people to say they'd pay more to get more, but when you ask them to respond to a specific amount, support evaporates. (That 74% of normally stingy Republicans are on board for the tax increase is, to me, the most significant finding in the survey.) This isn't "soft" support for infrastructure either. It stretches from Maine to Montana, from California to Connecticut. Democrats (87%) and Republicans (74%) are prepared to, in Barack Obama's words, put skin in the game, which tells you just how wide and deep the support is.

### Obama F.P. Focus Thumper

**Obama will run on foreign policy**

**Cohen, 1-25-12,** Michael, columnist for Foreign Policy's Election 2012 Channel and a fellow at the Century Foundation. “Kill Shot,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/01/25/kill_shot>, KHaze

If there is one regular foreign policy refrain that is heard from the crop of Republican presidential aspirants it is that the current resident of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue has weakened the United States and American power on the global stage. In last night's State of the Union address, President Barack Obama demonstrated why this might be a flawed and challenging political strategy. You see, in case you'd forgotten, Barack Obama ordered the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. The president didn't just mention this perhaps signal foreign policy accomplishment of his presidency -- he bookended his speech with it. That said, Obama was hardly reticent to talk about his other significant accomplishments in foreign policy. He started off the address with a reference to the pull-out of U.S. troops from Iraq; the winding down of the war in Afghanistan; and the successful U.S. military intervention in Libya. He spoke of the "renewal of American leadership," and pledged that "America is back," a none-too-subtle hit at the Bush administration. He also played up the vitality of U.S. alliances with Europe and Israel as well as ongoing efforts to isolate Iran and stop its nuclear program. (Not mentioned was that the Afghan drawdown followed a rather uncertain Afghan surge or that the president arguably ran roughshod over congressional prerogatives during the Libya adventure.) What came across in the State of the Union was the politically pleasing notion that, under Obama's leadership, America is more secure, more respected, and in a stronger global position. "Anyone who tells you otherwise, anyone who tells you that America is in decline or that our influence has waned," said Obama, "doesn't know what they're talking about." All of this seemed oriented to not only play up Obama's foreign policy strengths, but as a direct rebuttal to GOP charges of fecklessness. After all, this message is literally the opposite of what voters who have tuned into one of the 18 and counting Republican debates have heard about this president. Still, the real star of the show was the president's repeated invocation of the bin Laden raid. For all of Obama's other foreign policy achievements, many of which -- like the New START agreement, the expansion of the G-20, the reset with Russia, and the pivot to Asia -- will likely be more consequential over the long haul, the one that has the greatest political saliency is quite obviously the killing of bin Laden and the administration's success in taking out top al Qaeda lieutenants. It's been a very long time in American politics since a Democratic president has been able to brag about a military success along these lines and Obama seems inclined to milk it for everything it's worth. Indeed, Obama even went so far as to link the success of the bin Laden raid to his vision for America: The mission only succeeded because every member of that unit trusted each other -- because you can't charge up those stairs, into darkness and danger, unless you know that there's someone behind you, watching your back. So it is with America. Each time I look at that flag, I'm reminded that our destiny is stitched together like those 50 stars and those 13 stripes. No one built this country on their own. This nation is great because we built it together. This nation is great because we worked as a team. This nation is great because we get each other's backs. And if we hold fast to that truth, in this moment of trial, there is no challenge too great; no mission too hard. As long as we're joined in common purpose, as long as we maintain our common resolve, our journey moves forward, our future is hopeful, and the state of our Union will always be strong. Obama was making a direct link between the ethos of those who killed America's No. 1 enemy and his own progressive notion on what are the responsibilities of each citizen to the betterment of the country -- and of the role of government to lend a hand. This is clearly smart politics and pretty effective speechwirting. That said, getting a democracy as unruly as ours -- much less Congress -- to function like a well-drilled SEAL team is a tad unrealistic. This is particularly true when one considers that the U.S. military, which Obama venerated as the finest institution in the country, is also probably the single most undemocratic institution in American society -- and purposely so. Indeed, there was something a bit off-putting, albeit unsurprising, about listening to the president so brazenly cloaking his domestic vision for the country, and his key campaign messages, in a military action of which all Americans -- Democrats and Republicas -- can feel a shared sense of pride. Nonetheless, it does provide compelling evidence that Obama will run **aggressively** on his foreign policy success and his record as commander-in-chief. For liberals hoping for perhaps a less militarist message and a focus on diplomacy and soft power rather than the use of force as lodestars of American power ... well, last night wasn't quite their evening. That whole "changing the mindset" of U.S. foreign policy that Obama talked about in 2008 may have to wait a few more years. Of course, none of this will stop Republicans from making the claim that the president has weakened America -- and some will say they have truth on their side -- but then again, they didn't kill the man responsible for Sept. 11. That was Barack Obama, just in case you'd forgotten.

### Iran Thumper

**Israel will strike Iran before November and doom Obama- if they don’t Obama looks weak and loses anyway**

**Luft, 3-1-12,** Gal, executive director of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security (IAGS) and senior advisor to the United States Energy Security Council. “Between Iran and a Hard Place,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/29/between_iran_and_a_hard_place?page=full>, KHaze

Fed up with the vague official U.S. line that "all options are on the table" when it comes to Iran, Netanyahu is reportedly going to ask Obama to harden the rhetoric against Tehran and make some unequivocal statements about the United States preparing for a military strike in the event that Iran crosses certain red lines. If Obama refuses to oblige, it would expose clear daylight between the two leaders just as they share the same podium at next week's annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. It would also expose Obama to harsh GOP accusations that he is **weak on Iran**. Acquiescence, on the other hand, would elevate the temperature in the global oil market, driving prices to a higher level and deepening Obama's gas price predicament. As if the horns of this dilemma don't poke enough, Obama has another mine to diffuse: the potential of an Israeli military strike on Iran **prior to the November elections**. Should such an attack take place -- regardless of its success in destroying Iran's nuclear sites -- the short-term implications for the global economy could be dire. A war in the Middle East means an oil shock and, as was the case in 1973, 1979, and 1990, oil shocks are harbingers of recessions. In testimony before the Senate Budget Committee last month, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke warned that a major disruption in oil supply could put the kibosh on the recovery. Indeed, a new oil shock would be just as dangerous as a second heart attack for a fragile patient who is just recovering from his first.

### Climate Thumper

**Romney will attack Obama over clean energy- that will backfire**

**LeVine, 6-12-12,** Steve, Foreign Policy blogger, is author of The Oil and the Glory and a longtime foreign correspondent, “Playing Dirty,” <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/12/playing_dirty?page=full>, KHaze

 Is Barack Obama sufficiently dirty to win re-election? Not according to presumptive Republican nominee Mitt Romney, who says the president is too spic and span.

Calculating that clean energy is passé among Americans more concerned about jobs and their own pocketbooks, Romney is gambling that he can tip swing voters his way by embracing dirtier air and water if the tradeoff is more employment and economic growth. Romney's gamble is essentially a bet on the demonstrated disruptive potency of shale gas and shale oil, which over the last year or so have shaken up geopolitics from Russia to the Middle East and China. Now, Romney and the GOP leadership hope they will have the same impact on U.S. domestic politics, and sweep the former Massachusetts governor into the White House with a strong Republican majority in Congress. A flood of new oil and natural gas production in states such as North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas is changing the national and global economies. U.S. oil production is projected to reach 6.3 million barrels a day this year, the highest volume since 1997, the Energy Information Agency reported Tuesday. In a decade or so, U.S. oil supplies could help to shrink OPEC's influence as a global economic force. Meanwhile, a glut of cheap U.S. shale gas has challenged Russia's economic power in Europe and is contributing to a revolution in how the world powers itself. But Romney and the GOP assert that Obama is slowing the larger potential of the deluge, and is not up to the task of turning it into what they say ought to be a gigantic jobs machine. The president's critics say an unfettered fossil fuels industry could produce 1.4 million new jobs by 2030. They believe that American voters won't be too impressed with Obama's argument that he is leading a balanced energy-and-jobs approach that includes renewable fuels and electric cars. **The GOP's oil-and-jobs campaign** -- in April alone, 81 percent of U.S. political ads attacking Obama were on the subject of energy, according to Kantar Media, a firm that tracks political advertising -- **is a risk that could *backfire***. Americans could decide that they prefer clean energy after all. Or, as half a dozen election analysts and political science professors told me, energy -- even if it seems crucial at this moment in time -- may not be a central election issue by November. Yet if the election is as close as the polls suggest, the energy ads could prove a pivotal factor. "Advertising is generally not decisive. Advertising matters at the margins. ... But ask Al Gore if the margin matters," said Ken Goldstein, president of the Campaign Media Analysis Group at Kantar Media. "This is looking like an election where the margin may matter." Romney is hardly the first major U.S. presidential candidate to embrace Big Oil. The politics of clean go back to Lady Bird Johnson's war on litter and Richard Nixon's embrace of environmentalism. But both presidents Bush came from the oil industry, and former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, the last GOP vice presidential nominee, gleefully led chants of "Drill, baby, drill" in 2008. Yet President George W. Bush also famously declared that "America is addicted to oil" in his 2006 State of the Union address, and initiated most of the energy programs for which Obama is currently under fire. And Palin's drumbeat in the end seemed to fall flat. The Republican efforts appear to go beyond any modern campaign in their brash embrace of what is dirty, and their scorn of what is not. And the times seem to favor them. In 2009, the GOP, backed by heavy industry lobbying, knocked back environmentalists on their heels by crushing global warming legislation. Other previously central issues -- Afghanistan, Iraq, health care -- are still debated in the campaign, but not as centrally nor as viscerally as energy, said Frank Maisano, an energy and political analyst at Bracewell & Giuliani, a Houston-based law firm. Obama advisors have said rightly that energy is only one component of a much broader American and global economy, but the GOP appears to have at least partially successfully injected the oil and gas boom as a defining feature of the economic discourse. In a Sunday op-ed in the New York Times entitled "America's New Energy Reality," industry consultant Daniel Yergin remarked that while Obama's 2010 State of the Union address focused on clean-energy jobs, the president pivoted this year to talk as much about oil and natural gas. "His announcement that ‘American oil production is the highest it has been in eight years' turned out to be an applause line," Yergin noted. Romney grants that Obama is not precisely Mr. Clean -- while the president has championed clean energy technologies, he has also stewarded over the greatest buildup in U.S. fossil fuel production since the 1990s. But Romney insists he will be dirtier: He vows to open more land to oil and gas drilling, approve the import of more Canadian oil sands to Gulf Coast refineries, and allow more coal mining. As for Obama, Romney recently told a Colorado coal community, he isn't dirty enough to deserve a second presidential term. The president has "made it harder to get coal out of the ground; he's made it harder to get natural gas out of the ground; he's made it harder to get oil out of the ground," Romney said. The approach aligns with a campaign by the American Petroleum Institute, the U.S. oil industry's main lobbying arm, called "Vote4Energy." The API campaign, which consists of big political events and advertisements, targets 15 or so mostly swing states, those that both Obama and Romney will most need to muster the 270 electoral votes required to win. Marty Durbin, executive vice president at API, told me that the Vote4energy campaign is deliberately not backing any specific candidate or party, but attempting to centrally fix the subject of greater fossil-fuel drilling in voters' minds. "We're using this to highlight the importance of energy to the broader policy, that with the right energy policies we can have job creation, economic growth, energy security, government revenue. If voters have these realities in their mind when they go to the ballot box, that's what is going to move us forward in having a more rational national energy policy," he said. Already, he said, "the energy conversation is no longer just production and energy security. This is about job creation on a state-by-state level." Notwithstanding Durbin's disclaimer, the API campaign seems to weave seamlessly into the GOP strategy. And Maisano told me that he sees grist for GOP success in the targeted states. "Energy plays a huge role in those states, and I see it as a huge problem for Obama," he said. "It's going to be hard for him to win these states that he has to win, like North Carolina, like Florida and Michigan and Ohio and Missouri and Wisconsin. Energy undercuts him in those economies."

### GOP F.P. Focus Thumper

**The GOP will shift election focus to foreign policy**

**Lindsay 1/23/12 (James M. Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Policy and Obama’s State of the Union Address”)** [**http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137051/james-m-lindsay/foreign-policy-and-obamas-state-of-the-union-address?page=2**](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137051/james-m-lindsay/foreign-policy-and-obamas-state-of-the-union-address?page=2)

State of the Union addresses often sound like laundry lists of topics and ideas. But regardless of which foreign policy issues Obama mentions, the key to understanding the speech is to recognize that it is the opening salvo in what will undeniably be a heated election campaign. In the months ahead, Republican candidates will be looking to take the shine off of one of the relatively bright spots of Obama's presidency. Obama, in turn, will be making the case that he has triumphed against tough odds and, as such, remains the country's best bet in a dangerous and complex world.

If the GOP focuses on foreign policy Obama will lose

The Week 11 **(“Obama’s Tough-Guy foreign policy. Will it help in 2012?”)** [**http://theweek.com/article/index/221628/obamas-tough-guy-foreign-policy-will-it-help-in-2012**](http://theweek.com/article/index/221628/obamas-tough-guy-foreign-policy-will-it-help-in-2012)

Are you kidding? Obama is a weakling: The president has demonstrated nothing but "self-abasement and weakness" with his foreign policy, [says Michael Filozof at The American Thinker](http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/11/prepare_yourself_for_obamas_second_term.html), apologizing for Americans at every turn. The trouble is, the Republican candidates have failed to point out his failings, such as the "illegal war in Libya" that America led from behind. If the GOP field wises up, it can paint Obama as the "Second Coming of Jimmy Carter."

### GOP- AT: Economy Key

( ) Economic recovery is FORCING the GOP to make the election about foreign policy leadership

**Washington Post 3/19/12 (“Could 2012 be a foreign policy election”)**

A recovering economy would force Republicans to open up other lines of attack on the president. And, his handling of Afghanistan — along with rising gas prices — is an obvious target. It may not be an easy target, however. In the[most recent Post-ABC poll](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/postabcpoll_031012.html), 46 percent approved of how Obama was handling the situation in Afghanistan, while 47 percent disapproved. Those numbers amounted to his best showing on any major issue, foreign or domestic, in the poll. The most likely outcome is that the November election remains a referendum on Obama’s handling of the economy. But the growing tensions within Afghanistan as well as the always simmering Middle East suggest that foreign policy could play a much a larger role in the 2012 issue matrix than anyone might have imagined even three months ago. Who knows what the next three months will bring?

 ( ) Foreign policy will be EQUALLY important to re-election chances

Lindsay 1/23/12 **(James M. Foreign Affairs, “Foreign Policy and Obama’s State of the Union Address”)** [**http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137051/james-m-lindsay/foreign-policy-and-obamas-state-of-the-union-address?page=2**](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137051/james-m-lindsay/foreign-policy-and-obamas-state-of-the-union-address?page=2)

Tonight, as he delivers his third State of the Union address, U.S. President Barack Obama will stress economics. And that makes good political sense. Election Day is just nine months away, and jobs dwarf all other public concerns. Indeed, it must unnerve the White House that no president in the modern era has been reelected while unemployment stood above 7.2 percent. Today, it hovers around 8.5 percent. What the president says about foreign policy, however, will be equally important to his reelection chances. With more than 40 million viewers expected to tune into the speech -- the largest audience he will have until he addresses the Democratic National Convention in September -- he has an unparalleled opportunity to argue that his handling of foreign policy merits a second term. He will surely make the most of it.

( ) More evidence – it’ll still weigh on voters

Rosner 2/29/12 **(Jeremey, foreign policy online “From Strength to Strength”)** [**http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/29/from\_strength\_to\_strength?page=0,2**](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/29/from_strength_to_strength?page=0,2)

Rove and Gillespie are right on one point, though. Even at a time when voters are chiefly concerned about the state of the economy, foreign policy will still play a big role in the coming presidential contest. Americans know that the world remains dangerous, that the terrorist threat remains, and that U.S. efforts abroad do much to shape opportunities at home.

( ) Republicans are regrouping on foreign policy blunders to distract from the economic recovery

The Take Away 3/8/12 “Are Campaign Critiques Affecting Obama’s Foreign Policy”)

As the Republican Presidential candidates fight for the GOP nomination, President Obama is getting slammed on all sides. While voters consistently say that the economy is the most important issue in this election, the Republican candidates are particularly critical of President Obama’s foreign policy. Both Rick Santorum and Mitt Romney criticized President Obama for his stance on Iran's nuclear capabilities at the American Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC) Conference earlier this week. Santorum was particularly critical of the President for apologizing for the Koran burnings in Afghanistan last month.

### AT: Economy Matters

**If economy is what matters, Romney wins**

**Heilemann 2-10**

[John, NY Magazine writer, http://nymag.com/news/politics/powergrid/obama-reelection-heilemann-2012-2/]

Yet no one with half a brain in his head—and certainly no one with access to Obama’s ear—is under any illusion that a general election against Romney would not be a close-run thing. (A contest against Gingrich or Rick Santorum, by contrast, summons mental images of a stroll along a road paved with red-velvet cake.) For all the damage inflicted so far on the former Massachusetts governor, he is still running even with Obama in many battleground states and with independents nationally. Among registered voters, **Romney is rated more highly than the president in terms of his ability to manage the economy** and pare down the monstrous federal deficit.