



Political Triangulation: 2008 Election Campaign

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Three divisive issues roiled America's political landscape the past decade: Terror; Economy; and, Environment. The three issues are largely seen as unrelated, even as opposites in a zero sum political sense. Further, each issue is individually perceived as a zero sum game: "tree huggers" vs. developers, for example.

Teton Sands' White Paper, *Comparative Economic Advantage in the War on Terror*, presents a case for crafting a simple political message which integrates the three issues and is attractive to nominally opposing camps within each issue – particularly to independents and non-committed. The approach has three advantages:

- **Efficacy** – communication resources are concentrated on one “broad band” message rather than diluted on separate messages tailored to interest groups within each issue.
- **Scale** – the message is sufficiently scalable to resonate with the intelligentsia as well as with the lowest common denominator of the electorate: ranging from tightly reasoned editorials to emotive **sound bites**.
- **Deliverable** – political messages that are successful in the short run may carry undesirable longer term consequences if expectations raised by the messages cannot be fulfilled. The proposed approach is operationally achievable given a reasonable degree of political consensus.

In summary, the debate about the War on Terror primarily focuses on military force and police power. Teton's paper presents a case for an alternative approach aimed at the center of gravity which would arguably be more effective than broadly dispersed force. The paper also posits the approach would spin-off significant economic and environmental benefits.

It is argued that funding and support for world wide terror would largely dry-up if Western nations, the USA in particular, stopped importing oil. A case is made for removing certain artificial barriers that prevent American entrepreneurial prowess from marketing substitutes for imported oil. Success would produce significant economic benefit, including a 40-50% reduction in the current account deficit. To the extent that oil substitutes consist of alternative energies, environmental problems such as global warming would be mitigated.

