



Voters last week in Black Mountain, N.C. In the first few days of early voting in Nevada, Republicans outnumbered Democrats.

MIKE BELLEME FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

## N. KOREAN TROOPS AID RUSSIA IN WAR

### U.S. Calls Move a Sign of Putin’s ‘Desperation’

This article is by **Eric Schmitt, David E. Sanger** and **Anatoly Kurmanaev**.

North Korea has sent troops to Russia to join the fight against Ukraine, a major shift in Moscow’s effort to win the war, U.S. officials confirmed on Wednesday. Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III called the North’s presence a “very, very serious” escalation that would have ramifications in both Europe and Asia.

“What exactly are they doing? Left to be seen,” Mr. Austin told reporters at a military base in Italy after a trip to Ukraine. He gave no details about the number of troops already there or the number expected to arrive.

Mr. Austin cast President Vladimir V. Putin’s need for North Korean mercenaries as a sign of desperation.

“This is an indication that he may be in even more trouble than most people realize,” he said. “He went tin-cupping early on to get additional weapons and materials from the D.P.R.K.,” he said, using the abbreviation for the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, “and then from Iran, and now he’s making a move to get more people.”

But he said intelligence analysts were still trying to discern whether the troops were moving toward Ukraine.

Ukrainian officials insist they are headed there, and Ukraine’s defense minister was quoted on Wednesday saying he expected to see North Korean troops in Kursk, the Russian territory that Ukraine has occupied, in the coming days.

Mr. Austin’s statement came as American intelligence officials said they were preparing to release a trove of intelligence, including satellite photographs, that show troop ships moving from North Korea to training areas in Vladivostok on Russia’s east coast and other Russian territory farther north.

For two weeks, there have been reports of the movements, fueled by the Ukrainian and South Korean governments, that over 12,000 North Koreans were training to

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## Drugmakers Had a Secret in Alzheimer’s Trials

By **WALT BOGDANICH** and **CARSON KESSLER**

By 2021, nearly 2,000 volunteers had answered the call to test an experimental Alzheimer’s drug known as BAN2401. For the drug-maker Eisai, the trial was a shot at a windfall — potentially billions of dollars — for defanging a disease that had confounded researchers for more than a century.

To assess the drug’s effectiveness and safety, Eisai sought to include people whose genetic profiles made them especially prone to develop Alzheimer’s. But these same people were also more vulnerable to brain bleeding or swelling if they received the drug.

To identify these high-risk volunteers, Eisai told everyone that they would be given a genetic test. But the results, the company added, would remain secret.

In all, 274 volunteers joined the trial without Eisai telling them they were at an especially high

### Patients Prone to Grim Side Effects Did Not Know Their Risks

risk for brain injuries, files obtained by The New York Times show.

One of them was Genevieve Lane, a 79-year-old resident of the Villages in Florida who died in September 2022 after three doses of the drug, her brain riddled with 51 microhemorrhages. An autopsy determined that the drug’s side effects had contributed to her death. Her final hours were spent thrashing so violently that nurses had to tie her down.

Another high-risk trial volunteer died, and more than 100 others suffered brain bleeding or swelling. While most of those injuries were mild and asymptomatic, some were serious and life-threatening.

ening.

“This is a medication that has some significant side effects, and we need to be aware of them,” said Dr. Matthew Schrag, the Vanderbilt University neurologist who assisted with Ms. Lane’s autopsy.

Early last year, the Food and Drug Administration approved Eisai’s Alzheimer’s drug, marketed as Leqembi, saying its modest benefit — a slight slowing of cognitive decline for a handful of months — outweighed its risks.

This past July, the agency approved a second, similar drug, Kisunla. In a clinical trial, its maker, Eli Lilly, also chose not to tell 289 volunteers that their genetic profiles made them vulnerable to brain injuries, The Times found. Dozens experienced what Lilly classified as “severe” brain bleeding.

Drug trials are in part designed to illuminate risks, which is why volunteers are routinely informed

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## Doctor, Fearing Outrage, Slows A Gender Study

By **AZEEN GHORAYSHI**

An influential doctor and advocate of adolescent gender treatments said she had not published a long-awaited study of puberty-blocking drugs because of the charged American political environment.

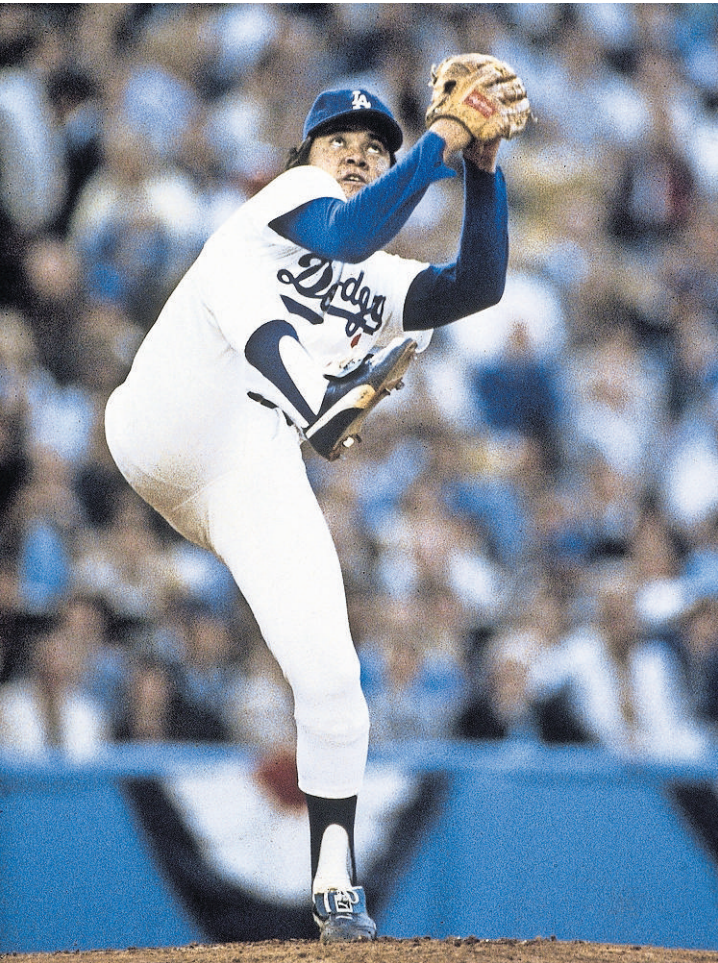
The doctor, Johanna Olson-Kennedy, began the study in 2015 as part of a broader, multimillion-dollar federal project on transgender youth. She and colleagues recruited 95 children from across the country and gave them puberty blockers, which stave off the permanent physical changes — like breasts or a deepening voice — that could exacerbate their gender distress, known as dysphoria.

The researchers followed the children for two years to see if the treatments improved their mental health. An older Dutch study had found that puberty blockers improved well-being, results that inspired clinics around the world to regularly prescribe the medications as part of what is now called gender-affirming care.

But the American trial did not find a similar trend, Dr. Olson-Kennedy said in a wide-ranging

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FERNANDO VALENZUELA, 1960-2024



HEINZ KLUETMEIER/SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, VIA GETTY IMAGES

The screwball pitcher became an instant Dodgers star, winning Rookie of the Year and Cy Young Awards in 1981. Page A25.

## G.O.P.’s Drive For Early Vote Gains Traction

### Stark Turnabout, Even as Misgivings Linger

By **KELLEN BROWNING** and **BENJAMIN ORESKES**

PHOENIX — Republicans have spent months and millions of dollars on an effort to push former President Donald J. Trump’s most loyal supporters to change their minds about voting early.

There is some evidence to suggest it’s working.

After polls opened on Tuesday in Wisconsin, some form of early voting has commenced in all seven of the swing states. As of Monday, 17 million people nationwide had already cast a vote — and there are initial indications that Republicans are showing up to the polls or returning absentee ballots with more gusto than in recent years. In many cases, Republican officials and canvassers on the ground are spurring their voters on with the same debunked conspiracy theories about fraud that Mr. Trump has used to sow doubt about the integrity of the count.

“They have done a better job of turning out their voters to vote early,” said Sam Almy, a Democratic political strategist who tracks early ballots in Arizona. “I think they realized that early voting is easy and convenient: It turns out your voters quickly, and they don’t have to gamble on turning out all their voters on Election Day.”

It’s a remarkable turnabout from four years ago, when Mr. Trump had thoroughly demonized every method of voting that didn’t occur in person on Election Day. As states expanded access to mail and absentee voting at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, Mr. Trump repeatedly discouraged his voters from taking advantage. He said mail ballots created “chaos and confusion,” and asserted without evidence that it would lead to “election interference by foreign countries.” Many of his supporters believed him, and Joseph R. Biden Jr. won, buoyed by Democratic dominance in early and mail votes.

This year, Mr. Trump has offered a more muddled message on the various methods of voting while others in his party worked overtime to reverse course. The Republican National Committee, with his daughter-in-law Lara Trump now the co-chair, poured resources into programs that would encourage Republican voters to submit ballots early. The former president himself voted

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### THE WEATHER

Today, windy, cooler, patchy clouds, high 65. Tonight, clear, less wind, low 47. Tomorrow, sunny, typical temperatures for late October, high 61. Weather map is on Page B8.

### NEWS ANALYSIS

## Voters Strain Under Deluge Of Untruths

### Disinformation Climbs to a Sordid New Peak

By **STEVEN LEE MYERS**

The Democratic Party’s vice-presidential nominee has been falsely accused of sexually molesting students. The claims have been spread by a former deputy sheriff from Florida, now openly working in Moscow for Russia’s propaganda apparatus, on dozens of social media platforms and fake news outlets.

A faked video purporting to show one victim — creating fake people is a recurring Russian tactic — received more than five million views on X, a platform owned by the world’s richest man, Elon Musk. Mr. Musk has not only leaned all in for the Republican nominee, former President Donald J. Trump, but he also used his platform to reanimate discredited claims about the validity of the election’s outcome.

Smears, lies and dirty tricks — what we call disinformation today — have long been a feature of American presidential election campaigns. Two weeks before this year’s vote, however, the torrent of half-truths, lies and fabrications, both foreign and homegrown, has exceeded anything that came before, according to officials and researchers who document disinformation.

The effect on the outcome on Nov. 5 remains to be seen, but it has already debased what passes for political debate about the two major party candidates, Mr. Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris. It has also corroded the foundations of the country’s democracy, undermining what was once a shared confidence that the country’s elections, regardless of who won, have been free and fair.

Russia, as well as Iran and China, have gleefully stoked many of the narratives to portray American democracy as dysfunctional and untrustworthy. Politicians and influential media figures have in turn given foreign adversaries plenty of fodder to work with, inciting and amplifying divisiveness for partisan advantage.

“They do have different tactics and different approaches to influence operations, but their goals are the same,” Jen Easterly, the director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security

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## The Quiet, Stubborn Aversion To Putting a Woman in Power

By **LISA LERER** and **KATIE GLUECK**

ERIE, Pa. — With less than two weeks left before Election Day, a big question is looming over the campaign for the White House, and it has nothing to do with the economy or the barrage of attacks between former President Donald J. Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris over judgment, character and mental fitness.

It is gender. The issue is rarely directly addressed by either of the candidates. Yet the matter of Ms. Harris’s gender — and her potential to make history as the country’s first female president — is defining the campaign, creating a contest that is, in ways overt and subtle, a referendum on the role of women in American life.

Pro-Harris stickers plastered on bathroom stalls offer reminders, “woman to woman,” that their vote is private. Trump aides use sexualized epithets to deride liberal men as weak and effeminate.



NICOLE CRAINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A campaign rally for Kamala Harris in Atlanta on Saturday.

In poll after poll, a difference in voting patterns based on gender pervades every demographic group.

And in quiet conversations, some female Harris supporters can’t shake the uneasy feeling that men in their lives are struggling to support a woman — especially a Black and South Asian

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### BUSINESS B1-6

#### Gas Prices Slide as Vote Nears

Shaking off inflation and the war in Ukraine, fuel prices are at their lowest level since February. PAGE B1

#### China’s Excess in a Ghost City

A Malaysian pop-up city is an emblem of extravagance for a Chinese developer that has gone into default. PAGE B1



### INTERNATIONAL A4-11

#### 20 Years After a Thai Massacre

Stuffed in trucks, 78 protesters died in 2004. If no one is prosecuted for it by Friday, no one ever will be. PAGE A6

#### Israel Bombs Lebanese City

The Israeli military struck Tyre as the U.S. secretary of state hints at new ideas for a Gaza cease-fire. PAGE A8

### ARTS C1-6

#### Requiem for a Dancer

Since K’Sean “KShakes” Nurse was killed last month, fellow New York street dancers have found release through performance. PAGE C1

### NATIONAL A12-23

#### Comparing Trump to Dictator

John Kelly, the Trump White House’s longest-serving chief of staff, said that he believed that Donald J. Trump met the definition of a fascist. PAGE A12

#### Democrats Look to Texas

A Senate race and millions from George Soros have rekindled hopes of turning Texas blue. But demographic changes alone may not be enough. PAGE A21

#### Professors Punished in Protests

Universities have cracked down on instructors for pro-Palestinian activism. Faculty members say punishments have put a “chill in the air.” PAGE A22

### THURSDAY STYLES D1-8

#### Fashion Extravaganza

The designer Giorgio Armani celebrated his new store in Manhattan and showcased his women’s collection. PAGE D7

#### Hanging in There

Fall is a great time for exercising outside. Below, Xavier Lewis, foreground, formed a workout group. PAGE D1



### SPORTS B7-11

#### A Steel Curtain in Dublin

As N.F.L. football gains global popularity, an enthusiastic base of Pittsburgh fans has cropped up in Ireland. PAGE B7

#### Two LeBrons Take the Court

LeBron James and his son became the first father-son duo to play in the same regular-season N.B.A. game. PAGE B9

### OPINION A26-27

#### Gail Collins

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