

Why it matters: America and the world

Editor's Note: One in an Associated Press series examining issues at stake in the presidential election and how they affect people.

THE ISSUE

How should America use its influence in a world where being a superpower doesn't get you what it once did? As instability and human tragedy in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria have shown, the U.S. alone cannot impose solutions or force the surrender of adversaries like the Islamic State group, which cannot be deterred by the threat of nuclear attack.

WHERE THEY STAND

Donald Trump says his approach is defined by the phrase "America First." He says, for example, that if allies in Europe and Asia won't pay the full cost of U.S. contributions to their defense, then the U.S. should let them defend themselves. He is sour on "international unions that tie us up and bring America down."

Hillary Clinton takes the view that America benefits from a wide network of alliances, both for security and for economic strength. She says she would work to widen and strengthen that network. She criticizes a "go-it-alone" approach for the U.S. and asserts that international partnerships are "a unique source of America's strength."

WHY IT MATTERS

The way America wields its power around the world affects people in every walk of life, in every corner of the country. Going to war in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 profoundly changed the lives of tens of thousands of people whose loved ones were killed or grievously wounded. It also raised questions that confront Clinton and Trump: How can American influence be used most effectively to protect the homeland and prevent future wars?

In Iraq and Syria, President Barack Obama has chosen not to use the full force of the U.S. military against IS. Instead he has sent small numbers of troops to prod and coach local forces to do the main fighting, backed

by U.S. airpower. He says this is more likely to create a durable success than fighting the Iraqis' and Syrians' wars for them. Trump says this is an abdication of a commander-in-chief's responsibility to extinguish as quickly as possible the most immediate threat to the United States. Clinton supports the thrust of Obama's approach to avoiding another U.S. war in the Mideast.

The Iran nuclear deal, which Trump trashes and Clinton praises, is an example of diplomacy with the potential to change the course of history, for better or worse. Critics like Trump say it opens the door for Iran to get its hands eventually on nuclear weapons, which would threaten America. Clinton says it blocks that path and provides possibilities for change in Iran that could reduce the chance of war.

At its core, the discussion about U.S. leadership gets down to this: How much can the U.S. accomplish acting alone, compared with allying itself with like-minded nations? The question applies not just on the military front but also in economics. Trump argues the U.S. gets too little out of current trade arrangements as well as decades-old

security partnerships like NATO, which is anchored in Europe but traditionally led by the U.S. He has called NATO "obsolete" and a bad deal for America. Clinton, by contrast, sees NATO and alliances with Japan and South Korea as a pillar of U.S. strategy for promoting peace and preventing war.

Trump is right when he says NATO was created to confront a threat — the Soviet Union — that no longer exists. The question is whether the alliance is capable of adapting to 21st century threats like a resurgent Russia, instability in the Middle East and the appeal of the Islamic State group. Whereas Trump suggests the U.S. can be better off going it alone, Clinton aligns herself with the more traditional notion that there is strength in numbers.



In this 2011 file photo Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Seeman, right, of Kalispell, Mont., takes the oath of re-enlistment as Spc. Brian Martinez, center, of Aurora, Ill., holds up an American flag at Camp Taji, north of Baghdad, Iraq.

AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo, File



In this file photo taken on May 31, provided by the Syrian Civil Defense Directorate in Liberated Province of Aleppo, shows Syrian man carries an injured boy, in Aleppo, Syria.

UN hears details of suffering of Aleppo

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Experts painted a graphic portrait of barrel bombings, attacks on medical facilities, chemical weapons use and the ongoing suffering inside the besieged Syrian city of Aleppo, shaming the international community for its inaction at an informal Security Council meeting Monday organized by the United States.

Dr. Zaher Shaloul, a Syrian-American doctor from Chicago, said medical facilities in eastern Aleppo are routinely targeted, creating a situation where people are dying from treatable conditions for lack of medical care and basic supplies.

Shaloul, who last visited Aleppo in July, said he asked a nurse there what she wanted most from the United Nations and she replied that she wanted help evacuating a 10-year-old girl named Shahd who was wounded by a barrel bomb and is now dying due to a shortage of medicine.

"We don't need condemnations, prayers or pointing fingers, we had enough of that. I ask you to meet the people of Aleppo and see them as humans. I have one request, besides saving Shahd, visit Aleppo yourself and meet with its doctors, nurses and patients. If three doctors from Chicago were able to do that, you can do it," Shaloul told diplomats.

Shaloul then showed slides showing women and child victims, one of them a child he said was injured in a chlorine gas attack.

He said only 35 physicians remain in Aleppo where 15 health care facilities had been attacked in July alone.

Currently, more than 250,000 people are besieged by government forces in the eastern part of Aleppo, a city that has been

divided into rebel and government-controlled parts since 2012. The government completely closed the main road into the rebel-held areas of Aleppo on July 17, effectively cutting off all supplies and exit routes.

Rebels breached the Syrian government siege on opposition neighborhoods in Aleppo on Saturday, opening a corridor in the south and marking a major military breakthrough, but observers said civilians still don't have a safe route out because of intense airstrikes and shelling in the area.

Also Monday, U.N. officials in Syria urgently called for a humanitarian pause to repair Aleppo's damaged water and electricity infrastructure and provide aid to those trapped in the eastern part of the city.

"Water available through wells and tanks in Aleppo is not nearly enough to sustain the needs of the population. The U.N. is extremely concerned that the consequences will be dire for millions of civilians if the electricity and water networks are not immediately repaired," said the statement signed by Yacoub El Hillo, U.N. resident coordinator for Syria, and Kevin Kennedy, regional humanitarian coordinator for the Syria crisis.

"At a minimum, the U.N. requires a full-fledged ceasefire or weekly 48-hour humanitarian pauses to reach the millions of people in need throughout Aleppo and replenish the food and medicine stocks, which are running dangerously low," the statement continued.

Abdullah Nawhlu, a member of Syrian Civil Defense, a neutral and impartial humanitarian group, speaking by video from Aleppo, described a dire situation with rapidly dwindling stocks of food and fuel, not to mention medical supplies.

BRIEFLY

Trump critics urge RNC to replace Trump in special meeting

WASHINGTON (AP) — Desperate conservatives have circulated a petition calling for the Republican National Committee to host a special meeting where Donald Trump could be replaced as the party's presidential nominee.

Organizers — some of the same Republicans who tried to prevent Trump from winning the GOP nomination — acknowledge the effort is a long shot at best. But fearing an Election Day disaster, they have appealed to RNC members across the nation in recent days to intervene.

"Desperate times call for desperate measures," Regina Thomson, executive director of a political action committee known as the GOP Accountability Project, wrote in an e-mail distributed to RNC members over the weekend and obtained by The Associated Press.

"Donald J. Trump is a disaster," Thomson wrote, attaching a copy of the petition in the message. "His post-convention behavior has been deplorable."

Trump has worried many leading Republicans in recent weeks with a string of controversies and fights, notably with the Muslim American parents of an Army captain killed in Iraq and prominent Republicans up for re-election. Trump reversed course and ended up endorsing House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin and Sens. John McCain of Arizona and Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire.

Still, Thomson and other anti-Trump Republicans are concerned.

Party rules allow RNC members to replace a presidential nominee in the event of "death, declination, or otherwise" — language Trump critics say allows for his replacement soon after he formally captured

his party's presidential nomination at the national convention. To force a meeting to discuss Trump's ouster, however, organizers must submit signatures by at least 16 RNC members from 16 states.

Should they do so, GOP chairman Reince Priebus has 10 to 20 days to convene the full, 168-member Republican National Committee.

Complexity makes airline computer systems vulnerable

DALLAS (AP) — Twice in less than a month, a major airline was paralyzed by a computer outage that prevented passengers from checking in and flights from taking off.

Last month, it took Southwest days to recover from a breakdown it blamed on a faulty router. On Monday, it was Delta's turn, as a power outage crippled the airline's information technology systems and forced it to cancel or delay hundreds of flights. Delta employees had to write out boarding passes by hand, and at one airport they resurrected a dot-matrix printer from the graveyard of 1980s technology.

Why do these kinds of meltdowns keep happening?

The answer is that airlines depend on huge, overlapping and complex IT systems to do just about everything, from operating flights to handling ticketing, boarding, websites and mobile-phone apps. And after years of rapid consolidation in the airline business, these computer systems may be a hodgepodge of parts of varying ages and from different merger partners.

These systems are also being worked harder, with new fees and options for passengers, and more transactions — Delta's traffic has nearly doubled in the past decade.

The result: IT failures that can inconvenience tens of thousands of passengers and create long-lasting ill will.



WHAT ENERGY SAVINGS AWAIT YOUR HOME? LET'S FIND OUT.

Start by doing a free online Home Energy Review from Energy Trust of Oregon. You'll get customized energy-saving recommendations and learn all kinds of ways to get more from your energy. Plus Energy Trust can help you with cash incentives and finding a trade ally contractor for your home energy project.



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