

## China: Pentagon report 'severely damaged' ties

China yesterday accused the US of deliberately distorting the facts in a report on the Asian giant's defence policy, warning Washington it had "severely damaged" trust between the superpowers.

The Pentagon on Friday said Beijing had been building up military facilities on reefs and islets in a bid to assert its claims to the contested waters of the South China Sea.

China's military has also been using "coercive tactics" to foster tensions with its neighbours, but will ensure they do not snowball into outright conflict, according to the annual report to Congress.

Beijing hit back yesterday in comments published in state media, with a defence ministry spokesman saying the Pentagon report had "deliberately distorted China's defence policies".

"It is the United States that has been flexing military muscles by frequently sending military aircraft and warships to the region," spokesman Yang Yujun said, according to the official news agency Xinhua.

"The US annual report on China's military and security developments has severely damaged mutual trust between the two sides."

Yang accused the US of being behind the "militarisation in the South China Sea", parts of which are claimed by Vietnam, Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines as well as China.

The South China Sea, an important shipping route thought to be home to vast energy deposits, has become a growing source of tension between Beijing and Washington as the US turns its focus on Asia.

Washington fears Beijing is seeking to impose military controls over the entire area, where China has built massive structures including radar systems and airstrips on reclaimed reefs and islets.

The Pentagon report estimated China has reclaimed 3,200 acres (1,300 hectares) of land around the Spratly Islands, also claimed by the Philippines, over the past two years.

Beijing has been angered by the growing US attention on Asia and US forays into the Sea, including sailing warships close to reclaimed islands.

Meanwhile, the US Congress has been warned that China's new 'Guam killer' missile, capable of hitting targets some 5,500 km away, is raising new fears of a growing Chinese threat to key American military facilities and stability in the Pacific Rim.

A Congressional panel has issued a report warning of the dangers of the DF-26 intermediate-range ballistic missile, during a week in which US-China tensions flared anew with a US Navy destroyer sailing close to a Chinese-claimed island in the disputed South China Sea.

The US-China Economic and Security Review Commission said this week that China's DF-26 missile – dubbed by analysts the "Guam killer" and unveiled at a high-profile military parade in Beijing last September – allows China to bring unprecedented firepower to bear on the US territory of Guam.

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## ICRF Press Release Regarding the recent incident

International Crimes Research Foundation from UK has sent us following press release regarding the recent incident in Bow Road, London:

### *Press Release*

*On the 1st of March 2016 ICR Foundation's London-based members Barrister Nijhoom Majumder, Ajanta Deb Roy, Kamrul Hasan and Mohammed Bappi Chowdhury, attended a meeting arranged by Gonojagoron Moncho inside a restaurant at Bow Road for their upcoming event on 26th March.*

*However unbeknownst to them, a few unsavoury individuals were covertly snapping photos and videos of our members. Upon discovering what they were doing, members of the ICR Foundation and Gonojagoron Moncho present there, chose to approach and question the men about their actions. Once they'd caught up with them one of the men roughly shoved aside two of our members and fled the scene immediately. Afterwards, our members sought the help of the British Metropolitan Police who came in and arrested the remaining perpetrator.*

*The ICR Foundation is perturbed and a little concerned by this incident, to say the least. Recent times have seen the blogger murders rise to a fever pitch in Bangladesh and many of our members, in fact, are under the cosh from credible death threats. We have expressed our concerns before on this matter and have notified the law enforcement authorities of these distresses. It is important to mention that all the individuals who were present at that meeting on 1st March were all simultaneously activists and respected members of the Gonojagoron Moncho UK as well.*

*Every one of our members scattered across different corners of the world has been in constant contact with the law enforcement authorities in their respective geo locations regarding these issues. And safe to say they have received the appropriate amount of attention and security without question. However if these matters are not dealt with swiftly, unlawful incidents such as the one in Bow Road might continue to grow in number.*

*The incident in Bow Road is the start of a daunting pattern which matches the murder of all others blogger conducted by the Islamic extremist in Bangladesh thus far. They were first followed, their routines memorized and then the lives were snuffed out of them at times outside their houses (at times inside their homes even), their workplaces, or on the open streets and so on. These sorts of activities are in direct violation of the rules and regulations set forth by the UK and EU.*

*Again we'd like to reiterate our anxiety on this whole affair at Bow Road. We urge that the British Metropolitan Police dig deeper as to why selected members of our organization were followed, and make swift decisions to settle the matter.*

*International Crimes Research Foundation  
5th March 2016*

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## Syria civil war: Leaders in new plea for massive refugee aid

World leaders have opened a donor conference in London with an urgent plea for billions of

pounds in aid for refugees from war-torn Syria.

“There is a critical shortfall in life-saving aid,” said UK Prime Minister David Cameron.

Germany pledged \$2.6bn (£1.9bn; €2.3bn) and the UK \$1.7bn in new refugee aid.

However, the conference has been overshadowed by the suspension of peace talks in Geneva on Wednesday, and intense fighting on the ground.

A Syrian government offensive, backed by Russian air strikes, is continuing north of Aleppo.

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said an estimated 70,000 Syrians fleeing the bombing were moving towards Turkey.

## Focus on children

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The goal of the donor conference is to raise \$9bn (£6.2bn) for Syrian refugees.

Mr Cameron and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon both spoke of the need to get all Syrian refugee children into education within months.

Sixty countries are represented at the [conference](#), including 30 world leaders.

It is the fourth of its kind, focusing on education and jobs for the 4.6 million Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries. Turkey is hosting 2.5 million – the largest number.

Hours before the conference began, peace talks between the Syrian regime and opposition [were suspended](#).

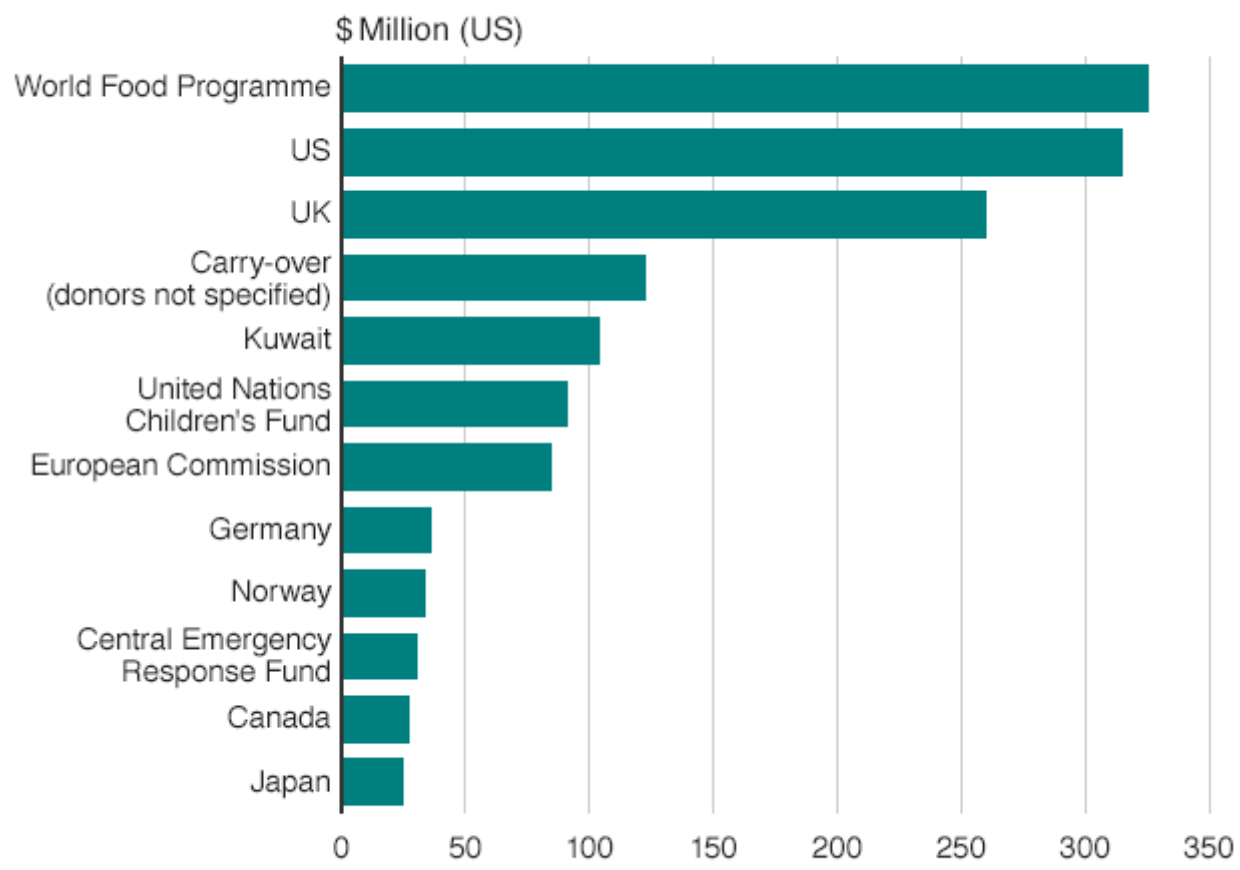
The United Nations-brokered talks, which opened just two days ago, are expected to resume on 25 February. Staffan de Mistura, the UN’s special envoy at the talks, admitted there had been a lack of progress but said that the negotiations had not failed.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon said the talks were “undermined by the continuous lack of sufficient humanitarian access, and by a sudden increase of aerial bombings and military activities within Syria”.

He urged the warring sides to “get back to the table, not to secure more gains on the battlefields”.

The \$9bn being sought on Thursday is made up of a [UN appeal for \\$7.7bn](#) and approximately \$1.3bn requested by regional host governments.

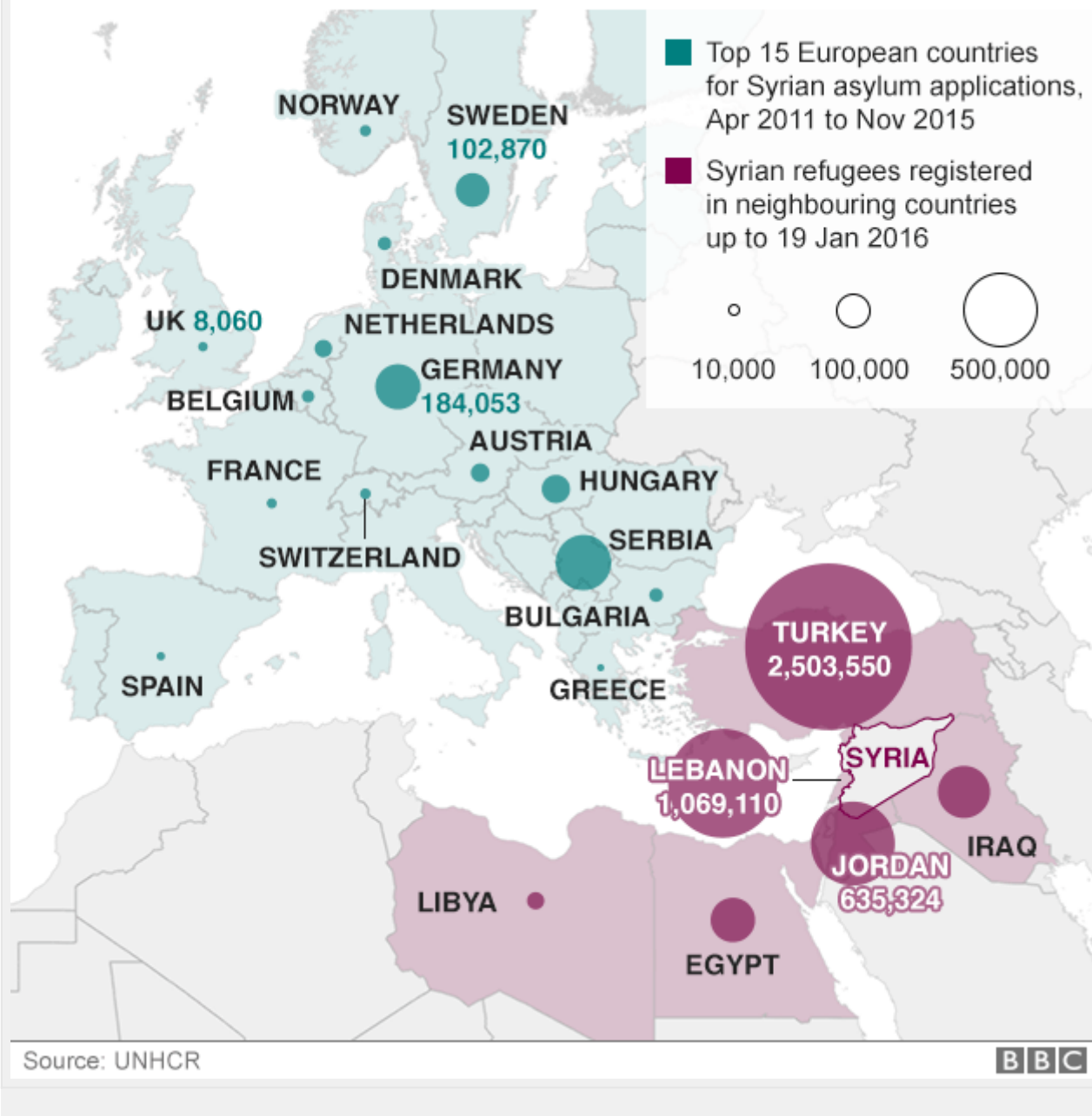
# Largest Syria Response Plan donors in 2015



Source: UNOCHA FTS



## Syrians in neighbouring countries and Europe



Part of the reason for the record request is the underfunding of previous appeals. Only 43% of the \$2.9bn pledged to the UN's 2015 appeal has so far been funded.

Delegates from Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon said their societies would need long-term support in order to adapt to the influx from Syria, BBC diplomatic correspondent James Robbins reports.

On Monday, officials said the European Union would promise \$2.2bn (£2bn) in aid at the conference.

A coalition of more than 90 humanitarian and human rights groups meeting in London on Wednesday – including Amnesty International, Oxfam and the Malala Foundation – called for better access to education and jobs for refugees in Syria and neighbouring states.

The latest round of peace talks broke up amid rebel anger over the continuing Russian bombing around Aleppo.

The air strikes were also criticised by the US, France and Turkey.

- A Russian officer helping Syrian government troops with a new weapons system was killed when

so-called Islamic State (IS) militants fired mortars at a Syrian army garrison on Monday, the Russian Defence Ministry said

- Four Russian Sukhoi Su-35S fighters – a new model delivered to the Russian air force just a few months ago – are now flying combat missions in Syria
  - Syrian state TV has shown civilians greeting government troops in a Shia Muslim town north of Aleppo, after the troops pushed rebels back from a key supply route.
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## Blame game over collapse of Syria talks

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Middle East newspapers apportion blame to a variety of sources for the suspension of the third round of peace talks in Geneva.

Ali Ibrahim Mattar in Iran's Arabic-language newspaper al-Vefagh takes aim at Saudi Arabia: "Saudi Arabia wants to make political solutions fail and sabotages any talks, in addition to its support for terrorist groups to destabilise Syria".

In Syria's state-run al-Thawrah daily, Ahmad Hamadah says: "The US Secretary of State [John Kerry] and his aides flock to the Swiss capital... and behind closed doors impede all options for a solution."

Qatar's pro-government al-Rayah newspaper says: "Damascus, Moscow and pro-Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's sectarian militias made the Geneva talks fail from day one. These talks were stillborn."

Nasri al-Sayigh in the pan-Arab leftist Al-Safir daily bemoans the absence of the Syrians themselves – the refugees, displaced and missing – whilst the Saudi pro-government paper al-Watan says "Russian air strikes suspend Geneva 3 until 25 February".

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Jordan is hosting 635,000 of the 4.6 million Syrians registered as refugees with the UN. [Speaking to the BBC](#) ahead of Thursday's conference, Jordan's King Abdullah said his country was at "boiling point".

More than 250,000 people have died in almost five years of war in Syria.

Eleven million others have fled their homes as forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad and those opposed to his rule battle each other, as well as IS jihadists.

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### Obama decries anti-Muslim rhetoric on first mosque visit

Barack Obama offered an impassioned rebuttal of "inexcusable" Republican election rhetoric against Muslims Wednesday, on his first trip to an American mosque since becoming president seven years ago.

Obama, whose grandfather converted to Islam, made the short trip to the Islamic Society of Baltimore to call on Americans not to be “bystanders to bigotry.”

Invoking the Prophet Mohammed and hailing the tolerance shown by American political icons from Thomas Jefferson to Dwight Eisenhower, Obama hit out at anti-Islamic sentiment that is “not who we are.”

“We’ve heard inexcusable political rhetoric against Muslim-Americans that has no place in our country,” he said, lauding Muslim-Americans as sports heroes, entrepreneurs and the architect who fashioned Chicago’s dizzying skyline.

His comments came as a shrill election debate has sullied America’s image abroad, and as jihadist attacks in San Bernardino and Philadelphia threatened to shatter post-9/11 religious solidarity at home.

Six days after the 2001 attacks in New York and Washington, then president George W. Bush visited the Islamic Center of Washington, declaring “Islam is peace.”

Today, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has wooed conservative voters by demanding a ban on Muslim immigrants, while frontrunner Ted Cruz has advocated Christian-only admissions and championed “Judeo-Christian values.”



*Copies of the Quran are seen on reserved chairs prior to a speech by US President Barack Obama at the Islamic Society of Baltimore on February 3, 2016 in Windsor Mill, Maryland (AFP Photo/Mandel Ngan)*

Obama took on such comments, and asked Christians to see “an attack on one faith is an attack on all our faiths.”

He also criticized the media and Hollywood, which he said portrayed Muslims in a narrow way.

“Our television shows should have Muslim characters that are unrelated to national security,” he said.

‘Thank you’

Obama has visited mosques in Malaysia, Indonesia and Egypt as president, but this was his first visit to one of America’s 2,000-plus places of Islamic worship.

In 2009, a freshly elected Obama traveled to Cairo to call for a “new beginning” with the Muslim world.

Much of Obama’s foreign policy agenda has focused on improving ties with Muslim nations, from making a nuclear deal with Iran to ending wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But the effort has been stymied by continued confrontation with jihadist groups and military strikes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria and Yemen.

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The president offered “two words that Muslim-Americans don’t hear often enough, and that is ‘thank you’.”

But he also called on Muslims to help tackle radicalization.

“How do we defend ourselves against organizations that are bent on killing innocents?” he asked.

“It can’t be the work of any one faith alone. It can’t be just a burden on the Muslim community, although the Muslim community has to play a role.”

That message is a vexed one for members of the Muslim community, including audience member Riham Osman, who works for the Muslim Public Affairs Council, an advocacy group.

“I know national security will come up in the speech just because of the climate of today,” she said ahead of Obama’s remarks.

“It does upset me a little bit that it is his first time coming to visit a mosque, and there will be kids there who have grown up in this post 9/11 era and their faith is constantly linked to national security and extremism.”

Around 49 percent of all Americans think “at least some” US Muslims hold anti-American sentiments, according to a Pew Research Center poll released Wednesday.

The United States is home to around 3.3 million Muslims.

Around 81 Muslim-Americans were involved in violent extremist plots in 2015, according to the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security.



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## Putin Probably 'Approved' Ex Spy's Assassination

President Vladimir Putin probably approved a plan by Russia's FSB security service to kill former agent Alexander Litvinenko, a British judge said today.

In a lengthy report, Judge Robert Owen said that he is certain Litvinenko was given tea laced with a fatal dose of polonium-210 at a London hotel in November 2006.

He said there is a "strong probability" that the FSB directed the killing, and the operation was "probably approved" by Putin.

Litvinenko, a former FSB agent, fled to Britain in 2000 and became a vocal critic of Russia's security service and of Putin, whom he accused of links to organized crime.

Owen said Litvinenko "was regarded as having betrayed the FSB" with his actions, and that "there were powerful motives for organizations and individuals within the Russian state to take action against Mr. Litvinenko, including killing him."

Moscow has always strongly denied involvement in Litvinenko's death, and Russia refuses to identify the two main suspects, Andrei Lugovoi and Dmitry Kovtun.

Litvinenko, who had become a vocal critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin, died after he was poisoned with polonium-210, an isotope that is deadly even if ingested in tiny quantities.

He had fled from Russian to Britain in 2000 after breaking with Putin and his inner circle.

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## China warns US against meddling in Taiwan issue

Expressing concern over a planned visit by a former American official to Taiwan for talks with the new government on the island, China on Monday asked the US to be cautious on the Taiwan issue and not meddle in China's internal affairs.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said at a press briefing that China has already expressed concern over the planned Taiwan visit by US former Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, who is to meet with senior officials of Taiwan.

Hong reiterated that Taiwan is an inseparable part of Chinese territory and Taiwan affairs are China's internal affairs.

Tsai Ing-wen, leader of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the elections in Taiwan on Saturday, becoming the first woman president of Taiwan.

She was strong critic of pro-China Kuomintang (KMT) or Nationalist Party which lost the polls. Hong asked the US to firmly abide by the one-China policy and the principles in the three Sino-US joint communiques, and live up to its commitment to opposing "Taiwan independence".

"We urge the US side to do more things that are conducive to the stable development of China-US relations and peaceful development of relations across the Taiwan Strait, not vice versa," Hong said.

Both China and Taiwan split in 1949 after the civil war. But Yaiwan has never declared independence and China still consider it as part of its territory awaiting reunification.

Meanwhile, China's state-run Global Times today warned Tsai against pursuing a pro-independence path saying that formal split from the mainland would be a "dead end".

Zhou Zhihuai, head of the Institute of Taiwan Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, wrote in the daily that if Tsai "parts ways with the mainland, she will go down a dead end.

An editorial in English-language China Daily newspaper said that the Kuomintang lost the election due to issues such as rising unemployment and inequality, rather than its Beijing-friendly approach.

Tsai's policy towards the mainland "remains ambiguous". "She has a responsibility to keep the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations on track," it said.

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### Republican debate: Trump challenges Cruz over Canada birth

Republican frontrunner Donald Trump has attacked Ted Cruz over his birth in Canada, saying it raises questions about his presidential eligibility.

In the latest Republican debate for White House hopefuls, Mr Trump told his rival: "There's a big question mark over your head."

The constitution mandates the president be a "natural born citizen" of the US.

Issues of national security, the economy and foreign policy have also played heavily in the debate.

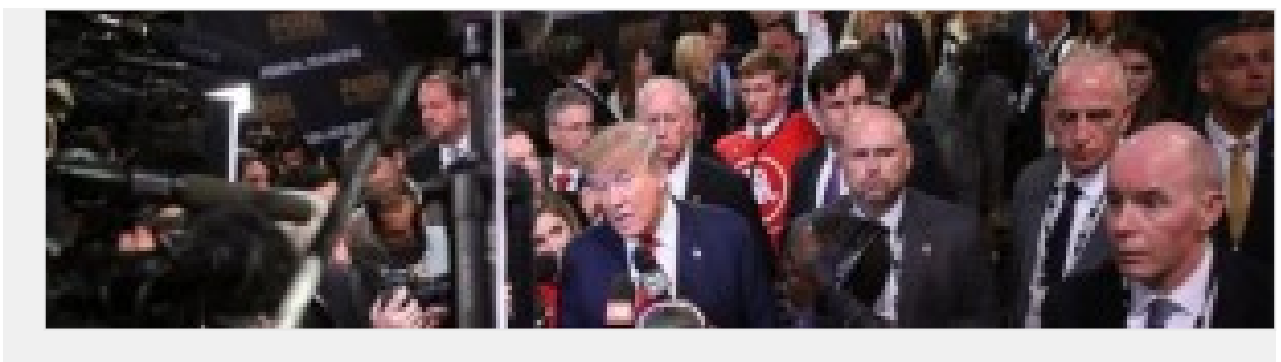
In the polls, the pair are leading the five other candidates, who were also on the stage in North Charleston.

The debate came just two weeks before the first real test of the campaign, when voters in Iowa pick their Republican and Democratic choices for president.

## US media verdict on the debate

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"Cruz acquitted himself well, cementing his status as the front-runner's chief opponent," writes Howard Kurtz for [Fox News](#).



“But Trump didn’t suffer, and in fact may have had his strongest debate performance... The two-man top tier remains just that, way ahead of the rest of the field.”

“For much of his career in Washington, Ted Cruz has been dismissed as a cartoonish sideshow,” Michael Barbaro notes in [the New York Times](#). However, he “did not just dominate much of the Republican debate, he slashed, he mocked, he charmed and he outmanoeuvred everybody else on stage”.

“Donald Trump and Ted Cruz had an unofficial non-aggression pact at the first five Republican presidential debates... but the sixth one Thursday night quickly became a flurry of mutual scorn,” writes Susan Page in [USA Today](#).

“There were only three real players in this exercise: Trump, Cruz and Rubio,” according to Josh Marshall on the [Talking Points Memo](#) website. “Trump wins, Cruz loses a bit of ground but not much and the clock continues to run out on Rubio.”

### Highlights

- Mr Cruz defended a controversy over his campaign finances in 2012, alleging bias in the media
- He said Mr Trump embodied “New York values”, adding “not a lot of conservatives come out of Manhattan – I’m just saying”
- Mr Trump defended his call for a halt on Syrian refugees, saying they were a “Trojan horse” bringing in people who would harm the US
- He came under fire from Florida Governor Jeb Bush for proposing a ban on Muslims coming to the US
- Florida Senator Marco Rubio said Mr Obama would confiscate every gun in the US if he could
- The candidates bickered over how to respond to China’s impact on the US economy

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## Analysis – Anthony Zurcher, BBC News, Washington

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The sixth Republican presidential debate was the political equivalent of a wrestling “battle royale”, where fists fly, chairs are thrown, the crowd cheers and the referees flee for safety.

There could have been no clearer indication that the Cruz-Trump honeymoon was over. The two candidates who stand atop the Republican presidential opinion polls had exchanged warm words through much of the campaign but with the Iowa caucuses just two weeks away, the niceties have melted away.

They exchanged barbs over Mr Cruz’s Canadian birthplace and Mr Trump’s alleged liberal “New York values”.

From there, numerous side fights broke out. Rubio v Christie over Mr Christie’s tenure as New Jersey governor. Trump v Kasich, Rubio v Bush on trade. Rubio v Cruz on immigration. Each candidate could boast a strong moment or two, but each also felt the sting of their competitors’ barbs.

A battle royale is supposed to end when only one participant is left standing. In Charleston, however, all the candidates survived – but all were bloodied.

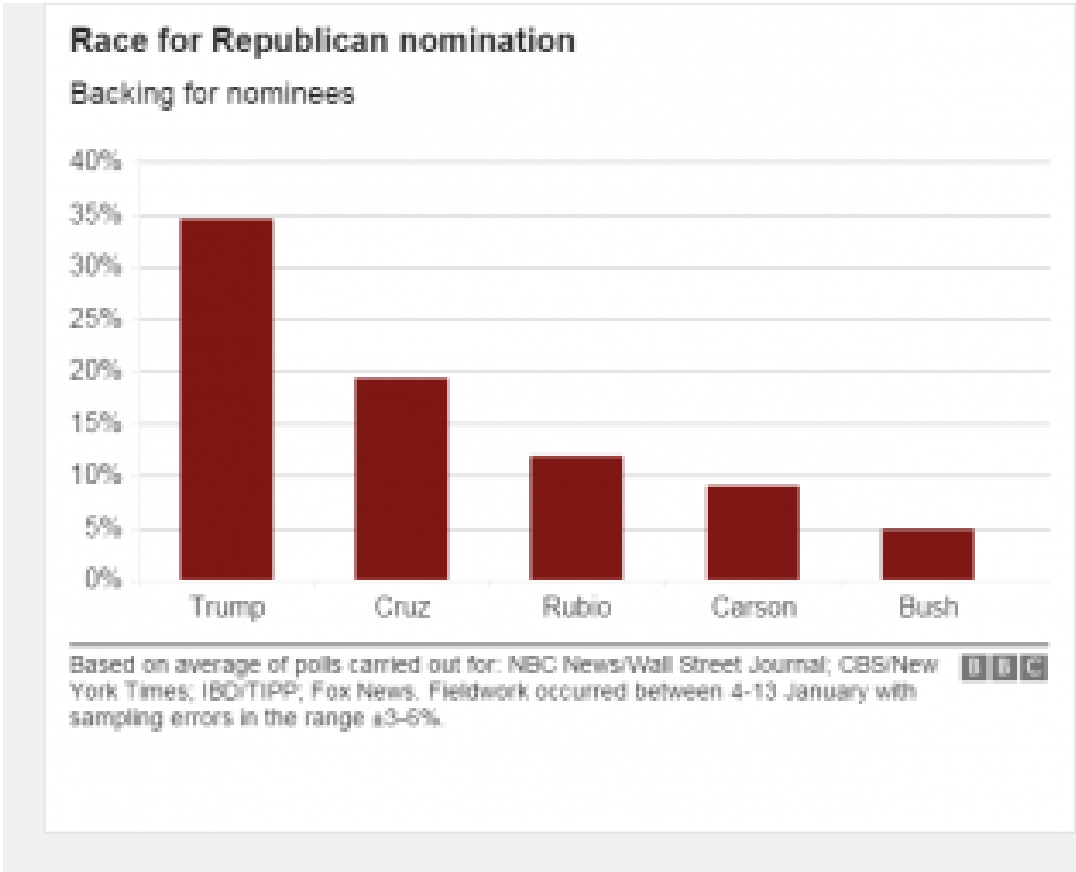
The event hosted by Fox Business Network came after days of Mr Cruz and Mr Trump taking shots at each other, shattering a months-long period of goodwill between the two men.

The start of hostilities began a week ago when the billionaire businessman started raising questions about whether the Texas senator’s birth in Canada put his eligibility in doubt.

But on the debate stage on Thursday night, Mr Cruz said there was “zero chance” of a lawsuit succeeding because the constitution’s definition of “natural born citizens” included people born to an American parent.

Mr Cruz was born in Calgary to an American mother and a Cuban father.

But the business mogul stood firm, noting that a Harvard law scholar had raised doubts and Mr Cruz could face lawsuits by Democrats wishing to challenge his qualification.



# Candidates for US president must

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- be a “natural born citizen” – this has never been tested in court but is widely interpreted as being a US citizen at birth, so born in the US or having a US citizen parent
- be 35 years of age or older
- have lived in the US for the past 14 years

Could a Canadian be US president?

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They also argued over the meaning of “New York values”, which Mr Cruz threw at the New York billionaire as a slur on his conservative credentials.

But the New Yorker said that was an insult to the “great people” who pulled together after the 9/11 attacks.

After the debate, Mr Trump told reporters: “I guess the bromance is over.”

All the candidates targeted leading Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, who was repeatedly attacked for her time as Secretary of State.

The primary contests, in which each party picks their nominee for president, begin in February and the presidential election is in November.

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## One in coma after French clinical trial

Six people are in a critical condition – including one in a coma – after clinical trial of new drug in France, the country’s health minister says.



*Health Minister Marisol Touraine is travelling to Rennes. Photo: AFP/BBC*

Marisol Touraine said there had been a “very serious accident” during a trial by a private laboratory in Rennes.

The minister said she would be making an emergency visit to the city, in the north-west of France, on Friday.

The trial has been suspended and the firm is recalling the volunteers. It is unclear how many people are involved.

Participants had taken “a drug taken orally being developed by a European laboratory” that was licensed to operate, the ministry said in a statement (in French).

Unconfirmed French media reports said it was a cannabis-based painkiller.

The first people to fall ill were taken into hospital earlier this week, French media said. An investigation is under way.

Touraine expressed her “deep determination to get to the bottom... of this tragic accident” and find who was responsible.

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### Jakarta attacks: Convicted militant named as attacker

Police in Indonesia have identified four out of five of the Jakarta attackers. Two were previously convicted militants.

Police named one – Afif Sunakim, seen carrying a gun and rucksack during the attacks. He was given a seven-year jail term for attending a militant camp.

All five died in Thursday’s attacks, which left two civilians dead and were claimed by Islamic State (IS).

Three arrests were made on Friday but it is unclear if they are connected.

Security forces battled militants for hours in the busy commercial district where the militants struck.

A Canadian and an Indonesian national died, and at least 20 people were injured.

The assault ended when two attackers died in a suicide bombing, police say, with the other three killed in gun battles.

Following recent IS threats, the country, which had been attacked by Islamist militants several times in the past, had been on high alert.

- [Who is the gunman in the picture?](#)
- [What we know about the attack](#)
- [‘We are not afraid’ tweets Jakarta](#)
- [A new breed of militants](#)
- [IS influence in Indonesia](#)

Gen Badrodin Haiti, the national police chief, said Sunakim and one other attacker had both been convicted criminals.

Jakarta's chief of police, Insp Gen Tito Karnavian, said a hunt was under way for terror cells believed to be behind the attack.

Three men were arrested near Jakarta early on Friday, police told local media.

A police spokesman, Anton Charliyan, confirmed on Friday that those who organised the attacks were associated with IS.

Two of the perpetrators, he added, were "known to have committed similar radical activities some time ago".

Earlier, Bahrum Naim, an Indonesian believed to be fighting with IS in Syria, was named as the suspected co-ordinator.

Insp Gen Karnavian said Naim's "vision" was to unite various IS-supporting groups across South East Asia.

IS released a statement saying it had targeted citizens of countries which are part of the international coalition fighting the group, which controls parts of Syria and Iraq.

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### 'Game-changer' for Indonesia

Life is getting back to normal on the junction where the attack happened – but only up to a point.

Traffic is flowing and the road sweepers are busy but the police post which was hit remains boarded up, and the Starbucks cafe at the centre of the attack is surrounded by iron fencing, curious onlookers and media using anything at hand to peer over the top at the blown out windows.

The condolence flowers have now been removed – probably to stop the crowds gathering to take selfies, risking their lives in the morning traffic.

But with the city's police chief admitting Thursday's assault is likely to be a game-changer for Indonesia, there is no doubt the risk of another attack has taken a new form. And no matter how "tiny" the group, as he called them, they have proved they can kill.

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Insp Gen Karnavian told the BBC the main culprits were "connected to other cells in Java and Sulawesi and we are chasing them".

He said one IS plot had been foiled at the end of 2015 and a number of people detained, among them a man who said he had been instructed by Naim.

Naim has been linked to the IS-allied East Indonesia Mujahidin Group (MIT), which is based on the island of Sulawesi.

Insp Gen Karnavian said Indonesia had significantly developed its understanding of domestic militant networks since the 2002 bomb attack in Bali, which killed 202 people.

Some 1,000 people linked to radical networks had been brought to justice in Indonesia since

2000, he said, but some had since been released from prison and had “the potential to pose a threat”.

“What we need to do today is strengthen capability and also sharing information with others because it is not home grown in Indonesia but it is part of a global network,” he said.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo tweeted on Friday that there was “no place for terrorism on Earth” and that “every citizen in the world” needed to fight it.

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## Islamist attacks in Indonesia

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Indonesia has suffered militant attacks in the past, but has been relatively successful in curbing home-grown Islamist extremism after a spate of attacks in the last decade. Some of the deadliest include

- July 2009: Seven people killed and dozens wounded when two suicide bombers target Marriott and Ritz Carlton hotels in Jakarta
- Oct 2005: Suicide attacks in Bali leave 23 dead, including the bombers
- Sept 2004: Bomb outside Australian embassy in Jakarta kills at least nine people
- Aug 2003: Bomb at Jakarta’s Marriott Hotel kills 12
- Oct 2002: Bali bombings kill 202, including 88 Australians
- Dec 2000: Church bombings across the country kill 19

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### Multiple explosions, gunfire rock Indonesia’s Jakarta; at least 7 dead including 4 attackers

Suspected Islamic militants launched a massive gun and bomb attack in Indonesia capital Jakarta, leaving at least 7 people dead. Media reports claimed that at least 10-14 gunmen – most of whom are still at large – were involved in the deadly strike, which has been now described by Indonesian President Joko Widodo as a terror attacks.



The deadly attacks were focused on a Starbucks in an area filled with offices and Western brands.



Jakarta police say the 7 dead include 4 attackers too.

Starbucks has confirmed that a customer has sustained injuries from explosion in Jakarta and was treated, latest reports said.

Indonesian police has said that the attack in downtown Jakarta has ended and security forces are in control.

Eyewitnesses said that the multiple terror strike started at 10:30 am local time in the heart of Jakarta when a militant shot dead a traffic cop from close range and then blew himself up.

Moments later one more explosion was heard from across the street at a Starbucks cafe. Reports later said that the gunman who attacked the cafe shoot at bystanders, as a series of explosions rocked the area.

The area is very near to a number of embassies and the regional office of the United Nations. A popular shopping centre called the Sarinah mall along the busy Jalan Thamrin is also in the vicinity.



Police snipers were deployed among hundreds of other security officers even as latest reports now suggest that the terrorists are holed up in a theatre.

Indonesia has been on edge in recent weeks over the threat posed by Islamist militants and counter-terrorism police have launched a crackdown on people with suspected links to Islamic State.

"We have previously received a threat from Islamic State that Indonesia will be the spotlight," police spokesman Anton Charliyan told reporters. But he said police did not know who was responsible.

An explosion was heard in the western suburb of Palmerah, according to domestic media tweet, but police said they could not confirm a blast there.



Indonesia has the world`s largest Muslim population, the vast majority of whom practise a moderate form of the religion.

The country saw a spate of militant attacks in the 2000s, the deadliest of which was a nightclub bombing on the holiday island of Bali that killed 202 people, most of them tourists.

Police have been largely successful in destroying domestic militant cells since then, but officials have more recently been worrying about a resurgence inspired by groups such as Islamic State and Indonesians who return after fighting with the group.

The last major militant attacks in Jakarta were in July 2009, with bombs at the JW Marriott and Ritz Carlton hotels.

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