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=Politics DA Budget=

====Debt ceiling will pass – Obama political strength and Dem unity means the GOP will cave====

Bolton, 9/14/13 (Alexander, The Hill, "Confident Democrats want separate showdowns on shutdown and debt limit" Read more: http://thehill.com/homenews/senate/322247-confident-democrats-want-separate-showdowns-on-shutdown-and-debt-limit~~%23ixzz2g92IX3s7

Democrats, however, want to force the GOP to debate these issues successively.¶ "We~’re not negotiating on the debt ceiling. We think we have the high ground in both of those fights," said a senior Senate Democratic aide.¶ The Senate Democratic strategy over the next several weeks will be to stand pat and refuse to make any significant concessions in exchange for funding the government or raising the debt ceiling.¶ "If push comes to shove on debt ceiling, I~’m virtually certain they~’ll blink," said Sen. Charles Schumer (N.Y.), the third-ranking member of the Senate Democratic leadership. "They know they shouldn~’t be playing havoc with the markets."¶ Schumer said Republicans are on stronger political ground if there~’s a government shutdown, but warned "even on that one, they~’re on weak ground because the public sort of is finally smelling that these guys are for obstructing."

====Increasing economic engagement splits Congressional Democrats and consumes political capital====

\*\*Magnus, ~’9\*\*

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3. Votes: Will the new government allow any major trade-liberalizing items to come to a vote in the first two years? Conventional wisdom holds that trade votes are bad for the Democratic party — they split the caucus, demoralize stakeholders, and generally spell trouble for the party~’s political majority. Many regard allowing trade initiatives to reach the front of the legislative queue as a blunder of the early Clinton administration. A precious period of unified government was squandered when it could, the argument goes, have been used to enact important Democratic priorities. And then it might have lasted longer — the 1994 Republican takeover could have been averted%21 Although questionable in several particulars, this narrative is present in the minds of many Democrats in and out of government today, and they are determined to manage the new period of unified government differently. There will be a strong temptation to use President Obama~’s political capital exclusively for initiatives favored by a strong majority of Democrats, to keep trade-liberalizing measures (and related items like Trade Promotion Authority) off the voting agenda for months or even years, and to limit any congressional trade votes to matters like adjustment assistance and enforcement. But, of course, foreign policy concerns, and business community desires, will pull in the opposite direction.

====It disrupts Obama~’s attempt to prioritize the debt ceiling by consuming political capital====

Frumin, 9/21/13 – reporter for MSNBC (Aliyah, "Bright prospects on foreign agenda; domestic in chaos" [[http://tv.msnbc.com/2013/09/21/bright-prospects-for-obama-on-foreign-agenda-domestic-in-chaos/-http://tv.msnbc.com/2013/09/21/bright-prospects-for-obama-on-foreign-agenda-domestic-in-chaos/]])

Conservative strategist Keith Appell said having a full plate is just part of being president and his legacy is at risk because his number one priority of improving the economy has not been significantly addressed.¶ Fixing the economy, he said, could arguable be pegged to how much political capital he has on the issues Obama is currently facing (Syria, Iran, debt ceiling, gun control). "But certainly, if you~’re talking about legacy, unless there is an overwhelming foreign policy situation like the Cold War, then it~’s all about the economy."¶ But Jeanne Zaino, a professor of political science at Iona College and of political campaign management at New York University said "Every time Obama tries to refocus on the economy, there~’s these enormous crises that break out. You can just imagine how frustrating that can be and how it~’s been difficult for him to prioritize."¶ "It~’s not only the amount he has on his plate. It~’s that he doesn~’t~’ have the ability to get anything done without Congress," she added.

====That takes Obama off-message – it undermines his strategy of constant pressure on the GOP and makes a deal impossible====

Milbank, 9/27/13 – Washington Post Opinion Writer (Dana, "Obama should pivot to Dubya~’s playbook" Washington Post, [[http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/dana-milbank-obama-should-try-pivoting-to-george-bushs-playbook/2013/09/27/c72469f0-278a-11e3-ad0d-b7c8d2a594b9\_story.html-http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/dana-milbank-obama-should-try-pivoting-to-george-bushs-playbook/2013/09/27/c72469f0-278a-11e3-ad0d-b7c8d2a594b9\_story.html]])

If President Obama can stick to his guns, he will win his October standoff with Republicans.¶ That~’s an awfully big "if."¶ This president has been consistently inconsistent, predictably unpredictable and reliably erratic. Consider the events of Thursday morning:¶ Obama gave a rousing speech in suburban Washington, in defense of Obamacare, on the eve of its implementation. "We~’re now only five days away from finishing the job," he told the crowd.¶ But before he had even left the room, his administration let slip that it was delaying by a month the sign-up for the health-care exchanges for small businesses. It wasn~’t a huge deal, but it was enough to trample on the message the president had just delivered.¶ Throughout his presidency, Obama has had great difficulty delivering a consistent message. Supporters plead for him to take a position — any position — and stick with it. His shifting policy on confronting Syria was the most prominent of his vacillations, but his allies have seen a similar approach to the Guantanamo Bay prison, counterterrorism and climate change. Even on issues such as gun control and immigration where his views have been consistent, Obama has been inconsistent in promoting his message. Allies are reluctant to take risky stands, because they fear that Obama will change his mind and leave them standing alone.¶ Now come the budget showdowns, which could define the rest of his presidency. Republican leaders are trying to shift the party~’s emphasis from the fight over a government shutdown to the fight over the debt-limit increase, where they have more support. A new Bloomberg poll found that Americans, by a 2-to-1 margin, disagree with Obama~’s view that Congress should raise the debt limit without any conditions.¶ But Obama has a path to victory. That poll also found that Americans think lawmakers should stop trying to repeal Obamacare. And that was before House Republicans dramatically overplayed their hand by suggesting that they~’ll allow the nation to default if Obama doesn~’t agree to their laundry list of demands, including suspending Obamacare, repealing banking reforms, building a new oil pipeline, easing environmental regulations, limiting malpractice lawsuits and restricting access to Medicare.¶ To beat the Republicans, Obama might follow the example of a Republican, George W. Bush. Whatever you think of what he did, he knew how to get it done: by simplifying his message and repeating it, ad nauseam, until he got the result he was after.¶ Obama instead tends to give a speech and move along to the next topic. This is why he is forever making "pivots" back to the economy, or to health care. But the way to pressure Congress is to be President One Note.¶ In the debt-limit fight, Obama already has his note: He will not negotiate over the full faith and credit of the United States. That~’s as good a theme as any; it matters less what the message is than that he delivers it consistently.¶ The idea, White House officials explained to me, is to avoid getting into a back-and-forth over taxes, spending and entitlement programs. "We~’re right on the merits, but I don~’t think we want to argue on the merits," one said. "Our argument is not that our argument is better than theirs; it~’s that theirs is stupid."¶ This is a clean message: Republicans are threatening to tank the economy — through a shutdown or, more likely, through a default on the debt — and Obama isn~’t going to negotiate with these hostage-takers.¶ Happily for Obama, Republicans are helping him to make the case by being publicly belligerent. After this week~’s 21-hour speech on the Senate floor by Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.), the publicity-seeking Texan and Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) objected to a bipartisan request to move a vote from Friday to Thursday to give House Republicans more time to craft legislation avoiding a shutdown. On the Senate floor, Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) accused them of objecting because they had sent out e-mails encouraging their supporters to tune in to the vote on Friday. The Post~’s Ed O~’Keefe caught Cruz "appearing to snicker" as his colleague spoke — more smug teenager than legislator.¶ Even if his opponents are making things easier for him, Obama still needs to stick to his message. As in Syria, the president has drawn a "red line" by saying he won~’t negotiate with those who would put the United States into default. If he retreats, he will embolden his opponents and demoralize his supporters.

====Failure to reach a deal guarantees government shutdown. ====

Farry, 11

~~[Yanira, Junior Editor – Veterans Today, Military %26 Foreign Affairs Journal, "GOP-Tea Party Play Chicken With U.S. Credit, Courting Catastrophe," 1/19, http://www.veteranstoday.com/2011/01/19/gop-tea-party-play-chicken-with-u-s-credit-courting-catastrophe/~~]

SHUTTING DOWN GOVERNMENT: If the debt limit is reached, the government is forced to move to a purely cash-flow budget, paying bills with only the tax revenue that comes in. Interest payments on the debt would get paid first, but what is the order of payment after that? Government activities that could fail to be funded range from Social Security and Medicare to military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 1995-96, when House Republicans, led by then-House Speaker Newt Gingrich, refused to raise the debt ceiling for a short time, it caused "two temporary shutdowns of all ~’nonessential~’ federal government activities, including a cessation of toxic waste cleanups, disease control activities, and a suspension of many law enforcement and drug control operations," ultimately costing the U.S. taxpayer more than %24800 million. The Clinton Treasury Department was required to employ some creative accounting — "including a temporary use of retirement funds for former government employees" — to stave off even worse outcomes. Analysts at Deutsche Bank have found that such efforts would not work as well today, and the government would "not be able to stave off a government shutdown (or possible suspension of bond payments) for long" if the debt ceiling isn~’t raised. But still, some Republicans, such as former Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty (R), have said this is the route Congress should choose. As Austan Goolsbee, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers put it, "If we get to the point where we damage the full faith and credit of the United States, that would be the first default in history caused purely by insanity."

====That causes cyberattacks. ====

Sideman, 11

~~[Alysha, Federal Computer Week Contributor, "Agencies must determine computer security teams in face of potential federal shutdown" 2/23, http://fcw.com/Articles/2011/02/23/Agencies-must-determine-computer-security-teams-in-face-of-shutdown.aspx?Page=1~~]

With the WikiLeaks hacks and other threats to cybersecurity present, guarding against cyberattacks has become a significant part of governing — especially because most government agencies have moved to online systems. As a potential government shutdown comes closer, agencies must face new questions about defining "essential" computer personnel. Cyber threats weren~’t as significant during the 1995 furlough as they are today, reports NextGov. The publication adds that agencies need to buck up and be organized. In late January, government officials, NATO and the European Union banded together in Brussels to formulate a plan to battle cyber bandits, according to Defense Systems. Leaders there agreed that existing cybersecurity measures were incomplete and decided to fast-track a new plan for cyber incident response. Meanwhile, observers are wondering whether the U.S. government has a plan to deal with cyberattacks in the case of a shutdown. The lists of essential computer security personnel drawn up 15 years ago are irrelevant today, computer specialists told NextGov. In 1995, the only agencies concerned about cybersecurity were entities such as the FBI and CIA. Today, before any potential government shutdown happens, a plan of essential IT personnel should be determined, the specialists add. Agencies should be figuring out which systems will need daily surveillance and strategic defense, as well as evaluating the job descriptions of the people operating in those systems, former federal executives told NextGov. Hord Tipton, a former Interior Department CIO, agrees. "If they haven~’t done it, there~’s going to be a mad scramble, and there~’s going to be a hole in the system," he told the site. All government departments are supposed to have contingency plans on deck that spell out essential systems and the employees associated with them, according to federal rules. Meanwhile, some experts say determining which IT workers are essential depends more on the length of the shutdown. Jeffrey Wheatman, a security and privacy analyst with the Gartner research group, tells NextGov that a shutdown lasting a couple of weeks "would require incident response personnel, network administrators and staff who monitor firewall logs for potential intrusions." If a shutdown lasted a month or longer, more employees would need to report, he said, adding: "New threats could emerge during that time frame, which demands people with strategy-oriented job functions to devise new lines of defense." Employees who are deemed "essential" are critical to national security. Cyber warfare or holes in cybersecurity can threaten a nation~’s infrastructure. In particular, the electric grid, the nation~’s military assets, financial sector and telecommunications networks can be vulnerable in the face of an attack, reports Federal Computer Week.

====Cyber-attacks cause retaliatory nuclear war====

Tilford, 12 – Graduate of the U.S. Army Airborne School at Fort Benning, GA (Robert, "Cyber attackers could shut down the electric grid for the entire east coast" 7/27/12, http://www.examiner.com/article/cyber-attackers-could-easily-shut-down-the-electric-grid-for-the-entire-east-coa)

To make matters worse a cyber attack that can take out a civilian power grid, for example could also cripple the U.S. military.¶The senator notes that is that the same power grids that supply cities and towns, stores and gas stations, cell towers and heart monitors also power "every military base in our country."¶ "Although bases would be prepared to weather a short power outage with backup diesel generators, within hours, not days, fuel supplies would run out", he said.¶ Which means military command and control centers could go dark.¶Radar systems that detect air threats to our country would shut Down completely.¶ "Communication between commanders and their troops would also go silent. And many weapons systems would be left without either fuel or electric power", said Senator Grassley.¶ "So in a few short hours or days, the mightiest military in the world would be left scrambling to maintain base functions", he said.¶ We contacted the Pentagon and officials confirmed the threat of a cyber attack is something very real.¶ Top national security officials—including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Director of the National Security Agency, the Secretary of Defense, and the CIA Director— have said, "preventing a cyber attack and improving the nation~~~’s electric grids is among the most urgent priorities of our country" (source: Congressional Record).¶ So how serious is the Pentagon taking all this?¶Enough to start, or end a war over it, for sure (see video: Pentagon declares war on cyber attacks A cyber attack today against the US could very well be seen as an "Act of War" and could be met with a "full scale" US military response.¶ That could include the use of "nuclear weapons", if authorized by the President.

=Commission CP=

====The United States federal government should establish a Presidential Bipartisan Commission on Cuba to study current U.S. policy on Cuba. The Commission should recommend that the United States federal government normalize its economic relations with Cuba.====

====A Bipartisan Commission on Cuba solves the case but avoids politics====

Ratliff, 13 - research fellow and former curator of the Americas Collection at the Hoover Institution. He is also a research fellow of the Independent Institute. An expert on Latin America, China, and US foreign policy, he has written extensively on how traditional cultures and institutions influence current conditions and on prospects for economic and political development in East/Southeast Asia and Latin America (William, "Cuba~’s Tortured Transition" 1/30,

http://www.hoover.org/publications/defining-ideas/article/139281

A New Policy to Cuba

Since the early 1990s U.S. "proactive" policies have done more to stoke than reduce domestic tensions in Cuba, though we profess to seek a "peaceful transition." Most U.S. legislators have supported pro-embargo Cuban-Americans even though Gallup polls have long shown that most Americans favor diplomatic relations with Havana and lifting the embargo. On balance, politicians don~’t think Cuba policy is important enough to be worth stirring up the hornets in the still fairly militant and well-financed pro-embargo lobby. Not only have all presidential candidates including Obama supported the embargo, most have resisted even seriously discussing it.

This U.S. commitment to a failed policy has given Washington a "special stake" in the island~’s so-called "independent" sector whose goals appeal to Americans. But tragically, paraphrasing journalist Scotty Reston, Americans will do anything for these dissidents except listen to them. My talks with many in Cuba and abroad suggest that most oppose the embargo and three have co-authored articles with me saying so. If these dissidents come under focused government fire in the years ahead, many Americans will feel compelled to intervene even more directly—perhaps militarily—on their behalf.

Two points stand out: Cuba is not the security threat that our current policy treats it as; and our sanctions do not advance the desirable political, economic, and humanitarian improvements that we say we seek on the island. The bottom line is that we must base our policy on national security interests and realities, not unattainable dreams, however noble those dreams may seem.

During his second and final term, and after having drawn unprecedented electoral support as a Democrat from Cuban-Americans in Miami, President Obama is in a position to make serious reforms, if he has the will to do so. He might begin by resurrecting a 1998-99 proposal—then endorsed by former secretaries of state Kissinger and George Shultz, but killed by President Clinton—for convening a Presidential Bipartisan Commission on Cuba to seriously examine the pros and cons of the policy. It would certainly see the need for change and its findings would give Obama cover for action.

=Oil Da=

Embargo limits drilling now – plan unlocks large-scale Cuban production.

\*\*Padgett ~’8\*\*

Tim Padgett joined TIME in 1996 as Mexico City bureau chief covering Latin America. In 1999 he moved to Florida to become TIME~’s Miami %26 Latin America bureau chief, reporting on the hemisphere from Tallahassee to Tierra del Fuego. He has chronicled Mexico~’s democratization and drug war as well as the rise of Latin leaders like Lula and Hugo Chavez, "How Cuba~’s Oil Find Could Change the US Embargo"¶ Time Magazine – Oct. 23, 2008 – internally quoting Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado, a Cuba oil analyst at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,¶ 1853252,00.html~~%23ixzz13Li5cosN

The Spanish energy company Repsol-YPF has entered into a production-sharing agreement with Cupet and is scheduled to start drilling the first real well in the EEZ next year. Other international firms, including Norway~’s StatoilHidro and India~’s Oil %26 Natural Gas Corp., are part of the Repsol-led consortium. Venezuela~’s state-run Petroleos de Venezuela is considered a lesser player because it has little deep-water drilling experience. (China is also interested but so far only involved in onshore drilling in Cuba.) Cuba is now in important negotiations with Brazil~’s Petrobras, which just made its own multibillion-barrel oil find off its coast near Rio de Janeiro and could, analysts say, be the major offshore drilling partner for Cuba if it jumps in.¶ Still, the concessions so far represent less than a quarter of the 59 drilling blocks that Cuba hopes to exploit in the 43,000-sq.-mi. (112,000 sq km) EEZ. Analysts say one reason is the daunting infrastructural difficulties facing any company that drills in Cuba: firms have to bring much more of their own capital, equipment, technology and on-the-ground know-how than usual. This year~’s severe hurricane damage in Cuba has made the situation worse. Canada~’s Sherritt, in fact, recently dropped out of its four-block contract. "Who else is going to be willing to actually come in and take the risk in Cuba?" says Benjamin-Alvarado. "In terms of proximity and technology, the only people really able to do it to the extent the Cubans need are the Americans."

====That trades-off with US- Mid-East oil ties.====

\*\*Alhaiji and Maris ~’4\*\*

~~[Dr. A. F. Alhajji is an energy economist and George Patton Chair of Business and Economics at the College of Business Administration at Ohio Northern, Terry L. Maris is the founding executive director of the Center for Cuban. Business Studies and professor of management, "The Future of Cuba~’s Energy Sector," Cuba Today, 2004, http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/bildn/publications/cubatodaybookcomplete.pdf~~%23page=105~~]

The current economic, political, and social trends in Cuba indicate that¶ energy consumption will increase substantially in the future. Transition to a¶ market economy would accelerate this trend. In this article the word "transition"¶ refers to any movement towards a market economy. It does not necessarily¶ mean regime change.¶ The proximity of Cuba to the United States and the possibility of massive¶ oil deposits in Cuban waters will have a tangible impact on political, economic,¶ and social environments, not only in Cuba, but in the whole region.¶ The discovery of commercial deposits of oil would affect Cuba~’s economy on¶ one hand and US energy policy and energy security on the other. If US-Cuba¶ relations improve in the future, discovery of large oil deposits could affect the¶ energy trade patterns between the two countries and affect oil trade between¶ the US and other oil producing countries, especially in the Middle East.

====That causes Saudi Prolif.====

\*\*Guzansky ~’13\*\*

Yoel Guzansky is a fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv University. His main research area is Gulf security. He has also served as Iran coordinator at Israel~’s National Security Council. His recent publications include The Gulf States in a Changing Strategic Environment (2012), One Year of the Arab Spring: Global and Regional Implications, and The Gulf States: Between Iran and the West – Middle East Quarterly¶ Spring 2013, pp. 59-64 – available at: http://www.meforum.org/3512/saudi-arabia-pakistan-nuclear-weapon

Continued Iranian progress toward a nuclear weapon, Iraq~’s increasing alignment with Tehran, and an expedited U.S. exit from Afghanistan are all changing the Saudi strategic landscape. The Obama administration~’s "lead from behind" approach in Libya and its hesitation to get involved in the Syrian civil war all contribute to a reassessment of U.S. commitments. With the U.S. "pivot to Asia"—taking the form of a series of military, economic, commercial, and diplomatic initiatives aimed at contending with the rising power of China—and a changing global energy map due to expansion of oil and natural gas production in the United States, Riyadh and others are beginning to prepare for a post-U.S. Middle East.¶ According to recent reports, Washington is considering expanding its nuclear cooperation with Riyadh on the basis of a 2008 memorandum of understanding: In exchange for foregoing the operation of nuclear fuel cycles on its soil, Saudi Arabia was to receive nuclear assistance.~~[33~~] Such a move, should it come to pass, may be meant to persuade Riyadh to abandon its strategic goals, prevent other players from gaining a foothold in the attractive Saudi market, and challenge Tehran~’s nuclear policy. The United States is still Saudi Arabia~’s most effective security support, but if Washington distances itself from regional matters, the gradual entrance of new players into the Gulf is inevitable.¶ The question of Saudi acquisition of a nuclear deterrent is more relevant than ever when both enemies and friends of the United States are looking at a possible regional drawdown on Washington~’s part as well as a lack of support for the pro-Western regimes that remain in place. If the U.S. government provides Riyadh with formal security guarantees, it would be natural for it to demand that the kingdom forego its strategic goals. But Riyadh~’s inclusion under a U.S. defense umbrella is not a given and depends both on the quality of relations between the two countries and other Saudi considerations. Riyadh remains skeptical over Washington~’s willingness to come to its aid and may thus seek to purchase a nuclear deterrent, which would provide it with more freedom vis-à-vis its stronger ally. Under present circumstances, it is not unreasonable for Riyadh to rely on other states for its defense in addition to Washington for the simple reason that it has done so in the past. Likewise, it is more than likely that the Saudis will not act transparently because they have acted in secret previously.¶ After Iran, Saudi Arabia is the number one candidate for further nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. Open source evidence remains circumstantial, but perhaps more than any other regional player, Riyadh has the requisite ideological and strategic motives as well as the financial wherewithal to act on the option.¶ The kingdom may conclude that its security constraints as well as the attendant prestige and influence generated by having a bomb outweigh the political and economic costs it will pay. The difficulty in stopping Tehran~’s dogged quest for a nuclear capability coupled with Riyadh~’s doubts about the reliability of Washington is liable to encourage Riyadh to shorten timetables for developing an independent nuclear infrastructure, as well as to opt to purchase a turnkey nuclear system, an off-the-shelf product, or to enter into a security compact of one sort with another power. Sunni-majority Pakistan has emerged as the natural candidate for such an arrangement.¶ Heavy U.S. pressure is likely to be brought to bear on the Saudis not to acquire nuclear capabilities. Indeed, it seems that, at present, the price Riyadh is likely to pay should it acquire military nuclear capabilities might outweigh the advantages of such a move. But strategic interest, motivated by considerations of survival, could have the upper hand. Should it seem that the kingdom~’s vital security interests are threatened, it may prefer to take a series of steps, including obtaining a nonconventional arsenal, to reduce risks and ensure the continuity of the House of Saud.

====Saudi prolif causes nuclear war. ====

\*\*Edelman ~’11\*\*

(Eric –Distinguished Fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments %26 Former U.S. Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Foreign Affairs, Jan/Feb, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67162/eric-s-edelman-andrew-f-krepinevich-jr-and-evan-braden-montgomer/the-dangers-of-a-nuclear-iran)

There is, however, at least one state that could receive significant outside support: Saudi Arabia. And if it did, proliferation could accelerate throughout the region. Iran and Saudi Arabia have long been geopolitical and ideological rivals. Riyadh would face tremendous pressure to respond in some form to a nuclear-armed Iran, not only to deter Iranian coercion and subversion but also to preserve its sense that Saudi Arabia is the leading nation in the Muslim world. The Saudi government is already pursuing a nuclear power capability, which could be the first step along a slow road to nuclear weapons development. And concerns persist that it might be able to accelerate its progress by exploiting its close ties to Pakistan. During the 1980s, in response to the use of missiles during the Iran-Iraq War and their growing proliferation throughout the region, Saudi Arabia acquired several dozen css-2 intermediate-range ballistic missiles from China. The Pakistani government reportedly brokered the deal, and it may have also offered to sell Saudi Arabia nuclear warheads for the css-2s, which are not accurate enough to deliver conventional warheads effectively. There are still rumors that Riyadh and Islamabad have had discussions involving nuclear weapons, nuclear technology, or security guarantees. This "Islamabad option" could develop in one of several different ways. Pakistan could sell operational nuclear weapons and delivery systems to Saudi Arabia, or it could provide the Saudis with the infrastructure, material, and technical support they need to produce nuclear weapons themselves within a matter of years, as opposed to a decade or longer. Not only has Pakistan provided such support in the past, but it is currently building two more heavy-water reactors for plutonium production and a second chemical reprocessing facility to extract plutonium from spent nuclear fuel. In other words, it might accumulate more fissile material than it needs to maintain even a substantially expanded arsenal of its own. Alternatively, Pakistan might offer an extended deterrent guarantee to Saudi Arabia and deploy nuclear weapons, delivery systems, and troops on Saudi territory, a practice that the United States has employed for decades with its allies. This arrangement could be particularly appealing to both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. It would allow the Saudis to argue that they are not violating the NPT since they would not be acquiring their own nuclear weapons. And an extended deterrent from Pakistan might be preferable to one from the United States because stationing foreign Muslim forces on Saudi territory would not trigger the kind of popular opposition that would accompany the deployment of U.S. troops. Pakistan, for its part, would gain financial benefits and international clout by deploying nuclear weapons in Saudi Arabia, as well as strategic depth against its chief rival, India. The Islamabad option raises a host of difficult issues, perhaps the most worrisome being how India would respond. Would it target Pakistan~’s weapons in Saudi Arabia with its own conventional or nuclear weapons? How would this expanded nuclear competition influence stability during a crisis in either the Middle East or South Asia? Regardless of India~’s reaction, any decision by the Saudi government to seek out nuclear weapons, by whatever means, would be highly destabilizing. It would increase the incentives of other nations in the Middle East to pursue nuclear weapons of their own. And it could increase their ability to do so by eroding the remaining barriers to nuclear proliferation: each additional state that acquires nuclear weapons weakens the nonproliferation regime, even if its particular method of acquisition only circumvents, rather than violates, the NPT. Were Saudi Arabia to acquire nuclear weapons, the Middle East would count three nuclear-armed states, and perhaps more before long. It is unclear how such an n-player competition would unfold because most analyses of nuclear deterrence are based on the U.S.- Soviet rivalry during the Cold War. It seems likely, however, that the interaction among three or more nuclear-armed powers would be more prone to miscalculation and escalation than a bipolar competition. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union only needed to concern themselves with an attack from the other. Multi- polar systems are generally considered to be less stable than bipolar systems because coalitions can shift quickly, upsetting the balance of power and creating incentives for an attack. More important, emerging nuclear powers in the Middle East might not take the costly steps necessary to preserve regional stability and avoid a nuclear exchange. For nuclear-armed states, the bedrock of deterrence is the knowledge that each side has a secure second-strike capability, so that no state can launch an attack with the expectation that it can wipe out its opponents~’ forces and avoid a devastating retaliation. However, emerging nuclear powers might not invest in expensive but survivable capabilities such as hardened missile silos or submarine- based nuclear forces. Given this likely vulnerability, the close proximity of states in the Middle East, and the very short flight times of ballistic missiles in the region, any new nuclear powers might be compelled to "launch on warning" of an attack or even, during a crisis, to use their nuclear forces preemptively. Their governments might also delegate launch authority to lower-level commanders, heightening the possibility of miscalculation and escalation. Moreover, if early warning systems were not integrated into robust command-and-control systems, the risk of an unauthorized or accidental launch would increase further still. And without sophisticated early warning systems, a nuclear attack might be unattributable or attributed incorrectly. That is, assuming that the leadership of a targeted state survived a first strike, it might not be able to accurately determine which nation was responsible. And this uncertainty, when combined with the pressure to respond quickly, would create a significant risk that it would retaliate against the wrong party, potentially triggering a regional nuclear war. Most existing nuclear powers have taken steps to protect their nuclear weapons from unauthorized use: from closely screening key personnel to developing technical safety measures, such as permissive action links, which require special codes before the weapons can be armed. Yet there is no guarantee that emerging nuclear powers would be willing or able to implement these measures, creating a significant risk that their governments might lose control over the weapons or nuclear material and that nonstate actors could gain access to these items. Some states might seek to mitigate threats to their nuclear arsenals; for instance, they might hide their weapons. In that case, however, a single intelligence compromise could leave their weapons vulnerable to attack or theft. Meanwhile, states outside the Middle East could also be a source of instability. Throughout the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union were engaged in a nuclear arms race that other nations were essentially powerless to influence. In a multipolar nuclear Middle East, other nuclear powers and states with advanced military technology could influence—for good or ill—the military competition within the region by selling or transferring technologies that most local actors lack today: solid-fuel rocket motors, enhanced missile-guidance systems, war- head miniaturization technology, early warning systems, air and missile defenses. Such transfers could stabilize a fragile nuclear balance if the emerging nuclear powers acquired more survivable arsenals as a result. But they could also be highly destabilizing. If, for example, an outside power sought to curry favor with a potential client state or gain influence with a prospective ally, it might share with that state the technology it needed to enhance the accuracy of its missiles and thereby increase its ability to launch a disarming first strike against any adversary. The ability of existing nuclear powers and other technically advanced military states to shape the emerging nuclear competition in the Middle East could lead to a new Great Game, with unpredictable consequences.

=Multilat Bad=

====The world is moving to pluralism, not multipolarity – the US can still maintain unipolar leadership because most challengers are regional====

Etzioni, 13 - served as a senior advisor to the Carter White House; taught at Columbia University, Harvard University and The University of California at Berkeley; and is currently a university professor and professor of international relations at The George Washington University (Amitai, "The Devolution of American Power" 37 Fletcher F. World Aff. 13, lexis)

The theory that the world is moving from a unipolar order, dominated by the United States, to a multipolar distribution of power has led to a robust debate concerning the consequences of this change on the international order. However, the global power distribution is currently following a different pattern. Instead of what is conventionally addressed as a global unipolar to multipolar shift, in fact rising powers are mainly regional powers, not global ones, although they may have global reach. This pattern should be expected to continue in the near future and should be accounted for in order to make sound policy. It follows that the movement away from a unipolar world should not be equated with one in which more global powers contend with each other; nor should it be equated with a world in which new powers take over from an old, declining power. Moreover, it should not be assumed that the world will be less ordered. Instead, to a significant extent, the change seems to be toward more regional autonomy, or increased devolution, and greater variety in the relationships between the United States and regional powers. These relationships may see regional powers serve as junior partners to the global power and assume some of the global power~’s regional responsibilities. Or these relationships may produce junior adversarial regional powers that seek greater relative regional control in defiance of the United States, but seek at most limited realignment of power on the global stage. In the process of devolution, the increase in regional self-government and pluralism are much less challenging to the global power than ~~[\*14~~] the redistribution of power implied by multipolarity. Indeed, as junior regional powers increasingly act as partners and assume regional responsibilities, they enable the global power to scale back its global commitments without losing much of its weight in international developments. Similarly, the desire for regional control among rising powers can be more readily accommodated than aspirations to challenge the United States as a global superpower. It must be noted that the notion of devolution as used here is that of an ideal, n1 and as such there will be significant variation in its real-world instantiations. However, the process of devolution suggests a logical pattern of behavior for all actors involved, upon which various powers can construct a viable strategy. While the movement from a uni- to a multipolar distribution of global power is considered by some to be "positive" and more supportive of international institutions, n2 others consider it as "negative" and likely to lead to confrontation between the declining power and the rising ones. n3 In truth, the move to a higher level of regional pluralism is a double-edged sword. The effect of the transformation depends on the particular accommodation pattern that develops between each regional power and the global power. As indicated previously, this pattern can vary from that of a junior partner to that of a regional antagonist. Stated in other terms, if unipolarity is compared to hierarchy and multipolarity is compared to flat systems or networks, regional pluralism is analogous to increased subsidiarity. Importantly, the accommodation pattern between the global superpower and regional powers is fundamentally different from the one between declining and rising global powers. In the former case, the regional powers do not seek to modify or replace the global rules or change the global distribution of public goods. Instead, they aim merely to gain local exemptions from the rules, variants in the ways they are applied, or increases in their share of distributed benefits. Superpowers may prove unwilling to accommodate such regional challenges and regional challengers may hold that they have been insufficiently accommodated. ~~[\*15~~] However, such global/regional accommodations are, in general, easier to reach than the global/global accommodations between declining and rising global powers, and thus are less likely to lead to outright conflicts. With devolution, the central power yields, therefore risking much less when pluralism increases than when a transition from uni- to multipolarity takes place. This is one of the principle strengths of pluralism.

====Unilateralism is what sustains primacy – other states bandwagon with the US for fear of other rising powers. Moving towards multilateralism makes it unsustainable====

Seldena, 13 – assistant professor of political science at the University of Florida (Zachary, "Balancing Against or Balancing With? The Spectrum of Alignment and the Endurance of American Hegemony" Security Studies Volume 22, Issue 2, 2013, Taylor and Francis)

Understanding which of these choices—soft balancing against the hegemon or alignment with the hegemon—is more prevalent among second-tier states has significant ramifications for the endurance of American hegemony. The record of the 2001–2009 period indicates that a wide range of second-tier states not only aligned with the United States, they strengthened their security cooperation in a manner that extended the reach of the us military at a time when American foreign policy was widely seen as unilateral. 3 In addition, they did so by incurring certain costs that helped to spread the burden of maintaining the American hegemonic system. This pattern of alignment with the United States has implications for the endurance of American hegemony because states aligned with the United States may have more at stake in the maintenance of American hegemony than the United States itself. A smaller American naval presence in the Asia Pacific region, for example, may be seen as a relatively minor shift in the United States with some beneficial budgetary savings. In Vietnam, Australia, or the Philippines, however, such a shift could prompt a wholesale reevaluation of national defense policy and have costly implications. Therefore, second-tier states have an incentive to participate in activities that extend the endurance of American hegemony, even if they do not receive a formal security guarantee for their efforts.

This may have implications for American foreign policy. There are distinct policy recommendations flowing from the logic of those scholars and policy professionals who argue that a more proactive and unilateral foreign policy speeds the decline of American hegemony. The most important of these is that the United States should practice a policy of self-restraint that defers to international organizations, which would alleviate concerns about the current preponderance of the United States in the international system. 4 A policy of self-restraint would signal that the United States is not a threat to other major powers and preclude attempts at balancing. This policy would also help to set a norm for the behavior of future great powers and recognize the emerging reality of a multipolar world. 5 Another policy implication from this line of reasoning is that the United States should reduce its global military presence that both encourages balancing behavior by other states and speeds hegemonic decline by draining financial resources. 6

Yet, this policy of restraint may be precisely what would cause second-tier states to question the utility of their security relationship with the United States and move away from policies that help to maintain American hegemony. This could at least partially explain the trend of states moving to establish closer security relationships with the United States in the 2001–2009 period, when it was at its most proactive and least deferential to international organizations. States may logically conclude that a hegemon willing to project power regardless of international opinion will be likely to use its power in the defense of the hegemony that is in the interest of second-tier states. Second-tier states might be far less willing to contribute to the maintenance of American hegemony if the United States behaves in a manner that raises doubts as to the durability of its commitments or its willingness to use its power in the international arena. Thus, what would trigger a serious decline in the cooperation that helps to sustain American hegemony would be a self-imposed reduction in the ability of the United States to project power and an increased reluctance to use its power in support of its national interests.

====The plan is surrender – it emboldens global regimes and collapses US influence====

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In another outreach to roguish regimes, the Obama administration on Monday announced the easing of some restrictions on Cuba. Team Bam hopes that a new face in the White House will heal old wounds. Fat chance. Sure, it~’s fine to allow separated families to see each other more than once every three years — even though Cubanos aren~’t allowed to visit America. And permitting gifts to Cuban relatives could ease unnecessary poverty — even though the regime will siphon off an estimated 20 percent of the money sent there. In the end, though, it~’s still Fidel Castro and his brother Raul who~’ll decide whether there~’ll be a thaw in ties with the United States — or not. And in usual Castro-style, Fidel himself stood defiant in response to the White House proclamation, barely recognizing the US policy shift. Instead, and predictably, Fidel demanded an end to el bloqueo (the blockade) — without any promises of change for the people who labor under the regime~’s hard-line policies. So much for the theory that if we~’re nice to them, they~’ll be nice to us. Many are concerned that the lack of love from Havana will lead Washington to make even more unilateral concessions to create an opening with Fidel and the gang. Of course, the big empanada is the US economic embargo against Cuba, in place since 1962, which undoubtedly is the thing Havana most wants done away with — without any concessions on Cuba~’s part, of course. Lifting the embargo won~’t normalize relations, but instead legitimize — and wave the white flag to — Fidel~’s 50-year fight against the Yanquis, further lionizing the dictator and encouraging the Latin American Left. Because the economy is nationalized, trade will pour plenty of cash into the Cuban national coffers — allowing Havana to suppress dissent at home and bolster its communist agenda abroad. The last thing we should do is to fill the pockets of a regime that~’ll use those profits to keep a jackboot on the neck of the Cuban people. The political and human-rights situation in Cuba is grim enough already. The police state controls the lives of 11 million Cubans in what has become an island prison. The people enjoy none of the basic civil liberties — no freedom of speech, press, assembly or association. Security types monitor foreign journalists, restrict Internet access and foreign news and censor the domestic media. The regime holds more than 200 political dissidents in jails that rats won~’t live in. We also don~’t need a pumped-up Cuba that could become a serious menace to US interests in Latin America, the Caribbean — or beyond. (The likes of China, Russia and Iran might also look to partner with a revitalized Cuba.) With an influx of resources, the Cuban regime would surely team up with the rulers of nations like Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia to advance socialism and anti-Americanism in the Western Hemisphere. The embargo has stifled Havana~’s ambitions ever since the Castros lost their Soviet sponsorship in the early 1990s. Anyone noticed the lack of trouble Cuba has caused internationally since then? Contrast that with the 1980s some time. Regrettably, 110 years after independence from Spain (courtesy of Uncle Sam), Cuba still isn~’t free. Instead of utopia, it has become a dystopia at the hands of the Castro brothers. The US embargo remains a matter of principle — and an appropriate response to Cuba~’s brutal repression of its people. Giving in to evil only begets more of it. Haven~’t we learned that yet? Until we see progress in loosing the Cuban people from the yoke of the communist regime, we should hold firm onto the leverage the embargo provides.

====US primacy prevents global conflict and turns their impacts====

Brooks et al 13 ~~[Stephen G. Brooks is Associate Professor of Government at Dartmouth College.G. John Ikenberry is the Albert G. Milbank Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University in the Department of Politics and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. He is also a Global Eminence Scholar at Kyung Hee University.William C. Wohlforth is the Daniel Webster Professor in the Department of Government at Dartmouth College. "Don~’t Come Home, America: The Case against Retrenchment", Winter 2013, Vol. 37, No. 3, Pages 7-51,[[http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/ISEC\_a\_00107-http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/ISEC\_a\_00107]], GDI File~~]

A core premise of deep engagement is that it prevents the emergence of a far more dangerous global security environment. For one thing, as noted above, the United States~’ overseas presence gives it the leverage to restrain partners from taking provocative action. Perhaps more important, its core alliance commitments also deter states with aspirations to regional hegemony from contemplating expansion and make its partners more secure, reducing their incentive to adopt solutions to their security problems that threaten others and thus stoke security dilemmas. The contention that engaged U.S. power dampens the baleful effects of anarchy is consistent with influential variants of realist theory. Indeed, arguably the scariest portrayal of the war-prone world that would emerge absent the "American Pacifier" is provided in the works of John Mearsheimer, who forecasts dangerous multipolar regions replete with security competition, arms races, nuclear proliferation and associated preventive wartemptations, regional rivalries, and even runs at regional hegemony and full-scale great power war. 72 How do retrenchment advocates, the bulk of whom are realists, discount this benefit? Their arguments are complicated, but two capture most of the variation: (1) U.S. security guarantees are not necessary to prevent dangerous rivalries and conflict in Eurasia; or (2) prevention of rivalry and conflict in Eurasia is not a U.S. interest. Each response is connected to a different theory or set of theories, which makes sense given that the whole debate hinges on a complex future counterfactual (what would happen to Eurasia~’s security setting if the United States truly disengaged?). Although a certain answer is impossible, each of these responses is nonetheless a weaker argument for retrenchment than advocates acknowledge. The first response flows from defensive realism as well as other international relations theories that discount the conflict-generating potential of anarchy under contemporary conditions. 73 Defensive realists maintain that the high expected costs of territorial conquest, defense dominance, and an array of policies and practices that can be used credibly to signal benign intent, mean that Eurasia~’s major states could manage regional multipolarity peacefully without theAmerican pacifier. Retrenchment would be a bet on this scholarship, particularly in regions where the kinds of stabilizers that nonrealist theories point to—such as democratic governance or dense institutional linkages—are either absent or weakly present. There are three other major bodies of scholarship, however, that might give decisionmakers pause before making this bet. First is regional expertise. Needless to say, there is no consensus on the net security effects of U.S. withdrawal. Regarding each region, there are optimists and pessimists. Few experts expect a return of intense great power competition in a post-American Europe, but many doubt European governments will pay the political costs of increased EU defense cooperation and the budgetary costs of increasing military outlays. 74 The result might be a Europe that is incapable of securing itself from various threats that could be destabilizing within the region and beyond (e.g., a regional conflict akin to the 1990s Balkan wars), lacks capacity for global security missions in which U.S. leaders might want European participation, and is vulnerable to the influence of outside rising powers. What about the other parts of Eurasia where the United States has a substantial military presence? Regarding the Middle East, the balance begins toswing toward pessimists concerned that states currently backed by Washington— notably Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia—might take actions upon U.S. retrenchment that would intensify security dilemmas. And concerning East Asia, pessimism regarding the region~’s prospects without the American pacifier is pronounced. Arguably the principal concern expressed by area experts is that Japan and South Korea are likely to obtain a nuclear capacity and increase their military commitments, which could stoke a destabilizing reaction from China. It is notable that during the Cold War, both South Korea and Taiwan moved to obtain a nuclear weapons capacity and were only constrained from doing so by astill-engaged United States. 75 The second body of scholarship casting doubt on the bet on defensive realism~’s sanguine portrayal is all of the research that undermines its conception of state preferences. Defensive realism~’s optimism about what would happen if the United States retrenched is very much dependent on itsparticular—and highly restrictive—assumption about state preferences; once we relax this assumption, then much of its basis for optimism vanishes. Specifically, the prediction of post-American tranquility throughout Eurasia rests on the assumption that security is the only relevant state preference, with security defined narrowly in terms of protection from violent external attacks on the homeland. Under that assumption, the security problem is largely solved as soon as offense and defense are clearly distinguishable, and offense is extremely expensive relative to defense. Burgeoning research across the social and other sciences, however,undermines that core assumption: states have preferences not only for security but also for prestige, status, and other aims, and theyengage in trade-offs among the various objectives. 76 In addition, they define security not just in terms of territorial protection but in view of many and varied milieu goals. It follows that even states that are relatively secure may nevertheless engage in highly competitive behavior. Empirical studies show that this is indeed sometimes the case. 77 In sum, a bet on a benign postretrenchment Eurasia is a bet that leaders of major countries will never allow these nonsecurity preferences to influence their strategic choices. To the degree that these bodies of scholarly knowledge have predictive leverage, U.S. retrenchment would result in a significant deterioration in the security environment in at least some of the world~’s key regions. We have already mentioned the third, even more alarming body of scholarship. Offensive realism predicts thatthe withdrawal of the American pacifier will yield either a competitive regional multipolarity complete with associated insecurity, arms racing, crisis instability, nuclear proliferation, and the like, or bids for regional hegemony, which may be beyond the capacity of local great powers to contain (and which in any case would generate intensely competitive behavior, possibly including regional great power war).

# 2nc

Saudi oil DA=

==2nc impact overview==

====6. Accidents result in extinction.====

\*\*Toon ~’7 \*\*(Owen B, chair – Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences – Colorado University, climate.envsci.rutgers.edu/pdf/acp-7-1973-2007.pdf)

To an increasing extent, people are congregating in the world~’s great urban centers, creating megacities with populations exceeding 10 million individuals. At the same time, advanced technology has designed nuclear explosives of such small size they can be easily transported in a car, small plane or boat to the heart of a city. We demonstrate here that a single detonation in the 15 kiloton range can produce urban fatalities approaching one million in some cases, and casualties exceeding one million. Thousands of small weapons still exist in the arsenals of the U.S. and Russia, and there are at least six other countries with substantial nuclear weapons inventories. In all, thirty-three countries control sufficient amounts of highly enriched uranium or plutonium to assemble nuclear explosives. A conflict between any of these countries involving 50-100 weapons with yields of 15 kt has the potential to create fatalities rivaling those of the Second World War. Moreover, even a single surface nuclear explosion, or an air burst in rainy conditions, in a city center is likely to cause the entire metropolitan area to be abandoned at least for decades owing to infrastructure damage and radioactive contamination. As the aftermath of hurricane Katrina in Louisiana suggests, the economic consequences of even a localized nuclear catastrophe would most likely have severe national and international economic consequences. Striking effects result even from relatively small nuclear attacks because low yield detonations are most effective against city centers where business and social activity as well as population are concentrated. Rogue nations and terrorists would be most likely to strike there. Accordingly, an organized attack on the U.S. by a small nuclear state, or terrorists supported by such a state, could generate casualties comparable to those once predicted for a full-scale nuclear "counterforce" exchange in a superpower conflict. Remarkably, the estimated quantities of smoke generated by attacks totaling about one megaton of nuclear explosives could lead to significant global climate perturbations (Robock et al., 2007). While we did not extend our casualty and damage predictions to include potential medical, social or economic impacts following the initial explosions, such analyses have been performed in the past for large-scale nuclear war scenarios (Harwell and Hutchinson, 1985). Such a study should be carried out as well for the present scenarios and physical outcomes.

====Cuban oil exploration will stay low in the squo.====

\*\*Pinon ~’13\*\*

(Progreso Weekly talked with energy affairs researcher Jorge Piñón, a Cuban-American who left the island during Operation Peter Pan and these many years later continues to talk in first-person-singular when referring to Cuba. Piñón has worked in the oil industry and was president for Latin America of AMOCO Oil Co. At present, he is a researcher for the Center for Energy and Environmental Resources of the University of Texas at Austin. The interview was held at the Meliá Habana Hotel in Cuba. The portion quoted in this card are the portions where Pinon is speaking – ¶ Progreso Weekly – May 7^^th^^ – http://www.havanatimes.org/?p=92634)

That is the process we have conducted for the past 10 years in Cuba, which includes a study by the U.S. Geological Survey. This study, done for the first time in 2004, estimates that in Cuba~’s geological north strip, off shore, from Pinar del Río Province to northern Matanzas province, there are oil reserves.¶ The surveyors raise the possibility that from 4 billion to 6 billion barrels of crude are still to be found. These geological studies are very environmental, but historically they are highly trusted by our industry. That doesn~’t mean that they guarantee the amount of oil, but it~’s the first step in that stage.¶ We are beyond the stage of studies; now we are in the stage of exploration. Four wells have been exploited by serious international oil companies – each well has cost at least %24100 million – so, in other words, it wasn~’t a political "game."¶ So far, the hoped-for results have not materialized; at least, that~’s what I~’m told by sources I~’ve consulted. We still have the rest of the Gulf of Mexico, the deep waters in the rest of the Gulf of Mexico, adjacent to the United States~’ exclusive zone. I think that there are possibilities there.¶ In my opinion, in the next three to five years, unfortunately, I don~’t see a high probability that Cuba will maintain the level of exploration in deep waters such as we~’ve seen in the past two or three years.

====Cuban oil not inevitable. International oil companies are turning to other parts of the globe. ====

\*\*O~’Grady ~’13\*\*

Mary O~’Grady is a member of the editorial board at The Wall Street Journal – WSJ – April 24, 2013 – http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324474004578442511561458392.html

Remember all the hype about Cuba drilling for oil in Caribbean waters and American companies missing out on the bonanza because of the U.S. embargo? Well, like all the other Cuban get-rich-quick schemes of the past 50 years, this one seems to have flopped too.¶ Last week, Florida~’s Sun Sentinel reported that "after spending nearly %24700 million during a decade, energy companies from around the world have all but abandoned their search for oil in deep waters off the north coast of Cuba near Florida." Separately, CubaStandard.com reported on Friday that "the shallow-water drilling platform used by Russian oil company OAO Zarubezhneft will leave Cuban waters June 1, to be redeployed to Asia."¶ According to the Sun Sentinel story, Jorge Piñon, an oil-industry guru who had been cheering Cuba~’s exploration attempts, said "Companies are saying, ~’We cannot spend any more capital on this high-risk exploration. We~’d rather go to Brazil; we~’d rather go to Angola; we~’d rather go to other places in the world where the technological and geological challenges are less.~’"

====Perception link – Saudi Arabia fears the narrative that the US may abandon them for North American supplies.====

\*\*Rogers 3/20\*\*

~~[2013 – Will Rogers is the Bacevich Fellow at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS). At CNAS, Mr. Rogers~’ research focus is on science, technology and national security policy. He has authored or co-authored a range of publications on energy, climate change, environmental cooperation in Asia and cybersecurity, "America Committed to Gulf Security Despite Changing Relationship with Region~’s Oil, says Gen. Dempsey," Center for New American Security, 2013, http://www.cnas.org/blogs/naturalsecurity/2013/03/america-committed-gulf-security-despite-changing-relationship-regions-~~]

America~’s relationship with the Middle East~’s energy resources is changing as U.S. domestic oil production continues to grow. A combination of hydraulic fracturing, horizontal drilling and advanced seismic technologies have contributed to the largest annual growth in U.S. crude oil production since Colonel Edwin Drake first drilled for oil in Titusville, Pennsylvania in 1859. Most of the crude oil is coming from shale formations in North Dakota and Texas – what we call "light tight oil." Since 2010, the United States has, on average, increased monthly crude oil production by 50,000 barrels a day.¶ Not all of this U.S. light tight oil is displacing Middle East crude, of course. A number of factors matter, most importantly the crude oil grade. The United States is producing light tight oil, that is, low-density crude oil, whereas the United States imports heavier crudes from the Persian Gulf, including from Saudi Arabia. Moreover, U.S. refineries have been increasingly geared to absorb heavier crudes, from the Persian Gulf, but more so from Canada, Mexico and Venezuela.¶ Nevertheless, the glut in U.S. crude oil production and declining demand for oil (a consequence of slow economic growth and more fuel efficient vehicles) have contributed to a powerful notion that the United States is relying less and less on oil from the Persian Gulf and could conceivably help wean America off crude oil imports from the Middle East entirely (a debatable point).¶ Whether or not one believes that the United States can break the tether to Middle East oil, U.S. allies and partners in the Persian Gulf are increasingly nervous about America~’s long-term security commitment to the region. After all, if the United States no longer relies on energy from the region, why should American foot the bill for protecting the sea lanes – that backbone of the crude oil trade in the region – or so the narrative goes.¶ The United States has a number of stakes in stability of the Persian Gulf oil trade even if it does rely less on oil from the region. Supply shocks will contribute to higher global oil prices, which will be felt at home. Moreover, supply shocks are damaging to our allies, particularly those in East Asia that have grown more dependent on oil and gas from the Middle East and North Africa. But there are other legitimate security concerns as well, which were not far from General Martin Dempsey~’s mind when he responded to a question on Monday about how the American energy revolution will impact U.S. interests and presence in the Persian Gulf. Here~’s what the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said:If by 2017 the United States can achieve some level of energy independence, why in the world would we continue to be concerned about the energy that flows out of – out of the Gulf? Well, look, my answer to that is I didn~’t go to the Gulf in 1991 and stay there for about the next 20 years because of oil. That~’s not why I went. It~’s not why my children went. It~’s –and we went there because we thought that a region of the world where we had – where we had not, except for a few bilateral relationships – where we hadn~’t invested much of our, let~’s call it, bandwidth, intellectual energy, commitment – now, we went there in ~’91 because of the – of the aggression of Saddam Hussein, but we stayed there because I think we came to the realization that the future of the region was tied to our future, and not through this thing called oil but rather through the – as I said earlier, the shared interest in a common future where people would be able to build a better life and where threats could be managed collaboratively, not by the United States uniquely but by the relationships we would build on the basis of common interests. So when I hear about in 2017, you know, oil won~’t be as big a factor for us – and that~’s great. I hope we do achieve energy independence. But I can assure you that at least from a military perspective – and I can only speak, as I dress, from the military perspective – that the continued development of capabilities – military capabilities, notably, in my world, but also partnerships and trust that we build by working together, by exchanging officers and noncommissioned officers in our professional military schools, that on that basis, you will find –you will find that the future will be a period of greater commitment.¶ Now, you know, if you measure our commitment in terms of numbers of boots on the ground and numbers of aircraft and number of aircraft carriers, I think you~’ll probably –you know, there~’ll always be this debate about inclining or declining commitment. But that~’s not what the commitment~’s all about, really, in my view. As I said, I went to – I went to the Gulf in ~’91, spent almost the next 20 years there on and off and didn~’t do it for oil.¶ So we have two powerful strategic cross-currents that the Obama administration will have to confront in the near term.¶ This week marks the anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, a solemn reminder for some that the United States should be less engaged in the Middle East, not more. Add this to the notion that the United States could break the tether to Middle East oil, and the domestic narrative speaks for itself. At the same time, though, a credible U.S. security commitment to our partners in the Persian Gulf may be the only way to allay concerns about security challenges in the region. Take for example, Iran. My colleagues Colin Kahl, Melissa Dalton and Matt Irvine recently published a report assessing the possibility that an Iranian bomb could lead to Saudi Arabia developing the bomb – Atomic Kingdom: If Iran Builds the Bomb, Will Saudi Arabia be Next? Kahl, Dalton and Irvine argue quite persuasively that a number of factors will keep Saudi Arabia from developing the bomb. But one of the big caveats to this is a credible U.S. security commitment to Saudi Arabia. Does the Royal Family in Riyadh feel comfortable about this commitment given the competing narrative that America may have an opportunity to walk away from the Persian Gulf if it doesn~’t need access to the region~’s oil? The public perception on these issues - at home and abroad - will have to be managed carefully. What a tightrope to walk.

====Oil independence deteriorates US-Saudi ties====

\*\*Tanter ~’12\*\*

~~[RAYMOND TANTER, Professor Emeritus, University of Michigan; President of Iran Policy Committee Publishing; and former member of the National Security Council staff in the Reagan-Bush Administration, "The Geopolitics of U.S. Energy Independence," International Economy, Summer 2012, http://www.international-economy.com/TIE\_Su12\_GeopoliticsEnergySymp.pdf~~]

At issue is whether energy independence will cause¶ a revision of U.S. national security policy. Because¶ energy is only one of the drivers, energy independence¶ is unlikely to have the major effect implied by the¶ Verleger thesis. During the Cold War, American participation¶ in the Korean and Vietnam Wars did not have¶ energy as a driver; likewise, energy is not at the core of U.S. long-term commitments to South Korea and Japan in the post-Cold War era. Shared values, prior commitments, and strategic calculations are more important than energy regarding countries such as Israel. In my experience on the National Security Council staff in the 1980s, there was little discussion of energy in relation to Israel. Ditto for Turkey. Control of energy was more important than values and commitments for Washington to save Kuwait after Iraq~’s invasion in the first Gulf War, but not relevant to the takedown of Saddam Hussein a decade later, and irrelevant to the post-September 11 invasion of Afghanistan to defeat al Qaeda and the Taliban. With respect to Iran, energy was a factor in the cooperation of American and British intelligence to overthrow the Mosaddeq government in 1953, but proliferation concerns trump energy a half century later. Concerning Saudi¶ Arabia, energy is at the heart of the relationship. So rising¶ oil prices and production costs, declining reserves, and¶ increasingly available alternative fuels as well as nonconventional¶ sources of oil are bound to make Riyadh of¶ less consequence to Washington than it is today.¶ Saudi Arabia~’s comparative advantage in oil production¶ and the world economy~’s thirst for oil converged to¶ make the Kingdom a strategic ally in the past. But the¶ odds that the Kingdom will survive the spreading Arab¶ revolts are not high, and the American commitment to the¶ royal family is mainly against external, not internal,¶ threats. Hence, coming to the defense of the Kingdom is¶ likely to be perceived in Washington as too costly when¶ the threat is from within.¶ With European countries becoming more dependent¶ on Russia for energy supplies, and Russia as well as Germany¶ becoming closer economic partners, the likelihood¶ of out-of-area involvement by NATO in such places as¶ Afghanistan is not high. And as the saying goes, "Out of¶ area or out of business%21" Verleger suggests that American¶ energy independence could make this era the "New American¶ Century" by creating an economic environment¶ where the United States enjoys access to energy supplies¶ at much lower cost than other parts of the world and giving¶ the U.S. economy an edge over other nations, particularly¶ northern Europe. In the context of enhanced¶ American energy independence, the Obama Administration~’s¶ pivot to Asia is likely to be of more import for¶ Europe than the Middle East. Finally, U.S. energy independence¶ is likely to reinforce isolationist foreign policy¶ tendencies already in force in the United States. A gamechanging¶ event like an Iranian nuclear weapon could wipe¶ out the tide toward isolationism.

====US-Saudi interaction is fully dependent on oil – the plan removes that link====

\*\*Congregalli ~’13\*\*

~~[Matteo Congregalli, International Politics Journalist, "Without Oil. Without Allies: USA and the New American Dream of Independent Energy," Urban Times, 2/15/13, http://urbantimes.co/magazine/2013/02/usa-oil-saudi-arabia-independent-domestic-energy-supply/~~]

Examples of oil-diplomacy are known to be neither smooth nor easy. Take, for example, the harsh relations between the US and Colonel Gaddafi~’s Libya; or the invasion of Iraq, back in 2003, whose justification was not uniquely about Saddam~’s Weapons of Mass Destruction – as UN reports confirmed; or the closure of the Hormuz strait, back in 2011. Iran threatened to close the strait in retaliation to the massive burden of sanctions on the Islamic Republic. As an unlucky coincidence, almost 17 billion barrels pass through the strait, every day. The blockade imposed by the Iranian military Navy made the oil prices skyrocket in just few weeks.¶ Saudi Arabia~’s relationship with the US was always based on mutual convenience. After 9/11, both Washington and Riyadh were allies in War on Terror. US wanted stability in the area. Later on, Saudi Arabia wanted to preserve their power in spite of the Arab Spring. US needed oil for a convenient price. Saudi Arabia needed arms.¶ In 2008, the US Senate struggled to approve a resolution to help cut soaring gasoline prices by providing the Saudi government with 900 cutting-edge military kits in return for increasing oil production. The resolution aimed at securing the Gulf area and winning support for the growing sanctions on Iran. Despite the potential revenue – about %2420 billion – the decision was stalling at the Senate as the Saudis were not keen on downing the price of the crude oil from 75 cents to 50 cents per gallon.¶ "We are saying to the Saudis that, if you don~’t help us, why should we be helping you? " said the democratic Senator Chuck Schumer. "We are saying that we need real relief, and we need it quickly. You need our arms, but we need you to cooperate and not strangle American consumers." The resolution passed, eventually.¶ According to statistics: throughout Bush~’s terms, the arms dealing with Saudi doubled from %2419 billion between 2001-2004 to %2440 billion between 2005- 2008. In the last five years, under Obama~’s administration, the deals reached %2460 billion.¶ At the end of December 2011, the US Department of State held a press briefing about a further arms sale to Saudi Arabia. The agreement included 84 brand new F-15 combat aircrafts for an eight-figure sum: %2430 billion. The Assistant secretary Andrew Shapiro declared:¶ "This agreement serves to reinforce the strong and enduring relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia."¶ No matter how much discounted oil you can get. Providing cutting-edge arms is also a strategy to ensure the stability of the region, crucial for American interests.¶ "There are geopolitical interests at stake, driving the arms deal. Saudi Arabia works with the US as they have a common strategy and common agreement," says Farhang Moradi, senior lecturer in Globalisation and Development at University of Westminster, London.¶ Shipping F-15s to Riyadh is a first-line defence to empower the biggest US ally in the region. But¶ "We have to keep in mind that buying arms in respect of selling oil could be the case. However, buying advanced arms doesn~’t put the Saudi in the position of defining the area from actors such as Iran."¶ Security, first – The positions of the American military bases in the Persian Gulf (Image Source: Google Maps).¶ An additional security belt of air and ground bases extends all around Iran and the Persian Gulf. There are at least 21 bases in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Bahrain and Kuwait. The question we should answer is whether the military infrastructures are about to be left behind now that the burden of regional interests and energy need is shrinking.¶ "These bases are giving them the infrastructures to check and balance. It costs them something but the cost is worth it in order to manage the gulf," says Moradi.¶ The military presence is a result of with oil production and the control of the political actors. The Gulf oil has always been a priority for the US. But in the age of the war on terror and the growing threat of a nuclear Iran, abandoning the battlefield is not a strategy-wise option. In the same regard, we should not expect the sanctions against Iran to diminish and that the US army will leave their bases anytime soon.¶ The real shift in the region could come in the long run.¶ "If US oil demands fall, it doesn~’t mean that foreign demand won~’t continue. Emerging countries suck oik; China, India, Turkey. They need oil on their routes to development" says Moradi.¶ According to many, in ten years time there will be a new producer-consumer relationship in the region. It will not involve the US anymore. Russia, China, India will be bounded by new energy ties.¶ "The demand for oil is going to be pretty good. Those producing oil are therefore going to export a lot. The balance of forces will change in terms of energy and power. Those changes will have subsequent effects upon other countries that may perceive themselves as competing powers against USA; China and Russia."¶ This likely shift of interest will cause a scenario where China and India will discontinue being mere investors in the Middle East and Central Asia. In the near future they could install bases and military infrastructures in the region, while the American ones will be gone.¶ The de-Americanisation of the Gulf is yet to come. But the first signs are already emerging. At the beginning of February, the US secretary of Defence, Leon Panetta announced that just one aircraft carrier will be deployed in the Gulf instead of two. The decision is motivated by defence budget cuts. Is it a sign of the de-prioritisation of the control of the Gulf? Probably. In the meantime, the lowering security in the area, as well the US~’ soft way of dealing with the Arab Spring, is making the Gulf States nervous. Are diplomatic relations facing a crisis? It is definitely a sign of an upcoming change.¶ The surge in US oil and natural gas production, which will scatter the American diplomatic ties, is not without reason. America suddenly found out that underneath their land, millions of barrels of sweet crude oil were reachable by merely changing the drilling technique. A well-known one is called ~’fracking~’ which involves fracturing layers of rock and pumping water and sand in the well to get to the oil reserve. Tens of sites in the US were considered worthless till fracking was introduced. Fracturing the rocks allow to reach deep and huge oil reserves, otherwise out-of-the-way. That~’s how the States are turning into a Saudi Arabia with burgers, baseball, and guns.

====Framing issue – their evidence is from 2008 – Lippmann concludes 3 years later that perceived breakdown of relations causes prolif.====

\*\*Lippman ~’11 \*\*(Sr. Adjunct Scholar-Council on Foreign Relations, http://www.susris.com/2011/08/05/saudi-arabia~’s-nuclear-policy-lippman/)

So let us suppose that Saudi Arabia~’s currently testy relationship with the United States deteriorated to the point where the Saudis no longer felt they could rely on Washington~’s protection. If the Saudis could no longer assume that the armed forces of the United States are their ultimate weapon against external threats, might they not wish to acquire a different ultimate weapon? With that in mind, could not a reasonable case be made in the Saudis~’ minds for the development of an alternative security relationship, and perhaps a nuclear agreement, with another major power should relations with the United States deteriorate? A possible candidate for such a role would of course be China, a nuclear power that has a close relationship with Saudi Arabia~’s ally Pakistan and a growing need for imported oil. Sufficiently remote from the Gulf not to pose a direct threat to Saudi Arabia, and no longer part of any international communist movement, China could theoretically be an attractive partner. This is not to say that Saudi Arabia is actually seeking such a relationship with any country other the United States, or that China would undertake such a mission, but to be unaware of any such outreach is not to exclude it from the realm of possibility. THE STRATEGY GAP The Saudi Arabian armed forces have never developed a coherent national security doctrine that could provide a serious basis for a decision to acquire nuclear weapons. But to summarize the reasons why Saudi Arabia might pursue such a course: it is a rich but weak country with armed forces of suspect competence; outmanned by combat-hardened, truculent and potentially nuclear-armed neighbors; and no longer confident that it can count on its American protector.

Even before the Iraq War, Richard L. Russell of the National Defense University argued in a 2001 essay arguing the case for Saudi acquisition of nuclear capability that "It would be imprudent, to say the least, for Riyadh to make the cornerstone of ~~[its~~] national-security posture out of an assumption that the United States would come to the kingdom~’s defense under any and all circumstances." It might be even more imprudent now. "From Riyadh~’s perspective," continued Russell, "the acquisition of nuclear weapons and secure delivery systems would appear logical and even necessary." Those "secure delivery systems," Russell argued, would not be aircraft, which are vulnerable to ground defenses, but "ballistic-missile delivery systems that would stand a near-invulnerable chance of penetrating enemy airspace" — namely, the CSS-2s. Military experts say it is theoretically possible that the missiles could be made operational, modernized, and retrofitted with nuclear warheads acquired from China, Pakistan or perhaps, within a few years, North Korea. Any attempt to do so, however, would present immense technical and political difficulties — so much so that Saudi Arabia might emerge less secure, rather than more.

====Lack of oil relations causes rapid prolif ====

\*\*Black ~’9 \*\*

(Major Chris, master~’s program at the Joint Forces Staff College, "Post Oil America and a renewable energy policy leads to the abrogation of the Middle East to China.," http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA530125%26Location=U2%26doc=GetTRDoc.pdf)

All of these factors have slowly led to Saudi Arabia wanting to assume a more independent role in its own security.181 In 2007, Saudi Arabia brokered a deal between Fatah and Hamas and hosted an Arab League Summit which they had declined to attend the two previous years. Also in 2007, King Abdullah also hosted Iran~’s President Ahmadinejad and canceled a state dinner with President Bush.182 Recently Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faial warned Iran on two separate occasions to stop meddling in inter-Arab affairs and has urged Arabs to unify clearly concerned with Iranian efforts to acquire nuclear weapons.183 Additionally, this has brought about a renewed emphasis by the Saudis to acquire from Pakistan both Chinese-designed missiles and dual-key Pakistani nuclear warheads which is a major concern by the US.184 Saudi Arabia is now flexing their muscle in the Middle East and has taken an increasing role in managing their own affairs. This scenario could lead to either cooperation or competition between the US and China in the region. Further, in this scenario, Saudi Arabia will increasingly align with the countries who are buying their oil. A geopolitical shift will begin with the rise of China in the Persian Gulf region secondary to a diminishing American presence, which will intensify Saudi Arabian concerns for their security.

=transition=

Reforms are causing growth.

Sweig and Bustamante 6/27 (Julia Sweig, Nelson and David Rockefeller Senior Fellow for Latin America Studies and Director for Latin America Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations; and Michael Bustamante, Ph.D. candidate in Latin American history at Yale University, "Cuba After Communism" <http://internalreform.blogspot.com/> 6-27

\*Investments, trade balancing, public expenditure reductions, debt payment, and financial accountability bureau.

The reforms have yielded several modest successes thus far. After facing sharp liquidity and balance-of-payments crises in the wake of the 2008 global financial meltdown, Cuba has succeeded in restoring a modicum of financial stability, resuming its debt payments, sharply cutting its imports, and beginning the arduous task of reducing public expenditures. Several key strategic investments from international partners — most notably, the refurbishing of Mariel Harbor, with the aid of Brazilian capital, to transform it into a major container shipping port — are moving forward on schedule. Meanwhile, a new state financial accountability bureau has begun the hard task of weeding out endemic corruption.

Migration laws are too.

Sweig and Bustamante 6/27 (Julia Sweig, Nelson and David Rockefeller Senior Fellow for Latin America Studies and Director for Latin America Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations; and Michael Bustamante, Ph.D. candidate in Latin American history at Yale University, "Cuba After Communism" <http://internalreform.blogspot.com/> 6-27

Indeed, by making it easier for Cubans to travel, work abroad, and then return home, Cuba~’s new migration law is also meant to stimulate the economy. At an estimated %241 billion a year, remittances have been big business since the late 1990s, helping Cubans compensate for low salaries and take advantage of what few opportunities have existed for private enterprise. Now that the government has undertaken a wider expansion of the small-business sector, ties between the diaspora and the island are bringing an even greater payoff. Cubans abroad are already helping invest money in the window-front cafeterias, repair shops, and other small businesses popping up across the country. Some islanders are also sending their own money out of the country so that relatives can buy them consumer goods abroad.

Medical services bring in a ton of money.

Ravsberg 6/10 (Fernando Ravsberg, writer for Havana Times, "The Locomotive of Cuba~’s Economy: Health Services Abroad" <http://www.havanatimes.org/?p=94374> 6-10-13)

HAVANA TIMES — Contributing some US %245 billion to Cuba~’s economy every year, the 40,000 Cuban health professionals currently offering medical services in 60 countries around the world have become the island~’s chief source of revenues, well above the tourism sector, family remittances and the nickel industry.¶ According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cuba~’s global brigade of health professionals is currently made up of 15 thousand physicians, 2,300 ophthalmologists, 15 thousand med-school graduates, 5,000 health technicians and 800 assistants.¶ In exchange for the services offered by those medical professionals based in Venezuela, Cuba receives 100 thousand barrels of oil a day. Cuban doctors are also working in other countries in the region, and there are some 4,000 in Africa, over 500 in Asia and Oceania and 40 in Europe.¶ What makes Cuban health professionals an attractive asset for many Third World countries is the fact they are willing to work in places that locals avoid, such as bad neighborhoods or rural areas that are difficult to access, where the lowest-income populations are concentrated.

=agriculture=

====No way they win Cuba~’s the only way to uphold US market – tons of other countries, like China, ensure that US agriculture exports remain high.====

\*\*Coia 8/13 (David, 8/13/13, "China Gobbling Up Wheat, as US Exports to Nation Soar," http://www.moneynews.com/US/china-american-wheat-sales/2013/08/18/id/520943)//DR. H\*\*

\*\*\*4.6 times more wheat purchased \*because of affordable prices, consumer preferences, more population \*2012 exports were 135.8 billion dollars \*highest wheat sales since 1991 (and year not over yet)\*\*

China, the world~’s largest grower of wheat, is making its largest purchase of the grain from the United States in nearly two decades after severe flooding earlier this year cut into its reserves.

China has purchased 3.7 million metric tons of wheat from the U.S. so far this season, or nearly 4.6 times more wheat than last year~’s purchase of 805,400 metric tons.

In addition to the flooding this spring — the worst in some areas since 1954 — increased demand for high-quality wheat have dented grain stocks in China.

A year earlier, China "controlled about 30 percent of the world~’s wheat stocks," Steve Mercer, spokesman for U.S. Wheat Associates, told Newsmax. The value so far of this year~’s wheat sales to China is conservatively over %241 billion, or nearly 10 percent of total U.S. wheat exports, Mercer said.

Factors influencing the growing Chinese desire for U.S. wheat include affordable prices, the consumer preferences of a rising middle class, and a growing urban population resulting from a demographic shift from the countryside, which has also led to a demand for higher-quality food products, including more protein and animal feed.

Sinograin, the name given to the state-owned China Grain Reserves Corporation created by China~’s State Council in 2000, is currently in the process of shoring up the nation~’s grain reserves.

Food security has long been a core national security concern for the Chinese government, hence the creation of Sinograin. Mercer said the food is a "huge … security issue for them."

A Chinese team of six milling executives and purchasing managers on August 13 completed a tour of grain facilities in Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and North Dakota for direct talks with wheat researchers, farmers, and storage facility operators, gaining first-hand experience with U.S. wheat regional production and storage.

"We found the opportunity to … convey our long-term requirements to the industry," the Chinese millers said in a joint statement to Newsmax. "It is important as we will buy more ~~[Dark Spring, Dark Northern Spring and Soft White wheat~~] since they are suitable to blending with our domestic wheat to make premium value foodstuffs."

The expansion in China of companies like McDonalds, Starbucks, and Yum Brands (a group that includes Taco Bell, KFC, Pizza Hut, and WingStreet restaurants) also are pacing the demand for higher-quality wheat, Mercer said.

Crops for Soft Red Wheat — used primarily for baking cakes, pastries, flat breads, and crackers— have been good for the last two years, Mercer said, and that is primarily what the Chinese have purchased.

Agricultural exports are one of the few bright spots for U.S. trade, as the deficit with China has grown from %246 million in 1985 to more than %24315 billion in 2012, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The nation~’s overall trade imbalance for 2012 was %24729 billion.

"Agricultural exports continue to be a strong and growing component of U.S. exports," an Agriculture Department spokesman told Newsmax. In fiscal 2012, agricultural exports reached %24135.8 billion, supporting 1 million jobs for U.S. farmers and ranchers.

"More than %2423 billion worth of those agricultural products went to China alone," he said.

While wheat sales for the year are not complete, this would be their highest level to China since the 1991-92 season, the agriculture department spokesman said, adding "current USDA projections forecast that China will import 8.5 million tons of wheat from all sources in the 2013-14 crop year" – with some 43 percent coming from the United States.