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Israel says it pulled its punches in Iran strike

Calibrated to dial back tensions, assault avoided oil and nuclear targets

BY STEVE HENDRIX AND LOVEDAY MORRIS

JERUSALEM — Israel's first open attack on Iran targeted missile production facilities and air defense systems, the military said Saturday, tempering fears of a broader foray but giving Israeli aircraft the ability to operate more freely in Iranian skies as the region entered a new phase of escalation.

"Israel now has broader aerial freedom of operation in Iran," an Israeli military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said in a statement after the attack concluded. The remarks signaled Israel's willingness to strike Iran in the future, even as Israeli officials said the attacks were tailored to minimize casualties and allow Iran to deny major damage.

The exact scope of the strikes, carried out by Israeli warplanes over four hours, was still unclear. Israel launched the attack in retaliation for the barrage of ballistic missiles Iran fired at Israeli territory earlier this month — the latest exchange between two of the region's most powerful militaries.

"It looks like they didn't hit anything other than military targets," President Joe Biden, speaking to reporters in Philadelphia, said of the Israeli strikes. "I hope that this is the end."

Around 20 targets were hit, according to an Israeli official who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss classified matters. There were no reports of mass casualties, although Iranian state media said four soldiers were killed, citing Iran's armed forces.

Military analysts and diplomats who braced for a more devastating blow against Tehran expressed hope on Saturday that tensions could ease. Iranian officials and state media were also quick to downplay the damage, saying that the impact was minimal and that some military sites were already undergoing repairs.

Ahead of the strikes, the Biden administration pushed Israel, publicly and behind the scenes, to avoid a massive response that could further inflame a region already shattered by two raging wars in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. Israel signaled in the run-up to Saturday's attack that it was planning limited strikes, with officials saying it was "calibrated."

SEE ISRAEL ON A19

Mideast politics: China trumpets its close alliance with Tehran. **A18**

Iran shrugs: Life quickly returns to normal after limited operation. **A19**

They were swept away by floodwaters, weeks before their wedding day. He perished rescuing victims of a mudslide in his own community. They fled war in Ukraine. A North Carolina river swallowed their home.

WHAT HELENE TOOK

This article is by Sarah Kaplan, Matt McClain, Brady Dennis, Scott Dance, Naema Ahmed and Dino Grandoni

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — Death came in many ways, and in many places.

The raging waters came for those who lived in valleys, alongside once-peaceful rivers and streams. The landslides came for those high on the hillsides above. It came for people who had lived here all their lives, and for those who had only begun to call these mountains home.

When Hurricane Helene tore through the Southeast in late September, it carved a trail of loss from the coast of Florida to the southwest corner of Virginia, killing at least 226 people across six states. It was the deadliest storm to strike the mainland United States in almost 20 years.

But it was here in western North Carolina that Helene exacted its greatest toll.

After more than four weeks of painstaking searches and harrowing recovery efforts, the North Carolina health department has identified at least 98 victims in 22 counties, spanning more than 9,000 square miles. That tally could continue to grow as the search continues for dozens of people yet to be accounted for.

As more details emerge about North Carolina's victims, it has become clearer why the storm was so deadly here. Helene unleashed extreme downpours on steep slopes that already had endured days of heavy rain. The deluge filled isolated mountain valleys with unimaginable floods and caused mudslides that consumed much in their path. Many known deaths were a result of drowning — at least 38 in Helene's floodwaters, creeks

SEE HELENE ON A12



BRIANA YARBROUGH



FOREST LAWN FUNERAL HOME



WEIBE FAMILY



CHRISTY WINSTEAD KNIGHT



SHALANA JORDAN



BRUCE DOCKERY

Victims, clockwise from top left: Knox Petrucci, Alison Wisely, and Alison's sons, Felix and Lucas. Tony Garrison. Lisa Peeler Brady (left, with Christy Winstead Knight, who survived). James and Judy Dockery. Nola and Robert Ramsuer. Dmytro Segen, Yevhenii Segen and Anastasia Novitnia-Segen.

'Open borders' foe Musk worked illegally in U.S.

BY MARIA SACCHETTI, FAIZ SIDDIQUI AND NICK MIROFF

PALO ALTO, CALIF. — Long before he became one of Donald Trump's biggest donors and campaign surrogates, South African-born Elon Musk worked illegally in the United States as he launched his entrepreneurial career after ditching a graduate studies program in California, according to former business associates, court records and com-

pany documents obtained by The Washington Post.

Musk in recent months has amplified the Republican presidential candidate's claims that "open borders" and undocumented immigrants are destroying America, broadcasting those views to more than 200 million followers on the site formerly known as Twitter, which Musk bought in 2022 and later renamed X.

What Musk has not publicly disclosed is that he did not have

the legal right to work while building the company that became Zip2, which sold for about \$300 million in 1999. It was Musk's steppingstone to Tesla and the other ventures that have made him the world's wealthiest person — and arguably America's most successful immigrant.

Musk and his brother, Kimbal, have often described their immigrant journey in romantic terms, as a time of personal austerity, undeterred ambition and a willingness to flout conventions.

Musk arrived in Palo Alto in 1995 for a graduate degree program at Stanford University but never enrolled in courses, working instead on his start-up.

Leaving school left Musk without a legal basis to remain in the United States, according to legal experts.

Foreign students cannot drop out of school to build a company, even if they are not immediately getting paid, said Leon Fresco, a former Justice Department

SEE MUSK ON A17

Leonsis's new quest: Win back D.C.

After failed Virginia arena deal, team owner says he's committed to city

BY RICK MAESE

Ted Leonsis has to keep moving forward.

Thousands of fans have stuffed the concourse of Capital One Arena to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their beloved hockey franchise. Players past and present are the stars of the show, but Leonsis is the host, shaking hands as he cuts through the crowd in an Alex Ovechkin jersey.

Just seven months ago, he was owner non grata for many fans; his plan to relocate the Washington Capitals and Wizards to

Virginia posed an existential threat to major professional sports in D.C. and to Capital One Arena as a downtown anchor.

The deal fell through, and Leonsis and his teams are staying put, with a promise from the city to help renovate the 27-year-old building. And Leonsis is as front and center as ever, stopping every few feet to take another selfie and to shake another hand. If people are still angry, they don't volunteer it, instead wishing him luck on his 25th season as the Capitals' owner. He doesn't mind stopping, but he also has to keep moving.

"There's no stasis. If you're not growing, you're shrinking," he said. "If you're shrinking, nothing good comes out of it. If you're not launching new products, if you're not investing in new things, keeping the spiral and momentum going [up], you start to go this way."

He twirled his fingers downward and kept talking.

So as he bounces back from the biggest setback he has experienced as an owner, Leonsis is throwing everything he can at his vision for Monumental Sports, which at the moment includes

SEE LEONIS ON A6



JOHN MCDONNELL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Capitals and Wizards owner Ted Leonsis said the backlash to his proposed new arena surprised him: "It hurt me a lot personally."

ELECTION 2024

Polling needle is barely budging

RACE KNOTTED UP AS CLOCK WINDS DOWN

Both camps closing with fear to turn out bases

BY DAN BALZ

The closest presidential election in modern memory enters its final, frenetic days with neither Kamala Harris nor Donald Trump able to be confident of victory. With tens of millions of early voters casting their ballots already, the outcome now depends on whether the campaigns can mobilize their bases and persuade the tiny fraction of the electorate still undecided about whom to support or whether to vote at all.

Neither Harris, the current vice president, nor Trump, the former president, has a lead outside the statistical margin of error in any of the seven battleground states of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania or Wisconsin, according to a recent Washington Post-Schar School survey and The Post's current poll average aggregator.

Nor does either have a statistical advantage in national polls, which are a reflection only of the popular vote. National polls published Friday by the New York Times and Siena College and by CNN both showed a literal tie: 48-48 percent in the Times, 47-47 percent from CNN, both among likely voters. A Wall Street Journal

SEE CAMPAIGN ON A8

PKCapitol: Democrats rely on anti-Trump fervor in Pa. county. **A4**

A key Harris bloc: VP is counting on college-educated voters. **A4**

D.C. leaders fear Trump would try to control police

BY PETER HERMANN AND PERRY STEIN

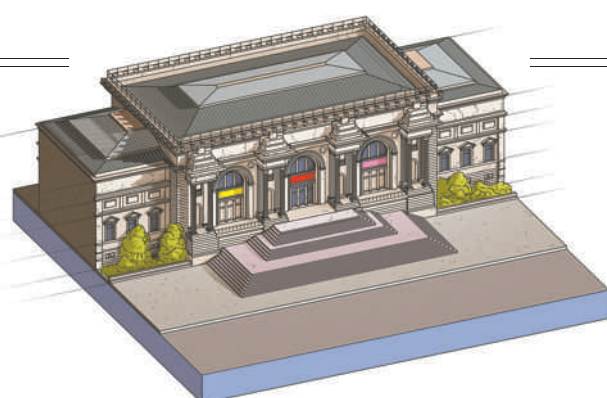
Donald Trump was commanding a country on edge from a city he thought was out of control.

The summer of 2020 had been marked by massive demonstrations across the country over the police killing of George Floyd, including one in Trump's own front yard, where some protesters set fire to American flags and a historic church near the park just outside the White House. So on June 1 of that year, Trump hinted at a plan he had been privately discussing with top aides: invoke a little-known federal law to take over the D.C. police force, then take a more aggressive approach to quelling the protests, officials said.

"If you don't dominate your city and your state, they're gonna walk away with you," the president told governors during a phone call that day, according to a transcript of the exchange obtained by CNN. "And we're doing it in Washington, in D.C. we're

SEE TRUMP ON A5

Pain at the pump: Gas prices are lower, but will that help Harris? **A20**



ARTS & STYLE

Twenty U.S. art museums that do the most to stun, inspire and provoke.

BOOK WORLD

Alexei Navalny's "Patriot" is a plea from the grave to keep resisting Putin.



BUSINESS

Crypto cash is flooding the 2024 election. Here's who's benefiting.

TRAVEL

New York's island of the dead gives visitors lessons in local history.

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