

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد
بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم
از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

Author: [Viktor Mikhin](#)

14.07.2024

Presidential debates between two losers



Many commentators, including from the United States, [reacted negatively](#) to the debate between President Joe Biden and Donald Trump with a mixture of disapproval and disappointment. Biden and Trump took part in the debate, organised by CNN at the headquarters of the channel in Atlanta, without an audience in the studio and in a format where microphones were turned off when the candidates exceeded the speaking time or interrupted each other.

Debates and the Middle Eastern Crisis

Many are interested in US policy in the Middle East and how the future president will assess the situation in this turbulent region of the world. [Amal Mudallali](#), a former Lebanese journalist and diplomat working as Lebanon's permanent representative to the UN, was deeply disappointed by the performance of both candidates, calling it «the saddest debate» she had ever seen in her life in the US. It was not really a debate,

Mudallali said. «It was all name-calling, barbs and personal attacks». Indeed, many of the exchanges, both on Middle East issues and on many others, seemed to be personal attacks devoid of depth and genuine political discussion.

During the debate, Trump criticised Biden's border policy, saying that it allowed many terrorists to enter the US. «We have the largest number of terrorists coming into our country right now», he said. «They come from the Middle East, everywhere. All over the world, they're pouring in. And this guy just left it open».

Trump also [said](#) that Hamas would allegedly never have launched an attack on Israel on October 7 had he been president, because the Iranian patrons of the Palestinian militant group would not have had the means under its strict sanctions. «Israel would have never been invaded, in a million years, by Hamas. You know why? Because Iran was broke with me», he said. «I wouldn't let anyone do business with them. They ran out of money. They were broken. They had no money for Hamas. They had no money for anything. No money for terror».

The approach to US policy vis-à-vis Iran seems to be an area where Biden and Trump disagree; the former prefers to try to contain Tehran's nuclear ambitions with the Obama-era deal he helped broker, while the latter advocates a maximum pressure campaign. «The biggest difference between President Trump and President Biden is definitely Iran», said [Firas Maksad](#), a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute. He believes that one advocates increased pressure and deterrence, while the other prefers diplomacy and attempts to satisfy Tehran's regional ambitions.

At a time when conflicts – including the largest one in the Middle East, where more than 37,000 people have already died – are scattered across different continents, the world has clearly seen that the foreign policy approach of both contenders in this debate was superficial. «There was no debate», Firas Maksad said sadly, «no vision of the US» role in ensuring peace, how we are going to end these wars, how we are going to end this ongoing tragedy. It was really, really, really sad to see this, to see that there is no real debate on foreign policy».

Mudallali correctly believes that the «minor discussion» about violence and carnage in the Middle East, including the war in Gaza and especially the armed clashes between Israel and Hezbollah along the Lebanese border, was the «most disappointing part» of the debate. She noted, as Firas Maksad also did, that during the debate there was no attempt to present a vision for the day after tomorrow in the world, as well as how the US and its role can contribute to ending these conflicts.

During the debate, [Trump called Biden](#) a «very bad Palestinian» who doesn't want to help Israel «finish the job». In fact, he meant that Biden did not provide Israel with enough weapons to defeat Hamas. This is Netanyahu's dream, which remains unattainable, and even the Israeli military has recognised that the current regime will not be able to eliminate Hamas. «He doesn't want to do it. He's become like a Palestinian, but they don't like him because he is a very bad Palestinian, he's a weak one», Trump said. It should be kept in mind that both presidential contenders, Republicans and Democrats, have Palestinian blood on their hands because of their unequivocal support for Israel.

Racist politicians

However, Trump's comments about Palestinians and his interpretation of the situation illustrated a bitter irony that once again highlighted the true approach of the US to the problems of the Middle East and to the plight of the many peoples living there. Ayah Ziyadeh, advocacy director of the Organisation of American Muslims for Palestine, told Al Jazeera that the «bad Palestinian» comment highlights the racist nature of America. She added that one candidate is a blatant racist and he wants to deport us all. She mockingly said that President Biden, in fact, is «not genocidal enough» (prone to genocide) considering that he wants to allow Israel to end its war in Gaza. The current president consciously and willingly, politically and financially, supported the obvious genocide in Gaza. «There is no lesser of the two evils here», the Palestinian concluded.

In recent months, people in the US have held rallies calling on the government to end its support for Israel and end the war in Gaza. The protesters called President Biden a «supporter of genocide» because of his complicity in the Israeli massacre of Palestinians. Arab American voters and young people, who may play a key role in Biden's re-election victory, noted that their ballots were left blank in previous Democratic primaries as a sign of protest. Such developments, along with protests on college campuses, have highlighted the generational divide in Washington's policy toward Israel. At the same time, the comments made by Trump during the first presidential debate and Biden's unconditional support for Israel clearly show that they are both divorced from reality.

Perhaps one should agree with the general Arab sentiment expressed in the Saudi newspaper Arab Times that «raging Trump and stumbling Biden» did more to discredit Western democracy at the presidential debates than anyone could have hoped. The outcome of the debate turned out to be so disastrous that many of Biden's allies and friends are begging him to leave. The Saudi newspaper believes that if Biden resigns, he will be remembered as a leader who put his nation above all else. Staying and losing

would entail historical shame as a failed president who jeopardised democracy in the United States for the sake of his own ego.

13.07.2024

Victor MIKHIN, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, especially for online magazine «[New Eastern Outlook](#)»