### Terror

#### DTC restrictions prevent it from being used unless in conjunction with admissible evidence, and it’s not declassified unless determined not to be a threat by a judge.

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Professor Guiora served in the Judge Advocate General's Corps of the Israel Defense Forces where he held senior command positions related to the legal and policy aspects of operational counterterrorism. His publications include GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON COUNTERTERRORISM (2007); CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITS ON COERCIVE INTERROGATION (2008); FUNDAMENTALS OF COUNTERTERRORISM (2008); and FREEDOM FROM RELIGION (forthcoming October 2009) Creating a Domestic Terror Court, [48 WASHBURN L.J. 617, 625 (2009).](https://www-lexisnexis-com.libproxy.usc.edu/lnacui2api/mungo/lexseestat.do?bct=A&risb=21_T17612684247&homeCsi=291221&A=0.6331227093420501&urlEnc=ISO-8859-1&&citeString=48%20Washburn%20L.J.%20617,at%20625&countryCode=USA&_md5=00000000000000000000000000000000) Web. Lexis.

One of the critical - and admittedly problematic - features of the DTC is the manner in which the government's interest in protecting legitimate national security concerns will be balanced against the obligation to simultaneously ensure the rights of individual suspects, particularly with respect to the right to confront an accuser. The DTC will not provide suspects with the same level of constitutional protection as traditional Article III courts. [n53](https://www-lexisnexis-com.libproxy.usc.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?tokenKey=rsh-20.678967.7999725131&target=results_DocumentContent&returnToKey=20_T17656590910&parent=docview&rand=1371872057242&reloadEntirePage=true#n53) This measure will enable the government to keep intelligence information classified. Nevertheless, significant measures will be taken to ensure that the information received by the DTC is weighed by the bench in a manner intended to benefit the defendant, precisely because he is absent.

Although the evidence is presented by the prosecution and a member of the intelligence community, by applying a strict four-part test in weighing the submitted information, the judge will wear two hats: one as the court and the other as defense counsel. The information and the source must be held to be: (1) reliable; (2) viable; (3) valid; and (4) corroborated. If the intelligence meets the four-part test, then and only then is it admissible and available for use against the defendant at trial. However, a defendant's conviction may not be based solely on confidential intelligence information. This evidence may only be used to support an existing body of evidence known to the defendant and his counsel and introduced in open court proceedings. In every case, the sitting judge will make all decisions as to the admissibility of evidence while viewing the evidence in a light most favorable to the defendant. [n54](https://www-lexisnexis-com.libproxy.usc.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?tokenKey=rsh-20.678967.7999725131&target=results_DocumentContent&returnToKey=20_T17656590910&parent=docview&rand=1371872057242&reloadEntirePage=true#n54)

Similarly, the sitting judge may determine through in camera review of intelligence evidence that introducing the information in open court proceedings does not pose a threat to national security. In these cases, the judge gives the prosecution the option of declassifying the information and presenting it in court or proceeding to trial without such evidence.

If a defendant is convicted in the DTC, sentencing will proceed just  [\*632]  as in traditional courts with maximum and minimum sentencing terms. Furthermore, sentencing will not, under any circumstance, involve the death penalty. Appeals will be filed directly to the United States Court of Appeals.

### 2AC K

#### 1. Any role of the ballot is arbitrary- fiat’s problems does not mean that the aff goes away –

#### 2. we should get the impacts of the aff- your links are predicated off our consequences. Its tautological for us not to get those same consequences. The aff outweighs the K (explain)

#### 3. no link – offensive vs. defensive security we spoke out against a detention regime that is based on the logic of security

#### Alt not feasible

#### Individual solutions are bad – focusing on the individual over personalizes politics and causes false believe in change

LOBEL 7, Professor of Law, University of San Diego, (Orly, Harvard Law Review, 120 Harv. L. Rev. 937)

This **celebration of multiple micro-resistances** seems to rely on an aggregate approach - an idea that the multiplication of practices will **evolve into something substantial**. In fact, the myth of engagement obscures the actual lack of change being produced, while the broader pattern of **equating extralegal activism with social reform produces a** false belief in the potential of change. There are few instances of meaningful reordering of social and economic arrangements and macro-redistribution. Scholars write about decoding what is really happening, as though the scholarly narrative has the power to unpack more than the actual conventional experience will admit. [224](http://www.lexis.com/research/retrieve?_m=b7d531dcca7209b987833602ed6fbb4e&docnum=23&_fmtstr=FULL&_startdoc=1&wchp=dGLbVzb-zSkAt&_md5=3f8bfd4662cb01d0d1bf9f28a63e1155&focBudTerms=lobel%20and%20harvard&focBudSel=all#n224) Unrelated efforts become related and part of a whole through mere reframing. At the same time, the elephant in the room - the rising level of economic inequality - is left unaddressed and comes to be understood as natural and inevitable. [225](http://www.lexis.com/research/retrieve?_m=b7d531dcca7209b987833602ed6fbb4e&docnum=23&_fmtstr=FULL&_startdoc=1&wchp=dGLbVzb-zSkAt&_md5=3f8bfd4662cb01d0d1bf9f28a63e1155&focBudTerms=lobel%20and%20harvard&focBudSel=all#n225) This is precisely the problematic process that critical theorists decry as losers' self-mystification, through which marginalized groups come to see systemic losses as the  [\*986]  product of their own actions and thereby begin to focus on minor achievements as representing the boundaries of their willed reality.

#### Transforming institutional structures is always a work in progress. Using the norms of relationality and criticisms of instrumentalization – are critical to building a new politics that subverts the logic of security

Burke 7, University of New South Wales, (Anthony, BORDERLANDS VOLUME 6 NUMBER 2)

44. But can this balance be struck so easily? Is the lure of violence and control, the temptation to preserve unjust and exploitative structures through coercive means, too great? The necessity then is not merely to encourage relationship and reciprocity, but **to continually critique and transform the institutional structures**, technologies and powers of mediation that shape and condition encounters, and that limit and channel the possibilities for life—especially when they do so violently and coercively. Patriotism, identity, social role and the desire for acquisition are such powerful technologies of being that the conditions under which it is made possible to exist and relate must always be subject to critique. A politics that can enable a more creative and ethical exercise of individual and social agency must be combined with one that ethically transforms the overarching structures of power and political enclosure, corporate, administrative and social, within which life takes form. If security is a 'political double-bind' that works at simultaneously individualising and totalising levels, it must be undone and transformed at both. 45. This essay has sought to think and negotiate two fundamental paradoxes in modern inter-national life. While the nation-state—as the normative and legal core of the global system and an entrenched form of social organisation and governance—is not going to disappear, and may well constitute a source of hope for oppressed and marginalised communities like the East Timorese or the Palestinians, it is fundamentally janus-faced and ambivalent (Nimni, 2003: 120). In the face of globalisation and proliferating transnational problems such as refugees, terrorism, economic crisis or climate change its function as an exclusive container for identity and moral community is becoming ever more ethically suspect and practically ineffective. It is becoming just as clear that the dual basis of modern security—the indivisibly sovereign body-politic and the 'rational' exercise of coercion and violence against its others—fails to eliminate threats but tends, in practice, to constitute and worsen them; to wager national identity and survival on the permanence of insecurity and violence. 46. Such is the contemporary global politics of being. It is neither natural, inevitable nor bearable, especially for those who are its daily victims. Against this I have sought to illuminate a path beyond our current politics of security, by combining a series of theoretical arguments that advance the need to challenge and rethink the ways we are made into subjects, to reject images of being based on separation and mastery, and to privilege relations of reciprocity and responsibility over instrumental forms of life that reduce humans to things and politics to an endless struggle for hierarchy and control. In short, I have sought to outline a set of normative, ethical and political intuitions that can assist in building a new politics—if not exhaustively prescribe its forms. I am suggesting transformation at both the local and trans-national levels: transformations in the meaning and practice of 'statecraft' and strategic policy, in narratives and practices of identity, and in the way trans-national movements of 'democratic citizens' organise and act to support and negotiate the diversity of identities at stake in the path to peace. Ultimately, I hope that such a model of trans-national responsibility, ethics and agency will work as a profound subversion of the modern architectonic of security that might—and this is no paradox—in turn hold out a promise of genuine and sustainable security in which no one is sacrificed, and in which there are no permanent victims. 47. It is important to restate that such an ethics does not mean a totalising rejection of the state, but it does demand its transformation.

#### Alt fails - abandoning security impossible

Kavka ’87 (Gregory S., Prof – UC Irvine, Moral Paradoxes of Nuclear Deterrence, p. 86-87)

The lesson of the kidney case seems to be that one can, at most, actively impose substantially lesser risks or harms on other innocent people to protect oneself. Can this lesson be applied to national as well as individual self-defense? One might contend that it cannot be, appealing for support to the hallowed ought-implies-can principle. According to that principle agents, including nations, can only be obligated to act in ways they are capable of acting. But, it may be suggested, nations are **literally incapable** of refraining from taking steps believed to be necessary for national defense, even if these impose horrible risks or harms on outside innocents. For any government that failed to undertake the requisite defensive actions (e.g., any government that abandoned nuclear deterrence) would be quickly ousted and replaced by a government willing to under take them.

Securitization norms are only effective if there’s an audience to accept it.

Hartkorn 9 Siris, Lunds University Department of Political Science - Peace and Conflict Studies, In search for strength, A case study of regime (in)security in Yemen

#### Securitization is therefore the next level after politicization and it legitimizes breaking of the normal rules (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde 1998, pp. 23-25). The question then arises if anyone can securitize any issue and of course that is not the case. The securitization of an issue is only successful when the audience accepts it and thereby legitimizes the extraordinary measures, which the securitization demands (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde 1998, pp. 25). The acceptance from the audience does not necessarily have to rely on a free choice, it can be forced as well, but without any sign of acceptance among the audience, there will not be securitization but only a securitizing move (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde 1998, pp. 25).

#### Their ev is incoherent psychobabble – it sounds sophisticated but doesn’t mean anything

Mahrer 99Alvin R., professor emeritus at the University of Ottawa School of Psychology, “Embarrassing Problems for the Field of Psychotherapy” John Wiley

& Sons, Inc. J Clin Psychol 55: 1147–1156, 1999. p. 1153, via Wiley Inter Science

One of the main things that characterize psychotherapists and that distinguish them from others is their spouting psychobabble. They learn to say terms that give the illusion of genuine knowledge, of professionalism, of science (Illich, 1970; Schon, 1982). They are elite and specialized because they spout jargon terms like unconditioned positive regard, contingency control, transference, reframing, double bind, existential analysis, bioenergetics, phallic stage, archetype, multimodal therapy, systematic desensitization, cognitive schema, catharsis, impulse control, avoidance conditioning, stimulus control, ego diffusion, countertransference, logotherapy, and attribution theory. Psychotherapists are distinguished mainly by their using these terms with effortless ease, as if they knew what the terms meant. Then they can speak in impressive paragraphs such as this, taken from a table of random psychobabble phrases: “This client is characterized by free-floating anxiety in a borderline disorder, brought about by a traumatic childhood history of emotional abuse, lack of a stable support system, and inadequate cognitive development. Accordingly, the treatment of choice is systemic therapy, with reframing of core conceptual schemata, to heighten self-efficacy in a supportive therapist-client alliance emphasizing positive regard and minimizing interpretive probing into stressful pockets of serious psychopathology.” The speaker may have no idea what he or she is saying, or may even secretly know that he or she is playing the game of silly psychobabble, but if the speaker carries it off with professional aplomb, he or she probably can be accepted into the inner ranks of professional psychotherapists.

Multiple Conditional alternatives are evil - and a voting issue -

1. Skews strategy and time – we have to focus the 2ac on multiple alternatives to the plan - this gives the neg the ability to exploit aff time decisions - not make the best most educational decision.
2. Kills rejoinder & not reciprocal - the aff doesn't get to respond OR claim advantages from offense they've read – that kills debate and kills the affs ability to generate offense.
3. Ensures argumentative irresponsibility - that undermines education - kicking arguments and not defending them is anti-educational. Multiple conditional alts insures that it has to happen.
4. Counter-interpretation – the neg gets one conditional strategy and the status quo - this solves all of their offense.

### 2AC OLC

Interpretation: Counterplans that use a different agent than the plan are illegitimate.

1. Doesn’t cause critical thinking outside of debate- personal decisions aren’t made by finding a different agent than ourselves

2. no literature compares it- discussions are only valuable if they are informed with real information

3. Promotes abdication of responsibility – they teach debaters to wish someone else would act instead of how to persuade someone to act

4. Forces us to debate ourselves- any of our solvency deficits can be applied to the aff as reasons why the executive will ignore the plan

Voter for fairness and education

#### Permutation do both

#### Permutation do the Counterplan

#### Extend Silivana - only Congressional action inspires the public to care about habeas violations- that solves accountability issues the prevent the executive from circumventing the counterplan - CP causes circumvention and more detention.

Hammond, 2012, (J.D. Candidate 2013, University of Southern California Gould School of Law; B.S. Environmental Economics & Policy 2009, University of California, Berkeley. Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal. 22 S. Cal. Interdis. L.J. 193 “NOTE: THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT AND THE UNBOUND AUTHORITY TO DETAIN: A CALL TO CONGRESS” Lexis.

¶ A. The Executive's Incentive to Over-Detain¶ ¶ The executive branch has little incentive to restrain its authority to detain - the executive has an incentive to over-detain suspected terrorists. n91 Terrorist attacks present the executive with an unpredictable and severe threat. Faced with such a tremendous threat, the executive is likely to "err on the side of the detention." n92 If an individual is erroneously detained and subsequently released, the executive's "error is invisible." n93 However, if an individual is not detained or erroneously released and proceeds to cause harm, "the error will be emblazoned across the front pages." n94 It is politically more desirable for the executive to push the boundaries of the detention authority than to risk suffering the "accusatory political backlash for having failed to take sufficient action." n95¶ The Bush Administration's detention polices provide a striking example of the executive's propensity to over-detain in the face of a terrorist threat. In the first two years after the September 11 terrorist attacks, over 5000 individuals were detained. n96 To this day, some of these detained individuals remain missing. n97

#### Court Creation DA – The executive cannot create a national security court, only Congress is vested with this power.

Schuck, Lecturer at Yale Law School, ‘4

[Peter, “Terrorism Cases Demand New Hybrid Courts”, LA Times, 7-9-2004,

<http://articles.latimes.com/2004/jul/09/opinion/oe-schuck9>, RSR]

The Supreme Court in its recent rulings has given U.S. citizens who are captives in the war on terror, as well as noncitizen Guantanamo detainees, the right to hearings. Now comes the hard part: what kinds of hearings, in what courts, by what process?¶ The court wisely refrained from answering these questions in detail. Arguments on the specifics had not been presented to the court, and the limited guidance that the justices did offer was more intuitive than analytical. Wisdom aside, this sort of self-restraint is constitutionally required: Article 1, Section 8, Clause 14 gives Congress -- not the judicial or the executive branch -- the authority to make rules for the armed forces, including the initial design of hearings for the prisoners.

#### THE CP DOES NOT CREATE A DOMESTIC TERROR COURT

#### Extend Chesney – Legislative action is key to international legitimacy – it’s seen as the most meaningful constraint on presidential action and sends a stronger signal to allies.

#### Extend the Welsh evidence- the plan promotes separation of powers which is the only way to prevent the executive from dominating the process and appointing biased judges – that tanks solvency.

#### Extend Periseault – vesting sole power in the executive increases separation of powers criticism – exec is able to control who should be tried and when – replicates status quo problems with military commissions

#### Perm do both – The Executive cannot create remedies on its own- has to be passed as legislation by Congress

Bernstein, Law Prof-Chicago, 12 (ANYA BERNSTEIN, Bigelow Teaching Fellow and Lecturer in Law, The Universityof Chicago Law School, CONGRESSIONAL WILL AND THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE IN BIVENS ACTIONS: WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT SPECIAL FACTORS, http://mckinneylaw.iu.edu/ilr/pdf/vol45p719.pdf)

Of course, the judiciary and the legislature are not the only branches that have a hand in crafting remedies. The modern executive branch, with its administrative remedial schemes and its prominent role in the process of legislation, also plays a part. However, as the Bivens case discussed throughout this Article indicates, the Executive’s role in remedy-creation is still subordinate to that of Congress. Administrative remedial schemes must be authorized through a delegation of congressional power to the Executive and are subject to legislative strictures and specifications. Although the President often plays a significant role in the crafting of legislation and must sign a bill into law, it is still Congress that debates and passes it. Responding to these realities, case law 16 regarding constitutional damages consistently looks to congressional will to ensure that judge-made remedies do not disturb the balance of authority between the judiciary and the legislature.

#### Net benefit is circumvention -

Posner 11 - Kirkland & Ellis Professor, University of Chicago Law School (Eric A. Posner, “Deference To The Executive In The United States After September 11: Congress, The Courts, And The Office Of Legal Counsel”, http://www.harvard-jlpp.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/PosnerFinal.pdf)

In the early years of the Bush Administration, the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC), an office within the Department of Jus‐ tice, issued a series of memoranda arguing that certain counter‐ terrorism practices—including surveillance of U.S. citizens and coercive interrogation—did not violate the law. 37 These memos were later leaked to the public, causing an outcry. 38 In 2011, the head of the OLC told President Obama that continued U.S. military presence in Libya would violate the War Powers Act. The President disregarded this advice, relying in part on contrary advice offered by other officials in the government.

These two events neatly encapsulate the dilemma for the OLC, and indeed all the President’s legal advisers. If the OLC tries to block the President from acting in the way he sees fit, it takes the risk that he will disregard its advice and marginalize the institution. If the OLC gives the President the advice that he wants to hear, it takes the risk that it will mislead him and fail to prepare him for adverse reactions from the courts, Congress, and the public.

Many scholars, most notably Professor Jack Goldsmith, argue that the OLC can constrain the executive. 39 The underlying idea here is that even if Congress and the courts cannot constrain the executive, perhaps offices within the executive can. The opposite view, advanced by Professor Bruce Ackerman, is that the OLC is a rubber stamp. 40 I advocate a third view: The OLC does not constrain the executive but enables him to accomplish goals that he would not otherwise be able to accomplish. It is more accurate to say that the OLC enables rather than constrains.

#### OLC has to be neutral- the solvency evidence means the CP links to politics

Posner 11 - Kirkland & Ellis Professor, University of Chicago Law School (Eric A. Posner, “Deference To The Executive In The United States After September 11: Congress, The Courts, And The Office Of Legal Counsel”, http://www.harvard-jlpp.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/PosnerFinal.pdf)

A question naturally arises about the OLC’s incentives. I have assumed that the OLC provides neutral advice, in the sense of trying to make accurate predictions about how other agents like Congress and the courts would react to proposed actions. It is possible that the OLC could be biased—either in favor of the President or against him. If the OLC were biased against the President, he would stop asking it for advice (or would ask for its advice privately and then ignore it). 50 This danger surely accounts for OLC jurisprudence being pro‐executive. 51 But it would be just as dangerous for OLC to be excessively biased in favor of the President because it would mislead him and lose its credibility with Congress. 52 As a result, the OLC could not help the President engage in L policies. So the OLC must be neither excessively pro‐President nor anti‐President. If it can avoid these extremes, it will be an enabler; if it cannot, it will be ignored. In no circumstance could it be a constraint. 53

#### CP isn’t sufficient – the cp is just lip service -- it doesn’t create a specialized court is key

Buttar 13 (Shahid, “Killing Us Softly: Why the Administration's Response to Criticism on Drones Carries Little Water,” 3-17, <http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/15156-killing-us-softly-why-the-administrations-response-to-criticism-on-drones-carries-little-water>)

Much of the controversy surrounding Brennan’s nomination concerned mere disclosure: whether the executive branch would let Congress read the administration’s legal analysis governing the targeted assassination program. President Obama apparently heard the message, admitting in his State of the Union address that more transparency is required. The result proved underwhelming. One congressional committee received a single legal memo among several, which did not even purport to delineate the boundaries of the assassination program, but rather explored the use of deadly authority against a single target among several hundred who have been killed, including at least four US citizens. Mere disclosure of some OLC memos to some Senators is insufficient. Meaningful congressional oversight requires full access to all the legal memos, as well as active investigation of the underlying facts. It is not enough to simply read executive legal analyses paying lip service to constitutional values routinely violated on the ground. The congressional intelligence committees, after all, were founded after robust investigations revealed widespread abuses by intelligence agencies, including the CIA, spanning decades and the terms of several presidents. Factual investigation has revealed more recent abuses, as well. Last year, the Senate Intelligence Committee concluded a thorough investigation of torture, which produced a report recognizing torture as an international human rights abuse that ultimately undermined US national security by producing false intelligence, eroding pro American sentiment abroad, and helping our enemies recruit foot soldiers. Yet, reflecting its pattern of embracing secrecy while claiming transparency, the Obama administration has refused to declassify the report. It is only because neither the press nor the public know the facts that irresponsible Hollywood fiction proved so problematic and controversial. Forgotten in commentary on Brennan’s confirmation were some troubling details suggesting that, on both torture and drone strikes, transparency remains inadequate. First, Senators had to fight tooth & nail to secure even the most minimal disclosure from the White House. Second, other congressional committees also sought access to the OLC assassination memos, but were denied. Finally, beyond disclosure of the OLC’s legal memos are important questions about how the standards in them are applied to real facts. The Obama administration and CIA still refuse to answer congressional questions beyond the memos—such as, “How much evidence does the President need to determine that a particular American can be lawfully killed?” These questions are crucial, but Brennan’s confirmation could ensure that Congress receives few answers.

#### Triggers litigation, OLC can’t speak to statutes, and White House Counsel Circumvents

Bruce **Ackerman 11**, Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science at Yale University, “LOST INSIDE THE BELTWAY: A REPLY TO PROFESSOR MORRISON,” Harvard Law Review Forum Vol 124:13, http://www.harvardlawreview.org/media/pdf/vol124forum\_ackerman.pdf

To see why, consider that the relationship between the WHC and the OLC is utterly mysterious to most lawyers, let alone to most Americans. So imagine the scene when some future White House Counsel issues a legal opinion, rubberstamping the President’s latest power- grab, with the peroration: “Ever since Lloyd Cutler assumed the position as White House Counsel in NVTV, this office has, from to time, taken the lead in explaining the constitutional foundations for major presidential initiatives . . . .” ¶ Given pervasive ignorance dealing with Beltway arcana, this famous precedent will go a long way toward legitimating the White House decision to cut out the OLC. Instead of conceding impropriety, our hypothetical Counsel can summon up the great spirit of Lloyd Cutler in support of his leading role. After establishing his distinguished pedigree, Counsel can reinforce his claim to authority with a host of additional arguments: After all, there’s nothing in the Constitution that requires the President to prefer the OLC to the WHC. Article II simply tells the President to “take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed”69 — it doesn’t tell him where to get his legal advice. Moreover, as Morrison acknowledges, the OLC’s traditional role is principally based on executive order, not Congressional statutes.70 If the President prefers to treat his Counsel as a modern-day Cutler, there can be no question that the bureaucracy and military will follow his lead — at least until the courts enter into the field. ¶ Undoubtedly, the Cutler precedent won’t stifle all grumbling from Beltway cognoscenti.71 But it will make it much tougher to convince the generality of lawyerdom, as well as the broader public, that they are witnessing a dreadful act of legal usurpation — even if that’s precisely what is happening.72

### 2AC FLEX

#### The plan is not judicial review – that’s what terror says

#### The legitimacy advantage outweighs and solves the disadvantage

POSNER 2011 - Kirkland & Ellis Professor, University of Chicago Law School (Eric A. Posner, “Deference To The Executive In The United States After September 11: Congress, The Courts, And The Office Of Legal Counsel”, <http://www.harvard-jlpp.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/PosnerFinal.pdf>)

The larger and more striking point of the example is that, even during emergencies, when the stakes are high and time is of the essence, agents should follow rules rather than improvise. In this way, agents should be constrained.^^ This argument has potentially radical implications. Recall that the conventional objection to deference is that the risk of executive abuse exceeds the benefits of giving the executive a free hand to counter al Qaeda. Professor Holmes argues—although at fimes he hedges—that in fact the benefits of giving the President a free hand are zero: A constrained executive, like a constrained medical technician, is more effective than an unconstrained executive. If the benefits of lack of constraint are zero, then the deference thesis is clearly wrong. Constraints both prevent executive abuses such as violations of civil liberties and ensure that counterterrorism policy is most effective.

#### Our credibility internals solve the impact better than flexibility

Schwarz, senior counsel, and Huq, associate counsel at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, 2007 [Frederick A.O., Jr., partner at Cravath, Swaine & Moore, chief counsel to the Church Committee, and Aziz Z, former clerk for the U.S. Supreme Court, Unchecked and Unbalanced: Presidential Power in a Time of Terror, p. 201]

The Administration insists that its plunge into torture, its lawless spying, and its lock-up of innocents have made the country safer. Beyond mere posturing, they provide little evidence to back up their claims. Executive unilateralism not only undermines the delicate balance of our Constitution, but also lessens our human liberties and hurts vital counterterrorism campaigns. How? Our reputation has always mattered. In 1607, Massachusetts governor John Winthrop warned his fellow colonists that because they were a "City on a Hill," "the eyes of all people are upon us."4 Thomas Jefferson began the Declaration of Independence by invoking the need for a "decent respect to the opinions of mankind:' In today's battle against stateless terrorists, who are undeterred by law, morality, or the mightiest military power on earth, our reputation matters greatly.¶ Despite its military edge, the United States cannot force needed aid and cooperation from allies. Indeed, our status as lone superpower means that only by persuading other nations and their citizens—that our values and interests align with theirs, and so merit support, can America maintain its influence in the world. Military might, even extended to the globe's corners, is not a sufficient condition for achieving America's safety or its democratic ideals at home. To be "dictatress of the world," warned John Quincy Adams in 1821, America "would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit." A national security policy loosed from the bounds of law, and conducted at the executive's discretion, will unfailingly lapse into hypocrisy and mendacity that alienate our allies and corrode the vitality of the world's oldest democracy.5

#### Congress has already killed Obama’s flexibility – prevented transfer of detainees from Guantanamo.

Alexander, Frederick I. Richman Professor of Law, Stanford Law School, ‘12

[Janet, “MILITARY COMMISSIONS: A PLACE OUTSIDE THE LAW’S REACH”, SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY LAW JOURNAL, Vol. 56, 2012, RSR]

On the other hand, the limitations on presidential ability to prosecute ¶ detainees in federal court, release them to other countries, or transfer them to ¶ facilities within the United States for detention or to serve their sentences are ¶ contained in statutes and thus will apply regardless of who is president. These ¶ include the mandatory military detention provisions of the 2012 NDAA.260¶ Indeed, the Feinstein amendment to the 2012 NDAA, designed in part to meet ¶ objections to mandating military custody or trial of U.S. citizens, could well ¶ turn out to support that very outcome.261 The compromise, which helped to ¶ secure passage of the 2012 NDAA without a provision for mandatory military ¶ custody or trial, is worded simply to state that the statute does not change ¶ ―existing law.‖ Many argued at the time—apparently supported by a phrase in ¶ Hamdi—that existing law already permits treating U.S. citizens and permanent ¶ residents who are determined to be ―enemy combatants‖ or unprivileged ¶ belligerents exactly the same as foreign nationals, even if they are taken into ¶ custody inside the United States. If in the future the Supreme Court, the D.C. ¶ Circuit, or another federal circuit, so holds, then the trial, detention, and waiver ¶ provisions of the 2012 NDAA will apply equally to U.S. citizens.¶ Thus, because Congress has frustrated the executive branch‘s efforts to ¶ bring the treatment of suspected terrorists back to fundamental principles of the ¶ rule of law and the Obama Administration has abandoned as futile any attempt ¶ to secure legislation to make the changes permanent, the military ¶ commissions—however improved over the Bush era—remain ―outside the ¶ law‘s reach.‖¶ 262

#### Creating a fair process for detainees preserves executive flexibility – results in judicial deference.

Bauer, Junior Editor at the Alabama Law Review, ‘6

[Jay, “DETAINEES UNDER REVIEW: STRIKING THE RIGHT¶ CONSTITUTIONAL BALANCE BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE'S¶ WAR POWERS AND JUDICIAL REVIEW”, Vol. 57, No. 4, RSR]

Establishing a detainee review process that is as transparent and fair as¶ possible may be the best way to "strik[e] the proper constitutional balance."'179 In considering the executive's concerns for national security and¶ protection of classified information, the courts have shown an ability to be¶ flexible and accommodate the special needs of the executive while preserving¶ the fundamental precepts of the Constitution. That flexibility will likely¶ come into play regardless of whether a court is reviewing a habeas petition¶ or the final decision of a tribunal under a separate statutory scheme like that¶ in the Detainee Treatment Act.¶ If a court is reviewing a non-citizen detainee's habeas claim, now that¶ the Supreme Court has established in Rasul that federal courts do have jurisdiction¶ over detainees at Guantanamo, the federal courts and habeas jurisprudence¶ may actually prove beneficial for the executive. For instance,¶ because a habeas court looks primarily to the authority and process of detention¶ in a habeas case, this Comment argues that from a practical standpoint¶ the more the executive branch establishes a solidly fair and judicial¶ process for determining detainee status, the better it would be for the executive.¶ Since the courts tend to deny habeas petitions when there is apparent¶ authority and alternative remedies available to a habeas petitioner, it is logical¶ that a full and fair process establishing those remedies for non-citizen¶ detainees is in the executive's best interest. In other words, if the executive¶ branch wants to preserve its independent control over detainees, then practically¶ speaking it could rely on history and precedence as a model. The¶ courts will defer to executive action, but only to a point. They will seek to¶ preserve the authority of the Constitution, albeit in a restrained sense considering¶ the unique nature of detaining enemy combatants in the "war on¶ terror." Habeas corpus jurisprudence teaches that as long as there is a way¶ for an independent judiciary to examine the lawfulness of executive detention,¶ or at least ensure that the detainee has an appropriate alternative remedy¶ available, then that detention will be upheld. Thus, ironically, the way¶ for the executive to retain control over detainees is to create a full and fair¶ tribunal process. Moreover, the traditional deference the judiciary pays to¶ the executive branch when it is looking at executive wartime actions or¶ judgments should also give the executive branch confidence that federal¶ court jurisdiction over detainees at Guantanamo Bay is not going to hinder¶ its execution of the "war on terror."¶ When it passed the Detainee Treatment Act, Congress intended to interject¶ congressional oversight into the detainee review process by dictating¶ the standard of evidence used, and it wanted to ensure that the procedures of¶ the CSRT are in accordance with the Constitution. 80 The passage of the Act¶ clearly shows that the executive should anticipate more, not less, assertion¶ of authority over the detainee review process by the other branches of government.¶ Although the consequences of the Act are unknown at this point in¶ time, it is also fairly clear that however the courts consider the detainee review process-whether it is through habeas litigation or under another¶ statutorily prescribed method like that of the Detainee Treatment Act-the¶ analysis will be in terms of whether that process fundamentally complies¶ with the Constitution. Thus, from just a pragmatic standpoint, it would be¶ prudent for the executive branch to ensure that the detainee review procedures¶ uphold the ideals of that great charter.¶ Consequently, creating a detainee review process as transparent and fair¶ as possible is the best option for our government and this nation as it seeks¶ to strike the right balance between executive war powers and judicial right¶ of review.

#### Checks on the Presidents power solves deterrence better- makes our threats credible

**Waxman 13** (Matthew C- Professor of Law at Columbia Law School; Adjunct Senior Fellow for Law and Foreign Policy, Council on Foreign Relations, “The Constitutional Power to Threaten War”, Forthcoming in Yale Law Journal, vol. 123 (2014), 8/25/2013, PDF)

A second argument, this one advanced by some congressionalists, is that stronger legislative checks on presidential uses of force would improve deterrent and coercive strategies by making them more selective and credible. The most credible U.S. threats, this argument holds, are those that carry formal approval by Congress, which reflects strong public support and willingness to bear the costs of war; requiring express legislative backing to make good on threats might therefore be thought to enhance the potency of threats by encouraging the President to seek congressional authorization before acting.181 A frequently cited instance is President Eisenhower’s request (soon granted) for standing congressional authorization to use force in the Taiwan Straits crises of the mid- and late-1950s – an authorization he claimed at the time was important to bolstering the credibility of U.S. threats to protect Formosa from Chinese aggression.182 (Eisenhower did not go so far as to suggest that congressional authorization ought to be legally required, however.) “It was [Eisenhower’s] seasoned judgment … that a commitment the United States would have much greater impact on allies and enemies alike because it would represent the collective judgment of the President and Congress,” concludes Louis Fisher. “Single-handed actions taken by a President, without the support of Congress and the people, can threaten national prestige and undermine the presidency. Eisenhower’s position was sound then. It is sound now.”183 A critical assumption here is that legal requirements of congressional participation in decisions to use force filters out unpopular uses of force, the threats of which are unlikely to be credible and which, if unsuccessful, undermine the credibility of future U.S. threats.¶ A third view is that legal clarity is important to U.S. coercive and deterrent strategies; that ambiguity as to the President’s powers to use force undermines the credibility of threats. Michael Reisman observed, for example, in 1989: “Lack of clarity in the allocation of competence and the uncertain congressional role will sow uncertainty among those who depend on U.S. effectiveness for security and the maintenance of world order. Some reduction in U.S. credibility and diplomatic effectiveness may result.”184 Such stress on legal clarity is common among lawyers, who usually regard it as important to planning, whereas strategists tend to see possible value in “constructive ambiguity”, or deliberate fudging of drawn lines as a negotiating tactic or for domestic political purposes.185 A critical assumption here is that clarity of constitutional or statutory design with respect to decisions about force exerts significant effects on foreign perceptions of U.S. resolve to make good on threats, if not by affecting the substance of U.S. policy commitments with regard to force then by pointing foreign actors to the appropriate institution or process for reading them.

#### No impact to Prez powers

**Healy 11**

Gene Healy is a vice president at the Cato Institute and the author of The Cult of the Presidency, The CATO Institute, June 2011, "Book Review: Hail to the Tyrant", http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/book-review-hail-tyrant

Legal checks “have been relaxed largely because of the need for centralized, relatively efficient government under the complex conditions of a modern dynamic economy and a highly interrelated international order.” What’s more, the authors insist, America needs the legally unconstrained presidency both at home (given an increasingly complex economy) and abroad (given the shrinking of global distances).

These are disputed points, to say the least. If Friedrich Hayek was at all correct about the knowledge problem, then if anything increasing economic complexity argues for less central direction. Nor does the fact that we face “a highly interrelated international order” suggest that we’re more vulnerable than we were in 1789, as a tiny frontier republic surrounded by hostile tribes and great powers. Economic interdependence — and the rise of other modern industrial democracies — means that other players have a stake in protecting the global trading system.

Posner and Vermuele coin the term “tyrannophobia,” which stands for unjustified fear of executive abuse. That fear is written into the American genetic code: the authors call the Declaration of Independence “the ur-text of tyrannophobia in the United States.” As they see it, that’s a problem because “the risk that the public will fail to trust a well-motivated president is just as serious as the risk that it will trust an ill-motivated one.” They contend that our inherited skepticism toward power exacerbates biases that lead us to overestimate the dangers of unchecked presidential power. Our primate brains exaggerate highly visible risks that fill us with a sense of dread and loss of control, so we may decline to cede more power to the president even when more power is needed.

Fair enough in the abstract — but Posner and Vermuele fail to provide a single compelling example that might lead you to lament our allegedly atavistic “tyrannophobia.” And they seem oblivious to the fact that those same irrational biases drive the perceived need for emergency government at least as much as they do hostility towards it. Highly visible public events like the 9/11 attacks also instill dread and a perceived loss of control, even if all the available evidence shows that such incidents are vanishingly rare. The most recent year for which the U.S. State Department has data, 2009, saw just 25 U.S. noncombatants worldwide die from terrorist strikes. I know of no evidence suggesting that unchecked executive power is what stood between us and a much larger death toll.

Posner and Vermuele argue that only the executive unbound can address modernity’s myriad crises. But they spend little time exploring whether unconstrained power generates the very emergencies that the executive branch uses to justify its lack of constraint. Discussing George H.W. Bush’s difficulties convincing Congress and the public that the 1991 Gulf War’s risks were worth it, they comment, “in retrospect it might seem that he was clearly right.” Had that war been avoided, though, there would have been no mass presence of U.S. troops on Saudi soil — “Osama bin Laden’s principal recruiting device,” according to Paul Wolfowitz — and perhaps no 9/11.

Posner and Vermuele are slightly more perceptive when it comes to the home front, letting drop as an aside the observation that because of the easy-money policy that helped inflate the housing bubble, “the Fed is at least partly responsible for both the financial crisis of 2008-2009 and for its resolution.” Oh, well — I guess we’re even, then.

Sometimes, the authors are so enamored with the elegant economic models they construct that they can’t be bothered to check their work against observable reality. At one point, attempting to show that separation of powers is inefficient, they analogize the Madisonian scheme to “a market in which two firms must act in order to supply a good,” concluding that “the extra transaction costs of cooperation” make “the consumer (taxpayer) no better off and probably worse off than she would be under the unitary system.”

But the government-as-firm metaphor is daffy. In the Madisonian vision, inefficiency isn’t a bug, it’s a feature — a check on “the facility and excess of law-making … the diseases to which our governments are most liable,” per Federalist No. 62. If the “firm” in question also generates public “bads” like unnecessary federal programs and destructive foreign wars — and if the “consumer (taxpayer)” has no choice about whether to “consume” them — he might well favor constraints on production.

From Franklin Roosevelt onward, we’ve had something close to vertical integration under presidential command. Whatever benefits that system has brought, it’s imposed considerable costs — not least over 100,000 U.S. combat deaths in the resulting presidential wars. That system has also encouraged hubristic occupants of the Oval Office to burnish their legacies by engaging in “humanitarian war” — an “oxymoron,” according to Posner. In a sharply argued 2006 Washington Post op-ed, he noted that the Iraq War had killed tens of thousands of innocents and observed archly, “polls do not reveal the opinions of dead Iraqis.”

### 2AC Debt Ceiling

#### Economic decline doesn’t cause war

Barnett, Senior Managing Director Enterra Solutions LLC, ‘9 (Thomas, August 24, “The New Rules: Security Remains Stable Amid Financial Crisis” World Politics Review, http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/4213/the-new-rules-security-remains-stable-amid-financial-crisis)

When the global financial crisis struck roughly a year ago, the blogosphere was ablaze with all sorts of scary predictions of, and commentary regarding, ensuing conflict and wars -- a rerun of the Great Depression leading to world war, as it were. Now, as global economic news brightens and recovery -- surprisingly led by China and emerging markets -- is the talk of the day, it's interesting to look back over the past year and realize how globalization's first truly worldwide recession has had virtually no impact whatsoever on the international security landscape. None of the more than three-dozen ongoing conflicts listed by GlobalSecurity.org can be clearly attributed to the global recession. Indeed, the last new entry (civil conflict between Hamas and Fatah in the Palestine) predates the economic crisis by a year, and three quarters of the chronic struggles began in the last century. Ditto for the 15 low-intensity conflicts listed by Wikipedia (where the latest entry is the Mexican "drug war" begun in 2006). Certainly, the Russia-Georgia conflict last August was specifically timed, but by most accounts the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics was the most important external trigger (followed by the U.S. presidential campaign) for that sudden spike in an almost two-decade long struggle between Georgia and its two breakaway regions. Looking over the various databases, then, we see a most familiar picture: the usual mix of civil conflicts, insurgencies, and liberation-themed terrorist movements. Besides the recent Russia-Georgia dust-up, the only two potential state-on-state wars (North v. South Korea, Israel v. Iran) are both tied to one side acquiring a nuclear weapon capacity -- a process wholly unrelated to global economic trends. And with the United States effectively tied down by its two ongoing major interventions (Iraq and Afghanistan-bleeding-into-Pakistan), our involvement elsewhere around the planet has been quite modest, both leading up to and following the onset of the economic crisis: e.g., the usual counter-drug efforts in Latin America, the usual military exercises with allies across Asia, mixing it up with pirates off Somalia's coast). Everywhere else we find serious instability we pretty much let it burn, occasionally pressing the Chinese -- unsuccessfully -- to do something. Our new Africa Command, for example, hasn't led us to anything beyond advising and training local forces. So, to sum up: \*No significant uptick in mass violence or unrest (remember the smattering of urban riots last year in places like Greece, Moldova and Latvia?); \*The usual frequency maintained in civil conflicts (in all the usual places); \*Not a single state-on-state war directly caused (and no great-power-on-great-power crises even triggered); \*No great improvement or disruption in great-power cooperation regarding the emergence of new nuclear powers (despite all that diplomacy); \*A modest scaling back of international policing efforts by the system's acknowledged Leviathan power (inevitable given the strain); and \*No serious efforts by any rising great power to challenge that Leviathan or supplant its role. (The worst things we can cite are Moscow's occasional deployments of strategic assets to the Western hemisphere and its weak efforts to outbid the United States on basing rights in Kyrgyzstan; but the best include China and India stepping up their aid and investments in Afghanistan and Iraq.) Sure, we've finally seen global defense spending surpass the previous world record set in the late 1980s, but even that's likely to wane given the stress on public budgets created by all this unprecedented "stimulus" spending. If anything, the friendly cooperation on such stimulus packaging was the most notable great-power dynamic caused by the crisis. Can we say that the world has suffered a distinct shift to political radicalism as a result of the economic crisis? Indeed, no. The world's major economies remain governed by center-left or center-right political factions that remain decidedly friendly to both markets and trade. In the short run, there were attempts across the board to insulate economies from immediate damage (in effect, as much protectionism as allowed under current trade rules), but there was no great slide into "trade wars." Instead, the World Trade Organization is functioning as it was designed to function, and regional efforts toward free-trade agreements have not slowed. Can we say Islamic radicalism was inflamed by the economic crisis? If it was, that shift was clearly overwhelmed by the Islamic world's growing disenchantment with the brutality displayed by violent extremist groups such as al-Qaida. And looking forward, austere economic times are just as likely to breed connecting evangelicalism as disconnecting fundamentalism. At the end of the day, the economic crisis did not prove to be sufficiently frightening to provoke major economies into establishing global regulatory schemes, even as it has sparked a spirited -- and much needed, as I argued last week -- discussion of the continuing viability of the U.S. dollar as the world's primary reserve currency. Naturally, plenty of experts and pundits have attached great significance to this debate, seeing in it the beginning of "economic warfare" and the like between "fading" America and "rising" China. And yet, in a world of globally integrated production chains and interconnected financial markets, such "diverging interests" hardly constitute signposts for wars up ahead. Frankly, I don't welcome a world in which America's fiscal profligacy goes undisciplined, so bring it on -- please! Add it all up and it's fair to say that this global financial crisis has proven the great resilience of America's post-World War II international liberal trade order. Do I expect to read any analyses along those lines in the blogosphere any time soon? Absolutely not. I expect the fantastic fear-mongering to proceed apace. That's what the Internet is for.

#### Food I/l is not what impact says

#### No risk of global food collapse – consumption decreasing & productivity improving

Lomborg ‘12

[Bjorn, Professor at Copenhagen Business School and head of the Copenhagen Consensus Center; *Foreign Affairs*, July/August; p. 33-4]

And predictions about the last two factors, agricultural production and pollution, were way off – which is important because these were the two backup drivers of collapse if a scarcity of resources didn’t do the job. Global per capita food consumption was expected to increase by more than 50 percent in the four decades after 1970, peak in 2010, and then drop by 70 percent. Calorie availability has indeed increased, if not quite so dramatically (by somewhat more than 25 percent), but the collapse of the food supply is nowhere in sight, and there is every reason to believe that the gains will continue and be sustainable. Malnutrition has not been vanquished, and the absolute number of people going hungry has in fact increased slightly recently (in part because some crops have been diverted from food to biofuel production due to concerns about global warming). But over the past 40 years, the fraction of the global population that is malnourished has dropped from 35 percent to less than 16 percent, and well over two billion more people have been fed adequately. The world is nowhere close to hitting a ceiling on the usage of arable land; currently, 3.7 billion acres are being used, and 6.7 billion acres are in reserve. Nor have productivity gains maxed out. The latest long-range UN report on food availability, from 2006, estimated that the world would be able to feed ever-more people, each with ever-more calories, out to midcentury

#### Debt ceiling doesn’t collapse the economy

Tom Raum 11, AP, “Record $14 trillion-plus debt weighs on Congress”, Jan 15, <http://www.mercurynews.com/news/ci_17108333?source=rss&nclick_check=1>

Democrats have use doomsday rhetoric about a looming government shutdown and comparing the U.S. plight to financial crises in Greece and Portugal. It's all a bit of a stretch. "We can't do as the Gingrich crowd did a few years ago, close the government," said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), referring to government shutdowns in 1995 when Georgia Republican Newt Gingrich was House speaker. But those shutdowns had nothing to do with the debt limit. They were caused by failure of Congress to appropriate funds to keep federal agencies running. And there are many temporary ways around the debt limit. Hitting it does not automatically mean a default on existing debt. It only stops the government from new borrowing, forcing it to rely on other ways to finance its activities. In a 1995 debt-limit crisis, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin borrowed $60 billion from federal pension funds to keep the government going. It wasn't popular, but it helped get the job done. A decade earlier, James Baker, President Ronald Reagan's treasury secretary, delayed payments to the Civil Service and Social Security trust funds and used other bookkeeping tricks to keep money in the federal till. Baker and Rubin "found money in pockets no one knew existed before," said former congressional budget analyst Stanley Collender. Collender, author of "Guide to the Federal Budget," cites a slew of other things the government can do to delay a crisis. They include leasing out government-owned properties, "the federal equivalent of renting out a room in your home," or slowing down payments to government contractors. Now partner-director of Qorvis Communications, a Washington consulting firm, Collender said such stopgap measures buy the White House time to resist GOP pressure for concessions. "My guess is they can go months after the debt ceiling is not raised and still be able to come up with the cash they need. But at some point, it will catch up," and raising the debt limit will become an imperative, he suggested.

#### Won’t pass – no compromise

Mattingly, 10/6 (“Boehner Says he Doesn’t have Votes to Increase Debt Limit” Bloomberg Business Week. http://www.businessweek.com/news/2013-10-06/boehner-says-he-doesn-t-have-votes-to-increase-debt-limit-1

U.S. Speaker John Boehner said the House can’t pass an increase to the U.S. debt ceiling without packaging it with other provisions -- a nonstarter for President Barack Obama. “We are not going to pass a clean debt limit,” Boehner said in an interview on ABC’s “This Week” program. “The votes are not in the House to pass a clean debt limit.” Boehner’s comments came as the government remains partially shut down for the sixth day and just 11 days from when Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew told lawmakers the U.S. will exhaust measures to avoid breaching the debt ceiling. The Obama administration has said it won’t negotiate with Republicans over funding the government or raising the debt ceiling, arguing that it is part of the basic functions of Congress and shouldn’t be used as point of leverage. Obama, in an interview with the Associated Press, said he expects Congress will reach an agreement to raise the nation’s $16.7 trillion debt limit in time to avert a default. “The nation’s credit is at risk because of the administration’s refusal to sit down and have a conversation,” Boehner said. Asked if he’d consider putting a clean debt ceiling increase on the floor, Boehner said the House would not be “going down that path.” Remaining Cash The U.S. will run out of borrowing authority on Oct. 17 and will have $30 billion in cash after that. The country would be unable to pay all of its bills, including benefits, salaries and interest, sometime between Oct. 22 and Oct. 31, according to the Congressional Budget Office. “Congress is playing with fire,” Lew said on CNN’s “State of the Union” today. “If the United States government, for the first time in its history, chooses not to pay its bills on time, we will be in default, there is no option that prevents us from being in default if we don’t have enough cash to pay our bills.” Unlike past fiscal feuds, this dispute is more about Obama’s signature health law and less about the amount of spending. The U.S. budget deficit in June was 4.3 percent of gross domestic product, down from 10.1 percent in February 2010 and the narrowest since November 2008, when Obama was elected to his first term, according to data compiled by Bloomberg from the Treasury Department and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. So far, the financial-market response to the political gridlock has been muted. The Standard & Poor’s 500 Index climbed 0.7 percent in New York Oct 4. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury increased two basis points last week, trading between 2.66 percent and 2.58 percent. While the yield is up from the record low of 1.38 percent in July 2012, it’s below the average of about 6.7 percent since the early 1980s, the start of the three-decade long bull market in bonds.

#### Temporary extension solves

CNN, 10-5-’13 (“GOP floats six-week funding and debt ceiling extension” http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2013/10/05/gop-floats-six-week-funding-and-debt-ceiling-extension/)

One idea being considered to end the immediate fiscal impasse is a bill to fund the government and extend the nation's borrowing authority for six weeks, a senior Republican member of the House told CNN Chief Political Analyst Gloria Borger. The congressman agreed to speak with CNN on the condition of anonymity. The GOP lawmaker said a committee could then be set up to negotiate the fiscal issues dividing the two parties and negotiate a plan to keep the government funded for the rest of the year without the proverbial gun to their heads. This idea of an extension being floated among Republicans would give everyone a temporary political reprieve. It would give them a way to reopen the government but bypass the issue of tying it to a change in Obamacare, as well as avert a crisis over whether to raise the nation's debt limit by Oct. 17 when the Treasury Department has said it will run out of money to pay its bills. The House Republican told Borger it is "unfair" to promise conservatives in the country something Republicans in Congress just cannot deliver - the defunding of Obamacare.

#### Non unique – 1ac rogin evidence says Obama has given speeches in support of the plan but it’s on congress to act

**Obama’s already negotiating and the GOP demanded new cuts---markets already perceive default as likely which means they’ve factored in their impacts**

Peter **Schroeder 10-3**, The Hill, “GOP puts new price on debt hike (Video),” http://thehill.com/homenews/news/326271-gop-puts-new-price-on-debt-hike#ixzz2gh1fRpw7

GOP puts new price on debt hike (Video)

Rank-and-file members want Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) to return to the so-called “Boehner Rule,” which they say means any debt limit hike must be matched by an equal amount of spending cuts.

An earlier GOP measure to raise the debt ceiling included a host of GOP priorities, including defunding ObamaCare and constructing the Keystone XL pipeline, but not dollar-for-dollar spending cuts.

Now, as it looks increasingly like the government shutdown fight will be paired with raising the debt ceiling, Republicans are pushing hard for a strong opening bid and are adamant that changes to entitlement programs be included in any final deal.

“The American people are realizing that spending has got to be brought under control,” said Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.). “I want three dollars’ worth of cuts for any dollar [of debt limit increase.]”

Washington is struggling to find a way out of the standoff over the government shutdown with the Oct. 17 deadline for raising the debt ceiling fast approaching.

The earlier GOP plan has been shelved, but a spokesman for Boehner on Wednesday said it technically met the Boehner Rule when taking into account both cuts and economic growth.

Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas), who released an economic report touting the benefits of the earlier plan, told The Hill on Wednesday that his colleagues are looking for more “meaningful” cuts, particularly on entitlements.

“It’s very much in play,” he said of the dollar-for-dollar approach. “Discretionary savings were modest but important, but really to get a handle on our finances, we’ve got to really start to save the entitlements.”

Asked what he wants on the debt ceiling deal, Rep. Marlin Stutzman (R-Ind.) quickly replied, “dollar-for-dollar cuts.”

“We’ve got to start getting control of our spending,” he added. “I’d like to see us even address entitlement programs.”

In private, many in the financial industry are growing increasingly concerned about a possible default, given the broad gap between the two parties and the shrinking timeline for action.

President Obama has repeatedly said he will not negotiate over raising the debt limit even as he called congressional leaders to the White House on Wednesday to discuss both the shutdown and debt ceiling.

Some speculate stocks must crash to get the sides to compromise.

“People are willing to risk it all, the credibility of the country … for political reasons,” said one banking lobbyist. “You let the market fall by 400 or 500 points and watch the constituent calls start to come in.”

The president huddled Wednesday with the heads of the nation’s largest financial institutions, who reiterated their concern over using the debt limit as a political tool.

“Individual members of our group represent every point on the political spectrum,” Goldman Sachs head Lloyd Blankfein told reporters after the private meeting. “You can litigate these policy issues, you can re-litigate these policy issues in a public forum, but they shouldn’t use the threat of causing the U.S. to fail on its obligation to repay debt as a cudgel.”

Republicans have long argued they have public opinion on their side in the debt fight, but a new poll released Wednesday by CNN/ORC International found that a majority of the public believe failing to raise the debt limit would be a bad thing for the nation. Only 38 percent said it would be a positive.

A Quinnipiac University poll released one day earlier found 64 percent opposed blocking a debt-limit boost, while 27 percent favored it.

Those results suggest a significant shift from earlier polling, which typically found a large number of Americans opposed to hiking the borrowing limit. A Sept. 13 poll from NBC News and The Wall Street Journal found twice as many Americans opposed a debt limit boost than supported it.

Republicans insist they will have leverage in the debt-ceiling talks with the White House.

**PC low and fails for fiscal fights**

Greg **Sargent 9-12**, September 12th, 2013, "The Morning Plum: Senate conservatives stick the knife in House GOP leaders," Washington Post, factiva

All of this underscores a basic fact about this fall's fiscal fights: Far and away **the dominant factor** shaping how they play out will be the divisions among Republicans. There's a great deal of chatter (see Senator Bob Corker for one of the most absurd examples yet) to the effect that **Obama's mishandling of Syria has diminished his standing on Capitol Hill and will weaken him in coming fights**. But those battles at bottom will be about whether the Republican Party can resolve its **internal differences**. Obama's "standing" with Republicans -- if it even could sink any lower -- is **utterly irrelevant to that question**.¶ The bottom line is that, when it comes to how aggressively to prosecute the war against Obamacare, **internal GOP differences may be unbridgeable**. Conservatives have adopted a deliberate strategy of deceiving untold numbers of base voters into believing Obamacare will be stopped outside normal electoral channels. Central to maintaining this fantasy is the idea that any Republican leader who breaks with this sacred mission can only be doing so because he or she is too weak and cowardly to endure the slings and arrows that persevering against the law must entail. GOP leaders, having themselves spent years feeding the base all sorts of lies and distortions about the law, are now desperately trying to inject a does of reality into the debate by pointing out that the defund-Obamacare crusade is, in political and practical terms alike, insane. But it may be too late. The time for injecting reality into the debate has long since passed.

**Obama will unilaterally resolve the crisis if Congress fails---game theory proves**

**IHT 10-4** – International Herald Tribune, 10/4/13 edition, “White House has options if impasse arises on debt ceiling,” p. lexis

As a result, economists and investors have quietly begun to explore the options the White House might have in the event Congress fails to act.

The most widely discussed strategy would be for President Barack Obama to invoke authority under the 14th Amendment and essentially order the federal government to keep borrowing, an option that was endorsed by former President Bill Clinton during an earlier debt standoff in 2011.

And in recent days, prominent Democrats like Senator Max Baucus, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and Representative Nancy Pelosi, the House minority leader, have urged the White House to seriously consider such a route, even if it might provoke a threat of impeachment from House Republicans and ultimately require the Supreme Court to rule on its legitimacy.

Other potential October surprises range from the logistically forbidding, like prioritizing payments, issuing i.o.u.'s or selling off gold and other assets, to more fanciful ideas, like minting a trillion-dollar platinum coin.

So far, administration officials have continued to insist that there is no plausible alternative to congressional action on the debt limit.

In December 2012, Jay Carney, the White House spokesman, flatly renounced the 14th Amendment option, saying: ''I can say that this administration does not believe that the 14th Amendment gives the president the power to ignore the debt ceiling - period.'' And on Wednesday, a senior administration lawyer said that remained the administration's view.

Still, some observers outside government in Washington and on Wall Street, citing an approach resembling game theory, suggest that the president's position is more tactical than fundamental, since raising the possibility of a way out for the White House like the constitutional gambit would take the heat off Republicans in Congress to act on their own before the Oct. 17 deadline.

''If a default is imminent, the option of raising the debt limit by executive fiat has to be on the table,'' said Greg Valliere, chief political strategist at Potomac Research. ''Desperate times require desperate measures.''

Some professional investors echoed his view, which is a reason Wall Street remains hopeful that the economic and financial disaster a government default could usher in will be avoided.

''At the end of the day if there is no action and the United States has a default looming, I think President Obama can issue an executive order authorizing the Treasury secretary to make payments,'' said David Kotok, chief investment officer of Cumberland Advisors in Sarasota, Florida, which has just over $2 billion under management. ''There's always been more flexibility in the hands of Treasury than they've acknowledged.''

According to some legal theorists, the president could essentially ignore the debt limit imposed by Congress, because the 14th Amendment states that the ''validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law,'' including debts like pensions and bounties to suppress insurrections, ''shall not be questioned.''

Plan is popular with the GOP – being used as a rallying call to attract different demographics.

McLaughlin, 8/9 (Rand Paul: GOP Can grow base by opposing indefinite detention” The Washington Times. Web, Acc 8/15/2013. <http://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/aug/9/rand-paul-gop-can-grow-base-opposing-indefinite-de/>)

Sen. Rand Paul says that one of the ways he can bring more minority and younger voters into the party is to push back against indefinite detention.¶ Speaking with [Bloomberg Businessweek](http://m.washingtontimes.com/admin/stories/story/add/%28http%3A/www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-08-08/rand-paul-on-republicans-voter-appeal-and-the-federal-reserve), Mr. Paul, a likely 2016 presidential candidate, said this week that young blacks and Hispanics have a sense of justice and often mistrust government.¶ “So one of the big issues that I’ve fought here is getting rid of the provision called indefinite detention,” the Kentucky Republican said. “This is the idea that an American citizen could be accused of a crime, held indefinitely without charge, and actually sent from America to Guantanamo Bay and kept forever. I think there is something in that message of justice and a right to a trial by jury and a right to a lawyer that resonate beyond the traditional Republican Party and will help us to grow the Republican Party with the youth.”¶ Mr. Paul has argued that his libertarian brand of politics can help the GOP reach out to young voters and minorities who have supported Democrats in recent elections.¶ He has stopped short of calling for the closure of the controversial prison in Cuba, but has railed against locking up U.S. citizens on American soil without a trial.¶ As part of his effort to expand the GOP, Mr. Paul spoke this year at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and Simmons College in Louisville, where he urged blacks to give the GOP another look, while touting his opposition to military adventurism and desire to reduce sentences for non-violent drug possession¶ “We should stand and loudly proclaim enough is enough,” Mr. Paul said at Howard. “We should not have laws that ruin the lives of young men and women who have committed no violence. That’s why I have introduced a bill to repeal federal mandatory minimum sentences. We should not have drug laws or a court system that disproportionately punishes the black community.”

#### Forcing controversial fights key to Obama’s agenda- try or die for the link turn

Dickerson 13 (John, Slate, Go for the Throat!, 1/18 www.slate.com/articles/news\_and\_politics/politics/2013/01/barack\_obama\_s\_second\_inaugural\_address\_the\_president\_should\_declare\_war.single.html)

On Monday, President Obama will preside over the grand reopening of his administration. It would be altogether fitting if he stepped to the microphone, looked down the mall, and let out a sigh: so many people expecting so much from a government that appears capable of so little. A second inaugural suggests new beginnings, but this one is being bookended by dead-end debates. Gridlock over the fiscal cliff preceded it and gridlock over the debt limit, sequester, and budget will follow. After the election, the same people are in power in all the branches of government and they don't get along. There's no indication that the president's clashes with House Republicans will end soon. Inaugural speeches are supposed to be huge and stirring. Presidents haul our heroes onstage, from George Washington to Martin Luther King Jr. George W. Bush brought the Liberty Bell. They use history to make greatness and achievements seem like something you can just take down from the shelf. Americans are not stuck in the rut of the day. But this might be too much for Obama’s second inaugural address: After the last four years, how do you call the nation and its elected representatives to common action while standing on the steps of a building where collective action goes to die? That bipartisan bag of tricks has been tried and it didn’t work. People don’t believe it. Congress' approval rating is 14 percent, the lowest in history. In a December Gallup poll, 77 percent of those asked said the way Washington works is doing “serious harm” to the country. The challenge for President Obama’s speech is the challenge of his second term: how to be great when the environment stinks. Enhancing the president’s legacy requires something more than simply the clever application of predictable stratagems. Washington’s partisan rancor, the size of the problems facing government, and the limited amount of time before Obama is a lame duck all point to a single conclusion: The president who came into office speaking in lofty terms about bipartisanship and cooperation can only cement his legacy if he destroys the GOP. If he wants to transform American politics, he must go for the throat. President Obama could, of course, resign himself to tending to the achievements of his first term. He'd make sure health care reform is implemented, nurse the economy back to health, and put the military on a new footing after two wars. But he's more ambitious than that. He ran for president as a one-term senator with no executive experience. In his first term, he pushed for the biggest overhaul of health care possible because, as he told his aides, he wanted to make history. He may already have made it. There's no question that he is already a president of consequence. But there's no sign he's content to ride out the second half of the game in the Barcalounger. He is approaching gun control, climate change, and immigration with wide and excited eyes. He's not going for caretaker. How should the president proceed then, if he wants to be bold? The Barack Obama of the first administration might have approached the task by finding some Republicans to deal with and then start agreeing to some of their demands in hope that he would win some of their votes. It's the traditional approach. Perhaps he could add a good deal more schmoozing with lawmakers, too. That's the old way. He has abandoned that. He doesn't think it will work and he doesn't have the time. As Obama explained in his last press conference, he thinks the Republicans are dead set on opposing him. They cannot be unchained by schmoozing. Even if Obama were wrong about Republican intransigence, other constraints will limit the chance for cooperation. Republican lawmakers worried about primary challenges in 2014 are not going to be willing partners. He probably has at most 18 months before people start dropping the lame-duck label in close proximity to his name. Obama’s only remaining option is to pulverize. Whether he succeeds in passing legislation or not, given his ambitions, his goal should be to delegitimize his opponents. Through a series of clarifying fights over controversial issues, he can force Republicans to either side with their coalition's most extreme elements or cause a rift in the party that will leave it, at least temporarily, in disarray.

#### Intrinsicness - Logical policy votes to do both

#### non link uniqueness and Obama won’t push- Obama aids have been pushing plan relentlessly

Klaidman, 7/31 (Daniel, national political correspondent for Newsweek and The Daily Beast and the author of [Kill or Capture: The War on Terror and the Soul of the Obama Presidency](http://www.amazon.com/Kill-Capture-Terror-Obama-Presidency/dp/0547547897/ref%3Das_at?tag=thedailybeast-autotag-20&linkCode=as2&), “Obama’s Secret Gitmo plan” Newsweek. Web, Acc 8/31/2013)

Ever since Obama vowed to “go back at” the Guantánamo challenge in a major national security policy address in May, his aides have gamely thrown themselves into the effort. There is more White House activity swirling around Gitmo now than there has been in three years. Numerous people are working on the project, either part time or full time, under the leadership of Lisa Monaco, Obama’s chief counterterrorism adviser. White House lobbyists have been all over Capitol Hill, meeting with members of Congress. And yet, despite all this, Obama aides quietly admit that unless the political climate changes dramatically, Guantánamo will likely be open for business for many years to come.

#### Vote no – plans introduction in this debate is its introduction in Congress

#### Aff gets McCain on board – he sees it a specific plan.

Hunt, 7/28 (Albert, “McCain Goes Maverick Again as Obama’s Republican Ally. Bloomberg View. Web, Acc 8/19/2013. http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-07-28/mccain-goes-maverick-again-as-obama-s-republican-ally.html

McCain also wants to help Obama fulfill his promise to close the detainee camp for terrorism suspects at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He says political conditions are much different than they were four years ago when there was a similar effort.¶ “The difference between 2009 and 2013 is the administration now has a plan,” he says.¶ Closing Guantanamo¶ Last month, the five-term senator traveled to Guantanamo with Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman [Dianne Feinstein](http://topics.bloomberg.com/dianne-feinstein/) and the White House chief of staff, [Denis McDonough](http://topics.bloomberg.com/denis-mcdonough/).¶ McDonough, who McCain knew as a mid-level aide to former Democratic Senate Leader Tom Daschle, is a glue that binds the Republican and the administration. He and McCain talk as often as five times a day. In addition, the Republican senator has a great fondness for Vice President [Joe Biden](http://topics.bloomberg.com/joe-biden/), a good working relationship with Secretary of State [John Kerry](http://topics.bloomberg.com/john-kerry/) and is a fan of United Nations Ambassador-designate Samantha Power.

#### McCain is key to getting GOP voters on board for th plan

Hunt, 7/28 (Albert, “McCain Goes Maverick Again as Obama’s Republican Ally. Bloomberg View. Web, Acc 8/19/2013. http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-07-28/mccain-goes-maverick-again-as-obama-s-republican-ally.html

The association between Obama and McCain is different. But it may be Washington’s most important since Reagan and O’Neill.¶ McCain, 76, whose political resiliency is rivaled only by such luminaries as [Bill Clinton](http://topics.bloomberg.com/bill-clinton/) and [Richard Nixon](http://topics.bloomberg.com/richard-nixon/), is the most pivotal figure in the Senate today. He often is more central than the party leaders, [Mitch McConnell](http://topics.bloomberg.com/mitch-mcconnell/), the Kentucky Republican, or [Harry Reid](http://topics.bloomberg.com/harry-reid/), a Nevada Democrat, or the self-styled new power broker, the New York Democrat Chuck Schumer.¶ When McCain is with the president -- on immigration and in brokering the recent deal to secure Senate approval of stalled Obama nominees -- they usually can trump the political right. When he’s against him -- sabotaging Obama’s plan last year to nominate [Susan Rice](http://topics.bloomberg.com/susan-rice/) as secretary of state -- the White House rarely prevails.

#### Feinstein is on board with the plan and no link - plan get’s bundled with 2014 defense authorization bill

Feinstein and Durbin, 8/14 (Dianne and Dick, United States Senators. “How to close Gitmo.” Los Angeles Times. Web, Acc at [http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-feinstein-durbin-close-gitmo-20130814,0,432429.story](http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-feinstein-durbin-close-gitmo-20130814%2C0%2C432429.story)

The 2014 [Senate](http://www.latimes.com/topic/politics/government/u.s.-senate-ORGOV0000134.topic) defense authorization bill will come up for debate on the Senate floor this fall. Congress must pass the provisions that streamline procedures for transferring detainees abroad and allow transfers to the U.S. for trial or detention under international law until the end of hostilities.¶ As chairwoman of the [Senate Intelligence Committee](http://www.latimes.com/topic/politics/espionage-intelligence/u.s.-senate-select-committee-on-intelligence-ORGOV000350.topic) and chairman of the defense appropriations subcommittee, respectively, we are committed to preventing terrorist attacks. We believe terrorists deserve swift and sure justice, and severe prison sentences. But holding detainees on an island off U.S. shores for years — without charge — is an abomination. It is not an effective administration of justice, does not serve our national security interests and is not consistent with our country's history as a champion of human rights.¶ It is time to close Guantanamo.

#### That’s after (fiscal debate/Syria debate)

GSN, 9/11 (Global Security Newswire, “Levin: NDAA Won’t Pass Before Fiscal Year Starts” Web, Acc 9/12/2013 at <http://www.nationaljournal.com/global-security-newswire/levin-ndaa-won-t-pass-before-fiscal-year-starts-20130911>

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin (D-Mich.) on Wednesday predicted the Defense Department’s policy-setting bill will not be considered by the full Senate until after fiscal 2014 starts, according to [The Hill](http://thehill.com/blogs/defcon-hill/budget-appropriations/321617-levin-defense-bill-headed-toward-end-of-year-cliffhanger-) newspaper.¶ The Senate will likely spend September, the final month of fiscal 2013, debating the federal budget deficit and potential U.S. intervention in Syria, the senior lawmaker reportedly told journalists in Washington. The fiscal 2014 defense authorization bill probably will not be passed by the Senate, and then reconciled with a competing House version, until the final days of this calendar year, he predicted.¶ “It’ll be another cliffhanger, probably,” Levin said, referring to how in the past the defense bill has not received Congress’ blessing until the final days of the legislative session in December. “It will probably end up closer to the end of the session than I’d like.”

#### She’s key to getting GOP votes for his agenda

**SF Gate 12** (“Dianne Feinstein: 4 decades of influence”, <http://www.sfgate.com/politics/article/Dianne-Feinstein-4-decades-of-influence-3968314.php>)

She revels in split-the-baby deal making: "I think my greatest strength is finding a solution when there are opposing sides." It was Feinstein, an ally of [Hillary Rodham Clinton](http://www.sfgate.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=politics&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Hillary+Rodham+Clinton%22) against Barack [Obama](http://www.sfgate.com/barack-obama/) in the 2008 Democratic presidential primary, who brought the warring candidates to a secret rendezvous at her Washington home to bury the hatchet in private. In a chamber riven by partisanship, **Republicans like and respect her.** "She thinks through issues and makes what she thinks is a rational and correct decision," said Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., the top Republican on the Intelligence Committee. "Unfortunately t**here are some Republicans who, if it's a Democratic idea, immediately jump up and they're opposed to it,** and that happens on the other side of the aisle too. **But with Dianne, that does not happen."** '

1. Political capital is fabricated- you can’t predict momentum or uplanned events. There’s only a risk the plan is a win.

Hirsh, Chief Correspondent National Journal, 2-7-’13 (Michael, “There’s No Such Thing as Political Capital” National Journal, http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/there-s-no-such-thing-as-political-capital-20130207)

On Tuesday, in his State of the Union address, President Obama will do what every president does this time of year. For about 60 minutes, he will lay out a sprawling and ambitious wish list highlighted by gun control and immigration reform, climate change and debt reduction. In response, the pundits will do what they always do this time of year: They will talk about how unrealistic most of the proposals are, discussions often informed by sagacious reckonings of how much “political capital” Obama possesses to push his program through.¶ Most of this talk will have no bearing on what actually happens over the next four years.¶ Consider this: Three months ago, just before the November election, if someone had talked seriously about Obama having enough political capital to oversee passage of both immigration reform and gun-control legislation at the beginning of his second term—even after winning the election by 4 percentage points and 5 million votes (the actual final tally)—this person would have been called crazy and stripped of his pundit’s license. (It doesn’t exist, but it ought to.) In his first term, in a starkly polarized country, the president had been so frustrated by GOP resistance that he finally issued a limited executive order last August permitting immigrants who entered the country illegally as children to work without fear of deportation for at least two years. Obama didn’t dare to even bring up gun control, a Democratic “third rail” that has cost the party elections and that actually might have been even less popular on the right than the president’s health care law. And yet, for reasons that have very little to do with Obama’s personal prestige or popularity—variously put in terms of a “mandate” or “political capital”—chances are fair that both will now happen.¶ What changed? In the case of gun control, of course, it wasn’t the election. It was the horror of the 20 first-graders who were slaughtered in Newtown, Conn., in mid-December. The sickening reality of little girls and boys riddled with bullets from a high-capacity assault weapon seemed to precipitate a sudden tipping point in the national conscience. One thing changed after another. Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association marginalized himself with poorly chosen comments soon after the massacre. The pro-gun lobby, once a phalanx of opposition, began to fissure into reasonables and crazies. Former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., who was shot in the head two years ago and is still struggling to speak and walk, started a PAC with her husband to appeal to the moderate middle of gun owners. Then she gave riveting and poignant testimony to the Senate, challenging lawmakers: “Be bold.”¶ As a result, momentum has appeared to build around some kind of a plan to curtail sales of the most dangerous weapons and ammunition and the way people are permitted to buy them. It’s impossible to say now whether such a bill will pass and, if it does, whether it will make anything more than cosmetic changes to gun laws. But one thing is clear: The political tectonics have shifted dramatically in very little time. Whole new possibilities exist now that didn’t a few weeks ago.¶ Meanwhile, the Republican members of the Senate’s so-called Gang of Eight are pushing hard for a new spirit of compromise on immigration reform, a sharp change after an election year in which the GOP standard-bearer declared he would make life so miserable for the 11 million illegal immigrants in the U.S. that they would “self-deport.” But this turnaround has very little to do with Obama’s personal influence—his political mandate, as it were. It has almost entirely to do with just two numbers: 71 and 27. That’s 71 percent for Obama, 27 percent for Mitt Romney, the breakdown of the Hispanic vote in the 2012 presidential election. Obama drove home his advantage by giving a speech on immigration reform on Jan. 29 at a Hispanic-dominated high school in Nevada, a swing state he won by a surprising 8 percentage points in November. But the movement on immigration has mainly come out of the Republican Party’s recent introspection, and the realization by its more thoughtful members, such as Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida and Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, that without such a shift the party may be facing demographic death in a country where the 2010 census showed, for the first time, that white births have fallen into the minority. It’s got nothing to do with Obama’s political capital or, indeed, Obama at all.¶ The point is not that “political capital” is a meaningless term. Often it is a synonym for “mandate” or “momentum” in the aftermath of a decisive election—and just about every politician ever elected has tried to claim more of a mandate than he actually has. Certainly, Obama can say that because he was elected and Romney wasn’t, he has a better claim on the country’s mood and direction. Many pundits still defend political capital as a useful metaphor at least. “It’s an unquantifiable but meaningful concept,” says Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute. “You can’t really look at a president and say he’s got 37 ounces of political capital. But the fact is, it’s a concept that matters, if you have popularity and some momentum on your side.”¶ The real problem is that the idea of political capital—or mandates, or momentum—is so poorly defined that presidents and pundits often get it wrong. “Presidents usually over-estimate it,” says George Edwards, a presidential scholar at Texas A&M University. “The best kind of political capital—some sense of an electoral mandate to do something—is very rare. It almost never happens. In 1964, maybe. And to some degree in 1980.” For that reason, political capital is a concept that misleads far more than it enlightens. It is distortionary. It conveys the idea that we know more than we really do about the ever-elusive concept of political power, and it discounts the way unforeseen events can suddenly change everything. Instead, it suggests, erroneously, that a political figure has a concrete amount of political capital to invest, just as someone might have real investment capital—that a particular leader can bank his gains, and the size of his account determines what he can do at any given moment in history.¶ Naturally, any president has practical and electoral limits. Does he have a majority in both chambers of Congress and a cohesive coalition behind him? Obama has neither at present. And unless a surge in the economy—at the moment, still stuck—or some other great victory gives him more momentum, it is inevitable that the closer Obama gets to the 2014 election, the less he will be able to get done. Going into the midterms, Republicans will increasingly avoid any concessions that make him (and the Democrats) stronger.¶ But the abrupt emergence of the immigration and gun-control issues illustrates how suddenly shifts in mood can occur and how political interests can align in new ways just as suddenly. Indeed, the pseudo-concept of political capital masks a larger truth about Washington that is kindergarten simple: You just don’t know what you can do until you try. Or as Ornstein himself once wrote years ago, “Winning wins.” In theory, and in practice, depending on Obama’s handling of any particular issue, even in a polarized time, he could still deliver on a lot of his second-term goals, depending on his skill and the breaks. Unforeseen catalysts can appear, like Newtown. Epiphanies can dawn, such as when many Republican Party leaders suddenly woke up in panic to the huge disparity in the Hispanic vote.¶ Some political scientists who study the elusive calculus of how to pass legislation and run successful presidencies say that political capital is, at best, an empty concept, and that almost nothing in the academic literature successfully quantifies or even defines it. “It can refer to a very abstract thing, like a president’s popularity, but there’s no mechanism there. That makes it kind of useless,” says Richard Bensel, a government professor at Cornell University. Even Ornstein concedes that the calculus is far more complex than the term suggests. Winning on one issue often changes the calculation for the next issue; there is never any known amount of capital. “The idea here is, if an issue comes up where the conventional wisdom is that president is not going to get what he wants, and he gets it, then each time that happens, it changes the calculus of the other actors” Ornstein says. “If they think he’s going to win, they may change positions to get on the winning side. It’s a bandwagon effect.”¶ ALL THE WAY WITH LBJ¶ Sometimes, a clever practitioner of power can get more done just because he’s aggressive and knows the hallways of Congress well. Texas A&M’s Edwards is right to say that the outcome of the 1964 election, Lyndon Johnson’s landslide victory over Barry Goldwater, was one of the few that conveyed a mandate. But one of the main reasons for that mandate (in addition to Goldwater’s ineptitude as a candidate) was President Johnson’s masterful use of power leading up to that election, and his ability to get far more done than anyone thought possible, given his limited political capital. In the newest volume in his exhaustive study of LBJ, The Passage of Power, historian Robert Caro recalls Johnson getting cautionary advice after he assumed the presidency from the assassinated John F. Kennedy in late 1963. Don’t focus on a long-stalled civil-rights bill, advisers told him, because it might jeopardize Southern lawmakers’ support for a tax cut and appropriations bills the president needed. “One of the wise, practical people around the table [said that] the presidency has only a certain amount of coinage to expend, and you oughtn’t to expend it on this,” Caro writes. (Coinage, of course, was what political capital was called in those days.) Johnson replied, “Well, what the hell’s the presidency for?”¶ Johnson didn’t worry about coinage, and he got the Civil Rights Act enacted, along with much else: Medicare, a tax cut, antipoverty programs. He appeared to understand not just the ways of Congress but also the way to maximize the momentum he possessed in the lingering mood of national grief and determination by picking the right issues, as Caro records. “Momentum is not a mysterious mistress,” LBJ said. “It is a controllable fact of political life.” Johnson had the skill and wherewithal to realize that, at that moment of history, he could have unlimited coinage if he handled the politics right. He did. (At least until Vietnam, that is.)¶ And then there are the presidents who get the politics, and the issues, wrong. It was the last president before Obama who was just starting a second term, George W. Bush, who really revived the claim of political capital, which he was very fond of wielding. Then Bush promptly demonstrated that he didn’t fully understand the concept either.¶ At his first news conference after his 2004 victory, a confident-sounding Bush declared, “I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and now I intend to spend it. That’s my style.” The 43rd president threw all of his political capital at an overriding passion: the partial privatization of Social Security. He mounted a full-bore public-relations campaign that included town-hall meetings across the country.¶ Bush failed utterly, of course. But the problem was not that he didn’t have enough political capital. Yes, he may have overestimated his standing. Bush’s margin over John Kerry was thin—helped along by a bumbling Kerry campaign that was almost the mirror image of Romney’s gaffe-filled failure this time—but that was not the real mistake. The problem was that whatever credibility or stature Bush thought he had earned as a newly reelected president did nothing to make Social Security privatization a better idea in most people’s eyes. Voters didn’t trust the plan, and four years later, at the end of Bush’s term, the stock-market collapse bore out the public’s skepticism. Privatization just didn’t have any momentum behind it, no matter who was pushing it or how much capital Bush spent to sell it.¶ The mistake that Bush made with Social Security, says John Sides, an associate professor of political science at George Washington University and a well-followed political blogger, “was that just because he won an election, he thought he had a green light. But there was no sense of any kind of public urgency on Social Security reform. It’s like he went into the garage where various Republican policy ideas were hanging up and picked one. I don’t think Obama’s going to make that mistake.… Bush decided he wanted to push a rock up a hill. He didn’t understand how steep the hill was. I think Obama has more momentum on his side because of the Republican Party’s concerns about the Latino vote and the shooting at Newtown.” Obama may also get his way on the debt ceiling, not because of his reelection, Sides says, “but because Republicans are beginning to doubt whether taking a hard line on fiscal policy is a good idea,” as the party suffers in the polls.¶ THE REAL LIMITS ON POWER¶ Presidents are limited in what they can do by time and attention span, of course, just as much as they are by electoral balances in the House and Senate. But this, too, has nothing to do with political capital. Another well-worn meme of recent years was that Obama used up too much political capital passing the health care law in his first term. But the real problem was that the plan was unpopular, the economy was bad, and the president didn’t realize that the national mood (yes, again, the national mood) was at a tipping point against big-government intervention, with the tea-party revolt about to burst on the scene. For Americans in 2009 and 2010—haunted by too many rounds of layoffs, appalled by the Wall Street bailout, aghast at the amount of federal spending that never seemed to find its way into their pockets—government-imposed health care coverage was simply an intervention too far. So was the idea of another economic stimulus. Cue the tea party and what ensued: two titanic fights over the debt ceiling. Obama, like Bush, had settled on pushing an issue that was out of sync with the country’s mood.¶ Unlike Bush, Obama did ultimately get his idea passed. But the bigger political problem with health care reform was that it distracted the government’s attention from other issues that people cared about more urgently, such as the need to jump-start the economy and financial reform. Various congressional staffers told me at the time that their bosses didn’t really have the time to understand how the Wall Street lobby was riddling the Dodd-Frank financial-reform legislation with loopholes. Health care was sucking all the oxygen out of the room, the aides said.¶ Weighing the imponderables of momentum, the often-mystical calculations about when the historic moment is ripe for an issue, will never be a science. It is mainly intuition, and its best practitioners have a long history in American politics. This is a tale told well in Steven Spielberg’s hit movie Lincoln. Daniel Day-Lewis’s Abraham Lincoln attempts a lot of behind-the-scenes vote-buying to win passage of the 13th Amendment, banning slavery, along with eloquent attempts to move people’s hearts and minds. He appears to be using the political capital of his reelection and the turning of the tide in the Civil War. But it’s clear that a surge of conscience, a sense of the changing times, has as much to do with the final vote as all the backroom horse-trading. “The reason I think the idea of political capital is kind of distorting is that it implies you have chits you can give out to people. It really oversimplifies why you elect politicians, or why they can do what Lincoln did,” says Tommy Bruce, a former political consultant in Washington.¶ Consider, as another example, the storied political career of President Franklin Roosevelt. Because the mood was ripe for dramatic change in the depths of the Great Depression, FDR was able to push an astonishing array of New Deal programs through a largely compliant Congress, assuming what some described as near-dictatorial powers. But in his second term, full of confidence because of a landslide victory in 1936 that brought in unprecedented Democratic majorities in the House and Senate, Roosevelt overreached with his infamous Court-packing proposal. All of a sudden, the political capital that experts thought was limitless disappeared. FDR’s plan to expand the Supreme Court by putting in his judicial allies abruptly created an unanticipated wall of opposition from newly reunited Republicans and conservative Southern Democrats. FDR thus inadvertently handed back to Congress, especially to the Senate, the power and influence he had seized in his first term. Sure, Roosevelt had loads of popularity and momentum in 1937. He seemed to have a bank vault full of political capital. But, once again, a president simply chose to take on the wrong issue at the wrong time; this time, instead of most of the political interests in the country aligning his way, they opposed him. Roosevelt didn’t fully recover until World War II, despite two more election victories.¶ In terms of Obama’s second-term agenda, what all these shifting tides of momentum and political calculation mean is this: Anything goes. Obama has no more elections to win, and he needs to worry only about the support he will have in the House and Senate after 2014. But if he picks issues that the country’s mood will support—such as, perhaps, immigration reform and gun control—there is no reason to think he can’t win far more victories than any of the careful calculators of political capital now believe is possible, including battles over tax reform and deficit reduction.¶ Amid today’s atmosphere of Republican self-doubt, a new, more mature Obama seems to be emerging, one who has his agenda clearly in mind and will ride the mood of the country more adroitly. If he can get some early wins—as he already has, apparently, on the fiscal cliff and the upper-income tax increase—that will create momentum, and one win may well lead to others. “Winning wins.”¶ Obama himself learned some hard lessons over the past four years about the falsity of the political-capital concept. Despite his decisive victory over John McCain in 2008, he fumbled the selling of his $787 billion stimulus plan by portraying himself naively as a “post-partisan” president who somehow had been given the electoral mandate to be all things to all people. So Obama tried to sell his stimulus as a long-term restructuring plan that would “lay the groundwork for long-term economic growth.” The president thus fed GOP suspicions that he was just another big-government liberal. Had he understood better that the country was digging in against yet more government intervention and had sold the stimulus as what it mainly was—a giant shot of adrenalin to an economy with a stopped heart, a pure emergency measure—he might well have escaped the worst of the backlash. But by laying on ambitious programs, and following up quickly with his health care plan, he only sealed his reputation on the right as a closet socialist.¶ After that, Obama’s public posturing provoked automatic opposition from the GOP, no matter what he said. If the president put his personal imprimatur on any plan—from deficit reduction, to health care, to immigration reform—Republicans were virtually guaranteed to come out against it. But this year, when he sought to exploit the chastened GOP’s newfound willingness to compromise on immigration, his approach was different. He seemed to understand that the Republicans needed to reclaim immigration reform as their own issue, and he was willing to let them have some credit. When he mounted his bully pulpit in Nevada, he delivered another new message as well: You Republicans don’t have to listen to what I say anymore. And don’t worry about who’s got the political capital. Just take a hard look at where I’m saying this: in a state you were supposed to have won but lost because of the rising Hispanic vote.¶ Obama was cleverly pointing the GOP toward conclusions that he knows it is already reaching on its own: If you, the Republicans, want to have any kind of a future in a vastly changed electoral map, you have no choice but to move. It’s your choice.¶ The future is wide open.