# Negative Politics Work

## UQ

### Obama Win—Swing States

Obama will win swing states—their national polls citing unemployment don’t apply—swing states are different

**Stanage 7/30** [Niall Stanage, The Hill, “Swing states give Obama the edge”, <http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/240921-battlegrounds-give-obama-election-edge>, 2012]

President Obama has an overall edge in the 12 decisive battleground states that is measurably greater than his advantage in national polling.¶ The dynamic, which may reflect a combination of lower swing-state unemployment rates and demographic advantages for the president, is causing stirrings of unease among Republicans, even as they emphasize that it is important not to read too much into the state of the race right now.¶ “Obama is concentrating his considerable early resources and messaging in the swing states, and it’s had an impact,” said Mark McKinnon, who served as a media adviser for President George W. Bush’s presidential campaigns.¶ But McKinnon added that Republican candidate Mitt Romney was “raising and saving his money to ensure he won’t be out-punched in the final rounds.”¶ The crucial battleground states number about a dozen: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin. ¶ Taking the polling averages used by Nate Silver in the New York Times, the president is ahead in 10 of the 12 vital states. If those polls were borne out on Election Day, Obama would coast to victory with 332 electoral college votes. Only 270 votes are needed to win the presidency.¶ Awarding Obama only the states in which he now leads by 3 percentage points or more in the polling averages still sees him safely home.¶ By that measure, as of last Friday, he would win 8 of the 12 battlegrounds, for a total of 290 electoral votes. ¶ Romney victories in Florida, Missouri, North Carolina and Virginia would leave the Republican marooned on 248 electoral votes.¶ Strategists including Karl Rove have, in recent months, noted that Romney’s path to victory is a challenging one in terms of the electoral map. ¶ Now, Democrats are citing the same argument to justify their guarded confidence.¶ “All the swing states this time are places [Obama] has been able to win in the past,” said David Beattie, a Florida-based Democratic pollster. “Some of them, like Nevada and Colorado, are pretty solidly in his direction. One of the most optimistic things for Obama is that Iowa and Virginia are still regarded as swing states.”

Obama will win Florida, Ohio and Virginia—if he wins one of these states he will win—if Romney wins one, he still has to win another 4 states

**Urbanski 7/29** [Steve Urbanski, the Examiner, “If Romney wins Pennsylvania, he will be the next President”, <http://www.examiner.com/article/if-romney-wins-pennsylvania-he-will-be-the-next-president>, 2012]

Florida is not really a total Southern state. Whereas the northern part votes like a Southern state, the southern part votes like New York. The middle of the state (Disney World country) is the truly swing part of Florida. Bush won the middle and the state in 2004, Obama won the middle and the state in 2008. Polls in Florida are very close, with a slight edge to Obama.¶ If Obama wins Florida, it's on to a second term. If Romney wins Florida, he still has some work to do.¶ Ohio is a big problem for Romney. Although most people think of Michigan as the automobile capital of the United States, the auto industry is very big in Ohio. Many of those Reagan Democrats work in the auto industry or auto industry related businesses in Ohio.¶ Romney made no friends in the Buckeye State when he opposed the auto industry bailout and said "Let Detroit go bankrupt." The polls seem to reflect this. Romney has only lead in 3 out of 22 polls conducted in Ohio since the beginning of 2012, and Obama hold an average lead of 5.0 points in recent polls.¶ If Obama wins Ohio, it's on to a second term. If Romney wins Ohio, he still has some work to do.¶ Virginia looks a little better for Romney. Obama's average lead is only 1.2 percent in Virginia, and Romney has lead in a few more polls since the beginning of 2012. Virginia had been a reliable Republican state until Obama won there in 2008.¶ If Obama wins Virginia, it's on to a second term. If Romney wins Virginia, along with Florida and Ohio, he'd still have to win Iowa or Nevada to get over 270 electoral votes.¶ The electoral map favors Obama at this point¶ The electoral map does not look good for Romney. If all of the toss up states are pushed into the column of the candidate who is currently leading in the RealClearPolitics average, Obama wins the election 332 to 206.¶

Obama win now – swing states

**Stanage 7/30** [Niall, Writer for The Hill, “Swing States Give Obama The Edge,” <http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/240921-battlegrounds-give-obama-election-edge>, 2012]

Taking the polling averages used by Nate Silver in the *New York Times*, **the president is ahead in 10 of the 12 vital states.** If those polls were borne out **on Election Day, Obama would coast to victory with 332 electoral college votes. Only 270 votes are needed** to win the presidency. **Awarding Obama only the states in which he now leads by 3 percentage points or more** in the polling averages **still sees him safely home.** By that measure, as of last Friday, **he would win** 8 of the 12 battlegrounds, for a total of **290 electoral votes.** Romney victories in Florida, Missouri, North Carolina and Virginia would leave the Republican marooned on 248 electoral votes. Strategists including Karl Rove have, in recent months, noted that Romney’s path to victory is a challenging one in terms of the electoral map. Now, Democrats are citing the same argument to justify their guarded confidence. “**All the swing states** this time **are places** [**Obama**] **has been able to win in the past**,” said David Beattie, a Florida-based Democratic pollster. “**Some of them**, like Nevada and Colorado, **are pretty solidly in his direction. One of the most optimistic things for Obama is that Iowa and Virginia are** still regarded as **swing states.**”

### Obama Win—Economy

Obama reelection but it will be close

**Dorning 7/27** [Mike, Writer for Businessweek, “Obama Holds Slim Re-Election Edge With Slow GDP Growth,” <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-07-27/slow-growth-leaves-room-for-obama-to-win-re-election>, 2012]

**The slow growth reported for the second quarter is enough to allow** President Barack **Obama an edge in his re-election bid**, according to a forecasting model based on the economy and polling data. The U.S. economy grew at a 1.5 percent annual rate from April through June, in line with forecasts and slowing from a revised 2.0 percent rate during the first three months of the year, the Commerce Department reported today. “It puts Obama just barely above the break-even point,” said Alan Abramowitz, a political science professor at Emory University in Atlanta and developer of the forecasting model. “Mainly it tells me **we’re heading to a very close election and Obama is a slight favorite.**” **Abramowitz** said today his **model projects Obama will receive 50.5 percent of the popular vote in November and has a two- thirds probability of winning.** The model doesn’t project the Electoral College outcome, and it is possible to win the popular vote without an electoral-vote victory, as occurred in the 2000 contest between Al Gore and George W. Bush. **In three-quarters of the 16 presidential elections since World War II, the outcome has been within 1.5 percentage points of this model’s projection**, Abramowitz said.

### Obama Win—EU

Short-term EU crisis pushes Obama to reelection

**Marsh 7/30** [David, Reporter for MarketWatch, “Euro Worries Could Boost Obama,” <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/euro-worries-could-boost-obama-2012-07-30>, 2012]

However, **short of a catastrophic full-scale breakup of economic and monetary union** in the next few months (which still looks unlikely), a further worsening of psychological and political **euro skirmishing may be good for Obama. It will give the president the chance to play statesman on the world stage. He can lecture Europe on where it’s going wrong** (not difficult). He could possibly **cobble short-term damage-control measures** together with China and other G-20 countries (not expensive, because there’s very little money left in the kitty.) He can **welcome** any **emergency liquidity-boosting action** by the Federal Reserve, Bank of England, European Central Bank and People’s Bank of China (not complicated, because central banking’s not his job, and therefore he can dispense praise fairly easily). And **the euro will likely weaken further in coming weeks, profiting the dollar.** Ultimately, this may well be bad for the U.S. economy. In the short run, however, **a strengthening currency will make** America and **the incumbent president look relatively good.**

### Obama Win—Foreign Policy

Obama will win – Americans prefer his foreign policy

**Zakaria 7/26** [Fareed, Editor-At-Large of Time Magazine and host of Fareed Zakaria GPS, “Why Romney’s Critique Of Obama’s Foreign Policy Record Will Not Fly, <http://fareedzakaria.com/2012/07/26/failure-to-launch>, 2012]

**Romney has tried to dredge up the ­standard-issue Cold War Republican attack on Democrats**: the world is dangerous, our enemies are growing strong, and Obama is weak. **The problem is, most Americans recognize that none of this is true.** The world is actually quite peaceful right now; our ­adversaries—like Iran—are weak and isolated. China is growing strong but has not used its power to contest America in ­national-security terms. **The one enemy Americans** recognize and **worry about remains** al-Qaeda and its affiliated **Islamic terrorist groups, and Obama has been relentless in attacking them.** Mitt **Romney** is a smart man who has had much professional success. But even Republican insiders have admitted to me that he has been strangely amateurish on foreign policy. His campaign, they note, is not staffed by the obvious Republican foreign policy heavyweights—people like Robert Zoellick, Richard Armitage, Richard Haas and Stephen Hadley. As a result, he **has blustered about Russia’s being our greatest** geopolitical **adversary** (actually it is a second-rate power), **seems willing to start a trade war with China, is** vague yet **belligerent about Syria and Iran and has gone back and forth on the timetable for withdrawal from Afghanistan.** Romney faces a tough problem. President **Obama is the first Democrat in nearly 50 years to enter an election with a dramatic advantage in foreign policy.** (The last time was Lyndon Johnson vs. Barry Goldwater in 1964.) Unless Romney can craft a smart, strategic alternative, **that gap will only get wider.**

### Obama Win—Likeability

Romney’s awkward—Obama’s likeability means he’ll win

**Tumulty 7/28** [Karen Tumulty, Washington Post, “Romney’s problem? Americans don’t like him as much as Obama, polls say.”, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/in-romney-vs-obama-competency-may-be-trumped-by-likability/2012/07/28/gJQAE6uKGX_story.html>, 2012]

If you believe the polls, it would appear **there is one big factor standing in the way of Mitt** Romney being elected president: **Americans don’t like him** as well as they do Barack Obama.¶ That was confirmed again in a new USA Today-Gallup survey in which respondents gave Romney higher marks on the economic issues, which voters say they care most about this year. But President Obama crushed Romney — 60 percent to 30 percent — on the question of which of the two was more likable.¶ In April, a Washington Post-ABC News poll found an even larger gap, with 64 percent of those surveyed describing Obama as the friendlier, more likable candidate, and only 26 percent saying that about Romney.¶ “We’re not going to win a personality contest. It’s not an election for class president. It’s who can best solve the problems of the country,” said Romney’s pollster, Neil Newhouse. “Likability isn’t fixing the economy or helping the middle class make ends meet.”¶ In part, the disparity reflects a natural reserve, even an awkwardness on Romney’s part. It also reveals a sensitivity to the fact that there are upsides and downsides politically to defining himself through his biography — his Mormon faith, his spectacularly successful business career, his wealth and his stint as the governor of a liberal state.¶ Asked last week by NBC News’s Brian Williams whether he is “unknowable to us,” Romney insisted that he is trying and still has opportunities to introduce himself.¶ “You know, I’ve been on ‘The Tonight Show’ and ‘Letterman’ and ‘The View,’ and I do some of those things to get better known,” he said in the interview that was broadcast Wednesday. “But at the same time, most folks won’t really get to see me until the debates and will get a better sense of the character that I have.”¶ Romney also seemed to acknowledge that he is not exactly a natural when it comes to selling the inner Mitt. “My wife and my sons and daughters-in-law, they’re doing the best job they can to get the real story about who I am in public view,” he said.¶ In every presidential election for the past two decades, the candidate viewed as more likable was the one who won.

### Obama Win—Independents

Obama gaining traction with Independents – it’s a tight race

Pew 7/12 (Pew Research Center For the People and the Press, “Obama Holds Lead; Romney Trails on Most Issues”, 2012, <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/7-12-12%20Political%20Release.pdf>)

Obama holds wide leads over Romney on several issues, including dealing with the problems of the poor (by 30 points), reflecting people’s views on social issues like abortion and gay rights (14 points), defending against terrorist attacks (12 points) and dealing with the nation’s energy problems (12 points). Voters’ evaluations are more divided on the issues that are at the top of their agenda – improving economic conditions and the job situation. And Romney leads by a wide margin as the candidate best able to reduce the federal budget deficit (50% Romney vs. 36% Obama). Last month, Romney led Obama on improving economic conditions by 49% to 41%. But today Obama holds a 48% to 42% edge. Romney has lost significant ground on the economy among independents. In June, independents favored Romney as the candidate best able to improve economic conditions by a 54%-31% margin. In the current survey, independents are divided: 43% say Romney can best improve economic conditions, compared with 39% who say Obama.

### Obama Win—Florida

Obama winning Florida now—best poll prove

Silver, ‘7-21 [Nate Silver, July 21, 2012, “Polls Show Forward Movement for Obama in Florida”, http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/21/july-21-polls-show-forward-movement-for-obama-in-florida/]

As we mentioned last week, President Obama’s polling has been holding up reasonably well in Florida. The latest example was a SurveyUSA poll, released late Friday, that showed him five points ahead there among likely voters.¶ SurveyUSA is a strongly rated pollster. It includes cellphones in its sample, which made a fair amount of difference in this poll; Mr. Obama trailed by six points among land-line households. And it gives its respondents the option of completing the interview in Spanish.¶ Still, because Florida has received plenty of polling — and because SurveyUSA’s polls have been somewhat Democratic-leaning so far this cycle — the poll does not make too much difference in our forecast. Mr. Obama’s chances of winning Florida improved to 52 percent from 49 percent, according to our forecast model. If you’re determined to “call” each state, it technically flipped from red to blue. But if you look at the election probabilistically, as we do, these results are about the same.

Obama winning Florida—their polls consistently overestimate Republican advantages

Witt, ‘7-24 [7/24/12, Ryan Witt, “Obama leads with 333 votes in most recent Electoral College map projection”, http://www.examiner.com/article/obama-leads-with-333-votes-most-recent-electoral-college-map-projection]

President Obama retakes Florida in the most recent Electoral College map projection, giving him a 333-215 electoral vote lead over Mitt Romney. The last update gave Obama 304 votes compared to 234 votes for Mitt Romney. The change entirely is once again due to a new polling in Florida. Last week a poll from Purple Strategies showed Romney with a three point lead, but this week a Survey USA poll shows Obama with a five point lead in Florida. Needless to say, Florida will likely be very close no matter who wins the state's 29 electoral votes¶ The projection is made using the most recent polls linked below, while also giving consideration to the historical trends of each state and other polls released over the last two weeks. Special emphasis is given to how the state voted in 2008. In analyzing Florida, President Obama only won the state by three points in 2008, and an average of polls as well as the most recent poll have Romney ahead. Considering all these factors, Romney was given the state. It is also worth noting that many of the most recent polls come from Rasmussen Reports, an organization that has given Republican candidates a misleading three-to-five point edge in their polls as recently as 2010.

### Obama Win—Newsmax

Your article concludes neg

**Newsmax 7/26** [“Poll: Democrats Lose Desire to Vote for Obama”, <http://www.newsmax.com/Politics/obama-romney-election-vote/2012/07/26/id/446651>, 2012]

To be sure, it may just be that Democrats are depressed by the prospects of an Obama defeat and will still vote in large numbers, Jones says.

### AT Deficit Spending Now

Obama expects to reduce the deficit and econ growth now

Runningen 07/28 (Roger, July 28, 2012, “Obama Advisers Project $1.2 Trillion Deficit for 2012” http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-07-27/obama-sees-deficit-down-to-1-dot-2-trillion-gdp-at-2-dot-6-percent-in-2012#p1)

The Obama administration forecast the federal budget deficit will be $1.21 trillion this year, down from $1.33 trillion projected in February, as gridlock in Congress slows government spending. The national unemployment rate will average 8 percent for the year, the president’s Office of Management and Budget said in an annual update of its budget projections. The updated figures were released yesterday amid a presidential election campaign in which the economy is the dominant issue. Economic growth from the fourth quarter of 2011 to the fourth quarter of this year is projected to be 2.6 percent, according to the OMB’s mid-session review. While that’s lower than what the administration said it expected in February, it remains higher than the forecasts of private economists. “Economic and financial fragility in the euro area remains a significant risk to the U.S. recovery and to the global economy,” according to the report, written by White House economists. “Despite these headwinds, the administration expects economic growth to continue at a moderate pace in 2012 and 2013 and to pick up in 2014.” Jobs, taxes and the deficit are central points of debate in the presidential contest between Obama and Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, and polls indicate the two candidates are separated by a narrow margin. Obama has a 1.1 percentage point advantage in the average of seven national polls taken since July 9 compiled by the website Real Clear Politics.

Obama using tax campaign to reduce deficit in long haul

Condon 07/30 (Stephanie, is a political reporter for CBSNews.com , July 30, 2012“Fine tuning economic plans, 99 days before the election “ http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544\_162-57482169-503544/fine-tuning-economic-plans-99-days-before-the-election/)

In addition to running the ads, the DCCC held "Middle Class First" grassroots events in 19 congressional districts over the weekend. Democrats point out that, according to recent polling, the public is on their side of the issue of tax cuts. However, a Gallup poll suggests their message may not be so politically powerful: Given a list of 12 policy priorities, voters list "increasing taxes on wealthy Americans" as the least important. Creating good jobs is the most important, followed by reducing corruption in government and reducing the federal deficit. As Democrats campaign on recalibrating the tax code, they'll point out to voters that the Bush-era tax rates were a significant contributor to the deficit. "Under House Republicans' plan, the rich would get richer, the middle class would pay the price, and the deficit would grow," DCCC Chairman Steve Israel wrote in a memo to Democratic candidates last week. While Democrats focus on tax equity, Republicans see a more potent political message in promising to foster small businesses. Mitt Romney's presidential campaign and the Republican Party are still hammering President Obama for recent remarks that the GOP says undermined the hard work of American entrepreneurs.

Obama committed to slashing the deficit

Price 07/03 (Jim, 07/03 “Ryan, Walker Blast Obama's Deficit-Spending Policies “ http://oakcreek.patch.com/articles/walker-ryan-condemn-obama-s-unsustainable-spending)

Democrats, in anticipation of Tuesday's GOP press conference, put out a statement in rebuttal even before it was over. “The president has laid out a plan to responsibly reduce the deficit by over $4 trillion – including $2 trillion in spending cuts he signed into law last year," said state Sen. Chris Larson. "The Romney-Ryan budget, on the other hand, would explode the deficit and give tax cuts to big corporations that outsource jobs to India, China and Mexico, while raising taxes on middle class families in Wisconsin. "Mitt Romney hasn’t put forth any plans to create job besides cutting taxes for the wealthiest, while President Obama has put forth plans that will create jobs now and strengthen the middle class, creating an economy built to last,” Larson said.

## Internals

### Single Issues Irrelevant

Election 2012 not about any single issue

Valle 07/30 (Elaine de, July 30, 2012, National Political Editor, George Washington University “100 days to Election 2012, Face the Facts initiative debuts with federal spending” http://www.voxxi.com/100-days-face-facts-federal-spending/#ixzz227OBPb00)

From immigration to infrastructure. From energy and the environment to education and the economy. From healthcare to taxes. From debt and deficit to food stamps and federal spending. Election 2012 is not about any one issue. There are dozens of hot-button topics that will motivate Americans from every voting bloc across the country. And there is plenty of rhetoric that can make the savviest of voters get a headache. But there are is also factual data available that can assist the debate and help keep the conversation going in the right direction. It puts everybody on a level playing field if we all know what we’re talking about. Did you know that the federal deficit, for example, is growing at a rate of $2.5 million per minute and that if you stacked dollar bills to total $42,000 that goes every second it would be more than 14 feet tall? We thought not.

### Independents Key

Independents will decide the election – declining registered voters and rising independents

IVA 7/11 (Independent Voters of America, “Independent Voters In Swing States Will Decide The Presidency,” 2012, <http://independentvotersofamerica.org/independent-voters-in-swing-states-will-decide-the-presidency/>)

There’s one thing that’s for certain about the 2012 Presidential Election – it will be close. The latest polls and aggregate poll trackers have forecasted the race between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney as a dead heat. This means that independent voters will be the deciding swing vote. Whether independents again break for Obama as they did in 2008, or if he’s actually down 14 points to Romney amongst indys as reported in the latest ABC News poll, independent voters in America will be the swing voters that decide campaign 2012. The fact that independent voters will be a deciding factor this fall is only bolstered by recent increases in voter registration numbers. As reported by Bloomberg News, numbers of registered independent voters in several key “swing states” are surging, while numbers of registered Democrats have steeply declined – certainly cause for concern for the Democratic Party and President Obama’s 2012 reelection chances: The collective total of independents grew by about 443,000 in Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire and North Carolina since the 2008 election, according to data compiled by Bloomberg from state election officials: During the same time, Democrats saw a net decline of about 480,000 in those six states, while Republicans – boosted in part by a competitive primary earlier this year – added roughly 38,000 voters in them, the analysis shows. This trend in declining Democratic voter registration and correspondent growth in independent voter registration isn’t just limited to the six states Bloomberg mentions, it’s a national phenomenon. Meanwhile, the Republican Party isn’t having much more success than the Democrats. Until the 2012 presidential primary boosted their most recent voter registration totals, a 2011 USA Today Analysis found that Republican voter registration efforts across the country were falling in tandem with Democrats: Since the 2008 Election… Registered Democrats declined in 25 of the 28 states that register voters by party. Republicans dipped in 21 states, while independents increased in 18 states... In the eight swing states that register voters by party, Democrats’ registration is down by 800,000 and Republicans’ by 350,000. Independents have gained 325,000… Registered Democrats still dominate the political playing field with more than 42 million voters, compared to 30 million Republicans and 24 million independents. But Democrats have lost the most — 1.7 million, or 3.9%, from 2008… By contrast, the number of independents has grown for years and is up more than 400,000 since 2008, or 1.7%. States with big gains: Colorado, Florida, North Carolina — and Arizona, a possible target for President Obama in 2012. The fact of the matter is that while both parties have struggled to increase their voter rolls since 2008, record numbers of dissatisfied voters are newly registering as independents. With the 2012 Presidential election shaping up to be much closer than the 2008 contest, independent voters can and will be the deciding swing vote this fall. Whomever you vote for, we encourage you to consider your decision wisely – your independent vote could decide the election.

### Independents Key—Colorado

Independents will decide which way Colorado votes

Eischen 7/3 (Faith, “Swing State Colorado: ‘Tossup’ in Upcoming November Election”, 2012, <http://ivn.us/2012/07/03/swing-state-colorado-tossup-in-upcoming-november-election/>)

President Obama flew out to Colorado at the end of last week “to get a firsthand view of the fires and their toll on residential communities”. The potential political motivations of such a visit are not lost in this election year. Colorado has recently been grappling with the state’s most destructive wildfire in its history. President Obama declared the wildfires a “major disaster” and promised Colorado federal aid to help with the high costs of damages. Colorado, one of nine main swing states, will play an important factor in the upcoming presidential election in November. Both President Obama and Gov. Romney’s presidential campaigns will target swing states in efforts to lock in the coveted amount of electoral votes on Election Day. On Sunday, Eva Longoria, celebrity and national co-chair for the Obama Campaign, was on hand in Colorado to kick off the campaign’s “Women Vote 2012″. In 2008, Obama won 53.5% of Colorado, while McCain only received 44.8%. This was a serious accomplishment for Obama considering Colorado voted reliably Republican in eight of the last nine presidential elections prior to 2008. Although Obama gained 9 electoral votes from Colorado in 2008, Colorado is considered a strong tossup in the 2012 presidential election. In the upcoming election President Obama and Mitt Romney must appeal to the emerging independent electorate in Colorado. Both presidential candidates may struggle with this task as they continue to court the bases of each of their own political parties. The centrist think tank, Third Way conducted a study of swing states including Colorado. Third Way found that the percentage of registered Republicans and Democrats barely increased since 2008, while newly declared independents drastically rose, in comparison. Third Way analyst Lanae Erickson said in Colorado, it’s now practically a three-way tie in registration. “Independents actually rose by nearly 10 percent in Colorado just since 2008. So there’s been a huge surge in independent voters. And, so, as a proportion of the electorate, independents have really gained on both parties.”

### Colorado Key

Colorado is a key swing state

Todd and Murray et. al 7/10 (Chuck Todd, Mark Murray, Brooke Brower, and Natalie Cucchiara, NBC, “First Thoughts: The importance of Colorado and Iowa”, 2012, <http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/07/10/12660842-first-thoughts-the-importance-of-colorado-and-iowa?lite>)

The importance of Colorado and Iowa: Today, President Obama and Mitt Romney will campaign in two battleground states that are important to their paths to 270 electoral votes. Obama stumps in Cedar Rapids, IA at 1:50 pm ET, and the Hawkeye State -- which launched his presidential bid in 2008 -- has been frustrating this time around for him. Polls show the president deadlocked with Romney, and reporting like this recent Des Moines Register dispatch suggests that many of the folks who were fired up and ready to go in ’08 aren’t as much in ’12. (Some Obama folks think the president’s problems in Iowa stem from disappointment due to the higher expectations folks in the state had for him.) Here’s why Iowa, despite its six electoral votes, is important to Obama’s path to 270: Winning the state gives him more flexibility. For instance, he could lose FL, OH, and VA and still surpass that magic number if he wins CO, IA, NV, NH, and NM. But if you take Iowa away, then he has to win one of FL, OH, and VA.\*\*\* They make life easier getting to 270: Meanwhile, Romney today is in Colorado, where he holds a town hall in Grand Junction at 12:35 pm ET. And just like Obama’s situation with Iowa, Romney winning Colorado gives him MUCH more flexibility getting to 270 electoral votes. For instance, if the former Massachusetts governor wins that state, he can still lose Virginia but win the presidency by capturing FL, IA, NH, and OH. But if he loses Colorado to Obama, then he has to win in Virginia (or another state that John Kerry won in ’04). Bottom line: Obama winning Iowa and Romney winning Colorado makes life a lot easier for them.

### Florida Key

Florida most important swing state

AP, ’7-19 [July 19, 2012, “In Florida, Obama keeps pressure on Romney”, http://www.newsday.com/elections/in-florida-obama-keeps-pressure-on-romney-1.3848117]

Florida is the largest and most coveted of the nation's Election Day toss-up states, a place where Romney could severely damage Obama's chances of winning re-election. Republicans are holding their national convention in Tampa in August in hopes of giving themselves an edge in the state.¶ Yet, if Obama can lock down Florida's 29 electoral votes, it would be difficult for Romney to mount enough support elsewhere to capture the White House.

### Florida Key—I-4 Corridor

I-4 corridor will determine the election—neither party has a big enough base

Beaumont, ’12 [7/3/12, Thomas Beaumont, “Obama and Romney scrap along battleground Florida's I-4”, http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Latest-News-Wires/2012/0703/Obama-and-Romney-scrap-along-battleground-Florida-s-I-4]

In the presidential battleground with the biggest prize, Democrat Barack Obama is focused on ratcheting up voter turnout in Florida's university towns, its Hispanic enclaves around Orlando and its Jewish communities in the south. Republican challenger Mitt Romney is working to squeeze as many votes as possible out of north Florida's conservative military bastions, the senior-heavy Gulf Coast and Miami's Cuban community. But their strategies to energize core supporters overlap in the central Florida swing-voting region that's key to winning the state and its 29 electoral votes. Voters along Interstate 4, which stretches from Tampa Bay to Daytona Beach, will determine the outcome if the race remains close into the fall, as expected. About 45 percent of the state's voters live in that 17-county area.¶ "Neither party has enough base alone, which is why those persuadable places, particularly along the I-4corridor, are so important," said Steve Schale, a Democrat who ran Obama's Florida campaign four years ago.¶ It seems that's usually the case, judging by Florida's track record of hard-fought races and narrow presidential outcomes since the 2000 race landed at the Supreme Court, which then handed the White House to Republican George W. Bush.¶ Bush won the state again four years later, 52 percent to 47 percent, over Democrat John Kerry. But in 2008, the state sided with Democrats when Obama defeated Republican John McCain, 51 percent to 48 percent.¶ This year, the stakes are hard to overstate: Obama's re-election is nearly assured should he repeat his 2008 victory in Florida, based on how the states lean now. His standing in Florida is far more precarious than it is in other contested states — so if he wins Florida, it's likely that he's won in many other states as he looks to cobble together the 270 Electoral College votes it takes to win. Romney's state-by-state routes to reaching the magic number are more limited than the president's, and a Florida victory would make it far more probable that he could win the presidency.

## Impact

### Russia Relations—Relations High

Relations are high despite disagreements

Ria Novosti 7/30 (7/30/12, “‘Everything’s OK’ in U.S.-Russian Relations – Medvedev,” http://en.ria.ru/russia/20120730/174862459.html)

MOSCOW, July 30 (RIA Novosti) – Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has dismissed allegations that the U.S.- Russian relations have deteriorated as of late over a range of issues, including Washington’s plans to build missile defense systems near Russian borders.¶ “I believe that the past few years in the history of U.S.-Russian relations have been the most productive,” Medvedev said in an interview with the Times newspaper in London, where he attended the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games on July 27. The Times published the interview on Monday.¶ “I don’t think that we have entered any ‘new’ period, that Russia has taken a harsher stance toward the United States (as the media sometimes put it), that our priorities have changed and that the ‘reset’ has winded down without any results. This is absolutely wrong,” he said.¶ He hailed U.S. President Barack Obama for helping Russia enter the World Trade Organization (WTO) after some 18 years of complicated negotiations.¶ “I will always be grateful to Barack Obama for taking an honest position,” Medvedev said.¶ “Once, I remember, we were sitting in a car, talking without an interpreter, and he said: ‘You know, I will help you enter the WTO.’ And he did this. Such things cannot be forgotten. This means he keeps his word,” the Russian prime minister said.¶ Russia officially joined the WTO on July 21, becoming the 154th member of the global trade club when President Vladimir Putin signed the relevant bill into law.¶ Medvedev admitted that “real differences” still exist between Moscow and Washington on a range of issues, including the U.S. European missile shield plans, and warned that failure to reach an agreement on the issue by 2018 could lead to a new arms race.¶ Nevertheless, “nothing bad, nothing extraordinary has happened” to Russia’s relations with the United States, and any suggestions about such “changes” are mainly inspired by ideological considerations, he said.¶ “Everything’s OK,” he added.¶ Besides differences on the missile defense issue, Russia and the United States have failed to find common ground on Syria, with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov frequently arguing over who is to blame for the continuing violence in the Middle Eastern country.

Russia is not getting tougher – and Putin won’t kill relations

Interfax 7/30 (7/30/12, “Russia did not toughen policy toward U.S.,” http://rbth.ru/articles/2012/07/30/russia\_did\_not\_toughen\_policy\_toward\_us\_-\_medvedev\_16816.html)

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has said he sees no changes in the Russian policy toward the United States and is grateful to President Barack Obama for supporting Russia's bid to join the World Trade Organization (WTO).¶ "I do not think that we have entered some other stage, that Russia has started pursuing a tougher course toward America as sometimes claimed by the media, that priorities have changed, the reset is over and yielded nothing. That is wrong," Medvedev said in an interview with the British newspaper The Times to be published on Monday.¶ The reset has resulted in the signing of the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty), "which now sets the configuration of our relationship for the coming years, despite our differences over the missile defense system," he said.¶ Hopefully, President Vladimir Putin too will establish a "working partnership" with President Obama, he said. "Actually, that is the case. And I, of course, will contribute where I can to this dialogue within the limits of my existing constitutional powers," Medvedev said.

### Russia Relations—Romney Kills

Romney will reverse the relations reset

Washington Times 7/1 (Guy Taylor, 7/1/12, “Romney would support foreign friends, confront adversaries,” http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jul/1/romney-has-no-intention-of-making-frenemies/?page=all#pagebreak)

Call it the “friend-enemy” distinction.¶ Mitt Romney has assembled a foreign-policy platform rooted in the belief that adversaries such as Russia must be confronted for backsliding on democracy and that Israel must be supported in the face of common threats such as a nuclear-armed Iran.¶ Advisers to the former Massachusetts governor contrast that approach and a belief in “American exceptionalism” with those of President Obama, whose foreign policy they characterize as putting its energy into trying to bargain with enemies while taking friends for granted.¶ “Gov. Romney believes that in foreign policy, you start with your friends,” said Eliot Cohen, who wrote the foreword to the Romney campaign’s 43-page foreign policy white paper last fall.¶ “Obama believes that no, you start with your enemies, you see where you can cut deals and negotiate,” said Mr. Cohen, who heads the Strategic Studies Program at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies. “Under the Obama approach, your friends are kind of an afterthought, and in some cases, if its useful to rough up your friends a little bit, you do that, too.”¶ As an example of the latter, Mr. Cohen cited Mr. Obama’s awkward relations with Israel. He also said the administration’s foundering “reset” with Russia, its initial overtures to Iran and its 2010 appointment of an ambassador to Syria all showed how fruitless it is to try to cut deals with adversaries.¶ If Mr. Romney wins the presidential election in November, his foreign policy will be anchored to what one adviser describes as a “Reaganesque” philosophy that a robust U.S. military conveys as much meaning to those watching from abroad as to the men and women of the armed services at home.¶ “My experience with Mitt Romney is that he believes strongly in peace through strength,” said Richard S. Williamson, a senior foreign policy adviser to the Romney campaign who held key positions under Presidents Reagan, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush.¶ “I had the privilege of working on Reagan’s senior White House staff, and so I had a pretty good sense of the man,” said Mr. Williamson. “I find Romney very similar in his approach. I would say Romney’s view is very Reaganesque.”¶ The former Massachusetts governor “believes strongly in American exceptionalism, that America is a great country and the world is a better place if America leads,” Mr. Williamson said. “This is a huge contrast with Barack Obama. I don’t think anyone would argue that Mr. Obama believes in American exceptionalism. He believes that you should ‘lead from behind,’ whatever the heck that means.”¶ But while Mr. Romney has compiled a star-studded roster of nearly two dozen foreign policy advisers, the vast majority are known more for their alignment with post-9/11 foreign policy of George W. Bush than the Cold War-era Reagan administration. Mr. Williamson is one of only a few whose resumes reach back to that time.¶ Others, including former counterterrorism chief Cofer Black, former CIA Director Michael V. Hayden, for Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and former U.N. Ambassador John R. Bolton, are more known for service under George W. Bush — leaving open the possibility that Mr. Romney is as inclined to embrace a Bush-style “with us or against us” foreign policy as anything else.¶ Such assertions offer a broad-stroke outline of how the Romney camp thinks U.S. foreign policy should be adjusted but sheds little light on what, precisely, Mr. Romney would do differently.¶ More neutral analysts, not tied to the Romney campaign, say this is his weak point.¶ “Rather than taking clear positions, there’s a lot of political positioning critical of Obama, but not really offering any clarity about what he would do differently on key foreign policy issues like Iran, Afghanistan and Israel,” said Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress.¶ “My analysis on this is that the Romney camp, and Republicans more generally, are struggling to deal with sharp divisions within their own party on foreign policy,” Mr. Katulis said. “One key camp is small-government proponents like the tea party and tax-cut advocates calling for a much smaller military, and the other is the defense hawks and neocons who are calling for even an expansion in defense spending.”¶ As a result, Mr. Romney has developed a penchant for embracing rhetoric over substance when it comes to foreign policy, Mr. Katulis said, going on to accuse Mr. Romney and his advisers of exaggerating Mr. Obama’s dovishness.¶ “The most recent, clearest example was Romney’s statement in mid-June when asked what he would do on Israel. He said he would do the exact opposite of what Obama has done,” Mr. Katulis said. “If Romney really wanted to do the opposite of what Obama has done on Israel that would mean he would vote in favor of supporting the Palestinian statehood bid at the United Nations.”¶ Romney staffers flatly dismiss such claims.¶ “Barack Obama’s policy toward Israel in the last four years — from repeatedly offering up to Congress budget cuts for missile-defense cooperation with Israel to saying that Israeli-Palestinian negotiations have to start with the indefensible 1967 borders — has resulted in chilled relations between the United States and our closest alley,” said Alex Wong, the campaign’s foreign policy director.¶ “What Mr. Romney meant is that, should he become president, he will wholeheartedly support Israel,” Mr. Wong said. “His first trip as president will be to Israel to send a message to the world that our relationship is rock solid, and he will basically reverse the policy of putting down our ally, which has been the basis of Barack Obama’s policy.”¶ Mr. Wong stressed other areas where Mr. Romney’s foreign policy differs clearly, and specifically, from Mr. Obama’s.¶ “In Afghanistan, while Mr. Romney agrees with 2014 as a realistic time frame for the withdrawal of U.S. troops, he simply would not have announced the withdrawal date ahead of time the way that Mr. Obama did,” Mr. Wong said.¶ “In Iran, Mr. Romney would have stood up for Iranian dissidents who demonstrated against their government during the 2009 Green Movement,” he said. “Obama said he wasn’t about to meddle in Iran’s internal affairs for fear of endangering his ‘no preconditions’ engagement policy. That policy ultimately failed.”¶ Mr. Romney also would “send a message to the ayatollahs that we are serious about the military option in order to stop their nuclear arms program,” said Mr. Wong. “To make that clear, we would establish a permanent presence of U.S. aircraft carrier task forces in both the Eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf region.”¶ The presumptive Republican nominee has also has promised to reverse Obama-era defense budget cuts with the goal of setting core defense spending at a floor of 4 percent of the nation’s gross domestic product.¶ Critics contend some of the Romney camp’s positions are more bluster than backbone, particularly since the Obama administration’s proposed defense spending cuts put the defense budget at 4.6 percent of the nation’s gross domestic product by 2015.¶ While the U.S.-Israel relationship has faced rhetorical strain under Mr. Obama, the administration has increased security-related assistance to Israel. It also has maintained the presence of aircraft carriers, albeit not “permanent,” in the eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf.¶ But Mr. Romney has been verifiably more aggressive than the Obama administration on Syria. While it’s unclear whether he would back a U.S. or NATO-led military intervention in Syria, he asserted recently that the United States “should work with partners to arm the opposition so they can defend themselves” — a strategy the administration has repeatedly said that it does not support.¶ On the campaign trail, Mr. Romney has raised the eyebrows of critics and supporters alike with variety of other aggressive foreign policy assertions.¶ He has vowed to declare China a currency manipulator on his first day in office, asserted that the U.S. should not negotiate with the Taliban but “go anywhere they are and kill them,” and described Russia as America’s “No. 1 geopolitical foe.” Mr. Romney also came out strongly against the signing of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia.

### Russia Relations—AT Putin

Obama can fix relations after the election

Lukyanov 5/10 – Editor-in-Chief of the “Russia in Global Affairs” journal published in Russian and English with participation of Foreign Affairs (Fyodor, senior member of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, member of the Presidential Council on Human Rights and Civic Society Institutions, 5/10/12, “Uncertain World: Putin and Washington: Is Conflict Inevitable?” Ria Novosti, http://en.rian.ru/columnists/20120510/173370687.html)

Vladimir Putin, who was inaugurated as president of Russia on May 7, has instructed the Foreign Ministry to ensure compliance with the New START Treaty, focusing on the issue of ballistic missile defense. The meaning of the gesture is clear. Relations with the United States remain at the forefront and at the core of these relations is the issue of ballistic missile defense, a situation that is unlikely to change.¶ Putin created a stir by announcing that he would not be attending the G8 summit at Camp David next week but would be sending Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev to represent Russia instead. This decision is highly significant, especially considering that one of the reasons for moving the meeting from Chicago, where a NATO summit is due to be held after the G8 meeting, is the unwillingness of both sides to start their interaction off with a conflict.¶ Since there has been no progress on the issue of missile defense, the tone of Putin’s potential statements had he attended the G8 summit, is predictable enough. It is in no one’s interest for this to happen, either from a security standpoint or on a political level. The lack of progress was due to the complexity of the issue itself and the election campaigns in Russia and the United States. As Obama told Medvedev in a candid moment in Seoul, unaware that his words were being picked up by microphone, he would have “more flexibility” to deal with contentious issues like missile defense after the U.S. presidential election if he is reelected, of course. Washington’s flexibility is vital for breaking the deadlock because Putin usually reciprocates to manifestations of goodwill, or more precisely, he does so when he feels that he is dealing with someone who is ready to negotiate and compromise, rather than talking to a brick wall.¶ The current difficulties in Russian-U.S. relations are hard to formulate: Putin has to understand that Obama is not George W. Bush. The world sees Obama as the polar opposite to Bush, but this is not so obvious to the new Russian president. Putin does not trust the United States as a matter of principle, but not because of his Soviet background or KGB training. The reason is more to do with his relations with Bush during his first two presidential terms. According to Putin, who was initially pro-American, instead of gratitude, the Bush administration responded to his moves toward rapprochement with the United States in 2000-2002 by launching an aggressive expansion into the post-Soviet space, withdrawing from the 1972 ABM Treaty, announcing plans to deploy BMD elements near Russia’s border, and setting a course for global hegemony.¶ As a result, Putin decided that, on the whole, gentlemanly agreements with the Americans are not possible: they do not honor their promises, they take every concession for granted and flexibility for them is simply a pretext for expanding their sphere of strategic influence. Agreements with them on some issues are possible in principle, but only after long hard bargaining, and when the results are sealed in a legally binding document. The START talks proceeded in accordance with this formula, and Russia’s 18-year marathon toward accession to the WTO is an even more explicit example.¶ The first – and so far only – meeting between Putin and Obama in July 2009 started with Putin talking fervently and passionately for 45 minutes about Russia’s complaints about U.S. policies. Obama listened attentively and promised to reconsider – to all appearances he has honored his promise. The reset between the United States and Russia took off in September when Obama announced his decision to cancel Bush’s plans to deploy a ballistic missile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic. The Kremlin welcomed the decision, and the process at last moved forward. However, the missile defense issue has once again reared its head. Putin believes that Washington is being disingenuous and that, whoever is president, will continue to advance its strategic project, disregarding the opinions of its partners.¶ Further statements on the readiness to continue working jointly can be expected to come from the Camp David talks, but practical discussions would be pointless until February or March 2013. Afghanistan may be the only exception and Medvedev may ask what Washington’s real intentions in this country are. Most Russian experts still doubt that U.S. troops will pull out of Afghanistan as planned. The general belief is that Washington will maintain a strategic presence there.¶ Contrary to what many believe, Russian-U.S. relations are not doomed to conflict under Putin, but they will be strained for the reasons outlined above. On the whole, the decision not to attend the G8 summit is fresh evidence that Putin dislikes diplomatic routine and endless protocol meetings with his foreign counterparts. He feels more at ease with foreign business leaders, who talk about practical issues more freely, with such meetings often culminating in practical projects.¶ That is why, although he has changed places with Dmitry Medvedev, Putin may try to preserve the previous tandem formula, which has proved quite effective in foreign policy. Prime Minister Medvedev could take on a broader foreign policy brief, becoming President Putin’s personal special envoy, especially since it is easier for him to find common ground with most foreign leaders. So what Obama was caught telling Medvedev in Seoul, and which caused such an uproar in the United States, may be a telling indicator of the possible format of Russian-U.S. communications for the next few years: “After my election, I will have more flexibility,” Obama said and urged Medvedev to relay this point to Putin. “I understand. I will transmit this information to Vladimir,” Medvedev replied.

# Affirmative Politics Work

## Uniqueness

### Romney Win—Poor Leadership

Obama is squandering goodwill by appeasing Republicans and abandoning stimulating policies like the aff

**Westen 7/27** [Drew Westen, Washington Post, “If Obama loses the election, here’s why”, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/if-obama-loses-the-election-heres-why/2012/07/27/gJQAkjMREX_story.html>, 2012]

The second mistake was squandering the goodwill that Americans felt toward the new president and their anxiety about an economy hemorrhaging three-quarters of a million jobs a month. That combination gave Obama, at the beginning of his term, a power to shape public policy that no one since Franklin Roosevelt had held. But instead of designing a stimulus that reflected the thinking of the country’s best economic minds, he cut their recommended numbers by a third and turned another third into inert tax cuts designed to appease Republican legislators whose primary aim was to defeat him. He stimulated the economy — but just enough to leave the results open to interpretation, rendering questionable what should have been an uncontested success.¶ Obama compounded the problem a year into his presidency, when corporate profits were on the rise while job creation wasn’t. The Senate was considering a jobs program much like one the House had passed. But Obama refused to throw his support behind it. To do so, he would have had to articulate a vision in which government sets the conditions for the private sector to create prosperity and jobs, and steps in when the private sector can’t — or when it works against the interests of ordinary Americans. It’s a vision in which leadership means knowing when to step up and when to step back, not simply passively riding the waves of market failures, business cycles and bubbles — the vision that unites Herbert Hoover, George W. Bush and Romney.¶ But Obama chose neither to offer that vision nor to take action to put Americans back to work directly, rebuilding our broken roads, our bridges, our crumbling schools. The stimulus was a good start, but its flaws were already apparent. Instead, he began using Republican language about how the government, like ordinary families, needs to tighten its belt, as if that were a solution for people whose belts couldn’t get any tighter. “Government has to start living within its means, just like families do,” he said in a weekly Web and radio address. Words like these not only undercut the vision behind the stimulus — the whole point of which was to spark a sputtering economy with deficit spending — but they came as bankers were loosening their belts, making average Americans angrier.

### Romney Win—Economy

Obama’s will lose—the economy will destroy his lead

SAPA-AFP 7/30 [Sowetan, “Obama vulnerable with 100 days until vote”, <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/world/2012/07/30/obama-vulnerable-with-100-days-until-vote>, 2012]

Polls show the Democratic incumbent's lead is shrinking as voters lose faith in his ability to tackle crucial domestic issues, in particular the economy, as growth slows and the job market stubbornly refuses to pick up.¶ According to a Wall Street Journal and NBC poll published this week, only 36 percent of American voters are confident Obama can improve the economy, while 43 percent prefer Romney, a multi-millionaire former venture capitalist.¶ Obama and his team have been hammering away at Romney's argument that his business experience makes him the better choice to get Americans back to work, alleging that his firm often sacked US workers and sent jobs abroad.¶ But the attacks appear to have gained little traction with a pessimistic electorate. Unemployment is stuck at 8.2 percent and is not expected to fall below 7.9 percent by the end of the year, the White House acknowledged Friday.¶ Figures released by the US Commerce Department on Friday showed GDP growth in the second quarter slowing to 1.5 percent from 2.0 percent in the first, amid falling consumer demand.¶ Economists warn that growth of less than two percent is not enough to make inroads into unemployment, and Romney's economic advisers claim that their policies could quickly double the rate.¶ Sixty percent of Americans believe the country is on the wrong track, the poll found.

Unemployment will be blamed on Obama

**Westen 7/27** [Drew Westen, Washington Post, “If Obama loses the election, here’s why”, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/if-obama-loses-the-election-heres-why/2012/07/27/gJQAkjMREX_story.html>, 2012]

Americans are scared, angry and struggling. They used to talk about job satisfaction; now they talk about just holding on to their jobs. No incumbent since FDR has ever won reelection with unemployment numbers remotely resembling today’s. What voters feel about their lives and dreams in the months leading up to an election tends to stick to the president when they enter the voting booth. And right now what’s sticking to Obama isn’t good.

### Romney Win—Attack Ads

Obama’s likeability is falling—new attack ads

SAPA-AFP 7/30 [Sowetan, “Obama vulnerable with 100 days until vote”, <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/world/2012/07/30/obama-vulnerable-with-100-days-until-vote>, 2012]

Still, Obama has recently suffered a drop in his personal popularity. Some 43 percent of voters responding to the WSJ and NBC poll said they had a negative opinion -- 32 percent of them "very negative" -- of their president.¶ The decline comes amid an onslaught of aggressive Democratic campaign ads targeting Romney's Swiss bank accounts and what they portray as a record of lost jobs at companies controlled by Bain Capital, the investment company he led.

### Romney Win—Turnout

Democrats wont vote—newest polls

**Newsmax 7/26** [“Poll: Democrats Lose Desire to Vote for Obama”, <http://www.newsmax.com/Politics/obama-romney-election-vote/2012/07/26/id/446651>, 2012]

Enthusiasm among Democrats to voting in the presidential election is slipping, according to a new USA Today/Gallup poll. ¶ The survey shows that only 39 percent of Democrats and those who lean Democratic are "more enthusiastic about voting than usual" in the race between President Barack Obama and Republican candidate Mitt Romney. That compares with 61 percent in 2008 and 68 percent in 2004, when Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., was running against President George W. Bush.¶ Those numbers obviously aren’t good for Obama, and it gets worse. Among Republicans and those who lean Republican, 51 percent are more enthusiastic about voting. That’s up from 38 percent in 2008 and unchanged from 2004.¶ “The Republican advantage may indicate a greater likelihood of voting among Republicans, but also greater optimism about a Republican victory than was the case in 2008,” writes Gallup’s Jeffrey Jones. “In turn, Democrats are probably less optimistic about their chances of winning than they were in 2008.”¶ The portion of overall voters who are more enthusiastic about voting than usual has slipped to 44 percent from 48 percent in 2008 and 59 percent in 2004.¶ “With voter enthusiasm down significantly from 2004 and 2008 levels, it is reasonable to expect that turnout will be lower this presidential election than in the last two elections, both of which had above-average turnout,” Jones writes.¶ “Republicans' greater enthusiasm about voting is a troubling sign for the Obama campaign, especially given the fact that registered voters are essentially tied in their presidential voting preferences, and that Republicans historically vote at higher rates than Democrats do.”

### Romney Win—Rush Limbaugh

Rush Limbaugh is going to take down Obama’s lead

**Feldman 7/30** [Marcus Feldman, Media Matters, “Rush Limbaugh's Campaign To "Otherize" Obama”, <http://mediamatters.org/blog/2012/07/30/rush-limbaughs-campaign-to-otherize-obama/188999>, 2012]

With the 2012 presidential election approaching, Rush Limbaugh has stepped up his efforts to "otherize" President Obama, engaging in dog-whistle politics intended to push the idea that Obama is foreign to the American experience.¶ In 2008, New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof wrote of a deliberate effort to exaggerate differences between Obama and other Americans, with the goal of "de-Americaniz[ing]" him in the eyes of American voters. This effort, which Kristof described as a "campaign to 'otherize' " Obama, has had many voices, but perhaps none more prominent than Limbaugh.¶ Since as early as 2007, Limbaugh has attempted to portray Obama's life story as foreign to the American experience, often exploiting racial and religious prejudice to sow distrust and fear of Obama. Limbaugh's past remarks include accusing Obama of being "more African in his roots than he is American" and guilty of "behaving like an African colonial despot." He has also called Obama a "Halfrican American" and questioned Obama's faith, asking, "Obama says he's a Christian but where's the evidence?" Limbaugh also asserted that "Imam Hussein Obama" is probably the "best anti-American president the country's ever had," and then a day later trumpeted a poll showcasing the mistaken belief that "Imam Obama is a Muslim."¶ Now, with the 2012 election just a few months away, Limbaugh has stepped up these efforts to "otherize" Obama.¶ On the July 16 edition of his radio show, after airing comments Obama delivered at a campaign rally that touched upon the relationship between small business success and public investment in infrastructure, Limbaugh declared that "it can now be said, without equivocation" that Obama "hates this country." He added that Obama "is trying to dismantle, brick by brick, the American dream," and concluded that Obama "despises the country and the way it was founded and the way in which it became great. He hates it."

### Romney Win—Deficit

Romney is perceived as the candidate most likely to reduce the deficit

Pew 7/12 (Pew Research Center For the People and the Press, “Obama Holds Lead; Romney Trails on Most Issues”, 2012, <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/7-12-12%20Political%20Release.pdf>)

Voters’ evaluations are more divided on the issues that are at the top of their agenda – improving economic conditions and the job situation. And Romney leads by a wide margin as the candidate best able to reduce the federal budget deficit (50% Romney vs. 36% Obama).

### Romney Win—Florida

Romney’s ahead in Florida

Burns, ‘7-16 [Alexander Burns, 7/16/12, “Economic debate close, Romney up in Florida” http://www.politico.com/blogs/burns-haberman/2012/07/purple-poll-economic-debate-close-romney-up-in-florida-129065.html]

We’ve posted on a number of national polls lately showing the 2012 economic debate is a close-run thing: Obama’s on weak footing, but Romney’s a long way from locking up the issue.¶ The bipartisan consulting firm Purple Strategies is out with a set of state-level data today showing the same phenomenon prevails in several of the 2012 battlegrounds. The Purple Poll asked voters in Ohio, Florida, Colorado and Virginia which of two statements they agreed with more: “Obama is unable to improve the economy” or “Romney couldn’t do a better job improving the economy.”¶ In Florida, Romney had a decisive advantage — voters agreed more with the first statement, that Obama’s incapable of making things better, by a 50 percent to 40 percent gap. That’s very good news for Romney and reinforces the perception that Florida is the mega-swing state — along with Ohio and Virginia — that’s currently most favorable to the Republican.

### Romney Win—Independents

Romney winning independents

ABC and Washington Post 7/10 (ABC News and Washington Post Poll, “Dead Heat in Vote Preferences Presages an Epic Battle Ahead”, 2012, http://www.langerresearch.com/uploads/1138a1The2012Election.pdf)

GROUPS – Vote preferences among groups, as noted, include Romney’s best showing to date among registered voters who identify themselves as independents, 53-39 percent. Obama comes back to parity overall because Democrats account for a larger share of the pie than Republicans, 36 percent of registered voters vs. 27 percent.

Obama is losing swing-voting independents by a large margin

ABC and Washington Post 7/10 (ABC News and Washington Post Poll, “Dead Heat in Vote Preferences Presages an Epic Battle Ahead”, 2012, http://www.langerresearch.com/uploads/1138a1The2012Election.pdf)

Economic discontent and substantial dissatisfaction with Barack Obama’s performance in office are keeping Mitt Romney competitive in the presidential race – but not by enough of a margin to overcome Obama’s stronger personal profile. The result: A dead heat in voter preferences at the midsummer stage, with the prospect of an epic battle ahead. While most Americans continue to disapprove of Obama’s handling of the economy, that’s not his only problem. More than half fault him on health care and immigration as well. Sixty-three percent say the country’s headed in the wrong direction, an unhelpful view for an incumbent. And among groups, he’s losing swing-voting independents by a record 14 percentage points.

### Romney Win—Obama Tax Hikes

Obama not focusing on American priorities – prioritizing tax hikes

Carroll 07/30 (Conn, Senior Editorial Writer, July 30, 2012“Morning Examiner: Obama’s dead last agenda” http://washingtonexaminer.com/morning-examiner-obamas-dead-last-agenda/article/2503480)

Last week, after Senate Democrats passed a bill allowing tax hikes on American families earning more than $250,000 a year, Talking Points Memo‘s Brian Beutler described the legislation as “the cornerstone of President Obama’s re-election strategy.” And Beutler is right. From his “New Nationalism” speech in Osawatomie, Kansas, last year, to his “you didn’t build that” speech in Roanoke, Virginia, this year, the continuing focus of Obama’s reelection campaign has always been increasing taxes on wealthy Americans. There is just one problem. Americans couldn’t care less about punishing the rich with higher taxes. Gallup released the results of a new poll this morning, showing which issues Americans want the next president to prioritize the most. Since Obama has failed to bring unemployment below 8 percent for a record 41 straight months, it is no surprise that “creating good jobs” was the top American priority. “Reducing corruption in federal government” and “reducing the federal budget deficit” were issues two and three. Terrorism, entitlement reform, and education were priorities four, five, and six. In all, Gallup offered up 12 possible priorities, and guess where “the cornerstone of President Obama’s re-election strategy” ended up? Dead last. Last Friday, the Commerce Department issued a new report showing that GDP growth had slowed in the last quarter to just 1.5 percent. Consumer spending is down. Manufacturing is down. Clearly, our economy is stagnating if not falling into recession. And Obama’s top priority is…a tax hike. This Friday, the Labor Department will release the monthly job numbers. Last month, a dismal report showed only 80,000 new jobs created and unemployment steady at 8.2 percent. If this trend continues, Obama may need to rethink his campaign plans.

### Deficit Spending Now

Obama’s deficit spending now – thumps the link

Campion 07/22(Patricia, Elections Examiner, July 22, 2012 “Deficit spending: Obama runs reelection campaign just like federal budget“ http://www.examiner.com/article/deficit-spending-obama-runs-reelection-campaign-just-like-federal-budget)

As reported Saturday by the Associated Press, President Barack Obama's re-election campaign spent more than it collected in June. “Competing fiercely to keep the presidency, Obama reported more than $46 million in June and total spending of $58 million.” That’s a deficit of $12 million. Clearly, when it comes to managing a budget, Obama is absolutely clueless. Even with a cursory view of his spending habits – as president, and as an incumbent running for reelection -- a consistent pattern of horrific waste emerges. In March, The Heritage Foundation revealed that the United States government had taken in $2.25 trillion in tax revenue for 2012. They spent $3.6 trillion. The estimated spending deficit for 2012 now stands at $1.8 trillion. “While federal revenues are recovering from the recent recession, spending is growing sharply, resulting in four consecutive years of deficits exceeding $1 trillion.” That same month, CBS News reported that the National Debt increased more during the first three years and two months of Obama’s first term in office than it did during the entire eight years of the George W. Bush presidency. As reported Wednesday by Examiner.com, Obama wasted billions of taxpayer dollars in the bailout of failing energy companies and the auto industry. His administration also spent much of the $831 billion stimulus to fund projects and jobs overseas.

Americans support spending on priority issues

Benen 06/18 (Steve, American political writer and blogger June 18, 2012, “The enduring unpopularity of spending cuts” http://maddowblog.msnbc.com/\_news/2012/06/18/12280147-the-enduring-unpopularity-of-spending-cuts?lite)

There's a widely-held assumption in Republican politics about fiscal issues: Americans love spending cuts. It's why GOP officials have rallied so enthusiastically behind Paul Ryan's budget plan, and why Republicans claim to be fiscally responsible with a straight face. Pew Research Center But the public's appetite for slashing public investments may not be as strong as the GOP would like. Indeed, it's apparently not even close. Suzy Khimm flagged an interesting report from the Pew Research Center that found a strong majority of Americans consider deficit reduction "a top priority," but most of the public rejects the GOP solution -- massive spending cuts -- as the way to go. As Pew Research Center president Andrew Kohut noted, more Americans actually support increasing spending on key domestic priorities The results like a sharp repudiation of everything Republicans believe in the 21st century -- Americans want more money for education, health care, aid to the poor, Social Security, law enforcement, and infrastructure, while the GOP wants the exact opposite. The only spending that's really unpopular is foreign aid, which is a perennial trend, and which represents a tiny fraction of the federal budget. As Travis Waldron explained, "Of course, cutting aid to the world's needy would do virtually nothing to reduce the deficit. Though Americans think it represents anywhere from 10 percent to one-third of the federal budget, in reality, it makes up less than one percent of federal spending." In terms of the larger fiscal debate, it obviously matters that the American mainstream supports deficit reduction in theory, but is not at all comfortable with cuts to cherished domestic priorities. But in terms of the political considerations, Republicans are gambling that American voters are so fearful of the debt and deficit, they're prepared to endorse sharp reductions in everything from education to health care to entitlements. The evidence to the contrary is overwhelming.

### MAP-21 Thumper

MAP-21 provides 1.7 billion in funds – thumps your spending link

MarEx News 07/30 (Maritime Executive News July 30, 2012 “U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood Launches Historic Expansion of Infrastructure Finance Fund “ http://www.maritime-executive.com/article/u-s-transportation-secretary-lahood-launches-historic-expansion-of-infrastructure-finance-fund)

TIFIA Financing Could Leverage Up to $50 Billion in Transportation Investment WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today announced the availability of up to $17 billion in loans for critical infrastructure projects across the country as a result of the recently enacted surface transportation bill. Secretary LaHood encouraged states and cities across the country to submit letters of interest for the TIFIA (Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act) program, which provides direct loans, loan guarantees, and standby lines of credit to major infrastructure projects with the potential to create jobs and spur economic development and growth. “Americans have always done big things – not in spite of hard times, but as a means of overcoming them,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. “That’s why the Obama Administration is launching the largest infrastructure loan program in our history – these investments will help cities and states create jobs right away building the big transportation projects we need to make sure our economy continues to grow and prosper.” The recently enacted surface transportation bill, known as MAP-21, provided $1.7 billion in capital over two years for the TIFIA credit assistance program, up from $120 million in FY2012, making it the largest transportation infrastructure finance fund in the Department’s history. Each dollar of federal funds can provide approximately $10 in TIFIA credit assistance, meaning $17 billion in loans through TIFIA, which in turn can leverage $20-$30 billion in transportation infrastructure investment. Altogether, the expanded federal loan program could result in up to $50 billion in Federal, state, local and private sector investment for critical transportation projects across the country. A wide range of critical transportation projects are eligible for the funding, including everything from highway and passenger rail projects to public transit and international bridges and tunnels. Because of the flexibility provided by the TIFIA programs, many qualified, large-scale projects that might otherwise be delayed or shelved can move forward quickly, providing an immediate boost to jobs while laying a foundation for continued economic growth. To date, the TIFIA program has used $9.2 billion in funding to leverage more than $36.4 billion in private and other capital to help build 27 major transportation projects around the country. In the past, TIFIA has supported signature projects like the Presidio Parkway Project in California, which is replacing the structurally and seismically deficient access road to the Golden Gate Bridge with the Presidio Parkway, which will connect San Francisco and Marin Counties with a safe and modern roadway. TIFIA also participated in funding the Miami Intermodal Facility in Florida, which will help travelers easily connect to the Miami International Airport, Metrorail transit, and Tri-Rail commuter rail, as well as Amtrak and Intercity bus services. More information about other projects, including the Denver Union Station in Colorado, and the Midtown and Downtown Tunnels in Virginia, is available here: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ipd/tifia/projects\_project\_profiles/

## Impact

### AT Russia Relations—Relations Low

The US is considered a major threat

Ivanov 7/24 – Massachusetts-based political commentator who blogs at The Ivanov Report (Eugene, citing Mikhail Dmitriev, president of the Center for Strategic Research, 7/24/12, “What foreign policy do Russians want?” http://rbth.ru/articles/2012/07/24/what\_foreign\_policy\_do\_russians\_want\_16629.html)

The center’s latest report released in May went a step further: it claimed that the political crisis in Russia has become irreversible, and that regardless of possible future scenarios, the return to the pre-crisis status quo is not anymore possible. In particular, Dmitriev and his colleagues argued that the post-election spike in approval ratings of President Vladimir Putin and his Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev was no more than a transient uptick and that further decline would inevitably follow, a prediction lately proven by published public poll data. ¶ The center’s May report is a must-read piece of analysis for everyone interested in Russian domestic politics. Yet, somewhat unexpectedly, it provides some interesting insights into possible directions of Russia’s foreign policy as well. The report’s data show that a solid majority of Russians – regardless of age, geography and level of education – believe that their country is surrounded by enemies who seek to forcefully take over Russia’s resources and territory. Among these “enemies,” the United States in particular is considered the major strategic threat. Not surprisingly, the respondents overwhelmingly support Russia’s assertive foreign policy and the need for a strong army; they approve of an increase in military spending, even if this would limit state funding for health care, education and pensions.¶ Curiously, the external threat to Russia’s sovereignty was one of the major themes invoked by Vladimir Putin during his winter presidential campaign. Back then, many observers argued that the anti-American sentiments articulated by Putin the candidate represented no more than a tactical approach aimed at winning the “patriotic” vote. Once back in the Kremlin, the thinking went, Putin would return to the more pragmatic foreign policy characteristic of his first two presidential terms.¶ The report’s findings, however, suggest differently. Far from being a transient trend, a foreign policy based on exploiting external threats and anti-western rhetoric may become a central piece of the regime’s whole political agenda, an “anchor” that would prevent further sliding of political support of the authorities by the citizens. The more disillusioned ordinary Russians become with the regime’s domestic policies, the more tempted the Kremlin would be to compensate for this disillusionment with conducting a muscular foreign policy.¶ Russia’s position on Syria may represent the most obvious manifestation of this approach. Last week, for the third time in the past nine months, Russia vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution on Syria – proposed by the UK and backed by other Western countries – calling for international intervention to stop the escalating violence in the country.¶ There is no shortage of explanations of Russia’s support for the regime of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad. Some analysts remind us that Syria is a trusted buyer of Russian military equipment and also the host of a naval base in Tartus, Russia’s last military base outside the former Soviet Union. Others point to Russia’s ideological aversion to “humanitarian interventions,” which Moscow views as slightly veiled pretexts for toppling Western-unfriendly regimes. And there are also those who claim that Russia simply wants to “avenge” the West for the last year’s U.N. Security Council resolution on Libya, the resolution that Russia chose not to veto and then watched helplessly as the United States and its allies used it as an excuse to overthrowing the regime of Col. Muammar Gaddafi. ¶ Obviously, all of the above is at play. And yet, Moscow’s behavior may be driven by far simpler and pragmatic consideration: at times when the productive cooperation with the West looks all but impossible, the best that Russia can do is to consistently confront the West. Given the domestic situation, the Kremlin would be foolish not to explore something that it still shares with its constituents: the image of the enemy knocking at the country’s door.

Syria proves

Gounev 7/29 – Former lecturer and Associate Professor at Faculty of History of Sofia University (Georgy, Ph.D. in International Relations from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, 7/29/12, “The United States, Russia, and The Syrian Crisis,” http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/07/the\_united\_states\_russia\_and\_the\_syrian\_crisis.html)

Undoubtedly, given that in the eyes of President Putin the United States is the main geopolitical enemy of his country, he is determined not to allow an American victory in the Syrian confrontation. All this is true, and it fits the "blame Russia for Syria's calamity" school of interpretation. At the same time, however, there are some additional elements of the picture that as a rule are absent from Western analyses but which happen to be absolutely correct.¶ The most important among them is Moscow's stake in the future of bilateral relations with Syria and the Russian interest in finding a solution to the crisis that will preserve the secular system of government. This dimension of the Russian approach to the Syrian crisis has never been properly understood by Sec. Clinton. As far as the State Department bureaucracy is concerned, they also don't understand, or rather pretend not to understand, that a victory of the opposition will be nothing short of the establishment of an Islamic dictatorship over Syria. ¶ At the same time, regardless of the hostile attitude of President Putin, portraying the United States as enemy number one, he realizes to an extent the nature of the Islamic danger hanging over Russia. That is why at least part of the Russian policy regarding Iran is based on the fear of the Shia-related Iranian influence. Any confrontation with Teheran will increase the magnitude of the Islamic threat to Moscow.¶ The main threat for Russia is the Saudi-originated Wahhabist branch of extreme Islam. Wahhabism is the ideological fuel to the fundamentalist guerrilla warfare in the area of the Northern Caucasus. The most disturbing recent development was the attempt on the lives of two leading Muslim clerics who were attacked in the center of Kazan (the capital of Tatarstan, the largest Muslim-populated province of the Russian Federation, located 400 kilometers east of Moscow). One of them died, and the other was wounded. The reason for the attack was their hostility towards Wahhabism. In short, Moscow doesn't want to see the Assad regime replaced by a fanatical Islamic state ruled by Wahhabists.¶ There are two possible exits from the seemingly endless conflict that ravages Syria. One of them is highly desirable but also highly unlikely. It would require an American-Russian understanding based on the agreement of both countries not to accept the establishment of an Islamic-dominated dictatorship over Syria after the end of the Assad regime.¶ The second option would express itself in the breakup of Syria by the emergence of a mini-Alawite state along the coastline, where most of the Alawites live. Such a state will be protected by the Syrian army in its present composition. There are talks also between some Kurdish activists and their compatriots from Northern Iraq for the creation of an autonomous Kurdish region on Syrian soil. Under such a scenario, most of Syria, including the capital of Damascus, will be a part of an Islamic, theocratic state.¶ There is much more contradiction than unity within the ranks of the Syrian opposition. Heavy-duty mutual accusations are flying back and forth among the representatives of the different organizations and leaders. The ideological pendulum of the enemies of the Assad regime varies from the hardcore jihadists all the way to the relatively limited group that includes pro-Western democrats.¶ Every outside attempt to help the unification of the anti-Assad opposition has failed. As a matter of fact, the most recent event along those lines that took place in Cairo in early July, instead of bringing about much-sought-after togetherness and solidarity, made things worse. The Kurdish delegation, for instance. virtually stormed out of the last session of the conference because of the unwillingness of the potential Arab allies to recognize their national identity.¶ There is more to this picture, though. The most numerous and the best-organized component of the opposition is represented by the notorious Syrian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.¶ One of the many tragic features of the civil war that devastates Syria expresses itself in the fact that the Brotherhood is not fighting for democracy. The goal of the Brothers is to replace the authoritarian and secular dictatorship of Bashir Assad with an Islamic tyranny based on the ideology of the Sunni-based extreme variety of Islam.¶ In the aftermath of the repressions that followed the crackdown of the Hama-based Islamic insurrection of 1982, many participants have left the country. The majority of them settled in Germany and Spain, where they were immediately granted the status of political refugees. With the growth of Jihadism that followed 9/11 and the outbreak of the Iraqi war, the Syrian Islamists were amongst the most active fighters for global jihad. They fought in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya -- in short, everywhere. Evidently oblivious to the hospitality of the people of Spain, their Syrian guests established a connection of their own to the infamous Madrid bombing of 2004.¶ A Syrian jihadist by the name of Abu Musab al Suri played a key role in the popularization of the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism throughout the Muslim world. It was al Suri who published on Pakistani soil a book entitled The Islamic Jihadi Revolution in Syria, which established him as one of the main theoreticians of jihad.¶ As it has been pointed out, the most tragic aspect of the American-Russian confrontation over Syria is the fact that it is the clash between Washington and Moscow that feeds the continuation of the Syrian civil war and, consequently, the huge loss of innocent life. Unless the policymakers of both countries accept the reality that it is Islamic fundamentalism which represents the biggest threat hanging over them, the Syrian tragedy will continue under different shapes and forms that finally will impact the ability of the country to survive.

Disagreements are inevitable

Voice of Russia 7/14 (Denisova Olga, 7/14/12, “The velvet glove of Russian diplomacy,” http://english.ruvr.ru/2012\_07\_14/The-velvet-glove-of-Russian-diplomacy/)

“This is evidenced by their so-called humanitarian operations, export of their ‘missile-and-bomb’ democracy and interference in internal conflicts. We can clearly see the unbalanced and contradictory nature of reforms currently taking place in North Africa and the Middle East. The tragic events which took place in Libya are still fresh in our memory. It is completely unacceptable to allow similar scenarios to be imposed on other countries, such as Syria, for example.”¶ The situation in Syria is one of the most pressing topics on the international agenda. While on the one hand, the whole of the international community supports Kofi Annan’s plan, on the other, tensions in the region continue to escalate. Certain forces are financing the opposition and supplying it with weapons.¶ The solution of a lot of global and regional problems in many ways depends on the world's two largest nuclear powers, Russia and the US. Putin has called cooperation with the US logical and mutually benefitial. But it is sometimes difficult to avoid difficulties and misunderstandings. The president urged his audience to refrain from exaggerating these differences and those loud declarations that are sometimes made during election campaigns.

### AT Russia Relations—Putin Dooms

Prefer our evidence – even if the reset has happened now, Putin will reverse it

Moscow Times 7/29 (Vladimir Frolov, 7/29/12, “What's Good for Putin Is Bad for Foreign Policy,” http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/whats-good-for-putin-is-bad-for-foreign-policy/462796.html)

Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency was expected to bring more brains and dexterity to the country's foreign policy. Putin, it was argued, would take foreign policy in his hands and deftly steer the Russian ship in troubled global waters. Where President Dmitry Medvedev had been lofty and idealistic, Putin would be purposeful and pragmatic.¶ It's turned out a bit differently.¶ While some of Medvedev's initiatives were ambitiously naive — the European security treaty or the joint missile defense project with NATO — his foreign policy had a clear strategic purpose. He wanted to carry out a technological and social upgrade through "modernization alliances" with the West. This strategic purpose overrode other less important foreign policy considerations.¶ Medvedev had a sober view of Russia's capabilities and sought to match them with Russia's real, privileged interests. He viewed Russia as a regional, not global, power.¶ Medvedev began closing the values gap between Russia and the Western world in responding to international challenges. Hence his calls for advancing human rights and freedoms. He seemed to aspire for Russia to be a pivotal force for good.¶ Putin quickly dispensed with Medvedev's strategic purpose and modernization alliances. His foreign policy so far has been surprisingly tactical, heavily tailored for domestic PR and tinged with his personal attitudes.¶ Putin has staked out a global role for Russia as defender of absolute sovereignty. On Syria, Moscow is defending the sovereign right of any autocrat to kill his own people at will and stay in power. Using the UN Security Council, the Kremlin opposes any attempt to change an oppressive dictatorship. If that were a strategic purpose, it would be better left unstated.¶ The policy is tailored to look tough to the people at home and to the apprehensive autocracies in the former Soviet space. Russia's intransigence on Syria may have won it the central role in the UN debate, but it has undermined the UN's effectiveness as a tool for Russian influence. It has also enhanced Russia's isolation on the global arena.¶ Putin has allowed his personal sensibilities to drive policy at the expense of strategy. His dissing of U.S. President Barack Obama and public humiliation of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych satisfied his personal dislike for those leaders, but they hurt Russia's broader interests.¶ Medvedev's foreign policy was visionary but unpopular. Putin's is situational and impulsive but broadly supported. Go figure.

Putin doesn’t want better relations

Lukyanov 7/12 – Editor-in-Chief of the “Russia in Global Affairs” journal published in Russian and English with participation of Foreign Affairs (Fyodor, senior member of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, member of the Presidential Council on Human Rights and Civic Society Institutions, 7/12/12, “Uncertain World: Putin the Realist, Medvedev the Liberal,” Ria Novosti, http://en.ria.ru/columnists/20120712/174569615.html)

Vladimir Putin’s speech to Russian diplomats contained nothing sensational but it did demonstrate the picture of the world by which the president is guided. This is particularly striking if we compare his words with what Dmitry Medvedev said at a similar meeting two years ago. ¶ “For all the sharpest contradictions on the world arena, there is an obvious striving for harmony in relations, for dialogue and a lessening of tensions today,” Medvedev said optimistically two years ago.¶ “International relations are growing more complicated all the time…we cannot describe them as balanced and stable. On the contrary, they are becoming more tense and uncertain, and, regrettably, there is often little room for trust and openness,” Putin stated gloomily.¶ Medvedev-2010: “Spurred on by the international financial crisis we are all searching together for new approaches to reforming not only global financial and economic institutions but also the world order in general. I’m referring to fairer principles of cooperation and development of relations between free nations on a solid foundation, solid principles of universal international law.”¶ Putin-2012: “The world economy is in the grip of a crisis and protectionism is becoming the norm… Many of our partners are striving just to endure their own invulnerability, forgetting that in modern conditions everything is interrelated. There are no reliable options for overcoming the world economic crisis... the prospects are becoming increasingly alarming… The struggle for access to resources is intensifying, provoking abnormal fluctuations on the commodities and energy markets.”¶ Where President-2010 sees opportunities and prospects, President-2012 discerns threats and reasons for concern. Has the world become so much more dangerous in such a short span of time? Or is it more in the nature of a personal vision? Both assumptions are true.¶ It is hard to argue with those who say that the world situation is deteriorating. In the last two years, Europe has become hopelessly immersed in a quagmire of debt crisis which is only getting worse. The Arab Spring has turned the whole of the Middle East on its head. The Iranian issue is becoming increasingly urgent. NATO has undertaken yet another intervention for regime change. Afghanistan is no nearer to peace; tensions in Asia are mounting and polarization inside American policy is as intense as ever. However, these trends were there before, and in 2010 Medvedev’s beaming optimism sounded a discordant note according to most expert estimates.¶ The difference is one of the starting points. Medvedev proceeds from Russia’s domestic developments and looks for how events on the world arena could promote Russia’s growth. Putin, by contrast, starts with the global picture and draws conclusions on how external events can influence domestic processes.¶ Medvedev is a genuine liberal, at least in terms of international relations. As a liberal, he thinks that foreign policy is determined by domestic policy and should be subservient to it. The main part of his speech in 2010 was devoted to the need to promote modernization and innovation. He assumed that Russian diplomats would know the basic directions of these trends by heart, like the Lord’s Prayer.¶ “We have to decide with which countries will cooperation help Russia the most in developing the relevant technologies and markets with a view to putting high-tech Russian products onto regional and global markets,” Medvedev said. In his view, the second task of foreign policy is “to consolidate the institutions of Russian democracy and civil society. We must promote the humanization of social systems all over the world, and primarily at home.”¶ This approach is unconventional – after all, since time immemorial diplomats have been trying to resolve the one main issue – that of war and peace. Resolving it correctly has always been the biggest contribution diplomats could make to the successful development of their homeland. However, the introduction of the concepts of “democracy” and “humanization” into foreign policy discourse is a strictly liberal skill.¶ Putin, and this is particularly obvious when seen against the background of Medvedev, is a classic realist. Of primary concern to him are structural factors and the international system which determines how states behave, and sometimes leaves them no choice. What is important to Putin are the balance of power (now including soft power) and the ability of the country to be “self-sufficient and independent,” in other words not to yield its sovereign rights. He also talks much about markets and technology (without mentioning the word “modernization” once) but in strictly practical terms. “We need to step up our efforts to help our companies in foreign markets,” “we should not be shy about promoting the products of our defense industry,” “we have to exploit the opportunities of the WTO, abolish visa requirements with the EU to encourage business…”¶ This is not a strategy (Putin simply does not believe that it is possible in today’s world) but a tactic of expanding opportunities and, hence, building up strength, because without it there is no chance of doing anything today.

# Random Updates

### Competitiveness Low

US is falling behind in infrastructure globally

Zakaria 07/19 (Fareed, Editor of Newsweek International whose column appears in Newsweek, Newsweek International and The Washington Post July 19, 2012 “Government Investment Trumps Tax Relief In Restoring American Competitiveness “ http://news.investors.com/article/618824/201207191846/obama-investment-proposal-better-romney-tax-relief-plan.htm?p=2)

Overall, however, whether compared with our own past — of, say, 30 years ago — or with other countries, the United States has become more business-friendly. That's why, just last week, the Economist magazine predicted an American economic renaissance. America is worse off than it was 30 years ago — in infrastructure, education and research. The country spends much less on infrastructure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). By 2009, federal funding for research and development was half the share of GDP that it was in 1960. Even spending on education and training is lower as a percentage of the federal budget than it was during the 1980s. The result is that we're falling behind fast. In 2001, the World Economic Forum ranked U.S. infrastructure second in the world. In its latest report we were 24th. The United States spends only 2.4% of GDP on infrastructure, the Congressional Budget Office noted in 2010. Europe spends 5%; China, 9%. In the 1970s, America led the world in the number of college graduates; as of 2009, we were 14th among the countries tracked by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Annual growth for research and development spending — private and public — was 5.8% between 1996 and 2007; in South Korea it was 9.6%; in Singapore, 14.5%; in China, 21.9%. In other words, the great shift in the U.S. economy over the past 30 years has not been an increase in taxes and regulations but, rather, a decline in investment in human and physical capital. President Obama has real facts and a strong case — which makes it all the more depressing that his campaign has focused on half-truths and weak arguments.

### Stimulus Good

Stimulus uniquely key now to avoid growth deficit

Kellner 07/24 (Irwin, holds the Augustus B. Weller Distinguished Chair of Economics at Hofstra University, and is the author of Hofstra University's Economic Report July 24, 2012 “Are we in the long run or the short run?” http://articles.marketwatch.com/2012-07-24/commentary/32806441\_1\_budget-deficit-tax-revenues-public-debt)

PORT WASHINGTON, N.Y. (MarketWatch) — When formulating economic policy, we must first take care of our short-run needs before we can deal with those of the long run. Deficit reduction is a worthwhile objective for the long run. There is no doubt that there is a need for our government to bring its spending into line with revenues and thus reduce the size of the public debt relative to our gross domestic product. This calls for either spending less, taxing more, or some combination of the two. However, the long run is a series of short runs, and the short run for today’s economy calls for a bigger budget deficit. As a matter of fact, before we can think about reducing the government’s budget deficit, we are going to have to run a bigger one. It will come about either deliberately or inadvertently. Since today’s economy needs more stimulus, we should spend more and tax less. This increases the deficit over the near term, but it will pay dividends in the form of faster growth and lower unemployment. If we don’t deliberately hike the deficit, the economy will do it for us. The slower we grow, the less tax revenues will flow into the government’s coffers, and the more it will have to spend on social needs associated with high unemployment. This will widen the budget deficit, thus moving us further away from the long-run goal of deficit reduction. The great economist John Maynard Keynes implied that we should focus on the short run, since in the long run we are all dead. He wasn’t wrong; there is no pressing need to reduce the deficit now. Bond buyers are only too happy to purchase our debt. As proof, on Monday the yield on the bellwether 10-year Treasury sank to only 1.4%. That’s the lowest rate in 60 years. And the stock market is more concerned about day-to-day economic and political uncertainty than it is about the government’s debt. On Monday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (US:DJIA) posted its second straight triple-digit decline on worries about Europe’s fiscal health and the longevity of the euro. Concerns over the European economic outlook stem from the austerity that comes from member countries trying to balance their budgets too soon. As we have seen time and again, cutting spending and/or raising taxes takes buying power out of an economy and makes things worse — not better. Trying to balance a budget when an economy is weak hurts more than it helps, and it sure doesn’t build confidence among business and consumers as Herbert Hoover found out. In 1930, Hoover thought that by cutting spending and raising taxes, it would please businesses. They would then hire people instead of firing them, thus ending the decline that began the year before. Not only did this not work — it led to even more layoffs, since the resulting drop in buying power caused people to slash their outlays. Franklin Roosevelt discovered the much same thing in 1936, when he was running for re-election. Under pressure from critics of his deficit spending, he cut spending, raised taxes — and pushed the economy back into recession by the middle of 1937. The moral of the story: Concentrate on the economy’s short-run needs and the long run will take care of itself.