

What changes will Biden bring?

Experts predict no major shift in US foreign policy if Trump is defeated in election

AGENCIES

Joe Biden vows to revive the moral leadership of the United States in the world if he is elected president, but after nearly four years of Donald Trump smashing through norms, is the veteran Democrat's vision even possible?

A senator for 36 years and vice president for eight more under Barack Obama, Biden will enter the White House with far more foreign policy experience than any president in decades if he beats Trump on November 3.

Trump has sought to turn Biden's resume into a liability and has delighted in breaking the diplomatic consensus both at home and abroad by bolting from international arrangements such as the Paris climate accord and the World Health Organization, and praising autocratic leaders.

For international partners aghast at Trump, the issue is not just him but whether US voters will keep choosing people like him, said Katrina Mulligan, managing director for national security and international policy at the left-leaning Center for American Progress.

"For the rest of the world," she said, the presidential vote is also "about whether America is really what the last election suggests it was



or whether that was an aberration." Mulligan said she expects a Biden administration would move quickly to show its commitment both to international cooperation dating from the Obama years and to liberal values, with Biden already promising to convene a summit of democracies in his first year.

"But (in) the bigger picture, I do not see a Biden foreign policy being a redux of an Obama-era foreign policy," she said. "The world has changed a lot. We're now 20 years away from 9/11."

Biden has promised to move toward fighting global challenges such as climate change and Covid-19, and has called for a firmer line on human rights with

allies such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey, whose leaders have all wooed Trump.

Celia Belin, a visiting scholar at the Brookings Institution who studies the Democrats, said that Biden has advisors who have come up with fresh ideas for a post-Trump foreign policy.

But she said: "There is a risk that Biden and some of his closest aides are traditional internationalist, transatlantic Democrats who see the world as it was when they left and not as it is today."

Biden is unlikely to belittle foreign allies or threaten war on Twitter, but he is also not the polar opposite of Trump.

Biden sides with Trump on

several key issues. Biden's view on Israel, Afghanistan aren't so much different from that of Trump.

In line with a rising bipartisan mood in Washington, Biden has also called for a hard line on China over trade, security and rights, with the two candidates trading barbs on who would be tougher.

"As Europeans, we should not think that if there is a new American president, the situation is as it was before President Trump was elected," said Clement Beaune, the French minister of state for European affairs.

"Some of the trends of the Trump presidency -- putting pressure on the EU regarding its own security financing, being quite tough on trade, the hard game played by President Trump with China -- the main elements of this, I think, will continue somehow," he said.

Bill Burns, a veteran US diplomat who has appeared on speculative shortlists for a top position in a Biden administration, said that how to handle a rising China will be the most consequential question for US foreign policy for decades to come.

Still, Burns expected Biden would first take on troubles at home and would be obliged to pursue US goals overseas in a "disciplined, restrained" way.

Majority of Americans will accept result of polls: survey

REUTERS

As the 2020 presidential election enters its final week, a majority of Americans appear ready to accept the result of an exhausting campaign even if their preferred candidate loses, a Reuters/Ipsos poll found.

Its latest survey, conducted from Oct. 13-20, shows that 79% of all Americans, including 59% of those who want to re-elect President Donald Trump, will accept a win by Democratic challenger Joe Biden even if they may not support a Biden presidency.

Among those Trump supporters who said they would not accept a Biden victory, 16% said they would do something to challenge a Democratic win such as protesting in public or resorting to violence.

The poll also found that 73% of Americans, including 57% of Biden supporters, would similarly accept a Trump victory. Among those who said they would not accept a Trump win, 22% said they would take action to challenge the result.

U.S. election officials are dealing with a series of challenges this year that have raised concerns about the public's confidence in the result.

Top national security officials warned last week that Russia and Iran have been hacking into U.S. voting systems and looking for ways to undermine the election. Trump also has repeatedly questioned

the integrity of U.S. elections, arguing that the process is "rigged" against him and repeatedly asserting without evidence that the surge in mail-in voting this year will increase the likelihood of voter fraud. He has refused to commit to a peaceful transfer of power if the vote count indicates he has lost.

So far, at least, a majority of the US public appears ready to accept the result.

Donald Green, a political scientist at Columbia University, said the poll results ease his concerns about post-election violence. But he warned that if the election is close, or one candidate can make a credible accusation of voter fraud, it could spark wider discontent and protests

than the poll suggests. "This is why many people who oppose Trump are holding their breath and hoping for a lopsided outcome that is not up for grabs," Green said.

The latest Reuters/Ipsos poll shows Biden leads Trump by 8 percentage points nationally: 51% of likely voters say they are backing the Democratic challenger while 43% are voting for the president.

Biden also is ahead in Wisconsin and Michigan, but the race appears to be much closer in other battleground states including Pennsylvania, Florida, Arizona and North Carolina.

US ELECTION 2020

7 DAYS TO GO

NEWS IN BRIEF

Malaysia's king rejects PM's emergency plan

Malaysia's King Al-Sultan Abdullah yesterday rejected a request by Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin for him to declare a state of emergency in response to the coronavirus crisis, saying that he did not see the need.

The move is a blow for Muhyiddin, who is facing a leadership challenge from opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim and infighting within his ruling coalition. Anwar and other critics have denounced Muhyiddin's proposal for emergency rule, which included the suspension of parliament, as an attempt by the premier to stay in power by avoiding a showdown in parliament over the support he commands.

Key al-Qaeda leader killed in Afghanistan

Afghan forces have killed a top al-Qaeda militant wanted by the United States, as the government yesterday accused the Taliban of still keeping close ties with the Islamist militant group. Abu Muhsin al-Masri, an Egyptian national believed to be the group's number-two in the Indian sub-continent, was targeted in eastern Ghazni province, Afghanistan's intelligence agency said in a statement. The National Directorate of Security did not provide further details about the operation or when it was carried out. The Taliban government's sheltering of al-Qaeda was the original reason for the US invasion of Afghanistan after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Turkey extends research vessel mission for gas hunt

Turkey has extended once again a research ship's search for gas in contested waters of the eastern Mediterranean in defiance of calls from the West to pull back the vessel. The navy said in a message on the international maritime alert system NAVTEX late Saturday that the Oruc Reis would stay in the region until November 4. In a counter-message on NAVTEX, Greece deemed the Turkish activity as "unauthorised and illegal, in an area that overlaps the Greek continental shelf." The Oruc Reis, escorted by military ships, has become the symbol of Ankara's quest for natural gas in the eastern Mediterranean, where recent discoveries have triggered a rush for the resource.

Cameroon school attack kills 8 students: UN

Attackers armed with guns and machetes killed at least eight children Saturday in a raid on a school in southwestern Cameroon, the United Nations said. No group claimed responsibility for the attack on the bilingual school in Kumba, but the area has been caught up in violence between Anglophone separatists and government forces for three years. Two English-speaking regions of Cameroon, Southwest and Northwest provinces, have long chafed against perceived discrimination from the country's French-speaking majority.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Treaty banning nuke arms to enter into force

AFP, United Nations

An international treaty banning nuclear weapons has been ratified by a 50th country, the UN said, allowing the "historic" text to enter into force after 90 days.

While nuclear powers have not signed up to the treaty, activists who have pushed for its enactment hold out hope that it will nonetheless prove to be more than symbolic and have a gradual deterrent effect.

Honduras became the 50th country to ratify. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called it "the culmination of a worldwide movement to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons," according to a statement from his spokesman on Saturday.

NGOs also welcomed the news, including the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a coalition that won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its key role in bringing the treaty to fruition.

Peter Maurer, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), said in a statement: "Today is a victory for humanity, and a promise of a safer future."

The 75th anniversary of the nuclear attacks on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, marked in August, saw a wave of countries ratify the treaty, which will now enter into force on January 22, 2021, the UN said.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons -- which bans the use, development, production, testing, stationing, stockpiling and threat of use of such weapons -- was adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2017 with the approval of 122 countries. Eighty-four states have since signed it, though not all have ratified the text.

The clutch of nuclear-armed states, including the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia, have not signed the treaty.

Japan, the only country to have been attacked with atomic weapons, ruled out any immediate plans to sign.



Pro-democracy protesters hold up three-finger salute during a rally in Bangkok, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

MACRON'S CONTROVERSIAL COMMENTS ON ISLAM

Calls grow to boycott of French goods

AFP, Doha

Calls to boycott French goods are growing in the Arab world and beyond, after President Emmanuel Macron criticised Islamists and vowed not to "give up cartoons" depicting a controversial topic for Muslims.

Macron's comments, on Wednesday, came in response to the beheading of a teacher, Samuel Paty, outside his school in a suburb outside Paris earlier this month, after he had shown the cartoons during a class he was leading on free speech.

The teacher became the target of an online hate campaign over his choice of lesson material -- the same images that unleashed a bloody assault by Islamist gunmen on the offices of satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, the original publisher, in January 2015.

The backlash against Macron's comments on Islam intensified Sunday, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan again urging him to have "mental checks."

But Erdogan on Saturday urged Macron to have "mental checks" for treating "millions of members from different faith groups this way" -- comments which



prompted Paris to recall its envoy to Ankara.

The European Union's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, called the comments Erdogan made on Saturday "unacceptable" and urged Turkey "to cease this dangerous spiral of confrontation."

On Saturday, Jordan's foreign ministry said it condemned the "continued publication of caricatures under the pretext of freedom of expression" and any "discriminatory and misleading attempts that seek to link Islam with terrorism."

Jordan's opposition Islamic Action

Front party called on the French president to apologise for his comments and urged citizens in the kingdom to boycott French goods.

Such boycotts are already underway in Kuwait and Qatar.

Dozens of Kuwaiti stores are boycotting French products, with images on social media showing workers removing French Kiri and Babybel processed cheese from shelves.

In Doha, an AFP correspondent saw workers stripping shelves of French-made St. Dalfour jams and Saf-Instant yeast in a branch of the Al Meera supermarket chain on Saturday.

Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf, secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council called Macron's words "irresponsible" on Friday, and said they would "increase the spread of a culture of hatred".

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan yesterday accused Macron of "attacking Islam".

Macron already sparked controversy earlier this month when he said "Islam is a religion that is in crisis all over the world."

3-DAY ULTIMATUM TO PM TO QUIT

Protesters return to Bangkok streets

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thousands of people protested in the centre of Thailand's capital Bangkok yesterday in the first demonstration since Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha ignored their Saturday night deadline to resign.

It was also the first major show of force since Prayuth lifted Oct. 15 emergency measures that had been meant to stop three months of protests against the government and monarchy, but which brought tens of thousands of people onto the streets.

"If he doesn't resign, then we must come out to ask him to quit in a peaceful way," protest leader Jatupat "Pai" Boonpattaraksa said as people chanted "Prayuth Out".

The prime minister's office posted a note on Twitter to say he was not quitting. He has said the crisis should be discussed in parliament, which is due to hold a special session on Monday and Tuesday.

But his opponents have little faith in an assembly dominated by his supporters.

Protesters seek the departure of Prayuth and a new constitution. He rejects their accusation that he engineered last year's election to keep power he first took in a 2014 coup. They have also demanded curbs on the monarchy, saying it has enabled decades of military domination.



Iraqi demonstrators gather to mark the first anniversary of the anti-government protests in Baghdad, Iraq, yesterday. Thousands of Iraqis took to the streets yesterday on the first anniversary of a revolt against a political system failing to deliver basic services and against the growing influence of pro-Iran militias. About 600 protesters were killed in clashes with security forces before the movement lost momentum due to the coronavirus pandemic.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Peace deals 'changing map' of ME: Israel PM

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that a trio of normalisation accords with Arab states offered an end to the Jewish state's former geographic isolation, with shorter and cheaper flights.

"We are changing the map of the Middle East," he told a televised press conference in Hebrew, pointing to a whiteboard with diagrams of flight corridors.

Air travel over Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates would save passengers heading for India and other Asian destinations "hours and a lot of money of course," he said.

Israel struck landmark agreements last month with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, and on Friday, agreed with Sudan to normalise relations in a US-brokered deal. "There will be more countries," Netanyahu said.

Meanwhile, prominent political factions in Sudan have rejected a deal brokered with the help of the United States to take steps to normalise ties with Israel. Among those criticising the deal was the National Consensus Forces Alliance, a leftist coalition and key component of the Freedom and Change (FFC) alliance that emerged from the uprising against Bashir.

QUIZ CONTEST

The Daily Star | STAR CINEPLEX

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Email your answer to starquiz@outlook.com by 4.00 pm today with your name, DOB, mobile number and address. The winners of the quiz will be announced tomorrow in this newspaper and through email.

Winners are requested to follow the instructions given in email

QUIZ - 04
On which floor is STAR Cineplex located at Shimanto Shambhar?

WINNERS LIST OF QUIZ - 03

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2. Asaduzzaman Nur Sunny, Mohammadpur
3. Abu Hanifa, Jashore
4. Mohammad Sajjad Hossain, Turag
5. MD. Shahadat Hosen, Nilkhet
6. Shamsun Nahar, Tongi
7. Md. Abdur Rahim, Tongi
8. Maksudat Khatun, Jagannath University
9. Sunjeda Sayed, Rampura
10. Muhammad Fuad Hussain, Dhanmondi