



Control of Aleppo will be a pivotal moment in Syria's war

The Syrian regime and rebel forces supported by their allies will intensify the battle around Aleppo in an effort to consolidate control of the city. Aleppo provides a strategic presence in northern Syria and whoever fully controls it will be able to gain a significant advantage in the war. US policy is now tilted toward disengagement, while Russia will continue expanding military support for regime forces in the battle.

Unlikely Trump victory would have more implications for foreign than domestic policy

Hillary Clinton is still likely to win the presidency in November, but the race has tightened significantly since early September. The possibility of a Trump victory always depended on an external surprise – Clinton being indicted for the email server/cover-up, a particularly damaging set of Russian leaks, a massive terrorist attack, or a health issue. The latter is now a factor, particularly because it plays to Clinton's particular weakness regarding authenticity and spin.

Next US president will have to deal with a more aggressive North Korea

North Korea's latest nuclear test and accelerating missile programs mark a substantial advance in its military capabilities. Washington, Seoul and Tokyo are now considering coercive steps that heretofore have been off the table. The geopolitical prohibitions on imposing "Iran-like sanctions" are essentially dissipating and support for an enhanced US/allied military posture is growing, especially in Seoul and Tokyo. US policy towards North Korea will likely harden under the next US president.

Latin America's rightward shift will continue

As leftist government policies fail to produce tangible results, voters in many large Latin American economies will probably increasingly elect more right-leaning leaders that adopt more orthodox economic policies. However, a challenging global economic environment and higher voter expectations for continuing improvement in living standards will limit the ability of governments to implement investor-friendly policies in places like Argentina, Peru, and Brazil. Leftist-led governments like Ecuador and Venezuela will face increasing challenges.