Neg Stuff

UQ for corps tradeoff disad

Flood control funding is contentious now

Paul Quinlan is a reporter for E&E, a public policy think-tank, 2/25/12, “Obama's budget touts navigation, but waterway interests aren't happy”, http://www.eenews.net/public/Greenwire/2012/02/15/4

The Obama administration is portraying its fiscal 2013 budget proposal for the Army Corps of Engineers as a boon for businesses that rely on navigable inland waterways. As Jo-Ellen Darcy, the Army's assistant secretary of civil works, puts it, the spending plan reflects "the importance the administration places on navigation." Navigation interests have long grumbled about what they see as the Army Corps' emphasis on ecosystem restoration at the expense of dredging shipping channels, maintaining locks and other projects aimed at keeping waterways open. President Obama's overall $4.7 billion Army Corps budget proposal, Darcy said at a briefing Monday, would send 37 percent of the agency's cash to navigation projects, compared with 33 percent for environmental restoration and 30 percent for flood control. And even though Obama's budget proposal is 5.4 percent smaller than what the agency is spending this year, Darcy said, there would be $176 million more for navigation, an 11 percent increase over fiscal 2012 levels. And the corps would spend $848 million on harbor maintenance, up 12 percent from last year. The industry's reaction? "Overall, disappointment," said Amy Larson, president of the National Waterways Conference, whose members include levee managers, shipping companies and engineering firms. Despite boosting waterways projects, industry officials say, the budget proposal fails to provide enough for navigation and levees to ensure U.S. water infrastructure can adequately provide flood protection and help meet Obama's goal of doubling the nation's exports by 2015. The corps is under unprecedented pressure to do more with less. Spending caps imposed last year during the White House's debt-limit showdown with Congress have rendered the Army Corps' budget a zero-sum game for competing interests of navigation, flood control and ecosystem restoration. Adding to the pressure were epic floods last year along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, which forced the agency to raid other accounts for its response. Congress provided $1.7 billion for the estimated $2 billion disaster. With so many needs and so little cash, few groups are thrilled by their prospects in the corps' budget sweepstakes. And waterways interests are pressing lawmakers to spend more on locks, levees and harbors and less on environmental restoration. A big competitor for cash is the massive Everglades restoration. Last year, about 10 percent of the Army Corps' construction budget went to the Everglades effort. The 30-year, $13.5 billion project was approved overwhelmingly by Congress and the Florida Legislature in 2000 as being essential to securing water supplies for 7 million people and protecting Everglades National Park and other federal parks and wildlife refuges. But Larson is telling lawmakers that some of that cash could pack more of an economic punch if spent on waterways. "It would seem to me," she said, "that the nation would be better served with a portion of that money focused on other projects which contribute more to the creation of jobs and our place in the global economy." Inland waterways face an $8 billion repair backlog, said Mike Toohey, president of the Waterways Council, a coalition of inland navigation interests. "The funding doesn't get anywhere near what the need is," Toohey said. 'Merit-based system' Environmentalists, whose interests see slight funding cuts in Obama's Army Corps budget proposal, cheered what they saw as the administration's continued support for ecosystems restoration, which also gets funding through the Interior Department and U.S. EPA. The Everglades project -- by far the most expensive environmental restoration project in the corps portfolio -- would receive $153 million under Obama's fiscal 2013 budget request for the agency, about $15 million less than the administration sought last year. Congress ultimately chopped last year's request to $142 million. Under pressure from Congress to cut spending and environmental programs in particular, the administration has pulled back on funding bestowed on the Everglades after Obama took office in 2009. The 2013 budget request is down significantly from more than $220 million the restoration received from the corps budget and federal stimulus in 2009 or the $214 million the administration requested in 2010. "They're trying to, I think, respect the message that's being given by Congress, while still putting forward their own priorities and their needs," said Julie Hill-Gabriel, Audubon Florida's director of Everglades policy. Overall, she said, there's reason for Everglades advocates to be pleased. All restoration projects authorized by Congress are now under construction, and Interior's budget proposal includes $58 million in Everglades-related spending -- including $3 million for establishing a new 150,000-acre wildlife refuge at the ecosystem's headwaters. "They're still making this a priority," Hill-Gabriel said. But the Everglades is facing competition for the corps' attention. The agency faces a $60 billion backlog in projects authorized but never funded by Congress. To appease as many congressional patrons as possible, a large number of projects are given small amounts of funding, leading to crippling construction delays and cost overruns. In a report last year, the National Research Council cited the corps' shrinking budget and ever-increasing list of demands from Congress in characterizing its mission as unsustainable (Greenwire, March 25, 2011). The report called the dilemma a fundamental paradox of how the nation manages its water resources. "It's not just up to the corps to change themselves," David Dzombak, an engineering professor at Carnegie Mellon University and the panel's chairman, said in an interview last year. "But the nation needs to rethink how we go about developing, prioritizing and implementing water resources projects." Congress' self-imposed earmark ban failed to provide a cure. The agency last week released its civil works plan for 2012, essentially a list of projects to be funded in fiscal 2012. Congress, it turns out, had spread $507 million across 26 corps-controlled funds, which the agency redistributed to fund, among other things, $212.7 million in new projects requested by individual lawmakers. Maj. Gen. Merdith "Bo" Temple said this week that the corps made a point to fund fewer projects more generously to help see as many over the finish line as possible and chip away at the backlog. "There may be fewer projects started in the coming year, but we're going to fund them efficiently, get them done and out the door, so they can get benefits to the nation sooner," he said. Steven Stockton, the Army Corps' deputy director of civil works, said in a recent interview that politics didn't drive project selection. "We have a merit-based system, and all projects have to go through that process," he said. Paying for waterway maintenance? Another big problem for the waterway industry: the administration's push to force waterway users to pay more for maintenance. To date, waterways have been maintained almost entirely by the federal government. And a congressional spending binge over the past 15 or so years has emptied a maintenance trust fund. So industry officials are promoting a proposal to hike a fuel tax of 20 cents a gallon to raise money for maintenance. But critics say other conditions of their proposal would offset their offer to take on a larger share of the burden. The Obama administration countered with its own proposal to add industry fees to raise $1.1 billion over the next decade (Greenwire, Oct. 3, 2011). That proposal, which the administration handed to Congress last year, was once again floated as part of yesterday's budget proposal. Although both sides continue to negotiate behind the scenes, neither side appears willing to give any ground. "They're very rigid with their proposal," the Waterways Council's Toohey said. "And so we'll both go to Congress to seek a resolution." Toohey suggested the real headline to emerge from the corps' budget briefing Monday was that the cost estimate for the Olmsted Locks and Dam project on the Ohio River -- originally authorized in 1988 and expected to cost $775 million and take seven years to complete -- had now climbed to $2.9 billion. Waterways industry officials say the project is an example of why they are unwilling to assume a greater share of the Army Corps' construction costs. Toohey said the project will chew up most waterway funding. "It means," he said, "that there will be only enough money for the next decade for Olmsted and just a little bit for everyone else -- nothing on the upper Mississippi, nothing for the Illinois, nothing for the other Ohio River projects, nothing on the Tennessee and nothing on the Cumberland." The corps is in a poor financial position to prepare the nation's ports and harbors for the widening of the Panama Canal, which is expected to bring an influx of supersize freighters to the U.S. East Coast from Asia when it's completed in 2014. "We want to grow our export markets for grain and coal," Toohey said. "We have to rely on locks and dams that are 80 years old. That's a high-risk strategy."

Climate change makes their impacts inevitable

Center for Integrative Environmental Research, October 2007, “The US Economic Impacts of Climate Change and the Costs of Inaction”,or we could http://www.cier.umd.edu/documents/US%20Economic%20Impacts%20of%20Climate%20Change%20and%20the%20Costs%20of%20Inaction.pdf

The indirect effects of climate change have rarely been quantified, yet they are likely substantial . Such effects may be present in the form of higher prices for products, because the prices of raw materials and energy, transport, insurance and taxes increase . As the costs for doing business increase, competitiveness of individual firms, entire sectors or regions may decline . With this decline may come a loss of employment and overall economic security . As climate change affects jobs and household income in the United States, and as resources are increasingly diverted to help maintain safety and adequate supply of goods and services, national security may be weakened . For example, a 1988 Midwest drought cost the region over $49 billion – in part because riverborne commercial shipping routes had to be replaced by more expensive railroad transport due to Mississippi River’s reduced water levels . The costs of future droughts are likely to extend beyond requirements to meet public and agricultural water needs, with the region’s manufacturing sector incurring costs as well . Around 60,000 jobs and $3 billion annually depend on the movement of goods within the Great Lakes-St . Lawrence route . Drought could lower water levels in the Great Lakes, requiring additional dredging of sediments at an annual cost of between $85 and $142 million, simply to maintain shipping lanes; and overall 6decreases in connectivity flow are estimated to cost the manufacturing sector $850 million per year . Damages from severe hurricanes can span many economic sectors . Hurricane Katrina, for example, damaged not only hundreds of thousands of housing units and other urban infrastructure, but it also affected as many as 2,100 oil platforms and damaged over 15,000 miles of pipelines . Lost revenues due to these damages amounted to nearly $11 billion

Plan increases the impact of devastating hurricanes – turns the case

Chris Edwards is a CATO man, March 2012, “Cutting the Army Corps of Engineers”, http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/usace#2

Fourth, Corps' infrastructure helped to deplete wetlands around New Orleans, which had provided a natural defense against hurricanes. The Corps' navigation and flood control structures have caused silt from the Mississippi to disperse into the Gulf over the decades, rather than being naturally used to rebuild the wetlands. As writer John McPhee noted, "sediments are being kept within the mainline levees and shot into the Gulf . . . like peas through a peashooter, and lost to the abyssal plain."84 As a result, the wetlands have shrunk decade after decade.

The construction and maintenance of river locks and dams is grounded on managerial discourse

John McPhee, 2/23/87, “ATCHAFALAYA”, The New Yorker, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/1987/02/23/1987\_02\_23\_039\_TNY\_CARDS\_000347146?currentPage=all

Rabalais works for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Some years ago, the Corps made a film that showed the navigation lock and a complex of associated structures built in an effort to prevent the capture of the Mississippi. The narrator said, “**This nation has a large and powerful adversary. Our opponent could cause the United States to lose nearly all her seaborne commerce, to lose her standing as first among trading nations. . . .We are fighting Mother Nature. . . .It’s a battle we have to fight day by day, year by year; the health of our economy depends on victory**.” Rabalais was in on the action from the beginning, working as a construction inspector. Here by the site of the navigation lock was where the battle had begun. An old meander bend of the Mississippi was the conduit through which water had been escaping into the Atchafalaya. Complicating the scene, the old meander bend had also served as the mouth of the Red River. Coming in from the northwest, from Texas via Shreveport, the Red River had been a tributary of the Mississippi for a couple of thousand years—until the nineteen-forties, when the Atchafalaya captured it and drew it away. The capture of the Red increased the Atchafalaya’s power as it cut down the country beside the Mississippi. On a map, these entangling watercourses had come to look like the letter “H.” The Mississippi was the right-hand side. The Atchafalaya and the captured Red were the left-hand side. The crosspiece, scarcely seven miles long, was the former meander bend, which the people of the parish had long since named Old River. Sometimes enough water would pour out of the Mississippi and through Old River to quintuple the falls at Niagara. It was at Old River that the United States was going to lose its status among the world’s trading nations. It was at Old River that New Orleans would be lost, Baton Rouge would be lost. At Old River, we would lose the American Ruhr. The Army’s name for its operation there was Old River Control.

Locks and dams solve flooding

John McPhee, 2/23/87, “ATCHAFALAYA”, The New Yorker, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/1987/02/23/1987\_02\_23\_039\_TNY\_CARDS\_000347146?currentPage=all

After the Corps dammed Old River, in 1963, the engineers could not just walk away, like roofers who had fixed a leak. In the early planning stages, they had considered doing that, but there were certain effects they could not overlook. The Atchafalaya, after all, was a distributary of the Mississippi—the major one, and, as it happened, the only one worth mentioning that the Corps had not already plugged. In time of thundering flood, the Atchafalaya was used as a safety valve, to relieve a good deal of pressure and help keep New Orleans from ending up in Yucatán. The Atchafalaya was also the source of the water in the swamps and bayous of the Cajun world. It was the water supply of small cities and countless towns. Its upper reaches were surrounded by farms. The Corps was not in a political or moral position to kill the Atchafalaya. It had to feed it water. By the principles of nature, the more the Atchafalaya was given, the more it would want to take, because it was the steeper stream. The more it was given, the deeper it would make its bed. The difference in level between the Atchafalaya and the Mississippi would continue to increase, magnifying the conditions for capture. The Corps would have to deal with that. The Corps would have to build something that could give the Atchafalaya a portion of the Mississippi and at the same time prevent it from taking all. In effect, the Corps would have to build a Fort Laramie: a place where the natives could buy flour and firearms but where the gates could be closed if they attacked. Ten miles upriver from the navigation lock, where the collective sediments were thought to be more firm, they dug into a piece of dry ground and built what appeared for a time to be an incongruous, waterless bridge. Five hundred and sixty-six feet long, it stood parallel to the Mississippi and about a thousand yards back from the water. Between its abutments were ten piers, framing eleven gates that could be lifted or dropped, opened or shut, like windows. To this structure, and through it, there soon came a new Old River—an excavated channel leading in from the Mississippi and out seven miles to the Red-Atchafalaya. The Corps was not intending to accommodate nature.

2AC TII /= Upgrade

Transportation infrastructure investment is to provide new and upgraded facilities

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Unless governments, airlines, and the travel industry work together on the congestion problem, delays at major airports will increase. The construction of additional terminals and runways will be expensive, and we must also examine other measures to improve the system's capacity to cope. For example, many governments are allowing private sector participation and investment capital to provide new and upgraded facilities while public agencies meet other urgent demands for more basic services. The lifting of air curfews, especially in Asian countries, is another solution proposed by industry experts.

Egypt Scenario

Egypt is extremely dependent on U.S. food exports – price shifts cause political instability

Isobel Coleman is a Senior Fellow and Director of the Civil Society, Markets, and Democracy Initiative; Director of the Women and Foreign Policy Program, 8/2/12, “U.S. Drought and Rising Global Food Prices”, Council on Foreign Relations, http://www.cfr.org/food-security/us-drought-rising-global-food-prices/p28777

The ongoing drought in the Midwest has affected approximately 80 percent of the U.S. corn crop and more than 11 percent of the soybean crop, triggering a rise in global food prices (RFE/RL) that CFR's Isobel Coleman says may fuel political instability in developing countries. **The United States produces approximately 35 percent of the world's corn and soybean supply, commodities that are "crucial in the food chain, because they are used for feed stock for animals**," Coleman says. Growing demand for meat and protein from emergent middle classes internationally has made many countries dependent on "relatively inexpensive food stocks" from the United States, she explains. "When you see a crop failure of the magnitude you have seen this summer, it flows through the whole food chain," says Coleman, who recommends reconsidering the U.S. ethanol mandate and building "more resilience into the global food system." Around the world you have rising middle classes, a growing demand for meat and protein in the diet, and countries around the world are becoming increasingly dependent on relatively inexpensive food stocks from the United States. How is the U.S. drought affecting commodity crops, food production, and prices? As recently as May, experts were predicting a record crop in the United States--and of course, what the United States does is so important, because the Midwest is the bread basket for the rest of the world. But with severe drought in the Midwest, you've already seen a failure in the soybean and corn crop in the United States. That increased world commodity prices, and it is going to trickle through the whole food chain. This is the hottest summer on record in the United States since 1895, and people are beginning to wonder whether this type of drought that we're experiencing could become a new normal. The United States is a pivotal player in world food production and has the most sophisticated agricultural sector in terms of seeds, technology, irrigation, deep commodity markets, and future markets. If the United States crop is so devastated by drought, what is going to happen to the rest of the world? How do rising U.S. food prices affect global food prices down the world's food supply chain? Which areas of the globe are most at risk? There are many large food producers in the world. China is the largest wheat producer, but it is also the largest wheat consumer. What makes the United States unique is that we are the largest exporter, so we produce about 35 percent of the world's corn and soybean supply. Those two commodities are crucial in the food chain, because they are used for feed stock for animals. Around the world you have rising middle classes, a growing demand for meat and protein in the diet, and countries around the world are becoming increasingly dependent on relatively inexpensive food stocks from the United States. When you see a crop failure of the magnitude you have seen this summer, it flows through the whole food chain. You're going to see the continuation of [political] instability driven in part by rapidly rising food prices. Right now you have American livestock producers taking their pigs and cattle to the slaughter house because they simply don't have the food to be feeding them. So you're going to see meat prices in the short term in the United States go down, but over the longer term you're going to see rising meat prices; [experts] are predicting already 4 to 5 percent price increases in meat for the next year. That flows through the whole food chain, [to] big-population countries that import a lot of food, such as the Philippines, Afghanistan, Egypt. And when you see rapidly rising food prices, of course it leads to instability. We've seen [this] in the last five years across many of those countries, and you see rising food prices translate almost directly into street protests. You're going to see the continuation of [political] instability driven in part by rapidly rising food prices. In 2008, we had food protests across much of the Middle East, so governments are going to be very much on the alert for unrest and very sensitive to it. Egypt is already spending about one-third of its subsidies on food, and it is draining the Egyptian foreign exchange reserve to continue those subsidies. This combination of an already mobilized population out on the streets demanding lots of different changes [in Egypt], and rising food prices is going to create a very unstable atmosphere. What are some policy responses for alleviating the pressures being felt in the United States and other countries because of rising food prices? In the United States, we have to look at our own policies that are part of the problem, [including] our mandated use of ethanol in gasoline. In the United States, we have to look at our own policies that are part of the problem, [including] our mandated use of ethanol in gasoline. This is something that is a mandated [10] percent that is not flexible, and when you have rising food prices and a problem with the failing crop, you would think that maybe we could lighten up on the ethanol mandate. Because right now so much of our food production is going into ethanol. So you've already seen governors across the United States in some of the hard-hit states saying, "Shouldn't we review our ethanol policies?" That's not a short-term fix, but it is potentially longer-term and something we should be looking at carefully. In terms of policy, we have a rising global population. We have more mouths to feed every year, and food security for the world is a critical issue. We should be looking at how to build in more resilience into the global food system. Africa, which has the highest population growth rates of any continent in the world, used to feed itself and used to export food, but [its] agriculture has suffered tremendously over the last half century. Only 4 percent of the land in Africa is even irrigated, and you've seen a green revolution occur in many parts of the world that has really passed Africa by. And so building in greater resilience and improving the agricultural capacity of Africa is a critical part of this equation, so that Africa has more of an ability to feed itself and become more a part of the global supply chain and not be so dependent on it. Unfortunately, governments have not made the investments in the agricultural sector that they needed to over the past half century, which is why you have this situation in Africa today.

US grain key to Egyptian food security

Jennifer Rattray is an undergraduate student at UW-L, 2012, “The Implications of the Increasing Global Demand for Corn”, http://www.uwlax.edu/urc/JUR-online/PDF/2012/Rattray.Jennifer.pdf

Political factors can greatly influence supply and demand for agricultural commodities. For example, the

political turmoil in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya in 2011 impacted the demand for corn and wheat across their region.

Their governments began buying large quantities of corn and wheat in order to maintain food security, which put

pressure on prices (“Agricultural Commodities-Part 1”). Egypt bought 120,000 tons of United State’s corn in midFebruary (“Grain Futures Unshaken by OECD”). Due to the oil stemming concerns in Libya, there was a greater

demand for ethanol, which has had effects on corn but also on wheat and sugar (“Agricultural Commodities-Part

1”). Although political events can play a significant role in short-term supply and demand levels, trends should be

analyzed in a wider market landscape because of the many factors involved globally.

Egyptian political stability is crucial to avoid nuclear war

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Israel’s fears are much more likely to become reality if reform efforts stall or fail. Like it or not, Mubarak is gone. The ancien regime will not return in Cairo, and pro-Western allies from Bahrain to Morocco are shaken. It’s worth thinking about what the failure of democracy in Egypt would look like. Failure would empower radicals in Egypt and throughout the region, ‘‘proving’’ that a Western, democratic model is not right for the Arab world. Reformers would point to a lack of Western support, while critics would use U.S. support for Israel as a cudgel to beat back moderates. More extreme voices would only gain resonance. Should regimes start to fail, scapegoating becomes more likely. Anti-Israel sentiment has long been a way for dictatorships to deflect popular dissatisfaction with the regime, and new rulers will use this tool too. If these regimes suffer economic and political problems, the political logic of scapegoating grows. Conversely, if regime legitimacy grows because new leaders enjoy the consent of the governed and are showing material progress on political and economic grounds, the need for scapegoating diminishes. Israeli President Shimon Peres has contended that ‘‘poverty and oppression in the region have fed resentment against Israel and the better our neighbors will have it, we shall have better neighbors.’’ 27 Scapegoating, however, may avail new regimes little if they cannot govern well. Indeed, one positive sign for Israel regarding the Arab Spring is that it is not about Israel. The Syrian uprising in particular shows that Arab publics will not buy regime attempts to deflect their anger over corruption, stagnation, and repression at home onto Israel. Scapegoating is more likely to succeed, however, if Israel’s policies are viewed as provocative and uncompromising. The success of democratization in Egypt is particularly important. Egypt’s size will always make it important, but its political stature in the region fell under Mubarak’s sclerotic rule. Now, as the likely leader of the Arab democratic camp, it will again enjoy enormous prestige. Indeed, Israeli fears that Iran will exploit the void can best be countered by a politically strong Egypt that enjoys credibility with the Arab people and offers a more powerful message than what Tehran promotes. Under these new circumstances, Egypt’s peace treaty with Israel could become particularly important. No longer is it a deal of elites. Now, the Egyptian nation will be embracing it in a de facto way, making it easier for leaders in other countries to convince their own people that an unpopular peace may be the best they can hope for given today’s political and strategic realities. In the end, regional revolutions can work to Israel’s benefit. Change, however, must be managed properly. Israel in particular must recognize the new regional dynamics, including the potential for escalation and the political realities of its neighbors and potential peace partners. Such recognition will not make the new challenges go away, but they will make Israel ready to seize opportunities for peace and less likely to engage in a dangerous escalation that could spiral into disaster.