



Clinton, Trump campaign in the world made by 9/11

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The shadow of 9/11 still falls over presidential politics.

Any number of topics that Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump talk about — the fight against the Islamic State, cybersecurity, troop deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq and immigration from Mexico — are byproducts of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Above all, worries about another attack and concerns by some voters that the United States remains vulnerable continue to influence presidential politics.

The 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon showed "America was no longer protected by two oceans," said author Robert D. Kaplan, senior fellow with the Center for a New American Security. "Since 9/11, there has been a struggle about how to deal with this new vulnerability — this has shaped politics to a significant degree."

As the 15th anniversary of 9/11 approaches on Sunday, both Clinton and Trump have invoked memories of that milestone day. The two candidates, both New Yorkers, have also accused each other of advocating policies that would invite another attack.

"I will never forget the horror of that day," Clinton said this week, adding that the brave responses of survivors and other Americans inspired her actions as a senator from New York and as secretary of State. "That's the kind of commander in chief I will be," she said, "someone who will bring us together in common purpose to keep our people safe and our country strong."

During the Republican primaries, Trump cited the recovery from 9/11 to push back against rival Ted Cruz's attack on his allegedly liberal "New York values." At a January debate in South Carolina, the Manhattan businessman said, "when the World Trade Center came down, I saw something that no place on Earth could have handled more beautifully, more humanely than New York."

Speaking to supporters this week in Tampa, Trump said too many Americans feel less safe than they did before 9/11: "With all the money we spent, all the trillions and trillions of dollars that we spent, people feel less safe today than they did then."

The Republican nominee says President Obama's administration, including Clinton as secretary of State during the first term, has failed to bolster the nation's defenses. In a May radio interview, Trump said refugees to the United States from Syria and the Middle East could plot 9/11-style terrorism. "There will be attacks that you wouldn't believe," he said. "There will be attacks by the people that are right now that are coming into our country."

During the campaign, Trump has seen his ratings rise after terrorist attacks in Paris, Orlando and San Bernardino, Calif.

Clinton says that Trump's anti-Muslim comments — including calls to temporarily ban Muslims from entry into the United States — are already making the United States more vulnerable to terrorism. They undermine alliances with Muslim nations that are helping fight terrorism and can serve as a rallying call for extremist groups like the Islamic State, she says.

Islamic State leaders have said "they hoped that Allah delivers America to Trump," Clinton told reporters this week. "They have said that they hope that he is the president because it would give even more motivation to every jihadi."

Neither Clinton nor Trump plan to campaign on Sunday, though Clinton will attend the ceremony in New York marking the anniversary.

The 9/11 attacks changed the United States in ways too numerous to count: security lines at airport, military action in Afghanistan and Iraq, a new government security infrastructure that includes the Department of Homeland Security and expanded surveillance powers for the National Security Agency, and more — including the nation's politics.

Immigration is an example of an election issue affected by fears of terrorism, changing discussions about border security and refugees. There are also continuing arguments over the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the fate of the terrorism prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (Clinton wants it closed; Trump wants to keep it open).

Fears of a "nuclear 9/11" hover over issues like the Iran nuclear agreement — which Clinton supports and Trump opposes — as well as threats from nuclear-armed North Korea.

Debates over cybersecurity, bio-terrorism and drone policy all stem one way or another from Sept. 11, 2001.

"We can't stop doling the hard stuff," said Kori Schake, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution who held national security posts in the George W. Bush administration. "We don't have an alternative."

Schake, a Republican who has endorsed Clinton, said politics changed a decade and a half ago for a basic reason: "Americans felt safe before 9/11 and didn't feel safe afterward. ... Our perceptions about how dangerous the world is shifted dramatically."

Kaplan, whose books include the forthcoming *Earning the Rockies: How Geography Shapes America's Role in the World*, said candidates are grappling with a world shaped by more than just 9/11. There are also the seismic economic and social changes wrought by globalization that emerged with the end of the Cold War.

"Globalization has created a lot of losers," he said. "And 9/11 has continued to create a lot of the most difficult issues we have to deal with."

The odds of another 9/11-style attack are low, analysts said, largely because of security measures put in place since then.

John Mueller, a political scientist at Ohio State and senior fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute, said fears of another 9/11 are somewhat irrational because the odds of being killed in one are so low. But many voters are fearful, and that continues to influence the rhetoric and platforms of presidential candidates, now and in the future.

"People are still very much afraid," Mueller said. "That really hasn't changed since 9/11."