

Clinton, Sanders Clash On Guns, Economy, Foreign Policy

BY JULIE PACE
AND LISA LERER
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Hillary Rodham Clinton and Sen. Bernie Sanders clashed over U.S. involvement in the Middle East, gun control and economic policy in the first Democratic presidential debate Tuesday, outlining competing visions for a party seeking to keep the White House for a third straight term.

Yet in a moment of political unity — and levity — Sanders leapt to Clinton's defense on the issue of her controversial email practices as secretary of state.

"The American people are sick and tired are hearing about your damn emails," Sanders exclaimed as the

crowd in Las Vegas roared with applause. A smiling Clinton reached over to shake his hand and said, "Thank you, Bernie."

While the five candidates onstage took issue with each other, they also repeatedly sounded traditional Democratic themes — such as fighting income inequality — that are sure to carry over to the general election campaign against the Republicans.

First, the Democrats must choose their own candidate. And throughout most of the two-hour debate Clinton played the role of aggressor, an unexpected shift for a candidate who had barely mentioned her Democratic rivals since launching her campaign six months ago. Until now, Clinton and Sanders — who has emerged as her

toughest competition — have circled each other cautiously and avoided personal attacks.

After Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, derided "a casino capitalist process by which so few have so much," Clinton said it would be a "big mistake" for the U.S. to turn its back on the system that built the American middle class. Asked whether she thought Sanders, who has a mixed record on gun control legislation, had been tough enough on the issue, she said simply, "No, I do not."

Sanders defended his gun control record, and called for better mental health services, stricter background checks and closing a loophole that exempts gun shows from background checks.

The two also tangled over

foreign policy, an issue where Clinton is often more hawkish than others in the Democratic Party. The former secretary of state reiterated her call for more robust U.S. action to stop the Syrian civil war and defended her judgment on international issues, despite having voted for the 2002 invasion of Iraq.

Sanders called the Iraq war "the worst foreign policy blunder in the history of our country" and said he would not support sending American combat troops back to the Middle East to fight terrorism.

"Nobody does, Senator Sanders," Clinton interjected.

Also hanging over the debate: the lengthy deliberations of Vice President Joe Biden, who is weighing a late entry into the Democratic race. Debate host CNN kept

an extra podium on standby just in case Biden decided to show up, but the vice president instead stayed in Washington, where he was watching the debate at his residence.

For Democrats, Tuesday's debate was an opportunity to steal attention from the drama in the Republican primary, where more than a dozen candidates are fighting to overtake billionaire Donald Trump. The real estate mogul still made his presence known Tuesday night, sending a torrent of Twitter commentary on the Democrats' performances.

"Sorry, there is no STAR on the stage tonight!" he wrote.

While the Republican primary has been roiled by

the emotional debate over immigration, the Democratic candidates were largely united in their call for providing a path to legal status for the millions of people currently in the U.S. illegally. The party is counting on general election support from Hispanics, a group that overwhelmingly voted for President Barack Obama in 2012.

Joining Clinton and Sanders on stage in Las Vegas was a trio of low-polling candidates looking for a breakthrough moment: former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley; Jim Webb, a former Navy secretary and U.S. senator from Virginia, and Lincoln Chafee, the Republican-turned independent-turned Democrat from Rhode Island.

Dutch Probe: Buk Missile Downed Malaysian Jet In Ukraine

BY JOHN THOR DAHLBURG,
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Associated Press

GILZE-RIJEN AIR BASE, Netherlands — The missile shot skyward from war-ravaged eastern Ukraine. With deadly accuracy more than six miles up, it detonated just in front of the Malaysia Airlines jetliner, sending hundreds of jagged steel shards ripping through its aluminum skin at up to 5,600 mph and shearing the cockpit from the rest of the plane.

The two pilots and purser in the cockpit died instantly, and the Boeing 777 disintegrated and fell to earth, killing the rest of the 298 men, women and children aboard Flight 17 on July 17, 2014, Dutch investigators said Tuesday in a long-awaited report.

Some of the victims may have been conscious for 60 to 90 seconds, the Dutch Safety Board said, but they probably were not fully aware of what was happening in the oxygen-starved, freezing chaos. The tornado-like airflow surging through the doomed jet as it came apart was powerful enough to tear off people's clothes and leave naked corpses amid the fields of sunflowers.

The 15-month Dutch investigation blamed a Soviet-made surface-to-air Buk missile for downing the Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur flight, but it did not explicitly say who had fired it. It identified an area of 320 square kilometers (120 square miles) where it said the launch must have taken place, and all of the land was in the hands of pro-Russian separatists fighting Ukrainian forces at the time of the disaster, according to daily maps of fighting released by the Ukrainian National Security Council.

The Dutch Safety Board also found that the tragedy wouldn't have happened if the airspace of eastern Ukraine had been totally closed to passenger planes as fighting raged below.

"Our investigation showed that all parties regarded the conflict in eastern part of Ukraine from a military perspective. Nobody gave any thought of a possible threat to civil aviation," Safety Board chairman Tjibbe Joustra said in releasing the report at a military base in the southern Netherlands.

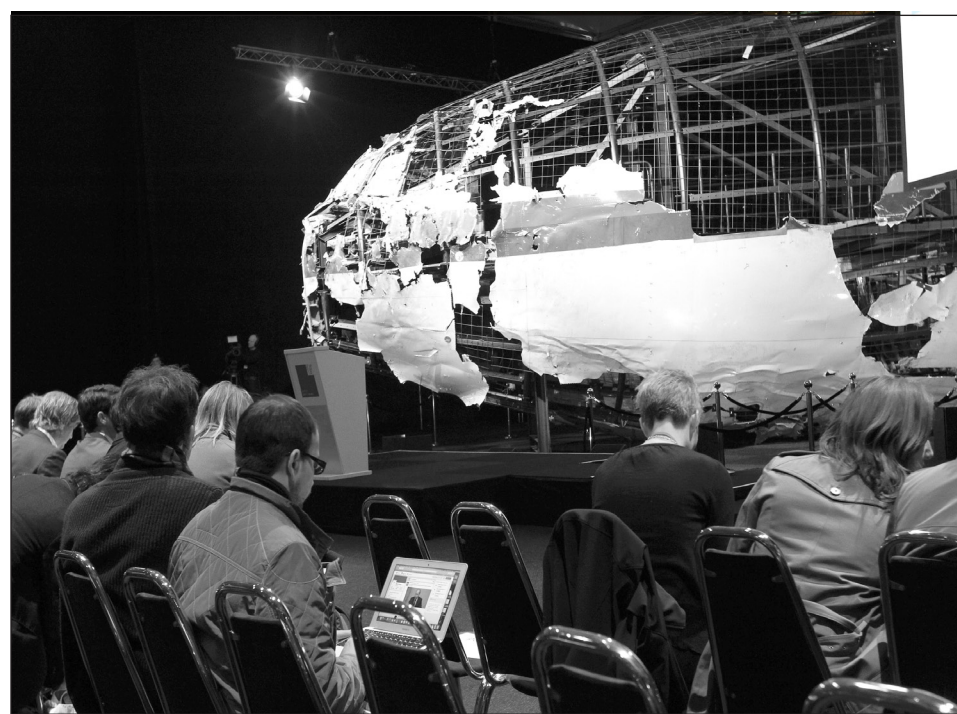
He spoke in front of the partially reassembled red, white and blue Malaysian jetliner, much of the left side of its mangled fuselage front riddled with shrapnel holes.

Russian officials were prompt to dismiss the Dutch report, with Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov calling it an obvious "attempt to make a biased conclusion, in essence to carry out a political order."

Earlier Tuesday, the Buk's manufacturer presented its own report trying to clear the separatists, and Russia itself, of any involvement.

The Russian state-controlled consortium Almaz-Antey said it conducted experiments, including one in which a Buk missile was detonated near the nose of an airplane similar to a 777, and it contended they contradicted the conclusion that a Buk missile of the kind used by the Russians destroyed Flight 17. Almaz-Antey had earlier suggested that it could have been a model of Buk that is no longer in service with the Russian military but is part of Ukraine's arsenal.

It said the experiments also rebutted claims the mis-



SYLVIA LEDERER/XINHUA/SIPA USA/TNS
The reconstructed cockpit of flight MH17 is on display during a press conference to release the investigation report on the cause of its crash, at the Gilze-Rijen air base on Oct. 13 in the Netherlands. The crash of flight MH17 on 17 July last year was caused by the detonation of a 9N314M-type warhead launched from eastern Ukraine using a Buk missile system, said the investigation report published Tuesday by the Dutch Safety Board (DSB).

sile was fired from Snizhne, a village that was under rebel control. An Associated Press reporter saw a Buk missile system in that vicinity on the same day.

Despite the moves by Moscow, Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands called on Russia to fully cooperate with a separate criminal investigation that Dutch prosecutors are conducting into the downing of the plane, in which 196 Dutch nationals died.

Rutte said a key priority "is now tracking down and prosecuting the perpetrators."

"On July 17, 2014, in eastern Ukraine, in broad daylight, a passenger airplane was shot out of the sky with a Buk missile," he said. The safety board's conclusions confirmed "some of our most shocking suspicions," he added.

In a statement, the Dutch-led Joint Investigation Team said it has already identified "persons of interest" in the probe, but said it is "not easy" to find witnesses, especially ones willing to make a statement. They said their probe will stretch into 2016.

The Netherlands has headed the international investigation into the disaster because most victims were Dutch. Ukraine, in whose airspace the incident occurred, agreed to let the Netherlands take the lead.

At U.N. headquarters, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin defended his country's decision not to close its airspace, saying no one at the time was aware of the possibility that Russia had brought highly sophisticated anti-aircraft missiles into Ukraine.

Klimkin also praised the Dutch report as "fully unbiased and transparent," and said what now is needed is for a criminal investigation to reveal the chain of command and bring those responsible to justice.

Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak also said the world "must move forward toward ensuring that those responsible are held accountable for this murderous act." There were 43 Malaysians aboard, the second-highest total.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said on Wednesday that her government would not be bullied by Russia in Australia's pursuit of justice.

Bishop told Seven Network television that a criminal investigation of the "atrocities" will continue.

"We certainly won't be bullied by anyone in our pur-

suit of justice for the families of those aboard," Bishop told the Seven Network.

Australia had the third largest number of victims with 39 Australian citizens and permanent residents aboard.

Dutch investigators said the missile detonated less than a meter (3.3 feet) from the plane, to the left side of the cockpit, sending the shrapnel into the plane at speeds of up to 9,000 kph (5,600 mph).

Joustra said missile fragments found in the cockpit crew's bodies, as well as paint traces, helped investigators to identify the Buk. Some of the pieces of metal, he said, were shaped like cubes or "bow ties" — a detail weapons experts called extremely significant.

"The overall picture is conclusive — a 9M38M1 surface-to-air missile from a Buk operated from rebel-held territory in east Ukraine was responsible for the shooting down of MH17," said Nick de Larrinaga, Europe editor for IHS Jane's Defense Weekly.

Joustra said the Russian government had been given the opportunity to review the report's conclusions in advance, and that it maintained it was impossible to determine the type of missile or warhead that struck the Boeing with certainty.

The missile explosion caused a "deafening sound wave" anyone still alive aboard would have heard, the Dutch report said.

The sudden decompression, reduced oxygen levels and extreme cold of minus 40-50 degrees Celsius (minus 40-58 degrees Fahrenheit) may have killed some people. As the high winds tore through the cabin, hand baggage and other personal belongings may have become lethal projectiles.

As the mangled, pilotless jet went into its deadly dive from 33,000 feet, those who hadn't already died may have suffered dizziness, nausea and, finally, blackout and death.

Rob Fredriksz, whose son Bryce was aboard Flight 17, said he was relieved to hear

that the passengers died almost instantly and "absolutely felt and knew nothing."

Paul Guard, an Australian man whose parents Jill and Roger died aboard Flight 17, said on Wednesday he believes the Russians aren't the only ones at fault.

"Russia's got a role and they haven't been very helpful. So I blame Russia partially but not completely. There are many other players that are also to blame," Guard told Nine Network television in the Queensland state capital Brisbane.

Key findings of the investigation were given to families of victims before the report was released, and Fredriksz said some relatives became emotional when they were shown an animation portraying the downing of the plane.

On Tuesday evening, President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said Russia was disappointed its experts hadn't been invited to take part in the Dutch investigation, adding that the refusal to take the findings of the Buk manufacturer's experiments into account reflected a biased approach.

Commenting on Ukraine blaming Russia-backed separatists for downing the plane, Peskov said that "prior to the completion of the probe, it's inadmissible to put labels and name culprits."

U.S. National Security Council spokesman Ned Price said the Dutch investigation was conducted in a professional manner and should serve as the basis for further work to identify those responsible for the aircraft's destruction.

In the village of Hrabove where the jet came down, Lyudmila Grigoryak — whose house was the closest to the crash site — brought red carnations Tuesday to the field where small pieces of the fuselage are still scattered.

Unlike a year and a half ago when heavy fighting was just nearby, the area is quiet and deserted. All the camouflaged rebels who were patrolling the area and manning checkpoints are gone.

Israel Leader Vows 'Aggressive Steps'

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's prime minister on Tuesday said he would take a series of "aggressive steps" to halt a wave of violence in Israeli cities after two attacks in Jerusalem left three Israelis dead. Three Palestinians, including two attackers, were also killed.

The attacks in Jerusalem, including a deadly shooting and knifing spree on a bus and a violent hacking attack caught on video, escalated the monthlong unrest and raised the pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to take action. The government has been unable to stop the violence, carried out mostly by young Palestinians unaffiliated with known militant groups and apparently acting on their own.

"Today we will decide on a series of additional aggressive steps in our war against terrorists and inciters," Netanyahu said in a speech to parliament. "We will use, and not hesitate to use, all means at our disposal to restore calm."

Netanyahu left a meeting of top security officials to deliver the speech, and quickly returned. The deliberations continued into the early hours of Wednesday morning when Netanyahu's office announced that several new measures were approved.

It said that police are now authorized to "to impose a closure on, or to surround, centers of friction and incitement in Jerusalem, in accordance with security considerations." Many of the recent attackers were from Arab areas in Jerusalem.

Gun Shop Must Pay \$6M To Cops

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Jurors ordered a Wisconsin gun shop to pay nearly \$6 million on Tuesday to two Milwaukee police officers who were shot and seriously wounded by a gun purchased at the store.

The ruling came in a negligence lawsuit filed by the officers against Badger Guns, a shop in suburban Milwaukee that authorities have linked to hundreds of firearms found at crime scenes. The lawsuit alleges the store ignored several warning signs that the gun was being sold to a "straw buyer," or someone who was buying a gun for someone who couldn't legally do so.

Officer Bryan Norberg and retired Officer Graham Kunisch were both shot in the face after they stopped Julius Burton for riding his bike on the sidewalk in the summer of 2009. Surveillance video shows that the officers scuffled with Burton and slammed him into a wall before he shot both officers.

Investigators said Burton got the weapon a month before the confrontation, after giving \$40 to another man, Jacob Collins, to make the purchase at the store in West Milwaukee.

One bullet shattered eight of Norberg's teeth, blew through his cheek and lodged into his shoulder. He remains on the force but said his wounds have made his work difficult. Kunisch was shot several times, resulting in him losing an eye and part of the frontal lobe of his brain. He said the wounds forced him to retire.

Groups Hope State's Policies Will Set Trend

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California ends its legislative season having enacted some of the country's most aggressive social policies: Laws requiring student vaccinations, granting terminally ill people the right to take life-ending medications, and mandating equal pay for women were among dozens approved.

The range of sweeping new laws in the most populous state reflects legislators' desire to set a national trend on progressive social and environmental issues while sidestepping more thorny economic matters.

Many interest groups and politicians see California as the brass ring for setting policies — and then testing whether those policies can withstand rigorous challenges.

"Both the vaccine bill and the right-to-die legislation will be seriously looked at by other states," said Sherry Bebitch-Jeffe, senior political science fellow at the University of Southern California. "If it can pass here and it is perceived to work here, I think the proponents have a big positive jolt out of the victory in California."

She believes over the next five to 10 years, the nation will look more like California both demographically and politically.

Playboy To Stop Running Nude Photos

LOS ANGELES (AP) — For generations, teenage boys got their first look at a naked woman from Playboy, often from a copy swiped from Dad's sock drawer or filched from a newsstand.

These days, however, you can see far more explicit stuff on your phone than anything Hugh Hefner probably imagined when he launched his pioneering skin magazine 62 years ago with a centerfold of Marilyn Monroe.

Which is why, Playboy announced this week, it will stop running nude photos.

"You're now one click away from every sex act imaginable for free. And so it's just passé at this juncture," Playboy Enterprises CEO Scott Flanders told *The New York Times*, which first reported the change.

In a move Playboy said had the blessing of the 89-year-old Hefner, the magazine will continue to publish what it called "sexy, seductive pictorials of the world's most beautiful women," but they won't be baring it all.

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