

# The Washington Post

Photos may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.

W2 V1 V2 V3 V4



Mostly sunny 91/76 • Tomorrow: Mostly sunny 95/78 B8

Democracy Dies in Darkness

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2022 • B2

## Zawahiri mission: Months in motion

U.S. targeted al-Qaeda leader on home's balcony to prevent other deaths

BY SHANE HARRIS

Ayman al-Zawahiri, the 71-year-old leader of al-Qaeda, stepped onto the third-floor balcony of his house in an exclusive neighborhood of Kabul around 6:15 a.m. Sunday. He usually appeared in the morning, shortly after daybreak. Sometimes he read. He was always alone.

And the CIA was watching. After hunting the co-planner of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks for more than two decades, U.S. intelligence personnel had tracked Zawahiri a few months earlier to a safe house in Kabul's Shirpur neighborhood, where senior Afghan officials own mansions. Members of the Haqqani Taliban faction, who patrolled the area, knew exactly who their new neighbor was, U.S. officials said.

Intelligence analysts monitored the house, creating a "pattern of life" based on the comings and goings of the occupants. They paid especially close attention to the man who, as far as they could tell, never left. The others — now believed to be Zawahiri's wife, his daughter and

SEE ZAWAHIRI ON A12

**Strike's aftermath:** The Taliban faces a nationalistic backlash. **A11**

## Fractured al-Qaeda has chance at revival

Zawahiri's death opens vacuum a charismatic leader could exploit

BY JOBY WARRICK AND SOUAD MEKHENNET

Two months before his death in a U.S. drone strike, al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri sat before a video camera to deliver a remarkable diatribe against some of his estranged former disciples. Looking like a prophet in his white beard and robe, he attacked several prominent figures in the Islamist world with the air of a peevish grandfather scolding his wayward offspring.

"You are an idiot and an imbecile," Zawahiri said at one point in his speech, referring to a Syrian Islamist leader who was once an al-Qaeda devotee. He blasts the leader of another faction as "corrupt" and accuses a third of "moral deviation."

When it was released in June, the video stood out because of its

SEE TERRORISM ON A10

## Tensions flare as Pelosi visits Taiwan



Taiwanese Foreign Minister Joseph Wu, left, welcomes House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) at Taipei Songshan Airport late Tuesday.

### CHINA DENOUNCES HIGH-PROFILE TRIP

White House defends her call, despite reservations

BY YASMEEN ABUTALEB AND LILY KUO

**TAIPEI, TAIWAN** — The White House worked urgently to de-escalate tensions with China as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi met Wednesday with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and other officials during a high-profile visit to the self-governing island against the administration's wishes, hoping to head off a geopolitical crisis amid threats and military maneuvers by Beijing.

White House officials warned that China is preparing itself for possible aggressive actions in response to Pelosi's visit beyond this week, and they reiterated forcefully that the Chinese Communist Party should not use the visit as a pretext to increase military activity and around the Taiwan Strait.

"We've seen a number of announcements from the [People's Republic of China] in just the last several hours that are unfortunately right in line with what we

SEE PELOSI ON A9

**Long adversaries:** Pelosi has been a critic of China for decades. **A8**

## Kansas voters reject bid to undo abortion rights

Decisive result buoys Democrats' hopes to catalyze issue elsewhere

BY ANNIE GOWEN AND COLBY ITKOWITZ

**OVERLAND PARK, KAN.** — In a major victory for abortion rights, Kansas voters on Tuesday rejected an effort to strip away their state's abortion protections, sending a decisive message about the issue's popularity in the first

political test since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June.

The overwhelming support for abortion rights in a traditionally conservative state bolsters Democrats' hopes that the historic Supreme Court ruling will animate their voters in an otherwise difficult election year for their party. The Kansas vote signals that abortion is an energizing issue that could affect turnout in the November midterms.

The question presented to voters here was whether abortion protections should be stripped from the state constitution. A

"yes" vote would allow Kansas's Republican-led legislature to pass future limits on abortion — or ban it altogether — in its coming session in January. A "no" vote would leave those protections in place.

With 90 percent of the vote counted, 60 percent of voters wanted to maintain those abortion protections compared with 40 percent who wanted to remove them from the state constitution. Turnout for Tuesday's primary election far exceeded other contests in recent years, with about 900,000 Kansans voting, according to an Associated Press esti-

mate. That is nearly twice as many as the 473,438 who turned out in the 2018 primary election.

Abortion rights advocates pointed to their resounding win here as evidence that Americans are angry about the efforts to roll back women's rights.

"At a time when reproductive freedom is under unprecedented threat across the country, Kansans said loud and clear at the ballot box: 'We've had enough,'" NARAL Pro-Choice America President Mini Timmaraju said in a statement. "In the heartland of the United States, protecting

SEE ABORTION ON A4

### ELECTION 2022

#### Abortion in Kentucky

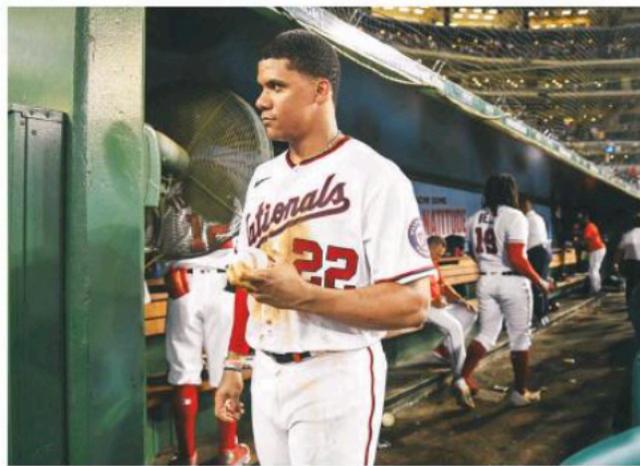
A judge restored a near-total ban, and clinics halted the procedure. **A3**

#### Primaries

Ballots cast in Washington, Kansas, Arizona, Michigan and Missouri. **A4**



Republican John Gibbs got a boost from Democratic dollars.



The departure of generational talent Juan Soto, a star outfielder who's just 23, means the Nationals parted ways with another homegrown cornerstone just three years after they won the World Series.

## Nationals cap teardown, trade Soto to San Diego

In move that rattles baseball, young superstar exits after five seasons

BY JESSE DOUGHERTY

The Washington Nationals did what once seemed unthinkable Tuesday: They traded Juan Soto.

Why? That will be debated for weeks and months — let alone years and decades in a city that saw Soto, still only 23, grow into a superstar outfielder and one of the best hitters on the planet. But after Soto turned down a 15-year, \$440 million contract offer in July, the front office struck an eight-player deal with the San Diego Padres that shook Major League Baseball, altered the course of the franchise and further saddened fans who have lost

one star after another since the Nationals won the World Series in 2019.

Calling it the biggest deal of this year's trade deadline falls short. With Soto under team control through the 2024 season, the Padres could have him for three playoff races, giving them a lineup built around Soto, Fernando Tatis Jr., Manny Machado and first baseman Josh Bell, whom the Nationals packaged with Soto in the move.

D.C., meanwhile, is left to watch another homegrown cornerstone leave. Bryce Harper, who once won an MVP award with the Nationals, left for Philadelphia after the 2018 season.

SEE SOTO ON A18

**Bowett:** The columnist returns in time for the full Nats teardown. **D1**

**Struga:** Deal is tough to swallow, but the return provides hope. **D1**