### AT No Election

**Only theories subject to falsifiability can serve as the basis for sound policy**

**Benson and Stangroom 06**

Ophelia and Jeremy, authors of many philosophy books, Why truth matters, 105-106

There is a final point to make here which has to do with wishful thinking. There is something troubling about people's almost childish desire to reconstruct the world imaginatively so that it fits neatly with their wider beliefs and values. This phenomenon is entirely familiar when it comes, for example, to the practice of maintaining religious belief in the face of countervailing scientific evidence; just consider, for instance, the absurdities of Philip Gosse's and Duane Gish's separate attempts to show that the fossil record supports biblical literalism; or the increasingly desperate efforts on the part of people such as Michael Behe to show that living organisms manifest the kind of 'irreducible complexity' which requires an intelligent designer. However, the fact that it is also prevalent in arguments about biology, evolution and human beings is more disheartening. The idea that nature will be amenable to the construction of a 'critical and liberatory science' is a clear case of wishful thinking; as was the Idea that the supposed moral superiority of white races is grounded in biology; as is the notion that human beings in a state of nature are 'noble savages', corrupted only through their exposure to Western civilization; and as is the idea that human nature is thoroughly malleable, thereby guaranteeing equality if the environment is right. Wishful thinking of various stripes has coloured the debate about evolution and human nature from the very beginning. This is not likely to change in the near future. In the meantime, then, the best advice for sober scholars, for people who think that matters of fact should be decided on the basis of the evidence rather than ideology, is that they should treat those theories which set up a neat correspondence between the wished-for and the real with extreme suspicion.

**2NC Uniqueness Run**

**The post-convention bounce is a measure of Democratic enthusiasm – it means the pool of likely Democratic voters will be higher**

**Silver, 9/13/**12 - statistician, author of FiveThirtyEight, one of Time’s 100 most influential people (Nate, “[Sept. 12: Polls Since Conventions Point to Decline in ‘Enthusiasm Gap’](http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/13/sept-12-polls-since-conventions-point-to-decline-in-enthusiasm-gap/),”

<http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/>

Why did President Obama get a bounce in the polls following the Democratic convention?

Part of it may simply be one of the functions that conventions have long served: to motivate voters who are generally loyal to the party, but who had been paying only marginal attention to the race.

At FiveThirtyEight, we measure the “enthusiasm gap” between the parties in a particular way. Specifically, we watch for cases in which pollsters report results among both the broader universe of registered voters, and the narrower one of likely voters. If one candidate’s supporters are more likely to vote, that candidate will do better in the likely-voter polls than the registered-voter ones.

Typically, the candidate who benefits from the comparison is the Republican. Republican voters tend to be older, whiter and wealthier, all characteristics that correlate with a greater propensity to vote.

In midterm election years, when overall participation is lower, the enthusiasm gap can be correspondingly greater. In 2010, for instance, we calculated it to be about six percentage points in favor of Republicans. For the most part, that advantage proved to be predictive of the actual results on Election Day. Democrats outperformed their likely-voter polls by a point or two on average in Senate and governors races, and underperformed them by a point or so in races for the House of Representatives. But in both cases the likely-voter surveys did a much more accurate job of capturing the Republican wave than polls of registered voters.

There have also been midterm election years, like 2006, when there was almost no likely-voter gap, or when it even favored Democrats by a point or so. With lower turnout, there is the possibility of a wider range of outcomes based on the particulars of the political cycle.

In presidential election years, however, when the turnout is higher, the gap has been more consistent: always favoring Republicans, but always narrowly.

Specifically, based on our research, the likely-voter gap has favored Republicans by 1.5 percentage points on average in presidential elections years since 1988, with little variance from cycle to cycle.

This year, however, there was evidence that the gap was larger, averaging close to three percentage points in favor of Mitt Romney.

Our forecasts build in an adjustment for this factor, adding points to Mr. Romney’s column in polls of registered voters, and subtracting them from Mr. Obama’s, in order to make them comparable to likely-voter polls.

Polls conducted since the Democratic convention in Charlotte, N.C., however, suggest that the gap may have narrowed. Although the difference varies from polling firm to polling firm, on the average it has reverted back to the historical average of between one and two percentage points.

In the table below, I’ve presented a comparison of the results of the polling firms that have released both sets of numbers since Charlotte. (I count the telephone and online polls by Ipsos as separate surveys, since they use distinct methodologies.)

There have been outlying results on either side. An ABC News/Washington Post poll released this week showed Mr. Obama leading Mr. Romney by six points among registered voters, but by just one point among likely voters — a five-point enthusiasm gap favoring Mr. Romney.

Conversely, a Fox News poll, released on Wednesday, showed a reverse enthusiasm gap, with Mr. Obama actually doing one point better in their likely-voter poll than in their survey of registered voters.

On average among the five polling results, however, the gap has been 1.4 percentage points favoring Mr. Romney — almost exactly in line with the historical average.

Will Democrats maintain this narrower gap? Or is it a temporary effect from the conventions?

It’s hard to know for sure, of course. Until we see more evidence, the forecast model is still assuming that the gap will be slightly wider than average, perhaps around two percentage points in Mr. Romney’s favor.

But in general, there’s more reason to believe that a shift is permanent rather than temporary when it brings the numbers closer into line with historical norms, as it has in this case.

In addition, there is a question over whether likely-voter models applied before the party conventions are all that informative, since voter enthusiasm can wax and wane over the course of the cycle.

Our research suggests that likely-voter polls become more accurate than registered-voter polls beginning around Labor Day. But it is more debatable which set of polls do a better job of predicting the result before that date.

If there were no likely-voter gap at all, and all registered voters turned out to vote, Mr. Obama would have a very clear advantage in the race, perhaps being favored to win by five or six percentage points.

That case is probably wishful thinking for Democrats. Even in years like 1996 when Republicans had a middling candidate, their voters were nevertheless quite loyal on Election Day.

But if Democrats can keep the enthusiasm gap to its traditional value of about one and a half percentage points, rather than three, that could make quite a lot of difference. Before the conventions our forecast model had generally shown Mr. Obama as a favorite by about two and a half percentage points; now it projects him to win by about four. That’s consistent with what you’d get if the enthusiasm gap had been narrowed by a point or two.

We’ll need to wait for another week or so to see how much of Mr. Obama’s convention bounce carries forward, but we’re getting to the point where polls do provide for a pretty reliable gauge of the Election Day outcome. A four-point deficit in the polls can certainly be overcome, but it isn’t that easy, especially in a year like this one with few undecided voters.

**Overall expectations about the economy are positive – this is mobilizing Democrats and boosting fundraising**

**Easley, 9/11/12** (Jonathan, “Team Obama has post-convention glow,” The Hill, <http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/248879-team-obama-has-post-convention-glow>)

The Obama campaign has been flush with good news since the Democratic National Convention, leaving both it and its Republican counterpart scurrying to deal with the altered dynamics of the race.

President Obama and Mitt Romney entered the conventions statistically tied in the polls.

Romney didn’t receive much of a bump following the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Fla., late last month, and while Obama is enjoying a modest boost, that movement is magnified because the race has been almost completely static since Romney became the GOP’s likely nominee.

Monday’s daily tracking polls from Gallup and Rasmussen showed Obama with a 5-percentage-point lead after last week’s Democratic gathering in Charlotte, N.C., and a CNN-ORC poll released late Monday, the first major poll to come out after the completion of the convention, showed Obama with a 52-to-46 percent lead over Romney.

Perhaps the best news for the Obama campaign is that those polling numbers include reaction to last Friday’s weak job report, which showed employers added only 96,000 jobs. Economists had expected upward of 150,000 new jobs last month.

The polling bounce wasn’t the only positive development for the president this week.

On Monday, the Obama campaign announced it had raised $114 million in August, the largest monthly haul for either presidential campaign in the 2012 cycle. Romney, who raised $111.6 million in August, had beaten Obama in each of the prior three months.

And while Friday’s troubling job data will be a source of concern for the Obama campaign going forward, it came with some sunny economic news.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average on Tuesday closed at its highest mark since December 2007, and as the Democrats gathered in Charlotte, Gallup’s U.S. Economic Confidence Index surged 11 points to its highest level since January 2008.

It was the largest one-week gain for the index, surpassing the 10-point bump following the killing of Osama bin Laden. The largest swing the index ever recorded was a 15-point drop during the financial crisis in September 2008.

“The convention appears to have given Democrats and, to a lesser degree, independents, fresh optimism about the economy,” wrote Lydia Saad at Gallup. “There was no comparable shift in Americans’ views of the economy, either overall or by party, during the prior week spanning the Republican National Convention … This could reflect renewed confidence in the economy per se, or heightened enthusiasm for the Democratic Party generally.”

**Most election models predict a narrow Obama win but it’s reversible**

**Klein, 9/11/12 –** the editor of Wonkblog and a columnist at the Washington Post, as well as a contributor to MSNBC and Bloomberg(Ezra, Washington Post, “The economy (slightly) favors Obama, not Romney,”

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/wp/2012/09/11/the-economy-slightly-favors-obama-not-romney/>

I learned this the hard way. Some months ago, I worked with political scientists Seth Hill, John Sides and Lynn Vavreck to build a model that used data from every presidential election since 1948 to forecast the outcome of this presidential election. But when the model was done, I thought it was broken: It was forecasting an Obama win even under scenarios of very weak economic growth. (You can play with the model here.)

After a lot of frantic e-mails, my political scientist friends finally convinced me that that’s the point of a model: It forces you to check your expectations at the door. And my expectation that incumbents lose when the economy is weak was not backed up by the data, which suggest that incumbents win unless major economic indicators are headed in the wrong direction, as was true with unemployment in 1980 and 1992.

This year, the major economic indicators are headed in the right direction, albeit slowly. We’ve been adding jobs, though not enough. We’ve been growing, though not particularly fast. We’ve seen the unemployment rate drop, though partially because workers are leaving the labor force. All in all, it’s not an impressive record. But it’s weak growth, not a new recession. And the political valence of that weak growth is unusually hard to discern, as voters continue to place more blame for our current economic troubles on George W. Bush than on Barack Obama.

Recently, Dylan Matthews surveyed six other forecasting models. Five of those models include economic data. Most, though not all, are predicting an Obama win. And that, I think, is a pretty accurate summation of where the economic fundamentals of the election stand: A slight lean towards Obama, but nothing that guarantees him a victory.

**Obama is winning in all swing states**

**Miles, 9/12**/12 - Chris is the editor at PolicyMic. He has worked for media outlets including the Associated Press and the Stars and Stripes (“Obama vs Romney Polls: Obama is Winning in So Many Polls It Might As Well Not Be a Race Any More”, PolicyMic, <http://www.policymic.com/articles/14628/obama-vs-romney-polls-obama-is-winning-in-so-many-polls-it-might-as-well-not-be-a-race-any-more>)

Barack Obama is still holding a considerable polling edge over Republican rival Mitt Romney in the 2012 election.

He’s polling high … he’s winning the swing states … and now he’s even seen by the rest of the world as the candidate they trust the most.

First this: Obama is winning in the key swing states, necessary to give him the electoral college lead in terms of delegates. As U.S. News reports, with less than two months to go before the November election, President Obama has built a "structural advantage" in key swing states which makes him the favorite to defeat Romney, says a prominent Democratic strategist.

As the story reports, Obama's strength among African Americans, Latinos, unmarried women and young people is translating into a powerful asset in the nine swing states that will decide the election — Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and Wisconsin. These states have 110 of the 270 electoral votes needed for victory.

Ohio is the deathblow in that list: many pundits believe Ohio is critical if Romney has any chance at winning.

### 2NC Nuclear Link Run

#### Even if they like nuclear power in theory, they’ll oppose new construction.

**Moniz et al., ‘3** – [Professor Ernest J, Physics @ MIT, Director of Energy Studies, Laboratory for Energy and the Environment, Professor John Deutch, Professor Stephen Ansolabehere, Professor Emeritus Michael Driscoll, Professor Paul E Gray, Professor John P Holdren, Professor Paul L Joskow, Professor Richard K Lester, Professor Neil E. Todreas, and Eric S Beckjord, “The Future of Nuclear Power: An Interdisciplinary MIT Study,” Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2003, pg. 81]

There is little question that the public in the United States and elsewhere is skeptical of nuclear power. A majority of Americans simultaneously approve of the use of nuclear power, but oppose building additional nuclear power plants to meet future energy needs. Since the accident at the Three Mile Island power plant in 1979, 60 percent of the American public has opposed and 35 percent have supported construction of new nuclear power plants, although the intensity of public opposition has lessened in recent years.1 Large majorities strongly oppose the location of a nuclear power plant within 25 miles of their home.2 In many European countries, large majorities now oppose the use of nuclear power. Recent Eurobarometer surveys show that 40 percent of Europeans feel that their country should abandon nuclear power because it poses unacceptable risks, compared with 16 percent who feel it is “worthwhile to develop nuclear power.”3

#### The public opposition to the plan is massive

**The Economist, 12** [February 18th, The 30-year itch America’s nuclear industry struggles to get off the floor, <http://www.economist.com/node/21547803>]

Still, nuclear power faces strong headwinds. A poll taken last year showed that 64% of Americans opposed building new nuclear reactors. The NRC's last new reactor approval predates Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima, all of which dented public support (and not just in America either: nuclear power supplies three-fourths of France's electricity, yet in one poll 57% of French respondents favoured abandoning it). America's anti-nuclear movement has been as quiet as its nuclear industry, but as one comes to life so will the other.

### AT: Energy Doesn’t Matter

#### The environmental vote will decide the election

**Lehrer, 12** (Eli, “How Mitt Romney can win the environmental vote”, 6/11, Huffington Post,

<http://rstreet.org/op-ed/how-mitt-romney-can-win-the-environmental-vote/>

Since the (few) positives in Obama’s record and the incumbency are unalterable, the Romney camp can only win by shaving parts of Obama’s base.

And environmentalists are one place big place where it could work. Stanford University researchers have found that about 38 million Americans care a lot about the environment and might vote on it. Assuming that environmental voters turn out at roughly the same rate as other citizens who can vote, this means that somewhere between 15% and 19% of the electorate will vote partly on environmental issues.

Although there’s no current, detailed polling, it’s likely that Obama currently stands to get around 75% of this group — taking 50% of it would probably be enough to put Romney over the top. So how can he do it?

### AT: Romney Won’t 1st Strike

#### Romney’s foreign policy starts nuclear wars and blowback around the globe – includes Pakistan collapse, US-Russia, US-China, Iran prolif and strikes, US-Arab relations, peace process, economic collapse

Doug Bandow 5-15-2012; Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and former special assistant to President Ronald Reagan. “Mitt Romney: The Foreign Policy of Know-Nothingism” http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/mitt-romney-foreign-policy-knownothingism

Romney’s overall theme is American exceptionalism and greatness, slogans that win public applause but offer no guidance for a bankrupt superpower that has squandered its international credibility. “This century must be an American century,” Romney proclaimed. “In an American century, America leads the free world and the free world leads the entire world.” He has chosen a mix of advisers, including the usual neocons and uber-hawks — Robert Kagan, Eliot Cohen, Jim Talent, Walid Phares, Kim Holmes, and Daniel Senor, for instance — that gives little reason for comfort. Their involvement suggests Romney’s general commitment to an imperial foreign policy and force structure. Romney is no fool, but he has never demonstrated much interest in international affairs. He brings to mind George W. Bush, who appeared to be largely ignorant of the nations he was invading. Romney may be temperamentally less likely to combine recklessness with hubris, but he would have just as strong an incentive to use foreign aggression to win conservative acquiescence to domestic compromise. This tactic worked well for Bush, whose spendthrift policies received surprisingly little criticism on the right from activists busy defending his war-happy foreign policy. The former Massachusetts governor has criticized President Obama for “a naked political calculation or simply sheer ineptitude” in following George W. Bush’s withdrawal timetable in Iraq and for not overriding the decision of a government whose independence Washington claims to respect. But why would any American policymaker want to keep troops in a nation that is becoming ever more authoritarian, corrupt, and sectarian? It is precisely the sort of place U.S. forces should not be tied down. In contrast, Romney has effectively taken no position on Afghanistan. At times he appears to support the Obama timetable for reducing troop levels, but he has also proclaimed that “Withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan under a Romney administration will be based on conditions on the ground as assessed by our military commanders.” Indeed, he insisted: “To defeat the insurgency in Afghanistan, the United States will need the cooperation of both the Afghan and Pakistani governments — we will only persuade Afghanistan and Pakistan to be resolute if they are convinced that the United States will itself be resolute,” and added, “We should not negotiate with the Taliban. We should defeat the Taliban.” Yet it’s the job of the president, not the military, to decide the basic policy question: why is the U.S. spending blood and treasure trying to create a Western-style nation state in Central Asia a decade after 9/11? And how long is he prepared to stay — forever? On my two trips to Afghanistan I found little support among Afghans for their own government, which is characterized by gross incompetence and corruption. Even if the Western allies succeed in creating a large local security force, will it fight for the thieves in Kabul? Pakistan is already resolute — in opposing U.S. policy on the ground. Afghans forthrightly view Islamabad as an enemy. Unfortunately, continuing the war probably is the most effective way to destabilize nuclear-armed Pakistan. What will Romney do if the U.S. military tells him that American combat forces must remain in Afghanistan for another decade or two in order to “win”? The ongoing AfPak conflict is not enough; Romney appears to desire war with Iran as well. No one wants a nuclear Iran, but Persian nuclear ambitiions began under America’s ally the Shah, and there is no reason to believe that the U.S. (and Israel) cannot deter Tehran. True, Richard Grenell, who briefly served as Romney’s foreign-policy spokesman, once made the astonishing claim that the Iranians “will surely use” nuclear weapons. Alas, he never shared his apparently secret intelligence about the leadership in Tehran’s suicidal tendencies. The Iranian government’s behavior has been rational even if brutal, and officials busy maneuvering for power and wealth do not seem eager to enter the great beyond. Washington uneasily but effectively deterred Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong, the two most prolific mass murderers in history. Iran is no substitute for them. Romney has engaged in almost infantile ridicule of the Obama administration’s attempt to engage Tehran. Yet the U.S. had diplomatic relations with Hitler’s Germany and Stalin’s Russia. Washington came to regret not having similar contact with Mao’s China. Even the Bush administration eventually decided that ignoring Kim Jong-Il’s North Korea only encouraged it to build more nuclear weapons faster. Regarding Iran, Romney asserted, “a military option to deal with their nuclear program remains on the table.” Building up U.S. military forces “will send an unequivocal signal to Iran that the United States, acting in concert with allies, will never permit Iran to obtain nuclear weapons... Only when the ayatollahs no longer have doubts about America’s resolve will they abandon their nuclear ambitions.” Indeed, “if all else fails... then of course you take military action,” even though, American and Iranian military analysts warn, such strikes might only delay development of nuclear weapons. “Elect me as the next president,” he declared, and Iran “will not have a nuclear weapon.” Actually, if Tehran becomes convinced that an attack and attempted regime change are likely, it will have no choice but to develop nuclear weapons. How else to defend itself? The misguided war in Libya, which Romney supported, sent a clear signal to both North Korea and Iran never to trust the West. Iran’s fears likely are exacerbated by Romney’s promise to subcontract Middle East policy to Israel. The ties between the U.S. and Israel are many, but their interests often diverge. The current Israeli government wants Washington to attack Iran irrespective of the cost to America. Moreover, successive Israeli governments have decided to effectively colonize the West Bank, turning injustice into state policy and making a separate Palestinian state practically impossible. Perceived American support for this creates enormous hostility toward the U.S. across the Arab and Muslim worlds. Yet Romney promises that his first foreign trip would be to Israel “to show the world that we care about that country and that region” — as if anyone anywhere, least of all Israel’s neighbors, doesn’t realize that. He asserted that “you don’t allow an inch of space to exist between you and your friends and allies,” notably Israel. The U.S. should “let the entire world know that we will stay with them and that we will support them and defend them.” Indeed, Romney has known Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for nearly four decades and has said that he would request Netanyahu’s approval for U.S. policies: “I’d get on the phone to my friend Bibi Netanyahu and say, ‘Would it help if I say this? What would you like me to do?’” Americans would be better served by a president committed to making policy in the interests of the U.S. instead. Romney’s myopic vision is just as evident when he looks elsewhere. For instance, he offered the singular judgment that Russia is “our number one geopolitical foe.” Romney complained that “across the board, it has been a thorn in our side on questions vital to America’s national security.” The Cold War ended more than two decades ago. Apparently Romney is locked in a time warp. Moscow manifestly does not threaten vital U.S. interests. Romney claimed that Vladimir “Putin dreams of ‘rebuilding the Russian empire’.” Even if Putin has such dreams, they don’t animate Russian foreign policy. No longer an ideologically aggressive power active around the world, Moscow has retreated to the status of a pre-1914 great power, concerned about border security and international respect. Russia has no interest in conflict with America and is not even much involved in most regions where the U.S. is active: Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. Moscow has been helpful in Afghanistan, refused to provide advanced air defense weapons to Iran, supported some sanctions against Tehran, used its limited influence in North Korea to encourage nuclear disarmament, and opposes jihadist terrorism. This is curious behavior for America’s “number one geopolitical foe.” Romney’s website explains that he will “implement a strategy that will seek to discourage aggressive or expansionist behavior on the part of Russia,” but other than Georgia where is it so acting? And even if Georgia fell into a Russian trap, Tbilisi started the shooting in 2008. In any event, absent an American security guarantee, which would be madness, the U.S. cannot stop Moscow from acting to protect what it sees as vital interests in a region of historic influence. Where else is Russia threatening America? Moscow does oppose NATO expansion, which actually is foolish from a U.S. standpoint as well, adding strategic liabilities rather than military strengths. Russia strongly opposes missile defense bases in Central and Eastern Europe, but why should Washington subsidize the security of others? Moscow opposes an attack on Iran, and so should Americans. Russia backs the Assad regime in Syria, but the U.S. government once declared the same government to be “reformist.” Violent misadventures in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya demonstrate that America has little to gain and much to lose from another attempt at social engineering through war. If anything, the Putin government has done Washington a favor keeping the U.S. out of Syria. This doesn’t mean America should not confront Moscow when important differences arise. But treating Russia as an adversary risks encouraging it to act like one. Doing so especially will make Moscow more suspicious of America’s relationships with former members of the Warsaw Pact and republics of the Soviet Union. Naturally, Romney wants to “encourage democratic political and economic reform” in Russia — a fine idea in theory, but meddling in another country’s politics rarely works in practice. Just look at the Arab Spring. Not content with attempting to start a mini-Cold War, Mitt Romney dropped his nominal free-market stance to demonize Chinese currency practices. He complained about currency manipulation and forced technology transfers: “China seeks advantage through systematic exploitation of other economies.” On day one as president he promises to designate “China as the currency manipulator it is.” Moreover, he added, he would “take a holistic approach to addressing all of China’s abuses. That includes unilateral actions such as increased enforcement of U.S. trade laws, punitive measures targeting products and industries that rely on misappropriations of our intellectual property, reciprocity in government procurement, and countervailing duties against currency manipulation. It also includes multilateral actions to block technology transfers into China and to create a trading bloc open only for nations genuinely committed to free trade.” Romney’s apparent belief that Washington is “genuinely committed to free trade” is charming nonsense. The U.S. has practiced a weak dollar policy to increase exports. Washington long has subsidized American exports: the Export-Import Bank is known as “Boeing’s Bank” and U.S. agricultural export subsidies helped torpedo the Doha round of trade liberalization through the World Trade Organization. Of course, Beijing still does much to offend Washington. However, the U.S. must accommodate the rising power across the Pacific. Trying to keep China out of a new Asia-Pacific trade pact isn’t likely to work. America’s Asian allies want us to protect them — no surprise! — but are not interested in offending their nearby neighbor with a long memory. The best hope for moderating Chinese behavior is to tie it into a web of international institutions that provide substantial economic, political, and security benefits. Beijing already has good reason to be paranoid of the superpower which patrols bordering waters, engages in a policy that looks like containment, and talks of the possibility of war. Trying to isolate China economically would be taken as a direct challenge. Romney would prove Henry Kissinger’s dictum that even paranoids have enemies. Naturally, Romney also wants to “maintain appropriate military capabilities to discourage any aggressive or coercive behavior by China against its neighbors.” However, 67 years after the end of World War II, it is time for Beijing’s neighbors to arm themselves and cooperate with each other. Japan long had the second largest economy on earth. India is another rising power with reason to constrain China. South Korea has become a major power. Australia has initiated a significant military build-up. Many Southeast Asian nations are constructing submarines to help deter Chinese adventurism. Even Russia has much to fear from China, given the paucity of population in its vast eastern territory. But America’s foreign-defense dole discourages independence and self-help. The U.S. should step back as an off-shore balancer, encouraging its friends to do more and work together. It is not America’s job to risk Los Angeles for Tokyo, Seoul, or Taipei. Romney similarly insists on keeping the U.S. on the front lines against North Korea, even though all of its neighbors have far more at stake in a peaceful peninsula and are able to contain that impoverished wreck of a country. The Romney campaign proclaims: “Mitt Romney will commit to eliminating North Korea’s nuclear weapons and its nuclear-weapons infrastructure.” Alas, everything he proposes has been tried before, from tougher sanctions to tighter interdiction and pressure on China to isolate the North. What does he plan on doing when Pyongyang continues to develop nuclear weapons as it has done for the last 20 years? The American military should come home from Korea. Romney complained that the North’s nuclear capability “poses a direct threat to U.S. forces on the Korean Peninsula and elsewhere in East Asia.” Then withdraw them. Manpower-rich South Korea doesn’t need U.S. conventional support, and ground units do nothing to contain North Korea’s nuclear ambitions. Pull out American troops and eliminate North Korea’s primary threat to the U.S. Then support continuing non-proliferation efforts led by those nations with the most to fear from the North. That strategy, more than lobbying by Washington, is likely to bring China around. Romney confuses dreams with reality when criticizing President Obama over the administration’s response to the Arab Spring. “We’re facing an Arab Spring which is out of control in some respects,” he said, “because the president was not as strong as he needed to be in encouraging our friends to move toward representative forms of government.” Romney asked: “How can we try and improve the odds so what happens in Libya and what happens in Egypt and what happens in other places where the Arab Spring is in full bloom so that the developments are toward democracy, modernity and more representative forms of government? This we simply don’t know.” True, the president doesn’t know. But neither does Mitt Romney. The latter suffers from the delusion that bright Washington policymakers can remake the world. Invade another country, turn it into a Western-style democracy allied with America, and everyone will live happily every after. But George W. Bush, a member of Mitt Romney’s own party, failed miserably trying to do that in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The Arab Spring did not happen because of Washington policy but in spite of Washington policy. And Arabs demanding political freedom — which, unfortunately, is not the same as a liberal society — have not the slightest interest in what Barack Obama or Mitt Romney thinks. Yet the latter wants “convene a summit that brings together world leaders, donor organizations, and young leaders of groups that espouse” all the wonderful things that Americans do. Alas, does he really believe that such a gathering will stop, say, jihadist radicals from slaughtering Coptic Christians? Iraq’s large Christian community was destroyed even as the U.S. military occupied that country. His summit isn’t likely to be any more effective. Not everything in the world is about Washington. Which is why Romney’s demand to do something in Syria is so foolish. Until recently he wanted to work with the UN, call on the Syrian military to be nice, impose more sanctions, and “increase the possibility that the ruling minority Alawites will be able to reconcile with the majority Sunni population in a post-Assad Syria.” Snapping his fingers would be no less effective. Most recently he advocated arming the rebels. But he should be more cautious before advocating American intervention in another conflict in another land. Such efforts rarely have desirable results. Iraq was a catastrophe. Afghanistan looks to be a disaster once American troops come home. After more than a decade Bosnia and Kosovo are failures, still under allied supervision. Libya is looking bad. Even without U.S. “help,” a full-blown civil war already threatens in Syria. We only look through the glass darkly, observed the Apostle Paul. It might be best for Washington not to intervene in another Muslim land with so many others aflame. Despite his support for restoring America’s economic health, Romney wants to increase dramatically Washington’s already outsize military spending. Rather than make a case on what the U.S. needs, he has taken the typical liberal approach of setting an arbitrary number: 4 percent of GDP. It’s a dumb idea, since America already accounts for roughly half the globe’s military spending — far more if you include Washington’s wealthy allies — and spends more in real terms than at any time during the Cold War, Korean War, or Vietnam War, and real outlays have nearly doubled since 2000. By any normal measure, the U.S. possesses far more military resources than it needs to confront genuine threats. What Romney clearly wants is a military to fight multiple wars and garrison endless occupations, irrespective of cost. My Cato colleague Chris Preble figured that Romney's 4 percent gimmick would result in taxpayers spending more than twice as much on the Pentagon as in 2000 (111 percent higher, to be precise) and 45 percent more than in 1985, the height of the Reagan buildup. Over the next ten years, Romney's annual spending (in constant dollars) for the Pentagon would average 64 percent higher than annual post-Cold War budgets (1990-2012), and 42 percent more than the average during the Reagan era (1981-1989). If Mitt Romney really believes that the world today is so much more dangerous than during the Cold War, he should spell out the threat. He calls Islamic fundamentalism, the Arab Spring, the impact of failed states, the anti-American regimes of Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela, rising China, and resurgent Russia “powerful forces.” It’s actually a pitiful list — Islamic terrorists have been weakened and don’t pose an existential threat, the Arab Spring threatens instability with little impact on America, it is easier to strike terrorists in failed states than in nominal allies like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, one nuclear-armed submarine could vaporize all four hostile states, and Russia’s modest “resurgence” may threaten Georgia but not Europe or America. Only China deserves to be called “powerful,” but it remains a developing country surrounded by potential enemies with a military far behind that of the U.S. In fact, the greatest danger to America is the blowback that results from promiscuous intervention in conflicts not our own. Romney imagines a massive bootstrap operation: he wants a big military to engage in social engineering abroad which would require an even larger military to handle the violence and chaos that would result from his failed attempts at social engineering. Better not to start this vicious cycle. America faces international challenges but nevertheless enjoys unparalleled dominance. U.S. power is buttressed by the fact that Washington is allied with every industrialized nation except China and Russia. America shares significant interests with India, the second major emerging power; is seen as a counterweight by a gaggle of Asian states worried about Chinese expansion; remains the dominant player in Latin America; and is closely linked to most of the Middle East’s most important countries, such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq. If Mitt Romney really believes that America is at greater risk today than during the Cold War, he is not qualified to be president. In this world the U.S. need not confront every threat, subsidize every ally, rebuild every failed state, and resolve every problem. Being a superpower means having many interests but few vital ones warranting war. Being a bankrupt superpower means exhibiting judgment and exercising discretion. President Barack Obama has been a disappointment, amounting in foreign policy to George W. Bush-lite. But Mitt Romney sounds even worse. His rhetoric suggests a return to the worst of the Bush administration. The 2012 election likely will be decided on economics, but foreign policy will prove to be equally important in the long-term. America can ill afford another know-nothing president.

### Nuclear Leadership

#### US won’t be able to exert prolif leadership -- too many bureaucratic constraints.

**NEI, ‘12**

[“Improved Policies for Commercial Nuclear Trade Will Create American Jobs,” June, http://www.nei.org/resourcesandstats/documentlibrary/newplants/policybrief/improved-policies-for-commercial-nuclear-trade-will-create-american-jobs?page=1]

While U.S. firms offer some of the most innovative and safest nuclear energy technologies, they are hampered by cumbersome trade regulations, lack of coordination among the federal agencies involved, an inefficient export licensing process, limited options for financing nuclear exports and the absence of an international liability regime. These companies face intense competition from suppliers in nations with less restrictive policies and substantial government subsidies for their nuclear industries. To facilitate a greater U.S. role in the global commercial nuclear market, government support must be integrated into a seamless mechanism that includes coordination of nuclear trade policy, creation of bilateral agreements, export control reform and enhanced export financing. It also is vital that the United States pursue the international adoption of effective civil nuclear liability regimes.

#### The US can’t influence global nuclear trade -- international actors will resist influence.

**Kerr et al, ‘11**

[Paul K, Analyst in Nonproliferation -- CRS, Mark Holt, Specialist in Energy Policy, Mary Beth Nikitin, Specialist in Nonproliferation, 8-10, “Nuclear Energy Cooperation with Foreign Countries: Issues for Congress,” http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/171374.pdf]

The ability of the United States to influence regulations for international nuclear commerce have arguably diminished. As discussed above, the U.S. nuclear industry’s market power has declined and foreign competitors have been concluding nuclear supply agreements with other countries. Moreover, some influential governments have demonstrated limited enthusiasm for such regulations. For example, as noted, some members of the NSG displayed resistance to proposals that would restrict the transfer of enrichment and reprocessing technology. Furthermore, the NSG decided in 2008 to exempt India from some of its export guidelines—a step which many observers argued would assist New Delhi’s nuclear weapons program. 85 Some suppliers may use the 2008 decision to justify supplying other states that do not meet NSG guidelines; indeed, China has agreed to supply Pakistan with two additional nuclear reactors. 86 It is also possible that Israel and Pakistan, which, like India, do not have full-scope safeguards and have not signed the NPT, may continue to ask for exemptions from NSG guidelines. For its part, Israel proposed export criteria in 2007 that would have had the effect of exempting Israel from the current NSG guidelines 87 and is widely believed to have sought a nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States.

#### There’s a greater likelihood it backfires -- resentment causes countries to pursue nuclear capabilities.

**Farmer and Makhijani, ‘10**

[“A US nuclear future? Counterpoint: Not wanted, not needed,” Nature 467 (23 September 2010): 391-393, Nature Journals]

There are also undesirable side effects of using nuclear power. To make a large dent in CO2 emissions, 2,000–3,000 reactors would be needed worldwide by 2050 to replace an equivalent coal capacity and to increase the share of nuclear electricity to about 30%. This poses a huge proliferation hazard. Two medium-sized uranium–enrichment plants would need to be built every year to fuel so many nuclear reactors, increasing the risk that some fuel would be diverted and enriched to weapons-grade material. A major US push for nuclear power will make developing countries more likely to demand the capacity to enrich their own fuel, vastly hampering efforts to clamp down on nuclear proliferation. In addition, each 1,000-megawatt reactor generates about 30 nuclear-bombs' worth of plutonium each year. There is still no long-term solution for the safe disposal of nuclear waste. This year, the office managing the US Yucca Mountain storage project is being closed down, leaving the discussion potentially back at square one after a 30-year and $12-billion effort.

#### Nuclear leadership doesn’t prevent proliferation.

Fuhrmann, ‘9

[Matthew, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of South Carolina, Summer, “Spreading Temptation: Proliferation and Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation,” International Security Vol. 34, No. 1. MIT Press Journals]

This article examines the relationship between peaceful nuclear cooperation and nuclear weapons proliferation. Speciacally, it explores whether countries receiving civilian nuclear aid over time are more likely to initiate weapons pro- grams and build the bomb. The conventional wisdom is that civilian nuclear cooperation does not lead to proliferation. Most scholars argue that nu- clear weapons spread when states have a demand for the bomb—not when they have the technical capacity to proliferate.4 Those who recognize the im- portance of the supply side of proliferation argue that certain types of nuclear assistance enable countries to build nuclear weapons but that others are innoc- uous or even positive from a nonproliferation standpoint. Nuclear suppliers, for instance, generally restrict the sale of uranium enrichment or plutonium re- processing facilities because these can be used directly to produce assile mate- rial for a bomb, but suppliers routinely build research or power reactors in other countries and train foreign scientists.5 A recent study ands that countries receiving enrichment and reprocessing facilities, bomb designs, or signiacant quantities of weapons-grade assile material are more likely to acquire the bomb.6 The implication of this research is that other forms of atomic assistance do not lead to the spread of nuclear weapons. This article argues that the conventional wisdom is wrong—and dangerous. All types of civilian nuclear assistance raise the risks of proliferation. Peaceful nuclear cooperation and proliferation are causally connected because of the dual-use nature of nuclear technology and know-how.7 Civilian cooperation provides technology and materials necessary for a nuclear weapons program and helps to establish expertise in matters relevant to building the bomb. I de- velop four hypotheses based on this general insight. First, receiving civilian nuclear assistance over time increases the likelihood that states will begin nu- clear weapons programs because it reduces the expected costs of such a cam- paign and inspires greater conadence among leaders that the bomb could be successfully developed. Second, militarized disputes with other countries con- dition the effect of civilian nuclear assistance on program initiation. The likeli- hood that nuclear assistance causes countries to begin weapons programs increases as their security environments worsen. Third, peaceful aid increases the probability that countries will successfully build nuclear weapons. Fourth, this is especially true when a country’s security environment deteriorates. To test these hypotheses, I produced a data set on civilian nuclear assistance based on the coding of all NCAs signed from 1945 to 2000.8 A combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis yields support for my arguments, even when controlling for the other variables thought to influence proliferation. The results from my statistical analysis indicate that other factors, such as indus- trial capacity and membership in the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), also have signiacant effects on proliferation. But peaceful cooperation is among the few variables that is consistently salient in explaining both nuclear weapons program onset and weapons acquisition.

### Naval Power

**US Navy is resilient, despite asymmetric threats**

**Gates 10** – US Secretary of Defense (Robert M., "Navy League Sea-Air-Space Exposition" Remarks Delivered at the National Harbor at Maryland on May 3rd, <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1460>)

We know other nations are working on asymmetric ways to thwart the reach and striking power of the U.S. battle fleet. At the low end, Hezbollah, a non-state actor, used anti-ship missiles against the Israeli navy in 2006. And Iran is combining ballistic and cruise missiles, anti-ship missiles, mines, and swarming speedboats in order to challenge our naval power in that region. At the higher end of the access-denial spectrum, the virtual monopoly the U.S. has enjoyed with precision guided weapons is eroding – especially with long-range, accurate anti-ship cruise and ballistic missiles that can potentially strike from over the horizon. This is a particular concern with aircraft carriers and other large, multi-billion-dollar blue-water surface combatants, where, for example, a Ford-class carrier plus its full complement of the latest aircraft would represent potentially a $15 to $20 billion set of hardware at risk. The U.S. will also face increasingly sophisticated underwater combat systems – including numbers of stealthy subs – all of which could end the operational sanctuary our Navy has enjoyed in the Western Pacific for the better part of six decades. One part of the way ahead is through more innovative strategies and joint approaches. The agreement by the Navy and the Air Force to work together on an Air-Sea Battle concept is an encouraging development, which has the potential to do for America’s military deterrent power at the beginning of the 21st century what Air-Land Battle did near the end of the 20th. But we must also rethink what and how we buy – to shift investments towards systems that provide the ability to see and strike deep along the full spectrum of conflict. This means, among other things: Extending the range at which U.S. naval forces can fight, refuel, and strike, with more resources devoted to long-range unmanned aircraft and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities. New sea-based missile defenses; A submarine force with expanded roles that is prepared to conduct more missions deep inside an enemy’s battle network. We will also have to increase submarine strike capability and look at smaller and unmanned underwater platforms. These changes are occurring even as the Navy is called upon to do more missions that fall on the low end of the conflict spectrum – a requirement that will not go away, as the new naval operational concept reflects. Whether the mission is counterinsurgency, piracy, or security assistance, among others, new missions have required new ways of thinking about the portfolio of weapons we buy. In particular, the Navy will need numbers, speed, and the ability to operate in shallow water, especially as the nature of war in the 21st century pushes us toward smaller, more diffuse weapons and units that increasingly rely on a series of networks to wage war. As we learned last year, you don’t necessarily need a billion-dollar guided missile destroyer to chase down and deal with a bunch of teenage pirates wielding AK-47s and RPGs. The Navy has responded with investments in more special warfare capabilities, small patrol coastal vessels, a riverine squadron, and joint high-speed vessels. Last year’s budget accelerated the buy of the Littoral Combat Ship, which, despite its development problems, is a versatile ship that can be produced in quantity and go places that are either too shallow or too risky for the Navy’s big, blue-water surface combatants. The new approach to LCS procurement and competition should provide an affordable, scalable, and sustainable path to producing the quantity of ships we need.

**US Navy is undefeatable in the status quo – no chance of decline**

**Gates 10** – US Secretary of Defense (Robert M., "Navy League Sea-Air-Space Exposition" Remarks Delivered at the National Harbor at Maryland on May 3rd, <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1460>)

In assessing risks and requirements even in light of an expanding array of global missions and responsibilities – everything from shows of presence to humanitarian relief – some context is useful: The U.S. operates 11 large carriers, all nuclear powered. In terms of size and striking power, no other country has even one comparable ship. The U.S. Navy has 10 large-deck amphibious ships that can operate as sea bases for helicopters and vertical-takeoff jets. No other navy has more than three, and all of those navies belong to pur allies or friends. Our Navy can carry twice as many aircraft at sea as all the rest of the world combined. The U.S. has 57 nuclear-powered attack and cruise missile submarines – again, more than the rest of the world combined. Seventy-nine Aegis-equipped combatants carry roughly 8,000 vertical-launch missile cells. In terms of total missile firepower, the U.S. arguably outmatches the next 20 largest navies. All told, the displacement of the U.S. battle fleet – a proxy for overall fleet capabilities – exceeds, by one recent estimate, at least the next 13 navies combined, of which 11 are our allies or partners. And, at 202,000 strong, the Marine Corps is the largest military force of its kind in the world and exceeds the size of most world armies. Still, even as the United States stands unsurpassed on, above, and below the high seas, we have to prepare for the future. As in previous eras, new centers of power – with new wealth, military strength, and ambitions on the world stage – are altering the strategic landscape. If history shows anything, it is that we cannot predict or guarantee the course of a nation decades from now – the time it takes to develop and build the next generation of ships, a process that has been likened to building a medieval cathedral: brick by brick, window by window – over decades.

### Water Security

-- No water wars

Victor 7 (David G., Professor of Law – Stanford Law School and Director – Program on Energy and Sustainable Development, “What Resource Wars?”, The National Interest, 11-12, http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=16020)

While there are many reasons to fear global warming, the risk that such dangers could cause violent conflict ranks extremely low on the list because it is highly unlikely to materialize. Despite decades of warnings about water wars, what is striking is that water wars don't happen-usually because countries that share water resources have a lot more at stake and armed conflict rarely fixes the problem. Some analysts have pointed to conflicts over resources, including water and valuable land, as a cause in the Rwandan genocide, for example. Recently, the UN secretary-general suggested that climate change was already exacerbating the conflicts in Sudan. But none of these supposed causal chains stay linked under close scrutiny-the conflicts over resources are usually symptomatic of deeper failures in governance and other primal forces for conflicts, such as ethnic tensions, income inequalities and other unsettled grievances. Climate is just one of many factors that contribute to tension. The same is true for scenarios of climate refugees, where the moniker "climate" conveniently obscures the deeper causal forces.

-- Water scarcity spurs cooperation – not conflict

Deen 7 (Thalif, Staff – IPS, “Water Wars A Myth”, Inter Press Service, 8-25, Lexis)

"Despite the potential problem, history has demonstrated that cooperation, rather than conflict, is likely in shared basins," UNESCO concludes. The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) says that 10- to 20-year-old arguments about conflict over water are still being recycled. "Such arguments ignore massive amounts of recent research which shows that water-scarce states that share a water body tend to find cooperative solutions rather than enter into violent conflict," the institute says. SIWI says that during the entire "intifada" -- the ongoing Palestinian uprising against Israel in the occupied territories of West Bank and Gaza -- the only thing on which the two warring parties continued to cooperate at a basic level was their shared waters. "Thus, rather than reaching for arguments for the 'water war hypotheses,' the facts seem to support the idea that water is a uniting force and a potential source of peace rather than violent conflict." SIWI said. Ghosh, co-author of the UNDP study, pointed out several agreements which were "models of cooperation", including the Indus Waters Treaty, the Israel-Jordan accord, the Senegal River Development Organisation and the Mekong River Commission. A study sponsored by the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars points that despite newspaper headlines screaming "water wars are coming!", these apocalyptic warnings fly in the face of history. "No nations have gone to war specifically over water resources for thousands of years. International water disputes -- even among fierce enemies -- are resolved peacefully, even as conflicts erupt over other issues," it says. The study also points out instances of cooperation between riparian nations -- countries or provinces bordering the same river -- that outnumbered conflicts by more than two to one between 1945 and 1999. Why? "Because water is so important, nations cannot afford to fight over it. Instead, water fuels greater interdependence. By coming together to jointly manage their shared water resources, countries can build trust and prevent conflict," argues the study, jointly co-authored by Aaron Wolf, Annika Kramer, Alexander Carius and Geoffrey Dabelko.

-- History and best studies prove

Wolf 99 (Aaron, Assistant Professor of Geography – University of Wisconsin, “Conflict and Cooperation Along International Waterways”, 11-1, http://www.gci.ch/GreenCrossPrograms/waterres/middleeast/wolf.html

There are 268 international rivers, covering almost one half of the total land surface of the globe, and untold numbers of shared aquifers. Water has been a cause of political tensions between Arabs and Israelis; Indians and Bangladeshis; Americans and Mexicans; and all ten riparian states of the Nile River. Water is the only scarce resource for which there is no substitute, over which there is poorly-developed international law, and the need for which is overwhelming, constant, and immediate. As a consequence, "water" and "war" are two topics being assessed together with increasing frequency. This paper investigates the reality of historic water conflict and draws lessons for the plausibility of future "water wars." The datasets of conflict are explored for those related to water only seven minor skirmishes are found in this century; no war has ever been fought over water. In contrast, 145 water-related treaties were signed in the same period. These treaties, collected and catalogued in a computerized database along with relevant notes from negotiators, are assessed for patterns of conflict resolution. War over water seems neither strategically rational, hydrographically effective, nor economically viable. Shared interests along a waterway seem to overwhelm water's conflict-inducing characteristics. Furthermore, once cooperative water regimes are established through treaty, they turn out to be tremendously resilient over time, even between otherwise hostile riparians, and even as conflict is waged over other issues. These patterns suggest that the more valuable lesson of international water is as a resources whose characteristics tend to induce cooperation, and incite violence only in the exception.