

'What Is Aleppo?' Asks Presidential Candidate Gary Johnson-and NYT Gives Three Wrong Answers

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*Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson, when asked in an **MSNBC** interview (**Morning Joe**, [9/8/16](#)) what he would do about the battle raging over the Syrian city of Aleppo, responded, "What is Aleppo?"*

That's troubling, that a presidential candidate would be unaware of one of the main battlefields in one of the world's deadliest conflicts. But even more troubling is that the **New York Times**, the US paper of record, can't seem to figure out what Aleppo is, either.

As FAIR contributor [Ben Norton](#) noted in a piece for **Salon** ([9/8/16](#)), the **Times'** [Alan Rappoport](#) ([9/8/16](#)) wrote a piece about Johnson's gaffe that described Aleppo as "the de facto capital of the Islamic State," or ISIS. That's wrong; the de facto capital of ISIS is Raqqa, a city halfway across Syria from Aleppo.



Media mocked Gary Johnson for his Aleppo ignorance, but some attempts to inform him weren't much better.

This was then changed in an edit to describe Aleppo as "a stronghold of the Islamic State." That's also wrong; the main rebel faction in Aleppo is Jabhat al-Nusra, better known as the Al

Qaeda affiliate in Syria—a bitter rival of ISIS. ISIS itself has little presence in the city.



Correction: September 8, 2016

An earlier version of this article misidentified the de facto capital of the Islamic State. It is Raqqa, in northern Syria, not Aleppo.

Correction: September 8, 2016

An earlier version of the above correction misidentified the Syrian capital as Aleppo. It is Damascus.

The **New York Times'** embarrassing correction of an embarrassing correction.

The **New York Times** ran a correction on its misidentification of Aleppo. But then it had to run a correction on the correction—because the first correction misidentified Aleppo as the capital of Syria. The actual capital of Syria is Damascus.

If history and the polls are any guide, Gary Johnson will probably not be elected president in November. But the **New York Times** is and will likely continue to be the country's most influential newspaper—so its gaps in knowledge are far more worrisome.

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