

STAR+PAC Key Questions for 2016 Federal Candidates

Seeking Peace in the Middle East

1. The US, UK, China, Russia, France and Germany and Iran have reached an historic agreement to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. The announced agreement significantly constrains Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief for Iran. Will you support this agreement? What lessons do you draw from this diplomatic approach to conflict resolution vs. military intervention?

I believe the deal with our international partners and Iran is the best and most effective way to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. A significant majority of scientists, nuclear experts and military leaders believe this agreement advances U.S. national security by cutting off Iran's pathways to a bomb. Now we need to aggressively enforce the agreement with monitoring and inspections. Iran must know that if it cheats, there will be consequences.

My bottom line as President will be to ensure that Iran will never obtain a nuclear weapon. All options must remain on the table. But the military option must be a last resort – and we must have all the facts at hand so we don't have unintended consequences, as we did when we went into Iraq on what proved to be a false pretext.

As General Martin Dempsey, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said recently, too often politicians reach for military solutions when a political solution is what's actually needed. As Commander in Chief, I would never take the military option off the table. But I would always try to resolve disputes diplomatically first.

2. Most analysts maintain that the Israel/Palestine conflict is a major cause of the broader turmoil in the Middle East. STAR*PAC supports the American Friends Service Committee positions that resolution of this conflict pivots on these goals: non-violent self-determination for both Palestinians and Israelis, based on international humanitarian and human rights law; an end to the Israeli occupation and further settlement of Palestinian territories; and, recognition of Palestinian refugees' right of return. Do you support these goals? What specific policies would you endorse to advance attainment of these goals?

I believe the two-state solution is the best and most viable way to achieve peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The parties themselves must ultimately negotiate and agree to the final status issues, including settlements, borders, security, Jerusalem and refugees. But I believe the United States and our international partners should assume a strong leadership role as honest brokers to help Israel and the Palestinian Authority achieve an agreement.

Recently I addressed the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict at length at the Arab American Institute's National Leadership Conference. I condemned the recent violence and called on both sides to take steps to end it, saying it produces nothing except more tragedy and mistrust. I said both sides must make the resumption of final status talks a firm priority. And I reiterated my support for a two-state solution, which would meet Israel's critical security needs and affirm the dignity of the Palestinians to live as a free people in an independent state of their own.

3. Many Americans believe that we are less secure today than we were before 9/11. STAR+PAC believes our military intervention over the fifteen years has created "blow back," motivating thousands to join a fight against our presence in their country or region. Do you agree? What steps do you propose to reduce the unintended consequences of military intervention?

I am very concerned about the unintended consequences of military interventions in the Middle East. I opposed the Iraq War and remember being at a dinner shortly before the invasion in March 2003. People at the time were saying we would be welcomed as liberators and that it would only take a few years to build a democracy there. I was mayor of Baltimore at the time and had a good sense of the chaos that would ensue if bridges and tunnels were bombed and my city had no electricity for days or weeks on end. Amid all the optimistic talk on the eve of the invasion, I thought, 'has this world gone mad?'

I often recall John Quincy Adams' warning against going abroad to search for monsters to destroy. One of the failings of the intervention in Libya is that we did not sufficiently invest in our diplomatic resources and human intelligence to have a clear sense of who would vie for power once we toppled Qaddafi. Now the situation in Libya very chaotic, of course we had the tragedy in Benghazi, and an ISIL franchise has sprouted there.

The stakes are high in the Middle East, and it's a region that's very important to our national interests and national security. I do think we need to remain very engaged there. But I support a more collaborative, forward-looking approach that better anticipates threats before they reach the point where we're boxed in and the only options available to us seem to be military ones. That means more proactive diplomacy and new alliances based on common interests. There are other ways to lead than always at the other end of a drone strike.

4. The United Nations Security Council has established comprehensive strategies for dealing with international terrorism, including non-violent actions addressing underlying causes such as cultural and religious intolerance, failure to recognize human rights and the rule of law, and lack of economic development. Do you support the overall positions and role of the UN regarding terrorism? What exceptions, if any, would you make?

I support a more comprehensive counterterrorism strategy that makes us stronger and better-prepared at home and simultaneously addresses current terrorist threats and the underlying causes of terrorism. A comprehensive counterterrorism strategy must include military force, but must also include an emphasis on inclusive and effective governance, and broad engagement and collaboration with those on the front lines against terrorism.

To mitigate and ultimately eliminate the scourge of terrorism, the United States must develop a long-term security strategy that advances political reform in the regions where terrorism festers. Transforming the economic and political prospects of the Middle East, in particular, is vital to eliminating the conditions in which extremism grows. We must do more to close the good governance gap in the Middle East. Our national interests will be better served through enduring partnerships with states that create opportunities for their citizens.

In addition, we must partner and expand our relationships with local communities on the front lines against violent extremism. The United States must partner with local community leaders, the private sector, and civil society to reach the small sub-set of individuals at risk of radicalization. We must also recruit a new generation of front-line civilians, diplomats and intelligence professionals to better identify threats and build long-term relationships with next-generation leaders in nations plagued by terrorism.

Controlling the Military/Industrial Complex

5. Former President and General Dwight Eisenhower warned, "...We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist." Do you agree with him? What must we do to cope with special interest pressures that have led us to spend as much on our military as the next nine countries combined?

The best way to heed General Eisenhower's important warning and more generally heal our ailing democracy is to once and for all get money out of politics. No office holder's reelection should depend on pleasing the defense industry and counting on its continued campaign contributions. Defense policy should be made on the merits alone.

Fixing our nation's biggest problems requires fixing our democratic process. Big-money special interests have taken over our elections. In the five years since the Supreme Court's disastrous *Citizens United* ruling, super PACs, corporations and dark money groups have spent almost \$2 billion trying to sway the outcome of federal elections—2.5 times what they spent, in total, between 1990 and 2008. As a result, special interests have drowned out our voices, while relentlessly lobbying for policies that improve their bottom lines at the expense of the American middle class. This corrupt system—while technically "legal" – forces candidates into a race to the bottom.

6. Efforts are underway to amend the U.S. Constitution to state that inalienable rights belong to human beings only, so that corporate spending is not a form of protected free speech and can be regulated in election campaigns. Do you support such an amendment? Are there other actions you propose to overcome the impacts of the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision?

I have committed to establishing publicly financed congressional elections within five years. Meeting this ambitious goal will require a new campaign finance system, a tougher regulatory system, and stronger disclosure rules – in addition to an unrelenting effort to finally overturn *Citizens United*.

As president, I will fight to ratify the *Democracy for All* amendment, which will allow the American people to once again place reasonable limits on the money that flows into our elections. This will give Congress and the states the authority to do what they always did before wealthy donors and corporations bought our courts and our elections: enact meaningful campaign finance rules that cap candidate spending, establish contribution limits, and bar corporations from meddling in our democratic process. The vast majority of Americans – including both Democrats and Republicans alike – overwhelmingly agree that *Citizens United* should be overturned.

7. War and military action have led to gigantic military expenditures and huge obligations in future budgets to service debt and provide crucial care for our veterans. Do you support reducing U.S. military spending and increasing spending for urgent social and human needs? What spending cuts or tax increases do you propose accomplish this change in priorities?

Strategy should frame defense spending, as President Obama did with his 2012 long-term Pentagon budget proposals. Defense spending must be tailored to 21st-century threats. We should approach defense budgeting by identifying the threats we face, and allocating sufficient resources to manage and defeat them. We should not approach it backwards by picking a funding level and then determining where to spend the money. And we should definitely not continue spending money on programs the Pentagon says it doesn't need – but Members of Congress fund anyway. That money should be used to grow our economy and restore funding to vital domestic services that the sequester cut. Funding for essential domestic programs that provide critical services to the American people must be restored.

8. Do you support reducing the US military bases and other presence in foreign countries?

I support reviewing our military's global force structure to make sure we are protecting the American people and our interests in the best ways possible. Such a review is necessary because much has changed since the end of the Cold War. We now face new 21st-century threats that we did not before, including cyber attacks against our businesses

and national security agencies and the proliferation of sub-national actors that wish us harm. Properly addressing these threats will require a reevaluation of our defense resources and a whole-of-government approach that utilizes our military, diplomatic and development tools.

9. U.S. response to international terrorism has led to escalating tactics by our federal government, with growth in domestic surveillance, “enhanced interrogation,” and lethal uses of unmanned drone aircraft outside of declared war zones. Do you agree that these practices should be restricted or curtailed? How would you address this area of concern?

I support a forward-looking approach to move our nation beyond the dark chapter of George W. Bush’s War on Terror. As president, I would continue President Obama’s executive order banning the use of torture and would go one step further by prosecuting those who violated U.S. law.

I would also support a full review of the military and intelligence decision-making processes on the use of drones. We should make sure those processes align with American principles and values, specifically by relying on better human intelligence and taking more caution regarding civilian casualties. We need to be more transparent and accountable, particularly when it comes to civilian risk. Drones can and do play a role as an alternative to boots on the ground, but we need to be more judicious in how and when we use them.

Regarding domestic surveillance, we must continue our work to strike the right balance between privacy and security. I supported the passage of the USA Freedom Act, which ended the government’s bulk data collection program. I support further strengthening the civil liberties and privacy protection provisions in that legislation by passing a bill to establish a public advocate at the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) court, which would argue before the court in defense of Americans’ constitutional right to privacy.

10. Do you support the principle of pre-emptive military intervention? Under what circumstances would you order a military campaign in another nation that has not declared war on the United States, and what constraints would you apply to the campaign?

I do not support the principle of pre-emptive military intervention as it was argued, practiced and executed by the Bush Administration vis-à-vis the Iraq War. I opposed the Iraq War, which will go down as one of country’s worst foreign policy blunders in history. While I would never take the military option off the table as commander in chief, I agree with most of our military leaders that we should only use force as a final option when it’s critical to our national interests. That means protecting the American people, defending our interests and allies, and, when necessary, addressing humanitarian crises

like the Rwandan genocide in 1994. I agree with the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, who said recently that some politicians are too quick to exercise military force when a political solution is what's needed to solve some of the world's problems.

11. Do you support extending arms control policies to include efforts to end proliferation of conventional weapons, which often are captured and reused by enemies of the U.S.?

I strongly support the efforts of our diplomats to reach international arms control agreements that seek to keep weapons – nuclear, conventional or otherwise – out of the hands of terrorists, violent militias and unfriendly governments. I also support the U.S. State Department's authority to set and enforce export controls on everything from small munitions to nuclear power technology. We need more authority, oversight and accountability for the flow of weapons in the world, not less. This is especially true of weapons manufactured in and exported from the United States. I believe this is a moral issue about America's role in the world. We should be extremely careful about arming foreign governments and actors, especially when human rights violations are a concern. For that reason I strongly support the Leahy Law, which prohibits the U.S. government from providing lethal assistance to foreign militaries that abuse human rights.

12. Would you support a global campaign for full nuclear disarmament, including the U.S. unilaterally discontinuing building further nuclear weapons? Which allies would you consider urging reductions in their nuclear weapons?

The world would be a safer place without nuclear weapons, and the Global Zero campaign to rid the world of them is a noble one. I appreciate that the Obama Administration has made nuclear non-proliferation a priority. The United States and Russia each have more than 7,000 nuclear warheads, a number more than capable of destroying the world several times over. Diplomatic efforts like the 2010 New START treaty with Russia should be built upon to further reduce nuclear stockpiles, especially in countries at risk of political instability.

Providing Humane Treatment of Migrants

13. Globally, millions of people are refugees, forced to emigrate because of war or the threat of violence in their homelands. Migrants often face desperate living conditions, abuse from criminals, and detainment. Does the United States have a national interest in addressing these areas of concern? What specific policy recommendations do you have to address this crisis?

We are in the midst of a global refugee crisis. There are now more refugees in the world than at any time since World War II. I believe that how we respond to this crisis will

speak to the type of country we are, and I stand for a more generous and compassionate America that respects our values and history as a nation of immigrants and refugees.

This isn't just rhetoric for me. I acted on these words last year as governor when thousands of children from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador arrived at our southern border fleeing death at the hands of murderous drug gangs. While many governors supported the position that these children must be sent back – in some cases to certain death – I instead stepped up and welcomed more than 5,000 children to Maryland, accommodating more kids per capita than any other state. We did it by living our values and working together – faith leaders, community organizations, state officials, all of us.

Similar to the position I took last year, I was also the first 2016 presidential candidate to say we should welcome at least 65,000 Syrian refugees to our country next year, as has been asked of us by humanitarian organizations. I am glad that at least one other presidential candidate has joined my position, and I hope all of them do. If Germany – a country with one-fourth our population – can accept 800,000 refugees this year, certainly we can accept 65,000 – a number akin to making room for just six and a half more people in a baseball stadium that holds 32,000.

14. Approximately eleven million migrants are in this country without authorization, thousands are detained, and thousands more have died while trying to cross borders. Do you support changes that would provide an orderly and humane process to recognize aspiring citizens? What changes would you support for our current immigration policies?

Today, the fundamental characteristic of our country – the diversity that makes us great and enriches each new generation – is being eroded. Our outdated immigration laws no longer meet our economic needs, our national security imperatives, or our values as a people. To continue to attract the next generation of strivers, dreamers, and risk-takers, and to be true to the values we hold dear, it is imperative that we pursue a dynamic, modern approach to immigration policy. This will require a new push for comprehensive immigration reform – and new leadership that is willing to work tirelessly until it is finally accomplished, once and for all.

There is broad consensus on how to fix our inhumane immigration system, but for all those waiting to immigrate – and for all those already here waiting to be legally included – reform cannot come soon enough. New Americans have endured the uncertainty and fear of legislative inaction for far too long. I support advancing a package of executive actions my first year in office. From expanding the use of deferred action and exercising discretion to keep families together; to rewriting punitive regulations and ending harmful law enforcement policies; to greatly limiting detention and restoring due process to our immigration system; an O'Malley Administration will use all legal and executive authorities to safeguard and welcome New Americans and restore greatness and justice to America's immigration system. To read my comprehensive plan for immigration reform, click [here](#).

15. Climate change can bring about economic disruption and jeopardize food and water supplies, and so increase the likelihood of armed strife and number of forced migrations. Do you support working internationally to address climate change? In addition to current agreements, what else would you propose?

I absolutely support robust diplomatic negotiations to address climate change. We have a moral obligation to act immediately and aggressively to stop climate change, which I believe poses an existential threat to life as we know it. Ending fossil fuel use is a public health imperative and would extend the lives of 200,000 Americans each year. In my view, clean energy not only means a safer, more stable world, but it also represents the biggest business and job-creation opportunity we've seen in a hundred years.

We can't meet the climate challenge with an all-of-the-above energy strategy, or from drilling off our coasts, or from building pipelines that bring oil from tar sands in Canada. Meeting the climate challenge requires a commitment to one simple concept: a full transition to clean, renewable energy and an end to our reliance on fossil fuels altogether. Within 35 years, our country can and should be 100% powered by clean energy. This is a central proposal of my campaign, but we have to accelerate the transition right now.

As President, on Day One, I would use my executive authority to declare the transition to a clean energy future the number-one priority of the federal government.