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Obama's "goals for America"

By Ezra Klein September 6, 2012

The Obama campaign has released a few excerpts of the president's speech tonight. They're not very interesting. But they've also released a set of "goals for America" that he'll lay out tonight. They're more interesting:

Tonight President Obama will ask the country to rally around a set of goals on manufacturing, energy, education, national security, and the deficit – a real, achievable plan that will create jobs, expand opportunity, and ensure an economy built to last.

Manufacturing

- Create one million new manufacturing jobs by the end of 2016
- Double exports by the end of 2014

Energy

- Cut net oil imports in half by 2020
- Support 600,000 natural gas jobs by the end of the decade

Education

- Cut the growth of college tuition in half over the next 10 years
- Recruit 100,000 math and science teachers over the next 10 years
- Train two million workers for real jobs at community colleges

National Security

- Invest in the economy with the money we're no longer spending on war

Deficit

- Reduce the deficit by more than \$4 trillion over the next decade

Most of these seem pretty standard. The energy promises are, as I understand it, likely to happen even without significant changes to government policy. The manufacturing policies probably speak more to global recovery and Federal Reserve policy than anything the Obama administration will or won't do.

More interesting is the promise to halve the growth of college tuition over the next decade. That's...ambitious. Here's [what's been happening](#) to tuition and fees in recent decades -- and remember, all these numbers are on top of inflation:

Ouch. It will be interesting to see what mechanism the administration proposes to bring that down.

Also note the promise to cut the deficit by \$4 trillion and use the money we were spending on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to invest domestically. If I'm reading that correctly, it will require a substantial change to Obama's deficit-reduction because, as we covered [earlier](#), it currently uses those war savings to reduce the deficit.

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