### AT: U o/w links

#### Romney is within the margin of error in most swing states

**Haberman, 10/1**/12 - Senior Political Writer for POLITICO (Maggie, WaPo, Battleground poll show margin-of-error contest, Politico, <http://www.politico.com/blogs/burns-haberman/2012/10/wapo-battlground-poll-show-marginoferror-contest-137104.html>)

Two new polls out this morning show a race that, nationally, remains within the margin of error for Mitt Romney and President Obama as they enter a crucial week in the race.

From the WaPo/ABC poll:

Nationally, the race is unmoved from early September, with 49 percent of likely voters saying they would vote for Obama if the election were held today and 47 percent saying they would vote for Romney. Among all registered voters, Obama is up by a slim five percentage points, nearly identical to his margin in a poll two weeks ago.

But 52 percent of likely voters across swing states side with Obama and 41 percent with Romney in the new national poll, paralleling Obama’s advantages in recent Washington Post polls in Florida, Ohio and Virginia.

And from the POLITICO/ George Washington University battleground poll:

Romney now leads by 4 points among independents, up slightly from a week ago. The Republican must overperform with that group to make up for the near monolithic support of African-Americans for Obama, as well as the huge Democratic advantage among Latinos and women...

...“The basic underpinnings of this race are just not changing, and that’s what’s going to keep this a very close race,” said Republican pollster Ed Goeas of the Tarrance Group, who helped conduct the bipartisan poll.

A solid 46 percent say they will vote to reelect Obama and 42 percent say firmly they’ll vote to replace him. Just 9 percent say they’ll consider someone else.

“We’ve never had a debate where the electorate was this polarized,” said Celinda Lake, the Democratic pollster who helped conduct the poll. “There’s a real question about how many voters are left to move in the debate.”

The WaPo/ABC numbers of swing states show a bigger gap, and most internal surveys show Romney behind in the majority of the key battlegrounds. But many also have him within the margin of error.

#### It will still be extremely close and could be determined by a small handful of swing voters

**Reich, 9/25**/12 - Chancellor’s Professor of Public Policy at the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley (Robert, “Why Mitt Romney may still win this election” <http://www.kansascity.com/2012/09/25/3833773/robert-b-reich-why-mitt-romney.html>

So I haven’t been surprised by all the calls I’ve been getting lately from my inside-the-Beltway friends telling me “Romney’s toast.” Hold it. Rumors of Romney’s demise are premature for several reasons.

• Between now and Election Day come two jobs reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Oct. 5 and Nov. 2. If they’re as bad as the last report, showing only 96,000 jobs added in August (125,000 are needed just to keep up with population growth) and the lowest percentage of employed adults since 1981, Romney’s claim that the economy is off track becomes more credible.

Economic predictions are always hazardous, but with gas prices rising, corporate profits shrinking, most of Europe in recession, Japan still a basket case and the Chinese economy slowing, the upcoming job reports are unlikely to be stellar.

• Between now and Election Day come three presidential debates, the first on Oct. 3. It’s commonly thought Obama will win the debates handily. But his reputation for eloquence didn’t come from his debate performance, and the expectation he’ll win may be very wrong, and could work against him.

Yes, Romney is an automaton. But when the dials are set properly, Romney can give a good imitation of a human engaged in sharp debate. He did remarkably well in the Republican primary debates.

Obama, by contrast, can come off slow and ponderous. Recall how he stuttered and stumbled during the 2008 Democratic primary debates. And he hasn’t been in a real-live debate for four years; Romney recently emerged from almost a year of them.

Third, during the final weeks of the campaign, the anti-Obama forces will be spending a gigantic amount of money. The gusher will be coming not just from the Romney campaign and Romney’s super PACs, but also from other super PACs aligned with Romney, billionaires spending their own fortunes, and nonprofit “social welfare” organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, Karl Rove’s “Crossroads” and various Koch brothers political fronts.

Some of the money will be devoted to get-out-the-vote drives, to computerized targeting of voters likely to support Romney, phone banks and door-to-door canvassing to make sure they vote, and vans to bring them to the polling stations.

It’s an easy bet these Romney and anti-Obama forces will far outspend Obama and his allies. I’ve heard two-to-one.

The race is still close enough that a comparative handful of voters in swing states can make the difference, which means gobs of money used to motivate voters to get to polling stations can be critical.

• Finally, as it’s displayed before, the Republican Party will do whatever it can to win, even if it means disenfranchising certain voters. To date, 11 states have enacted voter identification laws, all designed by Republican legislatures and governors to dampen Democratic turnout.

The GOP is also encouraging what can only be termed “voter vigilante” groups to “monitor polling stations to prevent fraud,” which means intimidating minorities who have every right to vote. They’re poring through lists of registered Democratic voters, seeking to have “suspicious” names purged from the rolls or targeted for questioning when these people arrive to vote.

Republicans haven’t been able to document a rise in voter fraud in recent years. They’ve manufactured the problem in order to give a patina of legitimacy to these efforts. And what about those Diebold voting machines?

For these reasons, don’t for a moment believe Romney is toast.

### plan K

#### Small shifts can swing the election

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

The last thing to remember is that when an election is quite close, it does not take very much to shift the race from one candidate being a 60/40 favorite to it being about even.

At the betting market Intrade, Mr. Obama’s odds of re-election have [consistently been around 60 percent](http://www.intrade.com/v4/markets/contract/?contractId=743474). While, on the one hand, it is good not to overreact to new data at this early stage of the race, it is also worth remembering that even a one-point shift in a president’s approval ratings, or a modest change in the economic forecasts, can move a president’s re-election odds at the margin.

#### Energy will be spotlighted in the debates and this makes the plan uniquely visible now

**Gardett, 9/28**/12 - managing editor of AOL Energy (Peter, “Energy & The US Electorate”,

<http://energy.aol.com/2012/09/28/energy-and-the-us-electorate-white-paper/>)

Americans have been able for decades to mostly ignore the sources of their energy as well as the impacts of the choices they make. In the US, energy has traditionally been cheap, widely available and extremely reliable.

In the late 1970s an OPEC oil embargo sparked handwringing in the US about energy choices and marked the ﬁrst government-sponsored cleantech boom. Widespread power outages and the collapse of Enron at the start of the last decade prompted another short-lived period of public interest in energy. Otherwise, the most Americans have seemed to know about energy is how to complain about prices at the gas pump.

Something’s changed. A mix of economic, technology, operational and political factors have brought energy issues to the forefront of political debate in the US over the past six months, and the conversation is set to intensify as the Presidential Debates and the November elections loom. Americans are becoming aware of their energy use, and its consequences.

### Link

#### Military clean energy MAGNIFIES the link – perceived as wasteful and politically motivated.

Snider 12 (Annie Snider, E&E reporter February 23, 2012 Military's alt energy programs draw Republicans' ire <http://www.eenews.net/public/Greenwire/2012/02/23/2?page_type=print>)

Suspicion is growing among Republican lawmakers that the Defense Department's efforts to move to renewable energy are more about politics than they are about saving lives and boosting security, as officials claim. The Pentagon's green push -- including outfitting Marines and soldiers with solar gear, testing aircraft and ships on biofuels and building renewable power plants at bases -- won supporters from both sides of the aisle over the past year as leaders drew a clear line between the technologies and military might. Stories about how solar equipment allowed units in Afghanistan to carry fewer batteries and more ammunition helped prompt eight Republicans and 15 Democrats -- many of whom hold vastly opposing views on national energy policy -- to last summer form the Defense Energy Security Caucus, which aims to educate Congress on military energy issues, including "the strategic value of utilizing sustainable energy" (E&E Daily, July 8, 2011). And at a subcommittee hearing with the Pentagon's top energy and environment officials last spring, lawmakers were more concerned about where the solar panels being installed at military installations were made than with the policy behind the projects in the first place (E&E Daily, April 14, 2011). But as election-year politics ramp up and Republicans target the Obama administration for its clean energy programs, especially its investment in failed solar panel manufacturer Solyndra, the military's attempts to move to alternative energy are coming under new scrutiny. "Obama is hiding new renewable energy bets at the Pentagon, charging our Defense Department with major investments in 'low-emissions economic development' while cutting their budget by $5.1 billion," Catrina Rorke, director of energy policy at the center-right American Action Forum, wrote in a blog post following the Obama administration's budget release last week. "New energy spending is new energy spending, no matter where it happens." The idea that the administration is using DOD as a more politically palatable vehicle for renewable energy investments is now reverberating across Capitol Hill, even as Pentagon officials flatly deny the allegations. At a budget hearing last week, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, the department's most high-profile alternative energy advocate, took volley after volley from Republicans on the House Armed Services Committee. They said that his priorities were misplaced, argued that spending on clean energy was taking money out of more important missions and hinted at a link between the Pentagon's green efforts and the prominence of former Silicon Valley clean-tech investors within the Obama administration. "You're not the secretary of the energy, you're the secretary of the Navy," said Rep. Randy Forbes (R-Va.), who leads the subcommittee with jurisdiction over military energy and environment issues. Prime among the lawmakers' complaints was that the military is paying a higher price for some forms of alternative energy at a time when DOD proposes cutting weapons programs and reducing forces in order to meet budget mandates. "You've bought fuel, blended [bio]fuel for the jets to fly at almost four times the cost of traditional energy," Rep. Mike Conaway (R-Texas) said to Mabus, referring to the $12 million the Navy is paying for 450,000 gallons of advanced biofuel to power a carrier strike group during exercises off the coast of Hawaii this summer (Greenwire, Dec. 5, 2011). "So in order to make up for that difference, will those planes fly a quarter of the time they would have otherwise flown as part of this exercise?"

Democrats oppose nuclear power – economics and the environment – kills Obamas base

Entine 6 (Jon Entine 10/6/6 fellow on science and public policy at the American Enterprise Institute Transcript of an AEI Conferency <http://www.aei.org/events/filter.all,eventID.1394/transcript.asp>)

At this conference at least we will set aside the debate over the myriad possible causes of global warming and focus on what we might do to address it; we are going to look today at nuclear energy.  Traditionally political predilection has driven the debate over nuclear energy with exceptions, of course.  Conservatives have tended to be supportive of nuclear technology considering the risks acceptable and the Left has been instinctively hostile.  Political passions have often masqueraded as economics and environmental science.  The double threat of global warming and high energy prices may be challenging those once rock-hard positions.

### Romney Stike

#### Romney will overestimate the benefits of a strike – controlled by neocon advisors

Daniel Larison 1-26-2012; Daniel Larison has a Ph.D. in history and is a contributing editor at The American Conservative. He also writes on the blog Eunomia.A War with Iran Is More Likely Under a Romney Administration http://www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/a-war-with-iran-is-more-likely-under-a-romney-administration/

The only evidence we have for Romney’s likely foreign policy is what he has said he will do and the views of the people he has named as his advisers. If we discount that, we are just making things up out of thin air. Romney is inexperienced, which makes him vulnerable to following the lead of hawkish advisers. If he has shown every sign of deferring to the so-called “Cheneyites” up to this point, why is he going to stop following their advice once he is in office? It may be that Romney isn’t interested in imitating Bush’s ground wars (though, again, we have no proof on this point one way or the other), but his hawkish advisers would likely tell him that launching military strikes on Iran is different from those wars and therefore won’t have as many harmful consequences for the U.S. Iran hawks consistently underestimate the risks and costs of war with Iran and overstate the benefits. If Romney performs a cost-benefit analysis using the bad information these advisers give him, he might conclude that a disastrous, unnecessary war with Iran is an acceptable risk. None of this means that Romney definitely will start a war with Iran, but it does mean that he is more likely to do so than Obama.