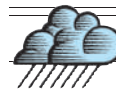


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Afternoon shower 83/72 • Tomorrow: T-storm 92/72 **B6**

Democracy Dies in Darkness

SATURDAY, JULY 20, 2024 • \$3

## ELECTION 2024

# Biden digs in, putting Democrats at impasse

Campaign says president ‘absolutely’ staying in as calls to withdraw mount

BY **TOLUSE OLORUNNIPA,**  
**LEIGH ANN CALDWELL**  
AND **MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR**

REHOBOTH BEACH, DEL. — At least 12 more Democrats called on President Biden to drop out of the presidential race Friday, a rapidly escalating effort that came as his campaign reiterated in no uncertain terms that he would be staying put. The tense standoff set up a pivotal clash that is expected to intensify this weekend and could reach its culmination next week.

Biden is “absolutely” staying in the race, campaign chair Jen O’Malley Dillon said on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe,” calling him the “best person to take on Donald Trump” and suggesting that the growing angst among top Democrats about Biden’s candidacy does not reflect the broader sentiment across the party.

Less than two hours after O’Malley Dillon’s appearance, four House Democrats released a joint statement calling on Biden to “pass the torch,” the broadest collective effort from Congress thus far — and a move some

SEE **BIDEN** ON **A4**

**The Take:** After convention, Trump is in his strongest position yet. **A8**

**In exile:** Traditional conservatives feel adrift in Trump’s GOP. **A9**

# How the president lost control of his party

Behind the scenes as fears over Biden cracked the Democrats apart

This article is by Michael Scherer, Tyler Pager, Josh Dawsey, Ashley Parker, Paul Kane and Marianna Sotomayor

The president of the United States had spoken — with 24 million Americans watching on TV. Every Democratic leader knew Joe Biden would continue his campaign. Statements like that used to mean something.

But two days after that July 11 NATO news conference, the president found himself hunched in front of a stone fireplace in his Rehoboth Beach, Del., home, losing his temper. A war hero had just questioned the toll that age took on his ability to lead.

“Tell me who enlarged NATO. Tell me who did the Pacific basin,” Biden snapped over Zoom at Rep. Jason Crow (D-Colo.), a decorated, retired Army Ranger, according to a recording of the virtual meeting with House Democrats. “Tell me who did something that you never done with your Bronze Star — and your — like my son — and, you know — proud of your leadership. But guess what? Well, what’s happening? We got Korea and Japan working together?”

SEE **DEMOCRATS** ON **A6**



EZRA ACAYAN/GETTY IMAGES



JINTAK HAN/THE WASHINGTON POST



STELLA QIU/REUTERS



ALLISON ROBERT/THE WASHINGTON POST

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Passengers line up at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila. A crashed cash register at a Sydney grocery store. Passengers wait at Reagan National Airport. Workers manually check in passengers at Gimpo International Airport in Seoul. These and other disruptions created a cascade of inconvenience affecting a wide range of activities. **Story, A16**

# A brief outage raises existential questions

BY **JOEL ACHENBACH**

Imagine a day when everything goes haywire. That was Friday.

It was not quite a global catastrophe, since it was mostly just a lot of devices, gadgets, computers and machines failing to work right. But it was revelatory — and ominous.

In today’s world, a single bad piece of software can wreak havoc on a global scale. And there’s more of this to come, according to experts who study and fret about our increasingly complex technological systems.

“We have, as this shows, lots of infrastructure relying on single points of failure,” said Gary Marcus, a professor emeritus at New York University and author of the forthcoming book “Taming Silicon Valley,” on Friday. “Absolutely

## CrowdStrike crash lays bare the vulnerabilities of global infrastructure

nothing guarantees that we won’t have another similar incident either accidentally or maliciously.”

As more information emerged about the cause of the outage, it seemed clear it was nothing more than an accident, one caused by faulty software in an automated update from an Austin-based company called CrowdStrike. The big headline was the vulnerability of major industries, such as aviation and banking. But it was a rough time for anyone with a computer that on Friday morning announced blandly and without

further explanation that it was not working.

Consumers of technology expect software to perform, and it usually does. But that invites complacency and digital illiteracy: We don’t remember anyone’s phone number because on a smartphone you just tap the name and the call goes through. We don’t carry cash because everyone takes plastic.

Life in the 21st century is pretty magical — until it’s not.

Marcus fears that society will become even more vulnerable as we rely increasingly on artificial intelligence. On X, he wrote: “The world needs to up its software game massively. We need to invest in improving software reliability and methodology, not rushing out half-baked chatbots. An unregulated AI industry is a recipe for disaster.”

The AI revolution — which did not come up a single time during the June presidential debate between President Biden and former president Donald Trump — is poised to make these systems even more interdependent and opaque, making human society more vulnerable in ways no one can fully predict.

Political leaders have been slow to react to these changes in part because few of them understand the technology. Even technologists can’t fully understand the complexities of our globally networked systems.

“It’s becoming clear that the nerve center of the world’s IT systems is a giant black box of interconnected software fully intelligible to no one,” Edward Tenner, a scholar of technology and author of the book “Why

SEE **SYSTEM** ON **A17**

# As trafficker advanced on goal, the law pursued

Marset always stayed one step ahead as he indulged his soccer fantasy and sold tons of cocaine

BY **KEVIN SIEFF**  
IN ASUNCIÓN, PARAGUAY

The undercover agents ducked into a squat brick house in a residential neighborhood.

The building — secretly rented by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration — was now the headquarters of what had become one of Latin America’s most important drug-trafficking investigations. It was not going well.

The handful of American and Paraguayan agents had been assigned to find the man at the center of a new transnational drug cartel dispatching boatloads of cocaine to Europe. The agents had been sealed off from the rest of the police to avoid

SEE **SOCCER** ON **A12**

This is the second of a two-part series.



ILLUSTRATION BY KAT RUDELL BROOKS/THE WASHINGTON POST; INTERPOL; OPERATION SMART, PARAGUAY NATIONAL POLICE; BOLIVIA NATIONAL POLICE; CRUCEÑA SOCCER ASSOCIATION; ISTOCK

# Glitch ripples around world

## BOTCHED UPDATE TO SECURITY SOFTWARE

Disruptions in airports, hospitals, supermarkets

This article is by Ian Duncan, Daniel Gilbert, Lori Aratani, Shira Ovide and Danny Nguyen

A defective update to an obscure piece of security software knocked out computer systems around the globe Friday, causing widespread disruptions to travel, medical care and businesses of all stripes while revealing in stunning fashion the fragility of a world economy built on shared technology.

Airline passengers were stranded at airports as thousands of flights were canceled. Hospitals closed their doors to patients expecting routine appointments. Shoppers encountered self-checkout terminals showing the notorious Blue Screen of Death that pops up when Windows fails. Even the organizers of the upcoming Paris Olympics reported impacts to the delivery of uniforms.

The problem traced to an update issued for Windows computers by security firm CrowdStrike, the company said in a blog post. The company said at 6 a.m. Friday the problem had been identified and fixed, but by that point the effects had rippled around the world.

The effects of the outage were a reminder of how the global economy is dependent on computer systems that are vulnerable to everything from attacks by sophisticated hackers to bungled software updates. But while the problems were widespread, there was an element of randomness at play, too, depending on which companies in any given industry made use of the defective system.

CrowdStrike chief executive George Kurtz said he was “deeply sorry” to anyone affected by the global outage during an appearance Friday on NBC’s “Today” show and vowed to “make sure every customer is fully recovered.”

SEE **OUTAGE** ON **A16**

**Faulty update:** How CrowdStrike’s error affected millions. **A17**

# Journalist given 16-year prison term in Russia

BY **ROBYN DIXON**

After a closed trial with secret evidence, a Russian court on Friday convicted American journalist Evan Gershkovich of espionage — charges that the U.S. government said were wholly fabricated — and sentenced him to 16 years in a maximum security penal colony, according to Russian state media.

Gershkovich was the first American journalist arrested in Russia since the Cold War, and his case has grave implications for press freedoms.

The trial proceeded with unusual swiftness — suggesting potential developments in negotiations for a prisoner exchange. Trials for espionage in Russia typically take months.

SEE **GERSHKOVICH** ON **A14**

## IN THE NEWS

**Drone strike on Tel Aviv** Yemen’s Houthi militants claimed the attack, which evaded Israel’s air defenses and killed one person. **A11**

**‘Enough is enough’** The grandmother of a toddler shot while walking with day-care classmates said she is in the ICU and called on D.C. to do more to curtail gun violence. **B1**

**THE NATION**  
**The Afghanistan War** Commission opened an independent review of the 20-year conflict. **A3**  
**The White House** wants the government to stop buying single-use plastics by 2035. **A4**

**THE WORLD**  
**The U.N.’s** top court said Israel should evacuate settlements and pay reparations. **A14**  
**In Bangladesh,** dozens were killed and the internet was blocked amid student protests. **A14**

**THE ECONOMY**  
**You’re probably** holding your phone wrong, which can cause physical problems. Experts have suggestions. **A15**

**OBITUARIES**  
**Bernice Johnson Reagon,** 81, blended activism and song during the civil rights movement. **B1**

**THE REGION**  
**A Silver Spring** neighborhood revived a deteriorating “love” sign put up as a Pride symbol in a couple’s front yard. **B1**  
**Virginia’s** down-ballot congressional hopefuls used the GOP convention as an opportunity to network for future campaigns. **B1**

**STYLE**  
**Bob Newhart,** who died Thursday at 94, was known throughout his long comedic career for being “as kind as he was funny.” **C1**

**SPORTS**  
**At the British Open,** a mighty wind sent Rory McIlroy and other big names home. **D1**

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The Washington Post  
Year 147, No. 53918

