

# Clinton's Strong Debate Is General Election Warning For GOP

BY JULIE PACE  
AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Hillary Rodham Clinton's polished performance in the first Democratic debate did more than send a message to her primary rivals. It was a warning to the chaotic Republican field about her likely strength in a general election.

Clinton solidified her shift toward more liberal positions on trade, gun control and immigration, but still stayed largely in step with the battleground state voters she'll need in November 2016. She also positioned herself as heir to the coalition of women, Hispanics and black voters that propelled Barack Obama to the White House, and she potentially held off a late challenge from Vice President Joe Biden.

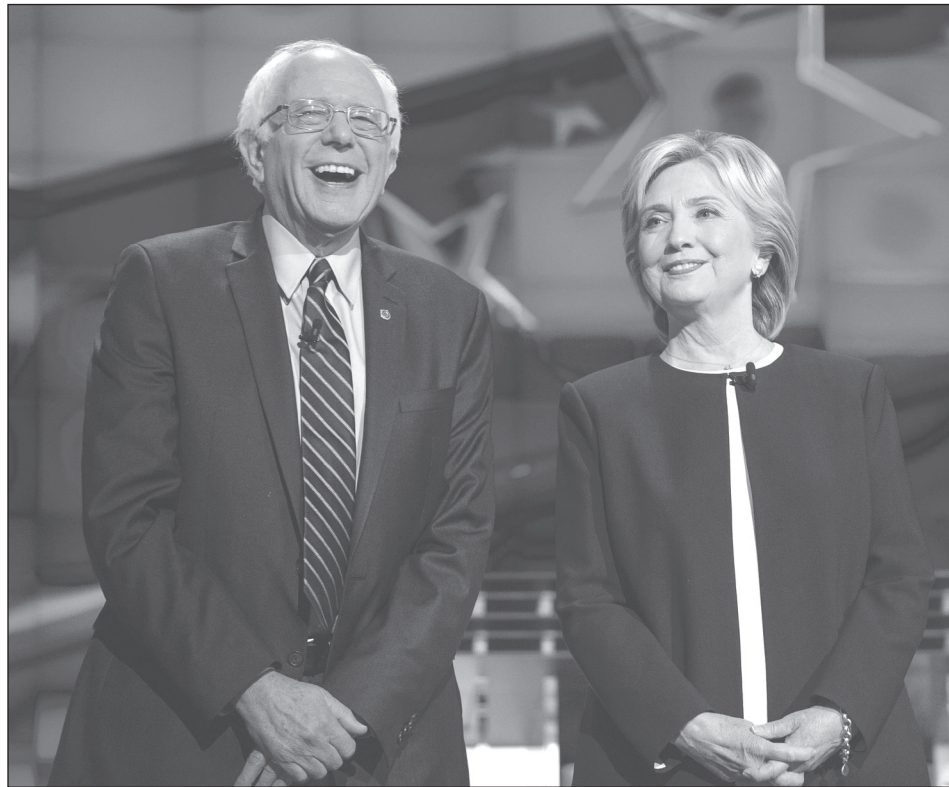
"I'm a progressive," she declared before a television audience of more than 15 million people. "But I'm a progressive who likes to get things done."

The Republicans' raucous first two debates, meanwhile, exposed the party's deep divisions and the pressure on GOP candidates to appease conservative primary voters. That could again leave the eventual nominee scrambling to recalibrate on issues including immigration and women's health in order to win over a national electorate that is more racially and ideologically diverse than primary voters.

It's a familiar conundrum for the party, yet one potentially deepened by the rise of Donald Trump and Ben Carson, candidates whose inflammatory comments seem to only boost their standing in the primary. Candidates who are favored by more traditional Republicans, like Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio, risk being associated with the rhetoric of their rivals — or never finding a way to overtake them.

The GOP contenders scrambled Wednesday to blunt the notion that Clinton has positioned herself as a general election force. Rubio said Clinton was locked in "a race to the left to see who could be the most radically liberal, the most big-government." And Bush cast Clinton as the beneficiary of a Democratic field that sidestepped confrontations over her private email use, a controversy that has dogged her campaign for months.

"In a partisan crowd you could see how that would work out, but I don't think Mrs. Clinton's been forthcom-



Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton on the debate stage on Tuesday, Oct. 13 in Las Vegas.

ing and I think she has created a problem for herself by not being forthcoming." Bush said Wednesday night while campaigning in New Hampshire. "It is a big deal, and there needs to be some clarity on it."

Trump added, "I think the Democrats, frankly, I think they are protecting her."

Clinton aides insist the former secretary of state isn't taking the Democratic nomination for granted. While her strong debate performance may have hardened her standing as the party's front-runner, she still faces tough competition from Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, an independent and self-proclaimed democratic socialist.

Yet Clinton left no doubt that she's setting her sights on the GOP field.

"I can take the fight to the Republicans, because we cannot afford a Republican to succeed Barack Obama as president of the United States," she said. She referenced Republicans a dozen times during the two-hour debate, even putting the party alongside the Iranians and National Rifle Association on a list of enemies she was proud to have made.

David Plouffe, an architect of Obama's two campaigns, wrote on Twitter that Clinton looked like a candidate who could win the general election. "That is a test for GOP,"

he added, questioning who in the party can attract voters in Ohio, Colorado, Virginia and other general election battlegrounds.

To be sure, Clinton remains a flawed candidate. Her evolving policy positions leave her open to charges that she shifts with the political winds. She's a Washington insider in an election cycle where voters have shown more interest in outsiders. And she continues to grapple with questions about her email practices at the State Department.

Yet Clinton has been handed two gifts on the email issue from her political opponents. She often brings up Republican House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy's boast about the political damage to her campaign caused by the congressional panel that uncovered her email practices, citing it as evidence of partisanship. And the frustration Sanders expressed in the debate with the amount of attention focused on the emails blunted the prospect that she'll be challenged on the issue from within her own party.

Republicans argue that Clinton still has vulnerabilities that would hurt her in the general election, including shifts to the left on major issues — a version of the problem the GOP contenders could face after focusing on the right for

their primary.

"She is now firmly outside the mainstream of the American electorate as part of her calculating efforts to satisfy the liberal base of her party," said Kevin Madden, who advised 2012 GOP nominee Mitt Romney's campaign.

Democratic strategists, however, argue that what were once viewed as liberal policies are increasingly becoming mainstream. Public polling supports that assertion on some issues.

On immigration, a CBS News/New York Times poll last month showed 58 percent of Americans said people living in the U.S. illegally should be allowed to stay and apply for citizenship, a position Clinton supports.

On the contentious issue of gun control, Americans overwhelmingly support expanding background checks for ownership, a proposal Clinton touted in the debate. A Pew Research Center poll from July showed 85 percent — including 87 percent of respondents in gun-owning households — support broader background checks.

Majorities of Americans also support government efforts to combat climate change, and they approve of gay marriage, positions backed by Clinton and other Democratic presidential candidates.

## Iran & Hezbollah Pour Fighters Into Syria

BEIRUT (AP) — Hundreds of Iranian troops are being deployed in northern and central Syria, dramatically escalating Tehran's involvement in the civil war as they join allied Hezbollah fighters in an ambitious offensive to wrest key areas from rebels amid Russian airstrikes.

Their arrival, a regional official and Syrian activist said Wednesday, highlights the far-reaching goals of Russia's military involvement in Syria. It suggests that, for now, taking on Islamic State extremists in eastern Syria seems a secondary priority to propping up President Bashar Assad.

The development is almost certain to increase pressure on Western-backed rebels, who are battling multiple foes, and push more civilians out of the areas of fighting, potentially creating a fresh wave of refugees.

Russia began its air campaign Sept. 30, and Syrian troops and allied militiamen launched a ground offensive against rebels in central Syria a week later. Russia says its airstrikes are meant to weaken the Islamic State group and other "terrorists" in Syria, but Western officials and Syrian rebels say most of the strikes have focused on central and northern Syria, where the extremist group does not have a strong presence.

The official, who has deep knowledge of operational details in Syria, said the Iranian Revolutionary Guards — currently numbering around 1,500 — began arriving about two weeks ago, after the Russian airstrikes began, and have accelerated recently. The Iranian-backed group Hezbollah has also sent a fresh wave of fighters to Syria, he told *The Associated Press*.

## Iranian Council Approves Nuclear Deal

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — A senior council of Iranian clerics and lawyers on Wednesday approved implementing the landmark nuclear deal with world powers, sealing the final required step in the process despite hard-liners' efforts to derail it.

The Guardian Council's vote, while apparently not unanimous, marks a major victory for the administration of moderate President Hassan Rouhani, which has campaigned on easing tensions with the West.

But it comes as Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard publicized images of an underground missile base and also has fired off a new long-range surface-to-surface rocket, showing hard-liners will remain a potent force within the Islamic Republic.

Iranian state television announced the decision by the Guardian Council, one of the top leadership bodies in Iran's cleric-ruled system. The 12-member council, half appointed by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and half by the country's judicial chief with parliament's approval, must sign off on all bills before they become law.

Nejatollah Ebrahimi, the council's spokesman, said the body approved the parliamentary bill implementing the deal "by an absolute majority of the votes." He did not offer a voting breakdown. The council meets behind closed doors.

## Brothers Brutally Beaten In Church

NEW HARTFORD, N.Y. (AP) — Two teenage brothers were brutally beaten in church — one fatally — in an effort by their parents, sister and other members to get them to confess their sins, police said Wednesday in a case involving an insular congregation that had sparked gossip and suspicion among neighbors.

Police said spiritual "counseling" at the Word of Life Church in upstate New York turned into an hours-long attack Sunday night in which Lucas Leonard, 19, and his 17-year-old brother, Christopher, were pummeled with fists and kicked. They suffered injuries to the abdomen, genitals, back and thighs.

Eventually, Lucas stopped breathing and relatives took him early Monday to a hospital, where he died, police said. Authorities went to the church and found his younger brother, who was hospitalized in serious condition.

"Both brothers were subjected to physical punishment over the course of several hours, in hopes that each would confess to prior sins and ask for forgiveness," Police Chief Michael Inserra said.

He said investigators have not determined what the supposed sins were.

## Planes Ferry Cocaine With Little Action

MAZAMARI, Peru (AP) — It happens about four times a day, right under the nose of Peru's military: A small single-engine plane drops onto a dirt airstrip in the world's No. 1 coca-growing valley, delivers a bundle of cash, picks up more than 300 kilos of cocaine and flies to Bolivia.

Roughly half of Peru's cocaine exports have been ferried eastward on this "air bridge," police say, since the rugged Andean nation became the world's leading producer of the drug in 2012.

Peru's government has barely impeded the airborne drug flow. Prosecutors, narcotics police, former military officers and current and former U.S. drug agents say that while corruption is rife in Peru, the narco-flight plague is the military's failure because it controls the remote jungle region known as the Apurimac, Ene and Mantaro river valley.

Wilson Barrantes, a retired army general who has long complained about military drug corruption, said giving the armed services control over the valley is "like putting four street dogs to guard a plate of beefsteak."

Deputy Defense Minister Ivan Vega, who runs counterinsurgency efforts in the region, said he knew of no military officials under investigation. "Corruption exists, but we are always looking out for it," he said. "If we know of anyone involved, we'll throw the book at them."

## Airlines Ask For Shield From Competition

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. airlines have ramped up an aggressive lobbying campaign that seeks nothing less than converting the government from industry regulator to business ally.

The big three legacy carriers — Delta, American and United — want the Obama administration to protect them from competition from foreign airlines, arguing those rivals can undercut ticket prices thanks to government subsidies or cheaper labor.

At the same time, the U.S. airlines want Congress to roll back or forestall rules aimed at protecting consumers. One is a requirement that airlines show ticket buyers the full cost of fares, including taxes and fees, instead of burying the information in fine print.

The lobbying already has been effective.

At the urging of the big three and the Air Line Pilots Association, 262 House members and 22 senators wrote the administration asking for a freeze in the number of flights to the U.S. now allowed for three Persian Gulf airlines — Emirates, Etihad and Qatar — and discussions with the United Arab Emirates and Qatar about whether those airlines are violating aviation treaties with the U.S.

# As Attacks Continue, Israeli Army Begins Deploying Troops

BY TIA GOLDENBERG  
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Hundreds of soldiers fanned out in cities across Israel on Wednesday and authorities erected concrete barriers outside some Arab neighborhoods of east Jerusalem in a stepped up effort to counter a monthlong wave of Palestinian violence that has seen near daily attacks.

Despite the escalated security, two assaults were reported Wednesday — the stabbing of a 70-year-old Israeli woman outside a crowded Jerusalem bus station and the attempted knifing of police officers outside the Old City.

The enhanced measures came as Israel struggles to contain the spiraling violence and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces heavy pressure from hard-liners in his governing coalition to stamp out the attacks. The Palestinians called the new measures "collective punishment" that would only further enflame tensions.

The military's deployment of six companies to back up thousands of police marks the first implementation of steps approved by Israel's security Cabinet early Wednesday, which also include stripping attackers of their Jerusalem residency rights and demolishing assailants' homes. The Cabinet also authorized police to impose closures on centers of friction and incitement in Jerusalem.

Israel has been unable to stop the attacks, carried out mostly by young Palestinians apparently acting spontaneously with no affiliation to or backing from organized militant groups. That, coupled with the frequency of the attacks, which have killed eight Israelis this month, including three on Tuesday, has unnerved Israelis who fear the violence could deteriorate into another Palestinian uprising.

Palestinian leaders say the violence is the result of frustration and lack of hope for ending nearly 50 years of occupation and gaining independence.

Israeli police said 300 soldiers had been deployed in cities across Israel, joining a reinforced force of some 4,000 police officers already patrolling the streets and bus routes of Jerusalem. On Wednesday, police were seen walking through a line of cars as cranes placed concrete blocks at the entrances to Arab neighborhoods in east Jerusalem, where many of the assailants are from.

"I think all the decisions we took ... will lead eventually to us being able to restore calm," Israeli Interior Minister Silvan Shalom told Israeli Channel 2 TV news.

But even with the heightened security, more violence hit Jerusalem on Wednesday.

Police said the 70-year-old woman was wounded in a knife attack as she boarded a bus outside Jerusalem's central bus station. Forces on the scene shot and killed the attacker, who Israel's internal security service Shin Bet said was a 23-year-old Palestinian resident of Jerusalem who had been jailed from 2012 until earlier this year.

Earlier, police shot and killed a 19-year-old Palestinian from the West Bank city of Hebron who they said had attempted to stab police officers outside Jerusalem's Old City.

Israel said that as part of the new measures, the bodies of dead Palestinian attackers would not be returned to their families for burial.

Israel's Internal Security Minister Gilad Erdan said the funeral processions of Palestinians who killed Israelis often turn into "an exhibition

of support for terror and incitement to murder." He said Israel should not allow them to "enjoy respect and ceremonies" after their deaths.

The funerals are a frequent flashpoint for clashes and often include calls for revenge. Erdan suggested the attackers be buried without fanfare in distant cemeteries where Palestinian killers have previously been buried.

Besides the eight Israelis killed in a string of stabbings, shootings and the stoning of a car, 31 Palestinians also have died — 14 of them identified by Israel as attackers and the rest killed in stone-throwing clashes with Israeli forces.

The violence erupted a month ago over the Jewish New Year, fueled by rumors that Israel was plotting to take over Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site, a hilltop compound revered by Jews as the Temple Mount and home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third-holiest shrine and a key national symbol for the Palestinians.

Israel has adamantly denied the allegation, saying the violence has been driven by what it calls rampant incitement against Jews on social media spread by Islamic groups and the Palestinian leadership.

In a briefing to foreign journalists Wednesday, Israeli Cabinet minister Yuval Steinitz showed Palestinian videos and animations that glorified the stabbings of Jews in the Old City of Jerusalem and the killing of a Jewish settler couple in the West Bank in front of their children.

He also quoted recent statements by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in which he blessed "every drop of blood spilled for Allah" and asserted that Jews desecrated a Jerusalem holy site with their "filthy feet."

"This is not new. It is just a new wave of terrorism and violence and this time it's totally clear that the main approach here is a religious approach," Steinitz said. "It's all about horrible, anti-Jewish, racist incitement."

Palestinians say the violence, coming at a time when prospects for gaining independence appear nil, is the result of years of occupation and failed peace efforts.

"Israel is an occupier in Jerusalem. It should end its occupation. This is the key to peace and stability," said Saeb Erekat, a top Palestinian official.

"Decisions such as the ones adopted by the Israeli Cabinet pour gasoline on the fire," he added. "Measures of collective punishment and killings and arrests and demolishing houses and confiscation of lands will only lead to the escalation of the situation."

In a brief speech Wednesday, Abbas used a softer tone than in previous remarks, calling for "peaceful popular resistance." Still, he blamed the Israeli occupation and the building of Jewish settlements on territory Palestinians want for a future state for the violence. He threatened to submit a case at the International Criminal Court against what he called Israel's "extrajudicial killings" of Palestinians.

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