



**FUTURE**  
for Advanced Research & Studies

**Artical Name :** Visible Contrasts

**Artical Subject :** Will the first Clinton-Trump Debate Determine the Election Race's Outcome?

**Publish Date:** 27/09/2016

**Auther Name:** Hussam Ibrahim



### Subject :

During the 90 minutes of the first presidential debate between Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, the two rivals, once again, presented their positions on US domestic and foreign policy issues in an apparently traditional manner that, except for their presentation and performance, showed nothing new in terms of content. The strong performance of the Democratic presidential nominee, compared to her Republican opponent, will have implications for the US political landscape in the coming weeks. These include expanding Clinton's voter base among the undecided voters, while Trump will keep his voter base within the GOP but will not manage to mobilize new voters at the federal level. The first presidential debate witnessed a heated argument between the two nominees who sparred presented their clashing positions on various issues that exist in three levels including the economy, domestic situations -in particular, the candidate's views on minority groups - as well as issues of security and foreign policy. Creating Jobs and Boosting Economic Growth During the debate, the two rival presidential candidates have, once again, set forth their economic plans explaining how they would, once they make it to the White House, ensure boosting economic growth. Clinton underlined the importance of supporting the middle class, helping college students get a debt-free education, streamlining regulations for small businesses, promoting reliance on clean sources of energy, imposing taxes on the wealthy and maintaining trade relations and partnerships between the US and the rest of the world. Trump, on the other hand, presented a different plan to stop American companies and jobs from fleeing the United States, to neighboring countries in particular, through reducing taxes tremendously for the rich and easing constraints and regulations for businesses. Within the same context, and to reiterate his confrontational positions on foreign trade relations, Trump demanded some trade agreements with other countries be reviewed. In this regard, he sharply criticized the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). As for the economic connection between US domestic affairs with the rest of the world, Trump further highlighted the need for US allies, NATO, Japan and South Korea, to pay the US for defending them as part of the state's obligations towards its partnership with NATO and Asian allies. Issues of Internal Violence and Social Relations The second part of the Clinton-Trump debate focused on how best to deal with internal violence in the United States, the handling of discriminatory policies based on race, particularly towards African- and Latino-Americans, as well as the spread of guns in communities across the country. Within this context, there was partial disagreement between the two nominees, but it was way deeper than their wrangling on economic matters. While Clinton attacked the stop-and-frisk practice of the New York Police Department and other contraband, Trump defended the tactics by saying "it brought the crime rate way down," as well as the murder rates in the US. Clinton further called for more training and assistance for police officers, better law enforcement, criminal justice reform and restoring trust between communities and the police. But despite his approval of Clinton's proposal, Trump was more focused on strengthening current law enforcement methods that would uphold "law and order." Regarding violence between police and African-Americans, part of the debate was focused on how to build policies to prevent discrimination in society, namely by white Americans against African- and Latino-Americans. While reiterating her support for American minority groups who account for a significant percentage of her voters, Clinton attacked Trump's attitude towards these minorities, and even indicated that her rival's history, whereby in 1973 Trump was sued twice by the Justice Department for racial discrimination against African-Americans who sought to rent apartments in one of his developments. Clinton's remarks put Trump on the defensive throughout the debate trying to stress that he was never against African- or Latino-Americans. Concerning firearms and their availability to Americans, the purport of Clinton's proposal shows her support for prohibiting unlicensed individuals from possessing guns. Furthermore, she accused Trump of attempting to support the US National Rifle Association (NRA). To counter this, Trump tried to stress that he was against the spread of firearms but also suggested that certain ethnic groups such as African-Americans and immigrants should not be allowed to possess them. US Partnership with Allies, Countering ISIS, and the Iranian Nuclear Deal From the Middle East and relations with Russia to cyber-security threats, the two presidential nominees' arguments revealed diametrically opposing views. These ranged from support for democracy focused on partnerships and stronger cooperative relations and mutual interests with allies to Trump's confrontational approach to international relations. While Clinton defended the United States' relations and partnership with the NATO alliance, Trump argued that his country pays the lion's share of the financial cost of the alliance, which in return should, according to him, back the policies pursued by the United States and pay the cost of partnership with the United States. The NATO, Trump argued, should join the United States in the war on terrorism in the Middle East. The same goes for the United States' Asian allies, Japan and South Korea, who should also pay the Americans for defending them. Regarding the Middle East, two central issues stood out in the debate - the nuclear deal with Iran and the war on ISIS. While Clinton considered the nuclear deal as the best alternative that reflects how coalitions with states, such as Russia and China, can be built to put a lid on Iran's nuclear program, prevent it from manufacturing nuclear weapons and ensure access to its nuclear facilities by international monitors without firing a single shot. She said that Trump - who criticized the deal as a "historic mistake for the world," just like Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

did- does not have an alternative policy or vision for dealing with Iran. Trump responded by saying that the policies pursued by President Barack Obama and his then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to conclude the nuclear deal will help make Iran a great power because it will use the gains it had manufactured from this deal. Presenting her plan for the war on terrorism and ISIS, Clinton reiterated that she would enhance cooperation with the Iraqi military and the Kurds, dry up ISIS' financial resources, disrupt their propaganda efforts and take out their leaders. Ramping up her attack on Trump, Clinton stressed that he has no plan to fight ISIS, which prompted the Republican nominee to claim that President Obama was behind forming ISIS through creating a vacuum of power, by withdrawing US forces from Iraq in which ISIS filled. The above led the two rivals to wrangle about the invasion of Iraq and its repercussions. Clinton noted that she was against the invasion, but Trump was in favor, a remark in which the Republican nominee spent a fair share of his allotted time on the defensive and failed to present a clearly-defined policy for dealing with the terror group. Despite the fact that the Middle East issues dominated part of the debate, the issue of Israel's security, the Arab-Israeli conflict and even the Syrian crisis were addressed neither by the two rivals nor the moderator of the debate. Contrasting Strategies Almost all experts in presidential elections agree that Clinton was stronger and more influential than Trump in the first debate, at least regarding domestic security and foreign policy issues. That is, despite the little criticism she received and the talk about her relative rapprochement with Trump over economic issues, Clinton managed to control her performance handling the debate in a professional self-assured manner and behaving like a president who has an in-depth knowledge of her country's interests as well as the threats facing it. All the while, her rival was restless and on the defensive, while trying to set forth, once again, his confrontational views which may be approved by his own voter base but will not sway swing voters to his favor. Clinton's performance throughout the debate was overall better than Trump's, where their two strategies ran head-to-head. The Democratic nominee's strategy was to emphasize and send across certain messages to certain segments of the American voters, with a focus on the middle class, women, college students of various minority backgrounds. By doing so, Clinton explained individual and clearly-defined proposed policies drawn up by her campaign team and assistants. On the other hand, and after Clinton had managed to force him onto the defensive, Trump's reaction became apparently impulsive, and he grew hostile without presenting clear policies that can convince the American voters. Moreover, the ill-disciplined nominee broke the rules of the debate interrupting Clinton many times and even responding to the debate's moderator Lester Holt in a harsh way, which eventually led him to lose points and support, according to polls. The quick polls conducted in the aftermath of the debate showed that Clinton was leading Trump by a large margin. According to a CNN/ORC Poll of voters who watched the debate, Hillary Clinton was deemed the winner by 62%, while just 27% said they thought Donald Trump had the better night. Voters said Clinton could improve on handling foreign policy issues, at a split rate of 62% to 35%. However, on the economy, voters indicated the split to be much closer, with 51% of respondents saying they favor Clinton's approach as opposed to 47% who prefer Trump. The debate gave Hillary Clinton an opportunity to be catapulted once again to the front of the electoral landscape after her evident lagging polling numbers in recent weeks before the debate due to speculation about her health. If Clinton manages to keep up her good performance regarding the same strategy and messages, she will attract a considerable number of swing voters who are a crucial factor in determining the winner of the elections. Also, Clinton would be able to strengthen and expand her base of support among the segments which are at the center of her campaign. At the same time, if Trump continues to count on his personal performance and break the professional debate rules, he could end up losing to Clinton in the second debate. Expected Outcome It is likely that the outcome of the first debate between the two presidential nominees will have a significant impact on the next leg of elections in the next six weeks. Assuming that Hillary Clinton would keep to her strategy of focusing on particular segments and sectors in the American society and that Donald Trump would stay his own course, it is almost certain that the Democrats will continue to keep the White House. However, other factors can be game changers, with Clinton's health standing out due to the possibility of her suffering more problems in the coming period and a new wave of terrorist attacks inside the United States or European countries. Despite their contingency, such game changers are not likely, because Clinton looked in good shape during the debate as well as the tight security measures and the awareness of intelligence and security agencies of such threats. All of which could mean that we are about to witness another change in the political history of the US, with the election of the first female president of the United States government.