### Elections OV

**Iran prolif collapses heg**

Dan **Meridor**, 4-11-20**11**; former Israeli Minister of Finance, The Jerusalem Post April 11, 2011 Monday Can the US block Iran's drive for regional hegemony? Lexis

In the Arab-Israeli conflict, the addition of a religious layer to the conflict is new. Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah are all religiously-based. When one speaks and acts for God, there is no compromise. Iran is a nation of merchants, and it needs the world and its financial system. This gives leverage to those who want to do something about its nuclear plans. If there is leadership, resolve, and persistence, with more sanctions, and more partners in the game, there is a chance that Iran will have to rethink its policy. Europe can do more. The volume of trade between certain European countries and Iran remains quite heavy. **In the end, this battle will determine the standing of the United States and its power and role in the world in the 21st century**. I believe that America has enough power to reinvent itself economically and restore the power that it had, but the perception that Iran is spreading is just the opposite. Israel is part of the camp that America has been leading for the last 70 years in terms of values, way of life, and democracy. It is important to us that this camp not lose its power in the world, and that is why a strong America is a very clear Israeli interest, regardless of whether the Democrats or Republicans are in power.

**Russian relations prevent global nuclear war**

**NTI 9** [Global Security Newswire, “Russia Open to U.S. Suggestions on Improving Relations, Curbing Iran” http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw\_20090318\_4374.php 3/19]

Russian leaders have shown an interest in improving ... outcome," the report adds (Nixon Center release, March 16).

Russian leaders have shown an interest in improving relations with Washington, a thaw that could enable the two former Cold War rivals to cooperate more closely on efforts to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions, the Washington Post reported today (see GSN, March 16).

The two nations experienced growing tensions during the Bush administration as they disagreed over a variety of international security issues, particularly a U.S. plan to deploy missile defenses in Eastern Europe as a hedge against potential Iranian missile threats. Regarding Iran, Russia has cautiously supported some U.N. Security Council resolutions setting mild sanctions against Iran for its refusal to freeze its uranium enrichment program, but Moscow scuttled U.S. efforts last year to boost those penalties.

Trying to change the climate, U.S. President Barack Obama has sent his counterpart a letter seeking a packaged solution to U.S.-Russian disputes, and Moscow appears interested, according to some analysts and officials.

Russian officials "want to send a message to the Obama administration that they're prepared to have a new relationship, but it will have to be quid pro quo," said Dmitri Simes, president of the Washington-based Nixon Center. "If they have to sacrifice their special relationship with Iran, they want to see a change in their relationship with the United States" (Pan/DeYoung, Washington Post, March 18).

Simes directed a commission that called on the Obama administration this week to recognize the importance of good Russian relations to a breadth of international issues, including the Iranian nuclear crisis.

"Without deep Russian cooperation, no strategy is likely to succeed in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, nuclear terrorism and nuclear war," says the commission report. "Working with Moscow to solve the Iran problem, including possibly strengthening sanctions on Iran if necessary, should be a top U.S. priority."

"However, America is unlikely to be able to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue solely through sanctions, and Russia's cooperation could contribute substantially to a successful outcome," the report adds (Nixon Center release, March 16).

**Pakistan instability causes reckless nuclear launches- escalates to nuclear war**

**Los Angeles Times 02**, 6/2/2002, Lexis

Nuclear war could also come as a result of mistakes in judgment by subordinate military commanders in the field, or from an accidental mishandling of the nuclear materials that are now being shifted around the battlefield, some experts say. "This is a region that tends toward misreadings, tends toward surprises, tends toward misperceptions," said Michael Krepon, founding president of the Henry L. Stimson Center, a Washington think tank. "In all of their wars, they have tended toward misreadings." There is no question that if a nuclear exchange occurred, it would inflict a horrific toll. According to a Defense Intelligence Agency assessment made public last week, a full-scale exchange could kill as many as 12 million people and could injure as many as 6 million more, not including victims of long-term radiation. The casualties would include U.S. troops stationed in the region. And the devastation would create a humanitarian and economic disaster that would scar the region for decades.

### Same fopolicy

#### Their foreign policy philosophies are fundamentally different on the issues that matter for our impacts

Michael O’Hanlon 8-13-2012; Director of Research and Senior Fellow Foreign Policy at Brookings; Obama vs. Romney on Foreign Policy http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/08/13-obama-romney-ohanlon

As a whole, Romney proposes a more traditionally realist foreign policy of emphasizing strong relations with allies, toughening policies toward others and building up the armed forces. Obama still seeks a muscular dimension to America’s role in the world — demonstrated most clearly by his commando raids and drone strikes against Al Qaeda. But the president seeks a more moderate tone and flavor in economic domains as well as policies toward Russia, China and the Muslim world. These differences are big enough set to merit a great deal of attention and debate. Obama and Romney are far from foreign policy carbon copies of each other.

#### They’re similar on some issues – doesn’t mean all of them

Michael O’Hanlon 8-13-2012; Director of Research and Senior Fellow Foreign Policy at Brookings; Obama vs. Romney on Foreign Policy http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/08/13-obama-romney-ohanlon

New conventional wisdom has emerged about the 2012 presidential race: President Barack Obama and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, The New York Times recently explained, aren’t all that far apart in how they see the world or frame U.S. foreign policy strategies. But this is a wrongheaded view of the choice voters face in November. Obama and Romney’s prescriptions for U.S. foreign policy diverge substantially on several key issues that involve crucial choices for the nation. To be sure, Romney and Obama are both smart, pragmatic men with seasoned advisers. And they do share many foreign policy views. For example, neither wishes to stay in Afghanistan forever or pull out immediately; neither has a radical proposal on global trade or financial matters, and Obama, chastened by his 2009 and 2010 experiences, is no longer pushing hard for a major new approach to energy and climate. Both seem willing to use U.S. military power to stop Iran from getting the bomb — though neither is in a hurry to take on that hornet’s nest until absolutely necessary. Indeed, Romney went to great pains while in Israel recently, to support a possible military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities—by Israel. He was adamant that Iran not get the bomb, but less adamant that the United States act to prevent it. This ambivalence is understandable in light of the complications involved — and resembles Obama’s own complex policies on the subject. But while the two may agree on perhaps half to two-thirds of the U.S. foreign policy portfolio, it does not make their remaining differences less important. Consider: DEFICITS AND DEBT: Obama, as part of his deficit reduction and economic renewal strategy, supports nearly $500 billion in defense spending reductions over 10 years, as laid out the Budget Control Act. Romney opposes this. Both oppose “sequestration,” which would cut defense another $500 billion over 10 years, starting in January, if Congress can’t take action before.

### 2nc Obama win

#### Obama is winning but it’s close - prefer our Brownstein evidence –

* He holds a narrow margin that is consistently reflected in all major polls among likely voters in swing states
* It depends on Obama not screwing up expectations of his job performance – if he falls below 50% he could lose

#### Obama leads in every poll since the convention in every swing state

**Silver, 9/21**/12 – statistician, editor of the NYT Fivethirtyeight blog (Nate, “Obama’s Convention Bounce May Not Be Receding” <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/21/sept-20-obamas-convention-bounce-may-not-be-receding/>)

President Obama’s position inched forward in the FiveThirtyEight forecast on Thursday. His chances of winning the Electoral College are 76.1 percent, according to the forecast, up from 75.2 percent on Wednesday. Mr. Obama’s projected margin of victory in the national popular vote also increased slightly, to 3.4 percentage points.

By and large, the story that Thursday’s polls told was the same one as on Wednesday. Mr. Obama continues to get very strong results in state polls that use industry-standard methodology, meaning that they use live interviews and place calls to mobile phones along with landlines.

In the 10 states that have generally been ranked the highest on our tipping-point list — Ohio, Virginia, Florida, Wisconsin, Colorado, Nevada, Iowa, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and Michigan — there have been 21 such polls since the Democratic convention ended. Mr. Obama has led in all 21 of these surveys — and usually by clear margins. On average, he has held a six-point lead in these surveys, and he has had close to 50 percent of the vote in them.

**Prefer our predictions – superior models**

Nate Silver, creator of FiveThirtyEight.com and New York Times poll aggregator, 8-31-2010, “Nate Silver: Democrats to lose 6-7 Senate Seats,” [http://www.w-r-s.com/blog/category/2010-elections](http://www.w-r-s.com/blog/category/2010-elections/)

The forecasts are based on a program designed to evaluate current polling and demographic data, and to compare these present-day conditions to outcomes in United States Senate races over the past six election cycles. For instance, in recent  cycles, a Senate candidate with a 7-point lead in the polls 10 weeks before  the election won about 80 percent of the time, and a candidate with a 12-point lead won about 95 percent of the time. Although the model, which correctly predicted the outcome of all 35 Senate elections in 2008, is not quite this cut-and-dried, it is this recent  track record that forms the backbone of its projections.

#### And even accounting for worst-case estimates of polling bias, Obama has a 76% chance of winning – taking polls at face value gives him a 95% chance

**Silver, 9/21**/12 – statistician, editor of the NYT Fivethirtyeight blog (Nate, “Presidential Race Changes, but Swing States Stay the Same” <http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/21/sept-21-presidential-race-changes-but-swing-states-stay-the-same/#more-34851>)

Mr. Obama’s chances of winning the presidential election are listed at 76.9 percent by the forecast model, an incremental improvement from 76.1 percent on Thursday.

The trend over the last three days is clearer: Mr. Obama’s forecast is up from a 72.9 percent chance of winning the Electoral College on Tuesday. However, he remains off his highest point in the forecast early last week, when he topped out at 80.8 percent.

Emblematic of Mr. Obama’s good-but-not-great polling day were a set of polls from the firm Purple Strategies, which had him ahead in four of the five swing states: Ohio, Virginia, Colorado and North Carolina. However, Mr. Obama still trailed Mr. Romney by one point in Florida, according to the poll.

Purple Strategies had polled all of these states but North Carolina previously, and Mr. Obama’s standing improved on average by three percentage points from the polls they conducted in August.

This is consistent with the post-convention bounce that we’ve seen for Mr. Obama on the whole. The FiveThirtyEight “now-cast” estimates that if an election were held today, Mr. Obama would have a 95 percent chance of winning it. Additionally, he is projected to win the national popular vote by almost five points – up from about two points before the conventions. The three-point gain is the same as in the average Purple Strategies poll.

Our Nov. 6 forecast continues to be more conservative, however, as we still need to account for the possibility that Mr. Obama’s numbers are inflated by the aftereffects of his party’s convention. By this time next week, it will be safer to conclude that Mr. Obama’s gains are permanent, and the forecast will move toward Mr. Obama if Mr. Romney does not make some tangible improvement.

#### And Electoral College math means Romney’s path to victory is too narrow- err on the side of Obama winning - he has greater momentum

**Burns, 9/19**/12 – reporter for Politico (Alexander, “Mitt Romney needs poll vault to win”, Politico, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/81392.html>)

Mitt Romney faces an increasingly daunting path to victory in the 2012 presidential race, as a wave of national and state-level polling suggests that President Barack Obama has cemented a small but meaningful lead across the battleground states.

Individual polls show varying snapshots of the Obama-Romney race: NBC News and the Wall Street Journal gave Obama a 5-point national lead in a survey published Tuesday night, while an AP-GfK poll released Wednesday morning pegged the president’s lead at just 1 point. Gallup’s tracking poll, meanwhile, showed Obama’s post-convention polling bounce fading to a 1-point lead.

The rosiest picture of the race for Obama came this afternoon from the Pew Research Center, which found Obama drawing 51 percent of the vote to Romney’s 43 percent, leading on nearly every issue question and fighting his challenger to a draw on who would better handle the economy.

From the fog of survey data available on the 2012 race, some consistent, post-convention trends have clearly begun to emerge. In the most credible national polls, Obama rarely leads Romney by more than a few points. But the president is almost invariably in the lead.

These polls were taken after the parties’ conventions, but mostly before the release this week of a controversial video of Romney this week in which he says that 47 percent of people don’t pay income taxes and are dependent on the government for services. Some data was collected before the attacks on U.S. diplomatic outposts in North Africa; some was collected afterward.

More problematic for Romney is the state-level data that gives Obama a slight edge in more than enough states to block his challenger from amassing 270 electoral college votes. Because of the makeup of the electoral map, Romney has to win nearly all the swing states on the table, while Obama only has to win a handful.

Of the biggest prizes up for grabs — Ohio, Virginia, Florida and North Carolina — Obama is the favorite in two, according to public surveys. NBC/Wall Street Journal polling and the Democratic firm Public Policy Polling gave Obama an edge in Ohio in the mid-to-high single digits. In Virginia, one survey from the Washington Post and another from Quinnipiac University, CBS News and the New York Times placed Obama at or above the 50 percent mark.

There has been little public polling in Florida — without which it becomes much harder for Romney to win — and strategists on both sides say the race there remains close. Only in North Carolina is Romney believed to have a slim edge.

In the bigger picture, it would take a national shift of several percentage points or the flipping of more than a few major swing states to put Romney back in the lead, and the momentum — with less than two months to go, doesn’t seem to be moving in the challenger’s direction.

Even if Romney were to win Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Iowa, Colorado and New Hampshire — all states Obama won in 2008 — the Republican would still be three electoral votes short of victory.

And right now, Romney is not leading in many of those states, leaving him well short of the threshold he needs to clear and under urgent pressure to reshuffle the race’s dynamics.

### A2 link U

#### Obama distancing himself from nuclear issues in the run-up to the election

LEVINE 9/7/12 (Gregg; Contributing Editor and Former Managing Editor – Firedoglake and Contributing Writer for Truthout, “Obama Drops Nuclear from Energy Segment of Convention Speech,” <http://capitoilette.com/2012/09/07/obama-drops-nuclear-from-energy-segment-of-convention-speech/>)

President Obama no longer promises to “safely harness nuclear power”–that likely would have sounded like a cruel joke in a world now contaminated by the ongoing Fukushima disaster–but beyond that, he does not promise anything about nuclear power at all. There was no platitude, no carefully crafted signal to the industry that has subsidized much of Obama’s political career, no mention of nuclear power whatsoever.

That is not to say that the entire 2012 Democratic National Convention was a nuclear-free zone. A few hours before the president took the stage at the Time Warner Cable Arena, James Rogers, co-chair of the Charlotte host committee, and oh, by the way, CEO of Duke Energy, stepped to the lectern and endorsed Obama’s “all of the above” energy “strategy” (they keep using that word; I do not think it means what they think it means):

 We need to work even harder toward a future of affordable, reliable and cleaner energy. That means we need to invest heavily in new zero-emission power sources, like new nuclear, wind and solar projects, as well as new technologies, like electric vehicles.

Well, if you are looking for a future of affordable, reliable and cleaner energy, you need look no further than nu–wait, what? If you are looking for those three features in an energy future, it is hard to imagine a worse option than the unsustainably expensive, chronically unreliable and dangerously dirty nuclear power plant. And, as has been discussed here many times, nuclear is not a zero-emission source, either. The massive carbon footprint of the nuclear fuel lifecycle rivals coal, and that doesn’t even consider the radioactive isotopes that facilities emit, even when they are not encountering one of their many “unusual events.”

But the CEO of the Charlotte-based energy giant probably has his eyes on a different prize. Rogers, who has been dogged by questions about a power grab after Duke’s merger with Progress Energy and his lackluster performance as fundraiser-in-chief for the DNC, sits atop a company that operates seven US nuclear power plants, and is partners in a plan to build two new AP1000 reactors in Cherokee County, South Carolina.

That last project, which is under active review by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, awaiting a combined construction and operating license, is one of a small handful of proposed new nuclear facilities currently scrambling for financing. The South Carolina plant, along with a pair of reactors in Georgia, two slated for a different site in South Carolina, and possibly one more in Tennessee, represent what industry lobbyists like to call the “nuclear renaissance.”

But completion of any of the above is nowhere close to guaranteed, and even if some of these reactors are eventually built, none will be able to generate even one kilowatt of commercial power until years after President Obama completes his sought-after second term.

Which, if you really care about America’s energy future, is, of course, all for the better. As even James Rogers noted in his speech (and he gets props for this):

 [W]e cannot lose sight of energy efficiency. Because the cleanest, most efficient power plant is the one we never have to build.

That Duke’s CEO thought to highlight efficiency is interesting. That President Obama, with his well-documented ties to the nuclear industry, chose not to even mention nuclear power is important.

In the wake of Fukushima, where hundreds of thousands of Japanese have been displaced, where tens of thousands are showing elevated radiation exposure, and where thousands of children have thyroid abnormalities, no one can be cavalier about promising a safe harnessing of the atom. And in a world where radioisotopes from the breached reactors continue to turn up in fish and farm products, not only across Japan, but across the northern hemisphere, no one can pretend this is someone else’s problem.

Obama and his campaign advisors know all this and more. They know that most industrialized democracies have chosen to shift away from nuclear since the start of the Japanese crisis. They know that populations that have been polled on the matter want to see nuclear power phased out. And they know that in a time of deficit hysteria, nuclear power plants are an economic sinkhole.

And so, on a night when the president was promised one of the largest audiences of his entire campaign, he and his team decided that 2012 was not a year to throw a bone to Obama’s nuclear backers. Obama, a consummate politician, made the decision that for his second shot at casting for the future, nuclear power is political deadweight.

### Link

**Massive public opposition to nuclear power --**

#### --Support is at an all-time low

Pew Research Center, 2011 (Center of research for the people and the press, March 21, 2011, “Opposition to Nuclear Power Rises Amid Japanese Crisis” The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. <http://www.people-press.org/2011/03/21/opposition-to-nuclear-power-rises-amid-japanese-crisis/2/>)

Not surprisingly, public support for the increased use of nuclear power has declined amid the ongoing nuclear emergency in Japan. Currently, 39% say they favor promoting the increased use of nuclear power while 52% are opposed. Last October, 47% favored promoting the increased use of nuclear power and the same percentage (47%) was opposed. Opinion about expanding the use of nuclear power has fluctuated in recent years. However, the current measure **matches a previous low in support** for increased nuclear power recorded in September 2005 (39% favor, 53% oppose).

#### --The opposition vastly outweighs the support

**ABC News, 11**

(April20, “Nuclear Power: Po Nuclear Power: Opposition Spikes After Japan Earthquake,” <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/nuclear-power-opposition-grows-japan-earthquake-abc-news/story?id=13412262#.UAnUlWHZATY>, d/a 7-20-12, ads)

Most Americans do not flatly say that nuclear power is unsafe; indeed, 53 percent say it's safe overall, 11 points above the immediate post-Chernobyl level. But just 23 percent see it as "very safe," which apparently is what's needed to sustain public support. **Perceptions of safety dramatically affect support for new nuclear plants**. Among people who think nuclear power plants are very safe, 84 percent favor building new ones. But that **falls to 33 percent** of those who just think it's only somewhat safe. And those who think it's unsafe are **nearly unanimous** (93 percent) in their opposition. In another measure, 42 percent say the crisis in Japan **has made them less confident** in the safety of nuclear power overall; 51 percent say it's had no effect. This, too, ties in closely with support for construction: Among those who are less confident now, 84 percent **oppose building new plants**. Among those whose opinions haven't changed, opposition falls to 48 percent.

### A2 wwin

#### Strong opposition is bipartisan – the plan starts more fights than it can finish

**ABC News, 11** (April20, “Nuclear Power: Po Nuclear Power: Opposition Spikes After Japan Earthquake,” <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/nuclear-power-opposition-grows-japan-earthquake-abc-news/story?id=13412262#.UAnUlWHZATY>, d/a 7-20-12

Americans by a 2-1 margin oppose building more [nuclear power plants in the United States](http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/japan-nuclear-emergency-sparks-worries-united-states/story?id=13133047), an 11-point spike in opposition from a few years ago. In the aftermath of Japan's nuclear plant crisis, 64 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll oppose new nuclear plant construction, while 33 percent support it. "**Strong" opposition now far outstrips strong support**, 47-20 percent. Opposition is up from 53 percent in a 2008 poll, and strong opposition is up even more, **by 24 points**. The results reflect the significant [challenges facing the nuclear power industry](http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/us-nuclear-power-plants-safe/story?id=13256973), which had been reaching for greater acceptance on the basis of factors including high oil prices, environmental concerns prompted by the Gulf oil spill a year ago and efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Opposition is not merely a not-in-my-back-yard phenomenon. The[survey](http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/nuclear-power-opposition-grows-japan-earthquake-abc-news/story?id=13412262), conducted for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](http://www.langerresearch.com/), finds that 67 percent of Americans oppose construction of a nuclear plant within 50 miles of their home -- not significantly different than **the number who oppose it regardless of location**. Resistance is bipartisan, with majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independents alike opposed to new nuclear plant construction. Still, there are differences among groups; opposition is higher among Democrats (75 percent, vs. 59 percent of Republicans and independents combined), women (73 percent, vs. 53 percent of men) and liberals (74 percent, vs. 60 percent of moderates and conservatives). Support for building more nuclear plants has fluctuated in the past, showing sensitivity to nuclear crises. Starting at 61 percent in the mid-1970s, support fell sharply after the Three Mile Island accident in 1979 and bottomed out at just 19 percent in May 1986 after the Chernobyl crisis (which began 25 years ago next week).

### Oil OV

#### Russian collapse escalates all conflicts

Patrick, Speice 2006 J.D. Candidate 2006, Marshall-Wythe School of Law, College of William and Mary, “NEGLIGENCE AND NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION: ELIMINATING THE CURRENT LIABILITY BARRIER TO BILATERAL U.S.-RUSSIAN NONPROLIFERATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS,” William & Mary Law Review, Lexis

The potential consequences of the unchecked spread of nuclear knowledge and material to terrorist groups that seek to cause mass destruction in the United States are truly horrifying. A terrorist attack with a nuclear weapon would be devastating in terms of immediate human and economic losses. (49) Moreover, there would be immense political pressure in the United States to discover the perpetrators and retaliate with nuclear weapons, massively increasing the number of casualties and potentially triggering a full-scale nuclear conflict. (50) In addition to the threat posed by terrorists, leakage of nuclear knowledge and material from Russia will reduce the barriers that states with nuclear ambitions face and may trigger widespread proliferation of nuclear weapons. (51) This proliferation will **increase the risk of nuclear attacks** against the United States or its allies by hostile states, (52) as well as increase the likelihood that **regional conflicts will draw in the United States and escalate to the use of nuclear weapons**. (53)

#### US-Russia nuclear war causes extinction and outweighs

Nick Bostrum March 2002 faculty of philosophy at Oxford and winner of the esteemed Eugene Gannon Award, <http://marukuwato.multiply.com/journal/item/157>

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

#### Even if Russia doesn’t collapse, opportunistic aggression by China would escalate – causes extinction

AlexanderSharavin2001 Director of the Institute for Military and Political Analysis, What the Papers Say, Oct 3)

Now, a few words about the third type of war. A real military threat to Russia from China has not merely been ignored; it has been denied by Russia's leaders and nearly all of the political forces. Let's see some statistic figures at first. The territory of Siberia and the Russian Far East comprises 12,765,900 square kilometers (75% of Russia's entire area), with a population of 40,553,900 people (28% of Russia's population). The territory of China is 9,597,000 square kilometers and its population is 1.265 billion (which is 29 times greater than the population of Siberia and the Russian Far East). China's economy is among the fastest-growing economies in the world. It remains socialistic in many aspects, i.e. extensive and highly expensive, demanding more and more natural resources. China's natural resources are rather limited, whereas the depths of Siberia and the Russian Far East are almost inexhaustible. Chinese propaganda has constantly been showing us skyscrapers in free trade zones in southeastern China. It should not be forgotten, however, that some 250 to 300 million people live there, i.e. at most a quarter of China's population. A billion Chinese people are still living in misery. For them, even the living standards of a backwater Russian town remain inaccessibly high. They have absolutely nothing to lose. There is every prerequisite for "the final throw to the north." The strength of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (CPLA) has been growing quicker than the Chinese economy. A decade ago the CPLA was equipped with inferior copies of Russian arms from late 1950s to the early 1960s. However, through its own efforts Russia has nearly managed to liquidate its most significant technological advantage. Thanks to our zeal, from antique MiG-21 fighters of the earliest modifications and S-75 air defense missile systems the Chinese antiaircraft defense forces have adopted Su-27 fighters and S-300 air defense missile systems. China's air defense forces have received Tor systems instead of anti-aircraft guns which could have been used during World War II. The shock air force of our "eastern brethren" will in the near future replace antique Tu-16 and Il-28 airplanes with Su-30 fighters, which are not yet available to the Russian Armed Forces! Russia may face the "wonderful" prospect of combating the Chinese army, which, if full mobilization is called, is comparable in size with Russia's entire population, which also has nuclear weapons (even tactical weapons become strategic if states have common borders) and would be absolutely insensitive to losses (even a loss of a few million of the servicemen would be acceptable for China). Such a war would be more horrible than the World War II. It would require from our state maximal tension, universal mobilization and complete accumulation of the army military hardware, up to the last tank or a plane, in a single direction (we would have to forget such "trifles" like Talebs and Basaev, but this does not guarantee success either). Massive nuclear strikes on basic military forces and cities of China would finally **be the only way out**, what would exhaust Russia's armament completely. We have not got another set of intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-based missiles, whereas the general forces would be extremely exhausted in the border combats. In the long run, even if the aggression would be stopped after the majority of the Chinese are killed, our country would be absolutely unprotected against the "Chechen" and the "Balkan" variants both, and even against the first frost of a possible nuclear winter.

### No renews

#### Renewables will collapse in the US – financial incentives are rolling back

Justin Jacobs 5-25-2012; Petroleum Economist June 2012, Is the boom-time over for US renewables, Lexis

Justin Jacobs, LONDON: The clean energy sector has been a rare bright spot for the ailing US economy since the financial crisis took hold. Strong political support from the Obama administration and generous stimulus spending has fuelled a golden age for wind and solar technologies and led to a resurgence in the moribund nuclear industry. Non-hydro renewable electricity generation in the US, including nuclear power, doubled from 2006 to 2011, even if it still accounts for less than a tenth of electricity produced. But the good times could soon come to an end, though, as stimulus funds run dry and a host of subsidy programmes expire over coming years, potentially creating a **ruinous "funding cliff**", a report from three think tanks has warned. The report, Beyond Boom and Bust: Putting Clean Tech on a Path to Subsidy Independence, was written by authors from the Breakthrough Institute, the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program and the World Resources Institute. It points to 2012 as a make-or-break year for the sector. Federal funding for clean energy - wind, solar and nuclear primarily - is expected to fall by nearly half this year, from $30.7 billion in 2011 to around $16 billion. That is down from a peak of $44.3 billion dollars in 2009. And spending is projected to continue its precipitous decline. By 2014 federal spending on clean energy technologies is projected to fall to $11 billion, a decline of 75% from 2009, the report's author's claim. Last year, for example, a crucial grant programme known as Section 1603, which BP took advantage of to approve an $800 million wind farm in Kansas, was allowed to expire. That led to an increase of some 50%-130% in the cost of financing new wind projects, according to the report. Dozens of similar subsidy programmes, representing 70% of all clean energy support measures, are scheduled to expire by 2014. "In the first quarter of 2012, global clean energy investment dropped to its lowest level since 2008. Good news stories are being replaced with headlines about closing factories, bankruptcies, and cancelled projects. Clean tech appears to be at a crucial inflection point," says Letha Tawney, a co-author of the report and senior associate at the World Resources Institute.

### speculation

#### Oil futures are overshot by speculation – lowering demand would set off a price collapse

Alexei Bayer 7-26-2012; Alexei Bayer is head of KAFAN FX Information Services. His monthly “Global Economy” column in Research has received an excellence award from the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants for the past six years, 2004-2009 “Pop That Bubble Policies should aim at pushing oil prices down” http://www.advisorone.com/2012/07/26/pop-that-bubble?page=3

A Soft Market Demand for oil, then, is softening because the global economy is weakening and consumers are reducing their oil use on a more lasting basis, even as greater supply is coming on line, from projects begun before 2008 and from producers eager to protect their market shares. Oil prices are set by futures markets and therefore fluctuate with traders’ psychology, speculation and liquidity. That means oil prices tend to overshoot. Just as they rocketed prior to 2008 and again in early 2012, driven by rising demand as well as various political concerns and fears, so a softening demand could push oil even below its long-term inflation-adjusted equilibrium price range of around $20-40 per barrel.

#### The plan causes the speculative bubble to pop – current prices are based on expectations of future demand

Andrew Leonard 8-21-2006, Salon.com, “The Oil Bubble”, 8-21, http://www.salon.com/tech/htww/2006/08/21/oil\_bubble/index.html

The theory goes like this: First, there's the supposition that some portion of the spike in oil prices over the last couple of years is speculator driven. Traders are stockpiling oil for sale to buyers at some later date, hoping that in the intervening period prices will continue to rise. Such speculation naturally pushes the price of oil even higher. This is a classic pattern in markets, going back at least as far as the great tulip mania of the 17th century, and there's no reason why oil should be any different from any other traded commodity. And as with all bubbles, once traders start thinking that the price might fall, whoooosh -- the air rushes out.

### diversification

#### Slow diversification is inevitable, but fast diversification forced by low oil prices would destroy comparative advantage – that’s key to the economy

Clifford G. Gaddy 6-16-2011; Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Washington, DC, economist specializing in Russia, “Will the Russian economy rid itself of its dependence on oil?” http://en.rian.ru/valdai\_op/20110616/164645377.html

To ask whether the Russian economy will rid itself of its “dependence on oil” is to ask whether ideology will trump economics. Many people in Russia—including President Medvedev—seem to believe Russia should de-emphasize the role of oil, gas, and other commodities because they are “primitive.” Relying on them, they argue, is “degrading.” From the economic point of view, this makes no sense. **Oil is Russia’s comparative advantage**. It is the most competitive part of the economy. Oil and gas are something everyone wants, and Russia has more of them than anyone else. It is true that the Russian economy is backward, and that oil plays a role in that backwardness. But oil is not the root cause. The causes of Russia’s backwardness lie in its inherited production structure. The physical structure of the real economy (that is, the industries, plants, their location, work forces, equipment, products, and the production chains in which they participate) is predominantly the same as in the Soviet era. The problem is that it is precisely the oil wealth (the so-called oil rent) that is used to support and perpetuate the inefficient structure. For the sake of social and political stability, a large share of Russia’s oil and gas rents is distributed to the production enterprises that employ the inherited physical and human capital. The production and supply chains in that part of the economy are in effect “rent distribution chains.” A serious attempt to convert Russia’s economy into something resembling a modern Western economy would require **dismantling** this rent distribution system. This would be both highly destabilizing, and costly in terms of current welfare. Current efforts for “diversification” do not challenge the rent distribution system. On the contrary, the kinds of investment envisioned in those efforts will preserve and reinforce the rent distribution chains, and hence make Russia more dependent on oil rents. Even under optimal conditions for investment, any dream of creating a “non-oil” Russia that could perform as well as today’s commodity-based economy is unrealistic. The proportion of GDP that would have to be invested in non-oil sectors is impossibly high. Granted, some new firms, and even entire sectors, may grow on the outside of the oil and gas sectors and the rent distribution chains they support. But the development of the new sectors will be difficult, slow, and costly. Even if successful, the net value they generate will be too small relative to oil and gas to change the overall profile of the economy. Thus, while it is fashionable to talk of “diversification” of the Russian economy away from oil and gas, this is the least likely outcome for the country’s economic future. If Russia continues on the current course of pseudo-reform (which merely reinforces the old structures), oil and gas rents will remain important because they will be critical to support the inherently inefficient parts of the economy. On the other hand, if Russia were to somehow launch a genuine reform aimed at dismantling the old structures, the only realistic way to sustain success would be to focus on developing the commodity sectors. Russia could obtain higher growth if the oil and gas sectors were truly modern. Those sectors need to be opened to new entrants, with a level playing field for all participants. Most important, oil, gas, and other commodity companies need to be freed from the requirement to participate in the various informal schemes to share their rents with enterprises in the backward sectors inherited from the Soviet system. Certainly, there are issues with oil. It is a highly volatile source of wealth. But there are ways to hedge those risks. A bigger problem is that oil will eventually lose its special status as an energy source and therefore much of its value. But that time is far off. It will not happen suddenly. In the meantime, sensible policies can deal with the problems. Otherwise, the approach should be to generate the maximum value possible from the oil and protect that value through prudent fiscal policies. Russia should not, can not, and will not significantly reduce the role of oil and gas in its economy in the foreseeable future. It will only harm itself by ill-advised and futile efforts to try.

### A2 Political Resiliency

#### Economic decline causes political instability in Russia – protests will spread and put pressure on Moscow

Andrew Kramer 5-24-2012; Moscow correspondent for the New York Times, “Putin Ally Warns of Political Fallout if Economy Falters” http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/25/business/global/russias-aleksei-kudrin-warns-of-fallout-from-economic-crisis.html?\_r=1

The former minister, Aleksei L. **Kudrin**, made the remark while presenting a report that also **predicted a period of “destabilizing” politics if incomes declined in Russia**. An economic downturn would most likely **swell the ranks of protesters** who opposed the recent re-election of Vladimir V. Putin as president and could spread the movement to rural areas from cities, where it has been centered until now, Mr. Kudrin said. Half a dozen prominent academics and former senior government officials gathered at a news conference to present their findings, sounding the first high-level alarm in Moscow’s political circles that Russia could suffer serious consequences if Greece exited the euro zone. Mr. Kudrin, a longtime close ally of Mr. Putin, is a weighty figure in Moscow political and banking circles. He is credited with anticipating the oil price collapse in 2008 and helping to soften its effect on the Russian economy by saving profits in advance in sovereign wealth funds. That added credibility to his predictions. The two crises in different parts of Europe — Russia’s simmering street protests and Greece’s long-running sovereign debt trouble — are not often looked at through the same lens. The Russian political class, Mr. Kudrin suggested, has been slow to recognize the severity of the economic troubles next door or how they interact with a wobbly domestic political environment. The European Union is Russia’s largest trading partner. “A recession has begun in Europe,” Mr. Kudrin said. “And the events in Greece from the last few days have shown that it’s going to get deeper, that it will touch other countries more deeply and unfortunately can lead to a new world crisis.” A recession in Russia is “possible and even likely,” Mr. Kudrin said, placing the probability of a contraction that would be “a destabilizing factor for political problems” at 50 percent. He defined the resulting political woes as a polarization in Russian politics, with **protesters becoming more radical** and the government more repressive. Mr. Putin, who was elected to a third term in March, presided during his first two terms and as prime minister over a decade of economic growth that lifted millions of people out of poverty and created a large class of wealthy individuals. But he has no control over the two main factors in Russia’s economy: the price of oil and the cost of capital. Both are moving in negative directions today. Global oil prices were lower last week. And as the debt crisis worsens, European banks are calling in loans from developing markets including Russia, raising the cost of borrowing. The report released Thursday took on additional significance because a well-regarded sociologist, Mikhail Dmitriev, provided its analysis of potential rural or industrial unrest in a slowing economy.

#### Stability is based on performance legitimacy – spending cuts cause uprisings by neglected groups

Mark Adomanis, 5-24-2012; analyst for Forbes, Russia's Economy is Still Growing, and Why This Matters <http://www.forbes.com/sites/markadomanis/2012/05/24/russias-economy-is-still-growing-and-why-this-matters/>

I’ve long been of the opinion that a regime like Putin’s that is so clearly based on “**performance legitimacy**,” growing wages and generally improved standards of living, is extremely vulnerable to a genuine economic downturn.\* A good deal of Putin’s popularity is due to the fact that, because of sustained, long-term growth in the prices of oil and natural gas, he’s been in a position to dispense an awful lot of largess in the form of higher wages for public sector workers, larger pensions for retirees, subsidies for families with young children, and a virtually endless list of loans, credits, tax write-offs, and “targeted” investments. In very simple terms, the economic pie has been growing, the state still has control over a healthy portion of it, and Putin has therefore been in a position to throw a lot of money at any problem. This sort of politics is only sustainable so long as the economic pie is actually growing: the minute that growth stagnates, much less turns negative, the government finds it impossible to please all of the competing interests at the same time. Hard decisions have to be made about which group benefits and which has to suffer, and the groups on the wrong side of the calculation are obviously not going to be pleased about it. Indeed depending on just how angry the losers in the resource allocation game get, they can easily transform from group that was easily co-opted with carrots into one that has to be actively repressed with sticks.