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Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2024 • \$3

## Harris, in escalation, calls Trump a 'fascist'

She says she agrees with assessments by Kelly, other former officials

BY TYLER PAGER, PATRICK SVITEK AND JONATHAN EDWARDS

PHILADELPHIA — Vice President Kamala Harris said on Wednesday that she believes former president Donald Trump is a fascist, agreeing with the assessment of a growing number of Trump's former top aides as she escalated her warnings about the Republican nominee's character and fitness for office less than two weeks before Election Day.

Asked directly during a CNN town hall whether she thinks that Trump is a fascist, Harris said: "Yes, I do. Yes, I do." Later, discussing voters concerned about the war in Gaza, the vice president said: "I also do know that for many people who care about this issue, they also care about bringing down the price of groceries. They also care about our democracy and not having a president of the United States who admires dictators and is a fascist."

Harris's comments came a day after a statement by Trump's former White House chief of staff John F. Kelly that Trump meets the definition of a fascist, intensifying a debate over whether Trump has authoritarian tendencies and would abuse governmental power in a second term. Kelly, a retired Marine general, told the New York Times that Trump's desire for unfettered power and other qualities fit the fascist label.

Mark T. Esper, who served as Trump's secretary of defense, added Wednesday on CNN that "it's hard to say" Trump does not fall into the category of a fascist. That

SEE KELLY ON A7

**Wisconsin:** Computer issues lead to long lines for early voters. A4

**Party elders:** Democrats hit trail as Republicans keep distance. A5

## ELECTION 2024 Campaigns in high gear for the home stretch



VINCENT ALBAN/REUTERS



MELINA MARA/THE WASHINGTON POST



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST



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On Wednesday, clockwise from top left: Milwaukee voters line up at the American Serb Hall. Democratic nominee Kamala Harris meets voters at the Famous 4th Street Delicatessen in Philadelphia. Early voters form a queue in Carmel, Indiana. Republican nominee Donald Trump greets supporters after a faith town hall in Georgia.

## From Silicon Valley elite to Trumpworld star

BY ELIZABETH DWOSKIN, ASHLEY PARKER, MERYL KORNFELD AND AARON SCHAEFFER

During his recent live tour, Tucker Carlson welcomed a stable of MAGA warhorses to the stage: activist Charlie Kirk in Wichita, conspiracy theorist Alex Jones in Reading, Pennsylvania, Donald Trump Jr. in Jacksonville, Florida. But at a sold-out show on the outskirts of Houston, Carlson's special guest was a new star in the right-wing firmament: Nicole Shanahan, running mate to former independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Until this year, Shanahan was a

Democrat who had once moved easily among the Silicon Valley elite, a lawyer, tech entrepreneur and wife of Google co-founder Sergey Brin, one of the world's richest men. Today, she is in the throes of a remarkable transformation, tapping a vast divorce settlement from 2023 to remake herself as an influencer and self-described "warrior mom" rallying independent women around fringe medical views — and former president Donald Trump.

Since Kennedy suspended his campaign and endorsed Trump in August, Shanahan, 39, has rebranded herself as a wellness guru promising to "Make America Healthy Again" (MAHA). She



**Nicole Shanahan, RFK Jr.'s former running mate, is rebranding as a wellness guru.**

has disavowed members of her old circle in tech, saying they want to overcome human limitations, such as aging, with technology. She has suggested that vaccines might have caused her daughter's autism, an idea she said she "was not allowed to consider" in progressive Silicon Valley. And she has hinted publicly about running for governor of

California.

Though Shanahan has said her politics don't "overlap perfectly" with Trump's, she has become a potent advocate for the former president, encouraging independent-minded voters to back his bid for the White House on Fox News, an array of podcasts and her increasingly popular social media feed. A prominent video ad she financed warns of "Trump Derangement Syndrome" and recommends "independence" as the remedy to a host of ills purportedly fostered by Democrats, including "forever wars," "Orwellian totalitarianism" and "communist fiscal policy."

SEE SHANAHAN ON A8

## Over 230 GOP candidates have cast doubt on election

Misinformation is used to question integrity of next month's vote

BY CLARA ENCE MORSE, DEREK HAWKINS AND CARSON TERBUSH

Nearly half of Republican candidates for Congress or top state offices have used social media to cast doubt on the integrity of the 2024 election, according to a Washington Post analysis, highlighting a pervasive effort within the GOP to undermine public trust in the vote ahead of Nov. 5.

From Nov. 9, 2022, to Oct. 11, at least 236 Republican candidates posted or amplified a range of falsehoods or misinformation about election malfeasance. Many candidates baselessly accused Democrats of trying to sway the election through former president Donald Trump's court cases or by registering noncitizens to vote.

Others falsely likened Vice President Kamala Harris's nomination to a "coup" or promoted misinformation about voter fraud.

Of the 48 percent of Republican candidates who have promoted false or misleading information about the 2024 election ...



488 total candidates

about 2 out of 3 referenced non-citizen voting in connection with 2024 election fraud,



and about half referenced Trump's legal troubles,



and almost a quarter discussed Harris's nomination as a coup, undemocratic or disrespectful to the will of primary voters.



The rhetoric, which often parrots Trump's election-related falsehoods, could help lay the groundwork for Republicans to challenge any election outcome they dislike by alleging the results are tainted or fraudulent.

"Even after the horrific sights of January 6, endorsing Trump's baseless claims about election fraud had become a litmus test for any Republican who hopes to secure political seats," said Yotam Ophir, an expert on political misinformation at the

SEE CANDIDATES ON A6



BRIANNA SACKS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Hilary Yoxall, who helped set up an aid hub in North Carolina, grew leery of the outside group.

## A source of help for some, fear for others

Conspiracy-fueled group gains foothold in storm-battered N.C. town

This article is by Brianna Sacks, Scott Dance, Will Oremus, Samuel Oakford and Jeremy B. Merrill

LAKE LURE, N.C. — It started with hot coffee.

Hurricane Helene had just cut off this already isolated foothill town from everything: power, water, information. Paralyzed, the only thing that residents Carin Harris and Hilary

Yoxall could think to do was post up outside their Ingles supermarket and hand out something warm. Soon, donations began to pour in, and a makeshift supplies distribution center emerged from a parking lot off the main two-lane road.

Then everything got more complicated.

A group called Veterans on Patrol showed up in Rutherford

County late on the night of Oct. 11, just four people with no supplies. But their leader, Lewis Arthur, came with a lot of promises and a big vision, which he said was sent from God: a three-year plan to help this lakeside community and others around here bounce back, according to Yoxall and Arthur.

At first, it did seem like a

SEE MISINFORMATION ON A9

## U.S. says N. Korean troops are in Russia

3,000-PLUS SOLDIERS RECEIVING TRAINING

Confirms assessments by Ukraine and South Korea

BY DAN LAMOTHE, MISSY RYAN AND MICHELLE YE HEE LEE

The U.S. government has evidence that at least 3,000 North Korean soldiers are in Russia receiving training, senior Biden administration officials said Wednesday, a development they said could have global implications and make those troops "legitimate military targets" in Ukraine should they enter the ongoing war there.

The disclosure, which officials said is based on newly declassified U.S. intelligence, coincides with similar pronouncements in recent days from the governments of Ukraine and South Korea. NATO and the United States had not previously confirmed the North Korean troop movements, and the administration said Washington was doing so now to convey the seriousness with which it views the matter.

"We recognize the potential danger here," John Kirby, a spokesman for the National Security Council, told reporters at the White House. "And we're going to be talking to allies and partners, including Ukrainians, about what the proper next steps are going to be."

He emphasized repeatedly that the U.S. government does not yet know for certain that any North Korean soldiers will join the fighting in Ukraine, but he warned there would be consequences if they do.

"If these North Korean troops are employed against Ukraine," Kirby said, "they will become legitimate military targets."

SEE RUSSIA ON A14

**Ukraine:** U.S. and allies finalize loan backed by Russian assets. A15

## Alsobrooks still has an edge in Md.'s Senate race, poll finds

BY SCOTT CLEMENT, EMILY GUSKIN AND ERIN COX

Democrat Angela D. Alsobrooks maintains a clear lead in Maryland's closely watched U.S. Senate race, fueled by voters' lopsided preference for Democrats to control the chamber and doubts that Republican Larry Hogan would buck the will of party leaders, according to a Washington Post-University of Maryland poll.

The Post-UMD poll finds that 52 percent of likely voters support Alsobrooks, the Prince George's County executive, while 40 percent support former governor Hogan and another 4 percent support Libertarian Mike Scott. Alsobrooks's lead of 12 percentage points is similar to her 11-point advantage in a September Post-UMD poll.

While behind in the poll, Hogan is outperforming the top of his party's ticket in the deeply Democratic state. In the presidential

SEE POLL ON A7

**What to know at the polls:** Early voting starts today in Maryland. B1

## IN THE NEWS

**Biodiversity summit** In Colombia, nations rich in nature but poor in the means to protect it ask wealthy countries for help. A10

**A brewing book battle** Maryland's largest school district has stopped teaching two storybooks with LGBTQ+ characters as part of its ongoing legal fight. B1

**THE NATION** Fewer freshmen enrolled in colleges this fall, marking the first decline since 2020. A2  
**After Helene**, a woman marshals dozens in the task of organizing donated goods. A3

**THE WORLD** At a Vatican synod, the drive for female deacons hits a big obstacle: Pope Francis. A11  
**Turkey said** a "terrorist attack" on a state-owned defense company killed at least five people. A13

**THE ECONOMY** Jake Sullivan, the national security adviser, defended President Joe Biden's global economic strategy as favorable to American workers. A15  
**Striking workers** at Boeing voted to reject the company's sweetened four-year contract proposal. A16

**THE REGION** The mother of a boy handcuffed by D.C. police in 2019 is suing the department, saying his rights were violated. B1

**OBITUARIES** Robert Bernstein, 98, was an ambassador to parents of gay children and a champion for equality. B1

**STYLE** The prospect of a strike by tech workers at the New York Times looms as Election Day approaches. C1

**LOCAL LIVING** Diwali, the Indian festival of lights, is the perfect occasion to host a celebration with friends and family.

BUSINESS NEWS.....A15  
COMICS.....C7  
OBITUARIES.....B4  
OPINION PAGES.....A17  
TELEVISION.....C6  
WORLD NEWS.....A11

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