McConnell rejects Dem push on impeachment trial witnesses

BY LISA MASCARO
AND MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is rejecting the Democrats’ push for fresh impeachment testimony against President Donald Trump and making a last-ditch plea for them to “turn back from the cliff” of Wednesday’s expected vote to send the case to the Senate for trial.

McConnell’s remarks Tuesday effectively slammed the door shut on negotiations for a deal proposed by the Democratic leader, Sen. Chuck Schumer, who wants to call top White House officials for the Senate trial, which is set to start next year if the House impeaches Trump this week.

“If House Democrats’ case is this deficient, this thin, the answer is not for the judge and jury to cure it here in the Senate,” McConnell said. “The answer is that the House should not impeach on this basis in the first place.”

Schumer’s proposal was the first overture in what were expected to be negotiations between the two leaders over the contours of a weekslong trial. Trump wants a more showy proceeding to not only acquit but vindicate him of the impeachment charges from the House, though he has instructed officials not to appear in the House.

McConnell and most GOP senators prefer a swift trial to move on from impeachment. Many centrist House Democrats have begun to signal that they, too, are ready to vote and move on.

SEE IMPEACHMENT ON PAGE 8
Amazon bans using FedEx for some deliveries

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Amazon is banning its third-party merchants from using FedEx’s ground service to deliver to Prime members, suggesting that it thinks the service is too slow to get packages to their destinations in time for Christmas.

The temporary ban will block those companies from using FedEx Ground service, although they can still use pricier FedEx Express shipping for Prime shipments.

More than half of the items sold on Amazon.com come from third-party sellers who post their goods for sale on Amazon’s online marketplace.

News of the ban was first reported by The Wall Street Journal. FedEx Corp. said in a statement that the decision affects “a very small number of shippers” and said it “limits the options for those small businesses on some of the highest demand shipping days in history, and may compromise their ability to meet customer demands and manage their businesses.”

Amazon.com Inc. has been expanding its own delivery fleet in the past few years, hoping to rely less on UPS, FedEx and other delivery services.

FedEx severed ties with Amazon earlier this year, saying it wouldn’t make ground or air deliveries for the online shopping giant. Third-party sellers were still able to use FedEx.

### Weather Outlook

**Wednesday in the Middle East**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>65/48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait City</td>
<td>62/53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>70/68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riyadh</td>
<td>62/51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>84/77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>84/68</td>
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**Wednesday in Europe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madrid</td>
<td>65/53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>61/49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>59/45</td>
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<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>57/44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>57/46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Istanbul</td>
<td>61/51</td>
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**Thursday in the Pacific**

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<thead>
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<tbody>
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<td>Tokyo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>43/37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasebo</td>
<td>54/49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okinawa</td>
<td>72/68</td>
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</table>

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

### Exchange Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Rate (Dec. 18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euro</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>British pound</td>
<td>1.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japanese yen</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Korean won</td>
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**Commercial rates**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
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<tr>
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<td>South Korea (Won)</td>
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**Military exchange rates**

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<td>Thailand (Baht)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey (New Lira)</td>
<td>5.8877</td>
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(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

### Interest Rates

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Discount rate</td>
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<td>Federal funds market rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-month bill</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-year bond</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Poll: Most S. Koreans support US alliance

Survey shows also many disapprove of sharp increase in cost-sharing

By Kim Gamel
and Yoo Kyong Chang
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The United States and South Korea began a fourth round of defense cost-sharing talks Tuesday, a week before the current contract is due to expire.

A new poll showed that most South Koreans support the alliance with the United States but reject U.S. demands for a fivefold increase in spending.

Negotiators are struggling to bridge the gap. The South balks at U.S. demands for nearly $5 billion annually in return for stationing some 28,500 troops on the divided peninsula. Last year Seoul paid about $920 million.

The rare public dispute has raised concerns about a rift in the longstanding U.S.-South Korean alliance. Meanwhile, tensions over North Korea’s nuclear weapons program are rising amid a breakdown in diplomatic efforts to resolve that conflict.

The talks in Seoul were scheduled to end Wednesday. Any agreement must be ratified by South Korea’s National Assembly. Many experts predict a repeat of last year, when the sides failed to meet the Dec. 31 deadline but continued talks and reached a retroactive agreement.

“If the two countries don’t reach an agreement in the defense cost-sharing talks, we can’t rule out the possibility of the reduction of U.S. forces in Korea, or their complete withdrawal,” James Kim, a researcher at South Korea’s Asian Institute for Policy Studies, said Tuesday at a conference in Seoul.

Still, 92% of South Koreans polled last week by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs said they support the alliance, and 74% said they support the long-term stationing of U.S. soldiers in South Korea.

The poll, which was conducted Dec. 9-11 in South Korea, however, showed a clear rejection of President Donald Trump’s demands for the South to sharply increase spending.

The think tank said 68% of those polled said “South Korea should negotiate a lower cost than the $4.7 billion request made by the United States.” Among those respondents, 60% said the amount should remain below $1.7 billion.

The survey, which was conducted by Hankook Research in South Korea and funded by a grant from the Korea Foundation, polled a representative national sample of 1,000 South Korean adults and had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1%.

The U.S. has not confirmed the $4.7 billion figure, but South Korean officials have released the amount and said Washington wants to justify it by reconfiguring the Special Measures Agreement, as the contract is known, to include indirect costs such as the deployment of warships, planes and preparations for joint military exercises.

Last month U.S. negotiators led by State Department official James DeHart walked out of a meeting, saying the South was “not responsive to our request for fair and equitable burden sharing.”

South Korean anti-American activists also have stepped up protests, accusing the Americans of “extortion” and of monetizing the alliance, which long has been considered a linchpin of regional security, against threats from North Korea and China.

South Korea has helped pay for U.S. troops under the agreement since 1976, with most of the funds used for local labor providing food, administrative and logistical support, as well as construction costs.

Under a separate agreement, Seoul also paid more than 90% of the $11 billion-plus construction costs for expanding Camp Humphreys, the U.S. military’s new headquarters base south of Seoul.

Talks on renewing the Special Measures Agreement, which were usually held every five years, have always been contentious. The two sides missed the Dec. 31 deadline in 2013 but reached a deal a few weeks later, with South Korea increasing its contribution by 5.8%.

But this time Trump has brought to the table his “America First” policy and general insistence that U.S. allies need to pay more for their own defense.

A former commander of U.S. Forces Korea, retired Gen. Walter Sharp, said the calculations in determining the increase were traditionally based on inflation and the need for South Korea paying nearly half of the nonpersonnel costs for U.S. troops.

Sharp argued that South Korea’s overall contribution to U.S. interests should be taken into consideration, including the fact that it sent troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, is a major trading partner and has dedicated about 2.8% of its gross domestic product to defense.

“On the one hand President Trump says countries should be standing up to defend themselves; well, South Korea is clearly, clearly doing that,” he said at a recent Korean Economic Institute Forum in Washington.

“I firmly believe … don’t give up the alliance for a couple dollars,” said Sharp. “Because at the end of the day North Korea will end up doing what North Korea does; China will end up doing what they’re going to do, but the alliance has got to stay strong.”

By Matthew M. Burke
Stars and Stripes

The Defense Department plans to add charter flights between Guam’s Andersen Air Force Base and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport starting next spring, officials announced Monday.

The flights, part of a service called the Patriot Express, will begin in March on a bi-weekly, point-to-point basis, we hope that the increased service will help military families defray costs associated with changing duty stations and traveling with pets.

A lack of carrier options and restrictions makes it difficult and expensive to ship pets to and from the U.S. island territory. In January, a Navy family turned to online fundraising to help pay the $11,592 cost of transporting two German shepherds to Guam from Virginia.

“The Patriot Express will provide a much-needed service to the military families on Guam,” Cindi Boswell, wife of the 36th Wing commander, Brig. Gen. Gentry Boswell, said in the statement. “Relying on commercial airfare during a [permanent change of station] to Guam can be extremely expensive, especially if the family is going to be moving with pets.”

The Patriot Express — sometimes referred to as the Rotator or Cat B flight — is a Defense Department-contracted carrier that ferries travelers on official duty to U.S. military installations around the globe. Common destinations include the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, Japan and South Korea as well as bases across Europe.

The Patriot Express also provides space-available opportunities for eligible passengers.

The new route will include a servicing stop in Hawaii, but passengers and cargo will not be permitted to disembark at that time, the statement said.

“Flying back to the states from Guam can be very expensive,” Boswell said in the statement. “For our junior Airmen, the cost can sometimes be too high to make a trip home for holidays or special events but with the rotator coming through on a consistent basis, we hope that the increased space-A travel opportunity will open that door for our Airmen and their families to make it home more easily.”

Military members and their dependents making a permanent change of station or on temporary duty should make travel reservations through their installation transportation office, as should families changing duty stations with pets, the statement said.

Families changing stations are permitted to travel with two animals, restricted to dogs and cats, and are responsible for meeting all shipping and country entry requirements. Capacity is limited based on the carrier’s cargo configuration.

Pet transport is not authorized for Space-A travel, the statement said.

Andersen officials will post flight schedules for the route on the Andersen Passenger Terminal Facebook page.

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Burke.matt@stripes.com
Campaign raises $12K for family of sailor hit by vehicles

**By James Bolinger**

A crowdfunding campaign started by the family of a gravely injured sailor assigned to a base in Japan exceeded its $10,000 goal in less than 24 hours.

The GoFundMe page identifies the sailor as Janet Castillo, 20, who enlisted in the Navy in September 2018 and has been stationed at Sasebo Naval Base since March. Her rank and hometown were not available Tuesday.

According to the post, which was started Monday by Castillo’s mother, Melissa Rodriguez, the sailor was leaving a Christmas gathering Saturday when she was struck by a motorcycle and then run over by another vehicle.

Task Force 76 spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Kristine Volk confirmed Tuesday that Castillo is being treated for injuries suffered in an accident outside Sasebo’s main gate just before midnight.

Castillo underwent surgery Tuesday on her right leg and hip, according to the GoFundMe post. She will have surgery again Wednesday on her left leg and hip.

The Navy would not confirm Castillo’s injuries, citing privacy concerns.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with this Sailor, family and friends and all who are affected by this tragic incident,” Volk said.

The funds raised will support her family’s stay in Japan while Castillo recovers.

“The U.S. Navy has advised me as her mother, to travel to Japan to be by my daughter’s side,” wrote Rodriguez, who was flying to Japan from Pearland, Texas.

“I am having to leave my job, and my family behind to be at Janet’s bedside. Although the U.S. Navy will pay for my travel arrangements and my stay in Japan, they will only compensate for me, as I am her only emergency contact. We need help to raise funds to bring a second family member to travel with me and help me and my daughter get through this tragedy.”

More than $12,300 had been pledged by more than 180 donors as of Tuesday evening in Japan.

“Thank you thank you thank you all so very much! I am awed by the outpour of your support and generosity,” Rodriguez wrote in an update posted Tuesday. “You all have done for us something that we will never be able to repay you for! I pray that every one of you are blessed!”

Attempts to reach the family for comment were not immediately successful.

bolinger.james@stripes.com

Twitter: @bolingerj2004

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**Pearl Harbor shooter’s family offers sympathy**

HONOLULU — The family of a U.S. Navy sailor who shot three civilian shipyard workers at the Pearl Harbor military base before killing himself offered condolences to the families of the victims Monday.

Gabriel Antonio Romero, of San Antonio, Texas, killed Roldan Agustín, 49, and Vincent Kapiolani Jr., 36, and wounded Roger Nakamine, 36, in the Dec. 4 shooting at the Hawaii base, authorities said.

From The Associated Press

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**Full-contact Christmas**

Holiday-themed roller derby teams battle at Camp Humphreys

**By Matthew Keeler**

Roller derby teams battle it out at Camp Humphreys

A crowdfunding campaign started by the family of a gravely injured sailor assigned to a base in Japan exceeded its $10,000 goal in less than 24 hours.

The GoFundMe page identifies the sailor as Janet Castillo, 20, who enlisted in the Navy in September 2018 and has been stationed at Sasebo Naval Base since March. Her rank and hometown were not available Tuesday.

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bolinger.james@stripes.com

Twitter: @bolingerj2004
Report: IED threat in Bahrain has grown since 2013

By Chad Garland
Stars and Stripes

Militants in Bahrain have obtained sophisticated bomb components like those Iran has allegedly been supplying to Houthi rebels in Yemen, researchers have found.

Security forces in the island kingdom, home to a major U.S. Navy base, have recovered components for radio-controlled improvised explosive devices, infrared sensors used to trigger IEDs, military-grade explosives and more, which suggest increased capabilities and links to Iran-backed supply networks, the London-based Conflict Armament Research said in a report released Tuesday.

“Between 2012 and 2018, the [IED] threat in Bahrain grew significantly as materiel recovered from militant groups illustrated an evolution of capabilities and access to resources,” the report stated.

The components found were identical or similar to Iranian materiel recovered from the Jihan 1, says the report, referring to a cargo vessel intercepted by U.S. Navy and Yemeni coast guard forces in January 2013.

The cargo included C-4 explosives, small-arms ammunition, rocket-propelled grenades, surface-to-air missile systems, IED components, night-vision goggles and electric detonators, the report found.

The material recovered in Bahrain was typically concealed among shipments of conventional weapons, the report states. Smugglers often appeared to have tried to hide the material’s origins by grinding off identifying marks, which CAR said is a hallmark of IED components found in Yemen.

Both Bahrain and Yemen were considered by protests during the Arab Spring in 2011, but while unrest in Yemen escalated to a yearslong civil war, Bahrain has managed to avoid a similar fate.

The kingdom, which has supported the Saudi-led coalition to restore the government in Yemen, is an important U.S. ally in the conflict against Iran-backed 0,000 American troops, mostly sailors, and the headquarters of the Navy’s 5th Fleet. It has also supported the Baghdad government against Islamic State in Syria, but government repression of opposition groups has “presented a policy dilemma for the United States,” said a report published by the Congressional Research Service last month.

Teaming CAR investigators went to Bahrain in July 2017 and April 2018 to examine and document the materiel seized from militant groups.

In 2011 and 2012, the investigators say in the CAR report, militant groups in Bahrain used “crude, domestically manufactured” IEDs. But starting in 2013, there was “a significant change in the sophistication of weapons and related material available to militant factions in Bahrain.”

They can now make explosively formed penetrators — a weapon that can cut through some armor — and directional fragmentation charges, the researchers say.

They also appear to have acquired radio-controlled IED circuit boards and complex weapons kits from outside Bahrain that resemble those used in Iraq, where Iran-backed militias have been fighting ISIS but have also attacked U.S. forces.

The findings come amid growing tensions in the Persian Gulf region after President Donald Trump backed out of the Obama administration’s nuclear agreement with the regime in Tehran. Trump has called it a bad deal and has stepped up pressure on Iran to renegotiate the agreement.

Last summer, Tehran and Washington seemed poised for conflict, with drones downed by both sides over the course of several weeks and the Pentagon announcing deployments of thousands more troops to the region, along with aircraft and other equipment.

Correction

In a Dec. 17 story about U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham discussing a possible U.S. troop drawdown in Afghanistan, The Associated Press erroneously attributed to U.S. military spokesman Sonny Leggett a statement that five service members from the U.S. and the country of Georgia were slightly injured in last week’s Taliban attack near Bagram Airfield. It was U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo who put the number of international coalition soldiers injured in the attack at five, and the information about the nationalities of the injured came from a coalition statement.

In a Dec. 12 story about Iraqi protests, The Associated Press, citing Iraqi officials, erroneously reported that a 16-year-old had shot and killed six people, including four anti-government protesters, before he himself was killed and hanged from a traffic pole in a Baghdad square. The AP has found no evidence to support the initial claims that the teen had committed killings before being killed.

Conflict Armament Research report

German service members will be able to ride country’s trains free

By Marcus Kloekner
Stars and Stripes

KAIERSLAUTERN, Germany — German service members in uniform and their children will be allowed to travel for free on trains in Germany beginning next month.

Germany’s minister of defense and the head of Deutsche Bahn came to an agreement Monday in Berlin, allowing military members from each branch to ride all of the national railroad service’s trains at no cost, together with their children up to the age of 14. Spouses will still have to pay their own way, a German Defense Ministry spokeswoman said Tuesday.

The goal of the project is to make the soldiers “more visible” and better recognized as part of society, a Defense Ministry statement said.

Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer hopes that when more members take trains, “they’ll have “more positive conversations” with civilians, the statement said.

U.S. European Command regulations generally prohibit the more than 30,000 U.S. service members in Germany from wearing uniforms on commercial trains for security reasons.

The German service members are required to carry their military ID card with them while using the trains. Allowing the country’s 180,000 service members to ride the rails for free, on second-class tickets, is projected to cost up to $4.4 million annually.

The agreement covers only Deutsche Bahn trains, but the Defense Ministry said it will soon negotiate with privately owned railroad companies that offer regional services.

The initiative to raise the German military’s profile comes as the U.S. has repeatedly criticized its NATO ally for not contributing more to defense spending.

Krupp-Karrenbauer, leader of Chancellor Angela Merkel’s political party and considered a possible successor, announced last month that Germany would increase its defense spending by tens of billions of dollars over the coming years. It is expected to spend 2% of its gross domestic product on defense by 2031, seven years after the alliance’s target year.

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The harm inflicted by more than four decades of war has been cumulative. Between 2009 and 2018, nearly 6,500 children were killed and almost 15,000 others injured, helping make Afghanistan the world's most lethal war zone in 2018, the report said.

According to the U.N., there are 150 land mine casualties a month in Afghanistan.

Clockwise from below: Farshid, 13, cries while lying on a hospital bed at the surgical center Thursday; orthopedic staff at the International Committee of the Red Cross physical rehabilitation center in Kabul flank Abdullah, 13, this month as they adjust the prosthesis he wears after he lost his left leg when he stepped on an improvised explosive device; doctors prepare to amputate the leg of a land mine victim at the surgical center Dec. 5.

Asmatullah attends to his son Eimal, 9, who lost his right eye and several fingers in a land mine blast, at the Emergency Surgical Center for Civilian War Victims in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday.
Pensacola victim laid to rest in Ga.

Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — One of the young Navy sailors killed in a Saudi gunman’s attack at a Florida base had boundless energy and a fierce loyalty to family and friends in Georgia that will make him “the most amazing guardian angel,” some of those closest to the slain sailor told hundreds at his funeral Monday.

Roughly 400 people, including dozens of uniformed service members, gathered at Compassion Christian Church in Savannah to remember Airman Apprentice Cameron Scott Walters, 21, of neighboring Richmond Hill. His casket, draped with an American flag, stood at the front of a stage adorned with Christmas trees.

Walters was among three sailors killed Dec. 6 when a gunman opened fire at Naval Air Station Pensacola. Federal authorities said the gunman also wounded eight other people before a sheriff’s deputy killed him.

The slain sailor’s father, Shane Walters, has said his son had recently arrived in Florida after completing boot camp and was standing watch at the entrance of a classroom building where the attack occurred.

Hunter Cannon, one of Walters’ best friends, spoke through tears during the service as he described Walters as his brother — not by blood, but by choice.

“Although we lost someone as amazing as Cameron, we got the most amazing guardian angel you could ask for.”

Family friend Shawn Hygh said that from a young age Walters liked to work on cars in the garage with his father, sometimes snatching tools and saying, “Daddy, I got this.”

Walters’ funeral followed a somber homecoming Saturday when people holding American flags lined a main street in Walters’ hometown as his casket arrived, escorted by motorcycle riders. Similar scenes played out over the weekend in Alabama and Florida as the bodies of Ensign Joshua Kaleb Watson, 23, and Airman Mohammed Shahed Haitham, 19, came home.

Flaw with Lockheed’s $31B Marine helo solved, US says

Bloomberg

Lockheed Martin has solved a major flaw with the U.S. Marine Corps’ new King Stallion helicopter that threatened to undercut congressional support for the $31 billion program.

The Lockheed-led project “has successfully tested a modification to the aircraft’s exhaust system” to solve the problem of hot engine exhaust being sucked back into one of the aircraft’s three engines, Megan Wasek, a spokeswoman for Naval Air Systems Command, said in an email Monday.

The Democratic chairman and top Republican on the House Armed Services Committee, Reps. Adam Smith, a Washington Democrat, and Mac Thornberry, a Texas Republican, wrote the Defense Department earlier this year citing the exhaust problem as a key reason to resist the Defense Department’s request to shift $79 million in fiscal 2019 funds to the helicopter program from elsewhere in the budget.

The lawmakers agreed in July to shift the money based on assurances of progress.

The problem has been dealt with early in the program. The Marines want to buy 200 King Stallions. Only 20, including six test aircraft, are currently on contract.
**Giuliani: Trump ‘relied on’ claims about envoy**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Rudy Giuliani, President Donald Trump’s personal lawyer, says he provided the president with information that the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine was impeaching investigations that could benefit Trump politically. Within weeks, he was recalled from her post.

In an interview with The New York Times, Giuliani portrayed himself as directly involved in the effort to stymie Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, and he provided details indicating Trump’s knowledge of that effort.

Giuliani’s interview, published Tuesday, comes as Trump is facing near-certain impeachment Wednesday by the House for abuse of power over his pressure on Ukraine to announce investigations of Democrats while he was withholding aid to the Eastern European nation.

Giuliani said he passed along information to Trump “a couple of times” about how Yovanovitch had frustrated work that could help Trump, including efforts to have Ukraine investigate political rival Joe Biden.

Trump, in turn, passed the information on to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Giuliani said. Within weeks, Yovanovitch was told Trump had lost trust in her and she was recalled as ambassador.

Trump has said he did nothing wrong and his pressure on Ukraine was aimed at rooting out corruption.

Early last year, Giuliani said, he told Trump that Yovanovitch was impeding investigations in Ukraine that could benefit Trump.

“There’s a lot of reasons to move her out,” Giuliani said to The Times, as he quoted Trump and Pompeo “relied on” his information, likely leading to Yovanovitch’s ouster last April.

“I just gave them the facts,” Giuliani said. “I mean, did I think she should be recalled? I thought she should have been fired. If I was attorney general, I would have kicked her out. I mean — secretary of state.”

Testimony in the Trump impeachment inquiry showed that the claims about Yovanovitch were either unsubstantiated or proven out of context.

In the Times interview, Giuliani portrayed himself as directly involved in the effort to derail Yovanovitch’s career. He said he told Trump and Pompeo that Yovanovitch was blocking visas for Ukrainian prosecutors to come to the United States to present evidence that he claimed could be damaging to Biden and his son Hunter Biden, who served on the board of a Ukrainian gas company.

“I think I had pointed out to the president a couple of times, I reported to the president, what I had learned about the visa denials,” Giuliani said, as well as claims that she ordered one Ukrainian prosecutor to drop cases.

According to an article published Monday in The New York Times, Giuliani said that he needed Yovanovitch “out of the way” and that she “was going to make the investigations difficult for everybody.”

“I forced her out because she’s corrupt,” Giuliani told Fox News in an interview last week. He claimed that Yovanovitch “committed perjury” when she said she turned down the visa requests for a prosecutor because he was corrupt. Giuliani claimed he had witnesses “who will testify that she personally turned down their visas because they were going to come here and give evidence either against Biden or against the Democratic Party.”

Yovanovitch, testifying in October in defiance of Trump, said there was a “concerted campaign” against her based on “unfounded and false claims by people with clearly questionable motives.”

In a tweet Tuesday, Giuliani insisted, “Yovanovitch needed to be removed for many reasons most critical she was denying visas to Ukrainians who wanted to come to US and explain Dem corruption in Ukraine. She was OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE and that’s not the only thing she was doing. She at minimum enabled Ukrainian collusion.”

Trump and his allies falsely claim that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 election. The special counsel’s investigation, as well as U.S. intelligence agencies, found that Russia, not Ukraine, meddled in the election.

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**Impeachment: Handful of Democrats expected to break ranks on key vote Wednesday**

FROM FRONT PAGE

Senate Democrats want to hear from John Bolton, Mick Mulvaney and others as the proceedings push to the chamber for the trial.

“Why is the leader, why is the president so afraid to have these witnesses come testify?” asked Schumer from the Senate floor. “They certainly ought to be heard.”

House Democrats are to vote Wednesday to impeach Trump, formally accusing him of abusing his power as president in dealing with Ukraine to help himself politically and to try to block the House investigation from its oversight duties as part of the nation’s system of checks and balances.

The president “betrayed the Nation by abusing his high office to enlist a foreign power in corrupting democratic elections,” according to the 650-page report from the House Judiciary Committee. He withheld military aid from the ally as leverage, the report says, and “Trump, by such conduct, has demonstrated that he will remain a threat to national security and the Constitution if allowed to remain in office.”

The report says the president then engaged in an unprecedented attempt to block the investigation and “cover up” his misconduct. The report also includes Republican rebuttals.

A raucous town hall Monday in the Detroit suburbs put on display the nation’s wrenching debate over the unconstitutional president and the prospect of removing him from office. Freshman Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin was both heckled and celebrated as she announced her support for impeachment, one of a cascade of centrists from areas where Trump is popular now saying they will support it.

“Ther’s certainly a lot of controversy about this,” Slotkin acknowledged to the crowd of 400. “But there just has to be a moment where you use the letter of the law for what it’s intended.”

Trump, tweeting from the sidelines after instructing the White House not to participate in the House inquiry, insisted anew he had done nothing wrong. He has promoted lawyer Rudy Giuliani’s investigation of Biden and a widely debunked theory that it was actually Ukraine not Russia that interfered in the 2016 election, a conspiracy-laden idea that most other Republicans have actively avoided. “He knows what he’s doing,” Trump said of Giuliani at a town hall in Alaska last week.

Americans are not fooled, Trump tweeted on Tuesday, by the “Scams and Witch Hunts, as phony as they are.”

As the House prepared for Wednesday’s vote, many Democrats announced they would be voting for impeachment. A handful or even fewer are expected to break ranks as Speaker Nancy Pelosi marshes her majority toward a vote she hoped to avoid having Democrats take on their own. One freshman Democrat, Rep. Jeff Van Drew, of New Jersey, saw several staff members resign Monday after he said he would vote against impeachment and indicated he was switching parties to become a Republican.

Another Democrat, Rep. Collin Peterson, a Minnesota centrist, had not decided how he will vote, his spokeswoman said.

As the House was detailing its case against the nation’s 45th president, attention was turning to the Senate where the top Democrat, Schumer, of New York, called anew for fresh evidence and testimony from key White House officials for the Senate impeachment trial.

In a letter to McConnell, Schum- er proposed hearing testimony from former national security adviser Bolton, acting White House chief of staff Mulvaney and two others as part of a detailed offer he made to Republicans as an opening offer for negotiations.

Several Senate Republicans rejected that idea late Monday, saying the House should have gone to court to force those witnesses to testify over the White House’s objections if Democrats wanted to hear from them. Bolton, who left the White House in September, once labeled the alternative foreign policy orchestraed by Trump lawyer Giuliani a “drug deal” he wanted no part of. Mulvaney has acknowledged the military aid to Ukraine was being held up. The aid was later released as Congress raised questions about the holdup.

McConnell is facing criticism for saying he’s taking his “cue” from the White House for the expected trial. Republicans say Schumer acted much the same two decades ago when the Senate prepared to vote on President Bill Clinton.
HOUSE votes to pass $1.4T spending package

BY ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press
WASHINGTON — The Demo-
cratic-controlled House voted Tuesday to pass a $1.4 trillion
omnibus spending package, handing President
Donald Trump a victory on his
U.S.-Mexico border fence while
giving Democrats spending in-
screws across a swath of dom-
estic programs.

The House, 193-239, passed the
measure that caps a difficult,
charged by a $1.4 trillion spend-
ing package. A tax on medical devices
related battles and on funding for
health care and pension
provisions into law, including an
increase from 18 to 21 in na-
tional age for purchasing
missile strike.

Several months earlier the
agency had launched a new ef-
fort to notify residents of any mis-
ile threats. The initiative began
in response to growing concerns that
North Korea was developing nuclear
weapons and long-range
missiles capable of reaching
Hawaii.

But a Hawaii Department of
Defense review conducted after the
bocheted alert found officials
failed to fully develop their plans
for these warnings before launch-
ing the program.

The alert went out on Jan. 13,
2018, because an emergency man-
gagement agency employee mistak-
ently sent it during a shift-change
dril.

Officials later disclosed the
department didn’t think he and his
colleagues were participating in
a drill and instead believed a real
attack was imminent. The state
fired him.

I'm not talking
about now when
it's vague. I
did it first! I
pioneered it!
"It all got
evicated
because of
what hap-
pened," Weinst
said in the
interview. "My work has been
forgotten." Weinst spoke out days after
a tentative $25 million settlement
was reached between him and
more than two dozen actresses and
former employees who have ac-
cused the movie mogul of a range
of sexual misconduct, including
claims of sexual assault.

He denied allegations of
nonconsensual sex. He faces a
Jan. 6 trial on rape and sexual as-
sault charges in state court, where
he has pleaded not guilty.

"Harvey Weinstein is trying to
out of his own pocket, nor
would he have to
be indemnified.

"He says in a new interview
he doesn’t want to be forgotten. Well,
he won’t be. He will be remem-
bered as a sexual predator and an
unrepentant abuser who took ev-
eything and deserves nothing," the
statement said.

Lawyer Gloria Allred, who rep-
resents a number of accusers, said
the ongoing criminal case against
Weinstein should be the priority
right now.

"Whatever he has done profes-
sionally for women or may not be
relevant at the time of sen-
tencing if he is convicted," Allred
said. "For now, any attempt by him
to recast his tattered reputation
or to appear to ask for sympathy
will only serve to trigger many of
those who allege that they are vic-
tims of Mr. Weinstein."
Powerful storms batter the South

By Jay Reeves and Janet McConnnęghy, Associated Press

Three people were confirmed dead and 12 were injured as powerful storms packed suspected tornadoes smashed into buildings, downed trees and left a trail of destruction around the Deep South on Monday, authorities said.

One person was reported killed in a suspected tornado strike on a Louisiana home, and two others were reported dead after another storm hit around a community about 55 miles west of the north Alabama city of Huntsville.

Lawrence County Coroner Scott Norwood in Alabama said the two people killed were husband and wife. Authorities said the injured people included a 7-year-old child who was taken to a hospital in Birmingham. Authorities did not release names of the victims.

The area was filled with debris and downed trees when first responders arrived.

“It was total chaos,” Norwood told reporters. “We had to make do the best we could.”

The storms prompted numerous tornado watches and warnings Monday in the Deep South, as a cold front collided with warmer air over northern Gulf Coast states and temperatures went well into the 70s, the National Weather Service said.

The Louisiana death was attributed to an apparent tornado that struck a residential area in Vernon Parish. Details were not immediately available, said Chief Deputy Calvin Turner. He said officials feared others could be hurt since crews were still trying to reach hard-hit areas.

In nearby Alexandria, La., about 200 miles northwest of New Orleans, crews cleared roads and restored power late into the night, working in a chilly mist.

Children in a church school were moved to the church before the tornado ripped off the school’s roof, said Cpl. Wade Bourgeois, spokesman for the Alexandria Police Department. Among the hardest-hit spots was the Johnny Downs Sports Complex, which he said may have suffered “total damage.” The complex includes five full-sized soccer fields, more than 10 smaller ones and eight baseball diamonds.

“Fortunately, we have no reports of any deaths or serious injuries,” he said of the Alexandria area.

Surveying damage with her family, Alexandria resident Summer Evans said there was a lot of devastation.

“It’s bad. There’s animals out, houses tore down,” she said.

“The barns are gone. You can’t even find some of the properties. Houses that used to be here, you can’t even find them anymore.”

Meteorologist Donald Jones of the National Weather Service office in Lake Charles said it appeared the twisters that hit part of Alexandria also struck near the town of DeRidder on an “absolutely ridiculous” path estimated at 63 miles long.

“I don’t know what our records for the longest total in this area is, but that’s got to be pretty damn close to it,” he said.

Three people were injured, at least one of them very seriously, by an apparent tornado that hit Amite County, Miss., on Monday afternoon, county emergency director Grant McCurley said.

Some houses were destroyed and others severely damaged, he said. The number wasn’t known Monday night because crews couldn’t get to them all — downed trees tangled with power lines blocked county roads and state highways.

McCurley said damage was spread across the county, which adjoins the southeast Louisiana state line.

Four counties eastward, seven women were taken to a hospital from a heavily damaged group home in Sumrull, Miss. Injuries were minor, Sheriff Danny Rigel told WTMJ. Damage on the men’s side the Douglas Graham Group Home was less serious than on the women’s side, Lamar County emergency management director James Smith told WDAM-TV.

That tornado cell sprang up in Tangipahoa Parish, La., and went through Washington Parish on its way into Mississippi, said meteorologist Phil Grigsby, of the National Weather Service office in Slidell.

The Storm Prediction Center reported two other people suffered minor injuries from flying debris after storms moved into Mississippi, and multiple trees atop homes and vehicles in Edwards, east of Vicksburg.

In Guntown, Miss., near Tupelo and about 260 miles north-north-east of Amite County, a transport tornado destroyed a church and damaged dozens of homes.

Pastor Carl Estes searched through the debris of Lighthouse Baptist Church for books, photos or any other salvageable items, the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal reported. The storm flattened the building, which Estes said was empty at the time.

Church member Shane Keith told the newspaper he rushed there after the storm and found pews tossed around the hillside.

“I wanted to cry, I really did,” Keith said. “I mean, I just got baptized last year and this means a lot to me, this place right here.”

Mississippi State Sen. Chad McMahan, of Guntown, said he toured a subdivision where an estimated 35 homes had been damaged.

As the storm system pushed into Alabama on Monday evening it toppled trees and power lines and kicked up more suspected tornadoes.

The Colbert County Emergency Management Agency said buildings were damaged in the Colbert Heights area and that multiple roads were blocked.

School systems in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi dismissed students early and canceled afternoon events and activities.

Boeing gets FAA message, will halt Max production in January

By Tom Krisher, Associated Press

The message to Boeing Co. from the Federal Aviation Administration was clear: The grounded 737 Max won’t get approval to fly again anytime soon. So the company had little choice but to idle the giant factory where the plane is made.

Boeing announced Monday that it will suspend production of the Max starting sometime in January, with no specific date for when the Renton, Wash., plant will be restarted.

The company said it won’t lay off any of the factory’s 12,000 workers “at this time,” and many could be diverted to plants elsewhere in the Seattle region. Some could also be assigned to work on the 400 jets that Boeing has built since the Max was grounded in March but couldn’t be delivered.

Boeing’s decision is a recognition that it will take longer than the company expected to get the planes back in the air, said Richard Aboulafia, an aircraft industry analyst at the Teal Group.

“If they had gotten some information quietly, behind the scenes, from the FAA that things were looking good for January or February, they wouldn’t have done this,” he said.

The Max is Boeing’s most important jet, but it has been grounded since March after crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia that killed a total of 346 people.

The FAA told the company last week that it had no authority for getting the plane back into service. Boeing has missed several estimates for the plane’s return date.

The agency has not given a specific date for approving the Max’s return, but FAA Administrator Stephen Dickson has said it will be done on the agency’s timetable, not Boeing’s.

The FAA said Monday it wouldn’t comment on Boeing’s business decisions and that it has no set time frame for when work to recertify the Max to fly will be completed.

Even if no employees are laid off, ceasing production will cut into the nation’s economic output because of Boeing’s huge presence in the U.S. manufacturing sector. Through October of this year, the U.S. aerospace industry’s factory output has fallen 17% compared with the same period last year, to $106.4 billion, in part due to production cuts of 737 Max planes.

Aboulafia said the shutdown would probably hinder the economy in the coming months and could worsen the nation’s trade balance. “This is the country’s biggest single manufactured export product,” he said.

In a statement, Boeing said it will determine later when production can resume, based largely on approval from government regulators.

“We believe this decision is least disruptive to maintaining long-term production and supply chain health,” the company said.

Investigators have found that flight control software designed to stop an aerodynamic stall was a major factor in the crashes, and Boeing is updating the software, making it less aggressive. But regulators have yet to approve the changes.

The long-term grounding has put Boeing in a difficult position, said Joe Schwieterman, a DePaul University professor who is an aviation expert. The plant shutdown will help Boeing conserve cash, but it also will disrupt the network of about 900 companies that supply parts for the Max and other 737 models, Schwieterman said.
Season’s greetings

Adrian Tolefree, 1, runs to his mother’s arms after meeting with Santa Claus while brothers Avery, 7, and Kieran, 4, detail their Christmas wishes at Trinity Episcopal Church in Lewiston, Maine, on Saturday. Santa handed out candy, gifts and warm knit slippers at the church.

Lawsuit: Paternity test falsely ID’d man as dad

THE CENSUS $1K

The amount of money a Miami Beach, Fla., parking enforcement officer is accused of demanding each month from a valet company in exchange for not issuing parking citations. Darde Ziro, 57, was arrested Saturday during a sting operation involving the owner of APS Parking LLC.

Pretty penny for Babe’s 500th home run bat

Company owner Freddy Diaz gave the officer a $750 payment during a conversation that was captured on video. Miami Beach City Manager Jimmy Morales told NJ.com that investigators believe Ziro acted alone, but he directed police to start an investigation to make sure.

Lankford, 29, called back again, and finally called a third time to say he had broken into a convenience store and was drinking beer.

That was enough for Boston police to track down and arrest Lankford.

Police arrest man in Christmas tree thefts

A man apparently felt so bad about breaking the law that he called police three times to confess, according to police in Georgia.

Lt. Tim Watkins, of the Thomas County Sheriff’s Office, told the Thomasville Times-Enterprise a man called at 5 a.m. Friday to say he had stolen a car in Thomasville and was about 12 miles away in the smaller town of Boston. A Boston police officer went looking for the Chevrolet Impala and Quent Rashed Lankford but could find neither.

Lankford, 29, called back again, and finally called a third time to say he had broken into a convenience store and was drinking beer.

That was enough for Boston police to track down and arrest Lankford.

Police arrest man in Christmas tree thefts

WASHINGTON — Authorities in Washington state are calling a Christmas tree thief a real-life Grinch after arresting a man they say stole dozens of evergreens from a family-owned farm.

The Seattle Times reported that police in Federal Way made the arrest Friday after getting reports that about 78 trees had vanished from the Snowshoe Evergreen Christmas Tree Farm the previous weekend. The trees were valued at more than $6,000.

The suspect was not identified.

From wire reports
Pakistan sentences former ruler to death

By Munir Ahmed
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — A Pakistani court Tuesday sentenced the country's former military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to death in a treason case related to the state of emergency he imposed in 2007 while in power, officials said.

It's the first time in Pakistan's history that a former army chief and ruler of the country has been sentenced to death. Musharraf, who was sentenced in absentia, has been out of the country since 2016, when he was allowed to leave on bail to seek medical treatment abroad.

He has been living in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, and is said to be very ill and unlikely to travel home to face the sentence. Pakistan and the UAE have no extradition treaty and Emirati authorities are unlikely to arrest Musharraf. If he were to return, however, Musharraf would have the right to challenge his conviction and sentence in court.

The ruling Tuesday by a three-judge panel was not unanimous, and one of the judges had opposed the death sentence, according to Akhtar Shah, one of Musharraf's lawyers. Shah said he would appeal the sentence.

After the sentence was announced, Pakistani Information Minister Firdous Ashiq Awan told reporters that Prime Minister Imran Khan's government would “review in detail” the verdict before commenting on it. Khan, who enjoys good ties with the country's powerful military, is expected to return from Geneva on Wednesday.

The military did not immediately react to the death sentence for Musharraf, a former army chief. Defense Minister Pervez Khattak said the ailing former dictator still has the right to appeal.

In an infamous purge in 2007, Musharraf imposed a state of emergency and placed several key judges under house arrest in the capital, Islamabad, and elsewhere in Pakistan. He came to power after ousting former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a 1999 bloodless coup.

Later, when he was back in office, Sharif first accused Musharraf of treason in 2013. The general was formally charged in 2014.

Protests grow over new citizenship law in India

By Emily Schmall and Sheikh Saaliq
Associated Press

NEW DELHI — Indian student protests that turned into violent clashes with police galvanized nationwide opposition Tuesday to a new law that provides a path to citizenship for non-Muslim migrants who entered the country illegally from several neighboring countries.

Police fired tear gas in the Seelampur area of New Delhi to push back protesters who burned a police booth and two motorbikes after throwing stones and swarming barricades.

Roads leading to the Muslim-majority neighborhood were strewn with stones, tear gas canisters and shards of broken glass.

“We are protesting against the new citizenship law. They are saying if you don’t have any proof (of citizenship) … they will send us out of India,” said Mohammad Shehzad, 15.

Protests against the law were also reported in the states of West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka and elsewhere.

On Sunday, a march by students at New Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia University descended into chaos when demonstrators set three buses on fire. Police responded with rubber bullets and tear gas. Videos showed officers running after unarmed protesters and beating them with wooden sticks.

The police response to Sunday's protests has drawn widespread condemnation. It also has sparked a broader movement against the Citizenship Amendment Act, with demonstrations erupting across the country.

The new law applies to Hindus, Christians and other religious minorities who are in India illegally but can demonstrate religious persecution in Muslim-majority Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It does not apply to Muslims.

The citizenship law follows a contentious citizenship registry process in northeastern India's Assam state intended to weed out people who immigrated to the country illegally.

Nearly 2 million people in Assam were excluded from the list, about half Hindu and half Muslim, and have been asked to prove their citizenship or else be considered foreign. India is constructing a detention center for some of the tens of thousands of people the courts are expected to ultimately determine came to the country illegally.

The Citizenship Amendment Act could provide protection and a fast track to naturalization for many of the Hindus left off Assam's citizenship list while explicitly leaving out Muslims.
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va.gov/stars

Donnell Lee Lewis
U.S. Army Veteran
Carey’s holiday hit finally reaches No. 1

Mariah Carey, shown during an NBC press tour in 2016, has much to celebrate this season: Her unstoppable holiday song from 1994, “All I Want For Christmas Is You,” has topped the charts at last.

By Elahe Izadi
The Washington Post

It’s annual “All I Want For Christmas Is You” season, also known as “December.”

Mariah Carey’s ode to love and Christmas has done well every year since its 1994 release, but the infectious Carol of course only officially reigns from the top of the charts.

Billboard revealed Monday that “All I Want For Christmas Is You” rests comfortably at the top spot on the Hot 100 chart for the week of Dec. 21.

The feat means that Carey’s album has now broken multiple records: “All I Want” is the first holiday song to reach No. 1 on the Hot 100 since the Chippendales’ 1958 “The Chipmunk Song”; it’s the most-streamed track on Spotify by a female artist in a 24-hour window; and its 20 weeks in the U.K. singles Top 10 chart is the most of any Christmas song.

“All I Want For Christmas Is You” always does well on the holiday-specific charts, but it’s been surging on general charts in recent years, with its biggest successes coming in a musical landscape that’s dramatically different from the one in which Carey recorded it.

In June 1994, Carey hung up Christmas decorations in the Hamptons rental home where she was staying to create the right mood. Former frequent collaborator Walter Afanasieff, who co-wrote “All I Want,” came up with a basic chord structure. Sitting together at the piano, Carey offered vocal melodies that Afanasieff wasn’t sure about, but he soon changed his mind after talking to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer in 2013.

“She would sing a melody and I would do a chord change,” Afanasieff told the newspaper. “It was almost like a game of ping-pong, back and forth, until we had it.”

The songwriters and others.

Of course there is Carey’s vocal prowess and command. But there are also few up-tempo Christmas songs in the American canon, and “All I Want,” he told the Seattle paper, is “more adult” and a love song that’s less focused on the trappings of the season.

Billboard compiled ratings based on streaming, radio airplay and sales data for its Hot 100 chart, and has changed the eligibility rules over the years. Between 1963 and 1972, and again between 1983 and 1985, holiday songs were mostly confined to the holiday rankings chart.

When Carey released her “Merry Christmas” album, “All I Want” was not available as a single that could be physically purchased, which also prevented it from appearing on the Hot 100. Billboard has since changed that rule, and another barraging older songs.

“Streaming may be a big reason “All I Want” and other other holiday songs are doing so well on the charts these days. “All I Want”’s 25-year journey to No. 1 is the longest of all songs in Billboard history.

During the 2018-19 season, Christmas songs occupied 23 spots on the Hot 100 list, and “it’s pretty much just one word: streaming,” Billboard senior director of charts, Gary Trust, told Genius in 2018. “We’ve seen streaming gain so much over the last few years. We’re really seeing it with holiday songs,” adding that smart speakers are helping fuel the trend.

“Although ‘All I Want’ becoming a No. 1 hit is quite nice, Carey said she didn’t need affirmation.

“‘It’s something my die-hard fans think about, and people that are really close to me are talking to me about it literally all year,” she told the New York Times. “But I don’t need something else to validate the existence of this song. I used to pick it apart when I was young and I like it now. It’s a point, I feel like I’m finally able to enjoy it.”

‘Rise of Skywalker’ receives enthusiastic reception from fans

By Jonathan Landrum Jr.
Associated Press

Audiences rose to their feet and gave the latest “Star Wars” film a standing ovation after the credits rolled at the ending of the franchise’s third trilogy.

Cheers often erupted with enthusiasm throughout the ending of the franchise’s third trilogy.

Audiences rose to their feet and gave the latest “Star Wars” film a standing ovation after the credits rolled at the ending of the franchise’s third trilogy.

Fans turned the premiere into a living tribute to various eras of the space epic franchise, with some dressing up like Hamill’s Luke and Carrie Fisher’s Princess Leia from the 1977 original film. Others opted for the look of the characters’ mother, Queen Amidala, and many donned the armor of Stormtroopers, bounty hunters and Darth Vader.

“It was everything I’d hope it would be and more,” said Dwayne Smith, who went to the premiere with his wife, Shannon, and son Kayden. Both father and son were wearing black First Order costumes.

“The twists, turns and nostalgia. It was emotional,” Smith said during the premiere’s after-party. “It had action. It had everything. If you’re on the fence from the last film, you’ll be happy that it’s back on track.”

Attendees were treated to a blue carpet spectacle that included appearances by the droids C-3PO and R2-D2, and Chewbacca stepping out of a black sport utility vehicle and posing for photographers with long arms stretched in the air.

Few films have captured the popular imagination like 1977’s “Star Wars: Episode IV — A New Hope,” which has sparked three film trilogies, TV shows, toys and more. “The Rise of Skywalker” is one of the year’s most-anticipated releases, in part because filmmakers have promised a conclusion to the story of the Skywalker clan that includes Luke, Leia and their father Anakin, who became Darth Vader.

Disney paid more than $4 billion to acquire the “Star Wars” franchise in 2012 and the recent trilogy started with Abrams in 2015 with “The Force Awakens.” While it returned beloved characters from the original trilogy to the big screen for the first time since 1983, the story has focused on a new generation of characters played by Daisy Ridley, Adam Driver, John Boyega and others.

Sun-kyun Lee, left, and Ye-jeong Jo star in “Parasite.”

10 films on Oscars’ international shortlist

Ten international films are on the shortlist of movies vying for Academy Award nominations.

The best international feature shortlist announced Monday by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences includes Bong Joon Ho’s “Parasite,” Pedro Almodovar’s semi-autobiographical “Pain and Glory” and “Atlantics,” Senegal’s entry from history-making director Mati Diop.

The 10 short-listed films are: the Czech Republic’s “The Painted Bird”; Estonia’s “Truth and Justice”; France’s “Les Miserables”; Hungary’s “Those Who Remained”; North Macedonia’s “Honeyland”; Poland’s “Corpus Christi”; Russia’s “Beanpole”; Senegal’s “Atlantics”; South Korea’s “Parasite” and Spain’s “Pain and Glory.”
Eugene Sheffer Crossword

ACROSS
1 Mint product
5 Rainbow
8 Transaction
12 Sicilian sputter
13 Actor Gibson
14 Roof overhang
15 Arm of the Atlantic
17 Egyptian deity
18 Prepare to drive
19 Tratoria offerings
21 Answer an invite
24 "Incidentally," in a text
25 "Dirty Jobs" host Mike
28 Stow cargo
30 Feedbag tidbit
33 Pub order
34 Appointments
35 Poem of praise
36 "Certainly!"
37 Teen fave
38 Japanese noodle
39 Three, in Rome
41 —do-well
43 Most recent
46 Union foes
50 Opposite of "ter"
51 Lefty
54 Barn roof topper
55 Deluge refuge
56 Madonna’s “La — Bonita”
57 Rim
58 Shad product
59 German refusal

DOWN
1 Penny
2 Oklahoma tribe
3 Concerning
4 Character
5 Early hrs.
6 R&B singer
7 Applaud
8 Believer of a sort
9 Clint of “Grain Torino”
10 Athletic shoe brand
11 Minus
12 Some printers
20 Fortas and Lincoln
22 —the Impaler
23 “Cry, the Beloved Country” author Alan
25 Shaft of light
26 Flamenco cheer
27 White House area
28 Takeout order?
31 Fuss
32 Sawbuck
34 Conks out
38 Ragamuffin
40 Actresses
42 "Guinness Book" suffix
43 Cathedral area
44 "Zounds!
45 Russian ruler
47 Church section
48 Island near Java
49 Graceful bird
52 Acupulco gold
53 Guitar’s kin

Answer to Previous Puzzle
G U R U  O F F  R A N K
A N O N  A L  A  V O N
R O C K  S T A R  N E R O
N A H  M C G R A W
S C R O O T  S L O E
C O O T  S H A M R O C K
A C T  A T O N E  R O I
R O C K F O R D  I  S A W
E A R N  E C O L I
S Q U I R M E N A
H U R T  S O F T R O C K
C I S E  I N T  U T I L
O P A L  N O S  S C A M

12-18 CRYPTOQUIP
L H V J V H H V R  L W Y Z  H V N Y V K V H
D H W Z R  F J  O F N K V Q  P M W P  J V V N
Q F H V  W J P V H  M F O N Y Z B  O W E
P F F  Q P H F Z B N E :  D W E V H

Yesterday’s Cryptopquip: WHEN YOU RETRACT A DECLARATION YOU HAD PREVIOUSLY PUT FORWARD AS FACT, HAVE YOU DE-POSIITED IT?

Today’s Cryptopquip Clue: J equals F
Congress is Trump’s enabler on Saudi vices

By ROB BERSCHINSKI
Special to The Washington Post

T he president and his political allies continue to do serious damage to America’s global reputation. Now, in a stunning about-face, the administration has used the annual National Defense Authorization Act to make clear that it will impose no meaningful or long-term consequences on Saudi Arabia or Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for directing the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in October 2018.

Since a Saudi hit team killed and dismembered Khashoggi in the consulate building, the U.S. government has waxed eloquent on the need to hold those responsible for the murder. They did so in opposition to a president who has sided with the Saudi dictator over his own diplomats, intelligence officials and members of Congress at every available opportunity.

Almost one year ago, the Senate unanimously approved a resolution holding the Saudi crown prince responsible for the murder, and Sens. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., Lindsey Collins, R-Maine, joined Democrats in introducing tough legislation to punish the Saudi crown prince and others deemed responsible for the killing. The legislation was blocked by the House. Bipartisan legislation introduced by Rep. Tom Malinowski, D-N.J., imposing visa restrictions on Saudi officials responsible for the murder, passed the House overwhelmingly of 405 to 7. But Senate Republicans refused to put Malinowski’s bill up for a vote.

Similarly, bipartisan majorities in both the House and Senate passed resolutions this year that would have blocked U.S. sales of arms to Saudi Arabia and its partner, the United Arab Emirates. Both countries have used U.S. arms for their war in Yemen, which has caused the world’s worst humanitarian crisis and pushed millions to the brink of starvation. Congress also passed a resolution that would have ended U.S. support for the Saudi-led war. The president issued four different vetoes to protect Saudi Arabia and block those measures from becoming law.

Given this political reality, House leaders included Malinowski’s bill requiring accountability for Khashoggi’s murder in their 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, which would refuse to agree to any meaningful accountability for Saudi Arabia through the defense bill.

But amidst congressional horse-trading on matters as disparate as the Space Force, fueling for the Green New Deal and federal paid parental leave, it appears that Repub- licans, fearful as always of President Don- ald Trump’s wrath for opposing him, would refuse to agree to any meaningful accountability for Saudi Arabia through the defense bill.

Instead, Congress is allowing the Saudi government to continue to get away with murder at the hands of the President and his enabler. The only reason the president backed away from a resolution that would have underscored the U.S. government’s reaction as possible. To their credit, House and Senate negoti- tors left in the final NDAA a requirement for a formal determination by the intelligence community on whether the crown prince is personally responsible for the hit and eventually be subjected to close scrutiny. The final resolution includes language that would require a finding of probable cause before any criminal charges could be brought against the crown prince. This could open the door for a meaningful accountability for his role.

If this is what close scrutiny looks like, one can only hope that any meaningful accountability for U.S. intelligence court activity that could lead to a criminal investigation into the murder of Jamal Khashoggi is out of the question. As of Wednesday, the FBI’s investigation into the murder of Jamal Khashoggi is officially closed. The investigation was officially closed on Tuesday.

Nearly a year after the murder of Khashoggi, the FBI investigation into his death is now considered closed. The FBI has now concluded its investigation into the murder of Khashoggi. The FBI has concluded its investigation into the murder of Khashoggi.

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College basketball

N. Arizona at UC Riverside
S. Utah at Long Beach State
Florida A&M at Washington St.
Jackson St. at Portland

Monday's women's scores

All-Star 69, Montana St. 54
Mount St. Mary's at New Hampshire 51
St. Michael's 76, Bridgeport 65

Charleston Southern St. (Columbia) 59
Georgia State 81, Louisiana Tech 70, Grambling 56, Mississippi State 87
Mississippi St. 56, Louisiana-Lafayette 62

UT Martin 83, Lipscomb 67
Wake Forest 74, Campbell 46
Akron 64, NC A&T 52

Hillsboro 88, Oregon St. 74, SIU Edwardsville 53
Kentucky 70, NC State 65
Northern Illinois 87, Illinois 57

North Carolina at Gonzaga
Ark.-Pine Bluff at New Mexico St.
South Florida vs. Utah St.

Women's schedule

New Hampshire at Dartmouth
Stony Brook at Virginia

Wednesday's games

NC State at Hofstra

Friday's games

San Diego at San Diego St.

Thursday's games

Coppin State at Howard

Wednesday's games

MINNEAPOLIS — The top 20 teams in the NCAA Division I poll, compiled by C.S.-NCAA baseball

ASR Yahoo! Search

Bowl schedule

Friday, Dec. 20
Bowl schedule

Tulane 83, Old Dominion 75

AP poll

Dec. 18

Dec. 19

3. Oregon 12-3

2. Ohio State 12-3

1. Alabama 13-0

1. Mississippi 12-2

2. Florida 12-3

3. Georgia 12-3

4. Cincinnati

5. Penn State

2. Georgia

1. Miami

Dec. 18

Arkansas

Wisconsin

Wisconsin

Ohio State

Oregon

Chi Town

Michigan St.

Alabama

Notre Dame

Florida

Michigan St.

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Michigan St.
NFL suspends Seahawks’ Gordon

His suspension is second in two seasons for violating league’s drug policy

Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — The troubles that have followed Josh Gordon throughout his career continued as the Seahawks wide receiver was suspended indefinitely by the NFL for violating the league’s drug policy again.

Gordon tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs and “substances of abuse,” the league said in a statement.

Gordon was reinstated by the NFL in August after having been suspended indefinitely in December 2018, missing the final three games of last season for violations of the league’s substance abuse policy.

Gordon signed with New England and was among the leading receivers for the Patriots with 20 catches for 287 yards and a touchdown through six games. But he was placed on injured reserve with knee and ankle injuries and was released in late October.

Seattle had stepped in and claimed the oft-troubled receiver off waivers.

Officials: Fire won’t slow Rangers’ new park

ARLINGTON, Texas — The opening of the new ballpark for the Texas Rangers isn’t expected to be delayed after a fire that damaged about 2,000 square feet near the roof, construction officials said.

The fire Saturday started when sparks from welding work ignited combustible materials being stored in a sub-roof area on one of the upper floors at Globe Life Field, fire officials said.

The first game at the new stadium is set for March 23, an exhibition against St. Louis. The first regular-season game is March 31 against the Los Angeles Angels.

Shiffrin falls to 17th in giant slalom

COURCHEVEL, France — Federica Brignone won her first women’s World Cup giant slalom in more than a year on Tuesday, while Olympic champion Mikaela Shiffrin of the United States fell to 17th.

Brignone trailed leader Mina Zaman, 0.44 seconds, at the halfway point before sliding away from the Italian posted the fifth-fastest time in the second to win by four-hundredths.

Simpson, motorsports safety pioneer, dies

Bill Simpson, a pioneer in motorsports safety credited with creating equipment that saved too many drivers to count from death or serious injury, died Monday from complications of a stroke suffered three days earlier. He was 79. The Motorsports Hall of Fame, which inducted Simpson in 2003, announced his death.

Simpson suffered the stroke Friday; he also had a stroke earlier this year from which he recovered and returned to many IndyCar events, where he routinely socialized and shared stories with some of the the greatest racers of all time.

“Bill Simpson was a racer and innovator who made drivers and crew members safer,” three-time NASCAR champion Tony Stewart said. “The safety equipment that bears his name saved me plenty of times.”

UNLV football players suspended for fighting

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — The Mountain West Conference has suspended four UNLV football players and reprimanded another for their involvement in an altercation following a game against rival Nevada on Nov. 30.

The conference announced Monday that Evan Austrie, Noah Bean, Giovanni Faoulo Sr. and Justin Polu were issued suspensions and Steve Jenkins a reprimand for the postgame fight.

Faoulo will be suspended for the first two games of the 2020 season, Bean will miss the season opener and Polu will be suspended for half a game. Four Nevada players were suspended last week for their involvement in the fight.

Accused Pryor attacker released to home

PITTSBURGH — A judge has decided that a woman who attempted homicide and aggravated assault in a Pittsburgh stabbing that critically injured former Ohio State quarterback Terrelle Pryor can be released on electronic home monitoring.

Allegeny County Common Pleas Judge Jeffrey Manning ruled Tuesday that 24-year-old Shalaya Briston will only be permitted to leave the home for court proceedings. Defense attorney Lee Rothman cited his client’s employment and lack of a criminal record. A preliminary hearing in her case is scheduled Thursday.

Pryor, 30, was taken to a hospital early Nov. 30 following what police called a dispute with “mutual combatants” in an apartment on the city’s North Side. He faces a charge of simple assault.

Blackhawks: Crawford to return in January

Chicago Blackhawks assistant Marc Crawford will remain suspended until Jan. 2 and then resume his coaching duties after an investigation into his behavior in previous jobs.

Several former players accused Crawford of physical and verbal abuse in recent weeks. Crawford on Monday apologized to Sean Avery, Harold Drukon, Patrick O’Sullivan and Brent Sopel, who spoke about the coach’s actions.

Charlotte lands MSL expansion team

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — David Tepper’s vision of bringing a Major League Soccer team to Charlotte has been realized.

Charlotte was awarded an MLS expansion team on Tuesday by MLS commissioner Don Garber at a news conference in downtown Charlotte. The team will begin play in 2021 and can begin signing players immediately.

Tepper owns the NFL’s Carolina Panthers, and the team will play its games at Bank of America Stadium, where the Panthers play.

The city also has the NBA’s Charlotte Hornets.

The NFL has suspended indefinitely Josh Gordon, above, for violating league policies on performance enhancers. Gordon was reinstated by the NFL in August after having been suspended indefinitely in December 2018, missing the final three games of last season for violations of the league’s substance abuse policy.
Southern Miss throws scare into Texas Tech
24th-ranked Red Raiders rally in second half

Associated Press

LUBBOCK, Texas — Texas Tech is back in the AP Top 25 after the school’s first win over a No. 1 team.

The 24th-ranked Red Raiders did just enough to stay there against a team that had already been blown out twice by ranked opponents this season.

Terrence Shannon Jr. scored 18 points and Texas Tech rallied in the second half for a 71-65 victory over Southern Miss on Monday night.

Davide Moretti scored 17 points and hit a punctuating three-pointer on an otherwise rough shooting night as the Red Raiders (7-3) extended the nation’s second-longest active home nonconference winning streak to 52 games.

“I think a lot of times when we sit around and feel sorry for ourselves, we’re disrespecting the opponent,” coach Chris Beard said. “They played harder than us in a lot of stretches of the game and we don’t really say that about our team as much but that’s exactly what happened.”

Texas Tech, which lost to Virginia in overtime in the national championship game last season, had dropped from 12th all the way out of the Top 25 with two straight losses, then lost again at DePaul.

The Red Raiders returned to the poll following a two-week absence with a 70-57 victory over then-No. 1 Louisville at Madison Square Garden in New York last Tuesday.

But the Golden Eagles (3-9) led well into the second half and were within two points in the final three minutes despite playing without leading scorer Boban Jacdonmi and two other players who have started this season.

“We’re a team in transition,” coach Jay Ladner said. “I thought it was good for our young players. I am in no way happy that we lost and not taking any type of solace, any type of moral victory and our players aren’t, either.”

Texas Tech was also short-handed in its fourth straight game without freshman Jahmi’us Ramsey. The team’s leading scorer has been sidelined by a hamstring injury.

LaDavious Draine scored 21 points and Gabe Watson added 20 in Southern Miss’ eighth consecutive loss to a ranked team going back to January 2011. Three of the defeats have come this season.
**Rockets roar back to overcome Spurs**

Associated Press

HOUSTON — After Houston completed the biggest comeback in franchise history, Russell Westbrook was asked about the key to the win.

The star guard didn’t speak for several seconds. He simply patted his chest several times, crediting the Rockets’ heart for the victory.

Westbrook scored 31 points, James Harden had 28 and Houston set a franchise record by overcoming a 25-point deficit to beat the San Antonio Spurs 109-107 on Monday night.

“Sometimes you’ve got to want it more than the other team,” Westbrook said. “It’s that simple. No plays or no possessions or no shots can change that.”


The game was tied with 2½ minutes remaining when Houston’s P.J. Tucker hit a three-pointer from the corner. A layup by Rudy Gay got the Spurs within one with just under a minute left before Harden missed a three on the other end.

A three-pointer by Bryn Forbes rolled on the rim before bouncing out. Harden made two free throws to extend the lead to 109-106 with 16.2 seconds left.

Forbes missed another three with 1.7 seconds left, but San Antonio got the ball back when Clint Capela knocked the the ball out of bounds while fighting for the rebound. The Rockets then intentionally fouled two times, and Derrick White made a free throw before purposely missing the second one with 2.7 seconds left. But Westbrook grabbed the rebound to secure the win.

Houston fell behind early in a game where Harden had just nine points on 4-for-17 shooting in the first half before he heated up after the break and finished 10-for-29.

“My confidence is never gone, no matter if I go 0-for-20 or whatever,” he said. “I’m always going to shoot the ball and be aggressive, Early my shot wasn’t falling … and then other guys stepped up.”

The Spurs managed just 35 points after setting a season high for first-half scoring. LaMarcus Aldridge led San Antonio with 19 points and 13 rebounds, and Forbes had 18 points.

**Thunder 109, Bulls 106:**

Chris Paul hit five three-pointers in the fourth quarter and host Oklahoma City erased a 26-point second-quarter deficit to rally past Chicago.

Paul took over in the fourth, going 5-for-5 from deep and scoring 19 of his 30 points. His fourth three of the period put the Thunder up 101-100, their first lead since the opening seconds. Paul also had nine rebounds and 10 assists.

The Bulls tied it at 106 before

**Mavs halt Bucks’ win streak at 18**

Dallas, minus Doncic, led by Curry, Porzingis

By Jim Hoehn

**MILWAUKEE — The Bucks have little time to reflect on the end of their 18-game winning streak.**

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Milwaukee’s impressive run was halted Monday night when Seth Curry and Kristaps Porzingis each scored 26 points to help the Mavericks hang on for a 120-116 victory even without star guard Luka Doncic.

The Bucks, who dropped to 24-4 with their first loss since a 103-100 setback Nov. 8 at Utah, next host LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers (24-3) on Thursday in a matchup of conference leaders.

“It’s going to be a test for us,” said Giannis Antetokounmpo, who led Milwaukee with 48 points and 14 rebounds. “The Lakers are one of the best teams in the league. We’ve got to play good basketball. We’ve got to move the ball. Obviously as a team, we don’t want to lose two in a row.”

The winning streak was the Bucks’ longest since a franchise-record 20 consecutive victories by the 1970-71 championship team that featured Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, then known as Lew Alcindor, and Oscar Robertson.

Dallas led comfortably for most of the fourth quarter until the final half-minute. Tim Hardaway Jr. hit the second of two free throws to make it 119-114 with 7.6 seconds left. Antetokounmpo scored on a layup and was fouled, but missed the free throw. Sterling Brown grabbed the offensive rebound, but his putback was blocked by Porzingis.

“I’m proud of the way the guys fought to the very last second tonight,” Milwaukee coach Mike Budenholzer said. “To find a way to be close in the fourth quarter and have an offensive rebound and give ourselves a chance. I think it’s just a sign of the competitive nature of this group.”

Doncic sat out with a sprained right ankle, while the Bucks were missing injured point guard Eric Bledsoe.

Milwaukee trailed 86-76 entering the fourth quarter and pulled to 99-92 before Porzingis hit back-to-back three-pointers.

The Mavs were 16-4 for 41 from three-point range, including four threes each by Curry and Porzingis. Milwaukee went 11-for-41 from beyond the arc.

“I hit those two deep threes but even then, Giannis was right there in front of me,” Porzingis said. “They know we are a pretty good shooting team. But we have so many weapons and anybody on any given night can score 20-plus points. That’s the dangerous thing about us. Tonight, Seth played great. It’s kind of hard to play against a team that has so many options.”

## Scoreboard

### Eastern Conference

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### Western Conference

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### Tuesday’s games

- L.A. Lakers 107, Philadelphia 106
- Portland 110, New Orleans 102
- Denver 124, San Antonio 102
- San Antonio 113, San Jose 96
- Boston 112, Houston 102
- Milwaukee 116, Oklahoma City 109
- Cleveland 107, Atlanta 104
- Orlando 133, Indiana 126
- Brooklyn 122, Chicago 108

### Wednesday’s games

- Charlotte 108, Milwaukee 100
- Brooklyn 111, New Orleans 105
- Toronto 110, Denver 108
- Milwaukee 118, Chicago 100
- Cleveland 110, Los Angeles 105
- Portland 112, Minnesota 103
- Miami 113, San Antonio 103
- Washington 112, New York 110
- Dallas 113, Boston 103
- Phoenix 110, Orlando 98

### Monday’s games

- Philadelphia 112, Milwaukee 96
- New Orleans 115, Portland 109
- Toronto 113, Indiana 101
- Brooklyn 111, Milwaukee 101
- New York 114, San Antonio 107
- Charlotte 110, Los Angeles 109
- Denver 102, Dallas 99
- Houston 105, Chicago 100
- Orlando 115, Milwaukee 105
- Miami 114, Atlanta 106
- Chicago 113, Brooklyn 112
John Chayka looked at the Arizona Coyotes roster and their spot atop the Pacific Division and wondered.

The Coyotes haven’t made the playoffs since 2012 and 2018 NHL MVP Taylor Hall was available. The cost was two draft picks and three prospects but no players from the current roster, so he went for it.

Arizona, after acquiring Hall, is a legitimate contender in the Western Conference.

“We want to take a run at things here,” Chayka said. “We ask our questions here internally like, ‘Why not us?’ We’ve got a good group. We’ve got a chance to contend. You can always look to future years and say, ‘What if?’ But when we’ve got a chance right now, we wanted to take our shot.”

The Coyotes haven’t had this good a shot at contending, not just for a playoff spot, but the Stanley Cup, in almost a decade. They prevented Western rivals such as the Colorado Avalanche and defending champion St. Louis Blues from getting hot and bolstered a blue-collar roster by adding a 28-year-old wing in his prime.

Hall is a free agent after this season. He could sign long term with the Coyotes.

The closest the Coyotes have come to the Cup is a five-game Western Conference finals loss to Los Angeles in 2012. Adding Hall to a core including young leading scorers Clayton Keller and Nick Schmaltz, wing Phil Kessel, defensemen Oliver Ekman-Larsson and goaltenders Darcy Kuemper and Antti Raanta should ratchet up the expectations in the desert.

“I’m joining a team with some young studs, a lot of really good defensemen and obviously two goalies that have played amazing this year. You mention those things and that’s really what you need in a contender and that’s what it looks like the Coyotes are,” Hall said after the trade from New Jersey.

The Coyotes have scored on an NHL-leading 31% of their power plays, including 10 man-advantage goals in their past eight games.

Koskinen made 17 saves in the third period. He allowed only 2 Tyler Seguin’s goal with 2:57 left to play after the Stars had pulled Ben Bishop for an extra skater.

Panthers, Senators: 1

Oilers, 2 Stars: 1

Leon Draisaitl scored another power-play goal for Edmonton, and Mikko Koskinen made 34 saves in a win at Dallas.

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The Oilers have scored on an NHL-leading 31% of their power plays, including 10 man-advantage goals in their past eight games.
New York — Rick Porcello’s $10 million deal with the New York Mets shows the fruits of a long search for a free agency deal as much as Gerrit Cole’s $324 million contract across town with the Yankees.

While Cole set a record, location was among Porcello’s primary concerns.

“I live about an hour away from Citi Field,” he said Monday after the Mets announced his contract. “That opportunity of having the hometown comfort, the ability for my father and family and friends to be able to come and see these games, to have personal experience it a little bit more live, were pretty deciding factors for me.”

Porcello lives in Morristown, N.J., and was at Seton Hall Prep in West Orange when Detroit selected him with the 27th overall pick of the 2007 amateur draft. He was traded to Boston after the 2014 season and was guaranteed $95 million by the Red Sox over the next five seasons. He won the Cy Young Award with a 2.44 record in 2016 and was 17-7 in 2018, when he earned a World Series ring.

“This is a big deal for me,” he said. “I grew up a lifelong Mets fan as a kid, and now to get the opportunity to play for the organization that I cheered on for so many years is a huge honor.”

Former Cy Young winner stays close to home

Associated Press

New York Mets sign Porcello to 1-year, $10M deal

No. 1 LSU and No. 2 Ohio State each placed three players on The Associated Press All-America first team released Monday.

Heisman Trophy winner Joe Burrow of LSU highlights the first-team offense and Heisman finalist Chase Young of Ohio State leads the defense on the team that was chosen by a panel of 15 college football poll voters.

The top-ranked Tigers also placed receiver Ja’Marr Chase and cornerback Derek Stingley on the first team by Ohio State by Teammates Wyatt Davis, a guard, and Jeff Okudah, a cornerback, No. 3 Clemson’s only first-team All-American was linebacker Isaiah Simmons. No. 4 Oklahoma was represented on the first team by receiver Deebo Lamb.

No. 5 Georgia and No. 11 Wisconsin were the other teams with multiple first-team selections.

Georgia placed tackle Andrew Thomas and safety J.R. Reed on the All-America team.

Wisconsin running back Jonathan Taylor is the only player to repeat as a first-team All-American this season. Badgers center Tyler Biadasz also made the first-team.

Ohio State led all teams with seven players selected to the three All-America teams, including quarterback Justin Fields, who made the second team.

No. 9 Alabama had no players selected to the first team for the first time since 2010, but had five players combined on the second and third teams. Oklahoma and Utah also had five selections on the three teams, and LSU and Clemson each had four.

Source: Reds, Miles agree to 2-year deal

All-Star pitcher Wade Miley and the Cincinnati Reds have agreed to a $15 million, two-year contract, a person familiar with deal told The Associated Press.

Miley, a 33-year-old left-hander, was 14-6 with a 3.98 ERA in 21 starts for the AL champion Houston Astros.

He had a $4.5 million salary base and earned $500,000 in performance bonuses. Miley made one postseason appearance, allowing three runs and four hits over 2⅓ innings in the Game 3 Division Series loss to Tampa Bay.


He was an All-Star in 2012, when he went 16-11.

Rays sign Japanese slugger Tsutugo

The Tampa Bay Rays and Japanese slugger Yoshihito Tsutugo have finalized a two-year contract worth about $12 million.

The 28-year-old Tsutugo was scheduled to be formally introduced by the Rays on Tuesday.

Tsutugo was made available to major league teams through the posting process by Yokohama of Japan’s Central League.

The Rays will have to pay a posting fee of about $2.4 million to his former club.

A left-handed-hitting outfielder, Tsutugo batted .272 this year with 29 homers and 79 RBIs. He has a .285 average with 205 homers and 613 RBIs during 10 seasons with Yokohama.

LHP Rodriguez, Rangers finalize 2-year deal

Left-hander Joey Rodriguez and the Texas Rangers have finalized a $5.5 million, two-year contract that could be worth $8 million if a team option for 2022 is exercised.

The 28-year-old reliever, who spent the past two seasons with the Chunichi Dragons of Japan’s Central League, Rodriguez will get salaries of $2.5 million in each of the next two seasons. Texas has a $3 million option for 2022 with a $500,000 buyout.

Texas also can earn $500,000 annually in performance bonuses for games finished: $500,000 each for 20 and each additional five through 45. He was 1-2 with a 5.46 ERA in 38 relief appearances for Philadelphia in 2016 and ’17.

Associated Press

AP All-America football teams dominated by LSU, Ohio State

By Ralph D. Russo

No. 1 LSU and No. 2 Ohio State each placed three players on The Associated Press All-America first team released Monday.

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Bad call adds to late collapse that spoiled last game in Oakland

By Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press

The NFL and the Raiders both botched the final football game at Oakland’s Alameda County Coliseum as the team prepares to pack up for Las Vegas in 2020.

A bad call contributed to a crushing late-game collapse by the Raiders that left the jilted Black Hole projecting venom and trash the black and silver instead of celebrating one last hurrah with their heroes.

The Raiders (6-8) were in position to close out their quarter-century run in Oakland with a win when Derek Carr scammed for a first down and slid before reaching the sideline to make sure the clock would keep running.

The official erroneously ruled him out of bounds, which forced Oakland to run another play before the 2-minute warning, sparing Jacksonville from burning a timeout and giving the Jaguars an additional 40 seconds for a winning drive in a 20-16 victory in a game they trailed 16-3 at the half.

In the confusion that followed the call — which the NFL apologized to Jon Gruden for Monday — Oakland went a delay of game penalty because a touchdown came on a third-down pass and Daniel Carlson missed from 45 yards after a penalty gave him a do-over on his miss from 50 yards.

That set the stage for Gardner Minshew’s touchdown toss to Chris Conley with 31 seconds left.

Gruden said he got an apology from NFL officiating chief Al Riveron but was frustrated nothing could have been done at the time to rectify the mistake after seeing other calls this year get changed in New York.

“Why don’t you stop the game and get the clock right? I don’t think it was even close,” Gruden said. “So, I’m not happy about it.”

Among other noteworthy calls in Week 15:

■ The New England Patriots were trolled at Paul Brown Stadium in Cincinnati a week after the Patriots went retro by bringing Rockwell’s “Somebody’s Watching Me” over the stadium speakers.

■ LeShaun Sims’ punt return hurt the Tennessee Titans’ chances of a last-second comeback in their 24-21 loss to the Houston Texans that snatched a four-game winning streak.

Sims fielded the punt at the 1 as it was about to bounce into the end zone for a touchback. He returned it to the 12, costing his team valuable seconds.

With contributions from AP pro football writers Josh Dubov and Teresa M. Walker.
Another record
Brees breaks Manning’s mark for career touchdown passes as Saints rout Colts

BY BRETT MARTEL
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Drew Brees became the NFL’s career leader in touchdown passes, throwing for four scores to lead the New Orleans Saints to a 34-7 victory over the Indianapolis Colts on Monday night.

The scoring strike that broke Peyton Manning’s record of 539 career touchdown passes came in the third quarter, when Brees hit tight end Josh Hill for a 5-yard score. Brees’ next pass in the game was the 541st scoring toss of his career, a 28-yard TD to reserve QB and utility player Taysom Hill that put the Saints up 34-0.

“It was special, everything about the night,” Brees said. “It just kind of makes your whole life and career flash before your eyes, because I never thought I’d have a chance to be part of something like this.”

The 40-year-old Brees came into the game already holding NFL records for completions with 6,792 and yards passing with 72,577 — and built on those numbers by also setting a record for completion percentage in a game.

SEE LEADER ON PAGE 23