

ELECTION 2024

Trump not sticking to aides' script on Harris

They want him to focus on her record; he keeps bringing up race, gender

BY MARIANNE LEVINE AND JOSH DAWSEY

Donald Trump's aides have said they aim to beat Vice President Harris in November by portraying her as a San Francisco liberal who is responsible for illegal border crossings and inflation.

Yet this week, Trump has repeatedly deviated from that messaging to more familiar territory: personal attacks.

"I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago when she happened to turn Black and now she wants to be known as Black," he declared Wednesday at an event hosted by the National Association of Black Journalists. "Is she Indian or is she Black?"

Harris will be "like a play toy" that world leaders will "walk all over," he told Fox News's Laura Ingraham, in a clip that aired Tuesday night. "I don't want to say as to why. But a lot of people understand it." And he claimed in a radio interview that Harris, whose husband is Jewish, "doesn't like Jewish people."

Trump's statements are emblematic of the broader challenge the GOP faces: Many of his aides and his Republican allies want to focus on Harris's record. They have watched Democratic enthusiasm about the vice president's campaign and believe that some of her personal qualities could help, not hurt her, with independent voters.

But Trump himself keeps changing the subject.

This week, the Trump campaign launched a \$12 million ad buy that featured video of Harris dancing, as the narrator declared, "This is America's border czar and she has failed us," a reference to President Biden's decision to ask Harris to lead a multipronged effort to reduce mass migration from Guatemala, El Salvador and

SEE CAMPAIGN ON A6

Immigration: Sen. Mark Kelly could be a key asset on the issue. **A7**

U.S., allies pull off historic swap



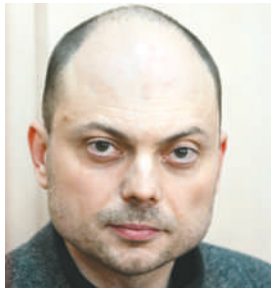
ROBERTO SCHMIDT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

President Biden and Vice President Harris watch Russian American journalist Alsu Kurmasheva, 47, reunite with her family Thursday after she and other prisoners freed in an exchange with Russia arrived at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland.

Among the 16 freed by Moscow



Evan Gershkovich



Vladimir Kara-Murza



Paul Whelan



Alsu Kurmasheva



Vadim Krasikov

Months of painstaking bargaining secured elaborate agreement

BY SHANE HARRIS, YASMEEN ABUTALEB AND SOUAD MEKHENNET

For the past two weeks, Biden administration officials were confident that they had finally secured a deal to release more than a dozen journalists, pro-democracy activists and wrongfully detained Americans from Russian prisons.

The negotiations had been painstaking and sometimes faltering. But now, 16 people were on

the verge of freedom, among them Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, serving a harsh sentence on baseless accusations of spying; Washington Post contributor Vladimir Kara-Murza, among the most outspoken and trenchant critics of Russian President Vladimir Putin; and Paul Whelan, a former Marine who had languished in Russian prisons for more than five years on trumped-up charges.

SEE BARGAINING ON A13

'Hostage diplomacy' gives Putin leverage to bring home a killer

BY ROBYN DIXON

Vladimir Putin on Thursday secured the release of spies, hackers and his most coveted Russian prisoner in the West: an assassin linked to intelligence services convicted of murder in Germany. For the authoritarian Russian leader, it was the biggest victory yet stemming from his willingness to violate global norms to extract what he wants from Western leaders.

Putin hinted at his determination to win the freedom of the assassin, Vadim Krasikov, during an interview in February with American conservative commentator Tucker Carlson, calling Krasikov "patriotic" without actually naming him and indicating he was open to a prisoner exchange involving American journalist Evan Gershkovich, whom Russia accused of espionage.

In a quarter-century as Russia's
SEE PRISONERS ON A18

24 PRISONERS FREED IN DEAL WITH RUSSIA

Journalists, dissidents, a former Marine released

BY SHANE HARRIS, YASMEEN ABUTALEB, MARY ILYUSHINA AND SOUAD MEKHENNET

In the largest prisoner exchange since the height of the Cold War, officials of the United States, Russia, Germany and other countries met on an airfield in Ankara, Turkey, on Thursday and swapped at least 24 people — capping months of painstaking diplomacy involving negotiations at the highest levels of nine governments.

Those released included a Russian assassin convicted of murder in Berlin; the American journalist Evan Gershkovich, who was accused of espionage without any known evidence; and several Russian dissidents whose only misdeed was demanding freedom and democracy or criticizing the war in Ukraine, including Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Washington Post Opinions contributor.

White House officials called it the largest and most complicated international prisoner exchange in decades, and one of the biggest diplomatic accomplishments of Joe Biden's presidency coming less than two weeks after he dropped his reelection bid under pressure over anxieties about his age and fitness for a new term. But the deal was also fraught, raising questions about the West's willingness to deal with authoritarian regimes that imprison innocent people for negotiating leverage.

In Ankara, Russia released 16 prisoners, many unjustly accused or handed heavy sentences for minor offenses, including Gershkovich, a reporter for the Wall Street Journal; Kara-Murza, who was sentenced to 25 years in prison for treason after criticizing the invasion of Ukraine; and Paul Whelan, a former U.S. Marine who Moscow insisted, despite denials, **SEE SWAP ON A12**

The prisoners: Learn more about those who were released. **A14**

Editorial: Relief at the swap — but there's no moral equivalence. **A22**

Jason Rezaian: Coming home after being a hostage abroad. **A23**

Wall Street Journal: Paper was unflagging in pursuit of release. **C1**

PARIS OLYMPICS

In taking home the gold, Biles was all about steel



Jerry Brewer

COLUMN

from atop the Eiffel Tower. It was an all-time flex for an all-time champion, but for Biles, it was not a narcissistic act. It was a gesture of self-love, a celebration that symbolized how far the gymnast has come, how high she can still soar and how well she sees herself.

After all the trauma and doubt and suffocating expectations, after all the physical and emotional effort it took to return, Biles deserves to flaunt the latest accomplishment of her

SEE BREWER ON A24



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST

A score of 14.566 on the balance beam helped Simone Biles become the first American gymnast to win two all-around Olympic gold medals. She has six golds and nine total medals in her Olympic career.

IN THE NEWS

9/11 plea deal Victims' families express puzzlement and outrage over an agreement with three men accused in the terrorist plot that killed nearly 3,000 people. **A4**

Montgomery shooting The county releases video showing that a man killed by a police officer appeared to be armed. **B1**

THE NATION Federal rules protecting trans, gay and lesbian students took effect in 24 states. **A3** Advocates are working to give prison inmates relief from punishing heat waves. **A8**

THE WORLD Calling for revenge against Israel, Iran and its allies mourned slain militant leaders. **A10** British authorities released the name of a 17-year-old charged in a mass stabbing. **A11**

THE ECONOMY Senate Republicans blocked legislation passed in the House that would have expanded eligibility for the child tax credit. **A20** Seven Teamsters activists were detained while protesting outside an Amazon warehouse last month. **A24**

THE REGION A man charged with second-degree murder in the July Fourth killing of a 6-year-old boy was arrested in Guyana. **B1** An ammonia leak at a Loudoun County sous vide culinary facility sent 33 workers to the hospital, including five in serious condition. **B1**

STYLE In New Orleans, an abandoned amusement park serves as a haunting reminder of how Hurricane Katrina changed the city. **C1**

WEEKEND A deli exhibit at the Capital Jewish Museum is a mouthwatering look at a culinary fixture.

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