# trump base DA – NU

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## topline

### 1nc – da

#### Trump’s base support is high now

Grace Sparks 6/7/18, Associate Producer, CNN Politics, "Trump approval ticking up in new poll", CNN, https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/07/politics/trump-approval-nbc-wsj/index.html

Washington (CNN) – President Donald Trump's approval has moved to 44% among registered voters, according to a new poll from NBC/WSJ, an improvement from the 39% approval he saw in April among all adults. The number of those who say they "strongly approve" of Trump has improved as well, moving from 22% to 26%. While this doesn't necessarily mean that the President has been adding new voters, it likely reflects Trump's base moving back towards him in fluctuations of approving or disapproving of his actions, month to month. According to NBC, Trump's approval has been inching up among Trump voters, Republicans, rural voters and whites. These are all groups that are originally a part of the President's base voters, showing that he is garnering stronger support from the same people, not necessarily adding new voters.

#### the plan causes total revolt and immediate base defection

Jason Silverstein 17, national politics reporter covering the Trump administration and related stories, "Trump base in Congress and right-wing media panic over his softer stance on immigration and border wall", nydailynews, http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/trump-base-congress-media-panic-softer-immigration-views-article-1.3495942

President Trump's softer stance on his border wall is cracking his base. Die-hard conservatives in Congress and the mainstream media erupted in a mass panic after reports that Trump is willing to work with Democrats on a moderate immigration package that excludes funding for his promised Mexico border wall. If Trump yields on that campaign promise, "Trump base is blown up, destroyed, irreparable, and disillusioned beyond repair. No promise is credible," Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa), an immigration hard-liner, tweeted Wednesday night. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) tweeted to Trump Thursday morning and said the President's pact with the opposing party will "undercut" efforts for a bipartisan agreement. He asked in the tweet for Trump's staff to brief him on where the President stands now. Conservative commentators who have loyally supported Trump were even harsher. "If we're not getting a wall, I'd prefer President Pence," Ann Coulter tweeted. In another message, she wrote, "At this point, who DOESN'T want Trump impeached?" Fox News host Sean Hannity [compared](https://twitter.com/seanhannity/status/908174113457541120) Trump's apparent change of heart to President George H.W. Bush's notorious "read my lips, no new taxes" campaign promise. Bush's break of that pledge was widely cited as a major factor in him becoming a one-term President. Laura Ingraham, who will soon have her own Fox News slot, called Trump's apparent new support for some undocumented immigrants a betrayal of his promises to American workers. "When does American working class w/out real wage increase in 15yrs & who send their kids to overcrowded public schools get amnesty?" she tweeted. The chaos broke out after Trump on Wednesday dined with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and seemed to emerge with a more left-leaning stance on immigration. According to Schumer's office, Trump agreed to an immigration deal that will bring stronger border security and protection for immigrants covered by DACA — but no money for his wall, which he wanted Congress to fund. The White House disputed Schumer's account, but in tweets and public remarks on Thursday, Trump seemed to confirm his intentions to protect Dreamer immigrants and delay funding efforts for the wall. Both those actions would contradict some of his signature campaign platforms. As a candidate, Trump said he would "immediately" cancel DACA as part of his promised crackdown on illegal immigration. He also said the wall would get built with Mexico, or Congress, footing the bill — but so far, there has been barely any action to begin its construction or secure full funding.

#### The impact is lash-out – causes *4 major wars a year*

Dennis Foster 16, professor of international studies and political science at the Virginia Military Institute, "Would President Trump go to war to divert attention from problems at home?," https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/12/19/yes-trump-might-well-go-to-war-to-divert-attention-from-problems-at-home/?utm\_term=.cc7194c00f20

If the U.S. economy tanks, should we expect Donald Trump to engage in a diversionary war? Since the age of Machiavelli, analysts have expected world leaders to launch international conflicts to deflect popular attention away from problems at home. By stirring up feelings of patriotism, leaders might escape the political costs of scandal, unpopularity — or a poorly performing economy. One often-cited example of diversionary war in modern times is Argentina’s 1982 invasion of the Falklands, which several (though not all) political scientists attribute to the junta’s desire to divert the people’s attention from a disastrous economy. In a 2014 article, Jonathan Keller and I argued that whether U.S. presidents engage in diversionary conflicts depends in part on their psychological traits — how they frame the world, process information and develop plans of action. Certain traits predispose leaders to more belligerent behavior. Do words translate into foreign policy action? One way to identify these traits is content analyses of leaders’ rhetoric. The more leaders use certain types of verbal constructs, the more likely they are to possess traits that lead them to use military force. For one, conceptually simplistic leaders view the world in “black and white” terms; they develop unsophisticated solutions to problems and are largely insensitive to risks. Similarly, distrustful leaders tend to exaggerate threats and rely on aggression to deal with threats. Distrustful leaders typically favor military action and are confident in their ability to wield it effectively. Thus, when faced with politically damaging problems that are hard to solve — such as a faltering economy — leaders who are both distrustful and simplistic are less likely to put together complex, direct responses. Instead, they develop simplistic but risky “solutions” that divert popular attention from the problem, utilizing the tools with which they are most comfortable and confident (military force). Based on our analysis of the rhetoric of previous U.S. presidents, we found that presidents whose language appeared more simplistic and distrustful, such as Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower and George W. Bush, were more likely to use force abroad in times of rising inflation and unemployment. By contrast, John F. Kennedy and Bill Clinton, whose rhetoric pegged them as more complex and trusting, were less likely to do so. What about Donald Trump? Since Donald Trump’s election, many commentators have expressed concern about how he will react to new challenges and whether he might make quick recourse to military action. For example, the Guardian’s George Monbiot has argued that political realities will stymie Trump’s agenda, especially his promises regarding the economy. Then, rather than risk disappointing his base, Trump might try to rally public opinion to his side via military action. I sampled Trump’s campaign rhetoric, analyzing 71,446 words across 24 events from January 2015 to December 2016. Using a program for measuring leadership traits in rhetoric, I estimated what Trump’s words may tell us about his level of distrust and conceptual complexity. The graph below shows Trump’s level of distrust compared to previous presidents. These results are startling. Nearly 35 percent of Trump’s references to outside groups paint them as harmful to himself, his allies and friends, and causes that are important to him — a percentage almost twice the previous high. The data suggest that Americans have elected a leader who, if his campaign rhetoric is any indication, will be historically unparalleled among modern presidents in his active suspicion of those unlike himself and his inner circle, and those who disagree with his goals.. As a candidate, Trump also scored second-lowest among presidents in conceptual complexity. Compared to earlier presidents, he used more words and phrases that indicate less willingness to see multiple dimensions or ambiguities in the decision-making environment. These include words and phrases like “absolutely,” “greatest” and “without a doubt.” A possible implication for military action I took these data on Trump and plugged them into the statistical model that we developed to predict major uses of force by the United States from 1953 to 2000. For a president of average distrust and conceptual complexity, an economic downturn only weakly predicts an increase in the use of force. But the model would predict that a president with Trump’s numbers would respond to even a minor economic downturn with an increase in the use of force. For example, were the misery index (aggregate inflation and unemployment) equal to 12 — about where it stood in October 2011 — the model predicts a president with Trump’s psychological traits would initiate more than one major conflict per quarter.

### 2nc – overview

#### Trump diversion outweighs and complicates the case. Decline of base support increases the propensity for inciting a war with another major power – robust studies predict *4 new conflicts every year* if his popularity declines – that’s Foster.

#### Those wars go nuclear

Tim **Street 16**, Senior Programme Officer on the Sustainable Security programme at ORG and has worked for many years on the politics of nuclear disarmament and the arms trade, 11-30-2016, "President Trump: Successor to the Nuclear Throne," No Publication, http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/publications/briefing\_papers\_and\_reports/president\_trump\_successor\_nuclear\_throne

Donald Trump’s arrival in the White House as US President has deeply unnerved people from across the political spectrum, both inside the US and around the world. The fact that many regard Trump as an indecent individual and his government as potentially the number one threat to their dignity, liberty and life means that the civil strife already raging in the US is unlikely to fade away soon. The wide-ranging implications of Trump’s election to the most powerful office on Earth—for the peace and stability of both that nation and the world—cannot be emphasised enough. In this regard, of the many uncertainties and worries brought on by a Trump presidency, the two existential questions of climate change and nuclear war stand out. With the former, Trump’s recent comment that he now has an ‘open mind’ about the importance of the Paris climate agreement—having previously said climate change is a ‘hoax’—is unlikely to assuage fears that he will seek to dramatically expand the US’s extraction and reliance on fossil fuels. With the latter, strong doubts have been raised over whether the new President is capable of responsibly handling the incredible power that will be at his fingertips. Moreover, several commentators are already raising concerns that a Trump administration will pursue policies that will aggravate and disappoint his supporters, a situation that could increase the possibility of the US engaging in a ‘diversionary’ war. In order to consider what we can expect from a Trump presidency, as well as noting whom Trump empowers as members of his cabinet and those whom he draws on for advice, it is vital to study the track record of recent administrations and appreciate the powers Trump will inherit. In doing so this briefing focuses on the question of what a Trump presidency might mean for international relations with a focus on nuclear arms, including doctrine and disarmament. This means reviewing policies relevant to the US’s nuclear arsenal and pressing international challenges such as non-proliferation, including in East Asia and the Middle East, as well as the US’s relationship with Russia and its role in NATO. The power and responsibilities of the nuclear monarch The US President is solely responsible for the decision to use the near-unimaginably destructive power of the nation’s nuclear arsenal. Thus, as Bruce Blair—a former intercontinental ballistic missile launch control officer—makes clear, ‘Trump will have the sole authority to launch nuclear weapons whenever he chooses with a single phone call.’ The wider political meaning of the bomb for the world is aptly summarised by Daniel Deudney, who describes nuclear weapons as ‘intrinsically despotic’ so that they have created ‘nuclear monarchies’ in all nuclear-armed states. Deudney identifies three related reasons for this development: ‘the speed of nuclear use decisions; the concentration of nuclear use decision into the hands of one individual; and the lack of accountability stemming from the inability of affected groups to have their interests represented at the moment of nuclear use’. Similarly, Elaine Scarry has explained in stark terms in her 2014 book Thermonuclear Monarchy: Choosing between Democracy and Doom, how the possession of nuclear weapons has converted the US government into ‘a monarchic form of rule that places all defense in the executive branch of government’ leaving the population ‘incapacitated’. In response to this situation, Scarry argues that the American people must use the Constitution as a tool to dismantle the US nuclear weapons system, thereby revitalising democratic participation and control over decision-making. Scarry also outlines the incredible might the president wields, with each of the US’s fourteen nuclear-armed submarines alone carrying ‘enough power to destroy the people of an entire continent’, equivalent to ‘eight times the full-blast power expended by Allied and Axis countries in World War II’. Nuclear specialist Hans Kristensen has described how the US’s strategic nuclear war plan ‘if unleashed in its full capacity’ could ‘kill hundreds of millions of people, devastate entire nations, and cause climatic effects on a global scale’. This war plan consists of a ‘family of plans’ that is aimed at ‘six potential adversaries’ whose identities are kept secret. Kristensen understands that they include ‘potentially hostile countries with nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons (WMD)’, meaning China, North Korea, Iran, Russia and Syria as well as a terrorist group backed by a state that has conducted a catastrophic WMD attack. The ‘dominant mission’ for US nuclear weapons within these plans is termed counterforce, meaning strikes on ‘military, mostly nuclear, targets and the enemy’s leadership’. Despite these plans, the US’s nuclear arsenal is often described by mainstream commentators as being solely intended to ensure mutual assured destruction (MAD), i.e. as part of the ‘balance of terror’ with Russia, in order to prevent armed conflict between the two nations and to ensure a response in kind to a surprise nuclear attack. However, as Joseph Gerson and John Feffer explain, rather than deterrence just being about enough nuclear forces surviving a surprise first strike attack to ensure MAD, US military planners have also understood it to mean ‘preventing other nations from taking “courses of action” that are inimical to US interests’. David McDonough thus describes the ‘long-standing goal of American nuclear war-planners’ as being the achievement of the ability to launch a disarming first-strike against an opponent- otherwise known as nuclear superiority. This has been magnified in recent years as the US seeks to ‘prevent’ or ‘rollback’ the ability of weaker states—both nuclear and non-nuclear powers—to establish or maintain a deterrence relationship. Taking all this into account, the new commander-in-chief’s apparently volatile temperament thus raises deep concerns since his finger will be on the nuclear trigger as soon as he assumes office on 20th January 2017. Given his past experience, Bruce Blair’s statement that he is ‘scared to death’ by the idea of a Trump presidency is but one further reason why urgent discussion and action, both in the US and globally, on lessening nuclear dangers—and reviving disarmament—is vital. A recent report by the Ploughshares Fund on how the US can reduce its nuclear spending, reform its nuclear posture and restrain its nuclear war plans should thus be required reading in Washington. However, as the Economist has rightly noted, ‘It is not Mr Trump’s fault that the system, in which the vulnerable land-based missile force is kept on hair-trigger alert, is widely held to be inherently dangerous’ since, as they point out, ‘no former president, including Barack Obama, has done anything to change it.’ Over sixty years after the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclearism thus remains very much embedded in the nation’s strategic thinking. Yet the election of Obama, and the rhetoric of his 2009 Prague speech, in which he stated ‘America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons’ led many to think that a real change was on the cards. Obama’s visit to Hiroshima earlier this year to commemorate the bombings was thus a painful reminder of how wide the gap is between the rearmament programmes that the US and other nuclear weapon states are engaged in and the disarmament action that they are legally obliged to pursue under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). Obama himself said in Japan that, ‘technological progress without an equivalent progress in human institutions can doom us. The scientific revolution that led to the splitting of an atom requires a moral revolution as well.’ For this statement to be meaningful it is necessary to identify who is responsible for the existing, highly dangerous state of affairs. In short, the US government’s recent record supports Scarry’s suggestion that a democratic revolution is what, in reality, is most needed if the US is to make substantial progress on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Short-term reforms towards the democratic control and ultimate dismantlement of the US’s nuclear arsenal have been outlined by Kennette Benedict, who writes that the next administration should: place our nuclear weapons on a much lower level of launch readiness, release to the public more information about the nuclear weapons in our own arsenals, include legislators and outside experts in its nuclear posture review and recognize Congress’ authority to declare war as a prerequisite to any use of nuclear weapons. Assessing Obama’s nuclear legacy In order to properly appreciate what a Trump presidency may bring, we need to revisit the range and types of powers bequeathed to the commander-in-chief by previous administrations. Despite the military advances made by China and Russia in recent years, it is important to recognise that the US remains far and away the biggest global spender on conventional and nuclear weapons and plans to consolidate this position by maintaining significant technological superiority over its adversaries, which will, as is well appreciated, push Beijing, Moscow—and thus other regional powers—to respond. Yet spending on nuclear weapons alone is set to pose significant budgeting difficulties for future US governments. According to a 2014 report by the James Martin Center, the Departments of Defense and Energy plan to spend approximately $1 trillion over the next 30 years ‘to maintain its current nuclear arsenal and procure a new generation of nuclear-armed or nuclear capable bombers and submarines’ as well as new submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). Arms Control Today has found that total Defense Department nuclear spending ‘is projected to average more than $40 billion in constant fiscal year 2016 dollars between 2025 and 2035, when modernization costs are expected to peak’. Including costs for the Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration’s projected weapons-related spending during this period ‘would push average spending during this period to more than $50 billion per year’. If anywhere near these sums are spent, then the modest reductions to the US’s nuclear stockpile achieved during the Obama presidency will be entirely overshadowed. Moreover, as analyst Andrew Lichterman notes, the US’s continued modernisation of its nuclear forces is ‘inherently incompatible’ with the ‘unequivocal undertaking’ given at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to eliminate its nuclear arsenal and apply the ‘principle of irreversibility’ to this and related actions. For Lichterman, the huge outlays committed to the nuclear weapons complex were part of a political ‘bargain’ made by the Obama administration with Republicans. This ensured that the New START nuclear arms control treaty would pass in the Senate whilst also not disturbing the development of missile defense and other advanced conventional weapons programmes. New START is a bilateral agreement between Russia and the US, which Steven Pifer describes as ‘one of the few bright spots’ that exists in these nations’ relationship. Under the treaty Moscow and Washington must, by 2018, reduce their stockpile of operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550. Furthermore, both must keep to a limit of 700 deployed strategic launchers (missiles) and heavy bombers, and to a combined limit of 800 deployed and non-deployed strategic launchers and heavy bombers. Despite New START ‘proceeding smoothly’ according to Pifer, Hans Kristensen recently produced a report comparing Obama’s record with that of the previous presidents holding office during the nuclear age, which found that, hitherto, Obama has cut fewer warheads—in terms of numbers rather than percentages—than ‘any administration ever’ and that ‘the biggest nuclear disarmers’ in recent decades have been Republicans, not Democrats. Kristensen thus drily observes of this situation that, a conservative Congress does not complain when Republican presidents reduce the stockpile, only when Democratic president try to do so. As a result of the opposition, the United States is now stuck with a larger and more expensive nuclear arsenal than had Congress agreed to significant reductions. As his presidency draws to a close, presumably as a means of securing some sort of meaningful legacy in this area, it has been reported that Obama considered adopting a no first use (NFU) policy for nuclear weapons, something which, whilst reversible, could act as a restraint on future presidents. Yet this was apparently abandoned, according to the New York Times, after ‘top national security advisers argued that it could undermine allies and embolden Russia and China’. Furthermore, according to Josh Rogin of the Washington Post, the governments of Japan, South Korea, France and Britain all privately communicated their concerns about Washington adopting NFU. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter is also said to have argued that such a move would be unwise because ‘if North Korea used biological weapons against the South the United States might need the option of threatening a nuclear response’. However, as Daryll Kimball explains, the US’s ‘overwhelming’ conventional military advantage means that ‘there is no plausible circumstance that could justify—legally, morally, or militarily—the use of nuclear weapons to deal with a non-nuclear threat’. Such resistance to NFU is thus deeply disappointing given that, as Kimball goes on to note, this move would go some way to reassuring China and Russia about the US’s strategic intentions. It would also be an important confidence-building measure for the wider community of non-nuclear weapon states, showing that the US is willing to act in 'good faith' towards its disarmament obligations under the NPT. Thinking about the causes of proliferation more widely requires us to understand what drives weaker states to seek deterrents, if their reliance on them is to be reduced. For example, as Dr Alan J. Kuperman observes, NATO’s bombing and overthrow of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 ‘greatly complicated the task of persuading other states such as Iran and North Korea ‘to halt or reverse their nuclear programs’. The lesson Tehran and Pyongyang took is thus that because Gaddafi had voluntarily ended his nuclear and chemical weapons programmes, the West now felt free to pursue regime change. When assessing the importance of the Iran nuclear deal, which is often hailed as one of Obama’s landmark achievements, and which the next President must not be allowed to derail, it is thus important also to consider carefully what behaviour by the most powerful states will enable existing or potential nuclear possessors to embrace disarmament and reduce their interest in seeking non-conventional deterrents. The inability of Washington to make substantial progress towards reducing the salience of nuclear weapons at home and abroad is all the more noteworthy when one considers the state of US and Russian public opinion on nuclear arms control and disarmament. As John Steinbrunner and Nancy Gallagher observe, ‘responses to detailed questions reveal a striking disparity between what U.S. and Russian leaders are doing and what their publics desire’. For example, their polling found that: At the most fundamental level, the vast majority of Americans and Russians think that nuclear weapons have a very limited role in current security circumstances and believe that their only legitimate purpose is to deter nuclear attack. It is highly consistent, then, that the publics in both countries would favor eliminating all nuclear weapons if this action could be taken under effective international verification. Another important measure which the US has failed to hitherto ratify is the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). This is despite President Obama stating in 2009 that he intended to pursue Senate ratification of the treaty ‘immediately and aggressively’. Once more, there is notably strong public support–82% according to a 2010 poll by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs—for the US joining the CTBT but, again, the Republican-controlled Senate has blocked the treaty at every opportunity. Overall, the gap between the public’s will and the government’s inaction on nuclear issues is alarming and redolent of the wider democratic deficit in the US. On a more positive note, the fact that the citizenry supports such measures suggests that groups advocating arms control and disarmament initiatives should continue to engage with and understand the public’s positions in order to effectively harness their support. Stepping back from the brink In terms of priorities for the incoming administration in the US, stepping back from military confrontation with Russia and pushing the threat of nuclear war to the margins must be at the top of the list. Whilst much has been made of a potential rapprochement between Trump and Putin, the two have, reportedly, only just spoken for the first time on the phone and still need to actually meet in person to discuss strategic issues and deal with inevitable international events and crises, including in relation to Ukraine and Syria. As of now, whilst the mood music from both sides might suggest a warming of relations, as has been seen with previous administrations, unless cooperation is rooted in a real willingness to resolve problems (which for Russia includes US ballistic missile defense deployments in Eastern Europe and NATO expansion) then tensions can quickly re-emerge. Another related question concerns how Trump will conduct himself during any potential crisis or conflict with Russia or another major power, given the stakes and risks involved, as highlighted above. Whilst we must wait to find out precisely what the new administration’s approach to international affairs will be, in the past week, NATO’s Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told the BBC that he had been personally informed by Donald Trump, following the election, that the US remains ‘strongly committed to NATO, and that the security guarantees to Europe stand’. Trump had previously shaken sections of the defence and foreign policy establishment by suggesting that NATO was ‘obsolete’ and that countries such as Japan (and by extension others such as South Korea and Saudi Arabia) ‘have to pay us or we have to let them protect themselves’, which could include them acquiring the bomb. One reason why some in Washington have, in the past, not wanted their regional allies to develop their own nuclear weapons is because the US might then become dragged into an escalating conflict. Moreover, if an ally in one region seeks the bomb, this may cause others elsewhere to pursue their own capabilities- an act of strategic independence that might make these states harder to influence and control. The US’s key relationships in East Asia and the Middle East illustrate why, if a future US President wishes to take meaningful moves towards a world free of nuclear weapons, then developing alternative regional political agreements, including strategic cooperation with China and Russia, will be necessary. As Nancy Gallagher rightly notes, the ‘weaknesses of existing international organizations’ thus requires ‘more inclusive, cooperative security institutions’ to be constructed regionally ‘to complement and someday, perhaps, to replace exclusive military alliances’, alongside progressive demilitarisation. Such confidence-building measures would also support efforts to halt missile and nuclear tests by states such as North Korea, which may soon be capable of striking the US mainland. Imagining the next enemy As well as mapping out the US’s current nuclear weapons policies and its regional relationships, it is important to reflect upon how domestic political dynamics under a Trump presidency might drive Washington’s behaviour internationally, particularly given the nuclear shadow that always hangs over conflicts involving the US. For example, in the near-term, Trump’s economic plan and the great expectations amongst the American working class that have been generated, may have particularly dangerous consequences if, as seems likely, the primary beneficiaries are the very wealthy. Reviewing Trump’s economic plans, Martin Wolf of the Financial Times concludes that ‘the longer-term consequences are likely to be grim, not least for his angry, but fooled, supporters. Next time, they might be even angrier. Where that might lead is terrifying’. Gillian Tett has also highlighted the ‘real risks’ that Trump’s policies could ‘spark US social unrest or geopolitical uncertainty’. Elsewhere, George Monbiot in the Guardian, makes the stark assertion that the inability of the US and other governments to respond effectively to public anger means he now believes that ‘we will see war between the major powers within my lifetime’. If these warnings weren’t troubling enough, no less a figure than Henry Kissinger argued on BBC’s Newsnight that ‘the more likely reaction’ to a Trump presidency from terror groups ‘will be to do something that evokes a reaction’ from Washington in order to ‘widen the split’ between it and Europe and damage the US’s image around the world. Given that Trump has already vowed to ‘bomb the shit out of ISIS’ and refused to rule out the use of nuclear weapons against the group, it goes without saying that such a scenario could have the gravest consequences and must be avoided so that the US does not play into the terrorists’ hands. Looking more widely, President-elect Trump’s existing and potential cabinet appointments, which Glenn Greenwald has summarised as ‘empowering…by and large…the traditional, hard, hawkish right-wing members of the Republican Party’ also point to the US engaging in future overseas conflicts, rather than the isolationism which many in the foreign policy establishment criticised Trump for proposing during the presidential campaign. William Hartung and Todd Harrison have drawn attention to the fact that defence spending under Trump could be almost $1trillion (spread over ten years) more than Obama’s most recent budget request. Such projections, alongside Trump’s election rhetoric, suggest that the new nuclear monarch will try to push wide open the door to more spending on nuclear weapons and missile defense, a situation made possible, as we have seen, by Obama’s inability to implement progressive change in this area at a time of persistent Republican obstruction. Conclusion The problem now, for the US and the world, is that if Trump does make good on his campaign promises then this will have several damaging consequences for international peace and security and that if Trump does not sufficiently satisfy his supporters then this will likely pour fuel on the flames at home, which may then quickly spread abroad. The people of the US and the world thus now have a huge responsibility to act as a restraining influence and ensure that the US retains an accountable, transparent and democratic government. This responsibility will only grow if crises or shocks take place in or outside the US which ambitious and extremist figures take advantage of, framing them as threats to national security in order to protect their interests and power. If such scenarios emerge the next administration and its untried and untested President will find themselves with a range of extremely powerful tools and institutional experience at their disposal, including nuclear weapons, which may prove too tempting to resist when figuring out how to respond to widespread anger, confusion and unrest, both at home and abroad.

#### And, it turns their impacts – (explain why it interacts with the aff’s scenarios)

## 2nc – specifics

### 2nc – uniqueness wall

#### Base support is high and increasing now – the most recent national polls show Trump’s approval rating increasing, especially with Republicans and rural voters who are the core of his constituency – that’s Sparks

#### Trump’s base will stick with him now – BUT, bashing Dems for being soft on immigration is key to maintain their support

Ford O’Connell 6/17/18, adjunct professor at The George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management, "Donald Trump is delivering on his promises and voters are noticing", http://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/392653-donald-trump-is-delivering-on-his-promises

Trump’s supporters see him as a man [who keeps his promises and disrupts the swamp](https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2018/05/16/donald-trump-supporters-across-america-hes-delivering-his-agenda/606334002/). They like that he has put in place a conservative Supreme Court Justice and [a record number of federal appeals judges](https://www.axios.com/trump-has-now-appointed-most-ever-federal-appeals-judges-in-1st-year-1513388665-b0f7cc3c-1b90-4a34-b63f-427a4ee9fe84.html) in his first year. They love that he pulled out of the Paris climate accord, the Iran nuclear deal and the Trans-Pacific Partnership and that he has cut [nearly twice as many regulations as promised](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/washington-secrets/boom-team-trump-cuts-nearly-twice-as-many-regulations-as-promised) — all despite unprecedented obstruction and resistance from Democrats and a handful of recalcitrant Republicans in Washington and beyond. Midterms are base elections. [About 130 million vote in presidential elections,](http://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/228641/previewing-base-voter-messaging-2018-elections.aspx) but only [80 million-95 million vote in midterms](http://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/228641/previewing-base-voter-messaging-2018-elections.aspx). That means it’s important to turn out the base. We’re told repeatedly Democrats are beyond fired up to vote in November. But there is little evidence those who [don’t generally vote in midterms are angry enough about Trump to make the extra effort this year](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/04/23/poll-non-voters-dislike-donald-trump-isnt-likely-make-them-vote-2018/540709002/), and there is growing evidence Trump is in the right place on the right issues to hold or perhaps even expand his base. In fact, after 500 days in office, President Trump has the [second highest “own party” approval rating](https://www.axios.com/trump-rakes-in-party-approval-at-500-da-1528033342-a9a1cdf2-e25f-4af8-b282-2a011d081369.html) since World War II. Based on recent polling, immigration is, [as Gallup put it](http://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/228641/previewing-base-voter-messaging-2018-elections.aspx), the “strongest countervailing issue determining Republican turnout,” and Trump’s proposal — amnesty for 1.8 million illegal aliens in exchange for funding the wall on the Mexican border and ending chain migration and the diversity visa program — “[encompasses the popular position on every major immigration issue](http://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/387644-impeachment-and-immigration-two-topics-to-help-the-gop-hold-the-house),” as a National Review report stated. Then there is the subject that touches every American — the economy — and Trump is doing so well on that front that even the [New York Times had to admit it “ran out of words to describe how good the job numbers are.”](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/01/upshot/we-ran-out-of-words-to-describe-how-good-the-jobs-numbers-are.html) [Since Trump took office](https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2018/04/17/donald-trump-tax-day-economy-column/518919002/), nearly 3 million jobs have been created, and wage growth is at the highest point since President Bush left office. Unemployment has dipped to its lowest level since 2000 and to [record lows](https://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/record-low-jobless-rates-black-americans-asians-55589066) for African Americans and Asians. [Manufacturing jobs are increasing](https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/terence-p-jeffrey/manufacturing-jobs-18000-may-322000-under-trump)across the country, and [two-thirds of Americans say the economy](http://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/387644-impeachment-and-immigration-two-topics-to-help-the-gop-hold-the-house) is “good.” On top of that, efforts by Obama supporters to give their man credit for the economic numbers [have crumbled in recent months.](http://www.newsweek.com/democrats-trump-obama-economy-responsible-885845) Republican congressional candidates are right to worry whether Trump’s coattails and loyal supporters are enough to keep them in control of Congress beyond this year. The Senate seems safe for now. But the battle for control of the House [remains a toss-up](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cbs-news-battleground-tracker-the-house-is-a-toss-up), Democrats continue to hold a small-but-stubborn lead in the [generic ballot question](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/other/2018_generic_congressional_vote-6185.html), and there is no guarantee, particularly as political turmoil in Italy threatens the European Union economy, the economy still will be a political plus come November. There is no-one-size-fits-all solution for Republicans to win in 2018. But all Republicans have to hope the Trump [economic renaissance continues](https://www.cnbc.com/2018/06/01/may-jobs-numbers-are-bad-news-for-democrats.html)and that no external event, such as Trump’s dealings with North Korea, becomes a problem. So far, those meetings have been [a net plus for the president](https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/14/politics/north-korea-monmouth-poll/index.html). In the meantime, Republicans should focus on the Democratic “impeachment fetish” and the left’s radical views on immigration, because it fires up the Republican base and captures independent support.

#### Support in key groups is high – multiple polls

Ronald Brownstein 5/22/18, senior political analyst @ CNN, "Beating Republicans in November will be harder than Democrats thought", CNN, https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/22/politics/beating-republicans-in-november-will-be-harder-than-democrats-thought/index.html

Support for Trump in key groups Since he took office, Trump's approval rating has always been high among self-identified Republicans and core Republican groups. The most recent national polls from CNN and the Pew Research Center, for instance, both put his approval rating among white men without a college degree at a robust 66%. More than three-fifths of those men also said they intend to support Republican candidates for Congress this fall.

#### Base support is high, but Trump has to continue to keep his promises

Phillip Bump 6/20/18, Washington Post politics reporter, "Trump’s effort to hold his base close for the midterms seems to be working — so far", https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2018/06/20/trumps-effort-to-hold-his-base-close-for-the-midterms-seems-to-be-working-so-far/?utm\_term=.5cd93de7b9f2

For a president who likes to be at the center of the conversation, good news from a new Pew Research Center poll: The 2018 midterm elections are shaping up to be all about President Trump. Six in 10 registered voters told Pew that their congressional vote this year will be explicitly meant as a vote for or against Trump, a higher percentage of voters weighing in specifically to send a message to the chief executive than in any of the prior three midterm elections. In 2014, 48 percent of voters said their goal was to give an electoral thumbs up or thumbs down to President Barack Obama. All of the figures above are from June or July prior to the midterm election. What’s particularly interesting, though, is that the split between for and against isn’t as lopsided as one might think. Trump’s approval numbers have been creeping upward of late, but he’s still unpopular and faces strong disapproval from a lot of Americans. But more people say that their vote is meant to send a message of support for Trump than said the same about George W. Bush in 2006 or Obama in 2010 or 2014. Why? Because more than half of those in Trump’s own party say that’s a factor in their congressional vote — the highest percentage of same-party voters to say that’s their motivation since 2006. The percent of Democrats saying their vote is in opposition to Trump is higher than the opposing votes from Republicans in 2010 or 2014 but lower than the enthusiasm Democrats had in 2006 to oppose Bush. It’s important to remember, in case you’d forgotten, that just as there is robust disapproval of Trump there is also robust approval from a smaller segment of the population. We’ve noted before that the combined strong approval and strong disapproval Trump has seen since taking office has been higher than we saw under his two predecessors, with the exception of the bump Bush saw after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Trump has fostered that, keeping a deliberate focus on his base and ensuring that the promises he made to them are fulfilled. Whether his base would have wavered anyway isn’t clear, but they haven’t. And so now more than half of Republicans specifically plan to vote for Republicans to show their support for him. Another way of looking at how that’s unusual is to consider the gaps between those saying they want to cast a vote for or against the president and the gaps between the opposition and the president’s party. In 2006, both gaps were wide: Much more intent to vote in opposition to Bush than to vote in support and much more energy among Democrats against him than Republicans for him. Compare that with 2018, when the overall for-against gap is the second narrowest since 2006 (minus-8) and the gap between the parties is the overall narrowest (9 points). In 2006, those wide gaps led to the Democrats gaining 61 seats and control of the House. The implication is that narrower gaps may not have a similar result. Except when one considers those gaps in 2010 and 2014. In 2010, the Republicans saw a swing of 126 seats in their direction, with only modest gaps between for and against and between Democrats and Republicans a few months out. We’ve noted before that the surges to the Republicans in 2010 and 2014 happened closer to the election. On June 20, 2010, the Republicans were up half a point in the generic ballot average; four years later, they were tied. They ended up winning 6.8 and 5.7 percent more of the popular House vote in those elections, respectively. What happens next isn’t clear. 2018 looks more like 2010 than 2006, but Democrats would be happy with either scenario. The question that remains to be answered is what effect that Republican loyalty to Trump might have, if any. To answer that question, we have little choice but to wait.

#### Their ev’s sample sizes are too small to be meaningful

Ronald Brownstein 17, Atlantic Media's editorial director; citing Mark Blumenthal, SurveyMonkey’s head of election polling, "The Voters Abandoning Donald Trump," The Atlantic, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/01/the-voters-abandoning-donald-trump/550247/

A massive new source of public-opinion research offers fresh insights into the fault lines emerging in Donald Trump’s foundation of support. Previously unpublished results from the nonpartisan online-polling firm SurveyMonkey show Trump losing ground over his tumultuous first year not only with the younger voters and white-collar whites who have always been skeptical of him, but also with the blue-collar whites central to his coalition. Trump retains important pillars of support. Given that he started in such a strong position with those blue-collar whites, even after that decline he still holds a formidable level of loyalty among them—particularly men and those over 50 years old. What’s more, he has established a modest but durable beachhead among African American and Hispanic men, even while confronting overwhelming opposition from women in those demographic groups. Together, the results crystallize the bet Trump is making for his own reelection in 2020, and for his party’s chances in November’s election: that he can mobilize enough support among older and blue-collar (as well as rural and evangelical) whites to offset the intense resistance he’s provoked from groups that are all growing in the electorate: Millennials, minorities, and college-educated whites—particularly the women among them. These findings emerge from a cumulative analysis of 605,172 interviews SurveyMonkey conducted with Americans in 2017 about Trump’s job performance. At my request, Mark Blumenthal, SurveyMonkey’s head of election polling, calculated Trump’s average approval rating over the last year among groups of voters segmented simultaneously by their race, gender, education level, and age. That extra level of detail, not available in conventional polls because their samples are too small, offers a more precise picture of Trump’s coalition.

### 2nc – link wall

#### Showing weakness on immigration *destroys Trump’s base for good* – he campaigned on a harsh stance, including the border wall and deporting DREAMers, so the plan looks like a betrayal of a core promise – that’s 1nc Silverstein.

#### keeping a hardline stance on immigration is key – it’s a central issue motivating continued enthusiasm to support Trump – looking weak loses the base

Jonathan Martin and Maggie Haberman 6/18/18, politics writers for NYT, "Forget Tax Cuts. Trump Wants to Rally the G.O.P. Base Over Immigration.", No Publication, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/18/us/politics/trump-immigration-midterms.html

WASHINGTON — As Republicans try to keep their midterm election strategy focused on the economy, tax cuts and falling unemployment, President Trump sent his clearest signal yet on Monday that he intends to make divisive, racially charged issues like immigration central going into the campaign season. Facing bipartisan criticism over his administration’s family separation practice on the border, Mr. Trump renewed the sort of bald and demagogic attacks on undocumented immigrants that worked well for him politically in his 2016 presidential campaign. He inveighed against “the death and destruction that’s been caused by people coming into this country” and vowed that “the United States will not be a migrant camp and it will not be a refugee holding facility.” Republicans typically handle immigration gingerly in an election year, as they try to appeal to Hispanic voters, independents and moderates across divergent districts. But with more Americans still opposing the tax measure than supporting it, Mr. Trump’s allies believe that trying to link Democrats to crimes committed by undocumented immigrants and gangs like MS-13 will do more to galvanize Republican voters and get them to the polls in November than emphasizing economic issues. “People don’t turn out to say thank you,” said Corey Lewandowski, one of the president’s top political advisers. “If you want to get people motivated, you’ve got to give them a reason to vote. Saying ‘build the wall and stop illegals from coming in and killing American citizens’ gives them an important issue.” This fear-oriented approach reflects the degree that Mr. Trump has put his anti-immigration imprint on the Republican Party. The same raw appeals Mr. Trump made in 2016 about immigrants illegally crossing the border have not abated among most of his Republican supporters. And his supporters say the party has little choice in an election where Democrats are eager to register their opposition to a president they despise — and that the only way to succeed in a campaign driven by turning out the party base is to focus on what grass-roots conservatives care most about. “It’s an issue folks are emotionally attached to,” said Andy Surabian, a Republican strategist and former Trump aide. “I know that upsets some people in the donor class, but it’s the reality of where the party is.” Mr. Trump’s anti-immigrant remarks are aimed at the conservative base of the party that elevated his candidacy and is dominant in red states and House districts, especially those with largely white populations. The Republican grass-roots were already hawkish on immigration, while the president’s takeover of the party has further diminished its pragmatist wing. And while hard-line Republicans are a minority of the country’s voters, the G.O.P. cannot retain its grip on Congress without this bedrock of its base going to the polls.

#### Flip-flopping on core promises sparks backlash so intense, it outweighs any turn

David Hunter Walsh 17, Marine veteran (rah) and PhD candidate at Rutgers, “Yes, Trump will face a backlash if he doesn’t deliver on his promises,” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/01/20/yes-trump-will-face-a-backlash-if-he-doesnt-deliver-on-his-promises/?utm_term=.250bb333ed24>

President-elect Donald Trump built his campaign on promises to put a wall on the Mexican border, “utterly destroy” the Islamic State, and accelerate economic growth to heights never before seen outside of wartime. Days before he won the presidency, Trump told his supporters he would give them “every dream you ever dreamed for your country.” Trump’s penchant for sweeping promises — and the likelihood that he may have trouble keeping them — has Republicans concerned about what would happen if he doesn’t or can’t follow through. “If we’re given the White House and both houses of Congress and we don’t deliver,” Texas Sen. Ted Cruz said recently, “I think there will be pitchforks and torches in the streets.” Although Cruz’s vision of a violent uprising may be an exaggeration, my research suggests that Trump would indeed face a backlash if he fails to deliver on key promises. [Will Trump follow through on all his Day One promises? Doesn’t look like it.] Losses outweigh gains in the human mind. What does that mean for politics? That conclusion rests on one of the most robust theories of modern psychology, prospect theory. Prospect theory argues that in our minds, perceived losses outweigh perceived gains in ways that profoundly affect our decision-making. In a political context, this means that when the president surprises you by doing something you like, you’re happy about it. But that happiness is not nearly as powerful as the disappointment — or even sadness or anger — that you experience when the president does something you hate. One implication is that the backlash a president faces for breaking a promise to his supporters may be much stronger than whatever positive reactions come from voters who are pleasantly surprised by his decision not to pursue that campaign pledge. For Trump, a shift away from some of the radical positions he has staked out may in fact please even a majority of Americans. But any positive reaction will likely be muted, while the disappointment of his original supporters will be amplified. He could find himself losing some of his supporters without picking up the same number from the other side — which could leave him even more unpopular than he already is.

### at: base support inevitable

#### Links disprove it – all our link ev says immigration is THE issue animating GOP support and loyalty to Trump – flipping on that messes everything up

#### Base support isn’t resilient – even if the fundamentals of support haven’t changed, the *intensity of that support* is wavering – collapse of the base is still possible

David Byler 3/29/18, Weekly Standard staff writer and chief election analyst; citing Mark Blumenthal, SurveyMonkey’s head of election polling, "The Gritty Details of Trump's Approval Ratings," The Weekly Standard, 3-29-18, https://www.weeklystandard.com/the-gritty-details-of-trumps-approval-ratings/article/2012114

The Gritty Details of Trump's Approval Ratings Everyone knows that President Trump is historically unpopular and his low approval rating is putting Republicans in real danger of losing at least the House in 2018. At this point, that's old news. But not everyone has a good grasp on the granular parts of presidential approval?how intensely people feel about the president, which groups do and don't like him and how much that matters for the midterms and our understanding of public opinion in the Trump era more generally. That's why I spent some time with a new, centralized dataset from SurveyMonkey that deals with these questions. I looked through their data, did some math, and came up with four different charts that demonstrate some of the most important facts about Trump's approval rating. Before getting started, I have one quick note for readers who might be confused because they have personal experience either making or filling out very non-political polls on SurveyMonkey. This is that same SurveyMonkey ? the company just also usse its platform to conduct scientific political surveys. Mark Blumenthal, head of election polling, explained it to me: "We draw random samples of those who have just completed a survey on our platform and invite them to answer a few more questions about important issues and current events, including Trump approval" and then they "statistically adjust the data so it is representative of the American public." So here are the graphics and the explanations: There Aren't (And Never Have Been) Many Lukewarm Trump Disapprovers The conventional wisdom on politics is often wrong. But these polls show that it's right about one thing ? Americans who don't like Trump really don't like him. This graphic shows the percentage of Trump disapprovers who "strongly" or "somewhat" disapprove of Trump's job performance in a series of SurveyMonkey polls stretching from January 2017 to now. The top line tells most of the story. If you put every American who disapproves of Trump in a room (usually more than half of the people that SurveyMonkey polls) and picked someone randomly, the odds of picking a "strong disapprover" would be greater than 3-to-1. This is a problem for down-ballot Republicans. Democrats have won some high profile races (like the special election in Pennsylvania's 18th District) partially by riding strong anti-Trump sentiment. The president has motived Democrats to turn out at a high rate while driving some more typical GOP voters to cast their ballot for the blue team. That anti-Trump enthusiasm is part of the reason Democrats are currently the favorites to take the House in November. Trump's Base is More Divided Than Many Think The conventional wisdom is a little less helpful when it comes to Trump supporters. Diehard Trump supporters have garnered a lot of media attention, but not every Trump approver is enthusiastic. This graphic is nearly identical to the previous one?the difference is that we're comparing strong Trump approvers and those who only somewhat approve of the president's job performance. In most of SurveyMonkey's polls, strong Trump approvers outnumbered those who approved somewhat, but the split isn't as lopsided as it is Trump disapprovers (this is similar to what we've seen in YouGov polls of Trump voters). Maybe more interestingly, the mix of somewhat and strong Trump approvers seems to have changed at least a little bit over time. Every poll is noisy, so these shifts shouldn't be overinterpreted. But the lack of stability in this graphic compared to the last one (plus real changes we've seen in topline averages) suggests that Trump supporters aren't immovable. Sometimes they go from supporting Trump enthusiastically to being more lukewarm. And sometimes they go from approving of Trump to not approving (or back to approval).

### at: family separation thumper

#### Issue-specific uniqueness – our authors are seasoned political analysts and have obviously priced in other issues – but support is still high in spite of such distractions, which was the uniqueness debate

#### And – Trump issued an XO that stopped the practice – solves backlash sufficiently

#### White evangelicals are the core of his base – and they love hardline immigration policies

Amelia Thomson-Deveaux 6/21/18, analyst at FiveThirtyEight, "Why Rank-And-File Evangelicals Aren’t Likely To Turn On Trump Over Family Separation", FiveThirtyEight, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-rank-and-file-evangelicals-arent-likely-to-turn-on-trump-over-family-separation/

Right now, however, even though some white evangelical leaders have condemned Trump and the family separation policy, there’s no evidence that their followers are poised to turn on the president. Indeed, there are a couple of reasons to think many white evangelicals will react differently than their leaders who have criticized Trump. Understanding evangelicals’ broader perspective on immigration can also help illuminate why this group continues to support Trump so strongly — despite recent scandals that appear to fly in the face of evangelicals’ values.1 First, polling on white evangelical Protestants has shown that they’re more likely than any other religious group to support hardline immigration policies and to have negative views of immigrants overall. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center found that 70 percent of white evangelical Protestants are in favor of expanding the border wall between the U.S. and Mexico, compared with only around half of white mainline Protestants and white Catholics and much lower shares of other religious groups. Another Pew survey, conducted last year, found that while majorities of nearly every religious group agree that immigrants strengthen our country, white evangelical Protestants are more divided, with a plurality (44 percent) saying that immigrants are a burden. These findings line up with results from other surveys too, like a 2017 poll from the Public Religion Research Institute that found that white evangelical Protestants were the only religious group in which a majority (57 percent) said they’re bothered when they encounter immigrants who don’t speak English. They were also the likeliest to say that they have little or nothing in common with immigrants. Daniel Cox, the research director at PRRI,2 said these findings help explain why evangelicals aren’t likely to abandon Trump over the child separation crisis, even if they’re troubled by it. “More than other groups, white evangelical Protestants seem to perceive immigrants as a threat to American society,” he said. “So even if they don’t like this particular policy, they’re on board with Trump’s approach to immigration in general, and that makes it likelier that they’ll see this as a tactical misstep rather than a breaking point.” That’s also how some evangelical leaders have responded; for example, Jentezen Franklin, a Georgia megachurch pastor who serves on Trump’s evangelical advisory council, criticized the family separation policy in an interview with FiveThirtyEight but blamed Congress — rather than Trump — for failing to act. “The president really cares for these families, but to permanently fix the problem, he needs Congress to do their job and work with him on border security,” Franklin said, adding that many evangelicals were drawn to Trump because of his emphasis on reducing the number of undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

#### The base doesn’t really care

Dylan Matthews 6/18/18, Vox politics correspondent, "Polls: Trump’s family separation policy is very unpopular — except among Republicans", Vox, https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/6/18/17475740/family-separation-poll-polling-border-trump-children-immigrant-families-parents

Two new polls find that the US government policy of separating children from their parents at the Mexican border is very unpopular with the general public but retains majority support among Republicans. A new Quinnipiac University poll, released Monday, asked voters, “As you may know, some families seeking asylum from their home country cross the U.S. border illegally and then request asylum. In an attempt to discourage this, the Trump administration has been prosecuting the parents immediately, which means separating parents from their children. Do you support or oppose this policy?” As my colleague Dara Lind notes, this characterizes most of the reason for family separation, though some families seeking asylum legally at ports of entry have also been separated. Sixty-six percent of voters — including 91 percent of Democrats and 68 percent of independents — told Quinnipiac they opposed the policy. Whites with college degrees were likelier than non-college whites to oppose the policy, and young people of all races were likelier to oppose it than old people. Women were likelier to oppose the policy than men, and black and Hispanic Americans were more likely to oppose it than whites (though a large majority of whites still oppose the policy). But by a large, 20-point (55 percent to 35 percent) margin, Republicans supported the policy: A poll conducted by Ipsos exclusively for the Daily Beast found similar results. Ipsos asked respondents if they agreed with this statement: “It is appropriate to separate undocumented immigrant parents from their children when they cross the border in order to discourage others from crossing the border illegally.” The wording is slightly different from the Quinnipiac poll, foregrounding the deterrence rationale the Trump administration has used to defend the policy. Fifty-five percent of respondents stated they disagreed (42 percent “strongly” disagreed), while 27 percent agreed. As in the Quinnipiac poll, women and nonwhite people were likelier to disagree with the policy; unlike the Quinnipiac poll, differences based on education were minimal, and 18- to 34-year-olds and 35- to 54-year-olds had similar opinions. (People 55 and up were likelier to support the policy.) And as in the Quinnipiac poll, more Republicans approved of the policy than not (46 percent to 32 percent). Note that unlike the Quinnipiac poll, the Ipsos poll found only a plurality of Republicans supporting family separation, not a majority. Chris Warshaw, a political scientist at George Washington University, notes that both the Quinnipiac and Ipsos polling suggests the policy is less popular than any major policy proposal of recent American history, including the extremely unpopular Obamacare repeal bills of last summer: [tweet omitted] Nonetheless, the polls find that Trump’s core Republican base supports family separation. But when interpreting party-based polling, one should keep in mind the finding by Emory political scientists Pablo Montagnes, Zachary Peskowitz, and Joshua McCrain that Trump’s unpopularity has coincided with fewer people identifying as Republicans. That could mean that Republicans who disagree with Trump, and in particular his immigration policies, are likelier to identify as independents rather than Republicans now, which in turn artificially inflates support for Trump among self-identified Republicans. If you polled people who identified as Republicans as of November 2016 and asked what they think of the family separation policy, you might get different results. That said, Trump’s popularity has been rising in recent weeks, which could mitigate that effect.

### at: immigration not key/other issues

#### Immigration is central to Trump’s strategy of maintaining popularity – it carried him to the 2016 win and it’s keeping the Republicans loyal, engaged, and fired up – that’s the 1nc and the link debate

#### “other issues” isn’t a thumper until they read ev that says he will lose large amounts of base support because of some other impending issue – vaguely alluding to potentially unpopular things is not an argument

#### Polls prove – Republicans think immigration is the most important issue – outweighs healthcare AND the economy

Ella Nilsen 6/20/18, covers Congress and the Democrats for Vox, "Poll: immigration has become the No. 1 issue for voters in 2018", Vox, https://www.vox.com/2018/6/20/17485162/pew-research-center-poll-immigration-issue-2018-midterms

Out of 2,002 Republican and Democratic adults (including 1,608 registered voters) surveyed by the Pew Research Center from June 5 to 12, immigration emerged as the top issue they most wanted to hear 2018 candidates talk about. In fact, about one in five voters mentioned immigration — more than mentioned either health care or the economy. Republican voters or those who lean Republican were slightly more likely to mention immigration as their most important issue than their Democratic counterparts; 21 percent of Republicans mentioned immigration as their top issue, compared to 18 percent of Democrats. Health care was the next most important priority for Democratic voters, while Republicans were focused on the economy and economic issues. Democratic voters were twice as likely as Republicans to mention health care as a key issue.

### at: da logic = racist

#### It’s not racist to care about the consequences of our actions – saying “who cares what Republicans think” willfully throws pragmatism out the window for misguided moralism – and it’s the same attitude that got Trump elected in the first place

#### But – if we agree consequentialism is the best way to evaluate impacts, this goes away – avoiding global war is the ultimate priority because saving the most lives is a good thing

#### And, the consequences of declining popularity would obviously stoke much more racism – Trump would scapegoat vulnerable groups and attack whole countries in the global South

## impacts

### 2nc – pence module

#### Base support is an impenetrable wall against impeachment – it’s the only thing preventing it

David Roberts 17, writer at Vox, "America is facing an epistemic crisis," Vox, 11-2-17, https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/11/2/16588964/america-epistemic-crisis

It is similarly difficult for most people to imagine believing that Hillary Clinton has had multiple people killed, that Obama is a secret Muslim who wasn’t born in the US, that Trump had millions of votes stolen, that Barack Obama wiretapped Trump’s White House, that Seth Rich (the mid-level Democratic staffer who was tragically murdered) was assassinated for stealing DNC emails and giving them to WikiLeaks, or that Antifa, the fringe anti-fascist movement, will begin going door-to-door, killing white people, starting on November 4. And yet millions of Americans fervently believe these things. Different polls find different things, and it’s always difficult to distinguish what people really believe from what they say on surveys. But if 30 percent of America’s 200 million registered voters are Republicans, and 40 percent of those don’t believe Obama was born in the US, well, that’s 24 million people, among them the most active participants in Republican politics. In short, an increasingly large chunk of Americans believes a whole bunch of crazy things, and it is warping our politics. This basic story has been told plenty of times (my longer version is here), but the reason we should not let it out of our sights right now is the Mueller investigation. As Ezra Klein laid out, there is enough on the record now to make it at the very least highly probable that there was collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia, meant to affect the outcome of the election. Er, despite what Trump says. We don’t know yet if Mueller has the goods — documentary or testimonial proof of explicit collusion — or if he can get them, so we have no idea how this is ultimately going to play out. But we are disturbingly close to the following scenario: Say Mueller reveals hard proof that the Trump campaign knowingly colluded with Russia, strategically using leaked emails to hurt Clinton’s campaign. Say the president — backed by the Wall Street Journal editorial page, Fox News, Breitbart, most of the US Cabinet, half the panelists on CNN, most of the radio talk show hosts in the country, and an enormous network of Russian-paid hackers and volunteer shitposters working through social media — rejects the evidence. They might say Mueller is compromised. It’s a Hillary/Deep State plot. There’s nothing wrong with colluding with Russia in this particular way. Dems did it first. All of the above. Whatever. Say the entire right-wing media machine kicks to life and dismisses the whole thing as a scam — and conservatives believe them. The conservative base remains committed to Trump, politicians remain scared to cross the base, and US politics remains stuck in partisan paralysis, unable to act on what Mueller discovers. In short, what if Mueller proves the case and it’s not enough? What if there is no longer any evidentiary standard that could overcome the influence of right-wing media? The US is undergoing an epistemic breach Epistemology is the branch of philosophy having to do with how we know things and what it means for something to be true or false, accurate or inaccurate. (Episteme, or ἐπιστήμη, is ancient Greek for knowledge/science/understanding.) The US is experiencing a deep epistemic breach, a split not just in what we value or want, but in who we trust, how we come to know things, and what we believe we know — what we believe exists, is true, has happened and is happening. The primary source of this breach, to make a long story short, is the US conservative movement’s rejection of the mainstream institutions devoted to gathering and disseminating knowledge (journalism, science, the academy) — the ones society has appointed as referees in matters of factual dispute. In their place, the right has created its own parallel set of institutions, most notably its own media ecosystem. But the right’s institutions are not of the same kind as the ones they seek to displace. Mainstream scientists and journalists see themselves as beholden to values and standards that transcend party or faction. They try to separate truth from tribal interests and have developed various guild rules and procedures to help do that. They see themselves as neutral arbiters, even if they do not always uphold that ideal in practice. The pretense for the conservative revolution was that mainstream institutions had failed in their role as neutral arbiters — that they had been taken over by the left, become agents of the left in referee’s clothing, as it were. But the right did not want better neutral arbiters. The institutions it built scarcely made any pretense of transcending faction; they are of and for the right. There is nominal separation of conservative media from conservative politicians, think tanks, and lobbyists, but in practice, they are all part of the conservative movement. They are prosecuting its interests; that is the ur-goal. Indeed, the far right rejects the very idea of neutral, binding arbiters; there is only Us and Them, only a zero-sum contest for resources. That mindset leads to what I call “tribal epistemology” — the systematic conflation of what is true with what is good for the tribe. There’s always been a conspiratorial and xenophobic fringe on the right, but it was (fitfully) held in place by gatekeepers through the early decades of America’s post-war prosperity. The explosion of right-wing media in the 1990s and 2000s swept those gatekeepers away, giving the loudest voice, the most exposure, and the most power to the most extreme elements on the right. The right-wing media ecosystem became a bubble from which fewer and fewer inhabitants ever ventured. As the massive post-election study of online media from Harvard (which got far too little attention) showed, media is not symmetrical any more than broader polarization is. “Prominent media on the left are well distributed across the center, center-left, and left,” the researchers found. “On the right, prominent media are highly partisan.” When mapping out sources of online news, researchers found that the two basic poles were the center-left and the far-right. The center of gravity of the overall landscape is the center-left. Partisan media sources on the left are integrated into this landscape and are of lesser importance than the major media outlets of the center-left. The center of attention and influence for conservative media is on the far right. The center-right is of minor importance and is the least represented portion of the media spectrum. In short, they conclude, “conservative media is more partisan and more insular than the left.” That insular partisan far-right media is also full of nonsense like Pizzagate that leaves the base continuously pumped up — outraged, infuriated, terrified, and misled. At this point, as the stories above show, the conservative base will believe anything. And they are pissed about all of it. As Brian Beutler wrote in a scathing piece recently, the mainstream media has never learned to deal with the right-wing bubble — it has not learned how not to take bad-faith lies seriously. And now we will all reap the consequences. **The incentives facing GOP politicians are not good** For Mueller’s findings to have any effect, they will have to break some part of the basic dynamic on the right. Here’s how it works: Pundits and yellers in right-wing media compete to freak out the base and reinforce its allegiance to Donald Trump. The base leans on politicians. And most elected GOP officials are in seats safe enough that they fear a primary challenge from the base more than a Democratic challenger. The only way to stave off a primary is to pay obeisance. That’s why Jeff Flake and Bob Corker are leaving the Senate. They no longer have any control over what their constituents believe or want, and their constituents believe and want increasingly ugly things. Sen. John McCain is saying all the right things now, but back when he faced his own Tea Party challenger, he sprinted right as fast as he could. GOP politicians cannot (or feel that they cannot) cross the base. And the base is currently being lied to about the Mueller investigation at a furious pace. The entire right-wing machine has kicked into high gear, led by the president himself, furiously throwing out chaff about Comey, Mueller, Obama, Hillary, the dossier, the uranium, the emails, and whatever else. On Monday, Fox News practically had a blackout of the Mueller news. Instead it covered fake Clinton scandals and cheeseburger emojis. It was such an embarrassing performance that multiple people on the news side leaked their disappointment to reporter Oliver Darcy. As always, the goal of this media/political offensive (there is no longer much distinction) is less to present some coherent alternative account of the facts than to fill the atmosphere with fog, to give those on the right enough cover to slough off the charges as yet another liberal plot. (See Vox’s Sean Illing’s great interview with Charlie Sykes, the conservative talk-radio host who criticized Trump and was excommunicated, for more on how this happens.) This reaction to Mueller in right-wing media was predictable enough. Similar things have happened so many times before, and been studied, analyzed, and documented. But to this day, no one knows how to stop or counter it. Mainstream institutions seem as unable as ever to resist its warping effects. It’s all playing out like some morbid script that we can only watch, stupefied. As familiar as this dynamic is, however, this episode is different. We are drifting perilously close to a serious constitutional crisis. What if we find out Trump is guilty and just can’t do anything about it? As long as the base is convinced that Mueller is an agent of the deep state (or whatever), it will punish any Republican politician that strays from the pack and criticizes Trump. For a GOP officeholder, standing up for democratic integrity could mean sacrificing reelection in 2018 or 2020. As long as Republican politicians are frightened by the base, the base is frightened by scary conspiracies in right-wing media, and right-wing media makes more money the more frightened everyone is, Trump appears to be safe. As long as the incentives are aligned in that direction, there will be no substantial movement to censure, restrain, or remove him from office. What happens if nothing happens? Mainstream scholars do not think that Trump will be able to get away with simply ignoring Mueller’s findings or pardoning everyone involved. As Andy Wright, a law professor at Savannah Law School, put it, “with each abnormal, unbecoming, or dishonorable act, President Trump makes it harder for his appointees to defend him, harder for traditional Republicans to maintain their uneasy power alliance with him, and easier for Democrats to take the moral high ground and secure political advantage." But if there’s one thing non-experts like me have learned over the last few decades of watching US politics, it’s that experts are frequently caught flat-footed by the growing intensity of partisanship and the destruction of norms it has wrought. They are operating based on certain assumptions that it simply doesn’t occur to them that a politician can ignore. But politicians can. Mitch McConnell can simply refuse to hold a vote on a Supreme Court nominee. There’s no explicit rule or law that says he can’t, so he can, and he did. That one shocked and flabbergasted experts too, but just like all the other perverse steps down this road to illiberal lawlessness, they eventually took it on board and normalized it. Now they’re sure Donald Trump can’t simply brazen his way out of an indictment. What if they’re wrong about that? Say he pardons everyone. People will argue on cable TV about whether he should have. One side will say up, the other will say down. Trump may have done this, but what about when Obama did that? What about Hillary’s emails? Whatabout this, whatabout that, whatabout whatabout whatabout? There is no longer any settling such arguments. The only way to settle any argument is for both sides to be committed, at least to some degree, to shared standards of evidence and accuracy, and to place a measure of shared trust in institutions meant to vouchsafe evidence and accuracy. Without that basic agreement, without common arbiters, there can be no end to dispute. If one side rejects the epistemic authority of society’s core institutions and practices, there’s just nothing left to be done. Truth cannot speak for itself, like the voice of God from above. It can only speak through human institutions and practices. The subject of climate change offers a crystalline example here. If climate science does its thing, checks and rechecks its work, and then the Republican Party simply refuses to accept it ... what then? That’s what US elites are truly afraid to confront: What if facts and persuasion just don’t matter anymore? As long as conservatives can do something — steal an election, gerrymander crazy districts to maximize GOP advantage, use the filibuster as a routine tool of opposition, launch congressional investigations as political attacks, hold the debt ceiling hostage, repress voting among minorities, withhold a confirmation vote on a Supreme Court nominee, defend a known fraud and sexual predator who has likely colluded with a foreign government to gain the presidency — they will do it, knowing they’ll be backed by a relentlessly on-message media apparatus. And if that’s true, if the very preconditions of science and journalism as commonly understood have been eroded, then all that’s left is a raw contest of power. Donald Trump has the power to hold on to the presidency, as long as elected Republicans, cowed by the conservative base, support him. That is true almost regardless of what he’s done or what’s proven by Mueller. As long as he has that power, he will exercise it. That’s what recent history seems to show. Democrats do not currently have the numbers to stop him. They can’t do it without some help from Republicans. And Republicans seem incapable, not only of acting on what Mueller knows, but of even coming to know it.

#### Pence causes U.S.-Russia war

Bobo Lo 17, Nonresident Fellow at the Lowy Institute, Associate Research Fellow with the Russia/NIS Center at the French Institute of International Relations, previously Head of the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House and Deputy Head of Mission at the Australian Embassy in Moscow, 10/25/17, “AN ACCIDENT WAITING TO HAPPEN: TRUMP, PUTIN AND THE US–RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP,” <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/accident-waiting-happen-trump-putin-and-us-russia-relationship>

For the time being, the Kremlin will keep faith with Trump as the least bad option, consistent with the Russian adage, ‘hope dies last’ (nadezhda umiraet poslednei). That hope, however, would die if Trump were either impeached or forced to resign, and replaced by Vice President Mike Pence. Washington and Moscow would then most likely enter a new phase of confrontation, involving an escalation of Russian military activity in Ukraine, and enhanced troop movements in areas adjoining the frontline NATO member states — the Baltic republics, Poland, and the Nordic countries. The risk of a clash between US and Russian forces would increase exponentially.[7

#### Extinction – comparatively outweighs every other war scenario

Owen Cotton-Barratt 17, et al, PhD in Pure Mathematics, Oxford, Lecturer in Mathematics at Oxford, Research Associate at the Future of Humanity Institute, 2/3/2017, Existential Risk: Diplomacy and Governance, https://www.fhi.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Existential-Risks-2017-01-23.pdf

The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki demonstrated the unprecedented destructive power of nuclear weapons. However, even in an all-out nuclear war between the United States and Russia, despite horrific casualties, neither country’s population is likely to be completely destroyed by the direct effects of the blast, fire, and radiation.8 The aftermath could be much worse: the burning of flammable materials could send massive amounts of smoke into the atmosphere, which would absorb sunlight and cause sustained global cooling, severe ozone loss, and agricultural disruption – a nuclear winter. According to one model 9 , an all-out exchange of 4,000 weapons10 could lead to a drop in global temperatures of around 8°C, making it impossible to grow food for 4 to 5 years. This could leave some survivors in parts of Australia and New Zealand, but they would be in a very precarious situation and the threat of extinction from other sources would be great. An exchange on this scale is only possible between the US and Russia who have more than 90% of the world’s nuclear weapons, with stockpiles of around 4,500 warheads each, although many are not operationally deployed.11 Some models suggest that even a small regional nuclear war involving 100 nuclear weapons would produce a nuclear winter serious enough to put two billion people at risk of starvation,12 though this estimate might be pessimistic.13 Wars on this scale are unlikely to lead to outright human extinction, but this does suggest that conflicts which are around an order of magnitude larger may be likely to threaten civilisation. It should be emphasised that there is very large uncertainty about the effects of a large nuclear war on global climate. This remains an area where increased academic research work, including more detailed climate modelling and a better understanding of how survivors might be able to cope and adapt, would have high returns. It is very difficult to precisely estimate the probability of existential risk from nuclear war over the next century, and existing attempts leave very large confidence intervals. According to many experts, the most likely nuclear war at present is between India and Pakistan.14 However, given the relatively modest size of their arsenals, the risk of human extinction is plausibly greater from a conflict between the United States and Russia. Tensions between these countries have increased in recent years and it seems unreasonable to rule out the possibility of them rising further in the future.

### 2nc – iran module

#### he’ll divert against Iran

Mark Danner 17, Chancellor’s Professor of English and Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley and James Clarke Chace Professor of Foreign Affairs and the Humanities at Bard, 3/23/17, “What He Could Do,” http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/03/23/what-trump-could-do/

One might call the resulting tactics “shock and opportunity”: Trump uses chaos to shock his opponents into varying crouches of outrage and contempt and then lunges forward amid the tumult wherever he sees an opportunity presenting itself. No wonder he thinks of himself as the supreme “counter-puncher.” His virtuosity is in his opportunism. It is against this reality that we must see the likelihood of a crisis as the vital springboard of a Trump presidency, especially an increasingly shaky, unpopular, and unstable one. The lower his poll numbers, the more outlandish his lies, the greater the resistance from opponents within the bureaucracies, the thicker his scandals and chaos, the likelier he will be to seek to use a crisis and all the opportunities it offers to lever himself from a position of defensiveness to that of dominating power. It is impossible to say when such a crisis might present itself or what it might be: A confrontation with Iran in the Persian Gulf? A dust-up with China over its claimed possessions in the South China Sea? A terrorist attack on American soil? There is no way of predicting, but it is worth taking very seriously that some sort of crisis will come and that, given Trump’s past behavior, his ruthless opportunism, and his drumbeat emphasis on “protecting the country,” such a crisis might well serve as a turning point in a Trump presidency, particularly one that is increasingly under siege.

#### Extinction

John Scales Avery 13, Associate Professor, University of Copenhagen, “An Attack On Iran Could Escalate Into Global Nuclear War,” <http://www.countercurrents.org/avery061113.htm>

Despite the willingness of Iran's new President, Hassan Rouhani to make all reasonable concessions to US demands, Israeli pressure groups in Washington continue to demand an attack on Iran. But such an attack might escalate into a global nuclear war, with catastrophic consequences. As we approach the 100th anniversary World War I, we should remember that this colossal disaster escalated uncontrollably from what was intended to be a minor conflict. There is a danger that an attack on Iran would escalate into a large-scale war in the Middle East, entirely destabilizing a region that is already deep in problems. The unstable government of Pakistan might be overthrown, and the revolutionary Pakistani government might enter the war on the side of Iran, thus introducing nuclear weapons into the conflict. Russia and China, firm allies of Iran, might also be drawn into a general war in the Middle East. Since much of the world's oil comes from the region, such a war would certainly cause the price of oil to reach unheard-of heights, with catastrophic effects on the global economy. In the dangerous situation that could potentially result from an attack on Iran, there is a risk that nuclear weapons would be used, either intentionally, or by accident or miscalculation. Recent research has shown that besides making large areas of the world uninhabitable through long-lasting radioactive contamination, a nuclear war would damage global agriculture to such a extent that a global famine of previously unknown proportions would result. Thus, nuclear war is the ultimate ecological catastrophe. It could destroy human civilization and much of the biosphere. To risk such a war would be an unforgivable offense against the lives and future of all the peoples of the world, US citizens included.

### 2nc – china module

#### Base decline leads to war with China

Mark Danner 17, Chancellor’s Professor of English and Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley and James Clarke Chace Professor of Foreign Affairs and the Humanities at Bard, The New York Review of Books, “What He Could Do,” http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/03/23/what-trump-could-do/

If it remains to be seen whether we are truly “witnessing…the birth of a new political order,” it is clear, a month into Trump’s ascension, that we are all his prisoners, held fast in the projected drama of his mind. As the battle over that new political order is enacted on the national stage, we have all become the dragooned antagonists in the play. This is what it is to live in the realm of the Big Man: his drama perforce is ours. Relentless political struggle, permanent revolution, shattering of norms, scandal and controversy, the capital hip-deep in broken crockery: this is what his supporters signed on for and this is what he is determined to give them; perhaps he knows how to give them little else. To him they are everything, his base: “This is a beautiful movement!” “They’ve never seen a movement like this in our country before.” They are his creation, permanent suppliers of the adulation and self-affirmation he craves.2 Now they cheer and hoot and scoff while their hero, saber in hand, slashes and hacks at his enemies among the hated status quo. The latter include not just Stephen Bannon’s “handful of media elites” but many others who are appalled and outraged and find themselves forced to live under the pall of permanent political anxiety that hangs over the nation’s cities. It is our outrage, our disgust, our knee-jerk shock and condemnation that animate the play and give verisimilitude to the battle being fought. We are the enemy and our screams of dismay are vital to the drama. Behind the controversies about crowd size and alternative facts and illegal voters and Muslim bans, all the shock and alarm and political fatigue can be reduced to a dawning horrified recognition that President Trump is indeed…Donald Trump. His uttering a thirty-five-word oath of office did not magically make him into someone else; he is determined to change the office much more than the office could ever change him. How could anyone have doubted that President Trump would be Donald Trump plus great power and not Donald Trump plus great restraint? And that he would be determined to use that newfound power to begin to do pretty much what he told his base he was going to do? And—a final irony—that his very determination to break crockery and spread chaos and disruption is a major obstacle standing between him and the “new political order” whose birth his Svengali Bannon claims he will oversee. The necessity for continual disruption, constant outrage, maintaining an iron grip on the news cycle, and sheer winning without ever retreating means he has a grand proclivity for getting in his own way—“stepping on his own dick,” in political parlance—and we need, not for the first time, to let ourselves be grateful for that. It has thus far proved to be the hated status quo’s most important protection—not least because in very short order he has managed to produce a growing cadre of adversaries within the government itself. Most important, Trump’s aggressive and reckless sallies against intelligence professionals have secured him powerful enemies within the national security apparatus, who have increasingly been making use of their contacts in the elite press—particularly The Washington Post and The New York Times—to fight back and undermine his new administration. This is an important part of the so-called Russia scandal: that the “intelligence services,” in the words of Connecticut Senator Chris Murphy, “seem to be at war” with the new president.3 That war has already claimed a high-level casualty in the person of General (retired) Michael Flynn, the president’s first national security adviser, who was fired after only twenty-four days in the job. Though Trump has railed against “illegal leaks” and declared that Flynn “was treated very unfairly by the media,” this side of the story—the bureaucratic war being waged against Trump from within the government—by its nature cannot be adequately told in the press itself, because reporters, however much they resist acknowledging it, in effect are vital players. This storyline is obscured, one might say, by the storytellers’ own shadows. Four weeks of the Trump ascendancy have been an ongoing seminar on where norms end and laws begin, on how much of what we had relied on when it came to the president’s conduct rested largely on a heretofore unquestioned foundation of centuries-old custom. That the president would express respect for the prerogatives of Congress and the judiciary, that he would acknowledge the country’s need for an independent press, that he would generally tell the truth and hold in respect the public record: in little more than the time it took to recite the oath of office much of this has been swept away. Donald Trump is a proud shatterer of these norms, and the louder the crash and splatter the better: for to his supporters such norms are nostrums, antiquated excuses for the elite’s own self-protection, and the wails of outrage and protest mean their hero is doing what they sent him to Washington to do. The norms are gone, perhaps never to be fully restored, and we have advanced now to the laws. The dividing line is surprisingly murky. That the president would not use his office to promote his personal business, for example, depends not only on the so-called emoluments clause of the Constitution but a good many subsidiary norms that Trump began shattering some time ago, when he refused to release his tax returns during the campaign. (His long-standing vow to release them once an audit was completed has been quietly abandoned.4) It seems plain now that in the near term the emoluments clause has in common with these norms that it requires political animation: that it has life only to the degree that those in power are willing to enliven it. Thus far Republicans in Congress, still stunned to find themselves enjoying an undreamed-of monopoly on power and struggling to craft a workable political program not based solely on ressentiment, have shown themselves uninterested in pressing Trump on his business entanglements and seem willing to stand by and let the presidency become a source of great wealth for the Trump family. Thus do sacred cows perish, not with a bellow but with a whimper. Ours is famously said to be a government of laws, not of men, and yet we find in the Age of Trump that the laws depend on men and women willing to step forward and press them and that such are not to be found in the dominant party in Congress. Republicans are too divided and too focused on the main chance to move to protect what suddenly appear to be abstract principles. In an age when their party cannot muster a national popular vote majority they find themselves unaccountably in full possession of two branches of government and face the task of mastering their divisions sufficiently to pass a political program that won’t further doom them to the wilderness. This means adopting policies of opposition designed to cultivate and harvest resentment, such as repealing Obamacare, which provides health insurance to more than twenty million Americans, while somehow shaping them into a positive program that they can present to constituents as having improved their lives. It is a daunting task and thus far they show few signs of being up to it. Untroubled by norms, President Trump required only two weeks to come face-to-face with laws in the form not of Congress but of three judges of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Once again banning Muslims was what he had promised his base he would do. That the executive order itself was a legal mess in its drafting and in its execution stemmed both from the modus operandi that the Trump team has adopted—policies closely held, drafts jealously sheltered from the eyes of those even in the departments or agencies responsible for carrying them out (taking a page from Dick Cheney’s post–September 11 playbook)—and perhaps from the desire of the president and his advisers to stage a fight with a major institutional force not yet recumbent before him: the judiciary. Thus the president’s assertion of his “unreviewable” powers in the face of “so-called” judges was not just absurd or ignorant but a bit of bait, establishing the basis for blaming the judiciary for any terrorist attack that was to come. On this he tweeted indefatigably and repeatedly: “Just cannot believe a judge would put our country in such peril,” he said in his most explicit tweet. “If something happens blame him and court system. People pouring in. Bad!” Then: “I have instructed Homeland Security to check people coming into our country VERY CAREFULLY. The courts are making the job very difficult!” “People,” of course, are not “pouring in,” certainly not from the seven countries targeted. But the phrase links once again the country’s vital security to the complex of issues at the heart of Trump’s “America First” politics: trade, immigration, and terrorism. Fortress America is being assailed by foreigners who pour into the country and take our jobs, by elite technocrats (“stupid people”) who negotiate trade deals that leave our borders unprotected, by traitorous businessmen who move factories abroad, and by terrorists who take advantage of the nonexistent immigration safeguards to penetrate our shores. Everywhere the Other threatens. Everywhere the stupid, ineffectual, corrupt, self-dealing elites do nothing to protect the Forgotten American, in effect allying themselves with the threatening outsiders, becoming, in reality if not intent, traitors. As Trump proclaimed from the Capitol scarcely a month ago, “this stops, right here and right now.” But now “so-called judges” stand in the president’s way. The president will likely get his immigration ban, in one form or another, by backing up, rewriting the executive order, and proclaiming victory. Commentators will bemoan the fiasco that his first immigration rollout became. But Trump will have established the precedent of saddling the judiciary with responsibility for the next attack. Jack Goldsmith, the former head of the Justice Department’s Office of Legal Counsel under George W. Bush and now a professor at Harvard Law School, notes that “Trump is setting the scene to blame judges after an attack that has any conceivable connection to immigration.” He goes on: If Trump loses in court he credibly will say to the American people that he tried and failed to create tighter immigration controls. This will deflect blame for the attack. And it will also help Trump to enhance his power after the attack. After a bad terrorist attack at home, politicians are always under intense pressure to loosen legal constraints. (This was even true for near-misses, such as the failed Underwear bomber, which caused the Obama administration to loosen constraints on its counterterrorism policies in many ways.) Courts feel these pressures, and those pressures will be significantly heightened, and any countervailing tendency to guard against executive overreaction diminished, if courts are widely seen to be responsible for an actual terrorist attack. More broadly, the usual security panic after a bad attack will be enhanced quite a lot—in courts and in Congress—if before the attack legal and judicial constraints are seen to block safety. If Trump assumes that there will be a bad terrorist attack on his watch, blaming judges now will deflect blame and enhance his power more than usual after the next attack.5 One might add that Trump’s executive order and the presidential Twitter assault on the judiciary that followed have set up the judiciary to be blamed following any attack, not just one having “any conceivable connection to immigration.” In his followers’ view Trump has acted to protect the country and “political” judges have blocked him. He has put them in a position to take the fall. Perhaps this was not the original plan but with Trump, it is safe to say, there will likely never be an original plan that plays out to the end. As the hapless Jeb Bush observed, Trump was “a chaos candidate and he’d be a chaos president.” Better to say that Trump uses chaos as a vital element in his tactics, perhaps having learned during his long career to capitalize on the chaos that his recklessness, ignorance, and aggression inevitably create. One might call the resulting tactics “shock and opportunity”: Trump uses chaos to shock his opponents into varying crouches of outrage and contempt and then lunges forward amid the tumult wherever he sees an opportunity presenting itself. No wonder he thinks of himself as the supreme “counter-puncher.” His virtuosity is in his opportunism. It is against this reality that we must see the likelihood of a crisis as the vital springboard of a Trump presidency, especially an increasingly shaky, unpopular, and unstable one. The lower his poll numbers, the more outlandish his lies, the greater the resistance from opponents within the bureaucracies, the thicker his scandals and chaos, the likelier he will be to seek to use a crisis and all the opportunities it offers to lever himself from a position of defensiveness to that of dominating power. It is impossible to say when such a crisis might present itself or what it might be: A confrontation with Iran in the Persian Gulf? A dust-up with China over its claimed possessions in the South China Sea? A terrorist attack on American soil? There is no way of predicting, but it is worth taking very seriously that some sort of crisis will come and that, given Trump’s past behavior, his ruthless opportunism, and his drumbeat emphasis on “protecting the country,” such a crisis might well serve as a turning point in a Trump presidency, particularly one that is increasingly under siege. Consider the possibility of a terrorist attack on American soil, even a failed one. Not only would such an attack, as noted, put Trump in a perfect position to strike out at the judiciary, a major countervailing institution, it would offer him the political leverage to put down various rebellions within the bureaucracy, particularly within the intelligence agencies. There is no way to know whether such an attack will come but one can say that Trump, by attempting to strike out at Muslims generally, as he had vowed to do, has managed to place the Islamic State in the tempting position of being able to affirm, by attacking the United States, that it is the avenger of all Muslims. No accident that its propagandists have been nothing short of exultant, dubbing Trump’s executive order “the blessed order” and thus raising it to the level of the United States’ “blessed invasion” of Iraq as a miracle savior of its cause. If, as the Islamic State has asserted, the goal of its attacks in the West has been to “eliminate the gray zone”—to place “Muslims in the West…between one of two choices,” to either “apostatize or [migrate] to the Islamic State, and thereby escape persecution from the Crusader government and citizens”6—then Trump’s immigration ban goes far toward accomplishing the same thing: isolating Islamic communities, placing them all among a besieged minority whose travel is restricted and whose loyalty to their adopted countries is put in question. Already several jihadist tweeters asserted that the prophecy of the late Anwar al-Awlaki, the American-born cleric killed in a drone attack in Yemen in 2011, that the “West would eventually turn against its Muslim citizens,” had been fulfilled.7 If one sought to design a policy to encourage radicalization, it would be hard to suggest a better one. One needn’t posit an administration master plan to notice that a further attack, even an unsuccessful one, will find the political ground well prepared. The panic over security that follows will open the way to a variety of measures to “protect the country,” few or none of which might have been necessary to prevent the attack in the first place. As we have seen, after an attack politicians seize the opportunity to act, not least to deflect blame from themselves, and we can expect President Donald (“The hour of action has arrived!”) Trump, after his repeated vows to keep the country safe, to act aggressively and comprehensively. How far he might go would depend on the severity of an attack, the ambitions of the administration, and perhaps how cornered the president feels himself to be. What measures might we expect under a Trump state of emergency? Probably strong steps against refugees, aliens, and immigrants. Suspending all entry of refugees. Widespread deportations. Expelling many green card holders. Further tightening and even suspending immigration. Mosques might be placed under surveillance, the much-discussed Muslim registry established. More broadly, and again depending on the severity of an attack, bulk collection of metadata might be reinstituted along with other forms of domestic surveillance. Long-standing constraints on the military and the CIA operating domestically might be loosened or eliminated. Black sites would be reestablished and torture reintroduced. The cells at Guantánamo, nearly empty now, would once again begin to fill. The standing post–September 11 Authorization for the Use of Military Force might be expanded or replaced, allowing unlimited military strikes abroad—and, perhaps, at home. The latter might lead, in the case of a particularly severe attack, to the suspension of habeas corpus. Certainly if such an attack were to come during the current Congress there is no reason to expect anything other than majority cooperation and support, not only for Trump’s specific responses to the attack but for the rest of his program. Democrats, whom Trump would denounce as worse than judges in their obstructionism, would be on the defensive. And the courts, whose pushback in any case would take much longer—as it did after September 11—will have been politically hamstrung by a commander in chief who will be in a position to declare, and to repeat, that he had warned the “political judges” not to second-guess him in what was needed to protect the country but that they had not listened. He will not be shy in saying the same about the press, “the most dishonest human beings on earth.” By then his political drama will have been elevated from a battle against elites and the status quo to a heroic struggle for the survival of the nation. As the hero was fond of telling his crowds during the campaign: if he lost, “we won’t even have a country anymore.” There is little reason to suspect they don’t believe it still and no reason to think he does not. “Never let a crisis go to waste,” President Obama’s first chief of staff was fond of saying. It is fair to expect that, in the face of opportunities to increase his power, destroy the opposition, and build his “new political order,” President Trump will once again gaze upon the darkening skies and see only sunshine.

#### US-China nuclear war causes extinction

**Wittner 12** [Lawrence, PhD, Professor of History emeritus at the State University of New York/Albany, has written extensively about nuclear war, “Is a Nuclear War With China Possible?”, first published on 11/30/11 and updated on 1/30/12, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lawrence-wittner/nuclear-war-china\_b\_1116556.html]

But what would that “victory” entail? An attack with these Chinese nuclear weapons would immediately slaughter at least 10 million Americans in a great storm of blast and fire, while leaving many more dying horribly of sickness and radiation poisoning. The Chinese death toll in a nuclear war would be far higher. Both nations would be reduced to smoldering, radioactive wastelands. Also, radioactive debris sent aloft by the nuclear explosions would blot out the sun and bring on a “nuclear winter” around the globe — destroying agriculture, creating worldwide famine, and generating chaos and destruction

### yes diversions

#### Their defense doesn’t assume him going crazy from a declining base – only our ev prices in longitudinal studies of his rhetoric and responses to smaller crises – that’s Foster

#### Yes diversions – empirical evidence and robust research proves it – and, Syria proves he’s willing to use force

Carrie A. Lee 18, an assistant professor at the U.S. Air War College, 4-13-2018, "Why has Trump been threatening to attack Syria? (Hint: It’s probably not about Syria.)," Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/04/13/why-has-trump-been-threatening-to-attack-syria-hint-its-probably-not-about-syria/?noredirect=on&utm\_term=.dd7c1a320a4e

Trump is playing to his base The real reason for the attack threats is probably this: Midterms are approaching, the Russia investigation is escalating and former FBI director James B. Comey’s book is being released. Research shows that diversionary wars — wars started to distract the public from domestic unrest — are hard to start in democracies and rarely have the intended effect. Military operations in an already existing conflict are much easier to manipulate — and are not as risky as starting a war. My research finds that, during periods of political fragility, U.S. presidents systematically manipulate the timing and tempo of military operations. That’s true most often in the lead-up to elections, when public opinion quite literally determines the fate of a president. However, presidents also manipulate military operations when they need support from their domestic political base — for example, during negotiations over major pieces of legislation, bids for legacy, midterms or while threatened with impeachment. Trump bookended his tweets about Syria with comments both about special counsel Robert S. Mueller III’s investigation and relations with Russia. That suggests that the president sees these as linked. And with Republicans expecting to take heavy losses in the midterms, Trump may see an airstrike on Syria as a way to motivate Republican voters and boost his approval ratings. If he does order a missile strike, Trump would be in good company, historically speaking. President Franklin D. Roosevelt scheduled the World War II invasion of North Africa before the 1942 midterm elections. President Richard B. Nixon prematurely announced a peace deal on Vietnam on the eve of the 1972 general election. And President Bill Clinton launched airstrikes against Sudan and Afghanistan the day that Monica Lewinsky appeared before a grand jury.

#### Recent studies go NEG

Kyle Haynes 15, Assistant Professor of International Relations, “Diversionary Conflict: Demonizing Enemies or Demonstrating Competence?,” <http://kyle-haynes.weebly.com/uploads/2/1/1/3/21135642/divtargets.pdf>

It is often argued that political leaders facing domestic turmoil and discontent are more inclined to provoke conflict abroad in order to secure their position at home. Indeed, the “diversionary” theory of war is perhaps the most widely known theory linking domestic political imperatives and international conflict. But how do embattled leaders stand to gain from initiating such risky conflicts? Do diversionary incentives derive from an attempt to rally the people behind the regime, or from leaders taking risky gambles to demonstrate their competence to the population? The literature to date has specified several causal pathways through which domestic unrest pushes leaders to initiate conflict abroad. Yet these competing theories of what I call “diversionary incentives” remain largely untested. We remain unsure of whether diversionary conflict, to the extent it occurs at all, is driven by unpopular leaders attempting to prove their competence to coalition members, stir up nationalist sentiment at home, scapegoat foreign groups for domestic problems, or simply distract constituents from the government’s failings. Although scholars have posited numerous mechanisms potentially underlying diversion, recent work has largely centered on the “rally around the flag” and “gambling for resurrection” theories as the most plausible explanations of diversionary conflict. Rally around the flag theory derives from the social psychology literature and argues that the cohesion of an “in-group” increases during crises or conflicts against a widely recognized “out-group.” The gambling for resurrection logic argues that embattled leaders can rationally initiate risky conflicts in a last ditch effort to demonstrate competence to the public. Recent studies have made significant advancements in specifying the conditions under which diversion is likely to occur and the types of conflicts likely to be initiated (Smith 1996; Gelpi 1997; Clark 2003; Mitchell and Prins 2004; Fordham 2005; Mitchell and Thyne 2010; Tir 2010). Little empirical work has been done, however, to adjudicate among the competing logics of how and why domestic unrest generates incentives for international conflict. This paper addresses this gap, assessing the various mechanisms thought to generate diversionary incentives for embattled leaders. I argue that we can gain significant leverage on the question of diversionary incentives by examining the types of states that are targeted in diversionary conflict. The rally and gambling theories posit entirely distinct logics behind the diversionary use of force, with immediate implications for the type of target chosen. Specifically, the rally theory predicts that diverting leaders will target traditional enemies and enduring rivals, as conflict against such persistent adversaries is most likely to promote in-group solidarity. According to the gambling logic, conversely, leaders are essentially agents that must demonstrate competence to their poorly-informed principals, the general public or winning coalition (Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson 1995; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). In order for an international conflict to demonstrate competence to these principals, the target must be adequately powerful (Tarar 2006). Defeating a weak adversary simply does not demonstrate a leader’s competence. Essentially, the rally around the flag and gambling for resurrection theories yield starkly different hypotheses regarding the likely targets of diversionary conflict. Testing these competing hypotheses can help us understand the nature of diversionary incentives and the domestic origins of international conflict. The extant literature has largely relied, implicitly or explicitly, on the rally around the flag logic in explaining diversionary conflict. A systematic examination of diversionary targets, however, indicates that the gambling for resurrection logic may offer a stronger explanation of diversionary incentives. Diversionary conflicts do not disproportionately target a state’s traditional adversaries. But diversionary incentives do appear to induce conflict with powerful targets. These findings should lead us to re-examine the field’s implicit reliance upon psychological rally mechanisms in explaining diversionary conflict.

### at: trump impact D

#### Disproven by his first year in office – he’s unilaterally done a bunch of crazy stuff that people said advisors would check

#### And, the President is the commander-in-chief – he can do pretty much whatever he wants with the military – advisors didn’t stop Syria strikes, no reason they won’t just rubber-stamp future operations

#### Constraints don’t exist anymore

Eric Levitz 18, 3-21-2018, "Donald Trump Has Never Been More Dangerous Than He Is Now," Daily Intelligencer, http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2018/03/donald-trump-has-never-been-more-dangerous-than-he-is-now.html

The “adults” in the West Wing have never had less influence over the president. The most harrowing development in presidential politics over the past month (the one that exacerbates all of the others) is that Donald Trump finally lost his humility. That may sound absurd, like saying Trump “finally” lost his tail, or some other appendage that the president was clearly born without, or else separated from in early childhood. But the reality is that, until recently, Trump approached his duties with a modicum of modesty. Awed by the awesome responsibilities of his new office, Trump spent much of last year deferring to the expertise of his advisers. He let the Republican Establishment dictate his legislative agenda and most of his Cabinet, and allowed the putative “adults” in the West Wing to overrule his instincts on the Iran deal, trade policy, and a variety of other matters. Of course, this forbearance was never strong enough to prevent the man from firing off incendiary tweets, praising white nationalists, canceling climate deals, or obstructing a little justice. But it was, nevertheless, sufficient to prevent Trump from translating his most belligerent rhetoric about foreign policy and the Mueller investigation into action. Now, however, Trump has finally shaken off his first-year jitters — and is ready to appoint himself the “adult” in every room. As the New York Times reports: A dozen people close to Mr. Trump or the White House, including current and former aides and longtime friends, described him as newly emboldened to say what he really feels and to ignore the cautions of those around him. … [I]n his first year in the White House, according to his friends, he found himself feeling tentative and anxious, intimidated by the role of president, a fact that he never openly admitted but that they could sense, people close to the president said … They say Mr. Trump now feels he doesn’t need the expertise of Mr. Kelly, Mr. Cohn or Rex W. Tillerson, the former Exxon Mobil executive he made secretary of state. If he once suspected they were smarter or better equipped to lead the country and protect his presidency, he doesn’t believe that now. The president’s new mind-set is readily apparent. Over the past two weeks, Trump has unilaterally announced steep tariffs on steel and aluminum imports to the United States; ousted the “globalist” director of his National Economic Council; agreed to an unprecedented face-to-face meeting with the leader of North Korea; fired his secretary of State over Twitter; orchestrated the (politically motivated) firing of deputy FBI director Andrew McCabe; and disparaged Robert Mueller’s investigation — by name — for the first time ever. In most, if not all, of these cases, the president either acted over the objections of senior advisers, or without bothering to consult them at all. The election of an emotionally volatile reality star — with authoritarian instincts, an insatiable ego, a capacious ignorance of American civics and geopolitics, and an implacable aversion to reading multi-page documents — led many a commentator to seek solace in the thought that Trump wouldn’t really be in charge. Precisely because he was so ignorant of — and uninterested in — governance, the new president would delegate critical decisions to his team of decorated generals, veteran GOP operatives, and corporate titans. He would handle the tweets, speeches, and petty graft; they’d handle the policy. Trump’s first 14 months produced plenty of evidence to support this hypothesis. But the past few weeks have fatally undermined it. The White House isn’t preparing for face-to-face talks with North Korea because James Mattis decided that was a good idea; or drafting $60 billion worth of tariffs against China because that’s what the GOP Establishment wanted. These things are happening solely because Trump decided to make them happen. That maniac on Twitter really is the president of the United States. And as more and more “adults” exit the West Wing — and it becomes more and more difficult to find normal, competent people willing to take their places — the chances of a return to last year’s “normalcy” grow ever more remote.

#### Trump doesn’t understand the power of nukes and the risk of lashout grows along with the pressure on his administration

Larry Diamond 18, Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Professor, by courtesy, of Political Science and Sociology at Stanford, 1/12/18, “Our Year of Living Dangerously,” https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/01/12/year-living-dangerously/

In the summer of 1974, as Richard Nixon’s presidency was unraveling—and Nixon’s mental stability along with it—Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger committed, in the words of historian Gil Troy, “the most patriotic act of treason in American history.” The brilliant young secretary (only a year in the job) reportedly told the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff not to follow any presidential orders to the military without checking with Schlesinger first. According to a Washington Post account shortly after Nixon’s resignation, Schlesinger and the Joint Chiefs “kept a close watch to make certain that no orders were given to military units outside the normal chain of command.” The Post attributed the move to concern that Nixon might try to use the military to stage some sort of coup to avert impeachment. But in its 2014 obituary of Schlesinger, the New York Times reported an even more chilling concern: that in his disintegrating mental state, Nixon might order the use of nuclear weapons. If Schlesinger did indeed give this order—and over the remaining 40 years of his life, he artfully and consistently avoided denying it—it was unconstitutional. As Franklin C. Miller, who served for three decades in U.S. national security roles, told the New York Times in 2016, “The president and only the president has the authority to order the use of nuclear weapons.” But can the President alone order a first use of nuclear weapons, and for that matter, a preventive war of choice? Since Donald Trump became a serious candidate for President, this legal, constitutional and moral conundrum and the memory of Schlesinger’s principled act of defiance have heavily shaped discussion of how he would handle the awesome powers of the presidency over national security. Donald Trump’s presidency enters its second year with the palpable sense of a gathering storm. By most accounts, the investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller is pushing forward aggressively on multiple fronts. It may now be getting close to the President’s family and his most inner circle, after already indicting his former campaign chairman and obtaining plea agreements with his national security advisor and a lower-level foreign policy aide. Reportedly, Mueller is seeking to interview Trump directly. In the courts of public opinion and elementary common sense (and possibly down the line, in legal proceedings as well), the President appears to be his own worst enemy. Who that is innocent of political collusion with the Russians repeats 16 times in an impromptu 30-minute interview, “there was no collusion”? The words have become such a relentless Trump mantra, day after day, week after week, like a nervous tick, that they inevitably summon Shakespeare’s trenchant insight from Hamlet, “The lady doth protest too much.” The persistent and by now gratuitous denials come from a President who is unable or unwilling to distinguish truth from fiction, who dishes out falsehoods as a daily ritual, whose gluttony and compulsive behavior suggest (in the words of a psychiatrist I respect) “a complete lack of impulse control,” and who, by the shocking account of Michael Wolff’s new book, Fire and Fury, as well as many others, doesn’t read memos, can hardly be briefed, is overwhelmed by an office he was not expecting to win, and is losing what grasp he had of reason and reality. In short, we may be approaching in the second year of the 45th president a situation as volatile and dangerous as the final days of the 37th president. For all his legendary faults—his greed for power, his paranoia, his bitterness and vindictiveness—Nixon was at least a deeply experienced and knowledgeable president, both in domestic and foreign affairs, and he understood the awesome destructive power of nuclear weapons. Trump is completely lacking in governing or military experience of any kind. Most frighteningly, he may not actually understand how devastating a nuclear war could be, or even a conventional war on the Korean peninsula. And he may have learned the wrong lesson from his (to my view well justified) April 2017 launch of 59 cruise missiles to punish the Syrian regime for its use of chemical weapons. That brought no serious military retaliation against the United States. An attack on North Korea would involve very different stakes on both sides. As 2018 unfolds, the domestic and international dimensions of Trump’s crisis-ridden presidency are beginning to intersect in wildly unpredictable and potentially disastrous ways. There are signs of preparations for a U.S. military attack on North Korea by mid-year, and a new report by a leading Russian expert on North Korea indicates that the Pyongyang regime “is convinced that the U.S. is preparing to strike.” This would likely be not a full-scale military assault to terminate the North Korea’s tyrannical regime but rather a punishing “bloody nose” strike, either to send a message about American resolve to halt further testing and development of Kim Jong Un’s nuclear weapons program or to actually destroy as much of its existing infrastructure as possible. While every American would like to be rid of the nuclear threat from the world’s last totalitarian regime, the risks of a military strike are enormous. They involve not only the possibility of massive North Korean retaliation against South Korea (and against American military installations in South Korea and Japan, where a total of more than 50,000 American troops are based), but also a military confrontation with China, which is ramping up its own military preparations in response to the growing signs of the U.S. military planning for an assault. Moreover, the attack would likely be seen by most of the world as an unprovoked act of “preventive war,” and one that would be launched before diplomatic options had clearly been exhausted (as they have hardly yet been adequately pursued). This would leave the U.S. diplomatically isolated and viewed by most of the world as responsible for death and destruction on a massive level. A diplomatic breakthrough to freeze and contain North Korea’s program before it can hit the U.S. may still be possible, and Trump is now all of a sudden signaling openness to diplomacy. But it is hard to see this as anything more than the president’s notorious unpredictability. As the Wall Street Journal observed in reporting his new signal, “Mr. Trump has vacillated between seeming open to—and even eager for—diplomacy with North Korea, and dismissing the need or value for it.” Then there is the looming domestic political crisis. What signal was the President sending when he told the New York Times in December, “I have absolute right to do what I want to do with the Justice Department”? And what are we to make of the gathering drumbeat of demands from conservative media figures, Trump loyalists, and Republican congressmen for Mueller’s firing—a seemingly orchestrated campaign that has congressional Democrats and even some Republicans deeply worried? In the coming months, the two gathering crises may well intersect. Given his past behavior and personal volatility, a Trump order to fire Mueller might be a shocking offense against the justice process, but it would hardly be surprising, considering his previous efforts to obstruct justice in the Russia investigation. These include his asking FBI director James Comey for a pledge of personal loyalty and then firing him when he did not receive it, and his attempt (in March of last year) to stop Attorney General Jeff Sessions from recusing himself from the Russia investigation. Then there was the widely reported incident aboard Air Force One last July 8, when the President reportedly personally dictated a statement his son was to issue insisting that Donald Trump Jr.’s meeting with a Russian lawyer the year before was “primarily” to discuss “a program about the adoption of Russian children,” and not the ongoing presidential campaign. Like the repeated condemnations of the special counsel’s investigations, the demands that it come to a close, and the endless recitation of the mantra, “there was no collusion,” these three episodes reek of the fear of a man who has something to hide, and who is laboring obsessively to hide it. We do not yet have proof either of what happened with Russia, or of how Donald Trump will conduct himself as this second year of his presidency unfolds. It has been a characteristic feature of his instability that his personal and political tirades alternate with tantalizing glimpses of a more practical, reasonable, and approachable man, ready to make serious compromises for a workable deal—whether on immigration, or infrastructure, or NAFTA, or who knows, even North Korea. But it is also characteristic of individuals with personality disorders that the illness inevitably seeps through—as in his latest racist outburst about black immigrants from “sh\*thole countries.” And the malady grows worse as the pressure intensifies. There is good reason to believe that, in pursuit of justice and simply discovering the truth, Robert Mueller is going to bring the pressure. The North Koreans are bringing the pressure. And pressure comes with the unforgiving burdens of the presidency. These are high among the reasons to worry that 2018 will be a year of living very dangerously for the United States, and for its democracy.

## \*\*\*\*aff section\*\*\*\*

## at: base DA

### 2ac – base DA – topline

#### The whole DA is ethically bankrupt – don’t allow yourself to be blackmailed by white nationalists – be skeptical of all their evidence, because it’s written from the presumption that we should appease racists

#### No Trump diversions from lashout

Håkan Frisén 17, Head of Economic Forecasting at SEB, 2-22-17, "Global economy resilient to new political challenges," https://sebgroup.com/press/news/global-economy-resilient-to-new-political-challenges

The interplay between economics and politics was undoubtedly a dominant feature of analyses during 2016. As we know, it was difficult to foresee both election results and their economic consequences. It was certainly not strange that economists were unable to predict the Brexit referendum outcome or Donald Trump’s victory, when public opinion polling organisations and betting firms failed to do so, but lessons might be learned from the economic assessment impacts they made. Economists probably tend to exaggerate the importance of more general political phenomena. While in the midst of elections that appear historically important, it is tempting to present alarmist projections about election outcomes that seem improbable and/or unpleasant. But once the initial shock effect has faded, more ordinary economic data such as corporate reports and macroeconomic figures take the upper hand. Psychological effects often exaggerated One important observation is that it is difficult to find any historical correlation between heightened security policy tensions and economic activity. Households and businesses do not seem to be especially sensitive in their consumption or capital spending behaviour. This is perhaps because uncertainty is offset by investments in a defence build-up, for example. Only when the conditions that directly determine profitability and investments are affected, for example via rising oil prices or poorly functioning financial markets, will the effects become clear. Markets also seem to have a general tendency to assume that the economic policy makers can actually behave rationally in crisis situations, until this has been disproved. Both during the US sub-prime mortgage crisis of 2007-2008 and the euro zone's existential crisis a few years later, for a rather long time the market maintained its faith that a response would come. Not until after a lengthy period of inept actions by decision makers did these crises become genuinely acute, with large secondary effects as a consequence. This market "patience" is presumably based on a long-time pattern of recurring bailout measures by governments and central banks, which usually benefit risk-taking at the expense of caution or speculation that policy responses will not materialise. It is reasonable to assume that this may also underpin the rather cautious reactions to the risks associated with the Trump administration's agenda. Although one cannot complain about the administration's power of initiative, there is a fairly high probability that in important areas it will not go from words to actions. There may be [for] various reasons for this, such as the inertia built into the separation of powers between the White House, Congress and the court system, or expectations that Trump's newly appointed cabinet secretaries and advisors will eventually take their cues from more established US positions.

#### No link – flip-flops don’t lose his base – only win him moderates – also dozens of thumpers

Danielle **Kurtzleben 17**, political reporter assigned to NPR's Washington Desk, former associate editor U.S. News & World Report, former correspondent for Vox, M.A. Global Communication, George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, B.A. English, Carleton College, “Trump's Latest String Of Flip-Flops Won't Hurt Him (At Least For Now),” NPR, 4-13-2017, http://www.npr.org/2017/04/13/523786423/trump-s-latest-string-of-flip-flops-won-t-likely-hurt-him-for-now-at-least

If George W. Bush was the decider, consider Donald Trump the un-decider. This week, the current president abandoned a string of his best-known policy positions over a matter of days. At a press conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg: "The secretary general and I had a productive discussion about what more NATO can do in the fight against terrorism. I complained about that a long time ago and they made a change, and now they do fight terrorism. I said it was obsolete. It's no longer obsolete." (On March 22: "NATO, obsolete, because it doesn't cover terrorism" — a claim that is untrue.) On China, in a Wall Street Journal interview: "They're not currency manipulators." (On April 2: "You know, when you talk about, when you talk about currency manipulation, when you talk about devaluations, they are world champions.") On Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen, in that same Wall Street Journal interview: "No, not toast ... I like her, I respect her. It's very early." (On May 5, 2016: "She is not a Republican. ... When her time is up, I would most likely replace her because of the fact that I think it would be appropriate.") This is just a taste; NBC's First Read counted up 13 flip-flops in the last few months. It's certainly noteworthy that the president has undone so many positions in such a short time frame — Americans might reasonably want to know exactly what their leader believes. But what kind of political consequences will he suffer? Potentially very few — at least in the short term — according to political experts. Here's why. 1) Lots of his supporters don't love him for specific policies, anyway. In 2004, one massive flip-flop was a crippling blow to John Kerry's campaign (See: his comments on how he "actually did vote for the $87 billion before I voted against it"). Last year, however, Trump made flip-flop after flip-flop during the presidential campaign — and he still won. Policy flip-flops simply didn't seem to stick to him. One reason may be that very specific policy proposals just aren't what people like about him. "I think there probably is something to the idea that to a degree his appeal isn't policy-based," says Robert Van Houweling, a political science professor at the University of California, Berkeley, who has studied flip-flopping. "One answer why he has more latitude than some politicians is that his appeal was more visceral." Because of that, it's quite possible that Trump's approval rating won't inch down much as a result of a half-dozen 180s. "I've just been out going to a bunch of town halls this week, and I don't see any evidence that it's hurting him at all," says Mark McKinnon, a longtime strategist who served George W. Bush, among others. "And in fact, what I would say is for opponents of Trump, they're very happy to see him changing positions, and his supporters don't really care. It's remarkable." Of course, it's true that there are a few key policies that Trump's voters did latch onto, like building a wall. But then, part of his "visceral" appeal came not just from the idea of building a wall (or proposing a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" or imposing massive tariffs on China), but from his tough image in general. That toughness continues to win voters over. "When people vote for presidents, it's more for attributes than it is for issues," McKinnon adds. "And there's usually strength, trust, and you know, 'Does he reflect my values?' Those are the three big ones. And he's doing really well on strength right now" because of his recent actions in Syria — which also, by the way, constitute a flip-flop. Indeed, Republicans now overwhelmingly support missile strikes in Syria — a reversal from 2013, during the Obama presidency, when two-thirds said they did not. 2) He doesn't have much support to lose. Speaking of that approval rating, it's already at near-historic-lows for a new president. Those who approve of him have already stuck with him through a litany of flip-flops. Those who disapprove — well, they already disapprove. With an approval rating of around 60 percent, a president likely has more people who aren't truly dedicated to them, Van Houweling says, "so you quickly see the effect of sort of damaging political moves in that context." That kind of signal may not show up when you have been riding at around 40 to 45 percent for a while, he says. "It's not easy to get a 10 percent decline in your popularity when you start out with really just your core supporters viewing your job being done well to begin with" — particularly, he adds, if those supporters are already used to Trump's views on policy being easily changeable. 3) Some of these policies aren't exactly emotional issues for Americans. Trump just did do more major policy about-faces in a few days than other presidents might take years to do. But not all of these flip-flops are terribly meaningful to most Americans. Consider monetary policy. In 2015, 70 percent of Americans didn't know who Janet Yellen was. So suddenly saying he might reappoint her as Federal Reserve chair might reasonably not bother many Americans all that much. Likewise, Trump said over and over and over that he'd label China a "currency manipulator." The average American has little reason to know exactly how currency manipulation works. One addendum here is that while Trump's policy message on China has changed, his tone hasn't budged much. He still proved on Twitter on Thursday morning that he's willing to talk tough on China: "I have great confidence that China will properly deal with North Korea. If they are unable to do so, the U.S., with its allies, will!" Trump does have some particularly strong policy views, but no particular ideology is so central to his identity as that tough-guy image. It may be that maintaining that image, as opposed to maintaining particular policy views, is what will allow him to remain constant in voters' minds. 4) Some flip-flops can be seen as good flip-flops. One upside to the Trump China flip-flop: He flipped in the direction of truth. China really hasn't been manipulating its currency recently. (The Washington Post's Fact Checker in December called the currency manipulation claims "way out of date.") To the extent that Trump's flip-flops reflect changing circumstances — or him acknowledging current circumstances —flip-flops could be viewed positively. "Conditions do change, and you have to change with them. I mean, that's part of the job," says Stephen Wayne, professor of government and an expert in the American presidency at Georgetown University. Indeed, presidents have made flip-flops that were, in retrospect, smart moves, as Slate's Jamelle Bouie has outlined. In his view, flip-flopping can be seen as "a skill," as opposed to a weakness. In addition, Trump's recent about-faces may win him some respect among policymakers. "He may face some compliments from mainstream Republicans who inhabit the swamp that he's not so bad after all," Wayne adds.

#### Other issues obviously matter more – healthcare, the economy, tariffs, and North Korea could all affect his approval rating with the GOP – immigration isn’t uniquely important

#### Either Trump’s base is bulletproof, and they’ll support him regardless…

Matt Shuham 3/21/18, "Corker: Republican Base's Support for Trump Is 'Tribal In Nature'" https://talkingpointsmemo.com/livewire/bob-corker-gop-base-support-for-trump-tribal-in-nature

Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN) said in an interview published Wednesday that President Donald Trump’s support among the Republican base is “tribal in nature” and “people don’t ask about issues anymore.” “The President is, as you know — you’ve seen his numbers among the Republican base — it’s very strong. It’s more than strong, it’s tribal in nature,” Corker told the Washington Examiner, as flagged by Taegan Goddard’s Political Wire. ADVERTISING “People who tell me, who are out on trail, say, look, people don’t ask about issues anymore. They don’t care about issues,” he added. “They want to know if you’re with Trump or not.” Corker, who has criticized Trump but voted in sync with the vast majority of the President’s positions, announced in September 2017 that he would not seek re-election in 2018. He briefly reconsidered in February but ultimately stood by his decision to retire.

#### OR, family separation split the GOP and thumps

Ryan Bort 6/20/18, Rolling Stone politics reporter, "Trump's Circle of Support Around Family Separation Is Shrinking Rapidly", Rolling Stone, https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/who-supports-family-separation-trumps-base-is-shrinking-w521759

Lewandowski's callous dismissal of such a heart-wrenching story was despicable, but the administration is running out of respectable allies willing to go on TV to defend the policy. As images, audio and anecdotes describing the atrocities taking place at the border have continue to emerge, even Trump's most faithful supporters have spoken out against family separation. Senator Lindsey Graham said Trump "could stop the policy with a phone call." Utah's Orrin Hatch called it "wrong," while Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has called for a "narrow solution" to fix the problem. Elsewhere, top-tier Trump supplicant Ted Cruz even introduced emergency legislation to keep families together. Though many of the Republican lawmakers speaking out against the policy have refused to sign a Democratic bill that would end family separation, they are unable to defend it, forcing the administration to rely on figures like Lewandowski and the propaganda peddlers who appear nightly on Fox News. All four former first ladies have also released statements criticizing the policy, with Laura Bush comparing the treatment of those crossing the border to the Japanese internment camps the United States constructed during World War II. Nine governors have announced they are pulling National Guard deployments from the border in protest. The head of the American Academy of Pediatrics has called the policy child abuse, while the UN's top human rights official described the practice as "unconscionable." On Tuesday, Trump removed the United States from the UN's Human Rights Council. Religious leaders have roundly denounced the policy, as well. Reverend Franklin Graham, the son of the late Billy Graham and usual ardent Trump supporter, called the policy "disgraceful." Days after Jeff Sessions attempted to use the Bible to defend the policy, over 600 members of his own church signed a letter condemning Sessions. Cardinal Timothy Dolan told CNN there is no Biblical justification for forcibly separating mothers from their children, adding that the policy "goes against human decency."

### 1ar – base low

#### Family separation thumps the link – it caused a huge rift between immigration hawks and evangelicals who find the practice ethically indefensible – that drains his support – that’s 2ac Bort

#### Family separation was terrible for the base – if immigration really is a key issue, that magnifies the importance of our thumper

Tara Francis Chan 6/15/18, Business Insider, "'Disgraceful': Separating immigrant children from their parents is so unpopular even Trump's base is not supporting it", Business Insider, http://www.businessinsider.com/evangelical-christian-catholic-response-zero-tolerance-border-policy-children-2018-6

The Trump administration's policy of removing immigrant children from their families has become so controversial that even the President's base of core supporters is speaking out. In April, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a "zero tolerance" policy towards those crossing the US border illegally. Arizona, New Mexico, and some districts of California and Texas have been ordered to criminally prosecute adults, causing them to lose custody of any accompanying children. Most children are sent to live with family members — but until then, they are largely housed in about 100 government-run centers, one of which limits kids to two hours of outdoor time a day. As of Thursday there were 11,432 children in the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the emotional turmoil on families doing serious damage. In 2016, 81% of white evangelicals voted for Trump. But some of the movement's leaders have started to criticize the administration's "zero tolerance" policy. Evangelical leader and Samaritan's Purse CEO Franklin Graham is a vocal Trump supporter, who prayed at Trump's inauguration and defended the presidents' "concern for Christian values." He is now among those to disavow the policy. "It's disgraceful. It's terrible to see families ripped apart and I don't support that one bit," Graham told CBN News this week, though he blamed "politicians for the last 20, 30 years" rather than Trump explicitly. In extraordinary scenes on Thursday, Sessions and White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders both referenced the Bible to defend the policy. "I can say that it is very biblical to enforce the law. That is, actually, repeated a number of times throughout the Bible," Sanders said in a press conference. Many Christians in the US seem, in this case at least, not to agree. Just this week the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which represents 47,272 US churches, voted on a resolution regarding immigration reform that pointedly described the importance of family.

### 1ar – no diversion

#### No diversion – there’s numerous checks on Trump’s ability to unilaterally launch a war – plus, projections are just economists exaggerating – that’s Frisén

#### And, won’t be nuclear – Syria proves he’s too risk averse to start a real war.

#### Advisors will stop him

Jonathan **Bernstein 16**, taught political science at the University of Texas at San Antonio and DePauw University, 12/13/16, “'Wag the Dog' for the Age of Trump,” <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2016-12-13/-wag-the-dog-for-the-age-of-trump>

Donald Trump will come into office knowing little about government policies and probably caring less about most of them. But he's going to want to stage an impressive opening number or two, to let everyone know who's the star of this show. The combination of uninformed and uninterested, but still ambitious and aggressive -- does that sound like potential trouble? If so, here's a different question. How can we insure that the new president feels he's getting his way often enough to keep him satisfied without creating disaster on the actual policies? Answer: Think "Wag the Dog." In this version, people inside and outside of his administration will persuade him to fight and win a few harmless battles. The Tweeter-in-Chief can say and believe he's taking decisive action. And normal Republicans and Democrats can get on with hashing out the normal stuff of politics. Suggestion One: The president wins the war on crime! Solution: As president-elect, Trump is still saying the murder rate is "highest in 45 years," a fictional claim he made in the campaign as well. Despite a jump in 2015, the murder rate is close to historical lows. So all he has to do is start using real statistics instead of phony ones to claim credit for solving this one. The formula can be repeated for other mistaken claims he made during the campaign about how terrible America is. Suggestion Two: Repeal a fictional law! Solution: The president can help fulfill his "drain the swamp" pledge if he can claim a full defeat for everyone in Congress, including the Republican leadership. A harmless way to do this is to make up a law he can persuade Congress to "repeal." There's even a phony law that has already been invented, the Public Affairs Act of 1975, a title dreamed up by academics to study how public opinion works. It turns out that many people will readily express opinions on non-existent laws, and will support or oppose them in response to partisan cues. If congressional leaders deny the need to repeal the (fictional) law, perhaps Trump can get them to take action anyway, since it would placate the angry constituents who are calling the legislators' offices and demanding that the "law" be declared null and void. Done. Trump can go on a victory tour, and leave the battles over real policies to the people who are serious about the policies. Many voters don't know how law-making works in the U.S. in the first place, and others may not care much about the truth so much as they care about visibly sticking it to the do-nothing bureaucrats in Washington. Suggestion Three: Invade something! The president-elect was the "bomb the hell out of them" candidate. How can he do this without involving a lot of innocent people or harming the interests of the U.S., let alone pick the wrong place (the South China Sea?) and risk global war? Solution: Find someplace out of the way, maybe an uninhabited island somewhere in the South Pacific -- closer to Hawaii than to China and Japan. Announce that Islamic League is about to set up a base there, and then bomb away and even stage a beach landing, with patriotic flag-raising pictures. Yes, I'm joking (well, mostly). But these "solutions" show some serious truths about how government works. Congress, career civil servants, interest groups and parties manipulate all presidents. The only question is how much, and how successful presidents are in fighting back. Even the most knowledgeable presidents have very limited expertise, given the vast number of subjects they deal with -- everything from space travel to Medicare reimbursement rates to aircraft carriers to national parks to constitutional law to regulation of complex financial products to disputes among Kurdish factions in Iraq. And the civil servants and members of Congress and lobbyists that presidents deal with are often masters of detail on whatever specific issue is under consideration. Presidents win a lot of these fights (or at least play to a draw) because they have strong political skills. They are good at figuring out what others want, and at knowing the incentives and motivations of those they must interact with. Trump has to date not demonstrated such skills, although, to be fair, he's only beginning to be tested. Thus far, he has shown a weakness for being easily distracted, and of seeking quick, surface-level results -- ones that career bureaucrats or House subcommittee chairs can reverse later, once the president's attention has moved on to something else. Granted, a lot of people, even Republicans, would be reluctant to give Trump such a long leash to achieve phony victories. But if they fear he's dangerous as president, then it would be better to keep him happy with some minor, temporary bump-ups in public opinion than it is to let him intervene in areas where he could do real damage. Of course, liberals believe that normal Republicans do plenty of damage to the nation on their own, Trump or no Trump. But at least those normal Republicans may respond to normal incentives, and moderate their positions if their ideal policies turn out to be unpopular. Think about it. Is a distracted president such a bad thing after all?

#### AND, future diversions will be small too

Dominic **Tierney 17**, associate professor of political science at Swarthmore College and contributing editor at The Atlantic, latest book is The Right Way to Lose a War: America in an Age of Unwinnable Conflicts, “The Risks of Foreign Policy as Political Distraction,” The Atlantic, 6/15/2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/06/trump-diversionary-foreign-policy/530079/

But what about military force? To be clear, there is little cause to speculate that Trump plans to launch a full-scale war solely to distract attention. For one thing, as president, the worst possible time to start a major military campaign is when you’re deeply unpopular. And the political upside is shaky at best. Recent big wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were politically damaging to George W. Bush. Even victory doesn’t guarantee a pay-off, as George H. W. Bush discovered when he won the 1991 Gulf War and then lost his bid for reelection in 1992. A crisis may arise where there are real national-security rationales for fighting, along with potential domestic gains. Here, the payoff at home would likely enter Trump’s calculus, and even push him over the edge to fight, with the legitimate casus belli providing a shield of plausible deniability. The most tempting use of force may be a seemingly manageable, but still dazzling, kinetic operation, like a missile strike or a raid to kill terrorist leaders. Another option would be to escalate a crisis where an easy win seems available: The key is to find the right enemy, one that’s both widely hated and too weak to fight back. After all, there’s a well-established “rally ‘round the flag” effect, where almost any military crisis temporarily juices the president’s approval ratings. In the wake of Clinton’s airstrikes in 1998, one poll found that 68 percent of Americans approved of his foreign policy. Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich said, “it was the right thing to do at the right time.”

### at: russia war

#### No Russia war

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The expert community has been crying wolf for a long time now: “War is at the doorstep!” The gloomy predictions indicate that Russia and the United States are at the brink of direct military clashes, as if they were trying to celebrate the 54th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis in some perverse way. However, any conflict, if it happens, will most probably be accidental – the parties are not yet ready for full-scale military confrontation. In the last few years, Russia has been modernizing its armed forces to replace the outdated Soviet-era materiel and structure. Numerous exercises, trillions of rubles spent, new equipment and combat vehicles emerging out of the blue, and a charismatic defense minister who changed the entire image of the Russian Army and brought back its popularity with society – all these steps provided for the fast (and real) growth of national military might. However, it remains rather limited in comparison with the overall total potential of the [NATO](http://www.russia-direct.org/tags/nato) states. Some would say that the alliance is reluctant to take any serious decisions and is nothing more than a paper tiger. Nonetheless, the brainwashing of the last two years has significantly improved the decision-making capacity of NATO and the chances for achieving consensus over the “Russian threat.” The ability to mobilize quickly strong conventional forces is still low, as NATO generals admit themselves. However, active recent revival of the nuclear sharing arrangements and the consolidation of U.S. troops in various countries of Central and Eastern Europe present enough deterrence against any light-minded action. It is clear that the war will not happen in Europe (and not even in [Ukraine](http://www.russia-direct.org/tags/ukraine) with its unpredictable leadership). However, wherever it occurs, NATO forces can eventually be mobilized to help their allies. Moreover, Moscow has largely been pursuing a defensive policy over the past 16 years. Even now, when “the Russians are (seemingly) coming,” an independent observer would probably notice that the lion’s share of the activities of Moscow are reactive rather than proactive. The Kremlin enjoys petty provocations from time to time (like ongoing incidents in the air over the [Baltic Sea](http://www.russia-direct.org/opinion/does-russia-really-pose-threat-baltic-states)), but is quite cautious in undertaking any serious action, which would require the use of force and lead to tangible casualties. Even when [Turkey shot down the Russian plane](http://www.russia-direct.org/opinion/russian-jet-shot-down-turkey-what-lies-behind-action) along the Syrian border, there was practically no military response and, on the contrary, it all ended up with a new friendship with Ankara. Moscow is now fond of “asymmetric measures” and they do not leave any room for substantial armed clashes. Russian President Vladimir Putin is fond of his status as the victim of Western pressure and the image of the global peace supporter. It is not in his interests to start a war – he would rather wait for the Western “attack” and would not necessarily give it an immediate response, in order to get the proper media effect. The U.S. side is passive as well. Many analysts assume that both of the presidential candidates would support a war – the difference is only in the scale. Republican candidate Donald Trump, despite his extravagant nature, sounds more like an isolationist and would likely mean a “small war.” Democrat Hillary [Clinton](http://www.russia-direct.org/opinion/why-hillary-clinton-better-russia-donald-trump), given her recent anti-Putin rhetoric, may be more willing to launch a “big war.”

### at: iran war

#### No impact to Iran war and no draw-in – we’d crush them

Matthew Kroenig 12, PhD in political science from the University of California at Berkeley, Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, “Time to Attack Iran Why a Strike Is the Least Bad Option”, <http://www.matthewkroenig.com/Kroenig_Time%20to%20Attack%20Iran.pdf>

To begin with, critics note, U.S. military action could easily spark a full-blown war. Iran might retaliate against U.S. troops or allies, launching missiles at military installations or civilian populations in the Gulf or perhaps even Europe. It could activate its proxies abroad, stirring sectarian tensions in Iraq, disrupting the Arab Spring, and ordering terrorist attacks against Israel and the United States. This could draw Israel or other states into the fighting and compel the United States to escalate the conflict in response. Powerful allies of Iran, including China and Russia, may attempt to economically and diplomatically isolate the United States. In the midst of such spiraling violence, neither side may see a clear path out of the battle, resulting in a long-lasting, devastating war, whose impact may critically damage the United States’ standing in the Muslim world. Those wary of a U.S. strike also point out that Iran could retaliate by attempting to close the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow access point to the Persian Gulf through which roughly 20 percent of the world’s oil supply travels. And even if Iran did not threaten the strait, speculators, fearing possible supply disruptions, would bid up the price of oil, possibly triggering a wider economic crisis at an already fragile moment. None of these outcomes is predetermined, however; indeed, the United States could do much to mitigate them. Tehran would certainly feel like it needed to respond to a U.S. attack, in order to reestablish deterrence and save face domestically. But it would also likely seek to calibrate its actions to avoid starting a conflict that could lead to the destruction of its military or the regime itself. In all likelihood, the Iranian leadership would resort to its worst forms of retaliation, such as closing the Strait of Hormuz or launching missiles at southern Europe, only if it felt that its very existence was threatened. A targeted U.S. operation need not threaten Tehran in such a fundamental way. To make sure it doesn’t and to reassure the Iranian regime, the United States could first make clear that it is interested only in destroying Iran’s nuclear program, not in overthrowing the government. It could then identify certain forms of retaliation to which it would respond with devastating military action, such as attempting to close the Strait of Hormuz, conducting massive and sustained attacks on Gulf states and U.S. troops or ships, or launching terrorist attacks in the United States itself. Washington would then need to clearly articulate these “redlines” to Tehran during and after the attack to ensure that the message was not lost in battle. And it would need to accept the fact that it would have to absorb Iranian responses that fell short of these redlines without escalating the conflict. This might include accepting token missile strikes against U.S. bases and ships in the region—several salvos over the course of a few days that soon taper off—or the harassment of commercial and U.S. naval vessels. To avoid the kind of casualties that could compel the White House to escalate the struggle, the United States would need to evacuate nonessential personnel from U.S. bases within range of Iranian missiles and ensure that its troops were safely in bunkers before Iran launched its response. Washington might also need to allow for stepped-up support to Iran’s proxies in Afghanistan and Iraq and missile and terrorist attacks against Israel. In doing so, it could induce Iran to follow the path of Iraq and Syria, both of which refrained from starting a war after Israel struck their nuclear reactors in 1981 and 2007, respectively. Even if Tehran did cross Washington’s redlines, the United States could still manage the confrontation. At the outset of any such violation, it could target the Iranian weapons that it finds most threatening to prevent Tehran from deploying them. To de-escalate the situation quickly and prevent a wider regional war, the United States could also secure the agreement of its allies to avoid responding to an Iranian attack. This would keep other armies, particularly the Israel Defense Forces, out of the fray. Israel should prove willing to accept such an arrangement in exchange for a U.S. promise to eliminate the Iranian nuclear threat. Indeed, it struck a similar agreement with the United States during the Gulf War, when it refrained from responding to the launching of Scud missiles by Saddam Hussein.

### at: china war

#### No US-China war, and interdependence checks escalation

Fravel & Cunningham 15—M. Taylor Fravel an Associate Professor of political science and member of the Security Studies Program at MIT // Fiona S. Cunningham a PhD candidate in political science and member of the Security Studies Program at MIT, “Assuring Assured Retaliation – China’s Nuclear Posture and U.S.-China Strategic Stability,” *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 2

The most important factor in Chinese assessments of crisis stability is the stakes involved in the scenarios that could result in a crisis. Many interlocutors believe that mutual possession of nuclear weapons is sufficient to deter a high-intensity or protracted war and would therefore ensure that any U.S.-China crisis or conflict would be limited and controlled. For example, the Science of Military Strategy concludes that “in the present and long-term future, there is a miniscule (shenwei) possibility of an enemy initiating a large-scale ground invasion of China.”125 Some Chinese analysts also note that U.S.-China economic and political interdependence would further constrain the role of nuclear weapons in any future U.S.-China contingency.126 As a result, the most likely U.S.-China contingencies in which nuclear weapons could play a role would involve Taiwan or U.S. allies. In these conflicts, Chinese analysts believe that the stakes would not warrant the use of nuclear weapons by China (unless attacked first). They implicitly assume that the stakes would be too low for the United States, as well, and that Washington would either restrain or abandon its allies if defending them gave rise to a situation in which the United States would need to threaten to use nuclear weapons.127 The general view was that the United States would not want to become entangled in a conflict with China on behalf of its allies or other states. One interlocutor suggested that Taiwan and North Korea were the only third-party contingencies over which the United States and China would be willing to risk a nuclear crisis. Nevertheless, this interlocutor maintained that China would not use nuclear weapons against the Taiwanese people and that the Chinese government had distanced itself from the remarks of a senior PLA officer who commented in 2005 that China would use nuclear weapons if it were defeated in a conventional war over Taiwan.128 Another interlocutor was concerned about the possible spillover effect of a U.S. preemptive strike on North Korea’s nuclear weapons. These Chinese views likely underestimate the strength of U.S. interests at stake in any conflict between a U.S. ally and China, as Christensen and Goldstein note. Although tensions have eased across the Taiwan Strait in recent years, the possibility of U.S. involvement in a conflict over Taiwan remains a real concern [End Page 35] for the PLA. The Science of Military Strategy acknowledges that cross-strait relations have improved, “but the key factors obstructing a solution to the Taiwan problem have not fundamentally disappeared.”129 As a result, the risk of a war over Taiwan’s unification is “relatively high.” The book states that such a war would be a relatively large-scale and relatively high-intensity conflict in which China would need to “guard against foreign military intervention” and that such a conflict would occur “against the background of nuclear deterrence.”130 Nevertheless, for the second reason below, most interlocutors did not believe that China would threaten or use nuclear weapons without being threatened or attacked first. A second reason for a relatively optimistic view of crisis stability is the Chinese view that China’s limited ambiguity over its no-first-use policy remains consistent with a clear firebreak between the use of conventional and nuclear weapons. China’s strategic community maintains that China would not use nuclear weapons first in a crisis or conflict. A recent textbook from AMS, for example, describes one of the Second Artillery’s main missions as “preventing (ezhi) an enemy from escalating a conventional war to a nuclear war.”131 In the context of a Taiwan contingency, Maj. Gen. Yao Yunzhu explains that “it would be useless for China to deter U.S. conventional intervention by using China’s nuclear weapons. It is the United States, not China, which has the nuclear capabilities to control and even dominate conflict escalation.”132 Some Chinese interlocutors also claimed that U.S. conventional superiority contributes to a clear conventional-nuclear firebreak, as the United States would always have conventional options to escalate a conflict and would therefore not need to resort to nuclear threats or use.133 Most interlocutors expressed confidence that the United States would have no reason to attack China’s nuclear arsenal with conventional weapons, but some interlocutors recognized that nuclear escalation control was a part of U.S. war planning, despite the United States’ conventional superiority.134 If China views a conventional attack on its nuclear weapons or infrastructure as a first strike that [End Page 36] would justify nuclear retaliation, its belief about a clear firebreak rests more on a belief that the United States will be deterred from initiating such an attack than it does on a principled constraint. A third factor in China’s optimistic assessment of crisis stability is the perceived deterrent effectiveness of the limited ambiguity that China has allowed regarding its no-first-use policy. Some strategists saw a greater temptation for the United States to attack China’s nuclear capabilities with conventional weapons as U.S. conventional precision strike capabilities improved. All inter-locutors indicated that China has carefully considered the possibility that the United States might use conventional force against China’s nuclear capabilities. As discussed earlier, China’s response has been to allow limited ambiguity over its no-first-use posture to deter such an attack. One interlocutor maintained that the United States did not believe that China would view an attack on China’s command and control facilities as an attack on its nuclear facilities and that China could do little to deter such an attack. Chinese strategists have noted that identifying what constitutes a nuclear command and control facility is challenging given the different levels of command and control.135 As a result, China is allowing the ambiguity surrounding its no-first-use policy in the hope that this will undermine U.S. confidence that China would not escalate a conflict if its nuclear capabilities were targeted.