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Elections DA

#### Obama will win the election --- major indicators and polls point to a victory.

**West**, **7/12**/2012 (Paul – Tribune Washington Bureau, Obama holds ‘significant lead’ over Romney in new national poll, The Olympian, p. http://www.theolympian.com/2012/07/12/2171777/obama-holds-significant-lead-over.html)

With the election still four months away, President Barack Obama holds "a significant lead" over Republican challenger Mitt Romney, according to a new Pew Research Center poll released Thursday.The national survey, completed July 9, showed Obama outpacing Romney by 50 percent to 43 percent. That's a more substantial gap than most recent surveys have registered, but Obama has held at least a small lead in earlier polling by Pew. The independent polling operation said there had been "no clear trend in either candidate's support" since Romney secured the GOP nomination in early spring.When it comes to fixing the economy - the top issue of the campaign - "Romney has not seized the advantage," Pew's analysis concluded. "In fact, he has lost ground on this issue over the past month."Of potentially greater significance than the overall national figures, Obama continues to lead Romney in battleground states. In the 12 states considered most competitive at this point, the president holds a seven percentage-point edge, 51 to 44, the Pew survey found. A Wall Street Journal survey, released late last month, also showed Obama with an eight-point advantage in battleground states.The national figures found no overall improvement in Romney's standing with voters over the past two months, a period in which Obama has attempted to keep his rival on the defensive with negative ad attacks on his business record and personal wealth. Some Republicans outside the Romney camp have become increasingly jittery about what they regard as insufficient progress by their party's unofficial nominee against a vulnerable incumbent.As the campaign heads into mid-summer, a period in which public attention will be diverted, at least in part, by the Olympic Games in London, Romney has failed thus far to capitalize on deep voter dissatisfaction with the way things are going in the country.At the same time, Obama's job-approval rating has ticked up slightly. In the latest poll, it stood at 50 percent, the first time Pew found that he had reached positive territory on that score since March.Voters were asked which candidate was best suited to fix the U.S. economy, and by a six-point margin they favored Obama over Romney, 48 percent to 42 percent. That's a sharp turnaround from June, when Romney held the advantage on that question by eight points, 49 percent to 41 percent. The Pew poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.1 percentage points.A similar shift was reflected among independent voters, a prized target for both candidates, who are now almost evenly divided on who would best improve the economy. In June, Romney enjoyed a 13-point edge among independents on that question.The latest survey, like most polling at this stage of the campaign, did not attempt to narrow the contest down to likely voters. Obama's lead, Pew found, stemmed from the fact that more voters currently identify themselves as Democrats than Republicans, and that virtually identical proportions of each say they will back their party's nominee.Put another way, the results of the survey are yet a further indication that voter mobilization will be crucial in determining the winner of this year's election.Obama has increased his lead among younger voters - historically the least likely to turn out on Election Day. It's now 24 percentage points, down from 34 points in the 2008 election. Independent voters - who typically decide close elections - remain split, with 46 percent favoring Romney and 45 percent supporting Obama, a statistical tie.

#### Independents don’t want a federally funded HSR.

**Ekins**, 1/5/**2012** (Emily – Director of Polling for Reason Foundation, 55 Percent of Americans Want Private Enterprise to Build High Speed Rail, Reason, p. http://reason.com/poll/2012/01/05/55-percent-of-american-want-private-ente)

When Americans are asked to choose between government and private business building high-speed rail, however, a majority of Americans (55 percent) want private enterprise to build this infrastructure. In contrast, 34 percent believe government should build high-speed rail. Partisan divisions do arise for this issue of high-speed rail: a plurality of Democrats and Occupy Wall Street supporters prefer government build with taxpayer money, however a majority of pure Independents, Tea Party Supporters and Republicans prefer private companies to build these railways.

#### Independent voters are increasing in size. They are the swing vote in battleground states.

**USA Today**, 7/10/**2012** (Analysis: Independents jump in key swing states, p. <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/onpolitics/post/2012/07/independent-voters-swing-states-obama-romney-/1>)

Independent voters are growing in some battleground states that will help decide the 2012 presidential election, a Bloomberg News analysis says. The upshot: Democrats have lost more voters in those swing states.Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire and North Carolina have grown by a combined total of 443,000 independent voters, according to data from the top elections officials in those states.At the same time, the Bloomberg analysis shows Democrats have lost 480,000 voters in those six states while Republicans picked up 38,000 voters.Michelle Diggles of Third Way, a Democratic-leaning research group, told Bloomberg that independents are "really just fed up with both parties.""Most elections are about the center, and that's where the swing vote is going to come from," Diggles is quoted as saying.

#### Romney election leads to China bashing --- results in a trade war

**Palmer**, 3/27/**2012** (Doug, Romney would squeeze China on currency manipulation-adviser, p. http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/28/us-usa-romney-china-idUSBRE82Q0ZS20120328)

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 United States 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."

#### Trade wars go nuclear

**Taaffe 2005** (Peter Taaffe, “China, A New Superpower?,” Socialist Alternative.org, Nov 1, 2005, pg. <http://www.socialistalternative.org/news/article11.php?id=30>)

While this conflict is unresolved, the shadow of a trade war looms. Some commentators, like Henry C.K. Liu in the Asia Times, go further and warn that "trade wars can lead to shooting wars." China is not the Japan of the 21st century. Japan in the 1980s relied on the U.S. military and particularly its nuclear umbrella against China, and was therefore subject to the pressure and blackmail of the U.S. ruling class. The fear of the U.S., and the capitalists of the "first world" as a whole, is that China may in time "out-compete" the advanced nations for hi-tech jobs while holding on to the stranglehold it now seems to have in labor-intensive industries. As the OECD commented recently: "In the five-year period to 2003, the number of students joining higher education courses has risen by three and a half times, with a strong emphasis on technical subjects." The number of patents and engineers produced by China has also significantly grown. At the same time, an increasingly capitalist China - most wealth is now produced in the private sector but the majority of the urban labor force is still in state industries - and the urgency for greater energy resources in particular to maintain its spectacular growth rate has brought it into collision on a world scale with other imperialist powers, particularly the U.S. In a new worldwide version of the "Great Game"- the clash for control of central Asia's resources in the nineteenth century - the U.S. and China have increasingly come up against and buffeted one another. Up to now, the U.S. has held sway worldwide due to its economic dominance buttressed by a colossal war machine accounting for 47% of total world arms spending. But Iraq has dramatically shown the limits of this: "A country that cannot control Iraq can hardly remake the globe on its own." (Financial Times) But no privileged group disappears from the scene of history without a struggle. Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. defense secretary, has stated: "Since no nation threatens China, one must wonder: why this growing [arms] investment? Why these continuing large and expanding arms purchases?" China could ask the same question of the U.S. In order to maintain its position, the U.S. keeps six nuclear battle fleets permanently at sea, supported by an unparalleled network of bases. As Will Hutton in The Observer has commented, this is not because of "irrational chauvinism or the needs of the military-industrial complex, but because of the pressure they place on upstart countries like China." In turn, the Chinese elite has responded in kind. For instance, in the continuing clash over Taiwan, a major-general in the People's Liberation Army baldly stated that if China was attacked "by Washington during a confrontation over Taiwan... I think we would have to respond with nuclear weapons." He added: "We Chinese will prepare ourselves for the destruction of all of the cities east of Xian. Of course, theAmericans would have to be prepared that hundreds... of cities would be destroyed by the Chinese." Thisbellicose nuclear arms rattling shows thecontempt of the so-called great powers for the ordinary working-class and peasant peoples of China and the people of the U.S. when their interests are at stake.

States CP

Text: The 50 states should fund <insert specific HSR plan text>

HSR should be funded by the states

Dehaven 11 [Tad Dehaven, budget analyst on federal and state budget issues for the Cato Institute,

5/13/11, “High-Speed Rail and Federalism”, Cato Institute, http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/high-speed-rail-and-federalism] aw

Florida Governor Rick Scott deserves a big round of applause for dealing a major setback to the Obama administration’s costly plan for a national system of high-speed rail. [As Randal O’Toole explains](http://www.cato-at-liberty.org/the-administration-concedes-defeat/#more-31446), the administration needed Florida to keep the $2.4 billion it was awarded to build a high-speed Orlando-to-Tampa line in order to build “momentum” for its plan. Instead, Scott put the interests of his taxpayers first and told the administration “no thanks.” That’s the good news. The bad news is that the administration is going to dole the money back out to 22 passenger-rail projects in other states. Florida taxpayers were spared their state’s share of maintaining the line, but they’re still going to be forced to help foot the bill for passenger-rail projects in other states. Here’s Randal’s summary: Instead, the Department of Transportation gave [nearly $1 billion](http://www.dot.gov/affairs/2011/dot5711.html) of the $2.4 billion to Amtrak and states in the Northeast Corridor to replace worn out infrastructure and slightly speed up trains in that corridor, as well as connecting routes such as New Haven to Hartford and New York to Albany. Most of the rest of the money went to Midwestern states—Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, and Missouri—to buy new trains, improve stations, and do engineering studies of a few corridors such as the vital Minneapolis-to-Duluth corridor. Trains going an average of 57 mph instead of 52 mph are not going to inspire the public to spend $53 billion more on high-speed rail. The administration did give California $300 million for its high-speed rail program. But, with that grant, the state still has only about 10 percent of the $65 billion estimated cost of a San Francisco-to-Los Angeles line, and there is no more money in the till. If the $300 million is ever spent, it will be for a 220-mph [train to nowhere](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/24/opinion/24white.html) in California’s Central Valley. Why should Floridians be taxed by the federal government to pay for passenger-rail in the northeast? If the states in the Northeast Corridor want to pick up the subsidy tab from the federal government, go for it. (I argue in a Cato essay on [Amtrak](http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/transportation/amtrak/subsidies) that if the Northeast Corridor possesses the population density to support passenger-rail then it should just be privatized.)

Solvency

Low profitability and ridership mean HSR can’t solve- their evidence is too optimistic

De Rugy 12

High-speed Rail to Nowhere

By Veronique de Rugy, Veronique de Rugy is a senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. Her primary research interests include the U.S. economy, federal budget, homeland security, taxation, tax competition, and financial privacy issues. Her popular weekly charts, published by the Mercatus Center, address economic issues ranging from lessons on creating sustainable economic growth to the implications of government tax and fiscal policies.

January 10, 2012 6:44 P.M.

<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/287697/high-speed-rail-nowhere-veronique-de-rugy>

The Washington Post’s Charles Lane has a really good yet infuriating piece today on California’s high-speed rail project. As you know, the Golden State has been pushing, at the encouragement of the federal government, an increasingly expensive high-speed-rail project. The rationale behind the multi-billion-dollar train is its ability to stimulate the economy and create jobs for many years to come. But as Lane explains, even ignoring the mountain of evidence accumulated in the past about high-speed rail’s inability to stimulate much of anything aside from debt, this particular project is on track to become yet another boondoggle.¶ The latest authoritative warning came last week from the California High-Speed Rail Peer Review Group, which called the program “an immense financial risk” for the state and refused to recommend that the state legislature sell $2.7 billion in bonds to start a 130-mile initial stretch of the system.¶ Thanks to federal policy, if California does not start work on the rail line by Sept. 30, it will lose an additional $3.3 billion in federal money — possibly dooming the system.¶ But the Catch-22 is that, if California does start building without securing future funding, it could end up with a $6 billion track to nowhere. As the Peer Review Group (PRG) explains, that’s because, for economic-stimulus reasons, Washington insisted that California build the initial stretch between two outposts in the lightly populated San Joaquin Valley.¶ “[M]oving ahead . . . without credible sources of adequate funding, without a definitive business model, without a strategy to maximize the independent utility and value to the State, and without the appropriate management resources, represents an immense financial risk on the part of the State of California,” concluded the PRG, an independent body established by the 2008 referendum that authorized $9 billion in high-speed rail bonds.¶ Of course, lawmakers in California dismiss the report and would like to to move ahead with the project. This is amazing especially considering how much evidence we have that high-speed rail is, at best, a “questionable investment even if California could afford to build it,” as Lane says. In this piece, for instance, the Cato Institute’s Randy O’Toole shows that high-speed rail creates almost no new mobility (it adds a tiny number of new travelers), which means no real value. And then, of course, it’s a terrible investment for taxpayers, who will be taking a risk as well as subsidizing a transportation system that most of them won’t use. (The estimate is that the overall high-speed rail system envisioned by president Obama will serve only 8 percent of Americans.) O’Toole explains:¶ Unlike the interstates, which were paid for exclusively out of gasoline taxes and other highway user fees, all of the capital costs and much of the operating costs of high-speed trains will be subsidized by taxpayers who will rarely ride the trains. This is the way it works in France and Japan, where — despite having population distributions much more conducive to rail travel — residents ride high-speed trains an average of less than 500 miles a year.¶ There are many reasons why passenger rail service doesn’t work in America. As Robert Samuelson wrote in the Washington Post a few months ago:¶ Interstate highways shorten many trip times; suburbanization has fragmented destination points; air travel is quicker and more flexible for long distances (if fewer people fly from Denver to Los Angeles and more go to Houston, flight schedules simply adjust). Against history and logic is the imagery of high-speed rail as “green” and a cutting-edge technology.¶ And Lane confirms:¶ But the sprawling, decentralized cities of the United States do not make convenient destinations for train travelers. International experience shows that high-speed rail entails expensive debt service and large operating subsidies. This would likely be the case here as well, since, for better or worse, rail must compete with well-established air and car options. Business travel is one ostensible purpose of bullet trains in California, but increasingly people meet via video conference.¶ Contrary to what many Americans think, the French do have nice and fast trains but they don’t use them enough to make them profitable. Even though France’s geography is better suited to rail travel than America’s, only one French high-speed line breaks even, and relatively few people use this expensive system of transportation.¶ And yet these projects looked good on paper. That’s not surprising, considering that inaccurate estimates of demand plague infrastructure projects. A study of 208 projects in 14 nations on five continents shows that nine out of ten rail projects overestimate actual traffic. Moreover, 84 percent of rail-passenger forecasts are wrong by more than 20 percent. Thus, for rail, passenger traffic averages 51.4 percent less than estimated traffic. This means that there is a systematic tendency to overestimate rail revenues. ¶ The same body of work has also shown that project promoters routinely ignore, hide, or otherwise leave out important project costs and risks to make total costs appear lower. Researchers refer to this as the “planning fallacy” or the “optimism bias.” Scholars have also found that it can be politically rewarding to lie about the costs and benefits of such projects. The data show that the political process is more likely to give funding to managers who underestimate the costs and overestimate the benefits. In other words, it is not the best projects that get implemented, but the ones that look the best on paper.¶ Finally, as my colleague Matt Mitchell and I have documented in the past, claims that investment in infrastructure projects will stimulate the economy and will create many jobs are, at best, dubious.

Oil

High-Speed rail doesn’t decrease dependence on oil and may increase emissions

Bosworth 11 (Bosworth, Anthony, Tony Bosworth is a campaigner for Friends of the Earth, in its energy and climate team. He has a long track record of working on environmental issues, including a spell as transport campaigner for the environmental campaigning charity, 11/18/11, CNN, How Green is HSR, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/18/world/how-green-is-hsr/index.html>) MPARA

The UK is currently mulling over a high speed rail link between London and Birmingham, a city about 160 kilometers north-west of the capital. But according to official estimates, it's unlikely to lead to significant carbon dioxide cuts -- and may even increase climate-changing emissions. So what's stopping high speed rail being a major part of a greener transport future in Britain?

First there's the electricity to power the trains. Over two thirds of the world's electricity comes from fossil fuels so until (or unless) power stations are weaned off fossil fuels, electric trains will still have a significant climate impact -- although rail travel is still better than flying or driving. Secondly, will high speed rail entice people off the roads and short-haul flights? French TGVs and the Channel Tunnel rail link have succeeded, but official calculations estimate that only 16 per cent of anticipated passengers for the London to Birmingham line will have swapped from planes or cars. One of the main factors is cost. Despite soaring fuel prices, motoring and flying are still expected to be cheaper than high speed rail. If faster rail travel is to become a realistic alternative it must be affordable too. The UK's high speed rail link is expected to cost a whopping $54 billion. But living as we do in cash-strapped times there's surely a strong case for investing some of that that money in less grandiose, but more effective, projects.

#### Russian economy good now – funding from oil sector key to maintain growth

Oprita 6/21

([Antonia Oprita](http://www.cnbc.com/id/15837548/cid/130727) is a Deputy News Editor for CNBC.com. 6/21/12. http://www.cnbc.com/id/47870418)hs

As participants gather in the Russian city of St. Petersburg for the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, their debates will focus on minimizing the effects of the debt crisis that is still raging through the euro zone. However, Russia itself is more sheltered from the crisis this time than it was during the global downturn in 2008 and 2009. Its prospects are brighter than those of many other economies, despite fears that the return of Vladimir Putin to the presidency will slow the pace of structural reforms and falling oil prices could hurt the country's budget. “I think currently Russia is in a very good situation," Anton Struchenevsky, senior economist at Troika Dialog in Moscow, told CNBC.com. "The exchange rate policy is more flexible than in 2008/2009, and it helps Russia to absorb external shocks." The ruble fell 12 percent against the dollar in May, the biggest drop since January 2009, but in June it recouped most of the losses and is nearly flat year-to-date. "Having lurched given the crisis in the euro zone, [the ruble] has pretty much recovered all its losses," Liam Halligan, chief economist at Prosperity Capital RF in Moscow, told CNBC.com. "The Russian state has a very strong balance sheet," Halligan added, pointing out that Russia "hasn't printed any money." Half of the revenues to Russia's budget come from the oil and gas sector, and taxation in that area depends heavily on the oil price on international markets. When prices decline, the Russian budget gets less revenue in dollar terms. But the budget is denominated in rubles, so a decline in the national currency helps to offset falls in oil prices to a certain degree. Oil prices fell to around $83 a barrel from around $110 in February because of worries that the global economy would slow down as the euro zone debt crisis spread. "Due to the devaluation of the ruble, the fall in oil prices was somewhat compensated," Struchenevsky said. Growth Forecast Upgraded The World Bank has upgraded slightly its economic growth estimate for Russia, forecasting growth of 3.8 percent in 2012 and 4.2 percent in 2013 in its June edition of the Global Economic Prospects. In January, the estimates were 3.5 percent for this year and 3.9 percent for next year. Russia's macroeconomic data would make many euro zone politicians go green with envy. The country's economy grew by 4.3 percent last year, its sovereign debt is around 10 percent of gross domestic product, its budget had a deficit of 0.9 percent in the first three months of this year and its current account had a surplus last year. "Actually, Russia is crediting the rest of the world," said Struchenevsky. One of the biggest risks for Russia's economy is the fact that it has become too dependent on high oil prices, said Neil Shearing, chief emerging markets economist at Capital Economics.

High speed rail decreases US oil dependence and consumption

Langan 10 (Paul, founder of High Speed Rail Canada, Issue 31 of Corporate Knights journal, “Getting on track,” http://www.corporateknights.com/article/getting-track)

HSR is a big part of reducing our impact on the planet. Lower greenhouse gas emissions, less oil dependence, and less energy consumption can all be achieved through switching to greater train use. The 1995 Federal/Ontario/Quebec study states, “By the year 2025, annual emissions of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide related to inter-city travel within the [Windsor-Quebec City] corridor would drop by 24 per cent and 11 per cent [respectively] with the introduction of 300kph technology.”The 2006 High-Speed Rail and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Study by the U.S. Center for Clean Air Policy and the Center for Neighborhood Technology calculated that passengers would—assuming all proposed U.S. HSR lines were built—take 112 million HSR trips in the U.S. in 2025. This would result in 29 million fewer automobile trips and nearly 500,000 fewer flights. The U.S.’s total emissions savings: over 2,700 tonnes of CO2 per year.Switching from air and auto travel will also reduce our dependence on oil. The California High-Speed Rail Authority estimates its planned line will save 12.7 million barrels of oil per year by 2030, even with future improvements in auto fuel efficiency. This is in part because high-speed trains need one-third the energy of an airplane and one-fifth the energy of an automobile trip to carry a passenger one kilometre.

#### High oil prices are key to the Russian economy – provides 2/3 of all revenues

Schuman 7/5

(Michael Schuman is a staff writer for Times Business. 7/5/12. http://business.time.com/2012/07/05/why-vladimir-putin-needs-higher-oil-prices/?iid=tsmodule)hs

Falling oil prices make just about everyone happy. For strapped consumers in struggling developed nations, lower oil prices mean a smaller payout at the pump, freeing up room in strained wallets to spend on other things and boosting economic growth. In the developing world, lower oil prices mean reduced inflationary pressures, which will give central bankers more room to stimulate sagging growth. With the global economy still climbing out of the 2008 financial crisis, policymakers around the world can welcome lower oil prices as a rare piece of helpful news. But Vladimir Putin is not one of them. The economy that the Russian President has built not only runs on oil, but runs on oil priced extremely high. Falling oil prices means rising problems for Russia – both for the strength of its economic performance, and possibly, the strength of Putin himself.Despite the fact that Russia has been labeled one of the world’s most promising emerging markets, often mentioned in the same breath as China and India, the Russian economy is actually quite different from the others. While India gains growth benefits from an expanding population, Russia, like much of Europe, is aging; while economists fret over China’s excessive dependence on investment, Russia badly needs more of it. Most of all, Russia is little more than an oil state in disguise. The country is the largest producer of oil in the world (yes, bigger even than Saudi Arabia), and Russia’s dependence on crude has been increasing. About a decade ago, oil and gas accounted for less than half of Russia’s exports; in recent years, that share has risen to two-thirds. Most of all, oil provides more than half of the federal government’s revenues.What’s more, the economic model Putin has designed in Russia relies heavily not just on oil, but high oil prices.Oil lubricates the Russian economy by making possible the increases in government largesse that have fueled Russian consumption. Budget spending reached 23.6% of GDP in the first quarter of 2012, up from 15.2% four years earlier. What that means is Putin requires a higher oil price to meet his spending requirements today than he did just a few years ago. Research firm Capital Economics figures that the government budget balanced at an oil price of $55 a barrel in 2008, but that now it balances at close to $120. Oil prices today have fallen far below that, with Brent near $100 and U.S. crude less than $90. The farther oil prices fall, the more pressure is placed on Putin’s budget, and the harder it is for him to keep spreading oil wealth to the greater population through the government. With a large swath of the populace angered by his re-election to the nation’s presidency in March, and protests erupting on the streets of Moscow, Putin can ill-afford a significant blow to the economy, or his ability to use government resources to firm up his popularity. That’s why Putin hasn’t been scaling back even as oil prices fall. His government is earmarking $40 billion to support the economy, if necessary, over the next two years. He does have financial wiggle room, even with oil prices falling. Moscow has wisely stashed away petrodollars into a rainy day fund it can tap to fill its budget needs. But Putin doesn’t have the flexibility he used to have. The fund has shrunk, from almost 8% of GDP in 2008 to a touch more than 3% today. The package, says Capital Economics, simply highlights the weaknesses of Russia’s economy: This cuts to the heart of a problem we have highlighted before – namely that Russia is now much more dependent on high and rising oil prices than in the past…The fact that the share of ‘permanent’ spending (e.g. on salaries and pensions) has increased…creates additional problems should oil prices drop back (and is also a concern from the perspective of medium-term growth)…The present growth model looks unsustainable unless oil prices remain at or above $120pb.

#### Economic collapse in Russia leads to internal war--spills over and goes nuclear

David 99 (Steven, Proffesor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University, “Internal War: Causes and Cures”, July, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/world\_politics/related/v049/49.4er\_brown.html)

If internal war does strike Russia, economic deterioration will be a prime cause. From 1989 to the present, the GDP has fallen by 50 percent. In a society where, ten years ago, unemployment scarcely existed, it reached 9.5 percent in 1997 with many economists declaring the true figure to be much higher. Twenty-two percent of Russians live below the official poverty line (earning less than $ 70 a month). Modern Russia can neither collect taxes (it gathers only half the revenue it is due) nor significantly cut spending. Reformers tout privatization as the country's cure-all, but in a land without well-defined property rights or contract law and where subsidies remain a way of life, the prospects for transition to an American-style capitalist economy look remote at best. As the massive devaluation of the ruble and the current political crisis show, Russia's condition is even worse than most analysts feared. If conditions get worse, even the stoic Russian people will soon run out of patience. A future conflict would quickly draw in Russia's military. In the Soviet days civilian rule kept the powerful armed forces in check. But with the Communist Party out of office, what little civilian control remains relies on an exceedingly fragile foundation -- personal friendships between government leaders and military commanders. Meanwhile, the morale of Russian soldiers has fallen to a dangerous low. Drastic cuts in spending mean inadequate pay, housing, and medical care. A new emphasis on domestic missions has created an ideological split between the old and new guard in the military leadership, increasing the risk that disgruntled generals may enter the political fray and feeding the resentment of soldiers who dislike being used as a national police force. Newly enhanced ties between military units and local authorities pose another danger. Soldiers grow ever more dependent on local governments for housing, food, and wages. Draftees serve closer to home, and new laws have increased local control over the armed forces. Were a conflict to emerge between a regional power and Moscow, it is not at all clear which side the military would support. Divining the military's allegiance is crucial, however, since the structure of the Russian Federation makes it virtually certain that regional conflicts will continue to erupt. Russia's 89 republics, krais, and oblasts grow ever more independent in a system that does little to keep them together. As the central government finds itself unable to force its will beyond Moscow (if even that far), power devolves to the periphery. With the economy collapsing, republics feel less and less incentive to pay taxes to Moscow when they receive so little in return. Three-quarters of them already have their own constitutions, nearly all of which make some claim to sovereignty. Strong ethnic bonds promoted by shortsighted Soviet policies may motivate non-Russians to secede from the Federation. Chechnya's successful revolt against Russian control inspired similar movements for autonomy and independence throughout the country. If these rebellions spread and Moscow responds with force, civil war is likely. Should Russia succumb to internal war, the consequences for the United States and Europe will be severe. A major power like Russia -- even though in decline -- does not suffer civil war quietly or alone. An embattled Russian Federation might provoke opportunistic attacks from enemies such as China. Massive flows of refugees would pour into central and western Europe. Armed struggles in Russia could easily spill into its neighbors. Damage from the fighting, particularly attacks on nuclear plants, would poison the environment of much of Europe and Asia. Within Russia, the consequences would be even worse. Just as the sheer brutality of the last Russian civil war laid the basis for the privations of Soviet communism, a second civil war might produce another horrific regime. Most alarming is the real possibility that the violent disintegration of Russia could lead to loss of control over its nuclear arsenal. Nonuclear state has ever fallen victim to civil war, but even without a clear precedent the grim consequences can be foreseen. Russia retains some 20,000 nuclear weapons and the raw material for tens of thousands more, in scores of sites scattered throughout the country. So far, the government has managed to prevent the loss of any weapons or much material. If war erupts, however, Moscow's already weak grip on nuclear sites will slacken, making weapons and supplies available to a wide range of anti-American groups and states. Such dispersal of nuclear weapons represents the greatest physical threat America now faces. And it is hard to think of anything that would increase this threat more than the chaos that would follow a Russian civil war.

Economy

Recovery is on track- unemployment decreasing and spending rising

Rushe 6/26/12

Dominic Rushe is the US business correspondent for the Guardian, OECD: US economy is improving but recovery is far from complete- Report suggests economy has 'gained momentum' but says long-term unemployment and income equality must be solved, The Guardian, Tuesday 26 June 2012 11.21 EDT

The US recovery remains on track but "fissures" have begun to appear in the world's largest economy as it struggles with record long-term unemployment and income inequality, according to a report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. The international economist group is more bullish on the economy than Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke, who recently downgraded his forecasts for the US economy. And the report may prove useful ammunition for the Obama administration as the economy emerges as the key battleground of the 2012 election. The OECD offered support to president Barack Obama's plans to cut tax breaks for America's wealthiest, a plan known as the 'Buffett rule' after its championing by billionaire investor Warren Buffett. Growth in the US will remain moderate this year but the OECD report concludes that America's economic recovery has "gained momentum". Consumer and business spending have risen and unemployment, though still high at 8.2%, has fallen nearly two percentage points from its peak in 2009.

High-Speed rail causes competition with buses and airlines- China proves

People’s Daily Online 11

Nanjing-Wuhan high-speed rail out-competes airlines, routes cancelled

16:35, March 31, 2011, People's Daily Online

<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/98649/7336854.html>

All flights between Nanjing and Wuhan were canceled starting from March 27 because of strong competition from high-speed rail. This is the first time that high-speed rail has forced airlines to cancel flights on the same route. The Hefei-Wuhan High-speed Passenger Railway opened in 2009. With a speed of 250 kilometers per hour, it cuts the journey time between the two cities to three hours. Three trains run on this route every day, and a ticket for a second-class seat only costs 180 yuan, so its occupancy rate is often above 90 percent. By contrast, the occupancy rates of the flights between the two cities, operated by Lucky Air and China Southern Airlines, have plunged below 50 percent since the railway opened. A full-price air ticket for this route costs 730 yuan (excluding fuel surcharges and airport construction fees), and their flights incurred losses almost every time, except on holidays. The airlines had taken many measures to improve the situation in the past two years, including offering tickets at 80 percent off the full price, but the occupancy rate remained low, partly because the airports at the two cities are too far from the city proper. Sometimes, there were only around 30 passengers on a flight. The two airlines said that after the Nanjing South Railway Station for the Beijing-Shanghai High-speed Railway is put into operation in the third quarter of this year, there will be more high-speed trains running between Wuhan and Nanjing, and the number of air passengers will continue to drop. Therefore, it is the right time for them to quit the market. Actually, the situation of road passenger transportation is also not good. A long-distance bus without any passengers departed from the Jinjiadun Terminal at 7 p.m. on March 30. The driver said the bus to Nanjing had not received any passengers for several days. The Hubei Highway Transport Corporation said that collinear flights and long-distance buses have no competitive advantages. They have stopped their long-distance bus from Wuhan to Shanghai and only operated on the eastern line. Hubei Highway Transport Corporation's volume of passenger traffic decreased more than 200,000 passengers per year resulting in a loss of more than 30 million yuan per year. Officials from the Wuhan Transportation Commission said that the competition between railway, highway and aviation has turned white-hot and passengers have become the prime beneficiary of the competition. Passengers can now choose based on their specific travel circumstances. For example, Wuhan-to-Guangzhou travelers can choose high-speed rail if they value speed and time. Passengers can choose aviation if they value speed or they can also choose regular trains and long-distance bus if they want to save money and do not care about the time.

The U.S. aviation industry is key to the economy

Trupo 6/21

Mary Trupo,  International Trade Administration's Director of the Office of Public Affairs, International Trade Administration, “Aerospace Industry is Critical Contributor to U.S. Economy According to Obama Trade Official at Paris Air Show,” 6/21/12.

PARIS – Francisco Sánchez, Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, addressed national and international groups at the 2011 Paris Air Show to reinforce the President’s National Export Initiative (NEI) and support the U.S. aerospace industry.

“The U.S. aerospace industry is a strategic contributor to the economy, national security, and technological innovation of the United States,” Sánchez said. “The industry is key to achieving the President’s goals of doubling exports by the end of 2014 and contributed $78 billion in export sales to the U.S. economy in 2010.”

During the U.S. Pavilion opening remarks, Sánchez noted that the aerospace sector in the United States supports more jobs through exports than any other industry. Sánchez witnessed a signing ceremony between Boeing and Aeroflot, Russia’s state-owned airline. Aeroflot has ordered eight 777s valued at $2.1 billion, and the sales will support approximately 14,000 jobs.

“The 218 American companies represented in the U.S. International Pavilion demonstrate the innovation and hard work that make us leaders in this sector,” said Sánchez. “I am particularly pleased to see the incredible accomplishments of U.S. companies participating in the Alternative Aviation Fuels Showcase, which demonstrates our leadership in this important sector and shows that we are on the right path to achieving the clean energy future envisioned by President Obama.”

The 2011 Paris Air Show is the world’s largest aerospace trade exhibition, and features 2,000 exhibitors, 340,000 visitors, and 200 international delegations.

The U.S. aerospace industry ranks among the most competitive in the world, boasting a positive trade balance of $44.1 billion – the largest trade surplus of any U.S. manufacturing industry. It directly sustains about 430,000 jobs, and indirectly supports more than 700,000 additional jobs. Ninety-one percent of U.S. exporters of aerospace products are small and medium-sized firms.

And, cross-apply their econ impact card

#### A. Fiscal discipline now – political pressure will lead to debt compromise

Washington Post 7/18

Washington Post 7/18/12, <http://www.columbiatribune.com/news/2012/jul/18/coalition-aims-to-head-off-debt-disaster/>

WASHINGTON — Acoalition of business leaders, budget experts and former politicians launched a $25 million campaign yesterday to build political support for a far-reaching plan to raise taxes, cut popular retirement programs and tame the national debt. With anxiety rising over a major budget mess looming in January, the campaign — dubbed "Fix the Debt" — is founded on the notion that the moment is finally at hand when policymakers will be forced to compromise on an ambitious debt-reduction strategy.After nearly three years of bipartisan negotiations, the broad outlines of that strategy are clear, the group's leaders said during a news conference at the National Press Club: Raise more money through a simplified tax code and spend less on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, the primary drivers of future borrowing."Everyone knows in their hearts and their minds what has to be done," said Democratic former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, who is chairing the group with former New Hampshire Sen. Judd Gregg, a Republican. The goal of the campaign is to "create a safe environment where it's not only good policy, but good politics as well."The campaign was founded by former Clinton White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles and former Republican Sen. Alan Simpson of Wyoming. The two men led an independent fiscal commission that in 2010 produced a $4 trillion debt-reduction framework that has won praise from politicians across the political spectrum.But the Bowles-Simpson plan never won the explicit backing of President Barack Obama or GOP leaders and therefore never gained real traction in Congress.The campaign plans to launch a social media drive to persuade lawmakers to approve a plan similar to the Bowles-Simpson framework by July 4, 2013 — replacing $600 billion in abrupt tax hikes and sharp spending cuts that are otherwise set to take effect in January.

#### B. Bullet Trains Expensive and problematic

Walter Russell Mead, Professor of Foreign Affairs and Humanities at Bard College Editor-at-Large of The American Interest magazine, Paraphrases UCLA study, 6-12, http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2012/07/14/ucla-study-bullet-train-wont-create-growth/

UCLA Study: Bullet Train Won’t Create GrowthA UCLA study of Japan’s high-speed rail system concludes that bullet trains don’t create economic growth, undermining one of the major justifications for California’s own high-speed train system.[Jerry] Nickelsburg [the UCLA economist who led the study] examined the growth rates of cities and regions served by Japan’s system, compared to the nation’s overall rate of growth, and found that the introduction of high-speed passenger service had no discernible effect.The analysis looked at nearly a dozen urban and rural prefectures and found no evidence that the introduction of bullet train service improved tax revenues, which was used as a proxy for local gross domestic product. In one case, one region without high-speed rail service grew just as quickly as a similar region with it. The study examined economic activity over a 30-year period.Last week, a Via Meadia commenter brought up a good point about high-speed rail:Only people whose homes are near the terminals will benefit. Everywhere else, land will be blocked off from productive use — worse than blocked off, converted from use that is productive for the locals—for the benefit of the few who live near the station. This is why voters and municipalities on the San Fransisco peninsula, from Burlingame to San Jose, are vehemently opposed to this expropriation.To make the train useful to them, it would have to stop there… at which point it stops being high-speed.The bad news about California’s absurdly expensive and increasingly unpopular bullet train system continues to pile up. By the time this white elephant is finished — if it ever is — it will be even more useless than it now looks. Transport technology will have changed, as innovations like self-driving cars challenge the assumptions on which the high speed rail backers make their case. Improvements in telcom technology and changes in work habits by new generations that grow up with new technologies will make telecommuting and teleconferencing integral to the way business works

#### C. Loss of fiscal discipline causes a downgrade

Mark Gongloff, Wall Street Journal, 08/2/’11, [Moody’s Affirms US AAA Rating, <http://blogs.wsj.com/marketbeat/2011/08/02/moodys-affirms-us-aaa-rating/>] VN

Moody’s just came out and said, great job, USA, you get to keep your AAA rating. For now. This follows Fitch, which earlier said more or less that they were still reviewing the US rating, a process that could take through August. They didn’t promise they’d keep a AAA rating at the end of the process, but called the debt deal “a step in the right direction.” Now the big shoe dangling is S&P, which is really on the hook, having sounded the loudest warning about a downgrade. The size of the debt deal doesn’t seem to hit the $4 trillion mark S&P has said would be necessary to keep a AAA rating. My prediction? They’ll issue a similar placeholder statement soonish. Meanwhile, let’s hear what Moody’s has to say: Moody’s Investors Service has confirmed the Aaa government bond rating of the United States following the raising of the statutory debt limit on August 2. The rating outlook is now negative. Moody’s placed the rating on review for possible downgrade on July 13 due to the small but rising probability of a default on the government’s debt obligations because of a failure to increase the debt limit. The initial increase of the debt limit by $900 billion and the commitment to raise it by a further $1.2-1.5 trillion by yearend have virtually eliminated the risk of such a default, prompting the confirmation of the rating at Aaa. In confirming the Aaa rating, Moody’s also recognized that today’s agreement is a first step toward achieving the long-term fiscal consolidation needed to maintain the US government debt metrics withinAaa parameters over the long run. The legislation calls for $917 billion in specific spending cuts over the next decade and established a congressional committee charged with making recommendations for achieving a further $1.5 trillion in deficit reduction over the same time period. In the absence of the committee reaching an agreement, automatic spending cuts of $1.2 trillion would become effective. In assigning a negative outlook to the rating, Moody’s indicated, however, that there would be a risk of downgrade if (1) there is a weakening in fiscal discipline in the coming year; (2) further fiscal consolidation measures are not adopted in 2013; (3) the economic outlook deteriorates significantly; or (4) there is an appreciable rise in the US government’s funding costs over and above what is currently expected.

#### D. Further downgrades would create a debt spiral, crippling the economy

Rowley 12 Charles Rowley, Professor Emeritus of Economics at George Mason University, 10/15/12, “Renewed threats to U.S. credit rating,” Charles Rowley’s blog, http://charlesrowley.wordpress.com/2012/06/15/renewed-threats-to-u-s-credit-rating/

If Moody’s downgrades and if S & P further downgrades U.S. credit ratings, this would move the United States out of the exclusive club of AAA-rated nations, and throw into question the privileged status of U.S. Treasury securities as a safe haven for global investors.Any significant flight from Treasuries would raise Treasury bond rates, with crippling consequences for the economy. A 1-percentage point increase in rates would raise Treasury debt payments by $1 trillion over the next decade, wiping out the benefits of all the budget cuts enacted by Congress last year.The dynamics of such a process may prove to be devastating, moving the U.S. federal government onto a path of sovereign downgrades that accelerates an already worsening fiscal situation. Greece here we come.

E. Economic collapse causes global nuclear war.

Merlini, Senior Fellow – Brookings, 11

[CesareMerlini, nonresident senior fellow at the Center on the United States and Europe and chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Italian Institute for International Affairs (IAI) in Rome. He served as IAI president from 1979 to 2001. Until 2009, he also occupied the position of executive vice chairman of the Council for the United States and Italy, which he co-founded in 1983. His areas of expertise include transatlantic relations, European integration and nuclear non-proliferation, with particular focus on nuclear science and technology.A Post-Secular World? DOI: 10.1080/00396338.2011.571015 Article Requests: Order Reprints : Request Permissions Published in: journal Survival, Volume 53, Issue 2 April 2011 , pages 117 - 130 Publication Frequency: 6 issues per year Download PDF Download PDF (~357 KB) View Related Articles To cite this Article: Merlini, Cesare 'A Post-Secular World?', Survival, 53:2, 117 – 130]

Two neatly opposed scenarios for the future of the world order illustrate the range of possibilities, albeit at the risk of oversimplification. The first scenario entails the premature crumbling of the post-Westphalian system. One or more of the acute tensions apparent today evolves into an open and traditional conflict between states, perhaps eveninvolving the use ofnuclear weapons.The crisis might be triggered by a collapse of the global economic and financial system, the vulnerability of which we have just experienced, and the prospect of a second Great Depression, with consequences for peaceand democracysimilar to those of the first. Whatever the trigger, the unlimited exercise of national sovereignty, exclusive self-interest and rejection of outside interference would likely be amplified, emptying, perhaps entirely, the half-full glass of multilateralism, including the UN and the European Union. Many of the more likely conflicts, such as between Israel and Iran or India and Pakistan, have potential religious dimensions. Short of war, tensions such as those related to immigration might become unbearable. Familiar issues of creed and identity could be exacerbated. One way or another, the secular rational approach would be sidestepped by a return to theocratic absolutes, competing or converging with secular absolutes such as unbridled nationalism.

Competitiveness

Infrastruture competitiveness uniquely triggers protectionism – industry subsidization proves

Winslow 4/1/12

[Lance Winslow, Director of “the online think tank”, published economic and political author, April 1 2012 [http://ezinearticles.com/?Are-You-Sure-You-Want-100%-Made-In-America-Parts-On-All-US-Infrastructure-Projects?&id=6975227](http://ezinearticles.com/?Are-You-Sure-You-Want-100%25-Made-In-America-Parts-On-All-US-Infrastructure-Projects?&id=6975227)]

Well, the unions want more high-paying jobs, and the politicians have promised the people that they can deliver jobs to America. And now these same politicians want to do what we are complaining that every other countries doing to us. They want to unbalance trade, create tariffs, and increased protectionism. That just doesn't make sense. Okay so, let's talk about this for a moment because there's a good chance you disagree with me here.¶ Industry Week reiterated a story that has been in the news a bit as of late in an article titled; "Alliance for American Manufacturing: Keep China Out of U.S. Infrastructure Projects," by Paul Handley published on March 27, 2012 which state; "AAM launched its 'Should Be Made in America' campaign as Congress considers a $109 billion, two-year transportation spending bill, which the government hopes will give a boost to the economy and generate more jobs."¶ Yes, I can certainly see the frustration of the average worker in the manufacturing sector which has been totally hammered over the last few decades, still, let's not forget that China and India and other massively fast growing economies and emerging markets have a lot more infrastructure to build up than we do, even as we upgrade our own systems here.¶ If we want to sell stuff to China and India, then we have to be willing to buy those parts that they create which meet our specifications - if they can produce them at a lower price and the same quality part. If we determine that we can only buy US-made parts for all of our infrastructure projects then other nations will reciprocate and bar us from selling them what they need for their infrastructure projects. You see, the United States is very good at engineering and building stuff, it behooves them to use our companies, and that also employs lots of US workers.¶It's okay to make stringent specifications, and demand the highest level of quality. If other nations can't produce parts that can compete, including the cost of shipping, then we shouldn't feel obligated to buy them. Still, we must also remember that it is the US taxpayer which has to pay for these infrastructure projects, and we need to get the best deal and the best price.¶ If American companies can compete for the same price and quality, then we should definitely buy it here, but they can't we should not subsidize industries or engage in protectionism because that makes our companies weak and unable to compete in global markets. It's akin to corporate welfare, and creating unnecessary wage inflation, not to mention a false economy based on inefficiency. I'm just as much for increasing employment as the next guy, but we don't need to cheat to do it. Indeed I hope you will please consider all this and think on.

Trade protectionism destabalizes the globe and escalates to nuclear war

Bernstein ‘10

[William J Bernstein, PHD, principal in the money management firm Efficient Frontier Advisors, and economic contributor to several publications, March 18 2010 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ian-fletcher/free-trade-vs-protectioni\_b\_504403.html]

When goods are not allowed to cross borders, soldiers will." --Frederic BastiatHow soon we forget. For nearly all of recorded history before 1945, Europe, today a peaceful and prosperous region linked by high-speed trains and ridiculously low airfares, was riven by nearly continuous major conflicts. In the Second World War's aftermath, it was crystal clear to military, political, and diplomatic leaders on both sides of the Atlantic that the trade protectionism of the previous several decades in no small measure contributed to that catastrophe.The U.S. State Department said, in effect, "never again" and drew up a blueprint for the new world trade order, Proposals for the Expansion of World Trade and Employment, which soon gave rise to the GATT and the beginnings of the EU. The arrangement succeeded beyond its wildest expectations and ushered in an era of unparalleled global peace and prosperity.By 1945, the link between trade conflict and armed conflict had become blindingly obvious. This was nothing new, of course. The Peloponnesian War saw its genesis in Athens' dependence on the grain from what is now the Ukraine, which necessitated control of the narrow passages between the Aegean and Black Seas by the Athenian Empire.In the early seventeenth century Holland and Portugal fought a remarkable world-wide conflict over the trade in slaves, spices, and sugar. Later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Britain and Holland fought no less than four wars, sparked largely by British protectionist legislation--the Navigation Acts.Southern anger over northern protectionism contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War nearly as much as did slavery. Those who doubt this would do well to consider that just thirty years before, the two sides nearly went to war over the Nullification Crisis of 1833, which was itself directly precipitated by the tariff acts of 1828 and 1832.Mr. Fletcher tries his best to ignore this historical inevitability of retaliation to tariff increases; he asserts that since our trading partners, particularly those in Asia, run persistently high trade surpluses vis-a-vis the U.S., they would not dare retaliate.There are at least three things wrong with this argument. First, in the past, it hasn't worked. During the 1930s, for example, all nations, including those running trade surpluses, pushed up their tariff rates. Second, it ignores one of the prime lessons of human history: winners often do not remember, while losers never forget. Centuries of humiliation by the West have scarred the national psyches of both China and India, and serious misunderstandings can easily ensue. Who controls the Strait of Malacca, through which flows China's oil supply and European trade? The U.S. Navy.Last, Mr. Fletcher believes that our politicians can fairly dispense protection broadly across the economy by means of a "flat tariff." Good luck with that: U.S. trade preferences always have, and always will, go disproportionately to the prosperous and well connected. Exhibit A: the obscene sugar subsidies and trade preferences meted out for decades to the wealthy and powerful Fanjul brothers.Do not be misled by those whose naive belief in the rational self-interest of others will prevent any significant protectionist actions by the United States. The events of August 1914 demonstrated just how seriously awry the "rational self-interest" of nations can go, and the Cold War taught us the impossibility of containing even the smallest of nuclear exchanges. So too has history repeatedly shown that even small tariff increases often lead to trade wars, and that trade wars can end in Armageddon.

Warming

1. Coal power plants cause a majority of emissions- Alt cause

Cappielo 11(Cappielo, Dina, Associated press, 1/11/2011, EPA: Power plants are main global warming culprits, <http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/environment/story/2012-01-11/greenhouse-gases-power-plants/52502466/1>)

WASHINGTON – The most detailed data yet on emissions of heat-trapping gases show that U.S. power plants are responsible for the bulk of the pollution blamed for global warming. Power plants released 72% of the greenhouse gases reported to the Environmental Protection Agency for 2010, according to information released Wednesday that was the first catalog of global warming pollution by facility. The data include more than 6,700 of the largest industrial sources of greenhouse gases, or about 80 percent of total U.S. emissions. According to an Associated Press analysis of the data, 20 mostly coal-fired power plants in 15 states account for the top-releasing facilities.

2. Their internal link card is from the US high-speed rail association which is biased toward the creation of high-speed rail

3. Their West evidence says that US emissions from cars totaled 314 million tons in 2004 and population growth since then means that the number is higher- their Longshore evidence says HSR might optimistically reduce emissions by 3 million tons- less than 1%

2NC Solvency Extensions

1. Extend de Rugy- she indicts the solvency claims of their authors and says that contractors purposely overestimate ridership and underestimate cost- the entire line will only serve 8% of Americans and cost billions of dollars

2. High-speed rail is unpopular, expensive and won’t have ridership

Kotkin 2/18/11

Mr. Kotkin is Distinguished Presidential Fellow in Urban Futures at Chapman University in Orange, California; a contributing editor to the City Journal in New York; a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Civil Service College in Singapore, and a Fellow at the National Chamber Foundation

Obama's High-Speed Rail Obsession

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/joelkotkin/2011/02/18/obamas-high-speed-rail-obsession/2/>

In China high-speed rail is so costly that the trains are too expensive for the average citizen. Furthermore, construction costs are so high the Chinese Academy of Sciences has already warned that its debts may not be payable. This experience with ballooning costs and far lower fare revenues have raised taxpayer obligations in Taiwan and Korea and added to heavily to the national debt in Japan.

The prospect of mounting and uncontrollable costs has led governors to abandon high-speed projects in Ohio, Wisconsin and most recently Florida, where a battle to save the Tampa-Orlando line has begun . In times of budget stress, the idea of building something new, and historically difficult to contain by costs, becomes a hard sell. Oddly, the leaders of California, faced with one of the worst fiscal positions in the country, are determined to spend several billions on what Sacramento Bee columnist Dan Walters has dubbed a “train to nowhere” for 54 miles between Madera and Corcoran — two unremarkable and remote Central Valley towns. The proposal makes the former Alaska Sen. Ted Stevens’ notorious ”bridges to nowhere” project seem like frugal public policy. California’s train to nowhere has been justified as part of wider project to construct a statewide system. But the whole idea makes little financial sense: The University of California’s Institute for Transportation describes the high-speed proposal as based on an “inconsistent model” whose ridership projections are simply not “reliable.” Equally suspect are cost estimates, which have doubled (after adjustment for inflation) from 1999 to $42.6 billion last year and. A new study says that the project could currently cost close to $65 billion. Costs for a ticket from Los Angeles to San Francisco, originally pegged at $55 one way, had nearly doubled by 2009, and now some estimates place it at about to at least a $100 or perhaps much as $190 — considerably more than an advanced-purchase ticket on far faster Southwest Airlines. There’s growing political opposition to the system as well, and not just among penny-pinching right-wingers. Residents and local officials in the San Francisco Peninsula, a wealthy and reliably liberal portion of Silicon Valley, largely oppose plans to route the line through their communities. This includes some prominent liberal legislators, such as San Mateo’s Assembly Jerry Hill, who has threatened to put high-speed rail back on the ballot if costs start to surpass initial estimates. Another Democrat, California Treasurer Bill Lockyer has doubts that the rail authority will be able to sell the deal to potential bond-buyers due in part to a lack of consistent estimates in ridership or cost. So why is Obama still so determined to push the high-speed boondoggle? Largely it’s a deadly combination of theology and money. Powerful rail construction interests, notably the German giant Siemens, are spreading cash like mustard on a bratwurst to promote the scheme. Add to that construction unions and the ever voracious investment banks who would love to pocket fees for arranging to sell the bonds and you have interests capable of influencing either party.

Then there’s what might be called the “density lobby” — big city mayors, construction firms and the urban land owners. These magnates, who frequently extort huge public subsidies for their projects, no doubt think it grand to spend billions of public funds on something that might also increase the value of their real estate. And finally there are the true believers, notably planners, academics, green activists and an army of rail fans. These are people who believe America should be more like Europe — denser, more concentrated in big cities and tied to the rails. “High speed rail is not really about efficient transport,” notes California transit expert and accountant Tom Rubin. “It’s all about shaping cities for a certain agenda.” Yet despite their power, these forces face mounting obstacles. As transportation expert Ken Orski points out, the balance of power in the House now lies with suburban and rural legislators, whose constituents would not benefit much from high-speed rail. And then there are governors, increasingly Republican and conservative, very anxious not to add potentially huge obligations to their already stressed budgets. The most decisive opposition, however, could come from those who favor transit spending but understand to the need to prioritize. High-speed rail is far more expensive than such things as fixing current commuter rail and subways or expanding both public and private bus service. Indeed, the money that goes to urban rail often ends up being diverted from other, more cost-effective systems, notably buses. The choice between high-speed rail and more conventional, less expensive transit has already been presaged in the fight against expanding LA’s expensive rail system by organizations representing bus riders. These activists contend that rail swallows funds that could be spent on buses

Much the same case is being made the San Francisco peninsula. The opponents of high-speed rail on the San Francisco Peninsula are outraged that the state would spend billions on a chancy potential boondoggle when the popular Caltrain commuter rail service is slated to be curtailed or even eliminated. One can of course expect that anti-spending conservatives will be the biggest cheerleaders for high-speed rail’s decline. But transit advocates may be forced to join the chorus of opposition, in order to steer transit spending towards more basic priorities as buses in Los Angeles, subways in New York or commuter rail in the San Francisco Bay Area.

In an era of tough budgets, and proposed cutbacks on basic services, setting sensible transportation priorities is crucial. Spending billions on a conveyance that will benefit a relative handful of people and places is not just illogical. It’s obscene.

2NC Elections Link Wall

#### HSR lacks public support

**Mathews**, 1/24/**2012** (Joe, How to Start High-Speed Rail, Fox & Hounds, p. http://www.foxandhoundsdaily.com/2012/01/how-to-start-high-speed-rail/)

There are reasons for doing that – the biggest one being the federal funding on the table. But for all the money and business plan problems the high-speed rail project, its biggest problem is public support. Such support is slipping in recent polls. And if the public won’t support high-speed rail, it has no hope of being built. Building the first link in a less-populated area of California won’t help that. (Even high-speed rail folks in Spain, quoted in a joint project by various California media organizations this week, seemed aghast at the decision to start in the Central Valley, instead of where people are).

#### GOP will spin HSR as expensive

**Journal of Commerce**, 10/18/**2010** (Mixed Signal for Rails, p. Lexis)

While Obama's vision includes hefty spending on roadways and airports, the rail piece is critical. Administration officials believe the only way to slow the ever-growing pressure on roads and air travel is to put more people and freight on trains, which would also reduce the need to pour as much future wealth into pavement.Not everyone is buying in. Several Republican gubernatorial candidates are talking down Obama's high-speed rail efforts as a big-government program that would cost their states and federal taxpayers too much in the long run. Some doubt the benefits of linking more cities by rail, and vow to end their states' support if elected.

#### HSR lacks public support --- voters are skeptical about paying for it.

**Bernstein**, 11/01/**2010** (Andrea – Director of the public radio Transportation Nation project, Wariness about spending on transportation and infrastructure accompanies voters to the polls, Transportation Nation, p. http://transportationnation.org/2010/11/01/wariness-about-spending-on-transportation-and-infrastructure-acompanies-voters-to-the-polls/)

It’s been a rough election season out there. Unless you’ve crawled into a cave for the last three months, you know the airwaves have been flooded with ads calling candidates everything from thieves to hooligans to rogues and everything in between. But the sour voter mood isn’t just about advertisements — it’s about reduced circumstances, drastic cuts in local government services, higher taxes and fees, fewer jobs, and dramatically higher health care costs — despite health care reform and an $800 billion stimulus bill.Or as one Florida election volunteer Marcia told me in a largely African American neighborhood in Tampa last week: “People are disappointed,” she said. “They thought they were going to have this magic wand that I’m going to save my home because we have Obama as President. And I’m going to have a job because we have Obama as President.” But then, people lost their jobs, and they lost their homes.“Where’s the change?” retired Hoovers vacuum worker Alice Prestier asked me in Canton, Ohio. Or, more bitterly, as one Colorado contractor told me in Loveland, Colorado: “I don’t need to spend $2,000 to support every illegal f\*\*\*\*\*g Mexican in this country. Nor do I need to keep busting my ass for this government. You know, my son can’t ride the bus to school anymore. He’s got to walk two miles to school, explain that to me! You know, why does education have to go, but yet we can support illegals, we can piss money away on stuff that doesn’t’ matter, a health care plan that will never work?”All of which has created a wary public, seemingly unwilling to spend on big transit projects like the ARC tunnel, high speed rail, or even roads. Even though the President has bracketed this campaign season with a call for $50 billion in additional spending on roads, rails, and airports and the distribution, last week, of some $2.5 billion in high speed rail grants, kitchen-table cut backs have spilled over into an attitude about government spending.Where once voters seemed to have faith that large infrastructure projects would create jobs, both in the long and short terms, they now worry that worthy as projects may be, there simply isn’t enough money to spend on things like new transit tunnels, high speed rail systems, or even roads.The Democratic Senate candidate in Colorado, Michael Bennet, was an early defector from the Obama Labor Day plan, and voters — Republicans, Democrats – told me that was “about right.”“It should all be fixed,” Debbie Horoschock told me at the Wilkes-Barre farmers market in late September” of the president’s proposal to spend money fixing rail, roads, and airports. So she thinks that would be a good thing to spend money on? “No. But they should be fixed.” How are they going to be fixed without money? “I don’t know how they are going to be fixed without money. But we need money to fix the damn roads.”High speed rail, actually pilloried by some candidates (Scott Walker in Wisconsin, Rick Scott in Florida, John Kasich in Ohio) gets a lot more raised eyebrows.“They just shouldn’t be spending on that project,” one Ohio retiree in downtown Canton who wouldn’t give her name told me. Even if that meant losing hundreds of millions of federal money coming straight to this depressed area? “Even so.”

#### HSR unpopular – costs have risen

**Economist** 7/9/**12** [The Economist. Gulliver. “Still on Track.” <http://m.economist.com/gulliver-21558442.php/accessed>: 7/21/12]

AMERICA's high-speed rail plans chug on. Republican-run states, including Wisconsin, Ohio, and Florida may have rejected federal stimulus money to spend on swanky new schemes, but California—which has the most ambitious HSR plans of all—is pressing ahead. On Friday, California’s state Senate approved $2.6 billion in bonds to fund its high-speed rail project, clearing the way for a further $3.2 billion in federal funds. This is enough to allow it to begin building the nation's first true high-speed rail system. (Another nearly $2 billion, also authorised Friday, will go towards other transportation and rail improvements, some of which are tangentially related to the HSR plans.)¶ California is the last remaining proponent of Barack Obama's vision of a modern railroad network in America, an idea that has grown increasingly unpopular as projected costs have risen . Rail has become, like many of the president's priorities, an issue of political identity, and opposition to rail projects is a great way for GOP governors to thumb their nose at the federal government—and, by extension, Mr. Obama himself.¶ The vote was close, with 21 senators, the bare majority needed to pass, voting in favour. Four Democratic senators joined the GOP in opposition . The money is a tiny fraction of the estimated $68 billion the scheme will cost in total–enough just to begin work in California's Central Valley region and perform some preliminary environmental studies.¶ High-speed rail supporters and detractors alike worry that the Central Valley line, between the cities of Bakersfield and Madera, will end up a train to nowhere, cut off from bigger cities such as Los Angeles, Sacramento and San Francisco. Governor Jerry Brown, a Democrat, supports the plan, and California's legislature is likely to remain under Democratic control for some time. But if four Democratic senators were willing to oppose the project on Friday, how many more might turn against it if costs continue to escalate? Building brand-new infrastructure is politically difficult. Although Friday's vote was a milestone, the battle to bring fast trains to America is far from over.¶