**Plan**

The United States Federal Government should offer to the Government of Venezuela to remove sanctions against Petroleos de Venezuela if the Government of Venezuela agrees to implement economic reforms.

**1AC: Relations**

**Advantage: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Relations**

**US has no diplomatic ties with Venezuela – relations are at a cross-roads**

**RT News 13** (“Venezuela threatens oil, trade in continuing election spat with US,” 4-23-13,

http://rt.com/news/venezuela-threatens-us-oil-238/

In response to remarks from US Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson, Venezuelan Foreign Minister Elias Jaua warned that any **sanctions** imposed by the US for its April 14 presidential ballot would be met with **punitive oil and trade measures**. Over the weekend Jacobson commented on CNN en Espanol, stating that the Venezuelan state moved too quickly in proclaiming Nicolás Maduro its new president in light of tight electoral results, and that half of the country’s public rejected the results. When Jacobson was asked whether the US would go so far as to impose sanctions if Venezuela refused to recount poll results, she could not confirm or deny the possibility. In response to Jacobson’s remarks, Foreign Minister Jaua said that his country held the US responsible for the violence that followed the election and has so far left eight people dead. He added that Venezuela would respond in kind to any US sanctions. Maduro was sworn in as president last Friday at a ceremony widely attended by South American leaders, including Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff and the presidents of Argentina and Cuba. **No US diplomat** attended the ceremony. Since the election results were tallied the US State Department has **supported** the idea of **a recount**, which has been a demand of opposition candidate Henrique Capriles and his Justice First party. The notion of a full or partial recount has been the subject of much back-and-forth debate, though last Thursday the country’s electoral board (Consejo Nacional Electoral) indicated that it would support an audit. Since then, however, the electoral body seems to have retracted its support for an audit. The board’s president, Tibisay Lucena, criticized as an ally of the incumbent party, told domestic media that no one should have “false expectations” regarding the results of a potential audit, and reiterated that as far as the board was concerned the vote’s results were final and irreversible. Officially, **the US has yet to accept** the results of Venezuela’s **presidential election**, where Maduro was reported to hold 51 per cent of the vote to Capriles’ 49 per cent.

**Venezuela is willing to work with the United States, High-Level diplomatic exchanges are crucial to overall cooperation**

**AFP 13** (Agence France Presse, “Venezuela’s new government ‘open’ to resuming U.S. diplomatic relations,” 5-19-13, <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2013/05/19/venezuelas-new-government-open-to-resuming-u-s-diplomatic-relations/>)

**Venezuela** on Sunday made a **rare diplomatic overture** to the United States, suggesting it could be time for better ties. “We are going to remain open to normalizing relations with the United States,” Foreign Minister Elias Jaua said on Televen television Sunday. “**The first thing** would be to **resume diplomatic representation** at the highest level,” he said. The country’s late socialist president Hugo Chavez was a staunch critic of the United States, and his successor Nicolas Maduro is still feeling out its footing with Washington. Chavez for more than 14 years unleashed verbal broadsides on US leaders before his death in March. The United States and Venezuela since 2010 have not even had ambassadors in their embassies in their respective capitals. **Maduro**, who earlier said his government would like to **increase dialogue** with the United States, has selected lawmaker Calixto Ortega as its potential US envoy. US President Barack Obama however has not congratulated Maduro for his controversial, razor-thin April 14 election, as Maduro’s opposition rival Henrique Capriles presses claims that the Venezuelan presidential election was marred by irregularities. Maduro meanwhile slammed Obama “**the top leader of devils**” after he commented on post-election unrest in Venezuela.

**Plan will boost U.S. standing in important Latin American energy forums**

**Delahunt 12** --- chairman of the Venezuela-US Friendship Group and retired U.S. Representative (10/30/2012, William, “A new role for the US and Venezuela,” <http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2012/10/30/podium-venezuela/EJ6Jd2yRKfaJ76HYrXb4WJ/story.html>)

The recent election in Venezuela offers an opportunity to improve the US-Venezuela bilateral relationship. On Oc. 7th, President Hugo Chavez was reelected to a new six-year term by a nine point margin. I — along with hundreds of other international witnesses — was duly impressed with the transparency of the electoral process and the enthusiasm of Venezuelans for democracy. Eighty-one percent percent of registered voters went to the polls! This turnout was remarkable when compared to the United States and other “mature” democracies. Whether or not one agrees with Chávez’s policies, there can be no doubt that he won these elections fairly. There are so many checks and balances in the electoral system in Venezuela that there is virtually no room for fraud. The voter registry, the voting machines, the electronic ballot and the data transmission system are all fully audited by representatives of all the different political parties and independent observers. Former President Jimmy Carter recently called the Venezuelan voting system “the best in the world.” He noted that the voting machines print out a paper receipt that voters can look at to verify that their selection was recorded correctly, and poll workers check those receipts against the electronic tally. I was particularly struck by the atmosphere of peacefulness and mutual respect in the voting centers, where monitors from both pro-government and opposition groups were present. In contrast with elections past, the two main candidates manifested a similar attitude. Once the election authorities announced the results, opposition candidate Henrique Capriles rapidly conceded defeat, and he quickly scolded “radical” opposition supporters who insisted on alleging that fraud had taken place, despite no evidence to support their claims. Chávez also behaved gracefully, calling Capriles the following day to express his willingness to work together to mitigate the polarization that divided Venezuelans. Most of Venezuela’s political leadership — following a tumultuous power struggle, during which a coup d’Etat and violent protests occurred — appear to have accepted to follow the democratic rulebook and be more tolerant of one another. This is an important step forward, and the United States should encourage Venezuelans to continue seeking common ground, rather than support one group over another, as has at times been the case in recent years. Most importantly, over 55 percent of Venezuelan voters cast their vote in favor of Chávez. The **U**nited **S**tates should respect this outcome and seek to improve relations in areas where we can agree. **Commercial relations** between our two countries have generally been excellent, despite political differences, and both countries would **greatly benefit from their expansion**. **Venezuela will** no doubt continue to **play a central role** in the **region’s** new **multilateral cooperation** and consultation mechanisms, such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Central American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The **U**nited **S**tates, which has increasingly found itself **isolated in regional forums**, would do well to find ways to work with these new groups on important issues such as drug trafficking and **energy cooperation.** Improved relations with Venezuela would greatly facilitate this task. Our government will certainly have important differences with Venezuela, particularly in the area of international relations. But we can agree to disagree, as we do with many other partners throughout the world. I am convinced that the Venezuelan government is prepared to **respond favorably to such an initiative**.

**US-Latin American Energy policy dialogue is key to stop Amazon Deforestation**

**Zedillo et al 08 Commission Co-Chair for the Brookings Institute Report on the Partnership for the Americas and former President of Mexico** [Ernesto Zedillo, Thomas R. Pickering, etc, Rethinking U.S.–Latin American Relations A Hemispheric Partnership for a Turbulent World. Report of the Partnership for the Americas Commission, The Brookings Institution, November 2008, <http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Research/Files/Reports/2008/11/24%20latin%20america%20partnership/1124_latin_america_partnership.PDF>]

To expand the hemisphere’s energy capacity, massive infrastructure investments will be required. Major investments in oil production (especially deep offshore), refining, and distribution will be needed to achieve the region’s potential. Developing the Tupi project in Brazil alone will cost $70–240 billion. Liquefied natural gas will become an important source of energy, but not before major investments are made in infrastructure to support liquefaction, regasification, transport, and security. U.S. and Canadian electricity networks, which are already highly integrated, can be further integrated with Mexico’s. Mexico also plans to connect its grid to those of Guatemala and Belize, eventually creating an integrated power market in Central America. Power integration in South America will demand even larger investments in generation, transmission, and distribution. Finally, reliance on nuclear power may grow because it is carbon free and does not require fossil fuel imports. However, efforts to expand energy capacity and **integrate hemispheric** energy **markets** face a variety of obstacles. Energy nationalism has led to disruptive disputes over pricing and ownership. Tensions and mistrust in South America have hindered regional cooperation and investment, particularly on natural gas. The security of the energy infrastructure, especially pipelines, remains a concern in Mexico and parts of South America. Gas, oil, and electricity subsidies distort patterns of production and consumption, and they are triggering protectionist behavior elsewhere. Technology on renewables remains underdeveloped, and research in this area can be better centralized and disseminated. Overcoming theseobstacles will require **high levels of cooperation among hemispheric partners**. In addition to developing carbon-neutral sources of energy, the Western Hemisphere has other roles to play in combating climate change. The LAC region currently accounts for about 5 percent of annual global carbon emissions, and emissions per capita are still relatively low compared with other regions. However, minimizing the LAC region’s future carbon footprint will require new policies. Also, **deforestation** globally accounts for 20 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. The **Amazon River Basin** contains one of the world’s three **most important rainforests**, whose protection can therefore very significantly contribute to combating climate change. Brazil is pioneering the use of information technology to lessen **deforestation in the Amazon**.

**Extinction**

**O’Neal 97** (Martin, “Rain Forest Depletion,” 5-5, http://www.northern.wvnet.edu/~tdanford/bio1/RAINFO.htm)

There are some really amazing facts about the Amazon rain forest. The Amazon alone covers 54% of all the world’s rain forests, thus **making it literally the lungs of the Earth**. We can say this because trees produce oxygen while they use carbon dioxide to maintain their respiration. Rain forests cover about 7% of the Earth’s surface, but host about 50-90% of the plant and animal population of the entire world. The Amazon River has more species of fish than the entire Atlantic Ocean does. In less than 25 acres of rain forest there are more species of trees than the entire continent of North America. A tree found in Peru was found to be the host to 43 different species of ants. There are more species of birds on a Peru reserve than the entire United States has. A fact that is very highly regarded about the Amazon rain forest is that of the 3000 species of plants that have been discovered there, 70% of these plants have anti-cancerous properties. Also, 25% of these plants are now used to combat cancer. So as humankind continues to harvest the Amazon rain forest which covers 1.2 million acres and 9 countries, they should also try to consider the devastating effects that it is having on our race along with all the biological effects that it also carries. Although 1.2 million acres seems like a very large number, in the past four decades that number was reduced in half to the current figure, so we see that this can not keep happening with out some type of governing on what is occurring. If it does **we may become an endangered species**.

**Offering to negotiate sanctions is crucial to establish diplomatic ties and provide official recognitionof the Maduoro government, key to solve counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism and FARC**

**Metzker 13** (Jared, “Analysts Say Oil Could Help Mend U.S.-Venezuela Relations,” 6/18/13, <http://www.international.to/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8681:analysts-say-oil-could-help-mend-us-venezuela-relations&catid=268:inter-press-serv%E2%80%A6>)

Over half of Venezuela's federal budget revenues come from its oil industry, which also accounts for 95 percent of the country's exports. Estimated at 77 billion barrels, its proven reserves of black gold are the largest of any nation in the world. Despite a troubled political relationship, its principal customer is the United States, which imports nearly a million barrels a day from Venezuela. Venezuela's oil industry has been officially nationalised since the 1970s, and, as president, Chavez further **tightened government control** over its production. His government took a greater chunk of revenues and imposed quotas that ensured a certain percentage would always go directly towards aiding Venezuelans via social spending and fuel subsidies. While these measures may be popular with Venezuelans, who pay the lowest price for gasoline in the world, critics argue such policies hampered growth and led to mismanagement of Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PdVSA), the main state-run oil company. The same critics also point to increasing debt levels, slowdowns in productions and accidents stemming from faulty infrastructure. In order to boost production, PdVSA agreed in May to accept a number of major loans. This includes one from Chevron, one of the largest U.S. oil companies, which will work with Venezuelans to develop new extraction sites.[related\_articles] "The oil sector is in deep trouble in Venezuela – production is down and the economic situation is deteriorating," explained Shifter. "They know they need foreign investment to increase production, and this is in part what has **motivated Maduro to reach out**." If its economy continues to falter, Venezuela may be further tempted to embrace the United States, which has the largest, most sophisticated fossil fuel industry in the world. Kerry's recent words suggest that the administration of President Barack Obama would be waiting with open arms. "Venezuela cannot confront its economic crisis and the United States at the same time," Diana Villiers Negroponte, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, a Washington think tank, told IPS, "and we are a pragmatic country which will deal with Maduro if it is in our interests." Indeed, Negroponte said she was "optimistic" about the **possibility of rapprochement** between the two countries within the next six months. She notes a "troika" of issues on which the United States is looking¶ for Venezuelan cooperation: **counter-terrorism**, **counter-narcotics** and assistance in ridding **Colombia of its FARC rebels**. Nonetheless, major actions remain to be taken if normalisation is to even begin, such as the exchange of ambassadors and **official U.S. recognition** of the Maduro government. Shifter (who regards the Kerry-Jaua meeting as "a small step") was not optimistic that these larger requirements will be completed in the short term. "I don't think Washington is going to push hard to send an ambassador to Caracas," he said. "It will probably take more time to observe the new government and see where it is going."

**Narco-Terrorism fueled by FARC causes WMD use in the Americas**

**NTA 8** (National Terror Alert, “U.S. Officials Worry Terrorists Could Align With Drug Cartels,” 10-9, http://www.nationalterroralert.com/2008/10/09/us-officials-worry-terrorists-could-align-with-drug-cartels/)

There is real danger that **Islamic extremist groups** such as al-Qaeda and Hezbollah could **form alliances** with wealthy and powerful Latin American **drug lords** to launch new terrorist attacks, U.S. officials said Wednesday. Extremist group operatives have already been identified in several Latin American countries, mostly involved in fundraising and finding logistical support. But Charles Allen, chief of intelligence analysis at the Homeland Security Department, said they could use well-established smuggling routes and drug profits to bring people or even **w**eapons of **m**ass **d**estruction to the U.S. “The presence of these people in the region leaves open the possibility that they will attempt to attack the United States,” said Allen, a veteran CIA analyst. “The threats in this hemisphere are real. We cannot ignore them.” Much as the Taliban tapped Afghanistan’s heroin for money, U.S. officials say the vast profits available from Latin American cocaine could provide al-Qaida and others with a ready source of income. The rebel group known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or **FARC**, has long used drug money to pay for weapons, supplies and operations — and is also designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S. “We’ve got a hybrid that has developed right before our eyes,” Braun said. Latin America’s drug kingpins already have well-established methods of smuggling, laundering money, obtaining false documents, providing safe havens and obtaining illicit weapons, all of which would be **attractive to terrorists** who are facing new pressures in the Middle East and elsewhere.

**Sanctions whip up nationalistic fervor in Venezuela – undermining US credibility, increasing oil prices and derailing the economic recovery, offering to negotiate is crucial to a sustainable solution**

**Economides 11** (Dr. Michael Economides, Contributor for Forbes, Editor-in-Chief of Energy Tribune, PhD petroleum engineer, professor at the Cullen College of Engineering, at the University of Houston, “Silly Sanctions Against Venezuela Boost Hugo Chavez,” 6-13-11, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2011/06/13/silly-sanctions-against-venezuela-boost-hugo-chavez/>

The U.S. government has finally decided to take on Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, but probably in the worst possible way: toothless sanctions that barely scathe the caudillo. Instead, these sanctions give him a treasure trove of ammunition to undermine U.S. policies and consolidate his own power. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton included Petróleos de Venezuela SA (PDVSA), parent company of large American refiner and gasoline retailer CITGO, in a list of seven companies sanctioned last month for supporting Iran’s energy sector. PDVSA “delivered at least two cargoes of reformate to Iran between December 2010 and March 2011, worth approximately $50 million,” the statement says. Reformate is blended with gasoline to improve its quality. The sanctions bar PDVSA from access to U.S. government contracts, financing through the U.S. Export-Import Bank and export licenses. But the sanctions don’t apply to PDVSA subsidiaries (e.g. CITGO) and don’t “prohibit the export of crude oil to the United States.” Chávez could not hide his glee on Twitter on May 24: “Sanctions … imposed by the imperialist gringo government? Welcome Mr. Obama! The real impact of the new gringo aggression is potentiating the **patriotic and nationalist morale** of Venezuela.” Chávez is right to thank Obama. Ahead of Venezuela’s presidential elections next year – perhaps the best chance for a democratic transition of power – the administration has handed its biggest antagonist in the hemisphere an **ideological missile** to rally **support against the U.S**. A case in point: “The revolutionary government calls on all the Venezuelan people, laborers and especially the oil workers, to stay alert and mobilized in defence of our PDVSA and the sacred sovereignty of the homeland,” says a statement from the Venezuelan Foreign Affairs Ministry. Yet the list of accusations runs deep. For example, the U.S. State Department has repeatedly accused Venezuelan officials of aiding FARC in Colombia; a Spanish court is investigating Venezuelan government support of the Basque terrorist group ETA and U.S. authorities are investigating reports that Chávez’s friendly ties to Iran are translating into support for Hezbollah and Hamas. Ever since Washington’s pressure on Caracas backfired at the beginning of George W. Bush’s first administration, both the Bush and Obama administrations have stuck to ignoring Latin tongue-lashing. Official reactions to Chávez’s provocations are simply useless and, in fact, to his benefit. Sadly, this is the best strategy the U.S. has come up with thus far. Also of concern, PDVSA is one of the world’s largest energy companies. It is and will remain an influential player in global energy matters. For instance, the U.S. imports between 9 and 10 percent of its oil from Venezuela. Full sanctions would require replacing heavy oil supplies, for which much of the U.S. oil refining infrastructure on the Gulf Coast is geared. Additionally, **oil prices could rise** as a result, an unwelcome scenario in a still wobbly recovery. There would also be **geopolitical consequences**, as Venezuela hosts numerous influential investors (including many Americans). Considering all of these points, it is all the more baffling that the administration is imposing these sanctions. A senior administration official quoted in a press briefing that followed the unexpected announcement said, “These sanctions send a strong signal to companies around the world about the risks of dealing with Iran. So it serves as a signal, a deterrent, as much as it does as having a near-term, practical impact.” Except they don’t. Iran will continue to provision itself with gasoline and additives, Chávez will be emboldened without actually enduring any significant sanctions and both governments will benefit economically when oil prices increase if the standoff escalates. Now it could be that the decision to include PDVSA on the list is a policy decision for other headaches. There is no doubt that the U.S. wants to target Iran’s lack of refining supply, one of its weaknesses. But $50 million worth of gasoline additive supply is not a game changer for Iran, and Venezuela’s efforts to supply Iran with refined products are inconsequential. Therefore, President Obama might have fallen into a trap. Or it could be that the administration is trying to quell criticism of its policies toward Venezuela. Whatever the case, these sanctions are unwise. They don’t dent Iran’s refined product supply. They are not “a strong signal” to Venezuela, nor do they weaken Chávez ahead of elections. And they could ultimately result in higher oil prices, **threatening U.S. economic recovery**.

**Economic decline causes global war**

**Royal 10** (Jedediah, Director of Cooperative Threat Reduction – U.S. Department of Defense, “Economic Integration, Economic Signaling and the Problem of Economic Crises”, Economics of War and Peace: Economic, Legal and Political Perspectives, Ed. Goldsmith and Brauer, p. 213-215)

Less intuitive is how periods of economic decline may increase the likelihood of external conflict. Political science literature has contributed a moderate degree of attention to the impact of economic decline and the security and defence behaviour of interdependent states. Research in this vein has been considered at systemic, dyadic and national levels. Several notable contributions follow. First, on the systemic level, Pollins (2008) advances Modelski and Thompson's (1996) work on leadership cycle theory, finding that rhythms in the global economy are associated with the rise and fall of a pre-eminent power and the often bloody transition from one pre-eminent leader to the next. As such, exogenous shocks such as economic crises could usher in a redistribution of relative power (see also Gilpin. 1981) that leads to uncertainty about power balances, increasing the risk of miscalculation (Feaver, 1995). Alternatively, even a relatively certain redistribution of power could lead to a permissive environment for conflict as a rising power may seek to challenge a declining power (Werner. 1999). Separately, Pollins (1996) also shows that global economic cycles combined with parallel leadership cycles impact the likelihood of conflict among major, medium and small powers, although he suggests that the causes and connections between global economic conditions and security conditions remain unknown. Second, on a dyadic level, Copeland's (1996, 2000) theory of trade expectations suggests that 'future expectation of trade' is a significant variable in understanding economic conditions and security behaviour of states. He argues that interdependent states are likely to gain pacific benefits from trade so long as they have an optimistic view of future trade relations. However, if the expectations of future trade decline, particularly for difficult to replace items such as energy resources, the likelihood for conflict increases**,** as states will be inclined to use force to gain access to those resources. Crises could potentially be the trigger for decreased trade expectations either on its own or because it triggers protectionist moves by interdependent states.4 Third, others have considered the link between economic decline and external armed conflict at a national level. Blomberg and Hess (2002) find a strong correlation between internal conflict and external conflict, particularlyduring periods of economic downturn. They write: The linkages between internal and external conflict and prosperity are strong and mutually reinforcing. Economic conflict tends to spawn internal conflict, which in turn returns the favour. Moreover, the presence of a recession tends to amplify the extent to which international and external conflicts self-reinforce each other. (Blomberg & Hess, 2002. p. 89) Economic decline has also been linked with an increase in the likelihood of terrorism (Blomberg, Hess, & Weerapana, 2004), which has the capacity to spill across borders and lead to external tensions. Furthermore, crises generally reduce the popularity of a sitting government. "Diversionary theory" suggests that, when facing unpopularity arising from economic decline, sitting governments have increased incentives to fabricate externalmilitary conflicts to create a 'rally around the flag' effect. Wang (1996), DeRouen (1995). and Blomberg, Hess, and Thacker (2006) find supporting evidence showing that economic decline and use of force are at least indirectly correlated. Gelpi (1997), Miller (1999), and Kisangani and Pickering (2009) suggest that the tendency towards diversionary tactics are greater for democratic states than autocratic states, due to the fact that democratic leaders are generally more susceptible to being removed from office due to lack of domestic support. DeRouen (2000) has provided evidence showing that periods of weak economic performance in the United States, and thus weak Presidential popularity, are statistically linked to an increase in theuse of force. In summary, recent economic scholarship positively correlates economic integration with an increase in the frequency of economic crises, whereas political science scholarship links economic decline with external conflictat systemic, dyadic and national levels.5 This implied connection between integration, crises and armed conflict has not featured prominently in the economic-security debate and deserves more attention.

**High Oil Prices devastate China’s export potential**

**Gangnes 11** (Byron S. Gangnes Department of Economics, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA and Yokohama National University, Yokohama, Japan Alyson C. Ma School of Business Administration, University of San Diego, San Diego, California, USA, and Ari Van Assche Department of International Business, HEC Montre´al, Montre´al, Canada and LICOS Centre of Institutions and Economic Performance, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven, Belgium, “China’s exports in a world of increasing oil prices,” Multinational Business Review19.2, 2011, 133-151)

In the six years leading up to the global recession of 2009-2010, oil prices rose dramatically, from an annual average of roughly US$26 a barrel in 2002 to nearly US$100 a barrel in 2008. In the summer of 2008, prices brieﬂy spiked to nearly US$150 per barrel before receding as the recession deepened. As oil prices surged upward in 2008, business analysts became increasingly worried about the impact of rising oil prices on trade. Rubin and Tal (2008) of CIBC World Markets wrote a thought-provoking article that rising oil prices will lead to signiﬁcant hikes in international **transportation costs** and therefore to a **major slowdown** in the **growth of world trade** – reversing globalization. They reported that hand in hand with the oil price hikes, the cost to ship a standard 40-foot container from Shanghai to the US Eastern seaboard rose from US$3,000 in 2000 to US$8,000 in 2008. At such transport prices, they argued, companies have started to rethink the establishment of far-ﬂung global supply networks, by seeking supplies from domestic and regional markets closer to home. Following on the heels of Rubin and Tal (2008), Jen and Bindelli (2008) of Morgan Stanley Research predicted that East Asia’s and especially **China’s export model** would be **particularly affected** by rising oil prices. This is because trade within East Asia is much more vertically specialized than for other regions. Many of the ﬁnished goods that China exports to America and Europe are made from components imported from Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. Since these regional production networks require components to be shipped multiple times, affordable transport costs are an essential ingredient for their maintenance.

**Chinese exports key to their economy**

**Prasad 08-** Tolani Senior Professor of Trade Policy, Cornell University, United States (Eswar S. PRASAD, May 28th 2008, Is the Chinese growth miracle built to last?, http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1043951X08000321#)

Since the early 1990s, China has integrated into world trade at an astounding pace. **Chinese exports** more than **quintupled** between 1992 and 2007, growing faster than the national economy. The functioning of China's economy has been radically transformed, moving from an isolated position with exports of less than 10% of GDP in 1980 to a highly-integrated economy, with an **export ratio of more than 37%** in 2007. This process has been accompanied by a no less impressive diversiﬁcation of China's trade, as its manufactured exports pervaded **all sectors of world trade**, from low-technology textiles to high-tech electronics and computers. A number of aspects of this trade integration have however puzzled economists. One is the rapid upgrading of China's exports: economists (and world consumers) have noticed the impressively broad range of China's export products since the mid-nineties, and in particular, the ability of Chinese producers to export capital- and skill-intensive products, high-technology products, and in general products that are usually considered as belonging to the area of specialization of more developed countries. Rodrik (2006) notes that China is an outlier regarding the overall sophistication of its exports: according to the sophistication index of Hausmann et al. (2007), which estimates the average “income level of a country's exports”, China's export bundle is similar to that of a country with a level of income per-capita three times larger than China. Using an alternative indicator, Schott (2008) also ﬁnds that China's export bundle is increasingly overlapping with that of the world's most-developed economies, and that this overlap cannot be entirely explained by factor endowments.

**Impact is CCP Collapse and Great Power War**

**Kane 01** [Thomas Kane, PhD in Security Studies from the University of Hull & Lawrence Serewicz, Autumn, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/01autumn/Kane.htm>]

Despite China's problems with its food supply, the Chinese do not appear to be in danger of widespread starvation. Nevertheless, one cannot rule out the prospect entirely, especially if the earth's climate actually is getting warmer. The consequences of general famine in a country with over a billion people clearly would be catastrophic. The effects of oil shortages and industrial stagnation would be less lurid, but economic collapse would **endanger China's political stability** whether that collapse came with a bang or a whimper. PRC society has become dangerously fractured. As the coastal cities grow richer and more cosmopolitan while the rural inland provinces grow poorer, the political interests of the two regions become ever less compatible. Increasing the prospects for division yet further, Deng Xiaoping's administrative reforms have strengthened regional potentates at the expense of central authority. As Kent Calder observes, In part, this change [erosion of power at the center] is a conscious devolution, initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1991 to outflank conservative opponents of economic reforms in Beijing nomenclature. But devolution has fed on itself, spurred by the natural desire of local authorities in the affluent and increasingly powerful coastal provinces to appropriate more and more of the fruits of growth to themselves alone.[ 49] Other social and economic developments deepen the rifts in Chinese society. The one-child policy, for instance, is disrupting traditional family life, with unknowable consequences for Chinese mores and social cohesion.[ 50] As families resort to abortion or infanticide to ensure that their one child is a son, the population may come to include an unprecedented preponderance of young, single men. If common gender prejudices have any basis in fact, these males are unlikely to be a source of social stability. Under these circumstances, China is vulnerable to unrest of many kinds. Unemployment or severe hardship, not to mention actual starvation, could easily trigger popular uprisings. Provincial leaders might be tempted to secede, perhaps openly or perhaps by quietly ceasing to obey Beijing's directives. China's leaders, in turn, might adopt drastic measures to forestall such developments. If faced with internal strife, supporters of China's existing regime may return to a more overt form of communist dictatorship. The PRC has, after all, oscillated between experimentation and orthodoxy continually throughout its existence. Spectacular examples include Mao's Hundred Flowers campaign and the return to conventional Marxism-Leninism after the leftist experiments of the Cultural Revolution, but the process continued throughout the 1980s, when the Chinese referred to it as the "fang-shou cycle." (Fang means to loosen one's grip; shou means to tighten it.)[ 51] If order broke down, the Chinese would not be the only people to suffer. Civil unrest in the PRC would **disrupt trade relationships**, send **refugees** flowing across borders, and force outside powers to **consider intervention**. If different countries chose to intervene on different sides, China's struggle could lead to **major war**. In a less apocalyptic but still grim scenario, China's government might try to ward off its demise by attacking adjacent countries.

**1AC: Economic Reforms**

**Advantage \_\_\_\_\_: Economic Reforms**

**Now Key - Offering to remove oil sanctions provides the political cover necessary for Maduro to implement economic reforms, key to stabilize Venezuela and Latin America, and consolidate hemispheric trade**

**Pagano 13** (James, contributing writer to the Truman Doctrine, “Moving Venezuela to the Center,” 3-18-13, <http://trumanproject.org/doctrine-blog/moving-venezuela-to-the-center/>)

After over a decade in power, Hugo Chavez is now dead, providing U.S. policy makers **an opening to mend fences** and steer Venezuela’s next president **towards the center**. With smart policy and a light touch, the United States can help Venezuela’s next president lead his country out of the mess that Chavez built. Chavez won the presidency in 1999 on a promise to “sow” the oil wealth of Venezuela into its social program. Bolstered by record high oil prices, Chavez spent billions on such programs. While millions of Venezuelans were able to obtain healthcare and an education, the poorly designed programs left little money to reinvest in oil exploration; output in Venezuela declined threatening the longevity of all Chavez’s initiatives. Meanwhile, Chavez became an increasingly authoritarian leader, consolidating power in the executive. He blacklisted opposition figures, altered the constitution and unevenly enforced laws for personal benefit. By creating a steeply slanted playing field, Chavez was able to retain power. Venezuela’s next president will have to decide whether to reverse these trends, or continue **the slide to** outright **authoritarianism**. **The U**nited **S**tates can and should influence this decision. The United States must support the democratic process and engage the likely winner of April’s election, Chavez’s chosen successor, Nicolás Maduro. He will have a real opportunity to put Venezuela back on the path to a free-market democracy. The next president will face an extremely politicized Supreme Court and military and reforms are likely more palatable if made by Maduro. Changes to apportionment, food subsidies or tax rates coming from Enrique Capriles (the opposition candidate) could spark a legal challenge from the supreme court; or worse, opposition from the military. What should **the U.S**. role be? It **must** work with its Latin American allies in the region, Chile, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico to gently **pressure Maduro** into making the types of institutional and economic changes necessary for Venezuela to prosper. Failure to do so could lead to the reemergence of authoritarianism in Latin America, instability in world oil markets and serious regional security repercussions. Chavez was infamous for his anti-American tirades. George W. Bush’s poor global standing gave Chavez an easy target. With a more positive global image, the most important step President Obama can take is to normalize relations with Cuba. As Venezuela’s closest ally, Cuba has remained a persistent problem in U.S.-Latin American relations. By normalizing relations, Obama would take a huge step in reducing anti-Americanism in Venezuela. Simultaneously, Obama would ingratiate himself to the rest of the region by ending the dated embargo. Perhaps most importantly, eliminating this issue would give Venezuela’s next president the political cover necessary to mend relations with the United States. The U.S. should push for **economic reform** with the help of Brazil which seeks a greater role in international and regional politics. Former Brazilian President Lula da Silva has close ties to Venezuela, and touting the recent successes of his center-left government in Brazil could help persuade Maduro to moderate his government. Brazil has made huge societal gains without suffering the kind of economic setbacks seen in Venezuela. Friendly cajoling, along with the **promise of closer economic ties** could help lead Maduro onto a path of **economic reform** necessary to extend certain “Chavista” social programs. Colombia, Brazil and the U.S. also have a shared interest in improving Venezuelan security. Under Chavez, Venezuela became on the most violent countries in Latin America, **as drug related crimes skyrocket**ed. Violence is the number one concern of Venezuelans, and significant reductions would be a major political victory for whoever is in power. Brazil and Colombia together should pressure Venezuela to accept sorely needed D.E.A assistance with the tacit acceptance of modest political reforms, most importantly freer press. The death of Chavez is a critical juncture in U.S.-Latin American relations and it is important the United States not miss this opportunity. Having a **stable trustworthy Venezuela** would allow the United States to continue to **draw down operations** in the ever-volatile **Middle East**, fight **narcotrafficking** and expand **trade**. Careful, well thought-out overtures and policy changes will help quell lingering anti-Americanism while also improving **regional stability**. Ending the Cuban embargo would provide absolute economic gain for all parties, while **providing cover for Maduro** to **thaw relations** with the United States and receive aid to stop uncontrollable violence. **Strategic engagement** with regional allies could help spur the **economic and institutional reforms** necessary for Venezuela to prosper moving forward. The situation in Venezuela could be potentially **destabilizing to the region**. The United must act deliberately to make Hugo Chavez’s passing an unmitigated positive development.

**Venezuelan instability spills over causing global problems**

**Manwaring 05** (Max G., Retired U.S. Army colonel and an Adjunct Professor of International Politics at Dickinson College, VENEZUELA’S HUGO CHÁVEZ, BOLIVARIAN SOCIALISM, AND ASYMMETRIC WARFARE, October 2005, pg. PUB628.pdf)

The Issue of State Failure. - President Chávez also understands that the process leading to state failure is the **most** **dangerous** long-term **security challenge** facing the global community today. The argument in general is that failing and failed state status is the breeding ground for **instability**, criminality, insurgency, **regional conflict**, and terrorism. These conditions breed massive humanitarian disasters and major refugee flows. They can host “evil” networks of all kinds, whether they involve criminal business enterprise, narco-trafficking, or some form of ideological crusade such as Bolivarianismo. More specifically, these conditions spawn all kinds of things people in general do not like such as murder, kidnapping, corruption, intimidation, and destruction of infrastructure. These means of coercion and persuasion can spawn further human rights violations, torture, poverty, starvation, disease, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, trafficking in women and body parts, trafficking and proliferation of conventional weapons systems and **WMD**, **genocide**, ethnic cleansing, warlordism, and criminal anarchy. At the same time, these actions are usually unconfined and **spill over** into regional syndromes of poverty, destabilization, and conflict.62 Peru’s Sendero Luminoso calls violent and destructive activities that facilitate the processes of state failure “armed propaganda.” Drug cartels operating throughout the Andean Ridge of South America and elsewhere call these activities “business incentives.” Chávez considers these actions to be steps that must be taken to bring about the political conditions necessary to establish Latin American socialism for the 21st century.63 Thus, in addition to helping to provide wider latitude to further their tactical and operational objectives, state and nonstate actors’ strategic efforts are aimed at progressively lessening a targeted regime’s credibility and capability in terms of its ability and willingness to govern and develop its national territory and society. Chávez’s intent is to focus his primary attack politically and psychologically on selected Latin American governments’ ability and right to govern. In that context, he understands that popular perceptions of corruption, disenfranchisement, poverty, and lack of upward mobility limit the right and the ability of a given regime to conduct the business of the state. Until a given populace generally perceives that its government is dealing with these and other basic issues of political, economic, and social injustice fairly and effectively, instability and the threat of subverting or destroying such a government are real.64 But failing and failed states simply do not go away. Virtually anyone can take advantage of such an unstable situation. The tendency is that the best motivated and best armed organization on the scene will control that instability. As a consequence, failing and failed states become dysfunctional states, rogue states, criminal states, narco-states, or new people’s democracies. In connection with the creation of new people’s democracies, one can rest assured that Chávez and his Bolivarian populist allies will be available to provide money, arms, and leadership at any given opportunity. And, of course, the longer dysfunctional, rogue, criminal, and narco-states and people’s democracies persist, the more they and their associated problems endanger global security, peace, and prosperity.65

**Latin American conflict goes global**

**Rochlin 94** (James Francis, Prof. Pol. Sci. @ Okanagan University College, “Discovering the Americas: the evolution of Canadian foreign policy towards Latin America”, p. 130-131)

While there were economic motivations for Canadian policy in Central America, security considerations were perhaps more important. Canada possessed an interest in promoting stability in the face of a potential decline of U.S. hegemony in the Americas. Perceptions of declining U.S. influence in the region – which had some credibility in 1979-1984 due to the wildly inequitable divisions of wealth in some U.S. client states in Latin America, in addition to political repression, under-development, mounting external debt, anti-American sentiment produced by decades of subjugation to U.S. strategic and economic interests, and so on – were linked to the prospect of explosive events occurring in the hemisphere. Hence, the Central American imbroglio was viewed as a fuse which could ignite a cataclysmic process throughout the region. Analysts at the time worried that in a worst-case scenario, instability created by a **regional war**, beginning in Central America and spreading elsewhere in Latin America, might preoccupy Washington to the extent that the United States would be unable to perform adequately its important hegemonic role in the international arena – a concern expressed by the director of research for Canada’s Standing Committee Report on Central America. It was feared that such a predicament could generate increased global instability and perhaps even a hegemonic war. This is one of the motivations which led Canada to become involved in efforts at regional conflict resolution, such as Contadora, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

**US-Venezuela trade ties are key combat exclusionary trade agreements, and to pave the way for Hemispheric trade integration, necessary for full WTO realization**

**Hornbeck 11** (J. F. Hornbeck, Specialist in International Trade and Finance, “U.S.-Latin America Trade: Recent Trends and Policy Issues,” 2-8-11, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/98-840.pdf)

The United States and Latin America have pursued trade liberalization through multilateral, regional, and bilateral negotiations, with **mixed results**. In part this reflects divergent priorities that have been difficult to fully reconcile. For many Latin American countries, reducing barriers to agricultural trade is top of the list for a successful agreement. This goal includes reducing market access barriers (peak tariffs and tariff rate quotas—TRQs), domestic U.S. subsidies, and nontariff barriers (administrative rules, antidumping provisions). Although there are many other issues, agriculture policy has played a big part in **slowing progress** in the World Trade Organization (**WTO**) Doha Development Round and halting the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).7 The United States has made clear its unwillingness to address most agricultural and antidumping issues in a regional agreement like the FTAA to preserve its bargaining leverage in the WTO against other subsidizing countries such as the European Union and Japan. Latin American counties have their own sensitive issues and a particular concern in some countries for easing its subsistence agricultural sectors slowly toward trade liberalization. In addition to market access, the United States has focused its trade negotiating goals on areas where it is most competitive such as services trade (e.g., financial, tourism, technology, professional); intellectual property rights (IPR); government procurement; and investment. Not surprisingly, these are areas where many Latin American countries are more reluctant to negotiate. Hence, there is a near reversal of priorities that has slowed the progress of comprehensive agreements at the multilateral and regional levels, reflecting inherent differences between many developed and developing countries. The result in the Western Hemisphere has been the proliferation of reciprocal bilateral and plurilateral agreements. The United States has implemented FTAs with Mexico, Central America, the Dominican Republic, Chile, and Peru, but Congress has not acted on the proposed FTAs with Panama or Colombia, despite changes agreed to even after the formal negotiations concluded. Currently, congressional reticence awaits further commitments in areas that fall outside the negotiated text of the FTAs, such as tax law in Panama and human rights improvements in Colombia, raising questions for some over the ability of the United States to consummate trade negotiations.8 The prospects are limited at best for exploring **reciprocal FTAs** with Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Bolivia, **and Venezuela.** Brazil, as the major regional economy not in a unilateral preferential arrangement with the United States, has abandoned the FTAA model and moved ahead separately by adding associate members to Mercosur, supporting **Venezuela’s accession to Mercosur** as a full member, and leading in the formation of broader economic and political integration pacts in South America. Venezuela’s President Hugo Chávez has taken a decidedly more confrontational approach in establishing the Bolivarian Alternative to the Americas (ALBA), enticing Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Dominica, and Honduras to join with subsidized oil trade.9 Although these are neither deep nor comprehensive trade arrangements, they do signal a political will to consolidate **regional bargaining interests** in juxtaposition to the U.S.-designed FTAA. Three clear challenges emerge from this picture. First, Brazil and the United States have demonstrated a prolonged reluctance to move off their respective positions, which bodes poorly for resurrecting the FTAA.10 The addition of Venezuela and possibly other countries with less than sympathetic attitudes toward the **U**nited **S**tates as full Mercosur members could **solidify this standoff**. Nationalizations of key industries and other efforts to increase the role of the state in managing the economies of Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador also do not augur well for broadening support for market-based trade solutions.

**WTO prevents resource constraints and crises**

**Carbonnier 13** – Professor of Development Economics @ Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies [[Gilles Carbonnier](http://www.cepweb.org/author/gilles-carbonnier/) (Editor-in-chief of International Development Policy, President of the board of directors of CERAH, the Centre for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action, and founding member of CEP), “Resource Scarcity, Export Restrictions and the Multilateral Trading System,” | Council on Economic Policies, April 10, 2013, pg. http://www.cepweb.org/resource-scarcity-export-restrictions-and-the-multilateral-trading-system/

A Greater Role for the WTO? How pivotal should the WTO be in improving the **global governance** of food, energy and minerals? Each commodity market presents its own characteristics with different key players and specific regional and global organisations pursuing different, potentially conflicting, objectives. Enhancing transparency by providing reliable information on stocks and flows is critical to enable importing and exporting countries as well as investors to take early action and avoid panic moves. The **WTO could provide greater transparency** on export restrictions with tighter rules on early notifications and consultations involving all interested parties. Member states could also clarify the interpretation of relevant WTO disciplines, in particular with regard to the temporary application of export restrictions for the sake of preventing or relieving critical shortages of primary commodities deemed essential to exporting countries. It has further been suggested to seek a deal under which importing countries would commit to reduce tariff escalation on processed goods against binding commitment from exporting countries not to impose trade restrictions on primary commodity exports.[[4]](http://www.cepweb.org/resource-scarcity-export-restrictions-and-the-multilateral-trading-system/#_ftn4) Concluding Remarks The Doha Round stalemate does not bode well for rapid advances on the options highlighted above. This should, however, not prevent progress on greater transparency and effective early consultations. For obvious reasons, previous multilateral trade negotiations focused on import protectionism. Today, the WTO should address export restrictions as a matter of priority. An effective multilateral trading system is expected to contribute to **avoiding harmful panic moves** when not justified by market fundamentals, as exemplified by the 2008 rice crisis. On the other hand, the WTO does and can further take into account the legitimate concerns of producer countries, allowing for restrictions deemed essential for national security or environmental protection. This should be part of a broader attempt to strengthen the global institutional architecture dealing with **food and energy security**. It requires considering a myriad of bilateral, regional and global arrangements ranging from informal, voluntary initiatives to systematic data exchange and oversight via the building and sharing of emergency stocks and the clarification of binding rules related to export restrictions. There is no one-size-fits-all solution: each commodity market has its own characteristics with different players and specific risks and vulnerabilities. Yet, the growing nexus between water, food and energy requires factoring the complex interactions between various commodity markets into the analysis with a view to **identifying critical bottlenecks** and devising **early risk management strategies**. Pragmatic multilateralism must contain the tendency to address resource scarcity through bilateral and exclusive deals.

**Extinction**

**Aguilar-Millan 10** – Director of research @ European Fu22tures Observatory [Stephen Aguilar-Millan (Member of the Global Advisory Council of the World Future Society and the Board of the Association of Professional Futurists), Ann Feeney (Member of the Association of Professional Futurists and its board and is a Certified Association Executive), Amy Oberg (Managing partner at Future-In-Sight, LLC. 25 years of experience), and Elizabeth Rudd (Risk assessment consultant), “The Post-Scarcity World of 2050-2075,” The Futurist, Jan/Feb 2010, pg. <http://www.eufo.org/psw1.pdf>]

Historically, there have been periods when large numbers of the global population have been reduced due to war, disease, natural disasters or famine. In the next 75 years, such an episode is likely to occur. The world has **several military hot spots**, and weapons able to **eliminate large portions of the population** are more prevalent than in the past. Rogue states or non-state actors such as terrorist organizations may develop these capabilities over the coming decades. **Resource shortages** may lead to heightened tensions, isolationism by countries, and increasing incidents of violence. In order to reduce the possibility of such incidents, we may see the rise of supranational governance and regulation and continued efforts to resolve conflicts through diplomacy and negotiation. The outbreak of disease is also a threat. A **global pandemic**, which, due to global travel, may spread more rapidly than any outbreak in history, could eliminate large numbers of the population. How widespread, and how great the population loss, will be dependent on the ability to curtail the global outbreak and find a cure or vaccination quickly. Inequities in access to health care mean pre-modern nations are likely to sustain a greater proportion of population loss than more-developed nations. **Famine** has the greater impact in pre-modern nations. Post-modern nations may be able to rely on their supranational relationships to assist them through the tough times. Modern nations may have better resources to manage or avoid food scarcity, but pre-modern nations are heavily dependent on aid from other nations. If globalization and access to finance becomes more difficult, coupled with resource shortages within their own countries, aid may decrease to the pre-modern nations, which will increase the duration and severity of famines. Weather patterns are cyclical. As well, there is a growing body of evidence in the early decades of the century indicating global warming. The severity and occurrence of natural disasters is increasing. If this continues, we are likely to have larger numbers of people displaced, and the death toll is likely to increase. In the early decades of the century, birthrates are much higher in modern and pre-modern countries. Economic development—especially in terms of the advancement of women through access to education, to micro-finance, and to birth control—contributes to reductions in birthrates in pre-modern countries. If pre-modern countries can successfully advance economically, this is likely to contribute to reduced population growth. Population will also impact where and how we live. People have lived in some type of dwelling for most of time, usually with family members. People will continue to live together in dwellings, but what will be the location, form, and ownership of those dwellings? The percentage of the global population living in urban areas is expected to increase from 48% in 2003 to 61% by 2030. The UN estimates that most of these urban dwellers will be in developing countries, living in cities in low-lying coastal areas at high risk from flooding due to global warming, making them vulnerable to natural disasters. As resources become scarce, housing prices are likely to rise, making home ownership less affordable; this may impact living arrangements, meaning more people living together in smaller spaces. This in turn could lead to increased crime rates for theft and violence. This may give rise to the countertrend of a return to villages. Villages afford more space and the ability to attain greater self-sufficiency for essentials like food, water, and power. Individual home ownership is common in many countries. Apartments or condominiums are also often individually owned, or sometimes the whole building is owned by a corporation. As global finance and credit markets become tighter, and resource shortages drive up the cost of housing, we may see more people leasing for longer periods of time and more housing owned by larger corporation and retirement funds. Rents are also likely to increase, so more people will likely share a household, thus reversing the growing trend of oneto two-person households. The materials we use to build and the sources of energy we use to heat and power our homes will likely change. Material shortages may drive innovation in recycled building materials and longer-lasting materials. Wind and solar may become more common sources of power. Rooftop, hydroponic, and vertical gardening could enable residential space to be used for food production, as a shortage of soil and arable land make it harder to feed the world’s growing population. It is difficult to conceive of a society without some form of individual ownership. A world in which all goods, services, and accommodation are provided by the government or by corporations seems unlikely. However, it is possible to conceive of one in which what individuals own, and how goods are consumed, changes due to both the availability of resources and also the materials used. Cradle-to-cradle manufacturing, a closed-cycle manufacturing process where nothing is wasted, may become more commonplace. Planned obsolescence in manufactured goods may become a thing of the past. Leasing of goods, where the manufacturer is responsible for repair and/or replacement and recycling of the item, may become more common. Innovation efforts are likely to focus on these types of efforts as resource availability begins to peak, yet demand continues to increase. While many fantasize about reduced workweeks and more leisure time, for the foreseeable future people will continue to work outside the home to earn an income. Where changes may occur is in the nature and quantity of the work. Statistics indicate that, as many countries develop economically, working hours increase. Resource shortages may mean this will eventually begin to show more balance. As the focus turns to efficiency and resource reuse, people are likely to buy less, which means less is produced, although it may be at a higher cost. Population growth means more adults available to work. This may lead to the elimination of child labor. Access to education for women as well as children may also assist in reducing the number of children working outside the home. Advances in health care and improvements in life span and the quality of life may assist people to remain in the workforce longer; this will be especially beneficial for post-modern countries, where the birthrate typically declines as the country advances economically. Greater numbers of people may enter or remain in the workforce. Reduced working hours may be mandated, in order to create more jobs. More people might work part time. Greater self-reliance may mean more need for time outside of work to spend growing food and tending to other essential activities. The time and activities performed at work are likely to change. Leisure activities are also likely to shift, with more physical activities being more local and distance interactions done virtually through the use of technology. The cost and resources available to enable global leisure travel are likely to experience shortages in the age of scarcity. By 2075, perhaps new technologies to enable low-cost, low impact travel may be developed. The desire to do so, however, is more a question of geopolitics, an issue to which we shall now turn. Post-Scarcity Geopolitics The most-plausible scenario of the development of a post-scarcity society would be driven by advances in nanotechnology or other extensions of materials sciences. So, based on the current infrastructure, the breakthrough developments would most likely take place in Western Europe, the United States, Japan, or South Korea, although China or India, or even one of the oil-wealthy Gulf nations, cannot entirely be ruled out. It would be tempting to follow all these possible scenarios, but for the scope of this paper, we will focus on the assumption that the post-scarcity future begins in the developed, Westernized world. By the time we build a post-scarcity capacity enough to build a post-scarcity economy, there will still be **widespread poverty** in many nations, particularly those that were still developing at the time of “peak everything” and many that reverted to developing-nation status under the hardships of climate change, scarcity of potable water, wars, and environmental degradation. Whether led by a spirit of philanthropy, capitalism, or enlightened self-interest, it seems likely that the originating nations would ensure that other nations would receive at least some of the benefits fairly soon. Much geopolitical conflict derives from scarcity or perceived scarcity of land, water, energy sources, mineral wealth, or other physical objects, ones which would be greatly alleviated by a post-scarcity economy. Eliminating or reducing these causes for conflict would be a great step toward international peace. However, it would not create total peace, largely because the capacity to mount deadly attacks would increase at the same time that some reasons for conflict will remain or might even worsen. Some scholars posit that **all historical conflict has been driven by competition over resources**, and that even wars ostensibly over ideologies were truly about scarcity. Political or ideological dominance were ways to an end, rather than the end itself. Certainly for many wars, such as the Crusades and World War II, their arguments are at least plausible. However, conflicts that might have started over scarcity may still capture hearts, minds, and resources by the enticing trappings of politics, religion, or even simply historical grudges. If, as other scholars believe, humans are **inherently a warlike species**, a postscarcity economy will enhance leaders’ ability to create war over causes that might have seemed trivial during a time when there was scarcity to worry about. The status of the natural world is another area that could create conflict. Many arguments for environmental protection are based on the direct and indirect human benefit of natural land and species conservation. The world’s forests act to sequester carbon, clean the air, regulate the temperature, and house animals and plants of current or potential benefit to humankind. In a post-scarcity society where technology can replace all of those functions, there could well be conflict over the appropriate use of whatever wild areas are left between those who see such areas as having intrinsic value, or possible future extrinsic value, and those who wish to use such land for other purposes. So far, we have just looked at the questions in terms of today’s nations and assumed that today’s nation-states are more or less intact by the time of the post-scarcity society. However, the post-scarcity society may well make both today’s states and the idea of a nationstate obsolete. On the other hand, the twentieth- and twenty-firstcentury creation of international groups and agencies from mutual interests rather than shared borders could replace today’s states in a different way. For example, the European Union formed, as an economic union, the European Economic Community, which itself arose from the European Coal and Steel Community. It has broadened its objectives beyond the purely economic or closely related (e.g., free movement of labor) to include social justice (e.g., its powers to legislate against discrimination), environmental policy, foreign policy, and security issues. If it were to change its charter to be one of shared values and common history, such an organization might not only include Turkey, thus adding part of Asia to its scope, but also traditional allies such as the United States. It might even transcend geography and history to become an alliance of democracies, bringing all of North America and large parts of South America, Asia, Africa, and even parts of the Middle East. Of course, the shadows of colonialism may create too great a barrier for some time, and continental alliances, rather than intercontinental, may come first. Some alliances would be unlikely to continue. OPEC, based on commodity production, would likely disappear. The existing NonAligned Movement, originally formed as a response to NATO and the Warsaw Pact nations, has struggled to define itself and its purpose since the collapse of the Cold War, and even now, its membership has little in common. One remaining unifying theme has been fair and sustainable development, but in a mature post-scarcity world, development would be moot for virtually all nations. On the other hand, a post-scarcity society in which the means of living could be created at a micro level, or even at a household level, could make it possible for small, self-selected communities to exist either as parts of a nation-state but largely independent or as entirely autonomous of a nation-state, even as their own nation-state. History suggests that most of these would be beneficial to their members and at worst harmless to others, but also gives us darker warnings of cults and militant groups that attacked other groups or destroyed themselves and took innocents with them. The ability of these organizations to operate with all the capacities of an autonomous nation in a post-scarcity society is a sobering thought. On the other hand, if the pursuit of these groups is control over themselves and their members and no control from an outside world, or if they can at least settle for this, we might find that post-scarcity geopolitics are in fact the road to a lasting peace. Ultimately, the geopolitics of a post-scarcity world depends upon the interactions of humans and groups. While human nature is a constant, human ethics are not, and most of the world’s history, viewed over a long time span, is what most of us would consider the growth of human ethics. For example, things once considered tolerable by the majority of society, such as slavery and indiscriminate slaughter during war, are now mostly condemned, at least in principle if not always in practice, and are greatly reduced. Perhaps this is what has **enabled us to survive** so far—that, while our technical capacities always run ahead of our ethical development, our ethics do keep up just enough. In order for a post-scarcity society to develop in such a way that it adds to net human freedom, justice, and well-being, we need more than ever to reinforce the principles of equality, generosity, tolerance, compassion, and mutual interdependence in what we teach and in what we model before those who will build the post-scarcity world. These values (or **their lack**) will shape whether the post-scarcity world fulfills its promise or **creates the seeds of the destruction of civilization**. Nowhere will this be felt greater than in the post-scarcity financial system. Pg. 289-297

**Offering to end oil sanctions provides Maduro the cover to make quick adjustments, necessary for stability and undercutting Russian Arctic Oil Development, paving the way for US Middle East Oil Independence and the US Economic Recovery**

**Weafer 13** (Chris Weafer is chief strategist at Sberbank Investment Research, BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union – Political, “No business as usual for Russia in Venezuela – paper,” 3-12-13, Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring)

Despite assurances from government officials in Caracas that it will be business as usual after the death of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez last week, his passing will almost certainly lead to the start of political and social changes in that country. The only question is the **time frame**. Chavez's death and the emergence of a new presidential administration will surely have a significant impact on the global oil industry and price of oil, although perhaps on an even longer timeline. According to the BP Energy Review, Venezuela sits on the world's largest exploitable reserves of oil. Chavez's policies have led not only to no significant exploitation of those reserves but have actually directly led to a cut in the country's average daily oil output by one-third in the 14 years he served as president. In 1999, the country produced an average of 3.5 million barrels per day, while the current average output has dropped to 2.5 million barrels. With the right investments, the country may easily support average daily oil output of 5 million barrels and probably higher, according to industry estimates. There can be little doubt that as of last week, Venezuela has become the **most important target location** for foreign oil majors, especially **US companies**. Russian oil majors still have a small advantage, and senior executives from state-owned Rosneft and Gazprom will be eager to ensure good relations with the next administration. But they must know that there is now a limited window to convert promised cooperation with the Venezuelan state-owned oil company, PDVSA, into actual projects. Oil executives from Houston will soon be descending on Venezuela with lucrative alternatives, and **PDVSA**, in dire need of capital investment, **will** surely **be listening to** their **offers**. For Russia, that means three risks. First, Gazprom and Rosneft will have more competition for joint-venture deals in that country. Second, Venezuela is an **easier alternative** to the hostile and unpredictable **Russian Arctic** for US oil companies, which may make it harder for Moscow to attract joint-venture deals. Finally, the prospect of more oil coming out of Venezuela adds to the growth projections for shale oil as a significant longer-term threat to the price of oil, and therefore, to the Russian economy. None of this will be lost on the Kremlin. It means that there will have to be greater urgency to convert promised deals into real projects in Venezuela. At the same time, the Kremlin will want to conclude more joint ventures to **exploit the Arctic**. It also means that the clock counting down to lower oil revenues is now ticking, increasing the need for more urgent progress in economic reforms. The Venezuelan constitution mandates that a new election must take place within 30 days. As it stands today, the current vice president, Nicolas Maduro, is expected to be elected to replace Chavez. **Maduro** said he **intends to stick with the economic** and political **policies** and ideologies of his former boss, but since Maduro is no Chavez, this will be virtually impossible to achieve. Chavez was a hugely charismatic, larger-than-life leader who managed to maintain unity of purpose among the many vested interests in the country. At the same time, he stayed popular with the people even as the economy slid further into trouble. With oil averaging over 110 dollars per barrel last year, the Venezuelan state budget ran a deficit of close to 20 per cent of gross domestic product. Now that Chavez is gone, the soon-to-be-elected president Maduro will come under **increasing pressure** to take actions to start improving the economy. No different from President Vladimir Putin's situation when he took over an ailing economy in Russia in 2000, **the only place** that the new Venezuelan president can get revenue is from **the oil sector**. But after Chavez practically destroyed PDVSA when he fired 20,000 skilled engineers and other workers in 2002, PDVSA will need a huge boost to capital spending and joint-venture partnerships. Although **politically risky**, Maduro may have no other choice than to ask ExxonMobil and Chevron, two of the **US majors** that had their local projects nationalized by Chavez, **to come back**. Venezuela is certainly an attractive option for the world's big oil majors. Recoverable reserves are now put at just under 300 billion barrels, compared to about 265 billion in Saudi Arabia and less than 100 billion in Russia. Most of Venezuelan oil is heavy and more expensive to refine, but it lies only a few hundred meters below the Orinoco Belt. That makes it a lot more attractive than, for example, speculatively drilling in the hostile Russian Arctic while dodging icebergs. The Orinoco Belt is an extremely important natural environment, and the inevitable objections from domestic, regional and international environmentalists will slow any development. But as has happened in similar situations elsewhere, the quest for the prize will almost certainly prevail. Venezuela needs the money. Venezuela has also very likely moved to near the top of the US government's list of geopolitical priorities. The US is set on a course to become **energy independent**, and the International Energy Agency calculates this may take two to three decades based on current trends and with optimistic assumptions for US shale oil production. Such assumptions have always been speculative when it comes to the oil industry. But a more achievable target for the US is to become **regionally oil independent** -that is, to only source its oil requirements domestically and from Canada, Mexico and now perhaps from **Venezuela**. That would allow the US to become completely independent of Middle East oil within 10 years or so. A change in Venezuela's political and economic priorities would also weaken the Cuban economy since Chavez supplied Cuba with almost free oil. That would hasten the inevitable regime change there as well, an extra bonus for Washington. But while such an outcome would be **very favourable for the US economy**, it would **accelerate the game change** already started in the global oil industry with the rapid growth in **shale oil volumes**. No matter how you work the assumptions, the world is heading for a lot more oil supply over the balance of this decade. New major oil production will come from North America, Iraq and the Caspian Sea, where Kazakhstan's giant Kashagan field starts to produce from this year, almost certainly from Venezuela if a new administration takes concrete steps to increase foreign investment and production in the oil sector. This may be the real reason Russian officials shed a few tears at Chavez's funeral on Friday.

**Russian energy development in the Arctic causes escalating military competition**

**Talmadge 12** (Eric – AP, Huffington Post, “Arctic Climate Change Opening Region To New Military Activity’, 4/16, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/16/arctic-climate-change-military-activity\_n\_1427565.html)

To the world's military leaders, the debate over climate change is long over. **They are preparing for a new kind of Cold War in the Arctic**, anticipating that rising temperatures there will open up a treasure trove of resources, long-dreamed-of sea lanes and **a slew of potential conflicts**. By Arctic standards, **the region is already buzzing with military activity**, and experts believe that **will increase significantly** in the years ahead. Last month, Norway wrapped up one of the largest Arctic maneuvers ever — Exercise Cold Response — with 16,300 troops from 14 countries training on the ice for everything from high intensity warfare to terror threats. Attesting to the harsh conditions, five Norwegian troops were killed when their C-130 Hercules aircraft crashed near the summit of Kebnekaise, Sweden's highest mountain. The U.S., Canada and Denmark held major exercises two months ago, and in an unprecedented move, the military chiefs of the eight main Arctic powers — Canada, the U.S., Russia, Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland — gathered at a Canadian military base last week to specifically discuss regional security issues. None of this means a shooting war is likely at the North Pole any time soon. But as the number of workers and ships increases in the High North to exploit oil and gas reserves, **so will the need for policing, border patrols and** — if push comes to shove — **military muscle to enforce rival claims**. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that 13 percent of the world's undiscovered oil and **30 percent of its untapped natural gas is in the Arctic**. Shipping lanes could be regularly open across the Arctic by 2030 as rising temperatures continue to melt the sea ice, according to a National Research Council analysis commissioned by the U.S. Navy last year. What countries should do about climate change remains a heated political debate. But that has not stopped north-looking militaries from moving ahead with strategies that assume current trends will continue. Russia, Canada and the United States have the biggest stakes in the Arctic. With its military budget stretched thin by Iraq, Afghanistan and more pressing issues elsewhere, the United States has been something of a reluctant northern power, though its nuclear-powered submarine fleet, which can navigate for months underwater and below the ice cap, remains second to none. Russia — one-third of which lies within the Arctic Circle — **has been the most aggressive in establishing itself as the emerging region's superpower**. Rob Huebert, an associate political science professor at the University of Calgary in Canada, said Russia has recovered enough from its economic troubles of the 1990s to significantly rebuild its Arctic military capabilities, which were a key to the overall Cold War strategy of the Soviet Union, and has increased its bomber patrols and submarine activity. He said that has in turn led other Arctic countries — Norway, Denmark and Canada — to resume regional military exercises that they had abandoned or cut back on after the Soviet collapse. Even non-Arctic nations such as France have expressed interest in deploying their militaries to the Arctic. "We have an entire ocean region that had previously been closed to the world now opening up," Huebert said. "There are numerous factors now coming together that are mutually reinforcing themselves, causing a buildup of military capabilities in the region. **This is only going to increase as time goes on**." Noting that the Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the globe, the U.S. Navy in 2009 announced a beefed-up Arctic Roadmap by its own task force on climate change that called for a three-stage strategy to increase readiness, build cooperative relations with Arctic nations and identify areas of potential conflict. "**We want to maintain our edge up there**," said Cmdr. Ian Johnson, the captain of the USS Connecticut, which is one of the U.S. Navy's most Arctic-capable nuclear submarines and was deployed to the North Pole last year. "Our interest in **the Arctic** has never really waned. It **remains very important**." **But the U.S. remains ill-equipped for large-scale Arctic missions**, according to a simulation conducted by the U.S. Naval War College. A summary released last month found the Navy is "inadequately prepared to conduct sustained maritime operations in the Arctic" because it **lacks ships** able to operate in or near Arctic ice, **support facilities and adequate communications**. "The findings indicate the Navy is entering a new realm in the Arctic," said Walter Berbrick, a War College professor who participated in the simulation. "Instead of other nations relying on the U.S. Navy for capabilities and resources, sustained operations in the Arctic region will require the Navy to rely on other nations for capabilities and resources." He added that although the U.S. nuclear submarine fleet is a major asset, the Navy has severe gaps elsewhere — **it doesn't have any icebreakers**, for example. The only one in operation belongs to the Coast Guard. **The U.S. is currently mulling whether to add more icebreakers**.

**De-escalation is key to prevent Arctic conflicts from going nuclear – draws in major powers**

**Wallace and Staples 10** (Michael Wallace and Steven Staples. \*Professor Emeritus at the University of British Columbia and President of the Rideau Institute in Ottawa “Ridding the Arctic of Nuclear Weapons: A Task Long Overdue,”http://www.arcticsecurity.org/docs/arctic-nuclear-report-web.pdf)

The fact is, the Arctic is becoming a zone of increased military competition. Russian President Medvedev has announced the creation of a special military force to defend Arctic claims. Last year Russian General Vladimir Shamanov declared that Russian troops would step up training for Arctic combat, and that Russia’s submarine fleet would increase its “operational radius.” 55 Recently, two Russian attack submarines were spotted off the U.S. east coast for the first time in 15 years. 56 In January 2009, on the eve of Obama’s inauguration, President Bush issued a National Security Presidential Directive on Arctic Regional Policy. It affirmed as a priority the preservation of U.S. military vessel and aircraft mobility and transit throughout the Arctic, including the Northwest Passage, **and foresaw greater capabilities to protect U.S. borders in the Arctic**. 57 The Bush administration’s disastrous eight years in office, particularly its decision to withdraw from the ABM treaty and deploy missile defence interceptors and a radar station in Eastern Europe, have greatly contributed to the instability we are seeing today, even though the Obama administration has scaled back the planned deployments. The Arctic has figured in this renewed interest in Cold War weapons systems, particularly the upgrading of the Thule Ballistic Missile Early Warning System radar in Northern Greenland for ballistic missile defence. The Canadian government, as well, has put forward new military capabilities to protect Canadian sovereignty claims in the Arctic, including proposed ice-capable ships, a northern military training base and a deep-water port. Earlier this year Denmark released an all-party defence position paper that suggests the country should create a dedicated Arctic military contingent that draws on army, navy and air force assets with shipbased helicopters able to drop troops anywhere. 58 Danish fighter planes would be tasked to patrol Greenlandic airspace. Last year Norway chose to buy 48 Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jets, partly because of their suitability for Arctic patrols. In March, that country held a major Arctic military practice involving 7,000 soldiers from 13 countries in which a fictional country called Northland seized offshore oil rigs. 59 The manoeuvres prompted a protest from Russia – which objected again in June after Sweden held its largest northern military exercise since the end of the Second World War. About 12,000 troops, 50 aircraft and several warships were involved. 609 Ridding the Arctic of Nuclear Weapons: A Task Long Overdue Jayantha Dhanapala, President of Pugwash and former UN under-secretary for disarmament affairs, summarized the situation bluntly: “From those in the international peace and security sector, **deep concerns are being expressed over the fact that two nuclear weapon states** – the United States and the Russian Federation, which **together own 95 per cent of the nuclear weapons in the world** **– converge on the Arctic and have competing claims**. These claims, together **with those of other allied NATO countries** – Canada, Denmark, Iceland, and Norway – could, **if unresolved**, **lead to conflict escalating into the threat or use of nuclear weapons**.” 61 Many will no doubt argue that this is excessively alarmist, but **no circumstance in which nuclear powers find themselves in military confrontation can be taken lightly**. The current geo-political threat level is nebulous and low – for now, according to Rob Huebert of the University of Calgary, “[the] issue is the uncertainty as Arctic states and non-Arctic states begin to recognize the geo-political/economic significance of the Arctic because of climate change.” 62

**Extinction – it’s categorically different from all other impacts**

**Bostrom 2** (Nick, PhD Philosophy – Oxford University, “Existential Risks: Analyzing Human Extinction Scenarios”, Journal of Evolution and Technology, Vol. 9, March, http://www.nickbostrom.com/existential/risks.html)

The unique challenge of existential risks Risks in this sixth category are a recent phenomenon. This is part of the reason why **it is useful to distinguish them from other risks**. We have not evolved mechanisms, either biologically or culturally, for managing such risks. Our intuitions and coping strategies have been shaped by our long experience with risks such as dangerous animals, hostile individuals or tribes, poisonous foods, automobile accidents, Chernobyl, Bhopal, volcano eruptions, earthquakes, draughts, World War I, World War II, epidemics of influenza, smallpox, black plague, and AIDS. These types of disasters have occurred many times and our cultural attitudes towards risk have been shaped by trial-and-error in managing such hazards. But tragic as such events are to the people immediately affected, in the big picture of things – from the perspective of humankind as a **whole – even the worst of these catastrophes are** **mere ripples** **on the surface of the great sea of life**. They haven’t significantly affected the total amount of human suffering or happiness **or determined the long-term fate of our species**. With the exception of a species-destroying comet or asteroid impact (an extremely rare occurrence), there were probably no significant existential risks in human history until the mid-twentieth century, and certainly none that it was within our power to do something about. The first manmade existential risk was the inaugural detonation of an atomic bomb. At the time, there was some concern that the explosion might start a runaway chain-reaction by “igniting” the atmosphere. Although we now know that such an outcome was physically impossible, it qualifies as an existential risk that was present at the time. For there to be a risk, given the knowledge and understanding available, it suffices that there is some subjective probability of an adverse outcome, even if it later turns out that objectively there was no chance of something bad happening. If we don’t know whether something is objectively risky or not, then it is risky in the subjective sense. The subjective sense is of course what we must base our decisions on.[[2]](http://www.nickbostrom.com/existential/risks.html#_ftn2) At any given time we must use our best current subjective estimate of what the objective risk factors are.[[3]](http://www.nickbostrom.com/existential/risks.html#_ftn3) **A much greater existential risk** **emerged with the build-up of nuclear arsenals in the US and** the **USSR**. **An all-out nuclear war was a possibility with both a substantial probability and with consequences that might** have been persistent enough to **qualify as global and terminal**. There was a real worry among those best acquainted with the information available at the time that a nuclear Armageddon would occur and that it **might annihilate our species** or permanently destroy human civilization.[[4]](http://www.nickbostrom.com/existential/risks.html#_ftn4)  Russia and the US retain large nuclear arsenals that could be used in a future confrontation, either accidentally or deliberately. There is also a risk that other states may one day build up large nuclear arsenals. Note however that **a smaller nuclear exchange**, between India and Pakistan for instance, **is not an existential risk, since it would not destroy** or thwart **humankind’s potential permanently**. Such a war might however be a local terminal risk for the cities most likely to be targeted. Unfortunately, we shall see that nuclear Armageddon and comet or asteroid strikes are mere preludes to the existential risks that we will encounter in the 21st century.

**Middle East oil dependence erodes US Hegemony**

**Miller 12** [Paul, assistant professor of international-security studies at the National Defense University, “Fading Arab Oil Empire”, 6/28/12, <http://nationalinterest.org/article/the-fading-arab-oil-empire-7072?page=1>]

SINCE 1945, the United States has rightly sought to prevent any single power from dominating the Middle East’s oil supplies. An oil hegemon, whether Soviet, Baathist, Nasserite, Iranian or Islamist, would have had the capacity to blackmail the United States and the world with economic warfare. To that end, the United States supported anticommunist monarchies and autocracies in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain, among others, during the Cold War. It has armed Saudi Arabia with a staggering $81.6 billion of arms sales since 1950, almost a fifth of all U.S. weapons shipments. It supported Iraq against Iran in the 1980s before fighting Iraq to defend Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in 1990–1991. After the 2001 terrorist attacks, it further bolstered ties in the region, adding Kuwait, Bahrain and Morocco to its collection of major non-NATO allies, which includes Egypt, Israel and Jordan. In 2003, it invaded and occupied Iraq over fears, later proven overblown, that Iraq’s WMD proliferation might give Saddam Hussein or allied terrorists unacceptable leverage in the region. The U.S. military’s Central Command, formed in 1983, has a forward headquarters in Qatar, and the U.S. Navy’s Fifth Fleet is based in Bahrain. This military infrastructure guarantees a long-term U.S. military presence in the region. Those policies were largely sensible efforts to maintain the security of world energy supplies. However, they make less sense in light of the brewing realities in the world oil market. These developments—the world’s increasing energy efficiency and the Middle East’s loss of its comparative advantage in oil production—will take time to play out fully. But they have been under way for several decades already. In two decades or so, the global oil market and the Middle East’s geopolitical influence will be dramatically different from what they are today. The Middle East will remain an important player, but it will no longer be able to act as the “central bank of oil,” as the princes of Saudi Arabia style their kingdom. Moreover, it will forever lose the ability to credibly threaten to wield oil as a weapon. The sword of Damocles that has implicitly hovered over the West since the 1970s will be gone. That means the central goal of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East will essentially be achieved: no power will be able to threaten the United States with unacceptable leverage over the American economy. That is because oil itself will be less important, and the world oil market will be more diffuse and diverse. The importance of this development cannot be overstated. It is a tectonic shift in the geopolitical balance of power, a strategically pivotal development only slightly less momentous than the fall of the Soviet Union. It is the slow-motion collapse of the Middle Eastern oil empire. In turn, the United States can and should begin to **adapt its foreign policy** to reflect these realities. It can look with more complacency on the rise and fall of particular regimes across the Middle East and North Africa. The Arab Spring, even if it brings to power moderate Islamist governments, is unlikely to threaten American interests. Washington also can play a less active part in conflicts between states, reverting to a role more like its indirect support for Iraq against Iran and less like its direct involvement in the 1991 and 2003 Iraq wars. Further, it can speak out more freely against tyranny and human-rights abuses, especially in Saudi Arabia, one of the most oppressive countries on earth. It can reclaim its position as the advocate of global liberalism, undoing the damage to the U.S. brand done by its close association with Middle Eastern dictators. THE UNITED States has additional interests in the Middle East, but they are outweighed by those in other parts of the world. For example, the region is a hotbed of terrorism and may become a major locus of WMD proliferation. But South Asia hosts terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda, that threaten the United States more directly. Further, South Asia is home to two declared nuclear powers. Thus, South Asia—not the Middle East—should be the focus of U.S. counterterrorism and counterproliferation efforts in coming decades. Additionally, the Middle East has two of the world’s most important choke points for ocean-going trade: the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz. But governments in the region, heavily reliant on exports, have strong interests in keeping trade routes open. Despite Iranian leaders’ recent threats, no government is likely to cut off its own economic lifeline voluntarily. Meanwhile, the Malacca Strait in East Asia will remain important for a diverse array of ocean-going trade for the foreseeable future. Finally, the United States rightly is committed to Israel’s security. If Iran succeeds in building a nuclear weapon, Israel could face a potential existential threat—the same threat fellow U.S. allies in East Asia, including South Korea, Taiwan and Japan, have been facing from North Korea since 2006. Once again, U.S. interests in the Middle East are no more, and probably less, important than U.S. interests in other regions. The changing realities of the world energy market do not mean the United States can or should ignore the Middle East. Certainly, Israel’s security and Iran’s behavior will keep the region a focus for policy makers’ attention. But, placed in a global perspective, the United States has more or **deeper interests at stake in other regions** of the world—especially Europe and Asia—than in the Middle East. Budget cuts are concentrating minds inside the Beltway with newfound discipline. And a new presidential term begins next January, either with President Obama or Mitt Romney taking over. This confluence of events gives American policy makers a powerful opportunity to reassess U.S. grand strategy, along with its attendant military-deployment and force structure. As they do so, they should recognize the emerging realities in the Middle East. Our rationale for guaranteeing the region’s stability in exchange for cheap oil is fading, and that mission quickly is becoming more trouble than it is worth.

**US Hegemony prevents global nuclear conflicts**

**Kagan 07 Senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace** [Robert Kagan (Senior transatlantic fellow at the German Marshall Fund), “End of Dreams, Return of History,” Policy Review, August & September 2007, pg. http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/8552512.html]

The jostling for status and influence among these ambitious nations and would-be nations is a second defining feature of the new post-Cold War international system. Nationalism in all its forms is back, if it ever went away, and so is international competition for power, influence, honor, and status. American predominance prevents these **rivalries from intensifying** — its regional as well as its global predominance. Were the United States to diminish its influence in the regions where it is currently the strongest power, the other nations would settle disputes as great and lesser powers have done in the past: sometimes through diplomacy and accommodation but often through confrontation and wars of varying scope, intensity, and destructiveness. One novel aspect of such a multipolar world is that most of these powers would possess **nuclear weapons**. That could make wars between them less likely, or it could simply make them more catastrophic. It is easy but also dangerous to underestimate the role the United States plays in providing a measure of stability in the world even as it also disrupts stability. For instance, the United States is the dominant naval power everywhere, such that other nations cannot compete with it even in their home waters. They either happily or grudgingly allow the United States Navy to be the guarantor of international waterways and trade routes, of international access to markets and raw materials such as oil. Even when the United States engages in a war, it is able to play its role as guardian of the waterways. In a more genuinely multipolar world, however, it would not. Nations would compete for naval dominance at least in their own regions and possibly beyond. Conflict between nations would involve struggles on the oceans as well as on land. Armed embargos, of the kind used in World War I and other major conflicts, would disrupt trade flows in a way that is now impossible. Such order as exists in the world rests not merely on the goodwill of peoples but on a foundation provided by American power. Even the European Union, that great geopolitical miracle, owes its founding to American power, for without it the European nations after World War ii would never have felt secure enough to reintegrate Germany. Most Europeans recoil at the thought, but even today Europe’s stability depends on the guarantee, however distant and one hopes unnecessary, that the United States could step in to check any dangerous development on the continent. In a genuinely multipolar world, that would not be possible without renewing the danger of world war. People who believe greater equality among nations would be preferable to the present American predominance often succumb to a basic logical fallacy. They believe the order the world enjoys today exists independently of American power. They imagine that in a world where American power was diminished, the aspects of international order that they like would remain in place. But that’s not the way it works. International order does not rest on ideas and institutions. It is shaped by configurations of power. The international order we know today reflects the distribution of power in the world since World War II, and especially since the end of the Cold War. A different configuration of power, a multipolar world in which the poles were Russia, China, the United States, India, and Europe, would produce its own kind of order, with different rules and norms reflecting the interests of the powerful states that would have a hand in shaping it. Would that international order be an improvement? Perhaps for Beijing and Moscow it would. But it is doubtful that it would suit the tastes of enlightenment liberals in the United States and Europe. The current order, of course, is not only far from perfect but also offers no guarantee against major conflict among the world’s great powers. Even under the umbrella of unipolarity, regional conflicts involving the large powers may erupt. War could erupt between **China and Taiwan** and draw in both the United States and Japan. War could erupt between **Russia and Georgia**, forcing the United States and its European allies to decide whether to intervene or suffer the consequences of a Russian victory. Conflict between **India and Pakistan** remains possible, as does conflict between **Iran and Israel** or other Middle Eastern states. These, too, could draw in other great powers, including the United States. Such conflicts may be unavoidable no matter what policies the United States pursues. But they are more likely to erupt if the United States weakens or withdraws from its positions of regional dominance. This is especially true in East Asia, where most nations agree that a reliable American power has a stabilizing and pacific effect on the region. That is certainly the view of most of China ’s neighbors. But even China, which seeks gradually to supplant the United States as the dominant power in the region, faces the dilemma that an American withdrawal could unleash an ambitious, independent, nationalist Japan. In Europe, too, the departure of the United States from the scene — even if it remained the world’s most powerful nation — could be destabilizing. It could tempt Russia to an even more overbearing and potentially forceful approach to unruly nations on its periphery. Although some realist theorists seem to imagine that the disappearance of the Soviet Union put an end to the possibility of confrontation between Russia and the West, and therefore to the need for a permanent American role in Europe, history suggests that conflicts in Europe involving Russia are possible even without Soviet communism. If the United States withdrew from Europe — if it adopted what some call a strategy of “offshore balancing” — this could in time increase the likelihood of conflict involving Russia and its near neighbors, which could in turn draw the United States back in under unfavorable circumstances. It is also optimistic to imagine that a retrenchment of the American position in the Middle East and the assumption of a more passive, “offshore” role would lead to greater stability there. The vital interest the United States has in access to oil and the role it plays in keeping access open to other nations in Europe and Asia make it unlikely that American leaders could or would stand back and hope for the best while the powers in the region battle it out. Nor would a more “even-handed” policy toward Israel, which some see as the magic key to unlocking peace, stability, and comity in the Middle East, obviate the need to come to Israel ’s aid if its security became threatened. That commitment, paired with the American commitment to protect strategic oil supplies for most of the world, practically ensures a heavy American military presence in the region, both on the seas and on the ground. The subtraction of American power from any region would not end conflict but would simply change the equation. In the Middle East, competition for influence among powers both inside and outside the region has raged for at least two centuries. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism doesn’t change this. It only adds a new and more threatening dimension to the competition, which neither a sudden end to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians nor an immediate American withdrawal from Iraq would change. **The alternative to American predominance** in the region **is not balance and peace**. It is further competition. The region and the states within it remain relatively weak. A diminution of American influence would not be followed by a diminution of other external influences. One could expect deeper involvement by both China and Russia, if only to secure their interests. 18 And one could also expect the more powerful states of the region, particularly Iran, to expand and fill the vacuum. It is doubtful that any American administration would voluntarily take actions that could shift the balance of power in the Middle East further toward Russia, China, or Iran. The world hasn ’t changed that much. An American withdrawal from Iraq will not return things to “normal” or to a new kind of stability in the region. It will produce a new instability, one likely to draw the United States back in again. The alternative to American regional predominance in the Middle East and elsewhere is not a new regional stability. In an era of burgeoning nationalism, the future is likely to be one of intensified competition among nations and nationalist movements. Difficult as it may be to extend American predominance into the future, no one should imagine that a reduction of American power or a retraction of American influence and global involvement will provide an easier path.