# NOTES

#### NEGATIVE

1. Put together the uniqueness wall and version of the 1nc you want to read.

2. Consider that the links the other way are also link turns.

3. Prepare for an impact turn, it is easy to just grab those modules when you are aff.

#### AFFIRMATIVE

1. You need to write 2ac blocks for each version. Anticipate more Obama Good disads, but be prepared for the other way.

2. Use the links as link turns and uniqueness cards. Combine with the general aff answers.

# OBAMA GOOD

## 1nc & UNIQUENESS

### 1nc – Obama Good

#### Obama will win re-election now. 68% chance under the best model

SILVER 7 – 13 – 12 538.com, New York Times blog on elections. Guru [Nate Silver, July 13: Obama Forecast Buoyed by Stock Rally, <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/13/july-14-obama-forecast-buoyed-by-stock-rally/>]

No offense to the people of the Peace Garden State. But when the only survey out is one of North Dakota, as was the case on Friday — plus the national tracking polls, which moved in opposite directions — there just isn’t much polling news to worry about. There was, however, a substantial gain in the stock market, which recovered the ground it had lost this week. The Dow Jones was up more than 200 points as investors reacted to better-than-expected data out of China. The forecast for President Obama’s chances of winning the Electoral College rose, to 67.7 percent, on the attendant gain in our model’s economic index.

#### Funding Transportation infrastructure is a political loser – people don’t want their money wasted – ignore industry polling

ORSKI 12 editor and publisher of Innovation NewsBriefs, an influential and widely read transportation newsletter [Ken Orski, WHY PLEAS TO INCREASE INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FALL ON DEAF EARS, <http://www.newgeography.com/content/002662-why-pleas-increase-infrastructure-funding-fall-deaf-ears>]

Finding the resources to keep transportation infrastructure in good order is a more difficult challenge. Unlike traditional utilities, roads and bridges have no rate payers to fall back on. Politicians and the public seem to attach a low priority to fixing aging transportation infrastructure and this translates into a lack of support for raising fuel taxes or imposing tolls.

Investment in infrastructure did not even make the top ten list of public priorities in the latest Pew Research Center survey of domestic concerns. Calls by two congressionally mandated commissions to vastly increase transportation infrastructure spending have gone ignored. So have repeated pleas by advocacy groups such as Building America’s Future, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the University of Virginia’s Miller Center.

Nor has the need to increase federal spending on infrastructure come up in the numerous policy debates held by the Republican presidential candidates. Even President Obama seems to have lost his former fervor for this issue. In his last State-of-the-Union message he made only a perfunctory reference to "rebuilding roads and bridges." High-speed rail and an infrastructure bank, two of the President’s past favorites, were not even mentioned.

Why pleas to increase infrastructure funding fall on deaf ears

There are various theories why appeals to increase infrastructure spending do not resonate with the public. One widely held view is that people simply do not trust the federal government to spend their tax dollars wisely. As proof, evidence is cited that a great majority of state and local transportation ballot measures do get passed, because voters know precisely where their tax money is going. No doubt there is much truth to that. Indeed, thanks to local funding initiatives and the use of tolling, state transportation agencies are becoming increasingly more self-reliant and less dependent on federal funding

Another explanation, and one that I find highly plausible, has been offered by Charles Lane, editorial writer for the Washington Post. Wrote Lane in an October 31, 2011 Washington Post column, "How come my family and I traveled thousands of miles on both the east and west coast last summer without actually seeing any crumbling roads or airports? On the whole, the highways and byways were clean, safe and did not remind me of the Third World countries. ... Should I believe the pundits or my own eyes?" asked Lane ("The U.S. infrastructure argument that crumbles upon examination") Along with Lane, I think the American public is skeptical about alarmist claims of "crumbling infrastructure" because they see no evidence of it around them. State DOTs and transit authorities take great pride in maintaining their systems in good condition and, by and large, they succeed in doing a good job of it. Potholes are rare, transit buses and trains seldom break down, and collapsing bridges, happily, are few and far between.

The oft-cited "D" that the American Society of Civil Engineers has given America’s infrastructure (along with an estimate of $2.2 trillion needed to fix it) is taken with a grain of salt, says Lane, since the engineers’ lobby has a vested interest in increasing infrastructure spending, which means more work for engineers. Suffering from the same credibility problem are the legions of road and transit builders, rail and road equipment manufacturers, construction firms, planners and consultants that try to make a case for more money.

#### INSERT IMPACT SCENARIO

### Obama Winning

#### Obama will win – despite stock market changes

SILVER 7 – 13 – 12 538.com, New York Times blog on elections. Guru [Nate Silver, July 12: Some Noisy News, but Little Change in Forecast, <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/12/july-12-some-noisy-news-but-little-change-in-forecast/>]

Thursday was a slow polling day after two busy ones. The flashiest number — a Pew Research national poll showing a seven-point lead for President Obama — doesn’t much change our forecast. Pew had shown very good results for Mr. Obama so far this cycle.

Instead, Mr. Obama’s chances of winning the Electoral College dropped incrementally — to 65.6 percent from 66.1 percent — on the decline in the stock market. This was despite a promising-looking report showing the number of initial unemployment claims decreasing to 350,000. Investors discounted the report because it was conducted over a holiday week, when the data is thought to be less reliable.

#### Obama Winning Now- Polls

**Tomasky 7/15/12 (** editor in chief of [Democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy_(journal)), a special correspondent for [Newsweek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newsweek) / [The Daily Beast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Daily_Beast), a contributing editor for [The American Prospect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_American_Prospect), [http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/07/15/michael-tomasky-obama-is-winning-because-of-the-shrinking-gop.htm S.J)](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/07/15/michael-tomasky-obama-is-winning-because-of-the-shrinking-gop.htm%20%20S.J))

Mitt Romney’s present travails must surely seem shocking and offensive to Republicans, both panjandrums and rank and file alike: “His is a great American success story. How can this be bad? The controversy must be all the fault of that evil liberal media and the Democrat Party!” Well, folks, sorry, but it’s not. If you’re willing to spend two minutes scouring the landscape for explanations rather than enemies, it might strike you that outsourcing is a real issue in American life—millions of citizens have been affected by it, and by definition, none of them for the better. That the ongoing Bain saga is such a shock and outrage to conservatives shows me only that conservatives are profoundly out of touch with the moderate center of the country: It helps explain why you selected this man as your nominee, and it further helps explain why he’s losing to an incumbent who, given the current economic conditions, ought to be pretty easy to take out. The race is close, and of course Romney has a decent shot at winning. But the fact is that by every measure, he’s behind. He’s behind, a little, in national polls. He’s behind by more in the swing states. And behind by still more in the electoral college conjectures, where Nate Silver gives Obama [294 votes](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/author/nate-silver/). Obama leads—narrowly, but outside the margin of error—in Virginia, Ohio, Colorado, and Nevada. If he wins those and holds the usual Democratic states—and yes, he’s up in Pennsylvania, where Romney has been sinking fast; only Michigan is really close—he will have won, even with maybe $1.5 billion thrown at him, a not-particularly close election. Okay, I’m getting ahead of myself. But the fact is, as I wrote at the beginning of the week, Romney should be [six points ahead](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/07/09/should-romney-be-six-points-ahead.html). At least four. The congressional Republican strategy—disgraceful but successful—of opposing Obama on everything has largely worked. The biggest thing Obama did manage to pass was wildly unpopular, though matters are improving for him a bit on the health-care front. Obama was soundly rebuked in the mid-term elections. And yet for all that and more, Silver has Obama pegged at roughly a 66 percent chance of winning. That’s not insurmountable in July, but if that’s still the number after both conventions, it’s pretty close to over.

#### Obama Winning Now- Romney Not Popular

Bloomberg 6/21/12 (<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-06-20/obama-leads-in-poll-as-voters-view-romney-as-out-of-touch>, S.J)

Barack Obama has opened a significant lead over Mitt Romney in a Bloomberg National Poll that reflects the presumed Republican nominee’s weaknesses more than the president’s strengths. Obama leads Romney 53 percent to 40 percent among likely voters, even as the public gives him low marks on handling the economy and the deficit, and six in 10 say the nation is headed down the wrong track, according to the poll conducted June 15- 18. The survey shows Romney, a former Massachusetts governor, has yet to repair the damage done to his image during the Republican primary. Thirty-nine percent of Americans view him favorably, about the same as when he announced his presidential candidacy last June, while 48 percent see him unfavorably -- a 17-percentage point jump during a nomination fight dominated by attacks ads. A majority of likely voters, 55 percent, view him as more out of touch with average Americans compared with 36 percent who say the president is more out of touch. Taken together, the results suggest an unsettled political environment for both Obama and Romney five months from the November election, with voters choosing for now to stick with a president they say is flawed rather than backing a challenger they regard as undefined and disconnected. Importance of Turnout “You can see in these data how important turnout will be,” says J. Ann Selzer of Des Moines, Iowa-based Selzer & Co. who directed the poll. “Those most enthusiastic about the election are more supportive of Romney, but Obama’s voters are more locked into their candidate than Romney’s. Building resolve to vote and making the vote stick is job one, and both candidates face obstacles toward getting that done.” The presidential race is roughly tied among the most enthusiastic voters, 49 percent of whom back Romney compared with 48 percent for Obama. Still, Romney inspires far less enthusiasm even among his supporters than does Obama, with 35 percent of Romney backers saying their support for him is “very strong,” compared with 51 percent of Obama backers who say so. “I would rather choose to vote for someone else, but there’s no one but Obama,” says John Sunde, a 57-year-old Verizon central office technician from Brentwood, New York, when asked which candidate would get his vote. “He hasn’t fulfilled a lot of his campaign promises, but I would vote for him anyway because Romney would be extremely destructive for this country.”

#### Obama Winning Now- high job approval

Bloomberg 6/21/12 (<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-06-20/obama-leads-in-poll-as-voters-view-romney-as-out-of-touch>, S.J)

About a third of likely voters rate Romney best at understanding their problems and struggles, and dealing with world leaders, while Obama draws majorities on both. And just 34 percent of respondents prefer Romney to Obama in appearing regularly on their TV and computer screens for the next four years; the president is the pick of 54 percent. Obama’s favorability ratings are the reverse of Romney’s, with 55 percent of Americans viewing the president positively, while 42 percent don’t. In a bad sign for Obama, a much smaller plurality, 48 percent, of likely voters say he would be best at getting the economy going, while 43 percent say Romney would do better. Fifty-three percent of Americans approve of the job Obama is doing in the White House -- the first time since March 2011 that he has broken the historic 50 percent threshold for U.S. presidents who have won re-election; 44 percent disapprove of his service. His performance rating on creating jobs -- 46 percent approve, while 48 percent disapprove -- matches its high mark in July 2010, and has risen 10 points from his low point in September 2011. A plurality of 45 percent of Americans identify jobs and unemployment as the “most important issue” facing the country.

#### Obama will win now – even bad economics is taken into account.

The Hill 7-10 [Justin Sink for The Hill; “Poll: Obama opens up 6-point lead nationally”; 7/10/2012; <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/237137-poll-obama-opens-six-point-lead-nationally>; Boyce]

President Obama has widened his lead over Mitt Romney to six points in a national survey released late Tuesday, but with voters surveyed by Reuters/Ipsos giving him poor grades on the economy. The president's 49-43 percent lead is a five-point improvement over the June version of the same survey, where he posted just a one-point lead over Republican challenger Romney. And the Reuters poll is the president's best showing in a national poll this month. A similar survey by the Washington Post and ABC News also released Tuesday showed the candidates deadlocked. "Last month was a particularly bad time for Obama but now the race seems to have returned to its normal position, which has Obama up a few points," Ipsos pollster Chris Jackson said. Still, there are discouraging signs for the president. Nearly six in 10 of those surveyed said the country was headed down the wrong track, versus 36 percent who said the nation was headed in the right direction. While those numbers represent an improvement over a month ago — right after a discouraging May jobs report — they nevertheless represent a discouraging sentiment facing the incumbent. The president's job approval rating also remains under 50 percent in the June survey, with 48 percent saying they believe the president has handled his job well. More Americans — 45 percent — say Obama's performance on the economy has been unsatisfactory than the 35 percent who say the president is performance is acceptable. That's the president's worst showing since December. But with the exception of the economy, voters gave Obama improved grades on nearly every metric, from foreign policy to healthcare, education and energy. And that the president was able to grow his lead despite a second straight disappointing jobs report bodes well for his ability to whether tough economic news throughout the campaign. The poll taken from July 5 to 9 and has a 3 percent margin of error.

#### Obama will win now – even bad economics is taken into account.

The Hill 7-10 [Justin Sink for The Hill; “Poll: Obama opens up 6-point lead nationally”; 7/10/2012; <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/237137-poll-obama-opens-six-point-lead-nationally>; Boyce]

President Obama has widened his lead over Mitt Romney to six points in a national survey released late Tuesday, but with voters surveyed by Reuters/Ipsos giving him poor grades on the economy. The president's 49-43 percent lead is a five-point improvement over the June version of the same survey, where he posted just a one-point lead over Republican challenger Romney. And the Reuters poll is the president's best showing in a national poll this month. A similar survey by the Washington Post and ABC News also released Tuesday showed the candidates deadlocked. "Last month was a particularly bad time for Obama but now the race seems to have returned to its normal position, which has Obama up a few points," Ipsos pollster Chris Jackson said. Still, there are discouraging signs for the president. Nearly six in 10 of those surveyed said the country was headed down the wrong track, versus 36 percent who said the nation was headed in the right direction. While those numbers represent an improvement over a month ago — right after a discouraging May jobs report — they nevertheless represent a discouraging sentiment facing the incumbent. The president's job approval rating also remains under 50 percent in the June survey, with 48 percent saying they believe the president has handled his job well. More Americans — 45 percent — say Obama's performance on the economy has been unsatisfactory than the 35 percent who say the president is performance is acceptable. That's the president's worst showing since December. But with the exception of the economy, voters gave Obama improved grades on nearly every metric, from foreign policy to healthcare, education and energy. And that the president was able to grow his lead despite a second straight disappointing jobs report bodes well for his ability to whether tough economic news throughout the campaign. The poll taken from July 5 to 9 and has a 3 percent margin of error.

## LINK DEBATE

### A2 Trans. Inf Popular

#### Their Infrastructure popular polls ignore that paying for it makes it unpopular

WASHINGTON POST 2 – 14 – 11 [Ashley Halsey III, Rockefeller Foundation survey: Americans rank transportation needs high but don't want to pay the costs, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/13/AR2011021303440.html>

Upkeep of roads, bridges and transit systems is a high priority to an overwhelming margin of Americans, but by an even greater margin they don't want to pay more for it, according to a survey that will be released this week.

With the Obama administration's budget due Monday, House Republicans embarked on an effort to reduce spending by$100 billion and a long-term transportation bill stalled in Congress, 78 percent of those surveyed say private investors should be tapped to rebuild the country's aging infrastructure.

The poll was commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation, which has funded a $66 million transportation initiative, and was conducted this month by Hart Associates.

"Transportation infrastructure affects so many critical issues for the country - economy, social mobility and energy - and it drives our economic growth," said Nicholas Turner, a managing director of of the Rockefeller Foundation who runs the initiative. "Most people don't realize that transportation is the second-highest expense for most Americans and the highest for those with the lowest incomes. The promotion of accessible and equitable transportation policies is critical to providing affordable options to all Americans."

The telephone poll of 1,001 registered voters came four months after a bipartisan panel of 80 transportation experts warned that the transportation system was deteriorating so rapidly that it would undermine U.S. ability to compete in a global economy

#### Paying for it makes it unpopular

MSNBC 2 – 17 – 11 [From NBC's Ali Weinberg, Poll: Support for infrastructure spending, but not paying for it, <http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2011/02/17/6075671-poll-support-for-infrastructure-spending-but-not-paying-for-it?lite>]

The survey found wide bipartisan support for legislators to seek common ground on infrastructure improvements: 71% of all respondents -- including 74% of Democrats, 71% of Republicans and 69% of independents -- said they wanted elected officials to work together on the issue

Support was also strong among respondents who identified themselves as part of the Tea Party, an affiliation that connotes a strong anti-government spending attitude, with 66% supporting infrastructure investment.

“The bipartisan, or even tripartisan, nature of the issue comes through loud and clear," said Jay Campbell of Hart Research, who, along with Public Opinion Strategies, conducted the poll for state-centric think tank the Rockefeller Institute.

This support also extended into specific policy proposals that would control how transportation dollars are spent. In the poll, 90% supported the idea of holding all levels of government accountable for making sure infrastructure projects stay on time and budget, as well as allowing local regions to have a greater say in how transportation funds are used in their area.

Even some spending increases, like more competitive grants for transportation projects and money for developing public transportation systems and bike paths, were met with high approval numbers.

“There is a tolerance for more spending in this area as long as there's a demonstration that it's going to be spent wisely,” said Republican pollster Bill McInturff of Public Opinion Strategies.

But support plummeted to 40% when respondents were asked if they would support replacing the per-gallon gasoline tax, which has stayed at the same level since 1993, with a fee based on the number of miles driven.

While a gas-tax hike would be a quick way to increase revenue, its unpopularity among voters means it’s unlikely to become a reality in Congress, Campbell said.

“This is really the rock and a hard place for lawmakers,” he said. “Voters say our infrastructure is lacking, they say it should be modernized, they say it should be improved, but they resist paying for it.”

#### Even their evidence admits – voters don’t want to pay for it

PR WEB 5 – 18 – 12 Americans Value Highways and Bridges as a National Treasure, <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2012/5/prweb9521021.htm>

A new survey from HNTB Corporation finds two-thirds (66 percent) of Americans who intend to vote during this year's presidential election feel that a candidate's standing on American transportation infrastructure will influence their decision; more than one in five (22 percent) say this will be extremely influential on who they vote for.

"Our highways, bridges and other transportation infrastructure are essential assets that support growth and investment in the U.S. economy," said Pete Rahn, HNTB leader national transportation practice. "People expect them to be resilient, reliable and safe."

Clearly, Americans hold the nation's infrastructure in high regard. Nearly nine in ten (89 percent) Americans feel it’s important for the federal government to fund the maintenance and improvements of interstate highways.

Yet, this infrastructure isn’t receiving the fiscal attention it deserves. Congress recently approved the ninth extension of transportation legislation that originally expired in 2009. The Highway Trust Fund – due to inflation, rising construction costs and increasingly fuel efficient vehicles – no longer collects enough money to support the U.S. surface transportation system, remaining solvent only through a series of infusions from federal general revenue funds.

More than half of Americans (57 percent) believe the nation’s infrastructure is underfunded.

The uncertainty over a long-term bill also is a challenge for state departments of transportation, which rely heavily on federal funding to support major highway and bridge programs, and creates ambiguity for planners and contractors who need the certainty of a long-term bill to commit to large, complex multiyear projects.

"The absence of a long-term bill is hurting our economic competitiveness," said Rahn. "Recent efforts by the House and Senate to move discussions into a conference committee and hammer out potential details of a bill are a step in the right direction, but what’s really needed is a stable, long-term authorization that can adequately pay for our transportation system."

Overall, 4 in 5 (80 percent) Americans would rather increase funding and improve roads and bridges than continue current funding levels and risk allowing our roads and bridges deteriorate.

The challenge is finding sustainable and sufficient revenue sources. More than 3 in 5 (61 percent) Americans would prefer to allocate funds for these projects through tolls.

### 1nc – Gov’t Spending

#### Government spending hurts with swing voters – they matter most

SCHOEN 12 political analyst, pollster, author, and commentator. Harvard Law Graduate. Former Pollster for President Clinton [Douglas E. Schoen, 2/8/12, The forgotten swing voter, <http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=7ED8592F-2122-4A55-AA3B-C5460134BE4A>]

Neither President Barack Obama nor the leading GOP candidates are addressing the issues that matter to the constituency likely to decide the election — independents and swing voters.

Obama is essentially reprising basic left-wing themes: populism, redistributive policies and class-based politics — with an emphasis on standing up for the middle class against the GOP, perceived as systematically focused on the needs of the wealthy and powerful.

He is demonstrating artful use of the politics of demonization — without any effort to build consensus or offer a real plan for the future. The president’s rhetoric in his State of the Union address was lofty with calls for unity, but he struck a defiant tone — complete with a millionaire’s tax. He also attacked banks, oil companies and, of course, Congress and politicians.

Meanwhile, Republicans remain equally out of touch with voters in the middle. They continue debating the principles of free-market capitalism and Washington influence-peddling — looking backward rather than forward

Neither party focuses on issues that matter most to people: reviving the economy, promoting job creation, balancing the budget, reducing debt and taking on entitlements. Both Republicans and Democrats are virtually ignoring the concerns of swing voters, now close to 20 percent of the electorate, and independents, now at least 40 percent of the electorate and, according to Gallup, the single largest voting bloc.

These two groups share similar interests. And both give Republican and Democratic leaders net negative ratings.

Independents disapprove of how Obama is doing his job, 52 percent to 37 percent, according to a recent New York Times/CBS poll. Just 31 percent had a favorable opinion of Obama, with two-thirds saying he has not made progress fixing the economy. Six in 10 independents say Obama does not share their priorities for the country.

The president’s improved standing in the recent Washington Post poll has probably been overstated and has more to do with Romney’s weakness than with some dramatic turnaround in Obama’s own numbers. A majority of independents still disapprove of his job performance and a clear majority of the electorate disapproves of his handling of the economy, his performance in creating jobs and his efforts to balance the budget.

Independents have similar negative impressions of leading GOP presidential candidates Romney and Gingrich, according to a recent Washington Post poll. Independents look unfavorably on Romney, 51 percent to 23 percent, and have an unfavorable impression of Gingrich, 53 percent to 23 percent.

Another ominous sign for Romney, still the presumed nominee, is that voter turnout decreased about 15 percent in Florida’s primary from four years ago, and almost 40 percent of the voters said they were not satisfied with the current field.

It’s crucial the GOP candidates address these voter concerns. A recent national survey I conducted sheds light on who the swing voters are and what they want from government — which meshes closely with the independents’ policy preferences.

I isolated swing voters by looking at those voters who supported Bill Clinton in an imaginary trial heat against Romney but didn’t support Obama in a trial heat against Romney. This came to 15 percent of the electorate.

In a two-way race for president between Clinton and Romney, an overwhelming majority prefers Clinton, 60 percent to 24 percent. Meanwhile, between Obama and Romney, voters split almost evenly — with Obama at 45 percent and Romney at 43 percent.

A detailed assessment of swing voters shows that they are not liberal Democrats. Over three-quarters (76 percent) are moderates or conservatives, and close to two-thirds (65 percent) are Republicans or independents. Slightly less than half (49 percent) are Southerners.

This data underscore the voters’ desire for politicians who advocate for bipartisanship and coalition-building in a polarized country. The substantial degree of support for Clinton versus Romney shows that the more bipartisan, centrist and fiscally conservative the appeal, the broader the support.

A Third Way survey conducted after the midterms supports my findings. Sixty percent of voters who supported Obama in 2008, but voted Republican in 2010, feel that Obama is too liberal. About 66 percent say that Obama and the Democrats in Congress tried to have government do too much.

A USA Today/Gallup Poll released late last year also shows that the electorate believes Obama is too far left ideologically. Americans were asked to rate their own ideology as well as that of the major presidential candidates on a 5-point scale. Most rated themselves at 3.3 (slightly right of center), and Obama at 2.3 (left of center) — further away than all other major presidential candidates. A majority of Americans, 57 percent, see Obama as liberal, while only 23 percent see him as moderate.

Indeed, recent polling shows that independents want to rein in the size and scope of government. Gallup reports that 64 percent of independents say Big Government is the biggest threat to the country. Which may be one reason for Santorum’s growing support. Three-quarters are dissatisfied with the size and power of the federal government, while just 24 percent are satisfied.

Other polling shows that these voters want policies that emphasize economic growth and budget reduction. In the wake of the crippling economic downturn, 82 percent believe it is extremely or very important to expand the economy, according to recent Gallup polling. Seventy percent say the federal budget deficit should be cut by a combination of spending cuts and modest tax increases — with many polls showing these voters feel spending cuts are key.

Independents do not support more government spending. My polling last year shows independents believe government should refrain from spending money to stimulate the economy, given the large deficit we face, 62 percent to 24 percent.

Independents, according to Gallup, are looking for government to expand the economy (82 percent), and promote equality of opportunity (69 percent). They are not looking for government to promote equality of outcome, since just 43 percent say they want to reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor. By 50 percent to 47 percent, they say the divide between the rich and the poor is an acceptable part of the economic system

So it’s clear what these voters are looking for, and also that neither party is addressing their concerns. To be sure, independent voters want conciliation and compromise. Some are more conservative and market-oriented. Others are ready to accept government stimulus spending for our economic recovery. But all share the desire for economic growth, job creation and a path to fiscal stability.

The two parties cannot continue to ignore swing voters. Without them, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to win in November. Moreover, to win without addressing their concerns will almost certainly promise four more years of the same gridlock.

### Ext – More Spending Bad

#### More spending is election suicide for Obama

SCHOEN 10 Harvard Law Graduate. Former Pollster for President Clinton. Daily News Contributor [Douglas E. Schoen, What Bam can learn from Bill: President Clinton's ex pollster tells Obama how to win independents, 7-11-10, <http://articles.nydailynews.com/2010-07-11/news/29438716_1_fiscal-discipline-swing-voters-president-obama>]

The independent swing voters who hold the fate of the Democratic Party in their hands are looking for candidates and parties that champion fiscal discipline, limited government, deficit reduction and a free market, pro-growth agenda.

They respect leadership that bucks the Washington establishment and the special interests.

Above all else, these swing voters will not tolerate any lack of focus on the most pressing economic concerns: reigniting the economy and creating jobs while simultaneously slashing the deficit and exhibiting fiscal discipline. Some say these are mutually exclusive objectives. They are not.

I should know. When I first met with former President Bill Clinton privately in late 1994, jobs and the deficit were major concerns. In the aftermath of that year's devastating mid-term elections when the Republicans gained control of Congress for the first time since 1954, I emphasized that unless Clinton simultaneously stressed fiscal discipline and economic growth, he simply could not be reelected in 1996

By adopting a bold new agenda that included a balanced budget, frank acknowledgment of the limits of government, welfare reform, as well as the protection of key social programs, we were able to win a decisive victory over former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole in 1996. Without that fundamental repositioning, Clinton would almost certainly have lost.

While the circumstances are different, the electorate now wants the same things that it wanted back then. The American people, exhausted and demoralized by a sluggish economy, recognize that the stimulus package, as currently crafted and implemented, has at best produced short-term results through subsidization of the public sector. And they are increasingly uneasy about rising deficits, which remain the independent voter's touchstone.

The left-wing economists urging Obama to ignore the latter concern and pour more taxpayer money into the economy now, regardless of the impact on the deficits, are prescribing electoral suicide.

Obama needs a robust, fast-acting job-creation strategy that doesn't throw fiscal responsibility to the wind.

### 1nc – Partisan Fighting Link

#### Partisan fighting hurts Obama’s chances – he promised to unify

MEDVED 4 – 1 – 12 nationally syndicated conservative talk show host [Michael Medved, Obama’s Achilles: Broken Promise of Bipartisanship May Sink Reelection, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/04/01/obama-s-achilles-broken-promise-of-bipartisanship-may-sink-reelection.html>]

In the last 100 years, every U.S. president who lost his bid for a second term did so because he abandoned his principal promise to the American people. If Republicans can persuade the public that Barack Obama similarly shattered the pledge at the very core of his presidency, they will succeed in denying him the new lease on the White House he insists he deserves.

Four elected chief executives in the past century failed in their reelection campaigns—and each of them flopped by landslide margins. For William Howard Taft in 1912, Herbert Hoover in 1932, Jimmy Carter in 1980, and George H.W. Bush in 1992, broken promises doomed their chances for another four-year term.

Taft, Theodore Roosevelt’s hand-picked successor, based his first presidential campaign on guarantees that he would continue the popular policies of his ebullient predecessor, but voters in 1912 knew they’d been betrayed because TR himself came out of retirement to tell them so! Roosevelt not only challenged Taft for re-nomination but ultimately conducted his third-party “Bull Moose” campaign, handing victory to Democrat Woodrow Wilson and pushing the incumbent to a paltry 23 percent of the popular vote

In 1928, Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover ran as the prosperity candidate, deploying the sonorous slogan, “A Chicken in Every Pot, a Car in Every Garage.” The Great Depression smashed his optimistic assurances and helped FDR carry 42 of 48 states

After the sleaze and polarization of the Nixon administration, a nation weary of Watergate turned to a youthful, deeply religious Georgia governor who titled his campaign autobiography Why Not the Best? As a former officer on nuclear submarines, Jimmy Carter ran as a sure-handed technocrat who offered the explicit promise of “a government as good as its people.” After three years of economic meltdown, a seemingly endless hostage crisis, and self-defeating talk of malaise, that cheerful vow sounded laughably quaint, and Carter fell by 8.4 million votes to Ronald Reagan.

Finally, in 1988 Vice President George H.W. Bush escaped the nagging “wimp” factor and electrified the GOP convention with an unequivocal declaration meant to evoke the steely resolve of Clint Eastwood. “Read my lips,” he snarled. “No new taxes!” Violating that well-publicized oath with a sharp increase in marginal tax rates literally wrecked his presidency: producing a primary challenge from Pat Buchanan, a formidable third-party candidacy by Ross Perot, and a lopsided November win for the young governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton

If Republicans want to see history repeat itself in 2012, with a once-popular incumbent turned out of office by a deeply disillusioned electorate, they must persuade the public that Barack Obama has continued the big-loser pattern of broken promises. That means reminding voters of the most important theme associated with his rise to power: the pledge to unify the nation and put aside petty, partisan differences. Whatever happens with the unemployment rate or gas prices, the president’s failure to live up to these assurances remains both painful and apparent

## IRAN IMPACT

### 1nc – Iran

#### Romney will strike Iran – he’ll be hawkish

Daily Kos 12 [Daily Kos; “President Obama versus Romney on Iran”; 4/16/2012; <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/04/16/1083726/-President-Obama-versus-Romney-on-Iran>]

Approach to foreign policy: Romney says he will “not apologize” for America and advocates a return to the Bush cowboy “my way or the highway” approach to dealing with other nations. When John Bolton is an endorser, that scares me. To me, however the biggest contrast is their approach to Iran. Binyamin Netanyahu by all accounts is a hawk who is pushing the United States to bomb Iran and has been doing so for a long time. He appears to see no need for negotiation. Granted, he has a right to protect his nation if he believes that its under threat. However, we all know how flawed the “intelligence” was for the Iraq war. And its important to let negotiations play out as far as possible before rushing to war, which would have many unintended consequences for years to come. (See the Iraq war). Here’s the big difference. Here’s Netanyahu’s recent response to the ongoing P5+1 talks: http://news.yahoo.com/... Netanyahu -- whose government has not ruled out a preemptive strike on Iranian nuclear facilities -- earlier said however that Tehran had simply bought itself some extra time to comply. "My initial impression is that Iran has been given a 'freebie'," Netanyahu said during talks with visiting US Senator Joe Lieberman, the premier's office reported. "It has got five weeks to continue enrichment without any limitation, any inhibition. I think Iran should take immediate steps to stop all enrichment, take out all enrichment material and dismantle the nuclear facility in Qom," he said. "I believe that the world's greatest practitioner of terrorism must not have the opportunity to develop atomic bombs," he said. Here’s President Obama’s response yesterday to Netanyahu (in a response to a journalist's question) at the press conference in Cartagena: But Obama refuted that statement, saying "The notion that we've given something away or a freebie would indicate that Iran has gotten something." "In fact, they got the toughest sanctions that they're going to be facing coming up in a few months if they don't take advantage of those talks. I hope they do," Obama said. "The clock is ticking and I've been very clear to Iran and our negotiating partners that we're not going to have these talks just drag out in a stalling process," Obama told reporters after an Americas summit in Colombia."But so far at least we haven't given away anything -- other than the opportunity for us to negotiate," he said. Obama in conjunction with world powers is negotiating with Iran, trying to prevent a needless war. You can be sure that Mitt Romney would bow to his buddy Netanyahu and attack Iran. He has previously said “We will not have an inch of difference between ourselves and Israel”. As he also said in a debate, before making any decision regarding Israel, he will call his friend Bibi. Bottom line, if somehow the American people elect Mitt Romney, expect more of the bombastic, Bush cowboy approach to foreign policy with a more than likely bombardment of Iran. If the American people are not fooled by this charlatan and they reelect Barack Obama, he will continue in his measured way to deal with the threats around the world, quietly, through the use of negotiation, and force if absolutely necessary, but only as a last resort, without bragging, and scaring the American people with needless terrorism alerts.

#### Intervention in Iran goes nuclear

Reuters 5-17

[“Russia says action on Syria, Iran may go nuclear” May 17, 2012 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/17/us-g8-russia-idUSBRE84G18M20120517>]

Hasty military operations in foreign states usually bring radicals to power," Medvedev, president for four years until Vladimir Putin's inauguration on May 7, told a conference in St. Petersburg in remarks posted on the government's website. "At some point such actions which undermine state sovereignty may lead to a full-scale regional war, even, although I do not want to frighten anyone, with the use of nuclear weapons," Medvedev said. "Everyone should bear this in mind." Medvedev gave no further explanation. Nuclear-armed Russia has said publicly that it is under no obligation to protect Syria if it is attacked, and analysts and diplomats say Russia would not get involved in military action if Iran were attacked. Russia has adamantly urged Western nations not to attack Iran to neutralize its nuclear program or intervene against the Syrian government over bloodshed in which the United Nations says its forces have killed more than 9,000 people. Medvedev will represent Russia at the Group of Eight summit in place of Putin, whose decision to stay away from the meeting in the United States was seen as muscle-flexing in the face of the West. Putin said previously that threats will only encourage Iran to develop nuclear weapons. Analysts have said that Medvedev also meant that regional nuclear powers such as Israel, Pakistan and India could get involved into a conflict.

### Romney Hard-Line

#### Romney will be tough on Iran – the military is an option.

McGreal 11 [Chris McGreal is the Guardian's Washington correspondent. He has previously been posted in Johannesburg and in Jerusalem. McGreal is a former BBC journalist in Central America and merchant seaman; “Romney: Obama has hindered peace in the Middle East 'immeasurably'”; 12/7/2011; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/dec/07/romney-obama-peace-middle-east>; Boyce]

Mitt Romney, a leading Republican presidential contender, has called for regime change in Iran and said that the US should make clear to Tehran that it is "developing military options". Romney made the call during a scathing attack on Barack Obama at a Republican Jewish Coalition forum of presidential candidates in which he accused the president of weak support for Israel, of appeasing America's enemies and of setting back peace in the Middle East with his fractious relationship with the Israeli leadership. Before a hawkish, pro-Israel audience, Romney and another contender, Rick Santorum, dwelt at length on the threat posed by Iran's nuclear programme and what they characterised as Obama's weak response. Romney called for "crippling sanctions" against Tehran and for Iran's diplomats and businessmen to be treated as pariahs. "Ultimately regime change is necessary. We should make it very clear we are developing and have developed military options," he said. Santorum said that on his first day in office as president he would ensure that the US and Israel are safe from Iran. But he didn't say how. Romney launched a broad attack on Obama's foreign policy. "Abroad, he's weakening America," he said. "He seems to be more generous to our enemies than he is to our friends. That is the natural tendency of someone who is unsure of their own strength, or of America's rightful place as the leader of the world." But Romney repeatedly returned to the president's dealings with Israel. He accused Obama of "not finding time" to visit the Jewish state, drawing some boos and hisses from the audience. Romney promised to make a trip to Jerusalem his first foreign visit as president. The Republican contender accused Obama of "insulting" the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, and of "emboldening Palestinian hardliners". Obama and Netanyahu have clashed repeatedly over Israel's continued expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, including plans for an entire new settlement and thousands of homes in others which are regarded by the Palestinians as evidence that the present Israeli government is not serious about a negotiated peace. Romney, however, blamed Obama for the sour relations. "President Obama has immeasurably set back the prospect of peace in the Middle East," he said.

### Romney invades

#### Romney key to military intervention- Obama gets caught in multilateralism

Council on Foreign Relations ’12 Nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization, publisher, and think tank specializing in U.S. foreign policy and international affairs

[“The Candidates on U.S.-Iran Policy” May 4, 2012 <http://www.cfr.org/iran/candidates-us-iran-policy/p26798>]

Mitt Romney wants the United States to get much tougher with Iran and to end what a top adviser calls President Barack Obama's "Mother, may I?" consensus-seeking foreign policy. With the presidential nomination all but locked up, an examination of Romney's foreign policy pronouncements and the team advising him on those issues indicates Americans and the world might expect a Republican campaign that reprises the hawkish and often unilateral foreign policy prescriptions that guided Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. "The world is better off when the United States takes the lead. We should not be playing 'Mother, may I?'

### Invasion bad

#### Military action bad- retaliation

Economist ’12

[“Bombing Iran: Nobody should welcome the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran. But bombing the place is not the answer” Feb 25, 2012 <http://www.economist.com/node/21548233>]

Military action is not the solution to a nuclear Iran. It could retaliate, including with rocket attacks on Israel from its client groups in Lebanon and Gaza. Terror cells around the world might strike Jewish and American targets. It might threaten Arab oil infrastructure, in an attempt to use oil prices to wreck the world economy. Although some Arab leaders back a strike, most Muslims are unlikely to feel that way, further alienating the West from the Arab spring. Such costs of an attack are easy to overstate, but even supposing they were high they might be worth paying if a strike looked like working. It does not. Striking Iran would be much harder than Israel’s successful solo missions against the weapons programmes of Iraq, in 1981, and Syria, in 2007. If an attack were easy, Israel would have gone in alone long ago, when the Iranian programme was more vulnerable. But Iran’s sites are spread out and some of them, hardened against strikes, demand repeated hits. America has more military options than Israel, so it would prefer to wait. That is one reason why it is seeking to hold Israel back. The other is that, for either air force, predictions of the damage from an attack span a huge range. At worst an Israeli mission might fail altogether, at best an American one could, it is said, set back the programme a decade (see article). But uncertainty would reign. Iran is a vast, populous and sophisticated country with a nuclear programme that began under the shah. It may have secret sites that escape unscathed. Even if all its sites are hit, Iran’s nuclear know-how cannot be bombed out of existence. Nor can its network of suppliers at home and abroad. It has stocks of uranium in various stages of enrichment; an unknown amount would survive an attack, while the rest contaminated an unforeseeable area. Iran would probably withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, under which its uranium is watched by the International Atomic Energy Agency. At that point its entire programme would go underground—literally and figuratively. If Iran decided it needed a bomb, it would then be able to pursue one with utmost haste and in greater secrecy. Saudi Arabia and the others might conclude that they, too, needed to act pre-emptively to gain their own deterrents. Perhaps America could bomb Iran every few years. But how would it know when and where to strike? And how would it justify a failing policy to the world? Perhaps, if limited bombing is not enough, America should be aiming for an all-out aerial war, or even regime change. Yet a decade in Iraq and Afghanistan has demonstrated where that leads. An aerial war could dramatically raise the threat of retaliation. Regime change might produce a government that the West could do business with. But the nuclear programme has broad support in Iran. The idea that a bomb is the only defence against an implacable American enemy might become stronger than ever. Get real That does not mean the world should just let Iran get the bomb. The government will soon be starved of revenues, because of an oil embargo. Sanctions are biting, the financial system is increasingly isolated and the currency has plunged in value. Proponents of an attack argue that military humiliation would finish the regime off. But it is as likely to rally Iranians around their leaders. Meanwhile, political change is sweeping across the Middle East. The regime in Tehran is divided and it has lost the faith of its people. Eventually, popular resistance will spring up as it did in 2009. A new regime brought about by the Iranians themselves is more likely to renounce the bomb than one that has just witnessed an American assault. Is there a danger that Iran will get a nuclear weapon before that happens? Yes, but bombing might only increase the risk. Can you stop Iran from getting a bomb if it is determined to have one? Not indefinitely, and bombing it might make it all the more desperate. Short of occupation, the world cannot eliminate Iran’s capacity to gain the bomb. It can only change its will to possess one. Just now that is more likely to come about through sanctions and diplomacy than war.

### Obama won’t attack

#### Obama won’t attack Iran

Tandler 2-28 Junior Fellow, Nuclear Policy Program at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

[Jaclyn Tandler “The Thin Red Line: Six Observations on Obama's Iran Policy” Feb 28, 2012 <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/02/28/thin-red-line-six-observations-on-obama-s-iran-policy>]

Despite the “all available options” stance of the administration, other statements indicate that the military threat may be less credible. The rhetoric used to deter Iran from closing the Strait of Hormuz offers a telling point of comparison. General Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, warned that the United States would “take action and reopen the strait,” which could be accomplished only by military means.7 In contrast, on Iran’s nuclear weapons, General Dempsey said in January, “We are determined to prevent them from acquiring that weapon, but that doesn't mean dropping bombs necessarily…I personally believe that we should be in the business of deterring as the first priority.”8 When the administration wanted to rule in military action, it did so plainly and explicitly. With respect to Iran’s nuclear weaponization, it has thus far remained vague. There may be understandable and good diplomatic, strategic, and political reasons for the distinction, but this is not self-evident.

### Obama solves Iran

#### Obama solves- tough sanctions and negotiations

Sanger ’12 Chief Washington correspondent of The New York Times, has reported from New York, Tokyo and Washington, covering a wide variety of issues surrounding foreign policy, globalization, nuclear proliferation and Asian affairs. Twice he has been a member of Times reporting teams that won the Pulitzer Prize

[David E. Sanger “Is there a Romney doctrine?” May 12, 2012 <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/13/sunday-review/is-there-a-romney-doctrine.html?pagewanted=all>]

Iran may be a first test. Mr. Romney put it pretty bluntly, in another line that caused some of his advisers to cringe and others to celebrate, when he declared late in 2011: “If we re-elect Barack Obama, Iran will have a nuclear weapon. If you elect me as president, Iran will not have a nuclear weapon.” BUT when pressed on how, exactly, his strategy would differ from Mr. Obama’s, Mr. Romney had a hard time responding. The economic sanctions Mr. Obama has imposed have been far more crippling to the Iranian economy than anything President Bush did between the public revelation of Iran’s nuclear enrichment facilities in 2003 and the end of Mr. Bush’s term in early 2009. Covert action has been stepped up, too. Mr. Bolton has called efforts to negotiate with Iran “delusional,” but other advisers— mostly those who dealt with the issue during the Bush administration — say they are a critical step in holding together the European allies and, if conflict looms, proving to Russia and China that every effort was made to come to a peaceful resolution.

### Deterrence Solves

#### Nuclear deterrence solves- empirics. Invasion escalates

CS Monitor ’12

[“3 reasons not to attack Iran” <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2012/0305/3-reasons-not-to-attack-Iran/Nuclear-deterrence-makes-a-preemptive-attack-unnecessary>]

Nuclear deterrence makes a preemptive attack unnecessary Nuclear deterrence makes it unnecessary to attack in order to prevent Iran from starting a nuclear war. The evidence of this is abundant but seldom recognized as the crisis over Iran’s weapons escalates. During the cold war the US was opposed by Russia and China, two nuclear-armed regimes that together possessed tens of thousands of nuclear missiles and were just as determined to crush democracy and economic freedom as the current regime in Tehran. What restrained them, as it would restrain a nuclear Iran now, was the overwhelming nuclear deterrent of the US. Add to the thousands of US nuclear warheads the hundreds possessed by Iran’s neighbor Israel. Any nuclear attack on Israel or American forces anywhere in the world would doom Iran to catastrophic and irredeemable destruction.

#### **Deterrence applies- Iran is rational actor**

Sadjadpour 3-9 Policy analyst at the Carnegie Endowment. Prior to that he was "chief Iran analyst" at the International Crisis Group

[Karim Sadjadpour “Iran is ‘Years Away’ from a Nuclear Weapon” March 9, 2012 <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/03/09/iran-is-years-away-from-nuclear-weapon/a268>]

Speaking on MSNBC's Morning Joe, Carnegie's Karim Sadjadpour stated that, as tensions between the Obama administration and Israel over Iran’s nuclear program continue, much discussion has focused on whether or not Iran can be counted on as a rational actor in international politics. Sadjadpour explained that “Iran is a rational actor in the sense that staying in power is paramount. The regime is homicidal but it is not suicidal.” However, it will ultimately prove extremely difficult to reach a modus vivendi with a regime that relies on anti-Americanism as an inextricable component of its ideology, Sadjadpour added. One of the chief points of contention between the Obama administration and the Israelis centers on how far away Iran is from developing the capacity to weaponize its nuclear program. Sadjadpour said that the Iranians are at a minimum of two years before they will be able to have the bomb. “The reality is we often talk ourselves into hyperventilation on this issue, but there is still a significant amount of time to engage in diplomacy,” he concluded.

### A2 Iran Prolif Impact

#### No impact- Iran uses nuclear capabilities for deterrence

Waltz ’12 Member of the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University, scholar of international relations

[Kenneth Waltz “Why Iran Should Get the Bomb Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability” July/August 2012 <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137731/kenneth-n-waltz/why-iran-should-get-the-bomb>]

One reason the danger of a nuclear Iran has been grossly exaggerated is that the debate surrounding it has been distorted by misplaced worries and fundamental misunderstandings of how states generally behave in the international system. The first prominent concern, which undergirds many others, is that the Iranian regime is innately irrational. Despite a widespread belief to the contrary, Iranian policy is made not by "mad mullahs" but by perfectly sane ayatollahs who want to survive just like any other leaders. Although Iran's leaders indulge in inflammatory and hateful rhetoric, they show no propensity for self-destruction. It would be a grave error for policymakers in the United States and Israel to assume otherwise. Yet that is precisely what many U.S. and Israeli officials and analysts have done. Portraying Iran as irrational has allowed them to argue that the logic of nuclear deterrence does not apply to the Islamic Republic. If Iran acquired a nuclear weapon, they warn, it would not hesitate to use it in a first strike against Israel, even though doing so would invite massive retaliation and risk destroying everything the Iranian regime holds dear. Although it is impossible to be certain of Iranian intentions, it is far more likely that if Iran desires nuclear weapons, it is for the purpose of providing for its own security, not to improve its offensive capabilities (or destroy itself). Iran may be intransigent at the negotiating table and defiant in the face of sanctions, but it still acts to secure its own preservation. Iran's leaders did not, for example, attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz despite issuing blustery warnings that they might do so after the EU announced its planned oil embargo in January. The Iranian regime clearly concluded that it did not want to provoke what would surely have been a swift and devastating American response to such a move. Nevertheless, even some observers and policymakers who accept that the Iranian regime is rational still worry that a nuclear weapon would embolden it, providing Tehran with a shield that would allow it to act more aggressively and increase its support for terrorism. Some analysts even fear that Iran would directly provide terrorists with nuclear arms. The problem with these concerns is that they contradict the record of every other nuclear weapons state going back to 1945. History shows that when countries acquire the bomb, they feel increasingly vulnerable and become acutely aware that their nuclear weapons make them a potential target in the eyes of major powers. This awareness discourages nuclear states from bold and aggressive action. Maoist China, for example, became much less bellicose after acquiring nuclear weapons in 1964, and India and Pakistan have both become more cautious since going nuclear. There is little reason to believe Iran would break this mold.

### Prolif Defense

#### Proliferation is overhyped- empirics

Chapman 7/8/12 Columnist for Chicago Tribune on international affairs

[Steve Chapman “The arms race that won't happen Iran and the phony proliferation scare” July 8, 2012 <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-07-08/news/ct-oped-0708-chapman-20120708_1_nuclear-proliferation-iran-regional-proliferation>]

If you want to understand the intensifying showdown between the United States and Iran, consider the headline in The Washington Post on the threat of rapid nuclear proliferation: "Many nations ready to break into nuclear club." It highlights one of the dangers cited by those who favor military action against Iran. President Barack Obama says that if Iran gets the bomb, "other players in the region would feel it necessary to get their own nuclear weapons. So now you have the prospect of a nuclear arms race in the most volatile region in the world." A plausible threat? It may sound that way. But it also sounded that way in 1981 — when that Washington Post story ran. Nuclear proliferation is always said to be on the verge of suddenly accelerating, and somehow it never does. In 1981, there were five declared nuclear powers — the U.S., the Soviet Union, China, Britain and France — as well as Israel, which was (and is) undeclared. And today? The number of members added since then is not 15 but three: India, Pakistan and North Korea. Most of the other countries on the list of likely proliferators never came close — including Argentina, Chile, Morocco and Tunisia. Iraq tried and failed. Libya made an effort and then chose to give up. The peril was greatly overblown. It probably is again

#### **No impact to prolif- empirics**

Waltz ’12 Member of the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University, scholar of international relations

[Kenneth Waltz “Why Iran Should Get the Bomb Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability” July/August 2012 <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137731/kenneth-n-waltz/why-iran-should-get-the-bomb>]

The third possible outcome of the standoff is that Iran continues its current course and publicly goes nuclear by testing a weapon. U.S. and Israeli officials have declared that outcome unacceptable, arguing that a nuclear Iran is a uniquely terrifying prospect, even an existential threat. Such language is typical of major powers, which have historically gotten riled up whenever another country has begun to develop a nuclear weapon of its own. Yet so far, every time another country has managed to shoulder its way into the nuclear club, the other members have always changed tack and decided to live with it. In fact, by reducing imbalances in military power, new nuclear states generally produce more regional and international stability, not less.

#### Prolif good- stability

Waltz ’12 Member of the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University, scholar of international relations

[Kenneth Waltz “Why Iran Should Get the Bomb Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability” July/August 2012 <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137731/kenneth-n-waltz/why-iran-should-get-the-bomb>]

In 1991, the historical rivals India and Pakistan signed a treaty agreeing not to target each other's nuclear facilities. They realized that far more worrisome than their adversary's nuclear deterrent was the instability produced by challenges to it. Since then, even in the face of high tensions and risky provocations, the two countries have kept the peace. Israel and Iran would do well to consider this precedent. If Iran goes nuclear, Israel and Iran will deter each other, as nuclear powers always have. There has never been a full-scale war between two nuclear-armed states. Once Iran crosses the nuclear threshold, deterrence will apply, even if the Iranian arsenal is relatively small. No other country in the region will have an incentive to acquire its own nuclear capability, and the current crisis will finally dissipate, leading to a Middle East that is more stable than it is today.

## Russia Impact

### 1nc – Russia Relations

#### Romney will destroy US-Russian relations – hardline & won’t compromise

Larison 6-27 Columnist for the American Conservative

[Daniel Larison “U.S.-Russian Relations Would Get Much Worse Under Romney” <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/u-s-russian-relations-would-get-much-worse-under-romney/>]

Putin doesn’t actually want a “hard-line conservative in the White House.” Putin distrusts the U.S. because he believes that the Bush administration behaved in an ungrateful and untrustworthy fashion in the previous decade, and U.S.-Russian relations improved as much as they did because the current administration seemed to be more reliable. U.S.-Russian relations reached their lowest point in the last twenty years in no small part because of a “more active U.S. policy” toward the Middle East, the South Caucasus, and central Europe. Putin might be willing to deal with a more hard-line American President, but only so long as it this translated into tangible gains for Russia. Provided that the hard-liner was willing to live up to his end of the bargain, there could be some room for agreement, but there isn’t any. Since Romney’s Russia policy is essentially to never make any deals with the current Russian government, Putin doesn’t have much of an incentive to cooperate. That will guarantee that U.S.-Russian relations will deteriorate much more than they have in the last year.

#### Nuclear war

ALLISON 11 Director @ Belfer Center for Science and Int’l Affairs @ Harvard’s Kennedy School, Former Assistant Secretary of Defense, Robert D. Blackwill, Senior Fellow – Council on Foreign Relations [Graham Allison, “10 Reasons Why Russia Still Matters”, Politico -- October 31 -- <http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=161EF282-72F9-4D48-8B9C-C5B3396CA0E6>]

That central point is that Russia matters a great deal to a U.S. government seeking to defend and advance its national interests. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin’s decision to return next year as president makes it all the more critical for Washington to manage its relationship with Russia through coherent, realistic policies. No one denies that Russia is a dangerous, difficult, often disappointing state to do business with. We should not overlook its many human rights and legal failures. Nonetheless, Russia is a player whose choices affect our vital interests in nuclear security and energy. It is key to supplying 100,000 U.S. troops fighting in Afghanistan and preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Ten realities require U.S. policymakers to advance our nation’s interests by engaging and working with Moscow. First, Russia remains the only nation that can erase the **U**nited **S**tates from the map in 30 minutes. As every president since John F. Kennedy has recognized, **Russia’s cooperation is critical to averting nuclear war**. Second, Russia is our most consequential partner in preventing nuclear terrorism. Through a combination of more than $11 billion in U.S. aid, provided through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program, and impressive Russian professionalism, two decades after the collapse of the “evil empire,” not one nuclear weapon has been found loose. Third, Russia plays an essential role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile-delivery systems. As Washington seeks to stop Iran’s drive toward nuclear weapons, Russian choices to sell or withhold sensitive technologies are the difference between failure and the possibility of success. Fourth, Russian support in sharing intelligence and cooperating in operations remains essential to the U.S. war to destroy Al Qaeda and combat other transnational terrorist groups. Fifth, Russia provides a vital supply line to 100,000 U.S. troops fighting in Afghanistan. As U.S. relations with Pakistan have deteriorated, the Russian lifeline has grown ever more important and now accounts for half all daily deliveries. Sixth, Russia is the world’s largest oil producer and second largest gas producer. Over the past decade, Russia has added more oil and gas exports to world energy markets than any other nation. Most major energy transport routes from Eurasia start in Russia or cross its nine time zones. As citizens of a country that imports two of every three of the 20 million barrels of oil that fuel U.S. cars daily, Americans feel Russia’s impact at our gas pumps. Seventh, Moscow is an important player in today’s international system. It is no accident that Russia is one of the five veto-wielding, permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, as well as a member of the G-8 and G-20. A Moscow more closely aligned with U.S. goals would be significant in the balance of power to shape an environment in which China can emerge as a global power without overturning the existing order. Eighth, Russia is the largest country on Earth by land area, abutting China on the East, Poland in the West and the United States across the Arctic. This territory provides transit corridors for supplies to global markets whose stability is vital to the U.S. economy. Ninth, Russia’s brainpower is reflected in the fact that it has won more Nobel Prizes for science than all of Asia, places first in most math competitions and dominates the world chess masters list. The only way U.S. astronauts can now travel to and from the International Space Station is to hitch a ride on Russian rockets. The co-founder of the most advanced digital company in the world, Google, is Russian-born Sergei Brin. Tenth, Russia’s potential as a spoiler is difficult to exaggerate. Consider what a Russian president intent on frustrating U.S. international objectives could do — from stopping the supply flow to Afghanistan to selling S-300 air defense missiles to Tehran to joining China in preventing U.N. Security Council resolutions.

### Ext – Romney kills Relations

#### Romney crushes relations- officials prove

L.A. Times 7-2

[Paul Richter “Russian official: Romney's hard line could bring 'full-scale crisis'” July 2, 2012 <http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-pn-russian-official-romneys-hard-line-could-bring-fullscale-crisis-20120702,0,4689534.story>]

Alexey Pushkov, chairman of the international affairs committee of the State Duma, said in a recent interview that Russian leaders have noted Romney’s comments with concern, and are watching with interest as neoconservative and “realist” advisers maneuver for influence within the campaign. “We don’t think that for us Romney will be an easy partner,” said Pushkov, an ally of President Vladimir Putin. “We think that Romney will be, on the rhetorical side, a replay of the Bush administration.” He also noted Romney’s statements that the United States should assert its dominance in the 21st century. “If he is serious about this, I’m afraid he may choose the neocon-type people…In the first year of his presidency, we may have a full-scale crisis,” he said.

#### **Romney’s stance on Russia tanks relations- shifts Russia’s political stance**

Hirst 3-27 Freelance journalist in IR for the Guardian and Huffington Post

[Tomas Hirst “Mitt Romney's Russian Delusions” March 27, 2012 <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tomas-hirst/mitt-romney-russia_b_1381850.html>]

This perception of an unbridgeable cultural divide between Moscow and Washington is something that should concern the international community. After all between them these two countries maintain around 95% of the world's nuclear weapons, according to the Center for Arms Control. Anti-American rhetoric formed a key part of Putin's re-election campaign with street protests around Russia against electoral fraud accused of receiving orders and cash from Hillary Clinton and the US State Department. It would surely be a strategic mistake to vindicate the Kremlin's paranoia by dubbing Russia a "geopolitical foe" and make opposition to America a more productive political move for Russian politicians than cooperation.

#### Romney’s positions fails- Putin fights back

Forbes 5-12

[“Mitt Romney's Russia Problem” May 12, 2012 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/markadomanis/2012/05/12/mitt-romneys-russia-problem/>]

Putin is not going to be won over with PowerPoint presentations about “synergy,” he won’t be impressed to hear someone use the word “leverage” in every sentence, and he can’t simply be “bought out” as would often happen in Bain-style hostile takeovers. If your plan to extract concessions from Vladimir Putin is “aggressively bluster in the hope that he caves” you’re going to be extremely disappointed. Moreover the entire Russian diplomatic corps is basically opposed to zero-sum deals as a matter of principle. The Russians, and this is not a personal characteristic of Vladimir Putin but something that characterized Russian/Soviet diplomacy for decades, never give up something for nothing. If Romney views the United States-Russia relationship as something he can “win,” then he is guaranteed to fail. The article also briefly outlines Romney’s very strange belief that Russia is somehow on pace to become an economic hegemon. Indeed the extent to which Romney’s beliefs differ from those of Leon Aron, his Chief Russia adviser, is scarcely believable and, frankly, more than a little bit alarming. I don’t think a political campaign needs to have everyone in ideological lockstep, but Aron and Romney aren’t even marching in the same direction. Aron thinks that the far more serious danger facing the US is of a weakened and disintegrating Russia, while Romney thinks they are a “rising power” whose military and economic power pose a direct threat to American national security. Romney and Aron are not simply “not on the same page,” they’re not reading from the same book. Hell, they’re not even reading books in the same language. But apart from Romney’s unique foibles concerning Russia, which I’ve covered before and will cover again, I wanted to focus on the last paragraph I cited above because it is as handy a summation of the corrupted state of American foreign policy as you’re likely to see. To avoid turning into a partyarchy , a stale and perverted form of democracy in which elections are held and parties alternate in power but there is never a meaningful change in policy, a country should have at least two parties that have essentially dissimilar views: a party in favor of greater economic liberalization, and a party that is in favor of greater state intervention, a party in favor of an aggressive military posture, and a party that strongly favors diplomacy and so on and so on. But as that paragraph makes clear, there is no such distinction in America right now. The “dovish” president doesn’t argue against the idea of ABM, a position which until recently was held purely by conservative Republicans, indeed he is fully and aggressively in favor of it and has been willing to sacrifice the effectiveness of “the reset” at its altar. The only differences between Barack Obama‘s view of missile defense and Mitt Romney’s view of missile defense are tactical in nature. They both agree that America needs ABM to defend itself from non-existent Iranian missiles carrying non-existent Iranian nuclear warheads, they just have some quibbles about where exactly to put the interceptors and how much the Russians should be antagonized in the process of doing so. To put it succinctly: when Barack Obama’s position on missile defense, which in the 1980′s would have put him in Reagan’s camp, is the farthest “left” that a mainstream politician is allowed to go, something is very badly amiss.

#### Romney’s policies would isolate Russia --- collapses relations

**Bandow**, 4/23/**2012** (Doug – senior fellow at the Cato Institute, Romney and Russia: Complicating American Relations, National Interest, p. <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-skeptics/romney-russia-complicating-american-relationships-6836>)

Mitt Romney has become the inevitable Republican presidential candidate. He’s hoping to paint Barack Obama as weak, but his attempt at a flanking maneuver on the right may complicate America’s relationship with Eastern Europe and beyond. Romney recently charged Russia with being America’s “number one geopolitical foe.” As Jacob Heilbrunn of National Interest pointed out, this claim embodies a monumental self-contradiction, attempting to claim “credit for the collapse of the Soviet Union, on the one hand [while] predicting dire threats from Russia on the other.” Thankfully, the U.S.S.R. really is gone, and neither all the king’s men nor Vladimir Putin can put it back together. It is important to separate behavior which is grating, even offensive, and that which is threatening. Putin is no friend of liberty, but his unwillingness to march lock-step with Washington does not mean that he wants conflict with America. Gordon Hahn of CSIS observes: Yet despite NATO expansion, U.S. missile defense, Jackson-Vanik and much else, Moscow has refused to become a U.S. foe, cooperating with the West on a host of issues from North Korea to the war against jihadism. Most recently, Moscow agreed to the establishment of a NATO base in Ulyanovsk. These are hardly the actions of America’s “number one geopolitical foe.” Romney’s charge is both silly and foolish. This doesn’t mean the U.S. should not confront Moscow when important differences arise. But treating Russia as an adversary risks encouraging it to act like one. Moreover, treating Moscow like a foe will make Russia more suspicious of America’s relationships with former members of the Warsaw Pact and republics of the Soviet Union—and especially Washington’s determination to continue expanding NATO. After all, if another country ostentatiously called the U.S. its chief geopolitical threat, ringed America with bases, and established military relationships with areas that had broken away from the U.S., Washington would not react well. It might react, well, a lot like Moscow has been reacting. Although it has established better relations with the West, Russia still might not get along with some of its neighbors, most notably Georgia, with its irresponsibly confrontational president. However, Washington should not give Moscow additional reasons to indulge its paranoia.

### Obama saves relations

#### Obama reelection maintains the US/Russian reset --- Romney will collapse relations

**Weir**, 3/27/**2012** (Fred, Obama asks Russia to cut him slack until reelection, Minnesota Post, p. <http://www.minnpost.com/christian-science-monitor/2012/03/obama-asks-russia-cut-him-slack-until-reelection>)

Russian experts say there's little doubt the Kremlin would like to see Obama re-elected. Official Moscow has been pleased by Obama's policy of "resetting" relations between Russia and the US, which resulted in the new START treaty and other cooperation breakthroughs after years of diplomatic chill while George W. Bush was president. The Russian media often covers Obama's lineup of Republican presidential challengers in tones of horror, and there seems to be a consensus among Russian pundits that a Republican president would put a quick end to the Obama-era thaw in relations. "The Republicans are active critics of Russia, and they are extremely negative toward Putin and his return to the presidency," says Dmitry Babich, a political columnist with the official RIA-Novosti news agency. "Democrats are perceived as more easygoing, more positive toward Russia and Putin." Speaking on the record in Seoul, Mr. Medvedev said the years since Obama came to power "were the best three years in the past decade of Russia-US relations.… I hope this mode of relations will maintain between the Russian Federation and the United States and between the leaders." During Putin's own election campaign, which produced a troubled victory earlier this month, he played heavily on anti-Western themes, including what he described as the US drive to attain "absolute invulnerability" at the expense of everyone else. But many Russian experts say that was mostly election rhetoric, and that in office Putin will seek greater cooperation and normal relations with the West. "Russian society is more anti-American than its leaders are," says Pavel Zolotaryov, deputy director of the official Institute of USA-Canada Studies in Moscow. "Leaders have to take popular moods into account. But it's an objective fact that the US and Russia have more points in common than they have serious differences. If Obama wins the election, it seems likely the reset will continue."

### Relations solve Iran Prolif

#### Russian coop solves prolif- pressures Iran to cooperate

Katz ’09 Professor of government and politics at George Mason

[Mark Katz “Obama’s Approach to Russia and Iran” December 14, 2009 <http://digilib.gmu.edu:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1920/5666/russia_iran_obama_katz.pdf;jsessionid=22D3D5A56C741D4DF9B50985F70627F4?sequence=1>]

It is clear why the United States and Russia should cooperate on the Iranian nuclear issue. Both, after all, do not want to see Iran acquire nuclear weapons. Russia could help pressure Iran to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by working with the United States to impose meaningful UN Security Council sanctions against Iran. And if Tehran were to see this cooperation materialize, it might back down before sanctions actually had to be imposed. In that light, canceling the Bush administration’s plan to deploy ballistic missile defense (BMD) systems in Poland and the Czech Republic (which the Obama administration didn’t like anyway) was a sacrifice that was well worth making to lift an obstacle to Russian-American cooperation on Iran.

#### Relations solve Iranian prolif- Russians are moving away from close relations with Iran

Pikayev 6-23 Head of the nonproliferation project in Russia

[Alexander Pikayev “Why Russia Supported Sanctions Against Iran?” June 23, 2012

http://cns.miis.edu/stories/100623\_russia\_iran\_pikayev.htm]

Conflicting Russia's interests vis-à-vis Iran makes it difficult to fully and quickly accept the U.S. position on Tehran. However, Moscow's gradual shift away from Tehran, evident during the last decade, has moved Russia closer to the United States and some European countries. At the same time, support of the sanctions has visibly strained Russian-Iranian relations. Although Iran plays much smaller role in Russian regional and economic priorities than ten years ago, still Moscow feels a need to maintain a positive relationship with Tehran. Opposition to more intrusive measures going beyond the UNSC Resolution 1929 declared by Russia means that any effort at further steps will simultaneously introduce a new round of painful U.S.-Russian discussions. However, if the improvement in relations between Washington and Moscow that took place during last two years is extrapolated into the future, the outcome of those discussions could still be quite positive.

\

## Turns Case

### 1nc – Obama does the aff

#### Obama loves transportation funding – he’ll do the plan in 2013

The Hill 6-4 [By Keith Laing; “DOT official: Obama support of high-speed rail 'remains as strong as ever'”; 6/4/2012; <http://thehill.com/blogs/transportation-report/railroads/230777-dot-official-obama-support-of-high-speed-rail-remains-as-strong-as-ever>; Boyce]

Federal Railroad Administration chief Joseph Szabo said Monday that President Obama is unwavering in his support for high-speed rail projects. Speaking a conference held by the American Public Transportation Conference in Dallas, Szabo said Obama's support for rail "remains as strong as ever. "His Fiscal Year 2013 budget requests $2.5 billion combined with $6 billion in immediate transportation investments – a total of $8.5 billion for the continued development of high-speed and intercity passenger rail projects," Szabo said. "America’s rail renaissance is well underway." Support for high-speed rail in Congress has ebbed to a definitive low since Republicans came to power in the House in 2010. Money from the 2009 economic stimulus package for railways that was offered by the Obama administration was rejected by three prominent Republican governors, and GOP members in the House moved successfully last year to eliminate future funding for high-speed rail. Despite, Szabo said at the APTA conference Monday that "as we speak – 32 states are now moving ahead with 153 rail-development projects. "This year alone, 44 projects in 16 states – representing close to $3 billion in federal funding – are underway or set to break ground," he said. "And, other projects are already coming in on time and on budget." Early in the first half of Obama's tenure in office, he called for a nationwide network of high-speed railways that he said would rival the reach of the interstate highway system. The Obama administration included $8 billion for construction in the 2009 economic stimulus, and prominently awarded the money to states the day after his 2010 State of the Union address. Since then, a proposed high-speed railway in California that was awarded the most money by the Obama administration has come under fire for escalating costs, and opponents have argued that railways should only be built in the populous northeastern U.S. But Szabo said Monday that citizens from other parts of the country also want to have access to high-speed railways. "Two railroad tracks can carry as many people in an hour as sixteen lanes of highway," Szabo said. "Americans want – and they deserve – more transportation choices," he added. "They’re tired of being stuck in traffic, delayed in airports, and facing pain at the pump."

### GOP anti Transportation Infrastructure

#### GOP will be anti-Transportation funding

Sledge 12 [Matt Sledge is a reporter for the Huffington Post based in New York. A graduate of Brown University, he was previously the Rhode Island director for FairVote; “GOP Candidates' Transportation Infrastructure Talk Praises Tolls But Ignores Jobs”; 1/4/2012; <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/04/gop-candidates-transportation-infrastructure-jobs_n_1184314.html>; Boyce]

President Barack Obama made improving transportation infrastructure a centerpiece of both his 2009 stimulus bill and 2011's American Jobs Act, which died in Congress late in the year. Upgrading the country's poorly maintained roads and bridges, the president argued, would have the dual benefit of improving business opportunities while putting people to work. Speaking in front of the functionally obsolete Brent Spence Bridge in Cincinnati in September, the president said, "We used to have the best infrastructure in the world." "How can we sit back and watch all these countries in Europe and Asia build newer airports and faster railroads and stronger bridges?" Obama asked in an address that sounded like a campaign speech to observers. "At a time when millions of unemployed construction workers could build them right here in America?" Among the Republican candidates running for president, however, references to transportation infrastructure have been few and far between. Infrastructure's job-creating potential, so critical for Obama, seems not to register among the GOP candidates, who abhor deficit spending and argue they'll be able to grow the economy as a whole by cutting taxes. "I listened to some of the debates, but I don't recall the word transportation at all," said Ken Orski, a transportation consultant and former Nixon administration official. Obama "seems to view transportation as a social good and therefore to be supported irrespective of its economic basis, of its self-financing basis," Orski argued. Republicans, by contrast, view transportation as either a local issue or "a sector that ought to stand on its own feet, in other words pay for itself, in other words through tolls or other fees," Orski said. If there is one thing that GOP candidates Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich seem to agree on, it's those "user fees." If a road's worth building, the argument goes, people will be willing to pay for it themselves through tolls.

### Romney Cuts HSR

#### Romney doesn’t support rail – likes private action better.

Sledge 12 [Matt Sledge is a reporter for the Huffington Post based in New York. A graduate of Brown University, he was previously the Rhode Island director for FairVote; “GOP Candidates' Transportation Infrastructure Talk Praises Tolls But Ignores Jobs”; 1/4/2012; <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/04/gop-candidates-transportation-infrastructure-jobs_n_1184314.html>; Boyce]

The Romney-Obama split mirrors a deeper ideological divide between the two major political parties on transportation. Democrats and Republicans have wide differences of opinion about how to pay for transportation, according to the crosstabs of a Dec. 3-13 Reason-Rupe poll provided to HuffPost. Members of both parties strongly oppose raising the gas tax, which is increasingly unable to fill the coffers of the National Highway Trust Fund as people drive fewer miles and cars become more efficient. Far sharper is the partisan divide over public transportation. When forced to pick between increasing funding for public transportation or interstates, the Reason poll found, 40 percent of Democrats would go with the former. Only 18 percent of GOP-backers favored public transportation over roads. On high-speed rail, which has become a favorite Republican example of a stimulus boondoggle, GOP voters are very much opposed to government support for the emerging transportation option. Only 21 percent of Republicans support government backing for bullet trains, as opposed to 47 percent of Democrats. So Romney was probably on firm ground on Monday when he told a crowd in Iowa, according to Transportation Nation, that "Amtrak ought to stand on its own feet or its own wheels or whatever you'd say." President Obama, by contrast, has proudly touted his support for Amtrak -- and high-speed rail.

## CHINA Impact

### 1nc – China

**Romney will cause china trade war—Calls them out on currency**

**Palmer** **12** [Doug, writer, “Romney would squeeze China on currency manipulation-adviser,” 3-27-2012 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/28/us-usa-romney-china-idUSBRE82Q0ZS20120328>, spencer]

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

**Escalates to full-scale conflict**

Landy ‘7 [Ben Landy, Director of Research and Strategy at the Atlantic Media Company, publisher of the Atlantic Monthly, National Journal, and Government Executive magazines. Landy served in various research and project management positions at the Brookings Institution and Center for Strategic and International Studies, two leading public policy think tanks in Washington, D.C. Ben holds a bachelor of arts degree from Yale University. April 3, 2007, <http://chinaredux.com/2007/04/03/protectionism-and-war/#comments>]

The greatest threat for the 21st century is that these economic flare-ups between the US and China will not be contained, but might spill over into the realm of military aggression between these two world powers. Economic conflict breeds military conflict. The stakes of trade override the ideological power of the Taiwan issue . China's ability to continue growing at a rapid rate takes precedence, since there can be no sovereignty for China without economic growth. The United States' role as the world's superpower is dependent on its ability to lead economically. As many of you will know from reading this blog, I do not believe that war between the US and China is imminent, or a foregone conclusion in the future. I certainly do not hope for war. But I have little doubt that protectionist policies on both sides greatly increase the likelihood of conflict far more than increases in military budgets and anti-satellite tests

**Extinction**

Tucker ‘5 [Nancy – Prof IR @ G’Town. Dangerous Strait: The US-Taiwan-China Crisis, 2005//]

At the beginning of this new century, nowhere is the danger for Americans as great as in the Taiwan Strait where the potential for a war with China, a nuclear armed great power, could erupt out of miscalculation, misunderstanding, or accident. Skeptics might argue that other threats are more volatile or more certain—conflict in the Middle East, terrorism at home and abroad, clashes with angry and chaotic rogue or failed states. But although the United States risks losing lives and repu- tation in these encounters none but a collision with China would be as massive and devastating. War with China over Taiwan may or may not be inevitable. The pros- pect, nevertheless, shapes the course of U.S.-Taiwan relations and signifi-cantly influences the texture of Taiwan's domestic affairs. Similarly, though the level of tension between Washington and Beijing fluctuates, depending on security, proliferation, trade, and human rights concerns, the dilemma of Taiwan's future remains a constant and can become incendiary with little warning. Optimists believe that, with time, ground for reconciliation be- tween China and Taiwan can be found and the two sides will be able to ar- rive at a mutually acceptable solution despite an impasse that has produced repeated military skirmishes and political upheaval for more than fifty years. Pessimists argue that the road to war has been laid, and nothing that anyone does, short of realizing the immediate unification demanded by Beijing, will deter combat. Indeed some feel that progress toward such a calamity has speeded up, making Washington's struggle to keep the rivals at peace, and the United States out of war, much more difficult. It is not surprising, therefore, that those who write on the interactions among the United States, Taiwan, and the PRC inevitably are drawn to, and quickly become preoccupied with, the situation in the Taiwan Strait. The tendency to focus on the clash of interests surrounding Taiwan's status and future follows naturally from the hazards inherent in the existing situation. For decades the contending parties have struggled toward largely incom- patible objectives. China insists upon recovery of the island of Taiwan which it asserts is a part of China's sovereign territory, severed from the mainland first by imperialists and then by the losing side in a civil war. Tai- wan's rulers initially believed as adamantly as those of the PRC in the uni- ty of China, but declared that Taipei not Beijing was the legitimate capital. More recently, Taiwan has sought increasing autonomy and international space despite Beijing's objections, with the majority of the population fa-voring a status quo that shuns both independence and Chinese control. For the United States also, the status quo is desirable since Washington has acknowledged, without accepting, the one-China principle asserted by Bei- jing. At the same time, the United States has legally obligated itself, in a way some sec as a contradiction, to help provide for Taiwan's defense and has asserted its preference for a solution to the problem that will meet with the assent of the people of Taiwan.

### Ext – Romney angers China

**Romney will go to trade war with China—currency**

**HUNT 6-24** [ALBERT R., Executive Washington Editor for Bloomberg News, Host of *Political Capital,* “On Some Issues, Romney Misaligned With Business,” June 24, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/25/us/25iht-letter25.html>, spencer]

CHINAMost large U.S. companies favor economic engagement with China and abhor any possibility of a trade war. Although it isn’t unusual for a presidential candidate to bash China during the campaign, Mr. Romney has taken this sport to a new level and may be more serious. He has vowed to declare China a currency manipulator on his first day in office; he has labeled the Chinese as “cheaters” and vowed, if necessary, to slap stiff tariffs on their exports. The candidate’s chief policy adviser, Lanhee Chen, recently declared that a “robust” willingness to confront China is the distinguishing element of Mr. Romney’s economic plan. “Here’s a place where Governor Romney is really calling for a different approach,” Mr. Chen said. That view is shared by some top political advisers, too. Getting tough with China is a staple of Mr. Romney’s early general election ads; in a commercial released in Ohio last week, the candidate says his initial act would be to “stand up to China.”

# OBAMA BAD

## 1nc & UNIQUENESS

### 1nc

#### Obama is behind now – election will hinge on consumers and the economy

ENTEN 6 – 20 Reporter for the Guardian. NBC political unit staff [Harry J. Enten, “Forget Mitt Romney. The 2012 election is a referendum on Obama's economy”; 6/20/2012; http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jun/20/forget-mitt-romney-2012-election?newsfeed=true; Boyce]

The day-to-day pattern of the campaign can be filled with twists and turns. We supposedly, but not really, saw Romney amazed at fast-food technology. We saw Obama promise a new immigration policy for undocumented immigrants under 30. But the reality is that 99% of this stuff distracts us from the state of the economy, the key issue in this and most elections. If you're a middle-income family struggling to pay the bills, do you really care whether Obama admittedly fudged some unimportant facts about his upbringing in his biography? Do you care that Romney has a horse on the way to the Olympics? The fact is that voters are perfectly rational. They make their decisions depending on the policies they believe will impact their lives. That can be the economy, terrorism, or wars. They may not know the ins-and-outs of exactly what is driving the current direction of the economy, but they know enough to rationally assign blame for what they perceive as failed policies. This year, voters seem as rational as ever. Plenty of Democrats would argue, for example, that current economic headwinds are still due to the policies pursued by George W Bush. Voters seem to have accepted that message, at least in part. The problem is that this election isn't Bush v Obama. A majority may blame Bush for the economic situation, but a majority also blames Obama. More so than in any recent election, Gallup has found that approval of President Obama is linked closely with consumer confidence. When confidence rises, Obama's approval climbs, and when it falls, Obama's approval rating drops. The major economic indicators regarded as determining people's views of the economy are generally weak, though some are weaker than others. Historically speaking, they point in the direction of a close election; but some point to the incumbent losing. Job growth is among the most reliable indicators of economic improvement. So, when the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that only 69,000 new jobs had been added in May, I wondered out loud whether Obama's approval would begin to drop. To me, that item of bad news would be enough to push the economic perceptions of Americans. And now, the economic dial seems to have moved further backwards. Gallup reports that for the first time since last summer, economic confidence has declined for three weeks in a row. Voters' economic outlook, as opposed to current conditions, has also dropped to the lowest level since January. We're not talking major decay, but in a close election this erosion of confidence could make the difference. So far, there hasn't been a corresponding fall in Obama's approval rating. That may hold, as no relationship is perfect. But I wouldn't count it: there was a similar lag when confidence began to pick up late last year, which was followed only later by a pickup in Obama's approval ratings. This problem for Obama is that this election is a referendum on his performance, as it is for most incumbents. Right now, his approval and disapproval ratings roughly have parity, with perhaps a fraction more disapproving than approving. Since voters are voting on the economy, additional economic angst is the last thing the president needs. It's rare that an incumbent loses re-election, but the state of the economy is leaning slightly but perceptibly towards Obama being a one-term president.

#### Federal spending will help Obama – empirics and studies prove. Battleground states are influenced the most.

Kriner and Reeves 12 [Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves @ Boston University; “The Influence of Federal Spending on Presidential Elections”; American Political Science Review; Volume 106, Number 2; <http://www.bu.edu/cas/files/2012/06/Kriner-Reeves.pdf>; Boyce]

In this article, we have shown that presidents are rewarded at the ballot box for federal spending. The effect is particularly dramatic in battleground states. Given that relatively small vote margins in competitive states determined the presidential elections of 2000 and 2004, the allocation of federal funds may be pivotal in determining who wins theWhite House. These findings provide insight into the role of the president and the behavior of voters. As recent research has found, presidents exert substantial control over the distribution of federal resources. Although Congress and the bureaucracy act as checks on this power, voters take notice of the president. In contrast to studies that find weak or highly contingent electoral benefits from pork barrel politics for members of Congress, we find relatively strong and consistent effects for presidents. As the national debt and government spending increasingly become hot button issues, it remains to be seen whether voters will continue to reward presidents for pork. Perhaps so. Republican presidents may continue to reject federal largesse in the abstract but, like President George W. Bush, extol specific projects such as the community health center in Sioux Falls. Similarly, Democratic presidents with a base ideologically predisposed to approve of increased federal spending may also have incentives to spend generously. In addition to providing estimates of the magnitude of the electoral effects of federal spending, we also examined the mechanisms behind it. Clarity of accountability determines the extent to which voters reward the president. When politicians of different parties compete for credit, the effect is diminished. Yet when a county is also represented by presidential co-partisans in Congress, increases in federal spending may cause large vote swings in the president’s favor. We also find that the characteristics of the places and voters receiving the funds condition the effect. Both conservative counties and individuals offer decidedly more tepid support for federal spending than liberal and moderate counties and voters. This suggests that the political ire driving groups like the Tea Party is more than confusion typified by the plea to “keep your government hands off my Medicare.”38 Our findings show that conservative voters are relatively unresponsive to federal largesse when compared to liberals and moderates.

**INSERT IMPACT MODULE**

### Obama losing

#### Romney Catching Up- Inaccurate Polls

Witt 7/15/12 (Ryan Witt is a graduate of Washington University Law School in St. Louis and has extensive experience teaching government and politics<http://www.examiner.com/article/an-updated-look-at-the-2012-electoral-college-map-projection-with-polls-1>, S.J)

For the first time since these Electoral College map updates have been posted Mitt Romney is given a very real chance at victory in the November election. According to the most recent projection, President Obama still wins with 285 votes compared to Romney 253 votes. However, Romney has greatly closed the gap over the last month with new projected victories in Florida, Ohio, and North Carolina. 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. For instance, the most recent projection has President Obama’s winning Michigan even though the most recent poll has Romney ahead in the state. The projection is based mostly on Obama’s 16-point win in Michigan in 2008. 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](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/11/04/rasmussen-polls-were-biased-and-inaccurate-quinnipiac-surveyusa-performed-strongly/).

#### Romney will win – Obama will lose because of consumer confidence and GDP

FreeRepublic 6-29 Free Republic.com, Obama Will Lose in November Based on Two Key Economic Indicators, Fri Jun 29 2012

Over the last almost 50 years, two economic indicators, have done a great job predicting the vote share of incumbents in Presidential elections (note I used vote share vs. the main opponent to adjust out the third party candidacies), real GDP growth and consumer confidence. Each has a correlation of 0.8 with vote share and each suggest that Obama will not be able to get 50% in a two way race with Romney. Let's start with real GDP growth (more precisely, real quarterly GDP growth compared to the prior year during the quarter prior to the election): As you can see, this is a pretty good indicator, with all the relatively deviations from the trend having great explanations. LBJ did better than expected because JFK had just been assassinated the year before, George H.W. Bush did worse because of Perot's outrageously successful 3rd party challenge that siphoned off votes and Ford did worse because of the Watergate fiasco. It suggests that Obama will likely get about 48% of the vote in November, with a full 1% more GDP growth necessary to cross the 50% threshold. That is a pretty tall order given that Obamacare was just affirmed (with all of its job killing taxes and regulations), the upcoming fiscal cliff (taxes increase by 3.4% of GDP in January) and China & Europe are slowing down. If anything, there is a good chance our economy will worsen, putting Obama even deeper in the hole. Now let's take a look at consumer confidence: As you can see, based on the abysmal University of Michigan consumer confidence readings, Obama is likely to get only 42% of the vote. That's what happens when consumers are more unhappy under your administration than they were under Carter!

### Obama Losing – Economics Key

#### Obama is losing ground – economics will be the decider.

Reuters 7-4 [Reuters; “Dark economic clouds gather anew over Obama campaign”; 7/4/2012; <http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/07/03/us-usa-campaign-economy-idINBRE8621EG20120703>; Boyce]

(Reuters) - After a month in which his re-election campaign picked up momentum, hard economic realities are about to hit President Barack Obama as he takes to the road on a campaign bus trip through the Rust Belt. Poor manufacturing data earlier this week followed by a likely weak jobless report on Friday are reminding Obama that he has a lot of work to do to convince voters he is bringing the economy back to full health. A Supreme Court victory for Obama on healthcare and a surprise expansion of immigration laws that put Republican opponent Mitt Romney on the defensive on the issue may soon fade from memory. "By Friday, the Supreme Court will be in the rear-view mirror and everybody will be talking about the state of the economy," said Greg Valliere, an analyst for institutional investors at Potomac Research Group. "I think the debate on Friday will be whether the economy is still growing or whether we've hit a brick wall," he said. U.S. manufacturing activity contracted in June for the first time in nearly three years, data showed on Monday, stark evidence of a slowing economic recovery and that Europe's debt crisis is weighing on the U.S. economy. And the monthly jobless figures, the most closely watched economic indicator, are expected to be lackluster. Economists polled by Reuters expect nonfarm payrolls to have risen by only 90,000 jobs in June and the unemployment rate will stay unchanged at 8.2 percent. Employers likely increased hiring, but not enough to dispel concerns that the economy is losing steam. The fiscal gloom allows Romney to re-energize his charge that the White House is not creating jobs quickly enough, after his nonstop economic criticism was drowned out by last week's Supreme Court ruling that Obama's 2010 healthcare law is constitutional. "From day one of his administration, the president has pursued policies that have hurt job creators, hurt the manufacturing sector, and left millions of Americans struggling to find work. It's going to be hard for the president to argue Americans should gamble on a second term while on his bus tour," Romney campaign spokeswoman Amanda Henneberg said.

#### Obama losing advantage – economy is key.

AP 6-21 [Associated Press; “Poll shows Obama losing advantage over Romney in race as economic anxieties increase”; 6/21/2012; <http://www.startribune.com/politics/national/159835135.html>; Boyce]

WASHINGTON - A new Associated Press-GfK poll shows that Republican challenger Mitt Romney has moved into a virtually even position with the president after three months of declining job creation that have left the public increasingly glum. Fewer Americans believe the economy is getting better and a majority disapproves of how President Barack Obama is handling it. Only 3 out of 10 adults say the country is headed in the right direction. Obama has lost the narrow lead he had held just a month ago among registered voters. The poll also shows that Romney has recovered well from a bruising Republican primary, with more of his supporters saying they are certain to vote for him now. Still, of all adults polled, 56 percent believe Obama will win a second term.

### Losing Independents

#### Independents increasing in favor of the GOP now.

Bloomberg 7-9 [By John McCormick; “Independent Voter Surge Cuts Democrats’ Swing State Edge”; Jul 9, 2012 8:00 PM ET; <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-10/independent-voter-surge-cuts-democrats-swing-state-edge.html>; Boyce]

Independent voters are growing in numbers at the expense of Democrats in battleground states most likely to determine this year’s presidential election, a Bloomberg News analysis shows. 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. “Democrats hit the high-water mark for registration in 2008, so it’s natural that they are going to see some drop off,” said Michelle Diggles, a senior policy analyst with the Democratic-leaning Third Way research group in Washington who conducted a similar study earlier this year. The rise of independent voters has had a major impact on recent election results. In 2008, President Barack Obama won 52 percent of the independent vote, according to national exit polls, which was one percentage less than his overall total. Senator John McCain of Arizona, his Republican opponent, collected 44 percent of the independent vote -- 2 points less than his overall total. Independents represented 29 percent of the total electorate that year.

#### Independents are key – going against Obama now

Walter 7-11 [Amy Walter, ABC News Political Director; “Obama Has Problems With Independent Voters”; <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/07/obama-has-problems-with-independent-voters/>; 7/11/2012; <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/07/obama-has-problems-with-independent-voters/>; Boyce]

Digging into the crosstabs of our ABC/Washington Post poll it’s clear that Obama has a significant problem with independent voters. On every measure, independents are significantly more disappointed with the president and more open to a Mitt Romney message. While 45 percent of voters overall say they approve of Obama’s handling of the economy, just 37 percent of independents believe that. Obama has a 12 point advantage among all voters on the issue of “who has presented a clearer plan for dealing with the economy – Obama or Romney?” But among independents that flips to an eight point advantage for Romney. Even on the issue of Romney’s record in business, independent voters are more sympathetic to the Republican. Among all voters, more thought that Romney in his work as a corporate investor did more to cut jobs than create them (42 percent to 36 percent). But among independents, that flips to a six point advantage for Romney – 43-37 percent. So, why isn’t Romney ahead? As ABC pollster Gary Langer points out, the Democratic base is more energized and engaged. But, if Republican enthusiasm and participation increases, Obama has some very serious problems. Even with universal support among Democrats, Obama can’t win if he’s losing independent voters by these significant margins.

## LINK DEBATE

### Ext – Spending Helps

#### Spending helps the President – prefer analysis of districts.

Kriner and Reeves 12 [Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves @ Boston University; “The Influence of Federal Spending on Presidential Elections”; American Political Science Review; Volume 106, Number 2; <http://www.bu.edu/cas/files/2012/06/Kriner-Reeves.pdf>; Boyce]

Virtually every academic inquiry into the electoral consequences of federal spending has focused on Congress. The image of pork-barreling legislators jockeying to channel federal dollars to their districts to secure reelection is firmly entrenched in both the popular and the academic consciousness (e.g., Mayhew 1974a, and the importance of securing “particularized benefits”). Yet, in stark contrast to this conventional wisdom, most studies have found scant evidence that increased federal spending translates into extra votes for congressional incumbents. Summarizing the literature, Lazarus and Reilly (2010, 344) describe the results of these primarily House-centered studies as exhibiting a general “pattern of non-findings.”3We argue that one of the most important reasons for the relative dearth of evidence for federal spending’s electoral consequence is that past scholarship has looked for it in the wrong place. In a county-level analysis of the last six presidential elections, we show that incumbent presidents or their party’s nominee received increased electoral support in counties that enjoyed rising levels of federal spending. We also replicate this finding using individual level survey data from the 2008 election. Our results complement recent studies of the federal budget that have highlighted the influence of the president in the geographic distribution of federal spending Berry, Burden, and Howell 2010; Larcinese, Rizzo, and Testa 2006). However, we ask a related though separate question: Do voters reward the commanderinchief for the share of federal outlays they receive? In addition to measuring the influence of federal spending on presidential elections, we investigate the mechanisms through which voters reward presidents for spending. Federal dollars are an electoral currency whose worth depends on both the clarity of partisan responsibility for its provision and the characteristics of those voters receiving it. We hypothesize and present evidence that presidents enjoy a greater boost from spending in counties represented by members of Congress from their party—–that is where partisan accountability for federal performance is most clear. We also posit that the effect of spending is conditional on ideology. First, we show that this is true on a contextual level. Conservative counties reward presidents at substantially lower levels than moderate or liberal counties. We also show that this hypothesis holds at the individual level. The more conservative a voter, the less likely he or she is to reward a president for federal spending.

#### Spending gets incumbents elected – can produce 2 percent more votes for an additional 100 dollars.

Levitt and Snyder 97 [Steven D. Levitt, Harvard Society of Fellows, and James M. Snyder, MiT; “The Impact of Federal Spending on House Elections”; The Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 105, No.1, pages 30-53; <http://www.econ.umn.edu/~bajari/metricsf06/levitt.pdf>]

While it is widely believed by academics, politicians, and the popular press that incumbent congressmen are rewarded by the electorate for bringing federal dollars to their district, the empirical evidence supporting that claim is extremely weak. One explanation for the failure to uncover the expected relationship between federal spending and election outcomes is that incumbents who expect to have difficulty being reelected are likely to exert greater effort in obtaining federal outlays. Since it is generally impossible to adequately measure this effort, the estimated impact of spending is biased downward due to an omitted variable bias. We address this estimation problem using instrumental variables. For each House district, we use spending outside the district but inside the state containing the district, as an instrument for spending in the district. Federal spending is affected by a large number of actors (e.g. governors, senators, mayors, and other House members in the state delegation), leading to positive correlations in federal spending across the House districts within states. However, federal spending outside of a district is unlikely to be strongly correlated with the strength of that district's electoral challenge. Thus, spending in other districts is a plausible instrument. In contrast to previous studies, we find strong evidence that non-transfer federal spending benefits congressional incumbents: an additional $100 per capita in such spending is worth as much as two percent of the popular vote. Additional transfer spending, on the other hand, does not appear to have any electoral effects.

### 1nc – TI popular

#### Funding Transportation Infrastructure will swing the election

PR WEB 5 – 18 – 12 Americans Value Highways and Bridges as a National Treasure, <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2012/5/prweb9521021.htm>

\* HNTB Corporation is an employee-owned infrastructure firm serving public and private owners and contractors New America THINKS survey from HNTB Corporation highlights public concerns for U.S. transportation infrastructure.

A new survey from HNTB Corporation finds two-thirds (66 percent) of Americans who intend to vote during this year's presidential election feel that a candidate's standing on American transportation infrastructure will influence their decision; more than one in five (22 percent) say this will be extremely influential on who they vote for.

"Our highways, bridges and other transportation infrastructure are essential assets that support growth and investment in the U.S. economy," said Pete Rahn, HNTB leader national transportation practice. "People expect them to be resilient, reliable and safe."

Clearly, Americans hold the nation's infrastructure in high regard. Nearly nine in ten (89 percent) Americans feel it’s important for the federal government to fund the maintenance and improvements of interstate highways.

Yet, this infrastructure isn’t receiving the fiscal attention it deserves. Congress recently approved the ninth extension of transportation legislation that originally expired in 2009. The Highway Trust Fund – due to inflation, rising construction costs and increasingly fuel efficient vehicles – no longer collects enough money to support the U.S. surface transportation system, remaining solvent only through a series of infusions from federal general revenue funds.

More than half of Americans (57 percent) believe the nation’s infrastructure is underfunded.

The uncertainty over a long-term bill also is a challenge for state departments of transportation, which rely heavily on federal funding to support major highway and bridge programs, and creates ambiguity for planners and contractors who need the certainty of a long-term bill to commit to large, complex multiyear projects.

"The absence of a long-term bill is hurting our economic competitiveness," said Rahn. "Recent efforts by the House and Senate to move discussions into a conference committee and hammer out potential details of a bill are a step in the right direction, but what’s really needed is a stable, long-term authorization that can adequately pay for our transportation system."

Overall, 4 in 5 (80 percent) Americans would rather increase funding and improve roads and bridges than continue current funding levels and risk allowing our roads and bridges deteriorate.

**CONTINUES**

About the survey

HNTB’s America THINKS national highway survey polled a random nationwide sample of 1,024 Americans April 2-10, 2012. It was conducted by Kelton Research, which used an e-mail invitation and online survey. Quotas were set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population ages 18 and over. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent.

### Ext – TI popular

#### Bipartisan voter support for TI – surveys prove.

Rockefeller Foundation 11 [Rockefeller Foundation, think tank specializing in smart globalization policy, “Rockefeller Foundation Infrastructure Survey Reveals Bipartisan Support for Transportation and Infrastructure Investments and Reform”; 2/14/2011; <http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/news/press-releases/rockefeller-foundation-infrastructure>; Boyce]

New York, NY, February 14, 2011 – An exclusive Rockefeller Foundation survey released today reveals overwhelming bipartisan support for federal investment in transportation and infrastructure projects. The survey showed that 71% of voters think leaders in Washington should seek common ground on legislation related to roads, bridges and transit systems, including 66% of Tea Party supporters and 71% of Republicans. Two out of three voters say that improving the country’s transportation infrastructure is highly important. Nearly half of all voters said that roads are often or totally inadequate and that only some public transportation options exist. Eighty percent of voters agree that federal funding to improve and modernize transportation will boost local economies and create millions of jobs, and view it as critical to keeping the United States as the world’s top economic superpower. But Americans want changes in the way the Federal government invests in infrastructure and makes policy. Two-thirds of respondents favored 9 of 10 reforms tested in the survey, with 90 supporting more accountability and certification that projects are delivered on time and fit into a national plan. In terms of priorities, a vast majority (80 percent) believe the country would benefit from an expanded and improved public transportation system and 57 percent believe that “safer streets for our communities and children” should be the one of the top two priorities if more money is to be invested in infrastructure.

#### Prefer our evidence – bipartisan survey.

Rockefeller Foundation 11 [Rockefeller Foundation, think tank specializing in smart globalization policy, “Rockefeller Foundation Infrastructure Survey Reveals Bipartisan Support for Transportation and Infrastructure Investments and Reform”; 2/14/2011; <http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/news/press-releases/rockefeller-foundation-infrastructure>; Boyce]

“As the transportation debate in Washington begins to heat up, this new Rockefeller Foundation Infrastructure Survey shows that the American people, no matter their political party, support transportation and infrastructure reform, said Marcia L. Hale, President of Building America’s Future Education Fund. “As voters continue to demand that economic reforms come ahead of politics, I call on all our representatives in Washington to listen closely to what the public is saying.” Survey Methodology: From January 29 to February 6, 2011, Hart Research (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R) conducted a national survey of voters on behalf of the Rockefeller Foundation. The firms interviewed 1,001 registered voters, including 200 voters who have only a cell phone. The data’s margin of error is +/-3.1 percentage points for the full sample, and a higher for subgroups of the sample.

## IRAN IMPACTS

### 1nc – Iran

#### Romney prevents Iranian prolif- strict foreign policy

Council on Foreign Relations 5/4/12 Nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization, publisher, and think tank specializing in U.S. foreign policy and international affairs

[“The Candidates on U.S.-Iran Policy” May 4, 2012 <http://www.cfr.org/iran/candidates-us-iran-policy/p26798>]

Mitt Romney has said that it is "unacceptable for Iran to have a nuclear weapon" and he would apply a range of measures--economic, diplomatic, and ultimately military, to deter Tehran. "If you'd like me as the next president, they will not have a nuclear weapon," he said during a November GOP debate. He has called for imposing additional economic sanctions and working with the insurgents to encourage regime change in the country. During a primary debate, he said Obama should have spoken out during the mass protests of 2009 and told protesters, "America is with you." He also called for covert support for dissidents. During a January 2012 primary debate in Florida, Romney expressed concern about the shrinking size of the U.S. Navy in answering a question about tensions in the Strait of Hormuz. He said the number of ships being built should be raised from the current nine to fifteen per year. "Not because we want to go to war with anyone but because we don't want anyone to take the hazard of going against us," he said. "We want to show Iran, any action of that nature will be considered an act of war, an act of terror and -- and America is going to be keep those sea lanes open."

#### Triggers Runaway prolif

Kroenig ‘12 Assistant professor of Government at Georgetown University and a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations

[Matthew Kroenig “Time to Attack IranWhy a Strike Is the Least Bad Option” Feb 2012 http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136917/matthew-kroenig/time-to-attack-iran]

Some states in the region are doubting U.S. resolve to stop the program and are shifting their allegiances to Tehran. Others have begun to discuss launching their own nuclear initiatives to counter a possible Iranian bomb. For those nations and the United States itself, the threat will only continue to grow as Tehran moves closer to its goal. A nuclear-armed Iran would immediately limit U.S. freedom of action in the Middle East. With atomic power behind it, Iran could threaten any U.S. political or military initiative in the Middle East with nuclear war, forcing Washington to think twice before acting in the region. Iran’s regional rivals, such as Saudi Arabia, would likely decide to acquire their own nuclear arsenals, sparking an arms race. To constrain its geopolitical rivals, Iran could choose to spur proliferation by transferring nuclear technology to its allies -- other countries and terrorist groups alike.

#### **Prolif escalates to global nuclear war**

Kroenig ’12 Assistant professor of Government at Georgetown University and a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations

[Matthew Kroenig “Time to Attack IranWhy a Strike Is the Least Bad Option” Feb 2012 http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136917/matthew-kroenig/time-to-attack-iran]

Having the bomb would give Iran greater cover for conventional aggression and coercive diplomacy, and the battles between its terrorist proxies and Israel, for example, could escalate. And Iran and Israel lack nearly all the safeguards that helped the United States and the Soviet Union avoid a nuclear exchange during the Cold War -- secure second-strike capabilities, clear lines of communication, long flight times for ballistic missiles from one country to the other, and experience managing nuclear arsenals. To be sure, a nuclear-armed Iran would not intentionally launch a suicidal nuclear war. But the volatile nuclear balance between Iran and Israel could easily spiral out of control as a crisis unfolds, resulting in a nuclear exchange between the two countries that could draw the United States in, as well.

### Intervention works

#### Military intervention feasible- Iranian plants are easily destroyed

Kroenig ’12 Assistant professor of Government at Georgetown University and a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations

[Matthew Kroenig “Time to Attack IranWhy a Strike Is the Least Bad Option” Feb 2012 http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136917/matthew-kroenig/time-to-attack-iran]

obstacles, however, would not prevent the United States from disabling or demolishing Iran’s known nuclear facilities. A preventive operation would need to target the uranium-conversion plant at Isfahan, the heavy-water reactor at Arak, and various centrifuge-manufacturing sites near Natanz and Tehran, all of which are located aboveground and are highly vulnerable to air strikes. It would also have to hit the Natanz facility, which, although it is buried under reinforced concrete and ringed by air defenses, would not survive an attack from the U.S. military’s new bunker-busting bomb, the 30,000-pound Massive Ordnance Penetrator, capable of penetrating up to 200 feet of reinforced concrete. The plant in Qom is built into the side of a mountain and thus represents a more challenging target. But the facility is not yet operational and still contains little nuclear equipment, so if the United States acted quickly, it would not need to destroy it.

#### Military action solves- sets regional precedent

Kroenig ’12 Assistant professor of Government at Georgetown University and a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations

[Matthew Kroenig “Time to Attack IranWhy a Strike Is the Least Bad Option” Feb 2012 http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136917/matthew-kroenig/time-to-attack-iran]

Those wary of a U.S. strike also point out that Iran could retaliateby attempting to close theStrait of Hormuz**,** the narrow access point to the Persian Gulf through which roughly 20 percent of the world’s oil supply travels. And even if Iran did not threaten the strait,speculators, fearing possible supply disruptions, would bid up the price of oil, possibly triggering a wider economic crisis at an already fragile moment. Skeptics might still counter that at best a strike would only buy time. But time is a valuable commodity. Countries often hope to delay worst-case scenarios as far into the future as possible in the hope that this might eliminate the threat altogether. Those countries whose nuclear facilities have been attacked -- most recently Iraq and Syria -- have proved unwilling or unable to restart their programs. Thus, what appears to be only a temporary setback to Iran could eventually become a game changer. Yet another argument against military action against Iran is that it would embolden the hard-liners within Iran’s government, helping them rally the population around the regime and eliminate any remaining reformists. This critique ignores the fact that the hard-liners are already firmly in control. The ruling regime has become so extreme that it has sidelined even those leaders once considered to be right-wingers, such as former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, for their perceived softness. And Rafsanjani or the former presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi would likely continue the nuclear program if he assumed power. An attack might actually create more openings for dissidents in the long term (after temporarily uniting Iran behind Ayatollah Ali Khamenei), giving them grounds for criticizing a government that invited disaster. Even if a strike would strengthen Iran’s hard-liners, the United States must not prioritize the outcomes of Iran’s domestic political tussles over its vital national security interest in preventing Tehran from developing nuclear weapons. STRIKE NOW OR SUFFER LATER Attacking Iran is hardly an attractive prospect. But the United States can anticipate and reduce many of the feared consequences of such an attack. If it does so successfully, it can remove the incentive for other nations in the region to start their own atomic programs and, more broadly, strengthen global nonproliferation by demonstrating that it will use military force to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. It can also head off a possible Israeli operation against Iran, which, given Israel’s limited capability to mitigate a potential battle and inflict lasting damage, would likely result in far more devastating consequences and carry a far lower probability of success than a U.S. attack. Finally, a carefully managed U.S. attack would prove less risky than the prospect of containing a nuclear-armed Islamic Republic -- a costly, decades-long proposition that would likely still result in grave national security threats. Indeed, attempting to manage a nuclear-armed Iran is not only a terrible option but the worst. With the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq winding down and the United States facing economic hardship at home, Americans have little appetite for further strife. Yet Iran’s rapid nuclear development will ultimately force the United States to choose between a conventional conflict and a possible nuclear war. Faced with that decision, the United States should conduct a surgical strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities, absorb an inevitable round of retaliation, and then seek to quickly de-escalate the crisis. Addressing the threat now will spare the United States from confronting a far more dangerous situation in the future.

### Obama’s Iran policy fails

#### Obama’s Iran policy fails- DOD proves

May 7-13 Formerly on faculties of the University of Illinois, the University of Texas, the University of California, Tulane University, and Texas Tech citing George Little: press secretary for department of defense

[Donald R. May “Department of Defense Admits the Obama Administration Has Done Nothing to Slow Iran’s Nuclear Weapons Development” July 13, 2012 <http://lubbockonline.com/interact/blog-post/may/2012-07-13/department-defense-admits-obama-administration-has-done-nothing>]

It has become clear that Barack Obama has apparently had no serious intentions of slowing or stopping the efforts of Iran to develop nuclear weapons and the intercontinental ballistic missile systems to deliver these weapons. During a Pentagon briefing on Thursday, Navy Captain John Kirby, who is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Media Operations, participated in an interview with Pentagon Press Secretary George Little. Captain Kirby asked Secretary Little, Q: All right. Can I ask you about this recently unclassified Iran report? I want to quote from it. It says Iran continues to progress with the uranium enrichment, steadily growing its missile and rocket inventories, and it's also boosting the lethality and effectiveness of these systems. So my question is what evidence is there that this administration has slowed Iran's military progress in the last four years? MR. LITTLE: Well, Iran has -- in violation of international obligations, to include U.N. Security Council resolutions -- continued to develop certain capabilities. And we've expressed serious concern. This administration has been very clear and very strong on the issue of Iran and its military and nuclear capabilities, developing widespread international consensus to bring pressure to bear on the Iranians, to help impose sanctions that are biting at the Iranian regime, and a host of other actions that have made it more difficult for the Iranian regime to justify its actions in certain areas. Yes, they have been developing weapons. We've known that for years. And I think the report that you referenced simply acknowledges what we've all known for quite a while about Iranian misbehavior. Q: It also says that, in the next few years, it may be possible that it could develop an intercontinental ballistic missile. Does that -- is that something you're focusing on? MR. LITTLE: Well, we're concerned about the full range of capabilities, especially those that are outside the confines of what Iran should be able to develop. I'm not going to speculate as to what they may or may not do, but we certainly closely monitor Iranian capabilities and pay special attention to its routine violations of its international obligations. President Barack Obama and his Administration have done nothing apparent or effective to slow Iran’s nuclear weapons development. Iran has been allowed to continue the development of its nuclear weapons with no military threats. The continued stalling has come from Barack Obama who before the 2008 General Election said Iran is a tiny country that poses no serious threat to us. Since becoming President, Obama has repeatedly treated Netanyahu rudely, has insisted that Israel stop building homes in Jerusalem, and has demanded Israel move back to its pre 1967 indefensible borders. It seems Obama would sacrifice Israel so he does not have to confront Iran. One can only hope that Obama is not purposely protecting Iran and delaying any confrontation with Iran so Iran can finish building nuclear weapons. In November 2009 Obama said, “we are now running out of time” to stop Iran’s efforts to produce nuclear weapons. That was almost three years ago, and Iran has since more than tripled its production rate of fissionable nuclear material. President Obama did not back up any of his negotiations with Iran with a threat of military action. Iran considered Obama to be a fool and a coward. Now Israel is left with no choice but to use military force to take out Iran’s nuclear weapons capabilities. Israel probably cannot count on Barack Obama to provide military assistance to Israel. It appears Canada is much more willing to help Israel than is the United States. Perhaps Canada and Britain can be of some military assistance to Israel if Obama will not? Israel should not count on Obama’s words, “Trust me. I’ve got your back.” It seems Israel does not trust Obama and does not intend to tell Obama before it strikes Iran, most likely because Israel thinks Obama would alert Iran. The United States is accumulating a formidable military presence in the waters surrounding Iran and on military bases in the region. The United States military presence is most likely a show of force intended to discourage Iran from attacking other countries in the region or from attempting to close the Strait of Hormuz. Obama has chosen to ignore many problems that needed to be addressed. President Obama’s “non-problems” are now coming back to bite us.

### A2 Iran War

#### Iran retaliation will stay limited – multiple factors prevent escalation

**Kroenig, 12** (Matthew, professor of Government at Georgetown University and a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, Foreign Affairs, Feb, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136917/matthew-kroenig/time-to-attack-iran)

SETTING THE RIGHT REDLINES The fact that the United States can likely set back or destroy Iran's nuclear program does not necessarily mean that it should. Such an attack could have potentially devastating consequences -- for international security, the global economy, and Iranian domestic politics -- all of which need to be accounted for. To begin with, critics note, U.S. military action could easily spark a full-blown war. Iran might retaliate against U.S. troops or allies, launching missiles at military installations or civilian populations in the Gulf or perhaps even Europe. It could activate its proxies abroad, stirring sectarian tensions in Iraq, disrupting the Arab Spring, and ordering terrorist attacks against Israel and the United States. This could draw Israel or other states into the fighting and compel the United States to escalate the conflict in response. Powerful allies of Iran, including China and Russia, may attempt to economically and diplomatically isolate the United States. In the midst of such spiraling violence, neither side may see a clear path out of the battle, resulting in a long-lasting, devastating war, whose impact may critically damage the United States' standing in the Muslim world. Those wary of a U.S. strike also point out that Iran could retaliate by attempting to close the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow access point to the Persian Gulf through which roughly 20 percent of the world's oil supply travels. And even if Iran did not threaten the strait, speculators, fearing possible supply disruptions, would bid up the price of oil, possibly triggering a wider economic crisis at an already fragile moment. None of these outcomes is predetermined, however; indeed, the United States could do much to mitigate them. Tehran would certainly feel like it needed to respond to a U.S. attack, in order to reestablish deterrence and save face domestically. But it would also likely seek to calibrate its actions to avoid starting a conflict that could lead to the destruction of its military or the regime itself. In all likelihood, the Iranian leadership would resort to its worst forms of retaliation, such as closing the Strait of Hormuz or launching missiles at southern Europe, only if it felt that its very existence was threatened. A targeted U.S. operation need not threaten Tehran in such a fundamental way. To make sure it doesn't and to reassure the Iranian regime, the United States could first make clear that it is interested only in destroying Iran's nuclear program, not in overthrowing the government. It could then identify certain forms of retaliation to which it would respond with devastating military action, such as attempting to close the Strait of Hormuz, conducting massive and sustained attacks on Gulf states and U.S. troops or ships, or launching terrorist attacks in the United States itself. Washington would then need to clearly articulate these "redlines" to Tehran during and after the attack to ensure that the message was not lost in battle. And it would need to accept the fact that it would have to absorb Iranian responses that fell short of these redlines without escalating the conflict. This might include accepting token missile strikes against U.S. bases and ships in the region -- several salvos over the course of a few days that soon taper off -- or the harassment of commercial and U.S. naval vessels. To avoid the kind of casualties that could compel the White House to escalate the struggle, the United States would need to evacuate nonessential personnel from U.S. bases within range of Iranian missiles and ensure that its troops were safely in bunkers before Iran launched its response. Washington might also need to allow for stepped-up support to Iran's proxies in Afghanistan and Iraq and missile and terrorist attacks against Israel. In doing so, it could induce Iran to follow the path of Iraq and Syria, both of which refrained from starting a war after Israel struck their nuclear reactors in 1981 and 2007, respectively.

#### Even if that fails – US can deescalate quickly and no regional war

**Kroenig, 12** (Matthew, professor of Government at Georgetown University and a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, Foreign Affairs, Feb, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136917/matthew-kroenig/time-to-attack-iran)

Even if Tehran did cross Washington's redlines, the United States could still manage the confrontation. At the outset of any such violation, it could target the Iranian weapons that it finds most threatening to prevent Tehran from deploying them. To de-escalate the situation quickly and prevent a wider regional war, the United States could also secure the agreement of its allies to avoid responding to an Iranian attack. This would keep other armies, particularly the Israel Defense Forces, out of the fray. Israel should prove willing to accept such an arrangement in exchange for a U.S. promise to eliminate the Iranian nuclear threat. Indeed, it struck a similar agreement with the United States during the Gulf War, when it refrained from responding to the launching of Scud missiles by Saddam Hussein.

## RUSSIA IMPACT

### Relations Resilient

**Relations resilient – empirics prove we’ve overcome bigger issues.**

**Pifer 12**. [Steven, Senior Fellow @ Brookings, “The Future Course of the U.S.-Russia Relationship” Brookings Institute -- March 21 -- http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2012/0321\_arms\_control\_pifer.aspx]

By any objective measure, the U.S.-Russian relationship is stronger today than it was in 2008. Then, sharp differences over the future of strategic arms limitations, missile defense in Europe, NATO enlargement and Georgia dominated the agenda. Relations between Washington and Moscow plunged to their lowest point since the end of the Soviet Union. The bilateral relationship had become so thin that there are no indications that concern about damaging it affected in any way the Kremlin’s decisions regarding military operations against Georgia. The Russian government saw little of value to lose in its relationship with Washington. That was not a good situation from the point of view of U.S. interests. It is different today. There are things in the U.S.-Russian relationship that Moscow cares about, and that translates to leverage and even a restraining influence on Russian actions. This does not mean that all is going well on the U.S.-Russia agenda. Although the rhetoric is less inflammatory than it was four years ago, missile defense poses a difficult problem on both the bilateral and NATO-Russia agendas. The countries clearly differ over Syria. Moscow’s misguided support for Mr. Assad—which stems from the fact that he is one of Russia’s few allies and from the Russian desire to pay NATO back for what they consider the misuse of March 2011 UN Security Council Resolution 1973 on Libya—have led the Kremlin to an unwise policy. It is alienating the Arab world and will position Moscow poorly with the Syrian people once Mr. Assad leaves the scene.

**US-Russian Relations Inevitable – Laundry List.**

**BAZHANOV 10.** [Yevgeny, vice chancellor of research and international relations at the Foreign Ministry’s Diplomatic Academy in Moscow “5 Barriers to a Western Partnership” Moscow Times -- Aug 20]

But despite these significant obstacles, there is still a lot of potential for strengthening Russia’s partnership with the West. The driving force behind this natural convergence is Russia’s pressing need to modernize and diversify its economy. Post-Soviet Russia is committed to build a market economy and a democratic society. As a result, for the first time in history, the Russian economic, social and political models are not antagonistic to the Western model. For its part, the West has an objective — if not self-serving — interest in seeing Russia become a well-functioning civil society with a prosperous market economy. The process of globalization and modernization necessarily means that Russia will never return to Soviet-style isolationism. The economic centers of the modern world — Europe, the United States, China, India and Southeast Asia — are becoming increasingly dependent on one another. If Russia were to reject economic ties with those power centers, the country would become so weak that it would disintegrate. In addition, common security risks and threats — mainly terrorism — will naturally bring Russia and the West together to fight the common enemies on all fronts. One other factor that will help the partnership is that Russia will gradually cure itself of its complex as a “defeated superpower” and will come to terms with its more modest geopolitical role in the global arena. For its part, the West will cease to view Moscow as a geopolitical rival.

### No Impact

#### Give Russia war zero probability – politics, military superiority, economic concerns, and nuclear security

Graham 2007 - (Thomas, Russia in Global Affairs, "The dialectics of strength and weakness", <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/20/1129.html>, WEA)

An astute historian of Russia, Martin Malia, wrote several years ago that “Russia has at different times been demonized or divinized by Western opinion less because of her real role in Europe than because of the fears and frustrations, or hopes and aspirations, generated within European society by its own domestic problems.” Such is the case today. To be sure, mounting Western concerns about Russia are a consequence of Russian policies that appear to undermine Western interests, but they are also a reflection of declining confidence in our own abilities and the efficacy of our own policies. Ironically, this growing fear and distrust of Russia come at a time when Russia is arguably less threatening to the West, and the United States in particular, than it has been at any time since the end of the Second World War. Russia does not champion a totalitarian ideology intent on our destruction, its military poses no threat to sweep across Europe, its economic growth depends on constructive commercial relations with Europe, and its strategic arsenal – while still capable of annihilating the United States – is under more reliable control than it has been in the past fifteen years and the threat of a strategic strike approaches zero probability. Political gridlock in key Western countries, however, precludes the creativity, risk-taking, and subtlety needed to advance our interests on issues over which we are at odds with Russia while laying the basis for more constructive long-term relations with Russia.

## China Impact

### Bad for Relations – Russia & china

**Obama Horrible for Relations- Russia and China**

**Bolton 5/24/12**  (Mr. Bolton is former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, <http://www.humanevents.com/2012/05/24/the-choice-is-clear-romney-will-keep-us-safer/>, S.J)

It is his fundamental ideological blunder—combined with inexperience, incompetence and naiveté—that explains so much of Obama’s national security strategy. Unfortunately, while restoring a proper philosophical basis for U.S. policy would be relatively easy under a new President Romney, correcting the real-world consequences of Obama’s mistakes will be far more difficult and costly. Some problems have inevitably gotten irretrievably worse, such as the Iranian and North Korean nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, which made four years of essentially undisturbed progress on Obama’s watch. We can only hope that neither Pyongyang nor Tehran take steps in the eight months before January 20, 2013, that will so worsen the situation that President Romney would be confronted with a fundamentally more dangerous proliferation environment. Similarly, Russia and China continue to become more adversarial. Despite a three-year effort to press the “reset” button with Moscow, Russia has pocketed one Obama concession after another, on missile defense, arms control, and proliferation. Now, top Russian defense officials are threatening pre-emptive military strikes against U.S. missile-defense facilities in Europe. If this is what we get for bending the knee to Moscow, one can hardly conjure what “bad” relations with Russia would mean. Similarly, Beijing is building up its conventional and nuclear forces, conducting widespread cyber-warfare against both the U.S. government and our private sector, and making vast, and utterly unjustifiable, territorial claims in its region, with essentially no response from the White House. Elections, as political analysts say, are about choices. On national security, it is hard to imagine a starker choice than the one we will make this November. And the budget deficits created by Obama will make for extraordinarily hard choices as we try to restore America’s international presence. But as Ronald Reagan once said: “yes, the cost is high, but the price of neglect would be infinitely higher.”

### Obama bad – laundry list

**Obama Horrible- terrorism, missile defense and national security**

**Bolton 5/24/2012** (Mr. Bolton is former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, <http://www.humanevents.com/2012/05/24/the-choice-is-clear-romney-will-keep-us-safer/>, S.J)

Barack Obama’s presidency has had profoundly negative consequences for our national security. From debilitating cuts in defense budgets, to gutting national missile defense efforts, to his unwillingness to acknowledge a continuing war against terrorism, to his inability to stem the nuclear proliferation threats posed by North Korea and Iran, to his echo of George McGovern’s 1972 refrain, “come home, America,” the picture is bleak. Underlying these and many other foreign and defense policy mistakes is a common theme. Obama consistently rejects the ancient doctrine *si vis pacem, para bellum*: if you want peace, prepare for war. George Washington said almost exactly that in his first annual message to Congress in 1790: “To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.” By contrast, Obama acts as though U.S. strength is provocative, and that our military forces, especially our nuclear “umbrella,” exceed our legitimate needs, and are therefore worthy of reduction. He bases this conclusion not on strategic analysis, but on ideology, the knee-jerk belief that America’s size and global influence somehow induce the misbehavior of others. ‘Blame America first’ Jeane Kirkpatrick assailed “the San Francisco Democrats,” site of their 1984 nominating convention, by saying “they always blame America first.” Fortunately, neither Walter Mondale nor successive ideological clones were elected, but Obama was. He has spent his first term doing exactly what Kirkpatrick warned us about. The president either does not understand or does not care that America’s strong international presence is critical and often decisive in maintaining whatever stability and security exists around the world. The United States and its alliance partners provide this international stability not out of altruism, but out of self-interest. For all of Obama’s obsession with domestic affairs, often to the exclusion of national security priorities, it is ironic he has not made the most elementary connection, namely that U.S. politico-military resoluteness internationally is critical to sustained economic growth at home. If international trade, investment, finance, and communications were to be imperiled by growing global anarchy or the belligerence of regional powers, our economy would suffer, and so would many others. The inextricable linkage between a strong America abroad and a strong America at home is one that Obama ignores at our collective peril. Contrary to Obama’s worldview, challenges to our national security, economic and political, are not provoked by U.S. strength but by U.S. weakness. Enemies and potential adversaries today see a White House most benignly be described as inattentive to world affairs, which does not view the world as terribly threatening or challenging to American interests, and which is not prepared to confront incipient threats to our interests before they metastasize. Our opponents now understand Obama, and they are now continually recalibrating their strategies to take account of both his indifference and his weakness. And with Obama’s measure having been taken, a second term will doubtless mean that the scope and the pace of global challenges to our security will broaden and accelerate.

### No Impact – just rhetoric

**Romney’s china-bashing is just election rhetoric**

NYT 3-22 [JOHN HARWOOD, “The Electoral Math of Romney’s Stance on Trade With China”, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/23/us/politics/mitt-romneys-stance-on-china-trade.html?pagewanted=all]

One Romney adviser, Vin Weber, initially wondered whether the position reflected political calculation. When he joined internal discussions about Mr. Romney’s forthcoming economic plan last year, Mr. Weber said he sought to persuade other economic advisers to abandon the promised currency crackdown, which he still considers a policy mistake. Soon Mr. Weber was making that case directly to the candidate — who rejected the appeal and insisted his policy is the right one. “This is directly from him,” said Mr. Weber, a Washington lobbyist and former Republican congressman from Minnesota. “He believes it will strengthen his hand substantially. Mitt Romney is a person who sees himself as a successful negotiator.” Underpinning Mr. Romney’s argument is his assertion that recent presidents of both parties have been “played like a fiddle” by Chinese leaders. By keeping the yuan’s value lower against the dollar than market forces would dictate, Beijing makes exports to the United States cheaper and imports from the United States more expensive. In a Republican debate last year, Mr. Romney said China’s interest in smooth relations with a mammoth customer like the United States would preclude his actions from backfiring. “You think they want to have a trade war?” Mr. Romney said. “If you are not willing to stand up to China, you will get run over by China, and that’s what’s happened for 20 years.” That assertion grates on veterans of the Bush administration, which in 2006 began a “strategic economic dialogue” with China led by Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr., a former chairman of Goldman Sachs. The Obama administration has extended that dialogue, pressing Beijing to raise the value of the yuan while stopping short of declaring China a currency manipulator. “Both the Bush and Obama administrations have been as aggressive as possible while protecting the American people,” said Neel T. Kashkari, a Bush administration Treasury official now at Pimco, the giant bond-trading firm. “Launching a trade war with China would hurt us as much as it would hurt them.” Mr. Romney’s economic plan makes it sounds as if he is willing to take that risk. It lists the currency crackdown among five executive orders he pledges to issue on “Day 1” of his presidency. But a close reading of the language suggests he has left himself an out. It pledges to label China a currency manipulator “if China does not quickly move to float its currency.” China has already been raising the value of its currency against the dollar somewhat in recent years, including by 4.7 percent in 2011. Some experts on China policy predict a President Romney would find a way to sidestep his pledge once electioneering gave way to governance. “It is a campaign, after all,” said Nicholas R. Lardy, a fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. “My forecast is that if Romney becomes president there will be little or no change in our China policy.”

### Relations Resilient

**US China relations are resilient – election posturing won’t affect them**

Ding 3-24 [Sheng, Associate Professor of Political Science at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, “Don’t Worry About the China Bashing”, The Diplomat, <http://thediplomat.com/2012/03/24/don%E2%80%99t-worry-about-the-china-bashing/?all=true>]

Still, safe though the attacks on China might feel, they are also unlikely to have much impact on American voters. American voters as a whole are generally seen as having little interest in foreign policy issues, whether because of a lack of knowledge on foreign policy issues or a feeling that foreign policy has no particular relevance to their lives. Most American voters focus on domestic issues – jobs, taxes and gas prices, as well as social issues like gun violence, gay marriage and abortion. The fact is that although China is the United States’ most important bilateral relationship, American voters won’t be casting their votes on the basis of a candidate’s China policies. And anyway, the U.S. and Chinese economies are so integrated that U.S. policymakers can’t simply cut their constituencies off from China. So, does all this China bashing really matter – and does it risk inflaming already tense ties? There’s a long tradition, especially since the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet foe, of American presidential candidates attacking China. Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama all attacked their predecessor’s China policies. Some went further than rhetoric, taking key policy decisions to underscore their “toughness.” For example, in September 1992, President George H.W. Bush approved the sale of 150 F-16 jet fighters to Taiwan, a move viewed by the Chinese government as “the most hideous U.S. arms sale to Taiwan since 1979.” In March 1996, President Bill Clinton ordered two U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait in response to China’s provocative military exercises in the lead-up to Taiwan’s first democratic election. The move helped underscore Clinton’s readiness to stand up to China in support of a fledgling democracy. But election year posturing – and the ups and downs of U.S.-China relations more generally – shouldn’t overshadow the fact that successive U.S. and Chinese governments have made ongoing efforts to institutionalize bilateral relations. Yes, the two nations have different political and economic systems, and their peoples sometimes have very different world views. And these differences can lead to prejudice. But the communications revolution of the past two decades also means that there are constantly expanding opportunities for Americans and Chinese to interact on many different levels, which should eventually encourage greater understanding. The reality is that much of the heated political rhetoric over China will die down once the presidential election is over. Despite the claims by some candidates to the contrary, we can safely assume that come January, whoever comes out on top in November will deal with China in a pragmatic and constructive manner.

### Impact Defense

#### No China war – cooperation

**Friedberg 5**, Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University, Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs and Director of Policy Planning in the Office of the Vice President, International Security, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 7–45

Fortunately, a number of the factors to which the optimists point seem likely to continue to act as a brake on what might otherwise be an unchecked slide toward mounting competition and increasingly open confrontation. Assuming that they persist and grow, the mutual gains from an expanding economic relationship will remain the single most important peace-inducing force at work in U.S.-China relations. The potential costs of a conflict between the two powers, especially given that both possess nuclear weapons, should also help to keep competitive impulses within bounds and to make both sides very wary of embarking on any course that could risk direct conflict. The emergence of a group of Chinese “new thinkers” could also contribute to a less zero-sum, hard realpolitik approach to relations with the United States. As with the Soviet Union during the era of perestroika, so also in this case changes in high-level thinking could have a calming effect on bilateral relations, even if they were not accompanied immediately by more profound and far-reaching domestic political reforms.

#### No escalation – US wins decisively

AP, 3/9/’11 (“China challenges U.S. edge in Asia-Pacific”)

The U.S. Pacific Command has 325,000 personnel, five aircraft-carrier strike groups, 180 ships and nearly 2,000 aircraft. Tens of thousands of forces stay on China's doorstep at long-established bases in South Korea and Japan.

China's defense spending is still dwarfed by the United States. Even if China really invests twice as much in its military as its official $91.5 billion budget, that would still be only about a quarter of U.S. spending. It has no aircraft carriers and lags the United States in defense technology. Some of its most vaunted recent military advances will take years to reach operation.

For example, China test-flew its stealth fighter in January, months earlier than U.S. intelligence expected, but U.S. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates says China will still only have a couple of hundred of these "fifth-generation" jets by 2025. The United States should have 1,500 by then.

# GENERAL INTERNALS

## Blocks For the Disad – both ways

### Small Shifts Matter

#### Small shifts matter – lots of factors can swing the election – the status quo is razor thin.

Silver 5-15 [Nate Silver, New York Times blogger and electoral statistician; “A 30,000-Foot View on the Presidential Race”; 5/15/2012; <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/15/a-30000-foot-view-on-the-presidential-race/>]

We are beginning to see more national surveys now, including this week’s New York Times/CBS News poll, which show Mitt Romney with a slight lead over President Obama in the general election matchup. To be sure, there are also a number of polls that put Mr. Obama slightly ahead. But his lead does seem to have narrowed — from about three or four points in an average of national polls a month or two ago to more like a point or so in surveys today. Has something fundamental changed in the race? Probably not. Instead, I suspect we are seeing some reversion to the mean. It could be that Mr. Obama’s larger lead from before was somewhat ephemeral, although there are a couple of factors that may be working in Mr. Romney’s favor at the margin. Although we are getting to the point where these national polls are at least worth a passing glance, it is still also worth paying attention to Mr. Obama’s approval rating. These have a history of predicting electoral outcomes at least as closely as head-to-head polls in the early stages of the race, especially for incumbent presidents. Mr. Obama’s approval ratings have not moved all that much. For the last month or two, they have been essentially even. Right now, in the RealClearPolitics average, 48.3 percent of Americans approve of the job that Mr. Obama is doing, and 48.6 percent disapprove. A president can get re-elected with numbers like those. Obviously, he can also lose. But the fact that Mr. Obama’s approval ratings are close to even means that it should not be surprising that the numbers in his matchup against Mr. Romney are getting closer to even, too. I am not a purist who says that candidates and campaigns make no difference. That said, the most reliable benchmark in the past of when presidential results deviate from those predicted by approval ratings is when one of the candidates has a relatively “extreme” ideology, like Barry M. Goldwater or George S. McGovern. Mr. Romney does not qualify as an extremist by the various measures we can look at that attempt to quantify this objectively — neither does he qualify as a moderate. Instead, he is a “generic Republican,” who might run fairly close to the outcomes predicted by Mr. Obama’s approval ratings. Mr. Romney also went through a period where his favorability ratings were quite poor. However, they have since improved to about even, possibly because his job has been less complicated since the effective end of the Republican primary campaign. It is not uncommon for favorability ratings to shift over the course of a campaign, particularly once the primaries end. I am working on our general election model, which can begin to look at some of this data in a more formal way. No model is perfect, but some things probably benefit from applying a more formal and rigorous structure. For instance, Mr. Obama’s state-by-state polls look a pinch better on balance than his national numbers. It is hard to know if there is something real there; the timing of the polls and the relative ordering of the states in the Electoral College need to be carefully considered. Likewise, most of the polls we are seeing now are of registered voters or adults rather than likely voters. That is something that needs to be accounted for. Usually a shift from registered voters to likely voters will improve the Republican candidate’s standing by a couple of points because Republican voters are older, wealthier and more likely to turn out in the average election. On the other hand, I do not think it is a good strategy to look solely at likely voter polls while ignoring the others. Some survey firms that use likely voter models have a history of a partisan skew in their polls that has nothing to do with the likely voter model itself. The last thing to remember is that when an election is quite close, it does not take very much to shift the race from one candidate being a 60/40 favorite to it being about even. At the betting market Intrade, Mr. Obama’s odds of re-election have consistently been around 60 percent. While, on the one hand, it is good not to overreact to new data at this early stage of the race, it is also worth remembering that even a one-point shift in a president’s approval ratings, or a modest change in the economic forecasts, can move a president’s re-election odds at the margin. The marginal factors in the past four or six weeks have looked slightly better for Mr. Romney than Mr. Obama. The recuperation in Mr. Romney’s favorability numbers, for instance — if it was somewhat to be expected — also reduces the risk that his personal qualities might cause him to lose an election that he otherwise would have won, as during another economic downturn. Meanwhile, the tumultuous situation in Greece may increase the chance of an economic downside case for Mr. Obama. And data from the domestic economy has not been as strong lately. (Although it might also be mentioned that the situation in the Middle East is thought to be improving, and oil pries have receded somewhat.)

#### Small swings matter – its super close and next couple months key

Abramowitz, 12 (Alan, Senior Columnist, Center For Politics.org, Prof Poli Sci @ Emory, 5/23, <http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/what-does-president-obama%E2%80%99s-may-approval-rating-tell-us-about-his-reelection-chances/>)

Whether we base our prediction on President Obama’s 47% approval rating in the Gallup Poll in early May or a more sophisticated forecasting model incorporating economic conditions and the “time for change” factor, it appears likely that we are headed for a very close election in November. Both models make Obama a slight favorite to win a second term. However, the final outcome will depend on the actual performance of the economy and the public’s evaluation of the president’s job performance in the months ahead. Those interested in assessing where the presidential race stands should focus on these two indicators rather than the day-to-day events of the campaign, which tend to dominate media coverage of the election.

#### Its super tight – could go either way now

Cook, 12 (Charlie, Cook Political Report, National Journal, 5/17, <http://cookpolitical.com/node/12510>)

But it’s the 58.8 percent chance of Obama winning that interests me today, because that prediction stands in stark contrast to what most pollsters, Democrats and Republicans alike, whom I talked with privately, believe. The number crunchers who conduct and analyze polls, and others who study these things closely, see a lot of metrics pointing to a very close contest that could go either way. They don’t see an election in which either Obama, or Mitt Romney, is likely to have an almost six-in-10 chance of winning. Take the polls, for example. The averages of all major national polls show the race as extremely close. Pollster.com gives Obama a 1.2-percentage-point lead over Romney, 46.3 percent to 45.1 percent. Realclearpolitics.com pegs Obama’s lead at 2 points, 47 percent to 45 percent. Gallup’s seven-day tracking poll puts the president’s lead at 1 point, 46 percent to 45 percent. Undecided voters, particularly, often break away from well-known, well-defined incumbents (the “what you see is what you get” rule for those in office). Does this really translate into a strong advantage for the president? Obama’s job-approval ratings are often “upside down” in pollster parlance, with disapprovals running higher than approvals in both Pollster.com (46.9 percent approve; 48.4 percent disapprove) and Realclearpolitics (48 percent approve; 48.5 percent disapprove). Gallup also shows 47 percent approve and disapprove numbers for the week of May 7-13. Is that really a decisive edge? In terms of the Electoral College, seven states—Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia—are likely to be extremely close. New Hampshire might also be tight. (I am increasingly skeptical that Obama can win North Carolina.) I pay a lot of attention to the top-dollar surveys by the Obama and Romney campaigns—and, for that matter, what highly regarded pollsters doing surveys for various senatorial and gubernatorial candidates and for ballot initiatives in the states say. I don’t put a lot of stock in the dime-store polls, which bloggers and Internet armchair analysts so avidly follow (ask them about calling cell phones; that separates the top-notch pollsters from the cut-rate crowd). Don’t get me wrong: I’m not predicting that Obama will lose. I’m only pointing out that the discrepancy is real between what the pros on the sidelines and those in the press box are seeing, versus those with the view from the cheap seats. Just sayin’.

### A2 Healthcare Thumps

#### The economy matters more than the healthcare decision.

Chandler 7-5 [US News and World Report, Jamie P. Chandler is a political scientist at Hunter College in New York City, where he teaches courses on American politics, political parties and elections, public opinion, and political analysis; “Election Will Be About the Economy, Not Healthcare Ruling”; 7/5/2012; <http://www.usnews.com/debate-club/is-mitt-romney-blowing-it-against-barack-obama/election-will-be-about-the-economy-not-healthcare-ruling>; Boyce]

The Wall Street Journal's column criticizing Mitt Romney's response to the Supreme Court's healthcare ruling makes couple good points about his narrative, but overall its weak. GOP kingmakers are running down a primrose path if they think this tax versus penalty semantics argument resonates with voters. It's not a game changing issue. The threat of higher taxes typically carries weight in elections, but not this time. Voters don't understand the law, nor do they rank healthcare as their number one concern. GOP primary exit polls tell this story. It's about job creation. Elephants forget the reason Democrats lost the 2010 midterm elections. Voters believed the president spent too much time working to pass the Affordable Care Act and too little time improving the economy.

#### Healthcare doesn’t matter to SWING voters – campaigns are trying to change the issue

WEISMAN 7 – 3 – 12 NYT Political Staff Writer [Jonathan Weisman, Wooing Swing Voters, Both Parties Wary of Overemphasizing Health Care, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/04/us/politics/both-parties-wary-of-overemphasizing-health-care-issue.html>]

George Allen, a former Republican senator campaigning to get his old job back, did not seem eager to discuss health care on Tuesday as he buzzed through this town’s historic district. The economy, energy production, even a rash of Lyme disease at a local college were quicker to get him talking as he glad-handed voters

But some of the most avid Republicans he ran into on King Street were determined to complain about the Supreme Court decision last week upholding President Obama’s health care law — and pull Mr. Allen off message.

“The health care bill was a total disaster,” said Dr. Ralph Swiger, 55, a dental surgeon having lunch at Leesburg Restaurant. “What the Supreme Court did, I’m so upset about it. Everybody is.”

The experience pointed to the problem that both parties face after one of the most consequential Supreme Court decisions in memory: their core voters are energized, either by rage or elation, but the independents who are likely to decide the 2012 elections may be ready to move on.

Dr. Swiger said the health care decision made him weep for his country. But to win his Senate campaign over Tim Kaine, a popular former governor, Mr. Allen needs to reach less partisan voters like Joshua Schwanborg, 43, the proprietor of China King restaurant. He was far more concerned about the rates charged by the Australian highway firm that runs the toll road to Washington

Leaders in both parties acknowledge that the ruling has thrown a wrench into their campaigns for control of the House and the Senate. House Republicans have scheduled another vote next week to try to repeal the law, known as the Affordable Care Act. And they say they are ready to play offense on the reinvigorated health care debate.

But even as they highlight that mobilization, leaders of both parties say overemphasizing the health care issue could turn off weary swing voters who, they fear, just want to put the issue aside. Representative Greg Walden of Oregon, the deputy chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee, put the health care law in fourth place on the campaign agenda — behind jobs and the economy, jobs and the economy, and jobs and the economy.

“I’d rather be on our side than theirs,” he said. “If Democrats want to go out there and talk about health care, have at it.”

The message is muddy for both parties, in part because neither is sure whether 2012 will turn solely on the economy or echo the dynamics of 2010, when the health care law was a driving force. Democrats know they cannot repeat their strategy of that election, when they simply avoided the subject of the historic health care law they had just passed, said Representative Steve Israel of New York, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. That got them trounced.

Instead, Mr. Israel said, Democrats will be aggressive and try to reframe the health care debate away from the size and reach of government to the issues that motivated them in the first place: access and delivery of care. That means tagging Republicans as defenders of the health insurance industry, trying to deny consumer protections even as they dismantle Medicare

“Republicans were able to define the agenda in 2010,” Mr. Israel said. “We’re not going to let them get away with it in 2012.

And the issue has helped Democrats raise money. The Congressional campaign committee announced Tuesday that since the decision, it had raised $2.3 million from nearly 65,000 donors, with $35 as the average contribution. Saturday was the single biggest grass-roots fund-raising day in the committee’s history.

At the same time, Mr. Israel and his campaign committee pointed to a new poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation, which showed that 56 percent of respondents — and 51 percent of independents — want politicians to move on to other national problems. Only 38 percent of respondents said legislators should continue to try to block the law from being put into effect, but 69 percent of Republicans want to repeal the law.

Republicans see a dilemma in those numbers. The party needs to respond to the desires of their base voters while wooing independents who are likely to vote in far larger numbers this November than they did in 2010.

“It’s a big issue,” Mr. Allen said. “And it’s one that gets people focused on how important this election is.”

Republican campaign organizations have gone on the offensive. American Crossroads, the Republican “super PAC” that has been plastering states with advertising against the health care law, released a memorandum predicting the second coming of 2010.

“The Supreme Court’s decision forces Obamacare to be litigated in the 2012 elections, and in virtually every case where Obamacare has been litigated by voters in an election, the law and its supporters lose,” the group said.

Jonathan Collegio, the group’s spokesman, said Crossroads would focus its attacks on Democratic Senate candidates in Indiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and Virginia.

But for all the bravado in Washington campaign offices, candidates on the trail are not racing to the issue. Democrats in the toughest races have tended toward a message of “moving on,” especially the ones who voted for the law’s passage.

## ‘x’ is Key

### Independents Key

#### Obama holding independents is key

WOODRUFF 2 – 29 – 12 Board Member at the IWMF. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. News Anchor, Political Journalist. [Judy Woodruff, Woodruff: Will Independents Return to Obama in 2012?, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/2012/02/woodruff-will-independents-return-to-obama-2012.html>]

There's a lot of talk thrown around in every election about the influence of independents -- voters who are registered as neither Democrat nor Republican or who swing back and forth. To listen to some pundits (even this reporter has been guilty of this), independent voters hold awesome power in close elections.

This may be one election when that conventional wisdom holds up. With a stubbornly polarized atmosphere and partisans on each side fiercely holding to the candidates in their party, the role played by swing voters becomes even more significant. In recent years, independents have made up about 30 percent of the electorate. Republicans and Democrats split most of the other 70 percent, leaving a little room for minority parties.

In 2008, President Obama won 52 percent of independent voters, helping propel him to the presidency. This year, there's good reason to believe those same voters who sided with Obama -- rather than the 44 percent of independents who went with Sen. John McCain -- will determine the outcome. First, it's safe to assume almost all self-described Republicans and Democrats will vote for their party's candidate. And it's almost as safe to assume that the McCain independents in 2008 will be reluctant to switch to Obama four years later

That leaves the focus on the Independents who swung to Obama four years ago. They are the subject of a paper by two policy analysts at the Third Way, a Washington, D.C.-based centrist think tank. According to Michelle Diggles and Lanae Erickson, the Obama independents of 2008 have certain qualities that may help us understand which way they'll go in 2012

Diggles and Erickson identify 10 qualities in particular but stress four. First, Obama independents are the most moderate segment of the electorate. Second, they are true swing voters in that nearly half of them did not vote for the Democratic candidate in 2004. Third, they look like the U.S. in that they include more women and are more racially diverse than McCain independents. Fourth, they are secular and attend church less often.

With growing signs that independent voters may make up the highest proportion of the electorate since 1976, all eyes are on these prized citizens. But as Diggles and Erickson note: "Not all independents are the same, and the real showdown for 2012 is over who will win the Obama independents." They said that if Obama can win the majority of them, he will win re-election. But if he does no better among them than Democrats did in the 2010 congressional elections when a quarter of the Obama independents voted Republican, the story could be different. Watching how Obama appeals to this crucial voting group is one story we plan to watch throughout this exciting election.

#### Independents are key to the election.

Gillespie 12 [Nick Gillespie is editor in chief of Reason.tv and Reason.com, the online platforms of Reason, the libertarian magazine of "Free Minds and Free Markets." Named one of the top 25 right journalists by the Daily Beast; “Independents Will Decide the 2012 Election”; 3/14/2012; http://reason.com/archives/2012/03/14/independents-will-decide-the-2012-electi; Boyce]

A raft of new polls about the presidential race drives home what everyone has always known: This election will turn on independent voters, the ever-growing plurality of Americans who refuse to sign up for Team Red or Team Blue. According to Gallup and based on 20,000 interviews from 20 polls taken throughout 2011, “a record-high 40 percent of Americans identify as Independents.” To put that in perspective, consider that self-identified Democrats roll in at a historic low of 31 percent while just 27 percent of us are willing to admit being Republicans. When the partisan leanings of independents were taken into consideration, Gallup found the nation evenly split between Democrats and Republicans, with each claiming 45 percent of the electorate. How important are independents, especially the 10 percent who don't lean toward Dems or Reps? President Barack Obama’s convincing win over Republican Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) in 2008 was due in large part to his pulling 51 percent of self-identified independents to McCain’s 43 percent. And Republican gains in the 2010 midterms stemmed largely from the GOP getting 55 percent of independent votes versus the Democrats pulling only 39 percent. Take it to the bank: You win any national election if you win the independent vote. So where are Obama and his would-be Republican challengers these days? Despite the recent, high-profile flap about insurance mandates and contraception, which was widely interpreted to benefit Obama, the president's poll numbers have been sliding. A Bloomberg National Poll from March 8-11 shows Obama and former Gov. Mitt Romney (R-Mass.) tied with 47 percent each among likely general election voters. Yet “among independents, whose votes will swing the election in November, 49 percent support Romney and 41 percent Obama in the survey.” In a CBS News/New York Times poll of registered voters from March 7-11, Obama is basically tied with Romney (47 percent to 44 percent) while handily beating Rick Santorum, Ron Paul, and Newt Gingrich. When it comes to independents in the CBS News/New York Times poll, Obama’s advantage over the likely nominee Romney is smaller, at 45 percent versus 43 percent. If independent voters are the key to the presidency, what are the keys to independent voters? In its summary of 2011 attitudes toward government and political parties, Gallup concluded that the surge in independents stems from the “sluggish economy, record levels of distrust in government, and unfavorable views of both parties.” Indeed, a “historic” 81 percent of Americans overall are “dissatisfied with the way the nation is being governed” and 53 percent of us have negative views of the Republican Party and 55 percent of us have negative views of the Democratic Party.

### Economy Key

#### Economy key – focus groups – a sustained effort will help Obama frame the election.

Daily Beast 6-15 [Eleanor Clift, political correspondent for the Daily Beast; “In Focus Group, Independent Voters Souring on Obama”; 6/15/2012; <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/06/15/in-focus-group-independent-voters-souring-on-obama.html>; Boyce]

How tough an uphill climb does President Obama face with independent voters? If the findings of a focus group conducted this week are any indication, a steep one indeed. Nine of the 12 people gathered in Denver on Tuesday voted for Obama in ’08, but only three lean toward him at this point. They are a cross-section of America, working in real estate, health care, IT, and sales, and they’re torn between a president whose performance they say has been underwhelming and who doesn’t deserve reelection, and a challenger they know very little about beyond the fact that he’s a rich and successful businessman. When Democratic pollster Peter Hart probed for their thoughts about Bain Capital, the private-equity firm that Mitt Romney headed, nine of the group opted out, saying they didn’t know enough to talk about it. Of the three who ventured they knew “a little,” one said “Mitt ran it,” while another said “He did well,” three words that sum up the Obama campaign’s challenge as they try to tarnish what Hart has called Romney’s “halo effect” on the economy. They aren’t biting on Bain. Listening to these voters for over two hours, it was clear that their assessment of the economy is not as bleak as one would suppose, given their disaffection from Obama. They generally agree that the economy is improving, but Obama doesn’t get credit for a recovery that, while slow, is moving in the right direction—the core of his message for a second term. A few cited what they called “little things” Obama has done for the economy, like reining in credit-card companies, but no one could cite major accomplishments that would measure up to the expectations aroused by Obama as a candidate who promised to bring about transformative change. This Denver group was sponsored by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, and Hart’s findings add to a growing chorus of concern among Democrats not directly aligned with the Obama campaign that the president is not connecting with the voters he needs to win. Asked if he was feeling the heat from his allies in the Obama camp, Hart told The Daily Beast, “They know who I am, and that I’m a straight-shooter, and I’m totally in their corner. Sometimes being in their corner means telling them the truth.” Whether it’s a failure of policy or of communications is debatable, but the sense of disillusionment with Obama’s performance is real. “He set up expectations that began 46 months ago, and they only grew over time,” says Hart. He singled out Jeffrey, a 31-year-old Web designer and home remodeler, as the voter Obama most needs and might not get. Jeffrey voted for Obama last time. “The whole platform was hope—I don’t feel any more hope today,” he said. Pressed by Hart as to which candidate he was leaning toward, Jeffrey said the tenor of the campaign turned him off, that he felt like he was in the middle of a weird argument between a husband and wife, and all he wanted to do was leave the room. “I don’t even know if I’m going to vote this time,” he said glumly. The crux of Obama’s challenge is to win back enough of the voters who have lost confidence in him, and in his ability to make government work for them. “Does that person even vote?” Hart later wondered. In his view, the young, bearded Web designer should be in Obama’s corner, and the fact that he isn’t is emblematic of the president’s problems. While the results of this focus group forecast trouble for Obama, they also point to an opening, which is to “get beyond the rat-a-tat of the present and take it to the future,” says Hart, a process begun by Obama with his economic speech in Cleveland Thursday. A sustained effort, and not just a one-stop speech, could reframe the race.

#### Economics is key – Obama is falling behind now.

Bennett 7-11 [William J. Bennett, Political Analyst for CNN, Former Secretary of Education; “Obama's running out of excuses on economy”; 7/11/2012; <http://www.cnn.com/2012/07/11/opinion/bennett-obama-economy-excuses/index.html?hpt=hp_c2>; Boyce]

(CNN) -- The White House is running out of time, and ideas, for turning the economy around before the fall elections. Almost three years into recovery, the U.S. economy added only 80,000 jobs in June, marking its third consecutive month of poor job growth. The Wall Street Journal noted that the United States gained just 225,000 jobs in the past three months combined, making it the weakest quarter of job growth since the labor market began to recover in 2010. The unemployment rate, still 8.2%, has been stuck above 8% for 41 straight months, the longest streak since the Great Depression. A government report found that 85,000 Americans left the workforce in June to enroll in the Social Security Disability Insurance program. That means that more workers joined the federal government's disability program in June than got new jobs. How did the White House respond to the anemic report? "There are no quick fixes to the problems we face that were more than a decade in the making," Alan Krueger, chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, said in a written statement. In other words, any chances for economic recovery before the fall elections look slim. More importantly, there is a profound lack of urgency from the White House for any large scale, serious reforms. In fact, Krueger went on to claim the economy really isn't as bad as we think. "The economy has now added private sector jobs for 28 straight months, for a total of 4.4 million payroll jobs during that period," he said. The obvious problem here is that Obama has been president for more than 40 months. The White House conveniently blames Republicans for decades of lost jobs, but forgets to mention the United States lost 4.3 million jobs in President Obama's first 13 months in office. Krueger concluded, "[I]t is important not to read too much into any one monthly report and it is informative to consider each report in the context of other data that are becoming available." This isn't the first time the White House has used this excuse. In fact, the Romney campaign was quick to put together a list of the 30 times the White House has used this same excuse, dating back to November 2009. Is the White House perhaps telling us something more significant: that we shouldn't read too much into the entire term of Barack Obama's presidency? In Ohio on Friday, Obama excused the jobs report by again claiming he inherited the worst economy since the Great Depression. He added that the jobs report is "a step in the right direction" and that "it's still tough out there." The president appears intellectually and ideologically spent, and it's not just Republicans saying that. Robert Reich, former Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration, wrote recently, "[T]he excuse is wearing thin. It's his economy now, and most voters don't care what he inherited." He added, "[H]e has to show he understands the depth and breadth of this crisis." It's not so clear the president does. On Monday, he again called to repeal the Bush tax cuts on the highest earners, a contentious partisan issue that the public knows will not be solved before the elections. In his weekly address he continued to push for more construction projects and increased financial aid for college students. Even to Keynesian economists on the left these are hardly bold policies a party can rally behind. The economy is shaping up to be the most important factor of the 2012 elections, yet the president seems content to rest his re-election chances on worn-out, recycled policy proposals and ad hominem attacks on Mitt Romney. It's hard to see how this is a winning strategy.

#### Economy will swing the presidential election – voter perception.

Leonhardt 12 [David Leonhardt is the Washington bureau chief of The New York Times; “Muddled Economic Picture Muddles the Political One, Too”; 3/13/2012; <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/14/us/politics/economy-plays-biggest-role-in-obama-re-election-chances.html>; Boyce]

WASHINGTON — The final major economic turning point of President Obama’s first term seems to have arrived. The question is which way the economy will turn. Job growth has picked up nicely in the last few months, raising the prospect that the American economy is finally in the early stages of a recovery that will gather strength over time. But with gas prices rising, the government cutting workers and consumers still deep in debt, some forecasters predict that economic growth — and with it, job growth — will slow in coming months. Politically, the difference between the two situations is vast. In one, Mr. Obama will be able to campaign on a claim, as he has recently begun to do, that the country is back on track. In another, he will be left to explain that recoveries from financial crises take years, and to argue that Republicans want to return to the Bush-era policies that created the crisis — as he tried to argue, unsuccessfully, in the 2010 midterm election. His approval rating has slipped again in some polls recently, with higher gas prices possibly playing a role. As a result, the economic numbers over the next couple of months, including an unemployment report on April 6, will have bigger political implications than the typical batch of data. The Federal Reserve acknowledged the uncertainty in its scheduled statement on Tuesday, suggesting the economy had improved somewhat but still predicting only “moderate economic growth.” Economists say the economy’s near-term direction depends relatively little on Mr. Obama’s economic policies. The standoff over Iran’s nuclear program, the European debt crisis and other events will most likely affect the economy more. But many American voters are still likely to make their decision based on the economy. Historically, nothing — not campaign advertisements, social issues or even wars — has influenced voters more heavily than the direction of the economy in an election year.

# AFF ANSWERS

### Issues Irrelevant

#### Issues irrelevant – Obama winning the personality contest

COOK 7 – 9 – 12 political analyst who specializes in election forecasts and political trends [Charlie Cook, National Journal Group Inc., <http://cookpolitical.com/node/12695>]

If President Obama’s campaign machine can define Mitt Romney before his own campaign even tries, my bet is Obama wins reelection.

It seems the Romney campaign believes that any day or dollar spent talking about anything other than the economy is a day or dollar wasted. Unquestionably, the economy’s state and direction, as well as voters’ perceptions on Obama’s handling of it—are important. Obama’s approval ratings on the subject are awful. According to the June NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, 42 percent of voters approve of the way Obama has handled the economy, while 53 percent disapprove. Additionally, just 31 percent think the country is headed in the right direction; and 61 percent believe it is on the wrong track. Voters seem quite willing to fire Obama as a result

A willingness to fire the president, however, is only one step. Voters also have to be willing to hire Romney. If the challenger is deemed unacceptable, a potentially decisive slice of the electorate could reluctantly return to the incumbent. Voters’ willingness to hire Romney is being severely damaged, at least in swing states, by the advertising efforts of the Obama campaign and Priorities USA, a pro-Obama super PAC. The ads are devastatingly tough, portraying the former Massachusetts governor as a private-equity version of Gordon Gekko, a heartless corporate barracuda who has made a fortune acquiring and looting companies, laying off workers, and ruining lives and communities. That’s the story line, anyway. These ads lead to the conclusion that Romney is not to be trusted in the Oval Office

Romney’s tenure running Bain Capital, layoffs, outsourcing, and now his personal finances give Democrats plenty of great fodder. If you live in or visit a swing state and turn on a television set, you will be deluged by these ads. Maybe they are accurate and fair, maybe they aren’t. Regardless, they are hard-hitting and running with great frequency.

What makes the ads effective is that voters know next to nothing about Romney, other than that he is a rich and successful businessman, and perhaps that he is a Mormon. Being quite rich and successful means—and focus groups I’ve watched support the notion—that more than a few voters may be willing to stipulate that Romney is a smart guy and probably knows a lot about the economy. But nothing the Romney campaign has said would give voters a reason to believe that he can be trusted or that Oval Office decisions in a Romney White House would be based on the same values that they want their president to have. The Obama campaign and Priorities USA are more than willing to fill in the blanks.

A pretty good case can be made that the daily headlines about depressing economic news and a tough job market—whether for 50-year-olds who lost jobs or college grads trying to get a start—drive the economic issue far better and more effectively than anything the Romney campaign can possibly do.

The only ad that has attempted to connect Romney with voters in a way that portrays him as a three-dimensional human being wasn’t even put out by his campaign. The pro-Romney super PAC Restore Our Future has run “Saved,” which features Romney’s former Bain Capital partner Robert Gay telling the story of his teenage daughter who was missing in New York City in 1996. As soon as Romney heard about the missing girl, he shut down Bain’s offices in Boston so that virtually the entire staff could hustle down to New York. Romney set up a search headquarters at the LaGuardia Marriott and even enlisted Bain accountants and lawyers to help distribute flyers and get the word out about the missing girl. A tip line received an anonymous call that was traced to a phone in New Jersey where the girl was found, safe. It’s a moving story and TV spot, but that’s the sum total of paid advertising that could help inoculate Romney from withering attacks. Worse yet for the candidate, Restore Our Future hasn’t run the spot since May 17.

Romney won the GOP nomination on a very tactical level. He out-fundraised, out-organized, and outmaneuvered his rivals. But even then, his story was never told. All the messaging seemed to be oriented toward selling him as the most conservative person on the planet. Now it’s just about the economy, not about him. Every week, usually on Friday, the Romney campaign launches a new ad, but these never sell him.

### Too Soon

#### Too early – uniqueness and link should be treated with grain of salt

SABATO 5 – 31 – 12 Director, UVA Center For Politics (Larry Sabato, <http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/presidential-polling-in-june-flip-a-coin-instead/>)

With all of the polls, models and history at their disposal, political analysts should be able to figure out who is going to win a November presidential election by June, right? Well, not quite. While we would modestly suggest to Socrates and our readers that we know more than nothing about the election, declaring the winner with certainty at this point is a fool’s errand, particularly when the current data argue only that the contest will be a close one. In the RealClearPolitics average of national horse race polls as of Wednesday, President Obama was narrowly ahead of Mitt Romney by 2.0 percentage points. Meanwhile, in last week’s Crystal Ball, Alan Abramowitz showed how his respected presidential election model forecasts a very tight race at this point, with Obama as a slight favorite. But surely, this year is an outlier, many would assert. Because of the unique circumstances surrounding this election, including the great economic dislocation caused by the 2008 crash and the restless mood of Americans even after three straight wave elections, it’s understandable that this contest would remain hazy late into the spring. That’s true. But uncertainty in June is not unique, at least not in modern history. If anyone doubts that a reassessment — maybe several of them — will come as 2012 wears on, consider this: Over the past eight elections, Gallup — the most recognizable of polling organizations — has only identified the eventual popular vote winner twice in its early June horse race polling: In June 1980, President Jimmy Carter led Ronald Reagan 39% to 32%, with independent John Anderson at 21%. In November, Reagan defeated Carter, 51% to 41%, with Anderson getting less than 7%. Remember that this race appeared close until the very end, with some polling even indicating that Carter might actually win just a few days before the election. But Reagan proved his mettle in a late debate, and Carter’s attempt to negotiate freedom for the American hostages in Iran failed. Those late developments helped turn a close election into a blowout. Note, also, Anderson’s strong early performance in polls: Third party candidates sometimes appear formidable in early surveys and then fade away as the election gets closer, victims of the voters’ desire not to “waste” their ballots. The polling was fairly stable in 1984. In June, Reagan already led Walter Mondale by 53% to 44%. The incumbent won 59% in the fall. Such early polling, and Reagan’s strength, prompted Mondale to throw a Hail Mary by selecting Geraldine Ferraro as his running mate. Like most Hail Marys, the pass was incomplete. By 1988, the June polling was far more misleading: Michael Dukakis was ahead of George H.W. Bush by a landslide, 52% to 38%. Bush ended up winning more than 53% in November. The June 1992 polling projected the nation’s first independent president, Ross Perot. At 39%, Perot easily topped Bush (31%) and Bill Clinton at 25%. Less than five months later, the order was reversed: Clinton won with 43%, Bush (37%) was ousted and Perot finished last with 19%, failing to win a single electoral vote. However, Perot maintained his support to a greater degree than most independent candidates do down the stretch. Gallup’s June 1996 survey got Clinton’s reelection percentage right on the nose (49%), but Bob Dole, at 33%, was well below his eventual 41% and Perot had 17% in June but finished with about 8% in November. Like 1984, Clinton’s reelection bid lacked drama. The squeaker of 2000 was close even in June, but Gallup had George W. Bush up over Al Gore, 46% to 41%. Come November, Gore won the popular vote by half a percentage point, though of course he lost the Electoral College vote. Gallup had John Kerry well on his way to avenging Gore’s loss in June 2004. Kerry led Bush outside the margin of error at 49% to 43%. Instead, Bush grabbed his second term with 51% in November. It’s rarely recalled, but John McCain actually led Barack Obama by a whisker in Gallup’s daily tracking at the beginning of June 2008, 46% to 45%. It wasn’t close in the fall, with Obama winning 53%. And the uncertainty goes back further. Jimmy Carter looked as though he would roll Gerald Ford in 1976; instead, the election ended up incredibly tight. So did the 1960 and 1968 contests. As we never tire of repeating, Harry Truman shocked the world in 1948 by defeating “President-elect” Thomas E. Dewey. This is not meant to cast aspersions on Gallup; rather, it’s to say that presidential races are not static, and that polling conducted five months before the election is only a snapshot in time, as opposed to a reliable prediction as to how the race will eventually shake out. As of Wednesday, Obama and Romney were tied, 46%-46%, in the Gallup poll. Obviously, this is a matchup that could go either way. Almost everything can change, and frequently does, during the course of the summer and fall in a presidential race. The economy can get decidedly better or worse. International crises can pop up — or peace can break out. Unexpected scandals can engulf one or both major party candidates. One or more independents or third-party candidates may prove influential in the presidential tally. Politics, as we’ve insisted for years, is a good thing. And a fun thing, too, for people who do not treat American elections as a life or death affair. There will be many spectacles between now and Nov. 6, and plenty of unexpected developments in this semi-scripted human drama. But while we know the road to the finish line will be fascinating, let’s also grant that it will be somewhat unpredictable. For those of you who can’t wait, just join the partisans on both sides who absolutely, positively know their side will win — in a landslide! One side will be right, more or less, and after the election, the winners will lord their perceptiveness over friends, family and the opposition. And if your partisanship isn’t intense enough for this route, there’s always that coin in your pocket. With the prospect of a tight presidential race, a good flip may tell you as much as June polls.

#### Too early – nothing matters now and voters aren’t paying attention

**Silver, 5/15/12** (Nate,chief pollster for New York Times’ 538 election polling center. Regarded as top-level pollster based on distinct mathematical models <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/15/a-30000-foot-view-on-the-presidential-race/>)

What I am less convinced by is the idea that anything in the campaign — the day-to-day stories that the news media covers — has mattered very much so far. One of the reasons that campaign stories have been so trivial lately is because if one of the campaigns has an especially strong line of attack on their opponent, or a great piece of opposition research, it does not make a lot of sense to drop it now when most voters are not paying attention yet. It is still extremely early for a general election campaign. If the period after Labor Day qualifies as the pennant race, and the summer of the general election year the regular season, we are still playing preseason baseball now.

### Gas Prices Thump

#### Voters don’t like Obama for gas

Reisner 5-29 Hiram Reisner. World Editor at NewsMax Media, Inc. “Trump: Obama Re-election Chances Nil Unless Gas Prices Drop.” Thursday, 29 Mar 2012 AM [http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/trump-obama-romney-gas/2012/03/29/id/434170. NewsMax.com](http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/trump-obama-romney-gas/2012/03/29/id/434170.%20NewsMax.com).

Donald Trump says President Barack Obama will lose the election by a large margin in November unless there is a dramatic drop in the price of gasoline. The real estate mogul also told Fox News’ Greta Van Susteren Wednesday that Obama’s claims that he has no control over the price at the pump are “totally false.” “I believe that gasoline prices will have a huge impact — if they don’t start coming down, I don’t think it's possible for Obama to win the election, personally. I think it will be a bigger victory that most people think,” Trump said. “Then you hear the head of energy say: I want $7 and $8 fuel. And I am saying: Where is this man coming from? I think that statement is one of the two sound bites I would use if I were running for president as a Republican.

### No Agenda IL – depends on congress

#### Obama’s agenda depends on congress – needs Dems to sweep to get things done

RUBINSTEIN 3 – 27 – 12 Reporter for Capital New York, has written for Bloomberg Businessweek, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the New York Observer, and the Brooklyn Paper [Dana Rubenstein “When is Obama going to have his Eisenhower moment?” March 27, 2012 http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2012/03/5524547/when-obama-going-have-his-eisenhower-moment]

In fact, even if Obama wins a second term, his ability to do anything much more than hold the line on current spending levels would probably be contingent on his party winning both houses of Congress.

"I think then he could really use the hammer of the bully pulpit of a sitting president who does’t have to run again," said Chris Ward, who served as the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's executive director before moving to construction firm Dragados. "I think he’ll be a very different president once he gets reelected."

“I’ll tell you this, if he wins a second term, he’s going to come into a second term with some domestic priorities,” said Schank. “Investing in transportation is not a bad way to invest his political capital.”

In the transportation nerd’s fantasy scenario, one in which funding was bountiful and politicians were programmed to spend it judiciously, the president would direct federal government to do things like rebuild the nation’s highways, expand its rail and transit networks, and improve connections between the two. The country could subsidize freight rail, unclogging the highways. The government could fund passenger rail too, and do it where it’s needed, like, say, in the Northeast corridor.

### No Iran IL

#### Iran war doesn’t depend on the candidate

Chapman 7/8/12 Columnist for Chicago Tribune on international affairs

[Steve Chapman “The arms race that won't happen Iran and the phony proliferation scare” July 8, 2012 <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-07-08/news/ct-oped-0708-chapman-20120708_1_nuclear-proliferation-iran-regional-proliferation>]

The United States keeps trying to force Iran to abandon its suspected efforts to build a nuclear arsenal, and so far it has been rebuffed. Both Obama and Mitt Romney have said they would use force rather than let Iran acquire nukes. Chances are good that whoever wins in November, we will be at war with Tehran sometime in the next four years. But there is no reason to think Iran would ever use such weapons, and there is little reason to think it would spur other countries to get them. If all it takes to unleash regional proliferation is one fearsome state with nukes, the Middle East would have gone through it already — since Israel has had them for decades. Why would governments in the region respond differently to Iran? Many of them are allied with the U.S. — which means Iran can't attack or threaten them without fear of overwhelming retaliation. Turkey, as a member of NATO, enjoys a formal defense guarantee from Washington. The U.S. might offer similar assurances to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other nervous neighbors. One way or another, they would probably find they can manage fine. Iran is no scarier than Mao's China was in 1964, when it detonated its first atomic device. Writes Francis Gavin, a professor at the Lyndon B. JohnsonSchool of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, "It was predicted that India, Indonesia and Japan might follow." At the time, he noted in a 2009 article in International Security, "a U.S. government document identified 'at least 11 nations (India, Japan, Israel, Sweden, West Germany, Italy, Canada, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Rumania and Yugoslavia)' with the capacity to go nuclear, a number that would soon 'grow substantially' to include 'South Africa, the United Arab Republic, Spain, Brazil and Mexico.'" Mexico? In recent decades, some countries have actually given up their nukes — including Ukraine and South Africa. Others, like Brazil and Sweden, have scrapped their weapons programs. After the Cold War, it was assumed the newly reunified Germany would want to assert its new status by joining the nuclear club. It has yet to exhibit a glimmer of interest. A nuclear Iran would soon learn something previous nuclear powers already know: These weapons are not much use except to deter nuclear attack. What help have they been for the U.S. in Iraq or Afghanistan?

# Congressional Elections

## NEG STUFF

### GOP wins – Senate

#### GOP will keep the House and win the senate

Lightman 6/10/12 Covers Congress and Election 2012 for McClatchy Newspapers, was the Hartford Courant's Washington Bureau Chief for 23 years before joining the McClatchy Washington Bureau in 2007. He has covered every presidential campaign since 1980, and earlier this year won the David Lynch award for outstanding regional reporting in Washington

[David Lightman “Republicans poised to retain control of House” June 10, 2012 <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/news/us/republicans-poised-to-retain-control-of-house-639765/>]

Five months before Election Day, Republicans are poised to retain control of the House and inch close -- and perhaps win the majority -- in the Senate. The outlook is driven by local factors rather any kind of wave for or against either major political party. Indeed, the lack of a national tide could help the Republicans hold the House, where they're expected to lose seats but not enough to cost them the majority. Top analysts who chart congressional campaigns now see Republicans losing as many as 15 seats in the House, a loss that would still leave them comfortably in control. Democrats need a net gain of 25 to regain control. The Rothenberg Political Report forecasts a Democratic pickup of fewer than 10 House seats. The Cook Political Report says the Democrats will gain five to 15 seats. The Senate In the Senate, consensus forecasts say Republicans should add two to five seats. The Republicans need to gain four seats to take a 51-49 majority and seize nominal control away from the Democrats. Rothenberg forecasts Republicans gaining two to four seats; Cook sees a gain of two to five. They would still be well short of the 60 votes needed to pass anything controversial. A key factor: Though most Americans hate Congress, they're not ready to give either party a huge mandate, or toss out incumbents in big numbers. There are no signs of a wave election in which voters seem to speak with one angry voice as as in 2010, when they rose in backlash against President Barack Obama and Democratic control or, to a lesser degree, as they did in 2006 against President George W. Bush and Republican control. "By and large, I don't think the electorate is ready to engage in a wholesale firing of members of Congress, even if they distrust the legislators in general -- and may harbor suspicions about their own representative," said Burdett Loomis, a congressional expert at the University of Kansas.

Republicans on track to win slim majority

Bouie 7/9/12 Writing fellow for The American Prospect

[JAMELLE BOUIE “Control of the Senate Depends on Obama” July 9, 2012 <http://prospect.org/article/control-senate-depends-obama>]

So, how do Republicans get to four (or five)? Nebraska is an almost certain pickup, with polls showing state Sen. Deb Fischer (R) with a comfortable lead. North Dakota’s open seat is far more competitive than most people expected (including us) but it’s still a state that should go solidly for Romney in November, which will help Rep. Rick Berg (R). The Republican field in Missouri is mediocre, but Sen. Claire McCaskill (D) isn’t likely to be able to get enough distance from Obama to save herself. Win all three of those — and that’s an easy scenario to imagine — and Republicans need either one (with the White House) or two (without it) to win the majority. That means winning one (or two) of Montana, Virginia and Wisconsin. The first two states will almost certainly be one- or two-point affairs, while the Wisconsin Republican primary will shape the party’s chances at a pickup. New Mexico and Hawaii are races where Republicans have recruited their best possible candidate to run in Democratic open seats, but the demographics of both states work against them. In Florida, Michigan and Ohio, the Republican challengers against solid-if-not-spectacular Democratic incumbents are either untested or unimpressive (or both), but are running swing states at the presidential level. Republicans also need to worry about their own incumbents in Massachusetts and Nevada. If Democrats win both of those seats — possible if not likely — then the magic number to the majority for Republicans goes up to six (with the White House) or seven (without it). Given the number of seats where Republicans are playing offense, a six- or seven-seat pickup is possible, but it’s far less likely than a three- or four-seat pickup. No matter what happens, it’s a near-certainty that it will be a thin majority for either side in 2013 — a point McConnell made to Crowley. “I think at the end of the day we’re going to have a very narrow Senate, one way or the other,” the Kentucky Republican said. He’s right.

#### GOP gaining ground in the Senate – momentum and it’s thin.

WaPo 7-9 [Posted by Chris Cillizza and Aaron Blake at 07:08 AM ET, 07/09/2012; “Mitch McConnell and the battle for Senate control”; <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/mitch-mcconnell-and-the-battle-for-senate-control/2012/07/09/gJQANRdsXW_blog.html>; Boyce]

McConnell is among the most savvy strategists in either party and, unlike most politicians, tends toward directness and honesty when he speaks publicly. (Who could forget — Democrats won’t let you — McConnell’s famous pledge that the “single most important thing” for Republicans was to make Obama a one-term president.) So, how much truth is there in McConnell’s statement to Crowley? Lots. And that marks a real change from the start of the 2012 election. When the 2010 election ended, the conventional wisdom was that Republicans would almost certainly take over the Senate in two years time due to the daunting numbers facing Democrats: They had to defend 23 seats while Republicans only had 10 incumbents up for another term. That CW hardened during 2011 as the likes of Democratic Sens. Herb Kohl (Wis.), Ben Nelson (Neb.) and, perhaps most politically painful of all, Kent Conrad (N.D.), called it quits. But in late February 2012, the Senate playing field pivoted when Republican Maine Sen. Olympia Snowe, a shoo-in for re-election, announced she would retire, and former Gov. Angus King, an independent expected to caucus with Democrats, decided to run. Suddenly, with King a near-certain pickup, the path to retaining the majority didn’t look so impossibly high for Democrats. Assuming King wins and picks the Democrats, Republicans would need four seats to take over the majority if former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney wins and five seats if President Obama is re-elected. (The vice president serves as President of the Senate and casts tie-breaking votes when necessary.) So, how do Republicans get to four (or five)? Nebraska is an almost certain pickup, with polls showing state Sen. Deb Fischer (R) with a comfortable lead. North Dakota’s open seat is far more competitive than most people expected (including us) but it’s still a state that should go solidly for Romney in November, which will help Rep. Rick Berg (R). The Republican field in Missouri is mediocre, but Sen. Claire McCaskill (D) isn’t likely to be able to get enough distance from Obama to save herself. Win all three of those — and that’s an easy scenario to imagine — and Republicans need either one (with the White House) or two (without it) to win the majority. That means winning one (or two) of Montana, Virginia and Wisconsin. The first two states will almost certainly be one- or two-point affairs, while the Wisconsin Republican primary will shape the party’s chances at a pickup. New Mexico and Hawaii are races where Republicans have recruited their best possible candidate to run in Democratic open seats, but the demographics of both states work against them. In Florida, Michigan and Ohio, the Republican challengers against solid-if-not-spectacular Democratic incumbents are either untested or unimpressive (or both), but are running swing states at the presidential level. Republicans also need to worry about their own incumbents in Massachusetts and Nevada. If Democrats win both of those seats — possible if not likely — then the magic number to the majority for Republicans goes up to six (with the White House) or seven (without it). Given the number of seats where Republicans are playing offense, a six- or seven-seat pickup is possible, but it’s far less likely than a three- or four-seat pickup. No matter what happens, it’s a near-certainty that it will be a thin majority for either side in 2013 — a point McConnell made to Crowley. “I think at the end of the day we’re going to have a very narrow Senate, one way or the other,” the Kentucky Republican said. He’s right.

### A2 Dem momentum

#### GOP likely to win Senate – despite Democrat gains

Rothschild 6/15/12 Economist at Yahoo News

[David Rothschild “Can Republicans take the Senate? The odds are in their favor” Jun 15, 2012 <http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/signal/republicans-senate-odds-favor-141907645.html>]

With the unrelenting focus on every aspect of the fight for the White House, it's easy to forget that the Senate is also up for grabs on Election Day. In fact, it could be the presidential election that determines the upper body's control: If the Republicans win a net total of three seats, the Senate will be divided 50-50. In that case, control will go to the party that wins the presidency. (If you need an eighth-grade civics refresher, this is because one of the vice president's few official duties is to break a tie.) Currently, the Democrats control 54 votes: 51 Democratic senators, two independent senators who caucus with them, and one vice president. But the way the dice fell does not favor them: Democrats control 23 of the 33 Senate seats that are up this cycle, giving them much more territory to defend and many fewer opportunities to pick up seats. Of those 23 races, seven are open seats (i.e., the Democratic caucusing member is leaving the Senate), while four of the 10 Republican seats are open. The prediction markets are aware of this, of course, which is why the odds that Democrats will retain their majority currently rest at 41.5 percent. That's a major improvement for them since the beginning of the year, when their odds clocked in at 25 percent.

### Spending helps Incumbents

#### Spending gets incumbents elected – can produce 2 percent more votes for an additional 100 dollars.

Levitt and Snyder 97 [Steven D. Levitt, Harvard Society of Fellows, and James M. Snyder, MiT; “The Impact of Federal Spending on House Elections”; The Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 105, No.1, pages 30-53; <http://www.econ.umn.edu/~bajari/metricsf06/levitt.pdf>]

While it is widely believed by academics, politicians, and the popular press that incumbent congressmen are rewarded by the electorate for bringing federal dollars to their district, the empirical evidence supporting that claim is extremely weak. One explanation for the failure to uncover the expected relationship between federal spending and election outcomes is that incumbents who expect to have difficulty being reelected are likely to exert greater effort in obtaining federal outlays. Since it is generally impossible to adequately measure this effort, the estimated impact of spending is biased downward due to an omitted variable bias. We address this estimation problem using instrumental variables. For each House district, we use spending outside the district but inside the state containing the district, as an instrument for spending in the district. Federal spending is affected by a large number of actors (e.g. governors, senators, mayors, and other House members in the state delegation), leading to positive correlations in federal spending across the House districts within states. However, federal spending outside of a district is unlikely to be strongly correlated with the strength of that district's electoral challenge. Thus, spending in other districts is a plausible instrument. In contrast to previous studies, we find strong evidence that non-transfer federal spending benefits congressional incumbents: an additional $100 per capita in such spending is worth as much as two percent of the popular vote. Additional transfer spending, on the other hand, does not appear to have any electoral effects.

### Dem Wins Solves the aff

#### Democrats winning the House & Senate solves the Aff – Obama would become a transportation funding ninja

RUBINSTEIN 3 – 27 – 12 Reporter for Capital New York, has written for Bloomberg Businessweek, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the New York Observer, and the Brooklyn Paper [Dana Rubenstein “When is Obama going to have his Eisenhower moment?” March 27, 2012 http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2012/03/5524547/when-obama-going-have-his-eisenhower-moment]

In fact, even if Obama wins a second term, his ability to do anything much more than hold the line on current spending levels would probably be contingent on his party winning both houses of Congress.

"I think then he could really use the hammer of the bully pulpit of a sitting president who does’t have to run again," said Chris Ward, who served as the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's executive director before moving to construction firm Dragados. "I think he’ll be a very different president once he gets reelected."

“I’ll tell you this, if he wins a second term, he’s going to come into a second term with some domestic priorities,” said Schank. “Investing in transportation is not a bad way to invest his political capital.”

In the transportation nerd’s fantasy scenario, one in which funding was bountiful and politicians were programmed to spend it judiciously, the president would direct federal government to do things like rebuild the nation’s highways, expand its rail and transit networks, and improve connections between the two. The country could subsidize freight rail, unclogging the highways. The government could fund passenger rail too, and do it where it’s needed, like, say, in the Northeast corridor.

### Dems block Spending Cuts

#### **Democrats block spending cuts- control of senate key**

Kasperowicz ’11 Politics reporter for The Hill

[Pete Kasperowicz “McCain: Democratic control of Senate, White House preventing spending cuts” December 30, 2011 <http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/senate/201803-mccain-democratic-control-of-senate-white-house-preventing-spending-cuts>]

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said this week that Republicans in Congress have failed to cut spending because Democrats are still in charge of most of Washington. "We have the Democrats in charge of both the presidency and the Senate, and we have not cut spending, and we have not addressed the mortgaging of our children and our grandchildren's futures," McCain said in an Arizona television interview. McCain said that despite all the problems facing the U.S., "very little" is happening in Congress to address those problems. "That's the problem," he said. "We're in gridlock, as you know. We continue to go from one precipice to another, once crisis to another. It's a failure of the system to work. It's a failure of people to sit down and try to get things done."

#### Republicans pushing for cuts – Democratic Senate stops it.

Hulse ’11 Political columnist, NY Times

[Carl Hulse “House Approves Republican Budget Plan to Cut Trillions” April 15, 2011 <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/16/us/politics/16congress.html>]

House Republicans on Friday muscled through a budget plan that pares federal spending by an estimated $5.8 trillion over the next decade while reshaping Medicare in a proposal that immediately touched off a fierce clash with Democrats. Multimedia Just one day after Congress concluded its fight over this year’s spending, the House voted 235 to 193 to approve the fiscal blueprint for 2012 drafted by Representative Paul D. Ryan, Republican of Wisconsin and chairman of the Budget Committee. Besides reconfiguring the Medicare program that now serves those 65 and older, the proposal would cut the top corporate and personal income tax rates while also overhauling the Medicaid health program for the poor. The vote represents the most ambitious effort yet by the new Republican majority in the House to demonstrate that it intends to aggressively rein in spending and shrink government. It doubles as a challenge to President Obama over which party is more determined to force a sharp shift in the handling of federal dollars. “The spending spree is over,” Mr. Ryan said. “We cannot keep spending money we don’t have.” Almost as soon as the budget was approved, Senator Harry Reid, Democrat of Nevada and the majority leader, vowed that the plan would never pass the Senate, setting up another tense showdown with House Republicans over spending as well as over an administration request to raise the federal debt limit. Not a single Democrat voted for the proposal, which will effectively serve as the House Republican bargaining position in talks with the White House and the Democratic Senate over how to reduce annual federal deficits and the accumulated national debt.

### GOP key to Fisc Disc

#### Republicans key to fiscal discipline- democrats delay the budget

Feran 4/26/12 Political reporter for Metro staff and PolitiFact

[Tom Feran “House Speaker John Boehner says Senate Dems haven't passed a budget in more than 1,000 days” April 26, 2012]

"Ours is the only responsible budget in town," Boehner said about the GOP spending plan proposed by Paul Ryan, the House Budget Committee’s Republican chairman. Other budget proposals included those from the House Democratic leadership, the conservative Republican Study Committee, the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus, plus a bipartisan budget inspired by the Simpson-Bowles Fiscal Commission and co-authored by Reps. Jim Cooper, a Tennessee Democrat, and Steve LaTourette, the Ohio Republican. "Unfortunately, we're again waiting for leadership from the Democrats who run Washington," Boehner added, and then refreshed a favorite GOP talking point: "The Democrat-controlled Senate, it hasn't passed a budget in more than 1,000 days." Ultimately the House approved the Ryan budget by a near party-line 228-191 vote, but it isn’t expected to go anywhere in the Senate

Democratic congress fiscally irresponsible- haven’t balanced a budget in 4 decades

Jeffrey ’10 editor in chief of CNSNews

[Terrence P. Jeffrey “No Democrat-Controlled Congress Has Balanced Federal Budget in 40 Years” March 15, 2010]

Many leading Democrats in Washington these days like to point to the fact that the federal budget was balanced for part of the time that President Bill Clinton was in office. What they do not mention is that those balanced budgets occurred only when Republicans controlled both houses of Congress. In fact, according to the historical data published by the Office of Management and Budget in the Obama White House, no Congress in which the Democrats controlled both the House and Senate has balanced the federal budget since fiscal 1969--more than 40 years ago.

#### Democratic congress spend trillions

Spencer ’12 Political columnist at Red State

[Dan Spencer “Democrat controlled Congress increased national debt 23%” Jan 5, 2012]

When the Democrats regained control of Congress on January 4, 2007, the national debt was $8,670,596,242,973.04 -- that's $8.67 trillion. In the three years Pelosi and the Democrats have been in charge, the national debt has grown to $12,302,465,487,917.34 -- that's $12.30 trillion. Since Pelosi and the Democrats regained control of Congress $3,631,869,244,944.30, or $3.63 trillion, has been added to the national debt. That is an increase in three years the Democrats have controlled Congress. The Democrat controlled Congress gets the credit for the soaring national debt because under the Constitution, Congress controls the purse strings.

### Dems block Iran aggression

#### Republicans pushing for strict policy toward Iran but Democratic senate blocks it

AFP ’12

[“Republican-led House votes to allow military action against Iran” May 18, 2012 <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2012/05/18/republican-led-house-votes-to-allow-military-action-against-iran/>]

The Republican-led House of Representatives approved Friday the use of US force against Iran if the Tehran regime threatens the United States and its allies with nuclear weapons. According to a section of the National Defense Authorization Act, “it shall be the policy of the United States to take all necessary measures, including military action if required, to prevent Iran from threatening the United States, its allies or Iran’s neighbors with a nuclear weapon.” Lawmakers by a vote of 299-120 passed the sweeping legislation, which sets out a total of $642.5 billion in military expenditures for the coming fiscal year. The bill including the tough Iran language came just a day after a non-binding but sharply worded House resolution put pressure on President Barack Obama to prevent Tehran from pursuing its nuclear program and reject policy merely aimed at containing a nuclear weapons-capable Iran. Friday’s measure would make the possible use of force a key plank in US policy to prevent Iran from acquiring an atomic bomb. The bill would still need to pass the Democratic-controlled Senate, where Obama’s allies are highly unlikely to pass the House version without substantial changes.

## AFF STUFF

### No Link – Compartmentalization

#### No link – ideology and demographic coalitions are a bigger internal link to Senate voting.

Abramowitz 9 [Alan I. Abramowitz Department of Political Science Emory University; “U.S. Senate Elections in a Polarized Era”; Prepared for delivery at the Conference on Legislative Elections, Process and Policy: The Influence of Bicameralism, Vanderbilt University, October 22-24, 2009.; <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/archived/Bicameralism%20papers/abromowitz3.pdf>; Boyce]

While scholars generally agree about the importance of increasing partisan polarization in Congress, there has been much less agreement on the extent and significance of polarization in the American electorate. The central argument of this paper is that polarization is not just an elite phenomenon. I will present evidence that over the past several decades there has been a substantial increase in polarization in the electorate and that this has had important consequences for Senate elections and for the relationship between senators and their constituents. Four major trends have affected Senate elections in the past thirty years as a direct result of growing partisan polarization within the electorate. First, the parties’ electoral coalitions have become increasingly distinct both racially and ideologically. The nonwhite share of the U.S. electorate has doubled since the early 1990s, reaching a record 26 percent in 2008, and this trend is almost certain to continue based on the racial make-up of the youngest and oldest age groups in the population. However, due to the overwhelming preference of nonwhite voters for the Democratic Party, the growth of the nonwhite electorate has led to an increasing racial divide between the Democratic and Republican electoral coalitions. At the same time, the parties’ electoral coalitions have become increasingly distinct ideologically as a result of a gradual ideological realignment within the electorate (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998). Democratic Senate voters have become increasingly liberal while Republican Senate voters have become increasingly conservative. Second, as a result of the growing racial and ideological differences between the Democratic and Republican electoral coalitions, party loyalty and straight ticket voting have increased in Senate elections. This increase in party loyalty at the individual level means that state partisanship is now a stronger determinant of the outcomes of Senate elections than in the past and that winning candidates’ electoral coalitions are more party-based than in the past. Third, as a result of the changing racial composition of the electorate and ideological realignment, geographic polarization has increased. States with relatively liberal electorates have been trending Democratic while states with relatively conservative electorates have been trending Republican. As a result, the South has become the most Republican region in the nation while the Northeast has become the most Democratic region. Although the overall balance of power between the parties in the nation has been relatively close in recent years, the number of states dominated by one party has increased while the number of evenly balanced states has decreased. In the color-coded language of media commentators, there are more dark blue and dark red states and fewer purple states. The combination of increased geographic polarization and increased party loyalty in voting means that it is now much more difficult for a candidate from the minority party to win a Senate election. Fewer senators represent swing states or states that favor the opposing party while more senators represent states that are relatively safe for their own party. As a result, fewer senators need to worry about appealing to voters who identify with the opposing party.

### Prez Determines

#### The presidential winner is key to the Senate.

American Prospect 7-9 [Jamelle Bouie at the American Prospect; “Control of the Senate Depends on Obama”; 7/9/2012; <http://prospect.org/article/control-senate-depends-obama>; Boyce]

At The Washington Post, Chris Cillizza and Aaron Blake note that the battle for control of the Senate is basically a toss-up: Assuming King wins and picks the Democrats, Republicans would need four seats to take over the majority if former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney wins and five seats if President Obama is re-elected. (The vice president serves as President of the Senate and casts tie-breaking votes when necessary.) So, how do Republicans get to four (or five)? Nebraska is an almost certain pickup, with polls showing state Sen. Deb Fischer (R) with a comfortable lead. North Dakota’s open seat is far more competitive than most people expected (including us) but it’s still a state that should go solidly for Romney in November, which will help Rep. Rick Berg (R). The Republican field in Missouri is mediocre, but Sen. Claire McCaskill (D) isn’t likely to be able to get enough distance from Obama to save herself. The easy way to put this is that the Republican Senate majority depends entirely on Mitt Romney’s performance in November. If Romney wins with even a slight majority, then—given the decline of split-ticket voting—odds are good that Republicans have picked up a seat (or two) in either Montana, Wisconsin, or Virginia. By contrast, an Obama win—which would imply high minority turnout—would likely result in a narrow Senate majority for Democrats, and a smaller House majority for Republicans. In other words, we would have a variation on the status quo. It should be said that this puts lie to Obama’s promise to “break the stalemate” if he wins re-election. Republicans have no incentive to be The moderate; as time goes on, it becomes much more difficult for the incumbent party to maintain its hold on power. If Republicans hold on to their right-wing intransigence, they’ll eventually be rewarded; Democrats will lose their grip on the White House and their majorities in Congress, and the GOP will have the space it needs to pursue its agenda.