**! – All**

**Cooperation with Russia is key to Multiple Scenarios for Global Extinction**

**Graham 09**

Thomas Graham served as special assistant to the president and senior director for Russia on the National Security Council staff, 2004–07Resurgent Russia and U.S. Purposes http://tcf.org/events/pdfs/ev257/Graham.pdf

The challenges facing the United States are well captured in the intelligence community’s most recent effort to peer into the future, the recent report by the National Intelligence Council, Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World.1 As the report notes, global dynamism is shifting from the Atlantic to the Asia Pacific region, most notably in the economic realm, but ineluctably in the geopolitical and the intellectual realms. The Middle East is in the midst of a historic—and destabilizing—struggle between the forces of modernity and tradition. Nation-states, the fundamental unit of the international system since the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, are under severe pressure from transnational forces and from sub-regional actors. There is a fundamental and growing mismatch between a global economy and nationally based regulatory systems—a mismatch graphically revealed by the current economic crisis. Globalization has laid the foundation for greater prosperity worldwide, but also it has raised new dangers and compounded old ones—the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, megaterrorism, pandemic diseases, climate change—that are beyond the capacity of states to deal with alone and for which current international organizations, notably the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions, are inadequate. Population growth, and the still-hoped-for long-term prosperity, is putting stress on energy, food, and water resources and raising the risks of violent conflict over them. The United States remains the preeminent power by any measure, and will remain so well into this century. But its margin of superiority is narrowing, particularly with China, and increasingly it needs to work with other major powers to manage threats and exploit opportunities. The current deep economic crisis only reinforces that point, drastically reducing the resources the United States can devote to foreign policy and underscoring its excessive and growing dependence on foreign financing of its debt. As a result, more so than in the past, the United States will have to establish priorities, to pursue a more focused policy, and build multilateral coalitions to shape a new equilibrium that will ensure its long-term security and prosperity. What are, or should be, the U.S. priorities in this uncertain world? How important is Russia to U.S. interests? Nonproliferation There is no graver threat to U.S. security than the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to states or terrorist organizations intent on doing us harm. Dealing with this threat entails strengthening the nonproliferation regime, enhancing the security and reducing the quantity of fissile material and chemical and biological agents that can be used for weapons of mass destruction, controlling the knowledge and know-how to build such weapons, and preparing to mitigate the consequences should such a weapon be used. Russia is the second major nuclear power (the United States and Russia • together control 95 percent of the world’s nuclear arsenal), with long experience in the development, manufacturing, and dismantlement of nuclear weapons; massive stockpiles of plutonium and highly enriched uranium (the fuel for nuclear weapons) and biological and chemical agents; and a long history in civil nuclear power. It is indispensable to any effort to manage the proliferation problem and prevent terrorist organizations from gaining possession of weapons of mass destruction. Management of the International Economy The current global economic crisis has laid bare the deficiencies of the current structure for regulating the global economy. The United States has an interest in reforming the present international financial and economic institutions, and creating new ones, so that the downsides of markets could be moderated without sacrificing their dynamism and so that an open global economy can be promoted in the face of rising protectionist sentiments worldwide. Russia has played an increasing role in the global economy as it recovered • from its turbulent transition in 1990s. It has accumulated the third-largest international currency reserves (although they are being depleted rapidly as the Russian government manages the devaluation of the ruble). It deserves a seat at the table in discussions of the current global economic crisis, and it should receive a larger role in the management of the global economy in the future. That said, leading European states, Japan, China, India, and perhaps Brazil are all more important than Russia to the global economic and financial future. The Broader Middle East The broader Middle East presents sets of critical security challenges to the United States, particularly concerning Israel/Palestine, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan/Pakistan/India. In brief, the U.S. interest in this region includes bringing an enduring conclusion to the Middle East peace process (Israel/Palestine), stabilizing Iraq, preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and destabilizing the region, eliminating the terrorist threat and ensuring stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and reducing the risk of major conflict—with the possible use of nuclear weapons—between Pakistan and India. Russia retains a wide network of contacts in the Middle East; it has • improved ties with Israel. Although its influence pales in comparison to our own, its cooperation could be helpful in managing the peace process and in dealing with Iran. Russia’s support is essential to maintaining one of the most valuable corridors—across Russia and through Central Asia—for supplying NATO and American forces in Afghanistan, a corridor that grows in value as instability deepens in Pakistan. At the same time, as a rival, it would have great potential to do mischief, to complicate our challenges, and to thwart our initiatives. Energy Security and Climate Change Providing sufficient energy for powering the global economy at affordable prices and in an environmentally friendly way is critical to long-term American prosperity. Fossil fuels, barring a major technological breakthrough, will remain the chief source of energy for decades to come. Much needs to be done in locating and bringing online new fields, ensuring reliable means of delivery to consumers, protecting infrastructure from attack or sabotage, and reducing the temptation to manipulate energy supplies for political purposes. Nuclear energy is enjoying a renaissance, but that raises proliferation concerns. Intensive scientific work will be necessary to develop new sources of energy for commercial use and to deal with climate change. As the world’s largest producer of hydrocarbons, a leader in providing • civil nuclear energy, and a major energy consumer itself, Russia is indispensable to guaranteeing energy security and dealing with climate change. As one of the world’s leading scientific powers, Russia has an important role to play in developing new sources of energy, using traditional fuels more efficiently, and managing climate change.

**! – War**

**Relations were on the brink before the Obama reset – Romney would eliminate any benefits from the past 4 years, sparkng conflict which would go nuclear**

**Gottemoeller 08** (Rose Gottemoeller was appointed Director of carnegie moscow center in January 2006. formerly, Gottemoeller was a senior associate at the carnegie endowment, where she held a joint appointment with the Russian and eurasian Program and the Global Policy Program. a specialist on defense and nuclear issues in Russia and the other former soviet states, Gottemoeller’s research at the endowment focused on issues of nuclear security and stability, nonproliferation, and arms control, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing cooperation between nations and promoting active international engagement by the United States, “Russia-US Security Relations after Georgia” www.carnegieendowment.org/files/russia\_us\_security\_relations\_after\_georgia.pdf)

No holds barred, no rules—the United States and Russia may be heading to a confrontation more unpredictable and dangerous than any we have seen since the Cuban missile crisis. A confrontation today would be different—the two countries are in constant and intense communication, unlike the situation in 1962—but if those exchanges provoke mutual anger and recrimination, they have the potential to spark a dangerous crisis. This effect is especially dangerous because both countries are in presidential transitions. Russia, whose government is riven by corruption, internal competition, and disorder, is attempting an unprecedented tandem leadership arrangement. The United States is in the midst of its quadrennial election season, with both political parties competing to show that their man is more skilled and tough on national security issues than his opponent. The unpredictability of these two transitions stokes the potential for misunderstanding and descent into crisis. We must avoid such a crisis, because we have never succeeded in escaping the nuclear existential threat that we each pose to the other. We never even came close to transforming the U.S.–Russian relationship into one that is closer to that which the United States has with the United Kingdom or France. What if Russia had refused to confirm or deny that no nuclear weapons were on the bombers it flew to Venezuela? Our nuclear weapons are still faced off to launch on warning of an attack, and in a no-holds-barred confrontation between us, we could come close to nuclear catastrophe before we knew it. What next? Is it possible to outrun confrontation and return to a pragmatic working relationship in pursuit of mutual interests? Clearly the answer should be “yes,” if the Russian Federation completely withdraws its troops from Georgian territory according to the Sarkozy–Medvedev plan. But, following Russia’s recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, that process may take months and perhaps years. Some Russian commentators have been arguing that a relevant time frame to consider is how long Cyprus has been the site of an unresolved territorial dispute between Turkey and Greece: nearly thirty years. In the meantime, the United States and Russia have about six months of intense political transition to get through, until the new U.S. president settles into place. This begs for a short-term modus vivendi that would enable the two countries to avoid a potential crisis and establish an agenda to confront some of the severe problems that have emerged in their relationship. Ultimately, the United States and Russia should want to re-create a book of rules that both will embrace, corresponding to international law and in fact strengthening it. Seize the Superstructure The first step in this process, and the best way to begin it, is to grab onto the existing superstructure of the U.S.–Russia relationship. This is the system of established and well-understood treaties, agreements, and arrangements that has been built up over time. Beginning in the 1950s, many efforts have been made to insert predictability and mutual confidence into the relationship in the form of both bilateral and multilateral arrangements. For the next six months, both governments need to take advantage of this established and well understood system. Derided in recent years as a Cold War relic not worthy of the friendship the two countries had developed, it could now be a lifeline.

**US-Russia war is the only existential risk**

**Bostrom 02** (Nick, Faculty of Philosophy, Oxford University, http://www.nickbostrom.com/existential/risks.html,) jl

A much greater existential risk emerged with the build-up of nuclear arsenals in the US and the USSR. An all-out nuclear war was a possibility with both a substantial probability and with consequences that might have been persistent enough to qualify as global and terminal. There was a real worry among those best acquainted with the information available at the time that a nuclear Armageddon would occur and that it might annihilate our species or permanently destroy human civilization.[4] Russia and the US retain large nuclear arsenals that could be used in a future confrontation , either accidentally or deliberately. There is also a risk that other states may one day build up large nuclear arsenals. Note however that a smaller nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan for instance, is not an existential risk, since it would not destroy or thwart humankind¶s potential permanently. Such a war might however be a local terminal risk for the cities most likely to be targeted. Unfortunately, we shall see that nuclear Armageddon and come to asteroid strikes are mere preludes to the existential risks that we will encounter in the 21st century

### ! – Heg

**Low US-Russian cooperation will crush US leadership.**

**Simes,** president of the Nixon Center, 20**03**  (Dimitri, Federal News Service, 9/30, lexis)

Seventh, as a veto-wielding permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Russia can substantially ease, or complicate, American attempts to work through the UN and other international institutions to advance other vital and extremely important U.S. interests. In a world in which many are already concerned about the use of U.S. power, this can have a real impact on America's success at providing global leadership. More broadly, a close U.S.-Russian relationship can limit other states' behavior by effectively eliminating Moscow as a potential source of political support.

### ! – Economy

**Relations are key to the economy**

**Good** June 21, **11** (Alison, U.S. and Russia are strengthening their relationship, Ambassador says, New Orleans Business News, http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2011/06/us\_and\_russia\_are\_strengthenin.html)

The ambassador also emphasized that relations with Russia are not only politically advantageous for the United States, but also economically essential. "Good political relations are not enough, and we need more solid foundations of trade and business. Our prosperity is closely intertwined with Russia, since it's a major market for U.S. goods and services," he said during the luncheon program, which was called "The Current State of U.S.-Russia Relations." While trade between the United States and Russia has doubled over the past four years, the scope of economic cooperation between Russia and New Orleans has also expanded. "Our exports to Russia from New Orleans grew exponentially between 2006 and 2010," said Mayor Mitch Landrieu. "There's a great partnership between New Orleans and Russia." American companies have taken the reset to heart, added Beyrle. "U.S. companies are now well-established in Russia and are creating jobs," he explained, citing the recent activities of Ford, General Motors, and high-tech entities such as Microsoft, Cisco and Boeing. Democratic development in post-Soviet Russia has also had positive implications for United States tourism."Russia is now more open and increasingly connected with the world," the ambassador said. "Russians recently discovered the American South, and now there are direct flights to and from Houston and Atlanta."

### AT: Relations Resilient

**Cooperation can be reversed**

**Rojansky 11**

Matthew Rojansky is the deputy director of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Carnegie Endowment, 7/13/11, <http://carnegie.ru/publications/?lang=en&fa=45036>

Lavrov’s visit to Washington comes at a historic high point for U.S.-Russia ties, and his work with U.S. counterparts will secure even greater success. Yet the relationship is still vulnerable, with real risk factors on the horizon. Rather than allowing these threats to dominate, the United States and Russia should take steps now to build a foundation for cooperation that is so broad and deep it cannot easily be upset. When faced with seemingly impossible challenges throughout history, both Americans and Russians have defied skepticism and proven equal to the task. Now, let us show what we are capable of doing when two great nations work together.

**Collapse possible**

**Perry and Scowcroft 09** (William and brent, Chairs CFR, april, “US Nuclear Weapons Policy”)

The dangers of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism are real and imminent, and any serious effort to reduce them will require the leadership of the United States. The risk of a new Cold War–like hostility developing between the United States and Russia is also real, and efforts to reduce it will require opening a positive strategic dialogue with Russia, at the same time hedging against the possibility that such a dialogue may not be successful. In short, the nuclear policy of the United States should be to lead when possible and hedge when necessary.

### Romney Kills Relations

**A Romney election would push relations back to Cold War levels**

**Bridge 8/1** (Robert Bridge, 8/1/12, “What reset? Romney’s road-trip rants reach Russia” http://rt.com/politics/mitt-romney-russia-elections-obama-596/)

The thought processes of Romney, 65, strongly suggest that the Mormon from Michigan has been time-warped back to the Soviet era, behind an Iron Curtain and inside of a 1950s black-and-white television set. In a speech in Warsaw on Tuesday, Romney kept his shock-and-awe comments in check by reheating leftover memories of deceased goodies and baddies alike. (Stars from yesteryear, including Ronald Reagan, Winston Churchill and Pope John Paul, were mentioned alongside the likes of Nicolai Ceausescu.) After all, a person has to try very hard to insult the dead. It should come as no surprise that Romney would use this opportunity to rail against Russia while visiting this former Warsaw Pact country, which maintains solid relations with the United States. After all, this is the same Romney who previously called Russia our “Number-one geopolitical foe.” He continued serving up red meat to the campaign crowd as he lumped Russia together with some very questionable characters: “A ruthless dictator in Syria has killed thousands of his own people. In Latin America, Hugo Chavez leads a movement characterized by authoritarianism and repression. Nations in Africa are fighting to resist the threat of violent radical jihadism. And in Russia, once-promising advances toward a free and open society have faltered.”

\*\*\* Jackson Vanik and Recess

Congress is on recess

Garretson 8-6 (8/6/12 Meredith P. Garretson, staff writer at PBS News Hour, “Recess Roundup: Legislation on Hold Till Congress Returns” <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/2012/08/recess-roundup-legislation-on-hold-till-congress-returns.html>)

Congress left town -- though didn't quite officially adjourn -- last week with heaps of unfinished business. NewsHour's Coordinating Producer on Capitol Hill, Linda J. Scott, notes that during the month of August, Congress will meet in pro forma sessions. In plain English that means "every three days they'll gavel in, gavel out. It will be as if Congress is in session, but decisions won't be made," she said. Members will be paid for the recess, whether work is done or not.

Won’t pass before Magnitsky and congress on recess

RBTH 8/8 ( Russia Before the Headlines,8/8/12 “Magnitsky Bill takes on a life of its own” <http://rbth.ru/articles/2012/08/08/magnitsky_bill_takes_on_a_life_of_its_own_17161.html> )

U.S. Congress postpones the repeal of Jackson-Vanik amendment and it will not be passed in tandem with the "Magnitsky Bill". Sources in Congress are not discounting the possibility that lawmakers in the autumn might only approve the "Magnitsky Bill", (which is not causing any disputes among lawmakers), and postpone the repeal of the Jackson-Vanik amendment for an unspecified time. This threatens to kill off the "reset" - Barack Obama's main Russian foreign policy achievement.

Relations uncertain now and JV would have to wait at least 6 months after elections

RBTH 8/8 ( Russia Before the Headlines,8/8/12 “Magnitsky Bill takes on a life of its own” <http://rbth.ru/articles/2012/08/08/magnitsky_bill_takes_on_a_life_of_its_own_17161.html> )

U.S.-Russian relations have entered into a new period of uncertainty. Since the beginning of July, sources in the U.S. State Department and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been saying with some confidence that everything will be resolved in August. They anticipated that at the beginning of the month, the U.S. Congress would replace the Jackson-Vanik amendment with the "Magnitsky Bill ahead of Russia’s accession to the WTO. However, Congress has failed to meet the necessary deadline. U.S. lawmakers went on recess Aug. 6 for five weeks. Only eight days have been schedules for legislative business in September, and after that comes the break for campaigning ahead of November elections in the United States. This sets back debate on Jackson-Vanik by a minimum of three months, and realistically the issue will only be taken up in six months, after the new Congress comes into session.

Magnitsky will pass but not JV

RBTH 8/8 ( Russia Before the Headlines,8/8/12 “Magnitsky Bill takes on a life of its own” <http://rbth.ru/articles/2012/08/08/magnitsky_bill_takes_on_a_life_of_its_own_17161.html> )

However, this issue has been discussed at length. The current problem for bilateral relations is new rumors that U.S. lawmakers might approve the Magnitsky Bill without repealing Jackson-Vanik. Last week Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (Republican-Florida), head of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives announced that she did not believe it was necessary to repeal the amendment. According to her, Moscow did not currently deserve "such a present" and the Russian position on the Syrian question had forced discussions to center on the need to adopt the Magnitsky Bill and postpone the trade law until next year. Ros-Lehtinen's announcement was supported by a large number of influential members of Congress.

That collapses relations

RBTH 8/8 ( Russia Before the Headlines,8/8/12 “Magnitsky Bill takes on a life of its own” <http://rbth.ru/articles/2012/08/08/magnitsky_bill_takes_on_a_life_of_its_own_17161.html> )

This state of affairs has put the White House in a tricky position. On the one hand, the administration was hoping for a swift repeal of the Jackson-Vanik amendment. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was planning to officially announce the end of the trading restrictions at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in Vladivostok at the beginning of September. And on the other hand, the Obama administration has been trying to avoid adopting the Magnitsky Bill, wary of causing any sharp deterioration of relations with Moscow. When Congress decided to link the two issues, the White House saw this as an unavoidable compromise and stopped forcing through the repeal of the amendment. "For the last few weeks no one in the administration has even called us regarding Jackson-Vanik," said a source in Congress.

Magnitisky will collapse relations and JV won’t pass before elections

RBTH 8/8 ( Russia Before the Headlines,8/8/12 “Magnitsky Bill takes on a life of its own” <http://rbth.ru/articles/2012/08/08/magnitsky_bill_takes_on_a_life_of_its_own_17161.html> )

At first glance the postponement of the repeal and the adoption of the Magnitsky Bill by Congress would appear to be in the White House's interests. "It's evident that in an election year, the administration is more likely to agree to American businessmen suffering some losses, but it does not want to enter into another diplomatic skirmish with Russia," said political analyst Richard Darcy. However, the refusal to quickly force through the repeal of the amendment threatens to backfire on the White House. There are no particular disagreements regarding the Magnitsky Bill in Congress and it could become law in September. But without any tie-in to the lifting of the trade restrictions, this will cause a violent reaction in Russia. The Russian government and Foreign Ministry have repeatedly declared that they consider it unacceptable to substitute the Jackson-Vanik amendment with the Magnitsky Bill, and the adoption of the Magnitsky Bill without the repeal of the amendment will be seen as nothing short of an insult in Moscow. And that could be the final straw for the reset.

\*\*\*NEG\*\*\*

Obama leads now but the race is down to the finish

Huffington Post 8/7

The Huffington Post, “8/7/12 at 3 PM, Someone Will Win The 2012 Election In A Landslide, Unless They Don't, Say People”, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/07/2012-election-dick-morris\_n\_1752510.html?utm\_hp\_ref=elections-2012”

If I had just 30 words to describe the state of the race, I would say, "Obama holds a narrow but not insurmountable lead, and the lousy state of the economy offers Romney a better than average chance to win a close race." That would leave me with three words, which I would donate to a worthy charity. But even if I had several hundred words to describe the state of the race, I probably would not describe it as an imminent "landslide." At least not in August of 2012.

\*\*\*Aff\*\*\*

The aff doesn’t effect the outcome of the election, only the last 20 days do. Mainstream polls are wrong.

Beaufort Observer 8/6

Beaufort Observer, reporter on politics and public issues, 8/6/12 “Romney is Winning,” http://www.beaufortobserver.net/Articles-NEWS-and-COMMENTARY-c-2012-08-06-261893.112112-Romney-is-winning.html

We believe this election, like nearly every other election since World War II, will be decided in the last 20 days by the "swing" voters. Those are the ones that are not telling the current pollsters how they are going to vote. That's so simply because they are hanging back before coming down on one side or the other. It's no so much that they tell a pollster they are "undecided" but rather the tell the pollster what they think the pollster wants to hear, particularly if they are white. But when they get in the polling place they will vote to fire Barack Obama. When the time to vote comes they will vote for a change simply because they, like most of the people we talk to, are not satisfied with the way the country is going these days.

Economy not key to election

Washington Post 8/3

Washington Post, 8/3/12. “Obama’s Real Game Plan,” http://www.heraldextra.com/news/opinion/editorial/around-the-nation/obama-s-real-game-plan/article\_66fa128d-a06d-53fa-84be-ede03ce618e3.html

I suspect that one of the Obama campaign's key strategic goals is to fight Mitt Romney to a draw on who can fix the economic crisis; the Obama team would love a win, but a draw may have to do. The battle can then be won on other turf -- who can be trusted to protect middle-class interests while reforming entitlements and taxes? Two events Thursday spoke directly to this. First, the Obama campaign released a very harsh ad arguing that Romney would raise taxes on the vast majority of Americans to pay for a tax cut on millionaires like himself. Second, Romney released a new middle-class economic plan. The latter contains ideas we've heard before from Romney: more access to domestic energy resources; repealing Obamacare; cutting taxes and capping spending.

Obama Wins Now

More to come tomorrow morning

Obama is ahead in Electoral College but Romney still has a chance

Steinberg 8/5 (Alan J. Steinberg served as Regional Administrator of Region 2 EPA during the administration of former President George W. Bush, 8/5/12, “Election Preview: Obama has a significant, but not insurmountable, Electoral College lead,” http://www.politickernj.com/alan-steinberg/58870/election-preview-obama-has-significant-not-insurmountable-electoral-college-lea //nimo)

It is only August. Yet the final Electoral College battle of Campaign 2012 has already been shaped. Since my last Electoral College projections, I have made the following three changes. Wisconsin has been moved from toss-up status into the “likely Obama” column. Florida, an original “likely Romney” state, is now a “toss-up” state. Virginia, previously a “likely Romney” and then a “likely Obama” state, is now a “toss-up” state. The candidate who wins 270 or more electoral votes is elected President of the United States. I now project Barack Obama as the likely winner of the District of Columbia and the following states, for a total of 257 electoral votes: California (55), Connecticut (7), Delaware (3), District of Columbia (3), Hawaii (4) , Illinois (20), Maine(4), Maryland (10) , Massachusetts (11), Michigan (16), Minnesota (10), Nevada (6), New Hampshire (4), New York (29), New Jersey (14), New Mexico (5), Oregon (7), Pennsylvania (20), Rhode Island (4), Vermont (3), Washington (12), Wisconsin (10) It is highly unlikely that Mitt Romney will be able to win any of these states. Accordingly, I call them “Obama base states.” I now project Mitt Romney as the likely winner of the following states, for a total of 206 electoral votes: Alabama (9), Alaska (3), Arkansas (6), Arizona (11), Georgia (16), Idaho (4), Indiana (11), Kansas (6), Kentucky (8), Louisiana (8), Mississippi (6), Missouri (10), Montana (3), Nebraska (5), North Carolina (15), North Dakota (3), Oklahoma (7), South Carolina (9), South Dakota (3), Tennessee (11), Texas (38), Utah (6), West Virginia (5), Wyoming (3). Similarly, it is highly unlikely that Barack Obama will win any of these states. Accordingly, I call them “Romney base states.” The election of 2012 will be won or lost in the following five toss-up states, holding a total of 75 electoral votes: Colorado (9), Florida (29), Iowa (6,) Ohio (18), and Virginia (13). In order for Romney to be elected, he must win all three of the states of Florida, Ohio, and Virginia, plus either Colorado or Iowa. Obama only needs to win one of the following three toss-up states to be elected: Florida, Ohio, and Virginia. If the president fails to win any of the aforesaid three states, he can clinch his reelection by winning both Iowa and Colorado. Obama clearly has the easier Electoral College victory path. Yet one should not discount the real possibility that Romney could pull off an Electoral College victory.

Obama winning – but still vulnerable in Ohio

Enten 8/6 (Harry J Enten, 6 August 2012, The Guardian, “How deep is Obama's lead in the battleground states?” http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/aug/06/how-deep-obama-lead-battleground-states?newsfeed=true //nimo)

The electoral map this year gives Democrats the jumping-joys and Republicans the willies. Newsweek/Daily Beast columnist Michael Tomasky puts it best, as "The (Possible) Coming Obama Landslide". All polling aggregators give President Obama an edge over Mitt Romney in the electoral college. In fact, if the polling average of every state were correct, then as of today, Barack Obama would win 332 electoral votes, or 61.7% of the available 538. The question, though, is just how deep is Obama's lead? To know the answer, we have to have an idea of which states will decide the election. Most analysts would agree that the states with the great chance of being "Florida 2000" are Colorado, Florida, Iowa, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Virginia. All were states won at least once by George W Bush, but were then carried in 2008 by Barack Obama. Obama leads in all of them currently. But how big are those leads? I've taken a median of the polling data for each state for all non-partisan polls since 1 June. I use the median to control for outlier polls and reference back to 1 June because most experts agree the race hasn't changed much since then. If a pollster has taken more than one poll in the state, I use the most recent data available. Table: Harry Enten/guardiannews.com It turns out that Obama's leads are really not that deep. If the margin shifted a point and a half away from Obama in Florida, Iowa, and Virginia, he would be at 284 electoral votes, or 52.8%. Few would call that a "blowout". An Obama supporter might reason that it's no big deal if Obama loses a percentage point in Florida, because he'll still hold onto Iowa. Maybe, but states' presidential support tend to move in unison with each other. That's why uniform swings referenced to changes in the national vote do a fine job of predicting changes in states' support. If Romney gains in Florida, he'll probably gain in Iowa and Virginia. Put another way, state-by-state presidential results are not independent of each other. Thus the key state, according to the median poll data, is Ohio. If Obama wins Ohio, he will almost certainly win re-election. If Romney takes it, he is in very good position. Ohio seems, on the one hand, the perfect state for Mitt Romney. Romney's doing very well nationally with white working-class voters. In Ohio, 50% of 2008 voters were whites who lacked a college education – well above the national demographic of 39%. Yet, Romney's fallen back in Ohio. A one-time lead in a number of state polls has become a 3-point deficit in the median. The auto industry is recovering in the state; some might argue that Ohio is a state where the Obama campaign's attacks on Romney's Bain Capital record seemed to be working.

Obama winning now – but vulnerable in August

Grossin 8/7 (Matthew Grossin, 8/7/12, Poliycmic, “Obama Will Win If Romney Has a Bad August,” http://www.policymic.com/articles/12381/obama-will-win-if-romney-has-a-bad-august //nimo)

The polls have been particularly revealing as Obama, despite losing two fundraising battles in a row, has seen a steady rise in electoral probability and popular vote polling. Since June 19, Obama’s electoral probability rating has risen from 62% (288 votes) to today’s 72% (297 votes). Romney has consequently seen a dip in both areas. A solid job report from July shares a significant part in the explanation for Obama’s up-tick and Romney’s gaffe filled trip abroad is still on the mind of voters, but Obama’s spending amount may be the biggest reason for his recent poll success. Obama, his PAC, and the DNC collectively outspent Romney and his crew by $32.5 million in June, and the poll numbers -- whether by correlation or causation -- seem to reflect this. The question therefore ends up being, especially considering Romney’s recent fundraising streak, whether or not Obama can continue to outspend his opponent. It’s an important question, because it’s the only means Obama has towards the end of keeping Romney’s image from improving. David Brooks, PBS News Hour pundit and New York Times columnist, puts this issue of image in perspective as he argues that the election’s, “Fundamental dynamic still slightly favors Romney, because I think it's much more likely we are going to see Romney's character image rise than that we're going to see the economy rise.” August will be the biggest show of Brooks’ economy versus image dichotomy to date, and will provide a good litmus test for November. This is because Labor Day has historically been the turning point for elections in terms of campaign activity, and more importantly voter attention to candidates and election story lines. If Romney can piece together an August where he wins another fundraising battle and outspends Obama, with a bit of luck from an always possible bad jobs report, the former governor just might be able to start turning this race around.

Obama Loses Now

Romney will outspend Obama – that win’s him the election

Jackson 8/6 (David Jackson, 8/6/12, USA TODAY, “Will Romney out-raise Obama?” http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2012/08/will-romney-out-raise-obama/1#.UCArysie6QY //nimo)

President Obama and his aides have been warning supporters for weeks that a Republican money advantage could doom their re-election bid in November. They're not kidding around. GOP candidate Mitt Romney and the Republican Party announced Monday they picked up $101.3 million in July, the third straight month they have out-raised the incumbent's campaign. Obama and the Democrats announced they raised only "over $75 million" in July. The new reports raise the distinct possibility that Romney and the Republicans will out-raise and out-spend the incumbent president this election year, especially if money from outside groups is included. "We are well on track to raise the money to be successful in November," said a joint statement from Romney finance chair Spencer Zwick and Republican Party chairman Reince Priebus. Obama spokeswoman Jen Psaki said fundraising is on track to produce "the biggest grassroots campaign in history," one capable of "reaching voters in the key target states" that will decide the election. "We are where we need to be," she said.

A2: Gay Marriage

Obama’s support of gay marriage won’t lose him votes

Jones 12 (Robert P. Jones, 8/6/12, Huffington Post, “Why Obama’s support for same-sex marriage won’t hurt him among African Americans,” http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/figuring-faith/post/why-obamas-support-for-same-sex-marriage-wont-hurt-him-among-african-americans/2012/08/03/5024f8d6-ddb4-11e1-8e43-4a3c4375504a\_blog.html //nimo)

Three findings signal that efforts leverage this issue to galvanize the black community against Obama are unlikely to be unsuccessful: continued overwhelming support for Obama among black voters, the fact that same-sex marriage is a very low-priority issue for black Americans, and—the most direct evidence at all—most black Americans who are aware of Obama’s support for same-sex marriage also approve of his position. Firstly, there is no evidence that Obama’s support has slipped among the black community since his announcement. Public Religion Research Institute’s recent July poll found that an overwhelming majority of black voters (87 percent) say they would vote for Obama if the election were held today. Only 3 percent they would vote for Mitt Romney, while 10 percent they did not know or refused the question. Similarly, 9-in-10 (91 percent) voters say that they hold a favorable view of Obama, compared to only 14 percent who say that they hold a favorable view of Romney. Second, same-sex marriage has always been a low-priority political issue for black Americans, who are, like other Americans, focused primarily on the economy this election season. Fewer than 1-in-5 (18 percent) black Americans cite same-sex marriage as a critical issue facing the country, compared to 71 percent who say the same of the economy. Although the black pastors’ new campaign might suggest that this issue has more traction within a religious context, fewer than half (47 percent) of black Americans say that their clergy discusses the issue of homosexuality sometimes or often. Notably, over 7-in-10 (71 percent) black Americans say that it’s possible to disagree with their church’s teaching on the issue of homosexuality and still be considered a good Christian, suggesting that black Americans in the pews are not necessarily taking their cues on this issue from clergy or official church positions. Finally, the PRRI poll shows that of the two-thirds (68 percent) of black Americans who are aware of Obama’s support for same-sex marriage, a solid majority (60 percent) say they approve of his position. This may seem counterintuitive, given that 53 percent of black Americans oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry legally, while 43 percent are in favor. But this differential is one more indicator of the unshakability of Obama’s support within the black community. The question of whether President Obama’s support for same-sex marriage will affect his support among black voters is liable to come up periodically between now and Election Day. But the answer to that question will likely be the same as it is today, three months after Obama’s announcement. Despite the fact that there is some dissonance between Obama’s position and where black Americans are overall on this issue, there is simply no evidence it is driving a wedge between Obama and black voters.

Jobs Report

Obama economic policies fail – unemployment is up

Madison 8/3 (Lucy Madison, August 3, 2012, CBS News, “GOP seizes on unemployment uptick in July jobs report,” http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544\_162-57486102-503544/gop-seizes-on-unemployment-uptick-in-july-jobs-report/ //nimo)

(CBS News) Pouncing on July's jobs report, Republicans on Friday continued to hammer the Obama administration for economic policies they say are failing the American people; Democrats, however, were cautiously optimistic that the same report indicated signs of economic improvement. According to the Labor Department report, U.S. employers added 163,000 jobs in July, the highest such figure since February, and one that outpaced expectations for the month. Unemployment, however, ticked up by a tenth of a point, from 8.2 percent in June to 8.3 percent in July. Republicans immediately seized on the unemployment number, blasting the Obama administration in a flurry of emailed statements released shortly after the report's 8:30 release. Job-creation picks up steam in July "Today's increase in the unemployment rate is a hammer blow to struggling middle-class families," said Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, in a statement. "President Obama doesn't have a plan and believes that the private sector is 'doing fine.' Obviously, that is not the case."

A2: Jobs Report

Job report is good new, not bad

Hutchinson 8/5 (Earl Ofari Hutchinson is a nationally acclaimed author and political analyst, 8/5/12, Huffington Post, “How the Economy Can Help or Hurt President Obama,” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/earl-ofari-hutchinson/ //nimo)

GOP presidential contender Mitt Romney predictably jumped all over the jobs report for July which saw joblessness tick up slightly. He called it a hammer blow for the middle-class. Certainly much has been made of the fact that no president has won reelection since World War II with the jobless rate above 8 percent. That and the report seemed to spell bad news for President Obama. But it's anything but that. The report also showed a jump in the number of jobs for the month. Some non-partisan economists and financial experts predict a slow but steady trend upward in the job numbers over the next few months. That's potentially a plus for Obama's reelection.

Obama Winning

Obama’s lead is growing – Romney will attack unpopular policies

Merrell 8-10 (David Merrell, “President Obama Opens Up Lead On Mitt Romney,” 8-10-12, http://www.northmobilepost.com/president-obama-opens-up-lead-on-mitt-romney/?utm\_source=rss&utm\_medium=rss&utm\_campaign=president-obama-opens-up-lead-on-mitt-romney)

A series of polls reveal that President Obama has begun to put a little space between himself and Mitt Romney in the coming election. A CNN poll showed the president leading Romney 52-45, while a Fox News poll showed the president leading 49-40. A series of gaffes by Romney coupled with a barrage of negative ads by President Obama’s campaign staff have the Republican challenger reeling. Romney will get a likely boost in the coming days as he is set to announce his running mate, and the Republican Convention will be held later this month as well. The latest polls are bad news for Romney on all fronts. He is losing independent voters, which most say are going to decide this election. Obama carried independent voters in the 2008 election, and is leading among that group now. This election group will be particularly important in key swing states like Ohio, Florida, Colorado, and Virginia. To win the presidency, Romney will have to win a majority of these states. Another troubling sign is the perception voters have of him. Most voters believe he favors the rich over the middle class. In an economy that appears to be stuck in neutral, with most Americans struggling, that is not a good sign. Recent studies of Mitt Romney’s tax plan have shown that it will disproportionately favor the rich, and lead to either tax increases on the middle class, or higher deficits. The report was very damaging to Romney’s campaign, and President Obama pounced on it. Romney’s choice for VP is going to be very important, as it will prove a further signal of how he intends to govern. Insiders seem to believe that Paul Ryan has moved to the front of the race. A Ryan selection would not help the perception that Romney favors the rich, as Ryan’s budget plan has faced the same criticism. Ryan’s budget plan calls for Medicare to be transformed into a voucher like program. Putting him on the ticket would open up the Romney campaign to charges that a Romney presidency would bring about the end of Medicare, and that would possibly cost him the election. Romney’s strategy thus far has been to play it safe and hope the economy worsens and derails the Obama presidency. Thus far, the economy has been getting incrementally better. Economic growth has not been strong enough to propel Obama to a surefire win in November, but it has not been bad enough to cost him the election either. With the election a mere three months away, Romney can not stand idly by and hope that conditions become more favorable for him. The odds are that the economy will not shift greatly one way or another in that short span. Unfortunately for Romney, his options are very limited. The Obama campaign has poisoned his private sector success to such a degree that it would be political suicide to attempt to run on it now. Conservative distaste for Obamacare, which was based on Romneycare in Massachusetts, means he can not run on his record as governor. Many of his policy proposals, such as across the board tax cuts which are more beneficial to the very wealthy, are not particularly popular with a majority of Americans. Romney really only has one choice, and that is to do exactly what Obama is doing: try to annihilate your opponent.

Obama winning – multiple polls – leading with independents

Burns 8-9 (Alexander Burns, 8-9-12, “Fox poll: Obama 49, Romney 40,” [http://www.politico.com//blogs/burns-haberman/2012/08/fox-poll-obama-romney-131598.html](http://www.politico.com/blogs/burns-haberman/2012/08/fox-poll-obama-romney-131598.html))

This is the third poll this week — following Reuters and CNN — showing Obama's lead in the high end of the single digits: Mitt Romney has had a tough couple of weeks on the campaign trail -- and it shows in the latest Fox News poll. After a barrage of campaign ads, negative news coverage of his overseas trip and ongoing talk about his tax returns, Romney’s favorable rating and standing in the trial ballot have declined. As a result, President Obama has opened his biggest lead since Romney became the presumptive Republican nominee. The president would take 49 percent of the vote compared to Romney's 40 percent in a head-to-head matchup if the election were held today, the poll found. Last month, Obama had a four percentage-point edge of 45 percent to 41 percent. This marks the second time this year the president has had a lead outside the poll’s margin of sampling error. Obama’s advantage comes largely from increased support among independents, who now pick him over Romney by 11 percentage points. Some 30 percent of independents are undecided. Last month, Obama had a four-point edge among independents, while Romney had the advantage from April through early June.

Obama will win – leading polls & economic approval

Steinhauser 8-9 (Paul Steinhauser, CNN Political Editor, 8-9-12, “CNN Poll: Obama holds 7-point lead over Romney,” <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2012/08/09/cnn-poll-obama-holds-7-point-lead-over-romney/>)

Washington (CNN) - Mitt Romney's unfavorable rating is up, most Americans think the Republican presidential challenger favors the rich, and it appears the number of people who believe that the economy will not get better if Romney is elected has edged up slightly, according to a new national poll. But a CNN/ORC International survey released Thursday also indicates that Romney's supporters are increasingly getting behind the presumptive GOP nominee. It all adds up to a seven point advantage for President Barack Obama over the former Massachusetts governor, with 52% of registered voters questioned in the survey saying that they'd vote to re-elect the president and 45% backing Romney. "Among independent voters, the poll indicates President Obama has a 53%-42% lead," CNN Polling Director Keating Holland said. "The president holds a nine point advantage among women voters and a smaller six point edge among men."

Independents strongly favor Obama

Steinhauser 8-9 (Paul Steinhauser, CNN Political Editor, 8-9-12, “CNN Poll: Obama holds 7-point lead over Romney,” <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2012/08/09/cnn-poll-obama-holds-7-point-lead-over-romney/>)

Since the start of the general election in April, the Obama campaign and Democratic groups have launched attacks on the presumptive Republican nominee, and the survey indicates that they appear to be working. While Romney's favorable rating has remained steady (47% now compared to 48% in July), his unfavorable rating has jumped from 42% last month to 48% now. The president's 56%-42% favorable-unfavorable rating now is little changed from July. Among independents, the poll indicates Romney's image has taken a beating. In May, only 40% of independents had an unfavorable view of Romney. Now, 52% of independents have a negative view of him. Other findings: Sixty-four percent of all Americans, and 68% of independents, think Romney favors the rich over the middle class. And 63% of the public thinks Romney should release more tax returns than he has already made public, a figure which rises to 67% among independents. "These are all signs that a summer of negative campaigning on the part of the Democrats seems to be taking its toll on the presumptive GOP nominee," says Holland. Most significantly, it appears that Romney's image as a can-do guy on the economy may have also been hurt. In May, 50% of all Americans said that the economy would get better if Romney were elected. That's now down to 45%, two points below Obama's number. It's likely that all of this is the result of the Democrats' efforts to paint Romney in an unflattering light, but so far Obama has avoided any blowback from that strategy, as evidenced by no rise in his unfavorable rating. Who do Americans think will win the election? Regardless of which candidate they support, 63% think Obama will win re-election, with one third saying Romney will win. "That may not translate directly into votes, but it is worth noting that in August of previous election years, the public accurately predicted the winner in 1996, 2000 and 2008, and in 2004 George W. Bush and John Kerry were tied," adds Holland.

Obama is winning

Silver 8-9 (Nate Silver, 8-9-12, “Aug. 9: National Polls Shouldn’t Panic Romney,” FiveThirtyEight, <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/09/aug-9-national-polls-shouldnt-panic-romney/>)

President Obama got a couple of very good-looking polls on Thursday. A CNN poll put him seven points ahead of Mitt Romney in the national race. And a Fox News poll gave Mr. Obama a nine-point lead. Some polling firms, like Pew Research, have consistently shown strong numbers for Mr. Obama. When a polling firm like that prints another strong number for him, it isn’t necessarily news. Mr. Romney cannot use that excuse in the case of the Fox News and CNN polls. CNN’s surveys so far this cycle have had essentially no partisan lean, whereas Fox News’s polls have shown a modest Republican one. Mr. Obama’s number was strong not just in an absolute sense, but also relative to their earlier polls. In the Real Clear Politics average of national polls, Mr. Obama’s lead grew to 4.4 percentage points on Thursday. That’s his largest lead by its method since early April, when Mitt Romney was just starting to recover from a rough stretch in the primary campaign.

Obama has a slight lead now

Silver 8-9 (Nate Silver, 8-9-12, “Aug. 9: National Polls Shouldn’t Panic Romney,” FiveThirtyEight, http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/09/aug-9-national-polls-shouldnt-panic-romney/)

In addition to the issue I mentioned earlier about potentially placing too much weight on new data points, most of the other polling sites do not adjust polls on the basis of whether they were conducted among registered voters or likely voters. Our model does, and it assumes — based on historical trends as well as what data we have from this year — that Mr. Romney will perform about two points better in polls of likely voters than polls of registered voters. This will not be a big issue in the state polls, the vast majority of which are already being conducted on a likely voter basis. But most of the recent national polls, including the Fox News and CNN polls, reported results among registered voters instead. If you take the Real Clear Politics national polling average and apply our likely voter adjustment to it, it would place Mr. Obama ahead by somewhere in the neighborhood of two-and-a-half or three points right now, which is almost exactly how our model sees the race. This is not to suggest that Mr. Romney has nothing to worry about. Polls like the Fox News survey may be outliers, but as I noted on Wednesday, even the outliers tell you something about the central tendency. The fact that Mr. Obama’s outliers show him as many as nine or 10 points ahead, while Mr. Romney at best gets polls that show him three or four points up, is not a good sign for him. Another concerning fact for Mr. Romney is that the spread between the horse-race polls and Mr. Obama’s approval ratings has been widening of late. Real Clear Politics — drawing from almost exactly the same set of polls that show a 4.4-point lead for Mr. Obama in the horse race — have Mr. Obama’s approval ratings almost exactly break-even instead. The split may be caused by voters who account for the personal qualities of the candidates, rather than seeing the race as a pure referendum on the incumbent. Can a president get re-elected with an approval rating of 47 or 48 percent? It’s tenuous, obviously. But if that president’s favorability scores are at or above 50 percent, and his opponent has net-negative favorables instead, it’s not that hard to see how he could be a few points ahead in the horse race.

Obama Losing

There is veryyyy little recent evidence in this direction. Obama probably will win. Look to past files for other Romney win ev. New stuff just doesn’t exist

Romney winning the ad war and outspending now

Jackson 8/9 (David Jackson, 8/9/12, USA TODAY, “Obama: 'I will be outspent this election',” http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2012/08/obama-i-will-be-outspent-this-election/1#.UCR57Mie6QY //nimo)

President Obama is telling backers that "I will be outspent this election," and that is why they need to give more money. The incumbent also says he is losing the "ad wars" on television and radio. The disadvantage won't mean anything "if we're able to keep the spending gap close enough so that our investments in a truly grassroots campaign pay off," Obama said in a fundraising e-mail sent today. Citing recent reports that Republican Mitt Romney out-raised Obama for the third straight month in July, Obama noted: "The headlines are talking about how you and I got beat again by the other side in fundraising. "Those headlines aren't going away," Obama wrote. "I will be outspent in this election. And we will not win the ad wars on TV and radio -- right now, the other side is outspending us on TV by at least 2-to-1 in most battleground states." Obama and the Democrats have long talked about Republican spending, not only by Romney but by outside groups that back the GOP.

Polls Bad

Polls aren’t predictive – too many inaccuracies

Silver 8/9 (NATE SILVER, August 9, 2012, NYT 538 Blog, “Aug. 9: National Polls Shouldn’t Panic Romney,” http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/09/aug-9-national-polls-shouldnt-panic-romney/ //nimo)

One problem is that the trend toward Mr. Obama in national polls has hardly been uniform. The Gallup national tracking poll has shown a very flat race. And Rasmussen Reports had a swing toward Mr. Romney in its release on Thursday, with his pulling ahead by four points in its survey. Weekly tracking polls from Public Policy Polling and YouGov have also not shown especially good numbers for Mr. Obama lately. If there had really been a shift in the race of the magnitude that the Real Clear Politics average implies — it has Mr. Obama gaining three points on Mr. Romney over roughly the past 10 days — we probably wouldn’t be seeing these contradictory data points. Perhaps more importantly, there hasn’t really been a lot of news to drive something on the order of a three-point swing toward Mr. Obama. There have been far more momentous news events at earlier stages of the campaign, like the Supreme Court’s ruling on Mr. Obama’s health care bill, or the set of poor jobs reports in April through June, that didn’t seem to move the numbers much at all. So your default position should be one of skepticism toward the numbers having moved very much. Might Mr. Obama have gained half a point, or a point, based on whatever residual factors that voters are thinking about? Sure, and Mr. Romney would rather that movement be in his direction instead. But has Mr. Obama gained three points, at a time when most ordinary Americans are watching the Olympics? Probably not. From a more technical standpoint, my research suggests that one should not be overly eager to chase down the latest trend at this stage of the campaign. Some of our friendly competitors, like Talking Points Memo, use a technique called Loess regression to calculate a polling trendline. Our methodology is not quite the same as theirs, but we do use a version of Loess regression to calculate our trendline adjustment.

Romney Win Ohio

Polls don’t matter, Obama will lose Ohio – Republicans in state government will close voting early to avoid urban bases of Obama support

Horstman 8-5 (Barry M. Horstman, “Voting time a partisan battle,” 8-5-12, <http://news.cincinnati.com/article/20120805/NEWS0106/308050053>)

Extended hours on nights and weekends that made it easier for nearly 9,000 voters to cast early ballots in the 2008 presidential race at the Hamilton County Board of Elections may not be repeated this year because of Republican opposition. Across Ohio, that is part of a developing pattern in which extra pre-election voting hours may be denied to voters in large urban counties – most of which traditionally vote Democratic – even as extended hours will be available in some smaller counties with a strong Republican slant. The issue has emerged amid continuing questions over provisional ballots – cast when there are questions over a voter’s registration, and the source of controversy in past elections – and the Ohio legislature’s failure over the past four years to amend the state’s voting laws to address problems. A showdown over the extra voting hours is expected at the Hamilton County Board of Elections next week. If the debate plays out as it has in Ohio’s other major urban counties, it likely will result in a 2-2 tie vote by board members, with Democrats in favor of extending voting hours and Republicans opposed. That would place the question before Secretary of State Jon Husted, a Republican who over the past several weeks has consistently sided with GOP elections board members elsewhere in casting tie-breaking votes against extending voting hours during the weeks leading up to the Nov. 6 election. Cost control, or blocking the vote? Although Husted has cited cost concerns, Hamilton County Democratic Party chairman Tim Burke views the move as having more to do with politics than budgets. “The Republicans remember those long lines outside boards of elections last time in the evening and on weekends,” Burke said. “The lines were overwhelmingly African-American, and it’s pretty obvious that the people were predominantly – very predominantly – Obama voters. The Republicans don’t want that to happen again. It’s that simple.”

Romney winning – negative ads are working

Selway 8-10 (William Selway and Heidi Przybyla, “Romney Gets Welfare Politics Right as Ad Misses on Facts,” 8-10-12, BusinessWeek, <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-08-10/romney-gets-welfare-politics-right-as-ad-misses-on-facts>)

Mitt Romney’s claim that President Barack Obama has quietly gutted the nation’s welfare overhaul may be a political winner with some voters. Yet it’s an assertion that is at odds with the views of policy experts, the Republican governor who suggested the idea of more flexible rules, and former President Bill Clinton, who signed the landmark 1996 welfare reform into law. In a new advertisement and on the campaign trail, Romney, the Republican presidential candidate, is criticizing an administration memo that would relieve states of federal welfare work quotas if they can present alternatives for moving more of the record number of impoverished Americans into permanent jobs. Romney’s ad says that under the rule, “you wouldn’t have to work and wouldn’t have to train for a job,” a claim rejected even by some members of his own party. “People who didn’t know the details might be likely to believe it,” said Ron Haskins, a Republican and onetime legislative aide who helped draft the welfare law. Even so, “this could be a very effective thing for Romney to do.” The line of attack speaks to concern among white working class voters, a crucial constituency for Romney**, as well as independents** that the government is catering to the highest and lowest rungs of society at their expense, said Larry Jacobs, a political science professor at the University of Minnesota. It also involves welfare-to-work requirements that enjoy broad public support and plays into a Romney campaign charge that Obama wants to promote a culture of dependence. ‘Big-Spending Liberal’ “It creates an episode that vividly demonstrates the Republican criticism of Obama as a big-spending liberal,” said Jacobs, adding that any detailed rebuttal by the administration wouldn’t be as potent. “It’s going to take you five or six paragraphs to neutralize a one-sentence attack ad.”

Iz A Dead Heat

No major shift – too close to tell

Silver 8-9 (Nate Silver, 8-9-12, “Aug. 9: National Polls Shouldn’t Panic Romney,” FiveThirtyEight, <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/09/aug-9-national-polls-shouldnt-panic-romney/>)

In the Real Clear Politics average of national polls, Mr. Obama’s lead grew to 4.4 percentage points on Thursday. That’s his largest lead by its method since early April, when Mitt Romney was just starting to recover from a rough stretch in the primary campaign. And yet, despite all that, I think the importance of these new polls could easily be overstated — and probably will be by some in the news media. One problem is that the trend toward Mr. Obama in national polls has hardly been uniform. The Gallup national tracking poll has shown a very flat race. And Rasmussen Reports had a swing toward Mr. Romney in its release on Thursday, with his pulling ahead by four points in its survey. Weekly tracking polls from Public Policy Polling and YouGov have also not shown especially good numbers for Mr. Obama lately. If there had really been a shift in the race of the magnitude that the Real Clear Politics average implies — it has Mr. Obama gaining three points on Mr. Romney over roughly the past 10 days — we probably wouldn’t be seeing these contradictory data points. Perhaps more importantly, there hasn’t really been a lot of news to drive something on the order of a three-point swing toward Mr. Obama. There have been far more momentous news events at earlier stages of the campaign, like the Supreme Court’s ruling on Mr. Obama’s health care bill, or the set of poor jobs reports in April through June, that didn’t seem to move the numbers much at all. So your default position should be one of skepticism toward the numbers having moved very much. Might Mr. Obama have gained half a point, or a point, based on whatever residual factors that voters are thinking about? Sure, and Mr. Romney would rather that movement be in his direction instead. But has Mr. Obama gained three points, at a time when most ordinary Americans are watching the Olympics? Probably not.

Too Early to Predict

Too soon to tell – only last 6 weeks matter

Silver 8-9 (Nate Silver, 8-9-12, “Aug. 9: National Polls Shouldn’t Panic Romney,” FiveThirtyEight, <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/09/aug-9-national-polls-shouldnt-panic-romney/>)

From a more technical standpoint, my research suggests that one should not be overly eager to chase down the latest trend at this stage of the campaign. Some of our friendly competitors, like Talking Points Memo, use a technique called Loess regression to calculate a polling trendline. Our methodology is not quite the same as theirs, but we do use a version of Loess regression to calculate our trendline adjustment. Loess regression is a nice technique, but one of its quirks is that you have to manually choose what’s called a “smoothing parameter.” You can set the smoothing parameter to be highly sensitive to new data points — a couple of new polls will swing the trendline a lot — or relatively insensitive to them, where a change might have to be sustained for a couple of weeks to make much difference. In designing this year’s model, I went back and looked at what choice of smoothing parameters would have produced the most accurate predictions in past presidential elections dating back to 1972. The research suggested that the answer actually depends on which stage of the campaign you’re in. In the late stages of the campaign — the final six weeks or so before the election — it’s worthwhile to be reasonably (but not excessively) aggressive. More and more voters will be paying attention to the campaign, and making up their minds once and for all about whom they’re going to vote for. Polling gets more accurate as you get closer to the election, but the trend is not linear: it gets a little bit more accurate throughout the summer months, but then a lot more accurate within these final six weeks. Right now, however, it’s better to be quite conservative. A poll released on Aug. 9 is just not going to be all that much more informative than one released on July 9, especially if there haven’t been major intervening news events during the period. The trendlines you see at some other Web sites are probably fluctuating upward and downward much more than they should. Loess regression is a fairly “smart” method, and even a conservative application of it could still potentially perceive a shift in the polls in the summer. Certainly, if the national tracking polls had also shown a shift toward Mr. Obama, we would be seeing some fireworks in the model right now. Even then, however, national polls are just one of the things you should be looking at to make an election forecast. The other critical factors are state polls and the economic numbers. Our model hedges against the national polls by combining the state polls with them, and then also, hedges against the polls in general by combining them with our economic index. Of these three things, the national polls probably have the least influence on the forecast at this stage of the campaign. To be clear, the model has shown a favorable trend for Mr. Obama lately. His chances of winning the Electoral College rose to 73.3 percent on Wednesday, a new high. His projected margin of victory over Mr. Romney in the national popular vote, 2.8 percentage points, is also a new high. But the shift is more because the consensus of evidence has been slightly favorable to Mr. Obama than any one piece of evidence pointing toward a major inflection point in the race. The economic numbers are still very mixed, but the jobs report was better in July, personal income growth has been accelerating and the stock market has been rallying. I’m certainly not going to render a prediction about the long-term future of the euro zone, but it now seems less likely that it will blow up soon enough to substantially affect the election in November. (Perhaps whichever candidate wins will have a huge mess on his hands in 2013 instead.) Mr. Obama has also had a fairly strong set of polls from swing states. It’s just not a good sign for Mr. Romney that he’s down in almost all polls of Ohio, and more often than not, in polls of Florida and Virginia as well — although he has posted some better numbers in Colorado recently. Finally, and despite my earlier caution about how time in a campaign should be measured on a relative rather than absolute scale, we are seeing some time tick off the clock. Mr. Obama is almost certainly ahead right now, so any day that the status quo is preserved is basically a good one for him. Despite that, it is doubtful that Mr. Obama leads by as many as four or six points now (as some other polling aggregation Web sites suggest), and even more doubtful that he is seven or nine points ahead.

Iran Strikes Good F/L

Iran first strike is inevitable – solves prolif and terror

Matthew Kroenig is Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, he was a Special Adviser in the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, responsible for defense strategy and policy on Iran, January/February 2012, “Time to Attack Iran: Why a Strike Is the Least Bad Option”, http://online.physics.uiuc.edu/courses/phys280/spring12/archive/Time-to-Attack-Iran.pdf; hhs-ab

In early October, U.S. officials accused Iranian operatives of planning to assassinate Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States on American soil. Iran denied the charges, but the episode has already managed to increase tensions between Washington and Tehran. Although the Obama administration has not publicly threatened to retaliate with military force, the allegations have underscored the real and growing risk that the two sides could go to war sometime soon--particularly over Iran's advancing nuclear program. For several years now, starting long before this episode, American pundits and policymakers have been debating whether the United States should attack Iran and attempt to eliminate its nuclear facilities. Proponents of a strike have argued that the only thing worse than military action against Iran would be an Iran armed with nuclear weapons. Critics, meanwhile, have warned that such a raid would likely fail and, even if it succeeded, would spark a full-fledged war and a global economic crisis. They have urged the United States to rely on nonmilitary options, such as diplomacy, sanctions, and covert operations, to prevent Iran from acquiring a bomb. Fearing the costs of a bombing campaign, most critics maintain that if these other tactics fail to impede Tehran's progress, the United States should simply learn to live with a nuclear Iran. But skeptics of military action fail to appreciate the true danger that a nuclear armed Iran would pose to U.S. interests in the Middle East and beyond. And their grim forecasts assume that the cure would be worse than the disease--that is, that the consequences of a U.S. assault on Iran would be as bad as or worse than those of Iran achieving its nuclear ambitions. But that is a faulty assumption. The truth is that a military strike intended to destroy Iran's nuclear program, if managed carefully, could spare the region and the world a very real threat and dramatically improve the long-term national security of the United States. Years of international pressure have failed to halt Iran's attempt to build a nuclear program. The Stuxnet computer worm, which attacked control systems in Iranian nuclear facilities, temporarily disrupted Tehran's enrichment effort, but a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency this past May revealed that the targeted plants have fully recovered from the assault. And the latest IAEA findings on Iran, released in November, provided the most compelling evidence yet that the Islamic Republic has weathered sanctions and sabotage, allegedly testing nuclear triggering devices and redesigning its missiles to carry nuclear payloads. The Institute for Science and International Security, a nonprofit research institution, estimates that Iran could now produce its first nuclear weapon within six months of deciding to do so. Tehran's plans to move sensitive nuclear operations into more secure facilities over the course of the coming year could reduce the window for effective military action even further. If Iran expels IAEA inspectors, begins enriching its stockpiles of uranium to weapons-grade levels of 90 percent, or installs advanced centrifuges at its uranium-enrichment facility in Qom, the **U**nited **S**tates **must strike immediately** or forfeit its last opportunity to prevent Iran from joining the nuclear club. 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. 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 **U**nited **S**tates in, as well. These security threats would require Washington to contain Tehran. Yet deterrence would come at a heavy price. To keep the Iranian threat at bay, the United States would need to deploy naval and ground units and potentially nuclear weapons across the Middle East, keeping a large force in the area for decades to come. Alongside those troops, the United States would have to permanently deploy significant intelligence assets to monitor any attempts by Iran to transfer its nuclear technology. And it would also need to devote perhaps billions of dollars to improving its allies' capability to defend themselves. This might include helping Israel construct submarine-launched ballistic missiles and hardened ballistic missile silos to ensure that it can maintain a secure second-strike capability. Most of all, to make containment credible, the United States would need to extend its nuclear umbrella to its partners in the region, pledging to defend them with military force should Iran launch an attack. In other words, to contain a nuclear Iran, the United States would need to make a substantial investment of political and military capital to the Middle East in the midst of an economic crisis and at a time when it is attempting to shift its forces out of the region. Deterrence would come with enormous economic and geopolitical costs and would have to remain in place as long as Iran remained hostile to U.S. interests, which could mean decades or longer. Given the instability of the region, this effort might still fail, resulting in a war far more costly and destructive than the one that critics of a preemptive strike on Iran now hope to avoid. A nuclear Iran would impose a huge burden on the United States. But that does not necessarily mean that Washington should resort to military means. In de-ciding whether it should, the first question to answer is if an attack on Iran's nuclear program could even work. Doubters point out that the United States might not know the location of Iran's key facilities. Given Tehran's previous attempts to hide the construction of such stations, most notably the uraniumenrichment facilities in Natanz and Qom, it is possible that the regime already possesses nuclear assets that a bombing campaign might miss, which would leave Iran's program damaged but alive. This scenario is possible, but not likely; indeed, such fears are probably overblown. U.S. intelligence agencies, the IAEA, and opposition groups within Iran have provided timely warning of Tehran's nuclear activities in the past-- exposing, for example, Iran's secret construction at Natanz and Qom before those facilities ever became operational. Thus, although Tehran might again attempt to build clandestine facilities, Washington has a very good chance of catching it before they go online. And given the amount of time it takes to construct and activate a nuclear facility, the scarcity of Iran's resources, and its failure to hide the facilities in Natanz and Qom successfully, it is unlikely that Tehran has any significant operational nuclear facilities still unknown to Western intelligence agencies. Even if the United States managed to identify all of Iran's nuclear plants, however, actually destroying them could prove enormously difficult.

Proliferation causes extinction

Victor A **Utgoff,** Deputy Director of Strategy, Forces, and Resources Division of Institute for Defense Analysis, Summer 20**02**, Survival, p.87-90

In sum, widespread proliferation is likely to lead to an occasional shoot-out with nuclear weapons, and that such shoot outs will have a substantial probability of escalating to the maximum destruction possible with the weapons at hand. Unless nuclear proliferation is stopped, we are headed towards a world that will mirror the American Wild West of the late 1800s. With most, if not all, nations wearing nuclear “six shooters” on their hips, the world may even be a more polite place than it is today, but every once in a while we will all gather together on a hill to bury the bodies of dead cities or even whole nations.

Terrorism causes extinction

Alexander, professor and director of the Inter-University for Terrorism Studies 2003 (Yonah;) “Terrorism myths and realities” Washington Times 8/28 l/n WBW

Last week's brutal suicide bombings in Baghdad and Jerusalem have once again illustrated dramatically that the international community failed, thus far at least, to understand the magnitude and implications of the terrorist threats to the very survival of civilization itself. Even the United States and Israel have for decades tended to regard terrorism as a mere tactical nuisance or irritant rather than a critical strategic challenge to their national security concerns. It is not surprising, therefore, that on September 11, 2001, Americans were stunned by the unprecedented tragedy of 19 al Qaeda terrorists striking a devastating blow at the center of the nation's commercial and military powers. Likewise, Israel and its citizens, despite the collapse of the Oslo Agreements of 1993 and numerous acts of terrorism triggered by the second intifada that began almost three years ago, are still "shocked" by each suicide attack at a time of intensive diplomatic efforts to revive the moribund peace process through the now revoked cease-fire arrangements [hudna]. Why are the United States and Israel, as well as scores of other countries affected by the universal nightmare of modern terrorism surprised by new terrorist "surprises"? There are many reasons, including misunderstanding of the manifold specific factors that contribute to terrorism's expansion, such as lack of a universal definition of terrorism, the religionization of politics, double standards of morality, weak punishment of terrorists, and the exploitation of the media by terrorist propaganda and psychological warfare. Unlike their historical counterparts, contemporary terrorists have introduced a new scale of violence in terms of conventional and unconventional threats and impact. The internationalization and brutalization of current and future terrorism make it clear we have entered an Age of Super Terrorism [e.g. biological, chemical, radiological, nuclear and cyber] with its serious implications concerning national, regional and global security concerns.

Turn – Conventional War

Israeli preemptive strike is inevitable – US action key to prevent it

Matthew Kroenig is Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, he was a Special Adviser in the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, responsible for defense strategy and policy on Iran, January/February 2012, “Time to Attack Iran: Why a Strike Is the Least Bad Option”, http://online.physics.uiuc.edu/courses/phys280/spring12/archive/Time-to-Attack-Iran.pdf; hhs-ab

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. 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 **U**nited **S**tates **to choose between a conventional conflict and a possible nuclear war.** Faced with that decision, the **U**nited **S**tates **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

Strikes critical to prevent conventional war – prevents Israel from striking

Matthew Kroenig is Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, he was a Special Adviser in the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, responsible for defense strategy and policy on Iran, January/February 2012, “Time to Attack Iran: Why a Strike Is the Least Bad Option”, http://online.physics.uiuc.edu/courses/phys280/spring12/archive/Time-to-Attack-Iran.pdf; hhs-ab

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 inbunkers 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 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. Finally, the U.S. government could blunt the economic consequences of a strike. For example, it could offset any disruption of oil supplies by opening its Strategic Petroleum Reserve and quietly encouraging some Gulf states to increase their production in the run-up to the attack. Given that many oil-producing nations in the region, especially Saudi Arabia, have urged the United States to attack Iran, they would likely cooperate. Washington could also reduce the political fallout of military action by building global support for it in advance. Many countries may still criticize the United States for using force, but some--the Arab states in particular--would privately thank Washington for eliminating the Iranian threat. By building such a consensus in the lead-up to an attack and taking the outlined steps to mitigate it once it began, the United States could avoid an international crisis and limit the scope of the conflict. Critics have another objection: even if the United States managed to eliminate Iran's nuclear facilities and mitigate the consequences, the effects might not lastlong. Sure enough, there is no guarantee that an assault would deter Iran from attempting to rebuild its plants; it may even harden Iran's resolve to acquire nuclear technology as a means of retaliating or protecting itself in the future. The United States might not have the wherewithal or the political capital to launch another raid, forcing it to rely on the same ineffective tools that it now uses to restrain Iran's nuclear drive. If that happens, U.S. action will have only delayed the inevitable. Yet according to the IAEA, Iran already appears fully committed to developing a nuclear weapons program and needs no further motivation from the United States. And it will not be able to simply resume its progress after its entire nuclear infrastructure is reduced to rubble. Indeed, such a devastating offensive could well force Iran to quit the nuclear game altogether, as Iraq did after its nuclear program was destroyed in the Gulf War and as Syria did after the 2007 Israeli strike. And even if Iran did try to reconstitute its nuclear program, it would be forced to contend with continued international pressure, greater difficulty in securing necessary nuclear materials on the international market, and the lurking possibility of subsequent attacks. Military action could, therefore, delay Iran's nuclear program by anywhere from a few years to a decade, and perhaps even indefinitely. 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 HashemiRafsanjani, for their perceived softness. And Rafsanjani or the former presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi would likely continue the nuclear program if he assumed power.

Preemptive strikes by Israel will unleash a global nuclear war.

J. Adams 1997 “THE SHOCK!: War In The Middle East?”, May 3, http://www.gold-eagle.com/gold\_digest/anon504.html

Israel is increasingly concerned by Iran's development of weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles. Iran has had a long-running, aggressive program to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weaponry and now the Iranians, according to the London Telegraph, "have....taken delivery of a consignment of the North Korean Nudong surface-to-surface missiles which would enable them to launch attacks against Israel". I doubt Tel Aviv will be patient in acting to mitigate the emerging threat of mass destruction from the radical regime in Teheran. And now, as both the U.S. and Europe are aligning against Iran in response to prior terrorism that is being linked back to Iran's leaders, an opportunity may be emerging for Tel Aviv to launch a debilitating preemptive attack against Iran's growing military prowess that was recently flaunted in wargames code-named the "Road To Jerusalem". (That Israel is willing to take such preemptive action is revealed by previous preemptive Israel strikes against the Arab powers as they were preparing to attack the Jewish State in the 1950's and 1960's.) Even if Israel isn't about to set-off a regional Middle Eastern war with a preemptive strike against Iran and/or Syria, the odds are war is going to erupt there one way or another in the near-future. Clearly the hard-line Arab states like Syria and Iran are getting ready to unleash a massive attack against the Jewish State, so it's not going to take much to ignite the region into a catastrophe of mass destruction. Inevitably, this will lead to a global nuclear war that Russia, now openly allied with China, has been preparing to unleash on the West.

Strikes work – precision bunker busters

Matthew Kroenig is Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, he was a Special Adviser in the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, responsible for defense strategy and policy on Iran, January/February 2012, “Time to Attack Iran: Why a Strike Is the Least Bad Option”, http://online.physics.uiuc.edu/courses/phys280/spring12/archive/Time-to-Attack-Iran.pdf; hhs-ab

Critics of a U.S. assault argue that Iran's nuclear facilities are dispersed across the country, buried deep underground and hardened against attack, and ringed with air defenses, making a raid complex and dangerous. In addition, they claim that Iran has purposefully placed its nuclear facilities near civilian populations, which would almost certainly come under fire in a U. S. raid, potentially leading to hundreds, if not thousands, of deaths. These 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 underreinforced 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. Washington would also be able to limit civilian casualties in any campaign. Iran built its most critical nuclear plants, such as the one in Natanz, away from heavily populated areas. For those less important facilities that exist near civilian centers, such as the centrifuge-manufacturing sites, **U.S. precision-guided missiles** could pinpoint specific buildings while leaving their surroundings unscathed. The United States could reduce the collateral damage even further by striking at night or simply leaving those less important plants off its target list at little cost to the overall success of the mission. Although Iran would undoubtedly publicize any human suffering in the wake of a military action, the majority of the victims would be the military personnel, engineers, scientists, and technicians working at the facilities. 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, whoseimpact 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.

Air strikes solve –intelligence, precision penetration bombs, exaggerated retaliation, and sustained strikes prevent rebuild

Efraim Inbar (Professor of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University and the Director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies) March 2006 “The Need To Block A Nuclear Iran”, MERIA Journal,

http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2006/issue1/jv10no1a7.html

While it is probably true that intelligence services cannot provide military planners with a full and comprehensive picture of the Iranian nuclear program, what we know seems to be enough to allow identification of the main targets. The military capability to hit all targets is important, but a partial destruction would be enough to cripple Iran's ability to build a nuclear bomb in the near future. Moreover, no large-scale invasion is needed in order to do the job, but only a sustained bombing campaign with commando strikes. While Iran has spread out its nuclear facilities and built a large part of the nuclear complex underground in order to protect it from conventional air strikes, technological advances in penetration of underground facilities and increased precision might allow total destruction. The difficulties in dealing a severe military blow to the Iranian nuclear program are generally exaggerated.[38] A detailed analysis of the military option is beyond the scope of this paper, but the American military definitely has the muscle and the sophistication needed to perform a preemptive strike in accordance with its new strategic doctrine, as well as the capability for a sustained air campaign, if needed to prevent the reparation and reconstruction of the facilities targeted.

No offense - US can stop Iran attempts to block strait of Hormuz, and if fails oil reserves solve short term oil deficits and Iran action will provoke global coalition against Iran

Efraim Inbar 2006 (Professor of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University and the Director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies) “The Need To Block A Nuclear Iran”, MERIA Journal, March, http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2006/issue1/jv10no1a7.html

Damaging oil fields and installations in the Gulf, as well as meddling with the oil flow, is a major affront to the well-being of the international community and would put Iran in conflict with most of the world. Interruptions in the export of Iranian petroleum would also negatively affect the Iranian economy and subsequently the regime survivability. In any case, an Iranian decision to attack the oil routes, before the state has acquired the bomb, might be deterred by a clear American commitment to use its military power to assure the security of these routes. However, even without such a commitment, America would act if confronted by Iranian attempts to block the Hormuz Straits. While revolutionary Iran may become bold and adventurous with a nuclear arsenal at its disposal, before acquiring such awesome weapons it is unlikely to estrange the whole international community by causing serious damage to the supply of a critical commodity such as oil. The determination of the West, displayed by the use of force against Iran's nuclear installations might even have a paralyzing effect on the regime. In any case, to counter a scenario where Iran brings about serious supply shortages in oil supply, the U.S. can exploit its Strategic Petroleum Reserve, as well as the oil strategic reserves of its allies to allow for replacement of the Iranian crude oil output in the world oil markets for some time.

\*\*\*Erections/Man-date\*\*\*

Obama Win – Big

Obama winning big – 70% chance at reelection due to huge lead in electoral votes and swing states

Silver 8/1 (Nate Silver, an American statistician, sabermetrician, psephologist, and writer, 8/1/12 “Aug. 1: Obama Extends Electoral College Advantage,”) hhs-ps

Barack Obama’s standing in the FiveThirtyEight forecast reached its strongest position to date on Tuesday as a result of favorable polls in a set of swing states. The forecast model now gives Mr. Obama a 70.8 percent chance of winning the Electoral College, up from 69.0 percent on Monday and from 65.0 percent last Tuesday. Three of the polls were conducted by Quinnipiac University in conjunction with The New York Times and CBS News. The polls gave Mr. Obama leads of 6 points in each of Ohio and Florida, and an 11-point lead in Pennsylvania. In each state, the polls are at the high end of the range of numbers produced by other polling firms. As we frequently advise, no one set of polls — no matter how reputable the pollster — should be read as gospel. Differences in the numbers from survey firm to survey firm often reflect sampling error or methodological differences rather than any fundamental change in the condition of the race. Nevertheless, Ohio and Pennsylvania polls are part of a consensus of polls showing Mr. Obama ahead in these states by varying margins. Mr. Obama has led 11 of the 13 polls in Ohio since May 1, and he has led all 11 polls conducted in Pennsylvania during this period. The Florida polls have been more equivocal: Mr. Obama has held 10 leads, versus six for Mitt Romney. Still, Florida is typically a somewhat Republican-leaning state. In an election that was truly even-money, you’d expect Mr. Romney to be leading in more of the Florida polls rather than the other way around. Ohio, for that matter, is also typically Republican-leaning relative to the rest of the country, although only by a point or two. One can debate the merits of different polling methodologies — but in Ohio, it has been a debate between polls showing Mr. Obama ahead by a narrow margin, and those showing him on top by a somewhat larger one. In another swing state poll, by the firm EPIC/MRA in Michigan, Mr. Obama held a 6-point lead. That poll was broadly consistent with our model’s prior take on Michigan, which also gave him about a 6-point lead there — although the polling firm in question had previously shown relatively good numbers for Mr. Romney, including a slim lead in a poll it conducted of the state in June. Most of the polls in these states, including the most recent set by Quinnipiac and The New York Times, were conducted among likely voters, which are generally less favorable to Democrats than those conducted among all registered voters. That makes Mr. Obama’s leads there a bit more robust. Mr. Obama’s polls in less competitive states — and in national tracking numbers — have been less strong. He received relatively weak numbers on Tuesday in polls of Arizona and Connecticut, for instance. But these states are unlikely to be decisive in the Electoral College. Our forecast model is starting to calculate a gap between the swing state polls and those elsewhere. As a result, it gives Mr. Obama a 4.6 percent chance of winning the Electoral College despite losing the national popular vote, but just a 1.2 percent chance to the same happening for Mr. Romney. Most of the advantage comes from Mr. Obama’s numbers in a few particular swing states, including Ohio and Florida. In the table below, I’ve listed a comparison between the model’s forecast in each state as of Tuesday, and that on June 7, when we debuted this year’s forecast model.

Obama will win big – winning swing states decisively

Stanage 7/30 (Niall Stanage for The Hill, 07/30/12, The Hill, “Swing states give Obama the edge, http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/240921-battlegrounds-give-obama-election-edge)

President Obama has an overall edge in the 12 decisive battleground states that is measurably greater than his advantage in national polling. The dynamic, which may reflect a combination of lower swing-state unemployment rates and demographic advantages for the president, is causing stirrings of unease among Republicans, even as they emphasize that it is important not to read too much into the state of the race right now. “Obama is concentrating his considerable early resources and messaging in the swing states, and it’s had an impact,” said Mark McKinnon, who served as a media adviser for President George W. Bush’s presidential campaigns. But McKinnon added that Republican candidate Mitt Romney was “raising and saving his money to ensure he won’t be out-punched in the final rounds.” The crucial battleground states number about a dozen: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin. Taking the polling averages used by Nate Silver in the New York Times, the president is ahead in 10 of the 12 vital states. If those polls were borne out on Election Day, Obama would coast to victory with 332 electoral college votes. Only 270 votes are needed to win the presidency. Awarding Obama only the states in which he now leads by 3 percentage points or more in the polling averages still sees him safely home. By that measure, as of last Friday, he would win 8 of the 12 battlegrounds, for a total of 290 electoral votes.

Big Obama win – electoral votes

Marketwatch 8/2/12 “Web site indicates presidential race isn’t so close”hhs-ps

Citing a set of recent polls from swing states, The New York Times’ blog [FiveThirtyEight](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/02/aug-1-obama-extends-electoral-college-advantage/#more-32731)says that Obama’s position in the race never has been stronger. Blog author Nate Silver gives Obama a 70.8% chance of winning the electoral college compared with 29.1% for Romney, as polls conducted by Quinnipiac University in conjunction with the Times and CBS News show Obama has a six-point lead in both Ohio and Florida, and an 11-point lead in Pennsylvania. That’s up from 69% on Monday and 65% on July 24. The forecaster says that Obama would have just under 299 electoral votes, a fairly comfortable margin over the 270 needed to guarantee a return trip to the White House. Silver says Obama’s standing in Ohio and Pennsylvania seems solid. He’s led in all 11 polls conducted in Pennsylvania since May 1 and in 11 of 13 polls in Ohio. Florida isn’t as clear; Obama has led in 10 polls there while Romney has won six. “Still, Florida is typically a somewhat Republican-leaning state. In an election that was truly even-money, you’d expect Mr. Romney to be leading in more of the Florida polls rather than the other way around,” Silver says. But Obama’s lead in Florida is scant, with the president ahead of Romney by less than one point. What’s encouraging for Obama is that he was 2.3 points behind at last count, Silver says. Still, Silver cautions: “It’s the vote in November that counts – not the polls in August – but they represent the most conspicuous sign that incumbent presidents are hard to defeat, and that Mr. Romney has some work left to do to win the electoral college.”

Obama Win – Small

Obama will squeak a victory – consensus of polls and forecasts

Reuters 8/1 “Analysis: Scientists go beyond the polls to forecast U.S. election,” hhs-ps

Another U.S. academic has penned a complex equation -- using data on the economy and presidential approval ratings -- that predicted who won the most votes in the last six presidential contests. As the election draws closer, pundits and journalists are looking at all sorts of data, from persistently high jobless rates to the latest polls in the politically divided state of Ohio, for clues on Obama's chances of defeating Republican Mitt Romney. But at a few U.S. universities, academics have boiled the art of prediction down to a dispassionate science. Some claim their forecasts in presidential elections -- typically issued months before Election Day -- have been more accurate than opinion polls taken the day before ballots are cast. Plugging decades of data into spreadsheets, they calculate everything from how much a bad economy is hurting an incumbent to how the results of New Hampshire's presidential primaries, conducted 10 months before an election, can signal who the eventual winner will be in November. "What this forecasting really amounts to is quantitative history," said James Campbell, a political scientist at the University at Buffalo, SUNY. So far this year, forecasters in line with many current opinion polls see Obama squeaking out a victory over Romney. In a Reuters poll of nine leading forecasters, the median prediction was for Obama to win 50.5 percent of the vote. Although under the complicated American system, that would not necessarily mean victory because the winner is determined by the state Electoral College results. In 2008, the median forecast of the same group, which estimated that Obama would receive 52 percent of the vote compared with Republican John McCain's 48 percent, was about as close to the election results as Gallup's final poll from the last three days of the presidential campaign. In the end, Obama received 52.9 percent of the vote to McCain's 45.7 percent, with other candidates receiving the rest.

Romney Win – Big

Romney Win – Small

Romney wins – voter ID law

FT 8/6/12, Financial times, “Voter ID Laws Could Sway US elections,” hhs-ps

**Washington:** Millions of US voters could be turned away at the ballot box in this November's presidential election as new rules impose tough requirements for identification that observers say could lead to minorities and young people – traditionally more likely to vote Democrat – being excluded. Almost all the new rules have been enacted in states with Republican governors and GOP-led legislatures. From Wisconsin to Texas, they have passed strict legislation requiring voters to present certain forms of government-issued identification instead of the usual voter registration cards. In hotly contested swing states such as Pennsylvania, Virginia and New Hampshire, the changes could affect the outcome. Pennsylvania's authorities says more than 750,000 registered voters in the state – 9.2 per cent of voters – do not have the required forms of ID, such as a driving licence or other government-issued photo ID, to vote in November. President Barack Obama won the state by 600,000 votes in 2008 and polls show the vote hangs in the balance this year. "There is certainly the potential for very serious outcomes," said Keesha Gaskins of New York University's Brennan Center for Justice, which estimates as many as 5m voters across the country might be affected by the rules.

Lolz – Paul Nominated

Just for the gigs, don’t read this

RNC will dump Romney and nominate Paul

Piper 8/7 (Michael Collins Piper, Political Writer and talk radio host, 8/7/12 “CAN GOP DUMP ROMNEY AND NOMINATE RON PAUL?”)

Because there are real doubts that presumed GOP nominee Mitt Romney has what it takes to displace the current White House occupant in the general election, there are some Republicans who have a message for the delegates to the forthcoming GOP National Convention: Dump Romney and nominate Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas). In stark contrast to outspoken populist Paul, whose integrity is undoubted, whose finances and business affairs are an open book and whose political message has been consistent, Romney can’t shake the image of being an out-of-touch elitist who flip-flops on the issues and whose business affairs seem sordid and un-American. Paul supporters are also conscious of the danger a Romney presidency would pose to the future of the burgeoning “Ron Paul movement” (RPM) that emerged during the past four years. As president, Romney would be in absolute control of the Republican Party national apparatus and would assuredly do everything in his power to quash any efforts by the RPM to expand its influence in GOP ranks. Romney is a fervent globalist whose allies in high places despise and fear the nationalist, non-interventionist sentiments of Paul and his supporters. Four—or eight—years of a Romney presidency would put the kibosh on efforts by the RPM to reform the GOP from within and bend the party away from the New World Order orientation of Romney and the nest of discredited Bush-era neoconservatives who are back again and now running Romney. But Paul’s supporters have hopes of displacing Romney—even at this last minute—in Paul’s favor. A lot of Americans are not dazzled by the fact that Romney has been a business success, particularly since his monetary triumph through his [Bain](http://www.bain.com/" \t "_blank) [& Company](http://www.bain.com/" \t "_blank) operation came through shutting down American corporations, looting their assets and “outsourcing” American workers’ jobs overseas. Even conservative Texas Governor Rick Perry described Romney as a “vulture capitalist.” Romney has also been dogged by questions arising from his refusal to release anything other than only a very limited number of his recent income tax returns. Romney is known to have stashed money in overseas bank accounts. This has raised further concerns, causing some to wonder if Romney has other unreported sources of income. That the Obama Justice Department is waging a quiet but aggressive inquiry into Americans who have hidden money in Israeli banks—including Bank Leumi (control of which was purchased by a consortium of Jewish financiers who use GOP former Vice President Dan Quayle as their front man)—has led to speculation the inquiry is looking for further evidence of financial shenanigans by Romney stemming from his Israeli connections. A longtime friend and former business associate of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Romney installed an Israeli woman with high-level Israeli military and intelligence connections, Orit Gadiesh, as chair of Bain, the entity at the center of the controversy surrounding Romney’s wheeling and dealing. What remains to be seen surrounding Romney’s mysterious ventures is enough to make victory-minded Republicans uneasy. That’s why supporters of Paul urge the GOP to dump Romney and pick the one GOP contender who can unquestionably draw clear lines of demarcation between himself and the Democratic incumbent—and win the presidency on 2012.

\*\*\*Etc.\*\*\*

Obama Win – Nate Silver Prodict

Silver empirically the best predictor

Harris 8/1 (Dereck Harris, technology journalist since 2003 and has been covering cloud computing, big data and other emerging IT trends for GigaOM since 2009. Aug 1, 2012 “ [5 sites that crunch data to help you predict the president](http://gigaom.com/cloud/5-sites-thatll-help-you-predict-the-presidential-election/),”)

This New York Times blog manned by expert statistician Nate Silver might be the gold standard for predicting elections. [FiveThirtyEight](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/) is updated multiple times a week, usually tied to the release of poll data or economic numbers, and[follows a consistent model](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/07/election-forecast-obama-begins-with-tenuous-advantage/) for generating its forecast. The blog includes some easy-to-follow visualizations, including each candidate’s chances in each state. Also nice is that Silver gives some analysis of why the forecast is shaping up the way it is rather than just presenting the result. Latest prediction (July 31): Obama (69 percent chance of winning).

Political Predictions Bad

Predictions don’t assume radical changes

Reuters 8/1 “Analysis: Scientists go beyond the polls to forecast U.S. election,” hhs-ps

In the last four presidential contests, more than 90 percent of leading forecasters picked the popular vote winner, says Thomas Holbrook of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, who surveyed 40 forecasts over that period, including his own. And therein lies a big caveat to their track record: Every major forecaster correctly predicted that Democrat Al Gore would win the popular vote over Republican George W. Bush in 2000. Of course, Gore lost the election because he came up short in the Electoral College. Under U.S. rules for the presidential election, each state is worth a certain number of electoral votes, based on population. The first candidate to win enough states totaling 270 electoral votes wins the election, regardless of the popular vote. "The 2000 election did a great job of reminding everyone about that," said Simon Jackman, a political scientist at Stanford University. Some academics try to account for the Electoral College by using state-level data to predict the results of both the Electoral College and the popular vote. It's a less traveled path because many professors find state-level economic data to be less reliable that nationwide data. Also, many think voters focus more on the national economy than on how their own states are faring. Flouting this convention, Carl Klarner of Indiana State University uses a range of state and national data, from how much money people earned in Florida to presidential approval nationwide. A relative newcomer in the forecasting world, Klarner's prediction was among the most accurate in 2008 when he forecast that Obama would get 53 percent of the vote. This year, Klarner sees Obama winning 51.3 percent of the vote. He gives the president a 57 percent chance of winning the Electoral College. Several forecasters acknowledged that because a tight race is expected this year, they could come very close to estimating the vote tally for each candidate, but get the winner wrong. "It's a lot like having a formula to try to predict football games," said Robert Erikson of Columbia University. "You can have a formula based on the past records of the teams, but then there will be intangibles, like the star quarterback breaks his leg."