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# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## Culture wars collide with budget battle



CRYSTAL HOUSMAN/U.S. Air National Guard

An airman from the California Air National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing wears a lanyard celebrating Pride in August in San Jose, Calif.

## House GOP could bring politically charged social issues into defense bill negotiations

BY ABIGAIL HAUSLOHNER, MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR AND DAN LAMOTHE  
*The Washington Post*

The Republican-led House is expected to vote as soon as this week on an \$886 billion bill that aims to shape Pentagon policy next year, but its path to

passage faces a potentially messy partisan battle over abortion access, LGBTQ+ rights, efforts to promote diversity in the military and other politically charged social issues.

The House version of the National Defense Authorization Act includes increased investment in

precision missiles, warships and newer technologies like artificial intelligence and hypersonics — core bipartisan priorities as the Pentagon directs greater attention toward China. It also authorizes a 5.2% base pay increase for military personnel and expanded support for their families through

housing improvements, and broader access to child care, health care and education benefits.

"The threat posed by China is real, and it represents the most pressing national security chal-

SEE BUDGET ON PAGE 7

## Ukraine gains G7 security pledges

BY CHRIS MEGERIAN, LORNE COOK AND SEUNG MIN KIM  
*Associated Press*

VILNIUS, Lithuania — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed fresh pledges of weapons and ammunition to fight Russia's invasion along with longer-term security commitments from the West on Wednesday even as he expressed disappointment over the lack of a clear path for his country to join NATO as the alliance wrapped up its annual summit.

"The Ukrainian delegation is bringing home a significant security victory for the Ukraine, for our country, for our people, for our children," he said while flanked by U.S. President Joe Biden and other leaders from the Group of Seven most powerful democratic nations.

A joint declaration issued by the G7 lays the groundwork for each nation to negotiate agreements to help Ukraine bolster its military over the long term. Zelenskyy described the initiative as a bridge toward eventual NATO membership and a deterrent against Russia.

Biden said, "Our support will last long into the future. We're going to help Ukraine build a strong, capable defense."

The Ukrainian and American presidents also met privately along with their advisers, and Biden pledged later that "the United States is doing everything we can to get you what you need." He acknowledged that Zelenskyy is sometimes "frustrated" by the

SEE UKRAINE ON PAGE 9

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## Officials: 3 firms shared sensitive data about taxpayers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A group of congressional Democrats reported Wednesday that three large tax preparation firms sent “extraordinarily sensitive” information on tens of millions of taxpayers to Facebook parent company Meta over the course of at least two years.

Their report urges federal agencies to investigate and potentially go to court over the wealth of information that H&R Block, Tax-Act and Tax Slayer shared with

the social media giant.

In a letter to the heads of the IRS, the Justice Department, the Federal Trade Commission and the IRS watchdog, seven lawmakers say their findings “reveal a shocking breach of taxpayer privacy by tax prep companies and by Big Tech firms.”

Their report said highly personal and financial information about sources of taxpayers’ income, tax deductions and exemptions was made accessible to Meta as taxpayers used the tax software to

prepare their taxes.

That data came to Meta through its Pixel code, which the tax firms installed on their websites to gather information on how to improve their own marketing campaigns. In exchange, Meta was able to access the data to write targeted algorithms for its own users.

The program collected information on taxpayers’ filing status, income, refund amounts, names of dependents and approximate federal tax owed, among other things, the report states.

### EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (July 13)	\$1.08
British pound (July 13)	\$1.26
Japanese yen (July 13)	137.00
South Korean won (July 13)	1261.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
Britain (Pound)	1.2991
Canada (Dollar)	1.3173
China (Yuan)	7.1728
Denmark (Krone)	6.7163
Egypt (Pound)	30.9526
Euro	1.1095
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8270
Hungary (Forint)	338.58
Israel (Shekel)	3.6452
Japan (Yen)	138.83
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3068
Norway (Krone)	10.1684
Philippines (Peso)	54.55
Poland (Zloty)	4.00
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7518
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3329
South Korea (Won)	1277.96

Switzerland (Franc)	0.8698
Thailand (Baht)	34.71
Turkey (NewLira)	26.1482

(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

Prime rate	8.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	5.75
Federal funds market rate	5.08
3-month bill	5.41
30-year bond	4.03

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

### THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



### THURSDAY IN EUROPE



### FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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## MILITARY

# USAF drops monthly bonuses for 33 jobs

By ROSE L. THAYER

*Stars and Stripes*

More than 30 Air Force jobs no longer qualify for special pay based on their level of difficulty, according to an annual service review.

An Air Force board that reviews pay for special-duty assignments looked at more than 100 career fields and determined there are 70 specialties that will still receive the monthly bonus in fiscal 2024, which begins Oct. 1. That's down from 103 in the previous year.

Bonus pay for these jobs ranges from \$75 to \$450 monthly and va-

ries based on skill level, assignment location and training levels, the Air Force said.

The jobs losing the bonus pay include cryptologic language analyst, flight attendant, diagnostic medical sonography, defense courier, dog handler, airborne mission system operator and some weather support jobs, according to a list of changes confirmed by the Air Force.

The service said last month that these decisions were made separate from budget considerations, though its proposed 2024 budget in-

cluded a reduction of about 3,700 airmen receiving the special bonus pay at a savings of more than \$4 million.

These cuts were made to "maintain parity with specialties of similar duties, responsibilities and training," the service said in a statement about the bonus changes.

The Air Force also added four new jobs to the list, increased pay for 11 positions and decreased pay for seven.

The new jobs receiving special-duty pay are material management, bomber airborne mainte-

nance support, enlisted faculty instructor at the Air Force Academy, and special missions support.

This review did not include pilot incentives and bonuses, which are handled separately.

The Space Force conducted the same board review for the first time since the military branch was created three years ago. The service inherited its bonus pay structure from jobs that it acquired from the Air Force, and last month announced it will remove three of the 14 jobs receiving special pay and add two new ones.

Airmen and guardians can expect the changes to take effect Oct. 1. For those in a job that will be removed from the list, they will continue to receive half the amount that they collected in 2023 through the next fiscal year.

The Air Force announced similar cuts to special-duty pay last year, but Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall reversed the decision weeks before the changes would have gone into effect.

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# Navy secretary signs order mandating mental health care

By KELLY AGEE

*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps have apparently become the first U.S. service branches to implement the Brandon Act, a set of policies that provide service members with a confidential evaluation and greater access to mental health care.

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro signed the instruction Monday, according to the parents of Brandon Castera and a USNI News report Tuesday. President Joe Biden signed the measure into law in December 2021 as part of the fiscal 2022 National Defense Authorization Act.

The act is named for Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Brandon Castera, an aviation electrician. Castera, 21, died by suicide June 25, 2018, at Naval Station Norfolk, Va. A command investigation found that a combative and toxic leadership contributed to his death.

Brandon's parents, Teri and Patrick Castera, two months after his death started a push to get the measure passed, an uphill battle of phone calls and trips to the Pentagon, Patrick Castera told Stars and Stripes by phone Wednesday.

"He will forever be saving lives and his death meant something, as



DAVID BRANDES/U.S. Marine Corps

**Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro speaks at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., in May. He signed the Brandon Act, a set of policies that provide service members with a confidential evaluation and greater access to mental health care, on Monday.**

tragic as it was," his father said. "I know he's smiling at us. He had a smile and made everyone want to smile."

The Brandon Act allows service members to seek confidential help for any mental health issue, at any time, in any environment, thereby reducing the stigma associated with seeking mental health treatment.

The act requires a mental health evaluation as soon as service mem-

bers self-report, according to thebrandonact.org, a website the Casteras created. The Brandon Act "will also allow Americans serving in uniform to seek help confidentially and, if necessary, outside of the chain of command," according to the website.

The measure also mandates annual training from the Department of Defense on recognizing members who may need a mental health evaluation.

Under the law, commanders and supervisors must ensure that service members understand the procedure for requesting a mental health evaluation, ensure they are referred as soon as possible, maintain privacy protections and not seek the results of evaluations, among other requirements.

Del Toro called the Casteras as they drove to their Peoria, Ariz., home with word that he had signed the order to implement the act, Patrick Castera said. Del Toro read the policy over the phone and said he was signing it on the spot, Castera said. The secretary later sent a photo of the signed document to the Castera family.

"It brought tears to our eyes knowing that he actually signed the act into Navy and Marine law," Teri Castera said. "It was thrilling."

The Casteras posted the news Tuesday on The Brandon Act Facebook page, where a flood of comments followed.

"This is amazing," Petty Officer 2nd Class Emilie Nielson, a gunner's mate, wrote. "I can't tell you how many hoops I had to jump through to seek help for my own mental health through the military. This is a huge step in the right direction."

Two months ago, Nielson, of Albuquerque, N.M., was stationed on

the amphibious transport dock USS Mesa Verde, when she experienced difficulty getting help for anxiety and depression, she told Stars and Stripes via Facebook Messenger on Wednesday.

"When I was on the ship, the big issue I faced was getting an ap-

pointment," Nielson said. The process involved getting screened by medical specialists who set up a doctor appointment for a referral to a therapist, she said.

The process could take weeks or months.

"There's a saying the Navy has: 'Ship, shipmate, self,' which to me is completely backwards," Nielson said. "If I can't take care of myself first, how can I take care of my shipmates or my ship? When I told my command about my view on the saying I received some pushback."

The Navy recorded 72 suicides in fiscal 2022, according to the Defense Department.

"This is to erase the stigma out there about mental health, it is OK to seek help," Patrick Castera said.

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Castera

# Crash of Air Force drone in Romania last summer blamed on pilot error

By JENNIFER H. SVAN

*Stars and Stripes*

Human error caused a U.S. Air Force MQ-9 Reaper to crash last summer near an air base in Romania, resulting in a loss of more than \$14 million, an investigation found.

The drone smashed into a cornfield outside the 71st Air Base in Campia Turzii on July 14, 2022, according to local media reports.

No injuries and minimal damage to civilian property were reported, according to the Air Combat Command investigation re-

port, which was released last week. The Reaper had a value of about \$14.6 million.

Investigators determined pilot error "based on channelized attention" and "poor airmanship" were to blame.

The report said the unmanned aircraft system, assigned to the 432nd Wing at Creech Air Force Base, Nev., came down at an undisclosed location in Europe.

The pilot and sensor operator tried to land the drone when its control system network began malfunctioning shortly after take-

off during a training mission, according to the report.

The pilot singularly focused on a "stuck (engine) torque" after an electrical anomaly caused the engine indicators to freeze on the pilot's display, the report stated. As a result, he misidentified the proper emergency procedure and he and the sensor operator failed to run through an emergency engine failure checklist, the report said.

When the Reaper arrived overhead at the designated airfield, the pilot and operator in effect

shut down the engine to try and safely glide the aircraft into a landing, the report said.

But because of the malfunction, the cockpit display suggested the engine still was operating, Air Combat Command said in a statement issued with the investigation findings.

Based on the erroneous belief that the engine was running, the team tried to abort the landing and go-around for another attempt.

Soon afterward, the pilot said he couldn't control the drone. He stalled it eight times before the

Reaper ran out of energy, according to the report.

The Air Force has flown drone missions from Romania since 2021, when the service moved 90 airmen and an unspecified number of MQ-9 Reapers to Campia Turzii.

The Reapers help with surveillance and reconnaissance in the Black Sea region, where the U.S. regularly has accused Russia of dangerous intercepts of aircraft.

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## MILITARY

# N. Korea tests ICBM days after threatening US

BY DAVID CHOI  
AND HANA KUSUMOTO  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — North Korea fired an intercontinental ballistic missile off its eastern coast around 10 a.m. Wednesday, according to military authorities in South Korea and Japan.

The missile was launched from the Pyongyang area at a high angle and flew about 620 miles before splashing down in the Sea of Japan, or the East Sea, South Korea's Joint Chiefs said in a message to news reporters.

"North Korea's launch of a long-range ballistic missile is a serious provocation that undermines the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and the international community," the message said.

Japan's military detected an ICBM being fired from near Pyongyang at 9:59 a.m. that flew for 74 minutes before splashing into the sea about 155 miles west of Okushiri Island, beyond the country's exclusive economic zone, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said at a news conference Wednesday.

The missile flew at a maximum altitude of 3,730 miles, Matsuno said. No damage was reported as of Wednesday afternoon.

"We will continue to work closely with related countries, such as the United States and South Korea, and will put our utmost efforts to gather and analyze information and to monitor the situation in order to protect the lives and properties of the Japanese citizens," Japan's Ministry of Defense said on its website.

The ICBM launch comes nearly 1 1/2 months after North Korea attempted on May 31 to launch what it called a surveillance satellite. The rocket failed and the vehicle fell into the Yellow Sea, where it was recovered by South Korea.

The regime promised another attempt soon.

North Korea last tested an ICBM on April 13. The state-run Korean Central News Agency called it a Hwasong-18, the country's first solid-fueled ICBM. The launch, which prompted Japan to warn Hokkaido residents to seek shelter, was also fired from near Pyongyang and flew 620 miles at a high angle.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who is at the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, has ordered a maximum effort to gather and analyze information related to Wednesday's launch, according to the Prime Minister's Office.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol was also at the NATO summit on Wednesday, talking to the North Atlantic allies about the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear-weapons program, according to media reports.

Wednesday's launch follows threats by the communist regime on Monday to shoot down U.S. reconnaissance aircraft. The North Koreans alleged that crewed RC-135 and unmanned RQ-Global Hawk aircraft violated its maritime airspace between July 2 and Friday.

Kim Yo Jong, a senior Workers' Party official and the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, alleged Monday that U.S. military aircraft had crossed the maritime military demarcation line dividing the Korean Peninsula and into the country's exclusive economic zone, according to KCNA.

She also warned that the regime will not

be responsible for "what dangers are facing" U.S. aircraft if they continue to cross its territory.

South Korea's military has denied the claim and said its joint aerial reconnaissance operations with the U.S. were routine.

Washington echoed Seoul's denial and said the North's "recent statements that U.S. flights above its claimed exclusive economic zone are unlawful are unfounded," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said at a press conference Tuesday.

Prior to Wednesday's launch, North Korea had fired 14 ballistic missiles in 10 separate days of testing so far this year. The most recent launch was June 15, when the North fired two short-range ballistic missiles off its eastern coast.

North Korea has been prohibited by the U.N. Security Council from "all ballistic missile activities" since 2006, when the organization unanimously adopted resolutions to punish the regime for its first nuclear test the same year.

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## B-52 makes landing in Tokyo due to maintenance issue

BY SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — A B-52 Stratofortress bomber diverted to the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo on Wednesday morning due to an in-flight maintenance issue.

The aircraft, assigned to the 5th Bomb Wing at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., arrived at Yokota at 10:22 a.m., according to an 11:06 a.m. post on the base's website.

"It landed safely and without incident," the post said.

The B-52 is in the Indo-Pacific region to support a training exercise, a Pacific Air Forces spokesman, Maj. Christopher Merian, told Stars and Stripes by email that afternoon.

PACAF records show the last time a B-52 landed at Yokota was in 1989 during the Japanese-American Friendship Festival, he added.

The Yokota incident occurred a week after four B-52s arrived at



KELLY AGEE/Stars and Stripes

**A B-52 Stratofortress bomber parks at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Wednesday.**

Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, as part of the Air Force's ongoing bomber task force missions intended to project U.S. air power in the region.

Those planes are assigned to the 20th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., PACAF said in a news release Tuesday.

The Minot-based 23rd Bomb

Squadron has also deployed to Guam with four more Stratofortresses, Andersen's 36th Wing said in an email Wednesday afternoon, without stating when those planes arrived.

In total, there are eight B-52s and 385 airmen deployed to Guam in support of the bomber task force missions, the wing said.

"Each mission flown further

demonstrates our ability to provide agile combat ready forces and long-range strike capabilities to combatant commanders across the globe," Lt. Col. Jared Patterson, the bomb squadron's commander, said in the PACAF release.

The B-52s on Guam will train while integrating alongside allies and partners throughout the re-

gion, the release said.

"From those maintaining or flying these bombers to those behind the scenes enabling the mission, our ability to credibly assure Allies and deter adversaries requires every Airman out here," Patterson said.

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## Retired soldier accused of stealing, crashing Humvee at Fort Stewart

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

ATLANTA — The man accused of crashing a Humvee into the front entrance of the 3rd Infantry Division's headquarters building at Fort Stewart is a retired soldier and Iraq war veteran, officials at the Georgia Army post said Tuesday.

Treamon D. Lacy was charged Monday by Army investigators with theft of government property and destruction of government

property after they arrested him at the scene of the crash, said Kevin Larson, a Fort Stewart spokesman. Lacy was being held in the Liberty County jail near Fort Stewart as of Tuesday afternoon, jail records show.

Lacy, 39, retired from the Army as a staff sergeant in July 2013 after serving more than a decade as a wheeled vehicle mechanic, according to the Army.

He served two combat deployments to Iraq.

Fort Stewart military police detained Lacy after he crashed the Humvee at about 10 a.m. into the glass front doors of the 3rd ID headquarters, known as Building 1 on the post.

No one was injured in the crash, but it destroyed the building front entrance, Larson said.

The suspect's status as a retired veteran gave him access to the installation, Larson said. He declined further comment on the incident.

Officials have not said when Lacy allegedly stole the Humvee or whether they believe he crashed it intentionally into the division headquarters, which houses the 3rd ID's commanding general, his deputies and much of the division staff.

Lacy had yet to appear in court as of Tuesday afternoon, jail records show.

His case was expected to be handled by federal prosecutors with the U.S. Attorney's Office for

the Southern District of Georgia, according to the Army.

The incident marked the second theft of an Army Humvee in about one week.

Someone stole a Humvee from the California Army National Guard's Santa Rosa armory on July 3.

It has not yet been recovered, according to California officials.

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# MILITARY

## Carbon filters reduced PFAS contamination at US Navy bases

By ALEX WILSON AND HANA KUSUMOTO  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Newly installed water filters appear to have reduced toxic PFAS compounds in wastewater at two U.S. bases in Japan, according to Navy and Japanese authorities.

Samples taken over the past year at Yokosuka and Naval Air Facility Atsugi, both southwest of Tokyo, revealed high levels of PFOS and PFOA, two common PFAS compounds that are suspected of causing significant health issues. The samples showed the toxins present in some cases at 258 times Japan's provisional limit of 50 parts per trillion.

However, survey results released Monday by Kanagawa prefecture indicate that granular activated carbon filters installed by the Navy have reduced the contamination to less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of Japan's limit, according to a news release from the prefecture.

PFAS — per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances — are manufactured chemicals commonly found

in fire-extinguishing foam widely used at airports, factories and military bases, and in household products such as electronics, paint and water-repellent clothing.

The Environmental Protection Agency refers to PFAS as “forever chemicals” because they “break down very slowly and can build up in people, animals and the environment over time.” Current research shows high levels of exposure can lead to fertility issues, developmental effects, increased risks of cancers and other health concerns.

On Sept. 22, a fire-suppression system inside a NAF Atsugi hangar accidentally released about 1,850 gallons of fire-extinguishing foam that reached a retention pond on the base, according to the prefecture. October water samples showed combined PFOS and PFOA present at 530 to 910 parts per trillion, the release states.

The combined concentration dropped to as low as 4.6 parts per trillion after the base installed the filters, according to the release.

Water damage caused the foam

release, which was mostly contained inside the hangar, Naval Forces Japan spokeswoman Cmdr. Katie Cerezo told Stars and Stripes by email Wednesday.

Only a “small amount” of the foam reached the base's stormwater system and the retention pond, she said, and the water was “successfully treated” with the filters.

Last year, several wastewater tests at Yokosuka, about 25 miles southeast of NAF Atsugi, also showed high levels of PFOS and PFOA at a wastewater treatment plant, with the highest levels around 12,900 parts per trillion.

The base installed the carbon water filters in November and removed the fire-extinguishing foam containing PFAS. By December, water sampling by U.S. Forces Japan and the Japanese government showed levels between 1.8 and 3.2 parts per trillion, according to the prefecture.

Further surveys on March 20 showed levels of 2.9 to 3.8 parts per trillion, the release said.

Cerezo declined to say whether the source of Yokosuka's contamination has been identified but



Akifumi Ishikawa/Stars and Stripes

**A fire-suppression system at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan, accidentally released about 1,850 gallons of toxic foam on Sept. 22, according to Kanagawa prefecture.**

said no more high PFAS concentrations have been reported, making a “one-time, inadvertent input into the system” the “likely source.”

Recent tests showed no detectable PFAS levels at Yokosuka, she said, and Naval Forces Japan remains “committed to environmental stewardship at all of our installations.”

U.S. Forces Japan does not intend to provide further test results unless the levels exceed Japan's 50 parts-per-trillion provisional limit, according to Kanagawa pre-

fecture. Cerezo said Japan Environmental Governing Standards establishes a 50 parts per trillion limit on drinking water but has no established limit for wastewater.

“The latest testing shows no detectable level of PFOS in the wastewater treatment plant,” she wrote in her email. “Since it is at the non-detect level, the need to continue to report is no longer warranted.”

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### Royal Hawaiian HOLOKU BALL

Witness as we turn back the hands of time and take a peek into a Golden Era, when Hawaii was under Monarchical rule. The Iolani Palace was often the gathering center of the people and the Ball took place in the Throne Room, with The Royal Hawaiian Band performing. These are still held annually in Hawaii and now you too can experience a Holoku Ball right here at The New Sanno Hotel.

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## MILITARY

# Army seeks AI to predict enemy's next step

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Army wants artificial intelligence that can predict what an enemy will do next, and it's looking for outside help to turn its wish into reality.

The service published a notice last week saying it seeks software for its intelligence analysts that can run 3D simulations showing how the situation on a battlefield could evolve.

The notice to the defense industry spells out the Army's wish list for a system that uses AI, which Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and service leaders have said is a top tech modernization priority.

Issued by troops based at the Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, the request for information assumes a future in which human soldiers are surrounded by weaponry and vehicles guided by AI.

These tech-driven wars will re-

quire commanders to learn new ways of fighting rapidly. The war in Ukraine and an earlier armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan are cited as examples.

In both instances, tactics changed so quickly that intelligence analysts struggled to predict what the enemy would do, the notice said.

Ideally, the AI system created for the service would analyze disparate bits of intelligence, fore-

cast what the enemy is doing and predict vulnerabilities, all while running on a laptop and being easy to learn and use, the notice said.

The request follows several years of multibillion-dollar investment by the Army in artificial intelligence.

Military leaders say AI can help commanders understand the voluminous amounts of intelligence data gathered on the battlefield. In addition to the U.S., Russia and es-

pecially China have emerged as deep-pocketed investors in AI technology.

Defense companies that have the ability to build a prototype AI are asked in the notice to send the Army information about what they can do and how much money and time it would take to build the software.

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## Family has witnessed century of sub history

By CAITLYN BURCHETT  
*The Virginian-Pilot*

The grooves of the Will family's gold-plated dolphins have tarnished. But the submarine warfare insignia, having been pinned to the chests of four generations, shines nonetheless.

The dolphins have been handed down from Will to Will for 100 years, bearing witness to major conflicts and events — World War II, the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Iraq War — and the U.S. Navy's shift from diesel ships to nuclear powered warfighters. That century of Naval submarine history is mapped out on walls of the family's Buckroo home in Hampton.

"This is submarine history, but it is our history too," said Alex Will, a retired captain and third-generation submariner.

Alex was pinned with the dolphins in 1988 when he was 26. The insignia, which is given to qualified submariners, belonged to his father and his father's father.

More than three decades later, those same dolphins belong to his son. Adam Will, 27, was pinned in May 2021 while assigned to the Norfolk-based USS Washington, a Virginia-class fast attack submarine. Although the Navy can't confirm it, Adam may be the only fourth-generation submariner.

"It is a very special feeling," Adam said. "When I look at the photos at home, and see what my great-grandfather, my grandfather and my dad have done, it is admirable. But I don't think of it as continuing a legacy — I am just doing my job."

Engraved on the back of the dolphins is the name of the first Will to join the silent service. John Will Sr. was one of the Navy's first submarine officers in the years before World War II, with his commissioning dating to 1923. He commanded three diesel S-class submarines and the fleet submarine Porpoise before World War II.

"Four generations, in any pro-

fession is noteworthy, particularly when that service is so important to our nation's defense," Alex said. "In my grandfather's day — World War II — submarines were critical to the outcome of that war, they were vital to winning the Cold War, and are arguably the most essential weapon system in these times of strategic competition."

John Mylin Will Sr. also commanded submarine divisions in the Pacific and Military Sealift Command, achieving the rank of vice admiral. Upon his retirement in 1959, he received a "tombstone promotion," and retired as a 4-star admiral. He died in 1981.

The second Will was the late Capt. John Will Jr., Adam's grandfather. John Will Jr. began his Naval career in 1953 as the Navy was on the cusp of introducing nuclear-powered propulsion.

"My dad wanted to go to the Naval Academy. As a kid, he moved around with his mom and dad so much that he went to 28 schools growing up. He wrote an essay about wanting to be a midshipman in the U.S. Naval Academy and he turned it in every time he changed schools," Alex said with a laugh.

John Will Jr. first worked on two destroyers and later entered the nuclear training program to transfer to submarines.

In 1989, John Will Jr. told The Beacon: "I know I'm prejudiced, but I feel the nuclear submarine fleet is the current backbone of the Navy ... Not to take anything away from carriers or battle groups, but I think subs are slowly growing in prominence."

John Will Jr. went on to be the first commanding officer of the USS Puffer (SSN 652), putting it in commission in 1968. He then served the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations as head of submarine research and development and returned to the Pentagon as a military advisor to the Department of Defense's Office of Naval Warfare.



KENDALL WARNER/TNS

**Lt. Adam Will and his father, retired Capt. Alex Will, stand on the front steps of the Will home in Hampton, Va. on July 6. Adam is the fourth generation of Navy submariners to hail from the Will family.**

"We are all submariners but it is an interesting distinction because my great-grandfather was a diesel boat guy, but in the '50s my grandfather shifted and spent his entire career as a nuclear officer," Adam said. "And then my dad and I followed that directional shift and became nuclear officers."

In 1985, Alex Will was commissioned as an officer and assigned to fast attack submarine USS Silverides, continuing what was affectionately dubbed "a family tradition." Alex served aboard the Norfolk-based submarine for three years before completing two years of shore duty and transitioning to the Navy Reserve. He retired as a captain in 2016 after a 30-year career.

While Alex left the active duty force, he still worked closely with submarines. He spent many years in the SSGN Program Office, overseeing the conversion of the capabilities of four Ohio-Class guided-missile submarines from launching nuclear missiles to launching guided missiles.

The Wills, Alex said, have always been drawn to subsurface warfare.

"It seems our family has always been connected to the submarine force in some way, shape or form," Alex said. "Even my oldest brother, he is an engineer, he works on acoustic programs. That is very important to the submarine force because our eyes

and ears down there are the acoustics. There are no windows. Listening is all you've got."

Even so, it came as a surprise to him when his son asked about pursuing a Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps scholarship before heading to the University of Virginia in 2014. The program offers college tuition to qualifying students who sign on to be commissioned as a Navy officer upon graduation.

"We have never pushed the military to our boys," Alex said. "It was my thing, and it was my dad's thing. But we never said, 'Hey, why don't you go into the military?'"

"So when Adam was applying to colleges and writing essays, he said he might go for an ROTC scholarship, and we were like, 'Where did that come from?' Joining the military had not been uttered by him up until that point."

Adam graduated from UVA in 2018 and went through two years of intensive nuclear training before he was commissioned in 2020. He was pinned with his dolphins in 2021.

"The Washington has a colloquial name — the Blackfish — and when we get pinned underway, we get pinned with black fish (dolphins), instead of silver or gold," Adam said. "But because I was pinned with my great-grandfather's dolphins, I was the only one with gold dolphins."

## Greece, Turkey pledge to 'reset' ties

Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece — Greece is ready to "reset" relations with neighbor Turkey in an effort to bypass decades-old disputes between the two NATO members, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said Wednesday.

Mitsotakis held an hourlong meeting Wednesday with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of a NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, and told reporters they had agreed to continue high-level contacts.

"Our problems have not been magically resolved," Mitsotakis said. "But today's meeting confirmed my intention and that of President Erdogan to reset Greek-Turkish relations."

Cabinet ministers from the two sides are due to meet after the summer in the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki, Mitsotakis said.

Wednesday's talks were held a day after Turkey dropped its objections to Sweden's membership in NATO and signaled further willingness to lower tensions with Western nations, including Greece.

Turkey and Greece remain at odds over maritime boundaries in the eastern Mediterranean, a dispute that affects illegal migration into the European Union, mineral rights, and the projection of military power.

Both NATO members are seeking to upgrade their air forces with assistance from the United States: Ankara wants new and upgraded F-16 fighter jets, while Athens is keen to join the F-35 program.

The defense ministers of Greece and Turkey, Nikos Dendias and Yasar Guler, held a separate meeting in Vilnius on Wednesday.

MILITARY

# Budget: Bill includes plan to reinstate troops who defied vaccine order

FROM PAGE 1

“challenge we’ve faced in decades,” House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike Rogers, R-Ala., told colleagues in remarks Tuesday. The defense bill, he added, was designed “with that underlying goal: to deter China.”

But it is the country’s intensifying culture-war battles, not any specific approach to U.S. national security, likely to attract the most vociferous debate as lawmakers consider amendments to the bill in the coming days. While it is widely considered one of the few must-pass pieces of legislation Congress takes up each year, some members and their staffers have warned that inserting contentious issues like abortion into the bill could derail the process entirely, complicating U.S. defense strategy and funding for the coming year.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., on Tuesday seemed to concede that the rancor surrounding some amendments could lead to delays. “We’re going to get it passed,” he said, adding, “It doesn’t have to be on a specific time.”

“It’s not how you start,” he said. “It’s how you finish.”

The Senate has yet to schedule a vote on its version of the bill. The two chambers will ultimately meet to reconcile any differences before the legislation can move to President Joe Biden for approval. The White House has criticized aspects of the House measure, which has diverged in some key ways from the proposal that the administration sent to Congress.

The bill, approved last month by the House Armed Services Committee on a 58-1 vote, succeeds in “pushing back against the radical woke ideology being forced on our servicemen and women,” according to a summary of the legislation released last month by committee Republicans.

The House bill would ban drag shows and the teaching of critical race theory in the military while rolling back initiatives, passed by the Democratic-controlled House in previous years, meant to foster diversity and inclusion within the Defense Department. That includes eliminating the department’s chief diversity officer position and a department working group designed to counter extreme

mism in the ranks.

Also built into the House bill is a plan to offer reinstatement to service members who defied the military’s coronavirus vaccine requirement, since repealed, and were discharged for their refusal to do as they were told. That component of the legislation “sets a dangerous precedent that not following lawful orders is an option for service members,” the Biden administration warned.

On Tuesday, the House Rules Committee began evaluating the more than 1,540 amendments that lawmakers have sought to insert into the NDAA. Among the record number of proposals are scores that have little to do with defense, including efforts to change laws governing concealed firearms, environmental standards, drug penalties and immigration policy. One seeks to declare the month of July “American Pride Month” — to bolster patriotism.

Not all amendments will be debated on the House floor, but some moderate Republicans worry that the influence of three far-right lawmakers who sit on the committee — Reps. Chip Roy, R-Texas, Thomas Massie, R-Ky., and Ralph Norman, R-S.C. — could prioritize the most polarizing proposals for consideration.

One amendment with more than 60 Republican co-sponsors would prohibit the Pentagon “from paying for or reimbursing expenses relating to abortion services,” the measure says. Conservatives have zeroed in on the policy, adopted in the wake of last year’s Supreme Court decision repealing the constitutional right to an abortion, that protects service members who must travel out of state to obtain the procedure.

A group of swing-district Republicans has vowed to defeat certain abortion-related amendments if they reach the House floor, said a person familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to disclose internal discussions. Many House Democrats have said they would not vote to pass the defense bill if it includes an amendment that repeals the policy.

In an interview, the armed services committee’s top Democrat, Rep. Adam Smith, of Washington, charged that “a few Republicans hijacked the bill to push their social agenda and their extreme



JABIN BOTSFORD/The Washington Post

**Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., has put a hold on top-level military promotions because of the Pentagon’s abortion policies.**

MAGA agenda” — referring to “Make America Great Again,” a rallying cry among conservatives loyal to former President Donald Trump. Democrats have sought to portray “MAGA Republicans” as espousing the party’s most polarizing and dangerous views, including those concerning abortion, equality and LGBTQ+ rights.

“We’ve taken some steps over the four years that we were in the majority to get the Pentagon to make sure that they did a better job of recruiting and making sure that people in historically marginalized communities — primarily LGBTQ women and people of color ... know that they’re welcome within the military, because historically they have not been,” Smith said, referring to Republican proposals to repeal those measures.

The country’s armed forces are facing a major recruiting challenge, Smith noted, and eliminating diversity and inclusion initiatives hinders the military’s ability to recruit talented individuals from marginalized groups.

Lawmakers also are divided — though not always along party lines — over the administration’s approach to China and Ukraine. More than 60 amendments concern U.S. policy toward China, Chinese people or Chinese entities, including some that Democrats say appear to be racist.

Republicans also submitted nearly 20 separate amendments to cut back on or eliminate U.S. security assistance to Ukraine and

NATO — proposals that stoked debate Tuesday and are likely to expose intraparty tensions if they go to the House floor.

“We should not be devoting time and resources and putting the people of Ukraine over American citizens,” Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., said, urging her colleagues to consider three proposals she introduced to defund the war effort in Ukraine.

Leading Republicans in the Armed Services Committee on Tuesday urged their Rules Committee colleagues to stick to relevant amendments, with Rogers imploring them to focus on those

“that advance the security of our nation and the needs of our service members.”

In the Senate, the partisan rift over abortion access has had enormous implications for the military’s promotion process. For the past seven months, Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., has blocked military confirmations and promotions in the Senate Armed Services Committee in a bid to pressure the Pentagon to abandon its policy.

As a consequence, the Marine Corps this week witnessed the departure of its top general without a Senate-confirmed successor.

Vigorous floor debate is important, Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va., said in an interview Tuesday. But ultimately, “all of us need to look at getting behind a bill that ensures that our men and women of the military will have the tools they need to be the most lethal and effective fighting force in the world.”

Committee members in both parties have sought to emphasize the legislation’s bipartisan wins, including its robust funding to bolster the defense industrial base — a deepening concern as the Pentagon has raided its stocks of artillery munitions to aid Ukraine — and modernize the military by retiring outdated aircraft, ships and weapons systems while investing in the development of advanced satellites, drones and munitions.

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## EUROPE

# 'No restoration of the status quo'

Could Ukraine war create chance to resolve Moldova's many Transnistria issues?

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA  
*Stars and Stripes*

CHISINAU, Moldova — The breakaway Russian-speaking territory of Transnistria on Ukraine's western border is part of Moldova but refuses to join it. It's occupied by Russian troops but not recognized by Moscow. Residents like Aurel want to keep it that way.

The 68-year-old, who declined to provide his last name, is a 50-year resident of Bender, a border town in Transnistria. He said he has no qualms with the state of limbo established by a pro-Russian uprising in 1992 and had no desire for Transnistria, a 250-mile stretch of land still steeped in imagery from its Soviet past, to integrate with Moldova or officially become one with Russia.

"Our town is clean, green and there's flowers and roses everywhere," Aurel said on a recent bus ride from Bender to Chisinau, Moldova's capital. "It's quiet, calm and everything is like it always was."

But the war raging in Ukraine and its outcome will likely upend the status quo Transnistria's some 300,000 residents have grown accustomed to, potentially providing an opportunity to resolve a frozen conflict that has stalled at the negotiation table for decades, officials and analysts say.

"This is the right time to start preparing and for both sides to start thinking about what they want from a settlement," said a senior international official, speaking on condition of anonymity under rules of their organization. "The conflict has created conditions in which both sides should start preparations for a future settlement."

For the first time in 30 years, the power dynamics between Chisinau and Tiraspol, Transnistria's capital, have flipped, the official said. Tiraspol, once having the upper hand due to its support from Russia, has been forced into a more submissive position since Ukraine shut its border with the rebel state last year.

The closures cut off Transnistria from its main trading partner, blocked access to a vital seaport in the Ukrainian city of Odesa and forced all Transnistrian imports, exports and people to solely pass through Moldovan border crossings.

"They're kind of stuck and it's a good thing for negotiations," said U.S. Ambassador to Moldova Kent Logsdon. "I think people are looking to the end of the war in Ukraine and when that happens, is that a time that maybe a peaceful



A girl in 2021 sits atop a Soviet era T-34 tank installed as a monument in Tiraspol, capital of Transnistria, a breakaway region and disputed territory unrecognized by the international community, in Moldova.

political settlement can make progress?"

Efforts to bring lasting peace to the region began shortly after a bloody war between Russia-backed secessionists and the Moldovan government claimed nearly 1,000 lives and ended in cease-fire. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), a regional security organization, is tasked with facilitating a settlement between the two sides, with the United States and European Union acting as observers at high-level talks.

The talks are unlikely to resume while Russia wages war in Ukraine because both countries are mediators in the negotiations. Lower-level discussions continue, however, despite icy tension between Ukrainian representatives and their Russian counterparts, according to the senior international official.

Moscow maintains a foothold in Transnistria through a 1,500 "peacekeeping" military force, though most troops are local recruits with Russian passports. The soldiers are ill-equipped, poorly trained and have "zero capability" of combat operations, said Alexandru Flenchea, a former Moldovan deputy prime minister for reintegration and now director of the Initiative 4 Peace think tank.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year, and a series of explosions reported in Transnistria a few months later, raised the specter of Russia pushing its southern offensive into Transnistria. Those fears largely passed as the Kremlin's forces struggled to make gains in Ukraine though the head of Moldova's spy agency warned in December that Russia will try again this year, with a possible aim of seizing a Soviet-era ammunition depot in Transnistria.

The stockpile of 20,000 tons of arms and munitions is one of Eastern Europe's largest and the pos-



Soldiers of the Transnistrian army hold red flags during the 2005 Victory Day parade in Tiraspol.

sibility that an errant missile will detonate it remains a constant worry, said the senior international official. There is much less concern that Russia will draw Transnistria into the war or recognize the region as an independent republic, as it did with occupied territory in Ukraine, said Flenchea.

"As much as [Russian President Vladimir] Putin wants to restore the Soviet Union in one shape or form, Moldova does not have that symbolic value for Russia as Ukraine does," he said. "Transnistria alone is of no value for Russia, the only value it has is that of a leverage that Russia can use to put political pressure on Moldova."

Moldova last year received coveted status as a candidate for membership in the European Union, alongside Ukraine, and intends to join the union by the end of the decade. The existence of Transnistria in its current form complicates those aspirations.

"How can one imagine Moldova being part of the EU with Russian troops on its soil?" Flenchea said.

The blue European flag is ubiquitous in Moldova and one even graces a welcome sign to the commune Calfa, located just outside a

Transnistrian border checkpoint. Moldova's pivot away from Moscow's orbit has soured Russia's attitude, said Kate Fearon, a deputy director in the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Center in Vienna.

In February, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused the West of looking to turn Moldova into "another Ukraine." Russia last year cut energy supply to Moldova as punishment, triggering sharp inflation and mass discontent. Moldova has since found alternative sources of natural gas but is still reliant on electricity from a power plant in Transnistria.

Transnistrian authorities have at times echoed Russian claims of attempted Ukrainian provocations on their territory and often announce snap military training exercises but are otherwise loath to bring the war home, according to the senior international official. Chisinau too has swatted away Ukrainian offers to help Moldova reclaim the breakaway state militarily, preferring a peaceful reconciliation.

"There have not been military movements that have caused alarm," the official said.

Links between Transnistrian



NOGA AMI-RAV/Stars and Stripes

and Moldovan residents have frayed over the decades but remain strong. Minibuses travel frequently between Chisinau and Tiraspol, with most people heading to Moldova's capital, said a bus driver who declined to be named. Many Transnistrians come to work, shop and see family and friends in Chisinau.

The number of passengers has dropped in recent years as the region, like the rest of Moldova, continues to lose residents to wealthier European nations, the driver said.

"Only old people that are poor are left," he said. "They get their pensions from Russia so that's why they want to be with Russia. They pray that nothing happens, that everything is good for them. Their gas is cheap, their salaries are low but they live calmly."

Polling in Transnistria, though conducted in a repressive political environment, indicates a lot of sympathy and loyalty to Russia as well as sympathy for Ukraine, said Flenchea, the former Moldovan deputy prime minister for reintegration. When asked if they can one day envision Transnistria being a part of Moldova, many Transnistrian residents answer "yes."

"Russia is far away and Ukraine is right there, behind the fence, and Moldova is also right there," Flenchea said.

He believes the best time to make headway in negotiations was in the first three to six months of the war, when Transnistria's leadership felt "particularly vulnerable and exposed." That opportunity was missed due to Moldova's preoccupation with the aftershocks of Russia's invasion but a final settlement is still possible, he said.

Moldova must triple its work with partners in the United States and Europe to lay out a vision for the country's future and put together all the pieces necessary for reintegration, Flenchea said.

"There will be no restoration of the status quo in Transnistria even if there's a deep freeze in the Ukraine war," he said. "It will be a different reality."



## EUROPE

# Zelensky: Cluster bombs necessary for Ukraine defense

By JOHN VANDIVER  
Stars and Stripes

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy offered reassurances Wednesday that controversial American-made cluster bombs will be used with caution, adding Ukraine's access to the weapon is "all about fairness."

"Russia is constantly using cluster shells in our area. It fights exclusively on our land, killing our people ... we are defending ourselves," Zelenskyy said moments before joining world leaders for security talks at NATO's summit in Vilnius, Lithuania.

After months of debate, President Joe Biden last week decided to send Ukraine cluster munitions, which are banned by many allies and other nations.

The munitions pose a risk to civilians because they may scatter widely and sometimes fail to detonate on impact. Unexploded bombs may remain live for many decades after a war ends.

However, the weapon can be effective on the battlefield. Gen. Christopher Cavoli, NATO's supreme allied commander and head of U.S. European Command, during testimony in April said such munitions could be put to use against Russian forces.

"It's very effective against mixed targets of personnel and equipment, especially when those targets are gathered into dense formations," Cavoli said. "It is happening in Bakhmut ... and it happens on most battlefields when one force goes into the offense. So, as a strictly military matter, it is a useful and very effective munition."

Zelenskyy said Ukrainian forces will direct the bombs at occupied territories in Ukraine.

"It is absolutely controlled and will not be used anywhere else," he said. "There must be justice. Look, there is no justice in this, that the aggressor has occupied us."

Zelenskyy's comments came on the final day of NATO's two-day summit, where he attended the inaugural meeting of the newly formed Ukraine-NATO Council.

The Ukrainian president caused a stir a day earlier when he blasted NATO for not presenting a definitive timeline for when Ukraine could join the alliance. Instead, NATO agreed Ukraine eventually will become a member, but only after the war has ended and certain government reforms have been achieved.

But speaking alongside NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg Wednesday, Zelenskyy put a positive spin on the agreement. Notably, Ukraine no longer will be required to complete a Membership Action Plan that is normally a prerequisite for new members to join the alliance.

"This will change Ukraine's membership path from a two-step process to a one-step process," Stoltenberg said Wednesday. "And we will issue an invitation for Ukraine to join NATO when allies agree that conditions are met."

In the end, Zelenskyy called the summit a success for Ukraine, although it fell short of hopes that the gathering would generate a more direct path into the alliance.

"We can state that the results of the summit are good, but if there was an invitation, it would be perfect," he said.

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## Turkey won't ratify Sweden NATO bid before October

Associated Press

VILNIUS, Lithuania — Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, said Wednesday that Sweden's NATO membership bid would not be ratified by Turkey's parliament before October.

He said at a news conference at the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, that the process would have to wait until after lawmakers return from a summer recess.

"The parliament is not in session for the upcoming two months ... but our target is to finalize this

matter as swiftly as possible," he said.

Turkey on Monday withdrew its objections to Sweden joining the alliance, a step toward the unity that Western leaders have been eager to demonstrate in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The decision by Erdogan was a significant move toward Sweden's membership and came after days of intensive meetings.

Finland has already become the 31st member of the alliance; Sweden is on deck to become the 32nd.



PAUL ELLIS/AP

President Joe Biden speaks at an event with G7 leaders next to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, center, and Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to announce a Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine during the NATO Summit, in Vilnius, Lithuania, on Wednesday.

## Ukraine: Move seen as bridge toward eventual NATO membership

FROM PAGE 1

pace of military assistance.

Zelenskyy thanked Biden, saying that "you spend this money for our lives," and said shipments of controversial cluster munitions would help Ukraine's fight against Russia.

It was a marked shift in tone from Zelenskyy's complaints a day earlier that it was "unprecedented and absurd" to avoid setting a timeline for Ukraine to join NATO.

On the final day of NATO's summit, the alliance launched a new forum for deepening ties with Ukraine: the NATO-Ukraine Council. It's intended to serve as a permanent body where the alliance's 31 members and Ukraine can hold consultations and call for meetings in emergency situations.

The setting is part of NATO's effort to bring Ukraine as close as possible to the military alliance without actually joining it. On Tuesday, the leaders said in their communique summarizing the summit's conclusions that Ukraine can join "when allies agree and conditions are met."

"Today we meet as equals," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said at a news conference with Zelenskyy. "I look forward to the day we meet as allies."

The ambiguous plan for Ukraine's future membership reflects the challenges of reaching consensus among the alliance's current members while the war continues, and has frustrated Zelenskyy even as he expressed appreciation for military hardware being promised by the G7.

"The results of the summit are good, but if there were an invitation, that would be ideal," Zelen-

skyy said, through a translator. He added that joining NATO would be "a serious motivating factor for Ukrainian society" at it resists Russia.

"NATO needs us just as we need NATO," he said alongside Stoltenberg.

Ukraine's future membership was the most divisive and emotionally charged issue at this year's summit. In essence, Western countries are willing to keep sending weapons to help Ukraine do the job that NATO was designed to do — hold the line against a Russian invasion — but not allow Ukraine to join its ranks and benefit from its security during the war.

"We have to stay outside of this war but be able to support Ukraine. We managed that very delicate balancing act for the last 17 months. It's to the benefit of everyone that we maintain that balancing act," Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said.

Amanda Sloat, senior director of European affairs for the U.S. National Security Council, defended the summit's decisions.

"I would agree that the communique is unprecedented, but I see that in a positive way," she told reporters.

Sloat noted that Ukraine will not need to work through a "membership action plan" as it seeks to join NATO, although she said "there are still governance and security sector reforms that are going to be required."

The action plan is usually a key step in the process that involves advice and assistance for countries seeking to join.

Symbols of support for Ukraine are common around Vilnius,

where the country's blue-and-yellow flags hang from buildings and are pasted inside windows. One sign cursed Russian President Vladimir Putin. Another urged NATO leaders to "hurry up" their assistance for Ukraine.

However, there was caution inside the summit itself, especially from Biden, who has explicitly said he doesn't think Ukraine is ready to join NATO. There are concerns that the country's democracy is unstable and its corruption remains too deeply rooted.

Under Article 5 of the NATO charter, members are obligated to defend each other from attack, which could swiftly draw the U.S. and other nations into direct fighting with Russia.

Defining an end to hostilities is no easy task. Officials have declined to define the goal, which could suggest a negotiated ceasefire or Ukraine reclaiming all occupied territory. Either way, Putin would essentially have veto power over Ukraine's NATO membership by prolonging the conflict.

British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace warned Wednesday of bubbling frustration over Zelenskyy's demands, adding that "people want to see gratitude" for Western military support. Wallace also said he's heard "grumbles" from some U.S. lawmakers that "we're not Amazon."

"I mean, that's true," Wallace said, according to multiple British media outlets. He recalled telling the Ukrainians the same thing when he visited the country last year and was presented with a list of weapon requests. "I'm not Amazon."

## NATION

## Vermont recovers after being hit by flood

By LISA RATHKE  
Associated Press

ANDOVER, Vt. — Floodwaters receded in Vermont cities and towns pummeled by a storm that delivered two months of rain in two days, enabling people to focus on recovering from a disaster that trapped residents in homes, closed roadways and choked streets and businesses with mud and debris.

The water drained off in the capital city of Montpelier, where streets were flooded Tuesday by the swollen Winooski River, and lingering concerns about a dam just upstream eased as water levels there appeared to stabilize.

"It looks like it won't breach. That is good. That is one less thing we have to have on our front burner," Montpelier Town Manager Bill Fraser said.

Fraser said the city of 8,000 has shifted into recovery mode, with public works employees removing mud and debris downtown and building inspections to come as businesses begin cleaning up their properties. Brown water from the Winooski reached the tops of parking meters downtown, inundating basements and ruining the contents of lower floors. Similar scenes played out in neighboring Barre and in Bridgewater, where the Ottauquechee River spilled its banks.

Gov. Phil Scott planned to tour areas hit by the flooding with Deanne Criswell, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, on Wednesday, a day after President Joe Biden declared an emergency for Vermont and authorized federal disaster relief assistance.

It was too early to estimate the total cost of the flooding damage, but it's likely to be substantial. According to the National



PHOTOS BY STEVEN SENNE/AP

**Jodi Kelly, left, practice manager at Stonecliff Veterinary Surgical Center, and her husband, veterinarian Dan Kelly, use a canoe to remove surgical supplies from the flood-damaged center on Tuesday in Montpelier, Vt.**

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, even before these floods, this year has seen 12 confirmed weather/climate disaster events with losses exceeding \$1 billion in the United States.

This slow-moving storm dumped between 7 and 9 inches of rain on parts of New England, New York and Connecticut. New York's Hudson River Valley was hit hard, and towns in southwest New Hampshire and western Massachusetts also had heavy flooding and road washouts.

Much of that water was flowing through Connecticut, carrying debris including entire trees on

its way south to Long Island Sound. Major waterways including Connecticut River overflowed their banks, and were expected to crest Wednesday at up to 6 feet above flood stage, closing roads and riverside parks in multiple cities.

By mid-day Wednesday, all the rivers in Vermont crested and water levels were receding, although at least one river was 20 feet above normal, said Peter Banacos, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. More rain was forecast Thursday and Friday in Vermont, but Banacos said it would not likely cause fur-



**Simon Jennings removes mannequins from the flood-damaged antique, art and furnishing store J. Langdon he shares with his wife, in downtown Montpelier, Vt., on Tuesday.**

ther flooding because the thunderstorms, gusty winds and hail won't linger.

"There could be some locally heavy rain so it depends where that falls," Banacos said. "The storms will be moving quickly for the most part so we are hoping to avoid any additional flooding for that region."

There have been no reports of injuries or deaths related to the flooding in Vermont, where swift-water rescue teams aided by National Guard helicopter crews performed more than 175 rescues, Vermont Emergency Management said Tuesday. One woman died in Fort Montgomery, New York, as she tried to escape her flooded home with her dog.

About 12 Vermont communities, including the state capital, were under a boil-water alert due to the floods. The American Red Cross of Northern New England succeeded in getting food and water to its shelters in Barre, Rutland, and White River Junction.

Attendance was down at the Barre Municipal Auditorium shelter, 58 as of Wednesday morning, compared to more than 200 on Tuesday.

Many people were passing through to recharge their phones and get something to eat, said John Montes, regional disaster officer. Red Cross volunteers from across the Northeast were arriving to help with everything from disaster assessment to handing out clean-up kits to homeowners, he said.

"There's more rain coming tomorrow, so it's best for us to be leaning forward and be ready," Montes said. "We can handle any additional impacts we get from the weather this week."

Gov. Scott said floodwaters surpassed levels seen during Tropical Storm Irene. Irene killed six people in Vermont in August 2011, washing homes off their foundations and damaging or destroying more than 200 bridges and 500 miles of highway.

## Manson follower Van Houten released from prison

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Charles Manson follower Leslie Van Houten, a former homecoming princess who at 19 helped carry out the shocking killings of a wealthy Los Angeles couple at the direction of the violent and manipulative cult leader, walked out of a California prison Tuesday after serving more than 50 years of a life sentence.

Van Houten, now 73, "was released to parole supervision," the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said in a statement.

She left the California Institution for Women in Corona, east of Los Angeles, in the early morning hours and was driven to transitional housing, her attorney Nancy Tetreault said.

"She's still trying to get used to the idea that this real," Tetreault told The Associated Press.

Days earlier Gov. Gavin Newsom announced he would not fight a state appeals court ruling that Van Houten should be granted parole. He said it was unlikely the state Supreme Court would consider an appeal.

The 1969 slayings and subsequent trials captivated the nation during an era of strife marked by the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement and the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy.

At a parole hearing in 2016, Van

Houten said the murders were the start of what Manson believed was a coming race war he called "Helter Skelter," after the Beatles song. He had his followers prepare to fight and learn to can food so they could go underground and live in a hole in the desert, she added.

Van Houten was sentenced to death in 1971 for helping Manson's group carry out the killings of Leno LaBianca, a grocer in Los Angeles, and his wife, Rosemary. Her sentence was later commuted to life in prison when the California Supreme Court overturned the state's death penalty law in 1972. Voters and state lawmakers eventually reinstated the death penalty, but it did not apply retroactively.

The LaBiancas were killed in

their home, and their blood was smeared on the walls afterward. Van Houten later described holding Rosemary LaBianca down with a pillowcase over her head as others stabbed her.

Then, ordered by Manson follower Charles "Tex" Watson to "do something," Van Houten said, she picked up a knife and stabbed the woman more than a dozen times.

The slayings happened the day after Manson followers killed actress Sharon Tate and four others. Van Houten did not participate in the Tate killings.

She is the first Manson follower who took part in the killings to walk free.

Van Houten is expected to spend about a year at a halfway house.

## Cargo ship fire put out after nearly a week

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J.— Crews extinguished the intensely burning fire aboard a cargo ship docked in New Jersey after nearly a week and are now beginning their investigation into the blaze that killed two firefighters, officials said Tuesday.

"We can officially declare the fire is out," Coast Guard Capt. Zeita Merchant said during a news conference in Port Newark.

The blaze started late Wednesday and left two Newark firefighters dead. Authorities are now also beginning a salvage operation for the Grande Costa d'Avorio, which could take up to two months.



Van Houten

## NATION



ZACH BOYDEN-HOLMES, THE DES MOINES (IOWA) REGISTER/AP

Pastor Michael Shover of Christ the Redeemer Church in Pella, Iowa, left, argues with Ryan Maher, of Des Moines, as protesters clashed in the Iowa State Capitol rotunda Tuesday, in Des Moines, while the Iowa Legislature convened for special session to pass a six-week “fetal heartbeat” abortion ban.

## Iowa Republicans pass bill banning most abortions after about 6 weeks

BY HANNAH FINGERHUT  
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Iowa’s Republican-led Legislature passed a bill banning most abortions after roughly six weeks of pregnancy during a marathon special session Tuesday that continued late into the night. Gov. Kim Reynolds immediately said in a statement she would sign the bill on Friday.

The bill passed with exclusively Republican support in a rare, one-day legislative burst lasting more than 14 hours over the vocal — and sometimes tense — objections from Democratic lawmakers and abortion advocates protesting at the Capitol. Just after 11 p.m., lingering protesters in the gallery boomed and yelled “shame” to state senators in the minutes after the bill was approved.

Reynolds ordered the rare ses-

sion after the state Supreme Court declined in June to reinstate a practically identical law that she signed in 2018.

“The Iowa Supreme Court questioned whether this legislature would pass the same law they did in 2018, and today they have a clear answer,” Reynolds said in a statement. “The voices of Iowans and their democratically elected representatives cannot be ignored any longer, and justice for the unborn should not be delayed.”

Abortion is currently legal in Iowa up to 20 weeks of pregnancy. The legislation will take immediate effect with the governor’s signature Friday. It will prohibit almost all abortions once cardiac activity can be detected, which is usually around six weeks of pregnancy.

Preparations were already underway to quickly file legal chal-

lenges in court.

“The ACLU of Iowa, Planned Parenthood, and the Emma Goldman Clinic remain committed to protecting the reproductive rights of Iowans to control their bodies and their lives, their health, and their safety — including filing a lawsuit to block this reckless, cruel law,” ACLU of Iowa Executive Director Mark Stringer said in a statement.

There are limited circumstances under the measure that would allow for abortion after that point in a pregnancy where cardiac activity is detected — such as rape, if reported to law enforcement or a health provider within 45 days; incest, if reported within 145 days; if the fetus has a fetal abnormality “incompatible with life;” and if the pregnancy is endangering the life of the pregnant woman.

## Inflation falls to 3%, lowest level in more than 2 years

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After two years of painfully high prices, inflation in the United States has reached its lowest point in more than two years — 3% in June compared with 12 months earlier — a sign that the Federal Reserve’s interest rate hikes have steadily slowed price increases across the economy.

The inflation figure the government reported Wednesday was down sharply from a 4% annual rate in May, though still above the Fed’s 2% target rate. Over the past 12 months, gas prices have dropped, grocery costs have risen more slowly and used cars have become less expensive.

From May to June, overall prices rose 0.2%, up from just 0.1% in the previous month but still comparatively mild.

At the same time, underlying inflation remains persistently high and a nagging concern for the Fed, which is all but certain to increase its key interest rate again when it meets in two weeks. The Fed has raised its benchmark rate by a substantial 5 percentage points since March 2022, the steepest pace of increases in four decades.

The year-over-year inflation figure for June marked the mildest such increase since March 2021, when the current bout of painfully high inflation began as the economy roared out of the pandemic recession.

Yet with most measures of inflation still uncomfortably high, the Fed hardly appears ready to halt its rate hikes. Its expected hike later this month will follow the central bank’s decision to pause its rate increases last month after 10 consecu-

tive hikes. The Fed’s policymakers have signaled that they could hike rates yet again when they next meet in September.

Some economists have suggested, though, that if inflation keeps slowing and the economy shows sufficient signs of cooling, the July increase could be the Fed’s last.

Used-car prices, for example, have been falling. Automakers are producing more cars as supply shortages have abated. New-car prices, too, have begun to ease as a result.

A sustained slowdown in inflation could bring meaningful relief to American households that have been squeezed by the price acceleration that began two years ago. Inflation spiked as consumers ramped up their spending on items like exercise bikes, standing desks and patio furniture, fueled by three rounds of stimulus checks. The jump in consumer demand overwhelmed supply chains and ignited inflation.

Many economists have suggested that President Joe Biden’s stimulus package in March 2021 intensified the inflation surge. At the same time, though, inflation also jumped overseas, even in countries where much less stimulus was put in place. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine also triggered a spike in energy and food prices globally.

Now, though, gas prices have fallen back to about \$3.50 a gallon on average, nationally, down from a \$5 peak last year. And grocery prices are rising more slowly.

Still, the cost of services, like restaurant meals, car insurance, child care and dental services, continue to rise rapidly. Auto insurance, on average, now costs 17% more than it did a year ago.

## Pence alone in backing ban on abortions when pregnancies aren’t viable

BY JILL COLVIN  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — In a Republican presidential field full of abortion rights opponents, Mike Pence stands out in his embrace of the cause.

The former vice president, who is seeking the White House in 2024, is the only major candidate who supports a federal ban on abortion at six weeks, before many women know they’re pregnant. He has advocated pulling from the market a widely used abortion pill that has a better safety record than penicillin and Viagra. And he’s implored his Republican rivals to back a 15-week federal ban as a minimum nation-



Pence

al standard, which several have not done.

In a recent interview, Pence went even further, saying abortion should be banned when

a pregnancy isn’t viable. Such a standard would force women to carry pregnancies to term even when doctors have determined there is no chance a baby will survive outside the womb.

“I’m pro-life. I don’t apologize for it,” Pence said in the interview. “I just have heard so many stories over the years of courageous women and families who were

told that their unborn child would not go to term or would not survive. And then they had a healthy pregnancy and a healthy delivery.”

That position places Pence firmly to the right of the rest of the 2024 presidential field and alone among GOP candidates, who largely declined to take a stance on the issue. And it drew alarms from obstetricians and doctors who specialize in high-risk pregnancies and say nonviable pregnancies are far more common than people realize. They range from ectopic pregnancies, when an embryo implants somewhere other than the uterus, to deadly birth defects and other severe pregnancy

complications.

Banning abortions in these cases, doctors say, leads to outcomes that are both cruel and put women’s lives and mental health at risk.

“One of the things that you cannot understate is the difficulty for a woman to carry a nonviable pregnancy,” said Alan Peaceman, professor emeritus of obstetrics and gynecology at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine. “It is psychological torture to go out in the world, for people to see your pregnancy — and people will come up to you and want to talk about your pregnancy. And that puts the woman in a terrible position that nobody

should be in unless they chose to be in that position.”

Spokespeople for former President Donald Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis declined to say whether they back Pence’s position. Trump, the early front-runner, has repeatedly said he backs exceptions in cases of rape, incest and the life of the mother and has blamed hard-line abortion stances for costing the party in last year’s midterm elections. DeSantis, who is polling a distant second, signed a six-week ban in Florida that includes an exception for fatal fetal abnormalities, along with rape, incest and to save the mother’s life. He has declined to say whether he supports a federal ban.

## NATION

# Senators call for Supreme Court to follow ethics code

Associated Press

The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, responding to Associated Press investigative stories on the Supreme Court, said Tuesday that it was time for the justices to bring their conduct in line with the ethical standards of other branches of government.

“If they just establish the basic standards of every other branch of government, it would give us much more confidence in their integrity,” Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., said. He commented in Vilnius, Lithuania, where he was attending the NATO summit as part

of the U.S. delegation.

The AP published stories showing that Justice Sonia Sotomayor, aided by her staff, has advanced sales of her books through college visits over the past decade; that universities have used trips by justices as a lure for financial contributions by placing them in event rooms with wealthy donors; and that justices have taken expenses-paid teaching trips to attractive locations that are light on actual classroom instruction.

The series comes after stories over the past six months that have raised ethical concerns

about the activities of the justices. Durbin and other lawmakers in Washington have announced a vote next week on legislation that would require the court to adopt an ethics code. While the measure is unlikely to pass, it sends a signal of discontent about the court.

The nation’s highest court operates without an ethics code, instead following what Chief Justice John Roberts has referred to as a set of foundational “ethics principles and practices.”

Asked Tuesday about the AP stories, Sen. Richard Blumenthal,

D-Conn., who also sits on the Judiciary Committee, called them “powerful reports” that amount to a “drip-by-drip-by-drip indictment of a Supreme Court that seems answerable to no one for ethical breaches.

“The chief justice really ought to be taking these into account for the sake of the court and the country because the Supreme Court will no longer exist as a truly viable institution if it continues the failure to face the need for a code of ethics,” he said.

In contrast, Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, another member of the

Judiciary Committee, said he believes Congress should leave the ethics issue to the court and that the Democrats’ pursuit of ethics reform “is part of a long-standing assault against the court that the left feels is undermining a lot of things they’ve accomplished over the years by judicial action. To me, that’s the motivating factor.

“I think it’s a co-equal branch of government we don’t have jurisdiction over. Secondly, I think this is part of a false narrative that the court is out of control and needs Congress to save it,” Cornyn said.

# Space Force member jailed for murder after chasing suspected thieves

The Denver Post

A 27-year-old Aurora, Colo., man jailed for investigation of first-degree murder after police said he chased down two teenagers suspected of trying to steal his wife’s car is an active duty U.S. Space Force member and war veteran who served two tours in Afghanistan, court documents show.

Thieves had apparently tried to steal the white Hyundai Elantra twice before at his home, the docu-

ments show.

The Hyundai’s alarm went off shortly before midnight on July 5 and Orest Schur, awakened by his mother-in-law, confronted the two teens, dressed in black, near the house where he lived on East 59th Place, according to an Adams County District Court affidavit reviewed by The Denver Post.

After the alarm on the Hyundai went off, Schur and his wife observed damage to the door handles.

They heard another car alarm going off nearby and saw taillights as the teens sped away in an apparently stolen white Kia Rio, the affidavit said.

Aurora police said Schur, who was armed with a Glock 19 9 mm handgun, followed them.

He called 911 at 11:23 p.m., the affidavit said, telling a dispatcher that “there had been shots fired and he had been shot at while he was chasing some car thieves who had at-

tempted to steal his wife’s car.” He called again and told a dispatcher he was uninjured, that he’d chased down the thieves, who had crashed, and that he had “shot back at them.”

But police didn’t find evidence supporting the claim that anybody fired at Schur, according to the affidavit.

The Kia crashed into a backyard fence nearby on East 58th Circle. Police said they found five bullet casings in the Hyundai and that

Schur shot both teens. Reaching the scene around 11:30 p.m., police saw one teen down with gunshot wounds in his back and head. He was pronounced dead of his wounds after paramedics took him to University Hospital shortly after midnight.

The other teen, a 13-year-old, ran to a relative’s house nearby and was taken to Children’s Hospital Colorado with a gunshot wound in his back and underwent surgery.

# STARS AND STRIPES

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# NATION

## Study: Vets living in areas once redlined face greater health risks

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

Veterans in an 80,000-person study experienced higher than expected mortality rates and greater risks of heart attacks and strokes if they lived in a historically segregated neighborhood.

Published Tuesday in the Journal of the American Medical Association, the study looked at data from veterans receiving care for preexisting cardiovascular disease at Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals nationwide from Jan. 1, 2016, to Dec. 31, 2019.

Researchers from Case Western Reserve University, University Hospitals and the Cleveland VA Medical Center examined the health records of veterans living in historically segregated neighborhoods.

The study used color-coded zones that were set out decades ago as part of redlining, a discriminatory housing practice that was used in the United States from the

1930s to the 1960s.

Authors of the study aimed to gauge the impact of racist housing policies that were outlawed as a result of judicial rulings and federal legislation generations ago.

“A century-old practice like redlining still affects our nation’s health today,” said Salil Deo, a cardiac surgeon at the VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System and one of the authors of the report.

Living in a historically redlined neighborhood came with a 13% greater rate of death from all causes and a 14% higher risk of stroke or heart attack among subjects, according to the study.

That elevated risk was present even after researchers took into account known cardiovascular risk factors as well as race and ethnicity.

“This study builds on emerging literature linking redlining with a host of present-day health issues,” Sadeer Al-Kindi, another author of the report, said in a statement

this week issued by Case Western Reserve University.

During the Great Depression, the federal government began insuring private mortgages to help people buy homes. These efforts included the creation of color-coded maps of U.S. cities based on perceived foreclosure risk.

Green areas, rated A, were seen as safe investments. Red areas, rated D, were seen as hazardous and ineligible for an insured mortgage, author Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote in a 2014 history of redlining.

The practice separated neighborhoods based on race or ethnicity, led to segregation and discouraged people from investing, Coates wrote in “The Case for Reparations,” a long-form article published in The Atlantic in 2014.

People who live in redlined neighborhoods are more likely to have coronary artery disease, stroke and chronic kidney disease, according to a previous study pub-



ROAN SMITH/U.S. Navy

The American flag is carried by attendees during last year’s New York City Veterans Day Parade. Veterans living in historically segregated neighborhoods experienced higher risks of heart attacks and strokes, according to a study published Tuesday in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

lished in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology in 2021 as well as another published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in 2022.

The authors of the study published this week said their findings might not apply to nonveter-

ans, as their subjects were mostly men who had health insurance. They said the specific reasons for the poor health results needs further research.

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## WORLD

# Microsoft reports breach by Chinese hackers

BY ZEN SOO  
Associated Press

HONG KONG — China called a Microsoft report that a China-based hacking group breached government-linked email accounts “disinformation,” saying Wednesday that the accusation was meant to divert attention from U.S. cyber activities.

In a blog post published Tuesday, Microsoft said the group,

which it identified as Storm-0558, gained access to email accounts linked to 25 organizations, including Western European government agencies. The breach was detected weeks later when customers complained to Microsoft about abnormal mail activity.

“We assess this adversary is focused on espionage, such as gaining access to email systems for intelligence collection,” Charlie

Bell, Microsoft’s executive vice president of security, said in a separate Microsoft post.

A Washington Post report cited a statement from U.S. officials claiming Storm-0558 also breached unclassified email accounts linked to the U.S. government. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Wang Wenbin, said the accusation was “disinformation” aimed at diverting attention

from U.S. cyberattacks on China.

“No matter which agency issued this information, it will never change the fact that the United States is the world’s largest hacker empire conducting the most cyber theft,” Wang said in a routine briefing.

“Since last year, the cybersecurity organizations of China and other countries have issued many reports exposing the cyberattacks

on China by the U.S. Government over a long period of time, but the U.S. has not made a response so far,” he said.

The Storm-0558 hackers used forged authentication tokens — pieces of information used to verify the identity of a user — required to access the email accounts, Microsoft said. It said it has dealt with the attack and informed affected customers.

## Spain sweating out sultry nights as heat wave bakes Europe

Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — Spain sweltered under an unrelenting heat wave Wednesday as temperatures started to build toward what is forecast to be a torrid weekend across southern Europe.

Spain’s weather service said thermometers could potentially hit 113 Fahrenheit in southeastern areas of the Iberian Peninsula, which are under alert for extreme heat. That mark of was reached Monday in the village of Loja near Granada at the start of the heat wave that is causing restless nights across the country.

Over 100 weather stations registered temperatures of at least 95 F as early as 6 a.m. Wednesday, according to meteorologist Rubén del Campo of Spain’s national weather agency.

“On Wednesday we expect temperatures to fall overall with the arrival of cool winds from the North and East, with the exception of the southeast and southern Andalusia, where hot winds blowing from the interior will cause temperatures to soar,” Del Campo said.

While some relief is in store in the coming days for the Iberian Peninsula, other European countries will sweat through the weekend.

In Italy, 10 cities were put on high heat alert for older people

and other vulnerable populations from Bolzano in the north extending southward to Bologna, Florence and Rome. Temperatures are expected to reach 104 F in the Sardinian inland Wednesday.

Temperatures were also starting to tick up in Greece, where a heat wave was forecast to reach up to 111 F in some parts of the country in the coming days. Authorities banned access to nature reserves and forests to reduce the risk of wildfires, while municipalities were opening air-conditioned areas in public buildings for people to shelter from the heat.

Greece’s agriculture ministry issued restrictions on the transportation and working hours of animals such as horses and donkeys offering rides in tourist areas during the heat wave. Working animals will not be allowed to work between noon and 5 p.m. on days where temperatures are between 95-102 F in the shade, while they will not be allowed to work at any time of the day when temperatures exceed that range.

Scientists report that heat-related deaths soared in 2022 in Europe, when Spain had a record-hot year. The Mediterranean region is expected to see temperatures rise faster than many other areas of the globe due to climate change.



An Indonesian Maritime Security Agency patrol ship inspects the Iranian-flagged MT Arman 114 and Cameroon-flagged tanker MT S Tinos near Natuna waters, Indonesia.

AP

## Indonesia seizes Iranian tanker for suspected illegal oil transfer

Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Indonesian authorities said Wednesday they seized an Iranian tanker and arrested its crew members for illegally transferring oil to another vessel in the country’s exclusive economic zone.

The Iranian-flagged — MT Arman 114 — transporting 2.3 million barrels of crude oil worth \$305 million was seized on Friday while carrying out illegal transshipment of oil to the Cameroon-flagged tanker — MT S Tinos — in Indonesia’s exclusive economic zone

near Natuna waters, said Aan Kurnia, Indonesia’s Coast Guard chief.

An Indonesian coast guard vessel detected suspicious activities at dawn and tried to approach the two tankers. The Iranian tanker fled toward Malaysian territorial waters spilling oil as the hose connecting the two tankers came loose. The tanker ignored various signals to stop, ranging from horns and warnings via loudspeakers to shots in the air, Kurnia said.

He added that the Iranian tanker, which was also carrying three

passengers besides its crew, was later arrested by Indonesian Coast Guard with the help of its Malaysian counterpart. The Cameroon-flagged tanker managed to escape.

Authorities were still questioning the tanker’s Egyptian national captain and 28 Syrian crew members, Kurnia said.

Kurnia said the tanker was facing a variety of violations, including not displaying a national flag, shutting off their identification systems, anchoring illegally, as well as the illegal transfer of fuel between ships and spilling oil.

## Kosovo to pull some special police officers from Serb-majority areas

Associated Press

PRISTINA, Kosovo — Kosovo’s government on Wednesday will reduce the number of special police officers stationed outside four municipal buildings in ethnic Serb-majority areas and hold new mayoral elections in each of the towns, in a bid to defuse tensions with neighboring Serbia that flared anew in May.

Kosovar Prime Minister Albin

Kurti said that one-fourth of the special police forces would be moved away from the sites “taking into consideration that the situation at the municipal buildings has been comparatively much quieter in the last two weeks.” He added that more officers would be withdrawn based on the continuous evaluation of the situation.

It wasn’t immediately clear when

the reductions would take place, and where the officers would be reassigned to.

Serbia’s government and Kosovo’s ethnic Serbs want special police forces to leave the northern area, while Pristina says the number will be gradually reduced.

Kurti said the government would make a formal statement on holding new elections in the four municipal-

ities, which have an ethnic Serb-majority population.

“For that it is necessary to create a proper environment to make possible holding of the (electoral) campaign, political pluralism, participation of the local communities and also guaranteeing vote inviolability,” he added.

The decisions were made after Kurti’s deputy met with European

Union envoy Miroslav Lajčák in Bratislava, Slovakia, earlier this week, according to Kurti.

Ethnic Serbs in northern Kosovo boycotted mayoral elections in the four municipalities in April as part of a campaign for greater autonomy, and they now object to the ethnic Albanian mayors chosen in the polls. Neighboring Serbia has backed calls for the mayors to step down.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Court sides with Amish families on 'gray water'

**MN** MINNEAPOLIS — Members of a deeply conservative Amish community in Minnesota don't need to install septic systems to dispose of their "gray water," the state Court of Appeals ruled Monday in a long-running religious freedom case that went all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court.

A three-judge panel ruled that the government "failed to demonstrate a compelling state interest" to justify overriding the religious freedom of the Amish families that challenged state regulations governing the disposal of gray water, which is water that's been used for dishwashing, laundry and bathing, but not toilet waste.

The Swartzentruber Amish in southeastern Minnesota are among the most traditional Amish groups in the country, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch noted in a 2021 ruling. It sent the case back to Minnesota courts for reconsideration in light of a high court decision a month earlier in a different religious freedom case. That ruling went in favor of a Philadelphia-based Catholic foster care agency that said its religious views prevented it from working with same-sex couples.

Fillmore County in 2013 started requiring homes to have modern septic systems to dispose of gray water. The Swartzentruber Amish sought an exemption, saying their religion prohibits that technology.

## Man charged in shootings from scooter that killed 1

**NY** NEW YORK — A man accused of killing an 86-year-old and injuring three other people in a series of apparently random shootings while riding a scooter in New York City was arraigned Monday on charges including murder and attempted murder, prosecutors said.

Thomas Abreu, 25, was arraigned in a hospital in five shootings that occurred in Queens over about 10 minutes late Saturday morning, a spokesperson for Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz said. An additional person was shot and injured in Brooklyn.

Witnesses identified Abreu as the gunman who shot Hamod Saeidi, 86, just before 11:30 a.m., prosecutors said. Family members said Saeidi, who died, had been on his way to a mosque to pray.

## Plea deal reached in burning of abortion clinic

**WY** CHEYENNE — A college student who authorities say admitted to setting fire to a building slated to become Wyoming's only full-service abortion clinic has reached a plea agreement with prosecutors, federal court documents showed Monday.

Details of the proposed plea deal for Lorna Roxanne Green weren't available to the public pending a



BRITTANY MURRAY, THE ORANGE COUNTY (CALIF.) REGISTER/AP

## Hanging out of the hangar

**A Cessna plane sits nose-first after crashing into the roof of a hangar at the Long Beach Airport in California on Monday. Authorities say the pilot escaped with only minor injuries.**

judge's approval of the agreement.

Green, 22, pleaded not guilty to an arson charge in U.S. District Court in Cheyenne in June. Green faces up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Green told investigators she opposed abortion and was experiencing anxiety and having nightmares over the Wellspring Health Access clinic that was to open in Casper last year, so she decided to burn it, according to court documents.

Investigators say Green set the clinic ablaze on May 25, 2022. The clinic was scheduled to open a few weeks later but was not able to begin seeing patients until April because of the fire damage.

## Sex charges dismissed against reality TV doctor

**CA** NEWPORT BEACH — A California judge has dismissed sex charges against a reality TV show doctor and his girlfriend who had been accused of drugging and raping women in a case that drew international attention.

Court records show that charges of assault with the intent to commit a

sexual offense were dismissed Friday against Dr. Grant Robicheaux, a surgeon who previously appeared on a Bravo TV show called "Online Dating Rituals of the American Male," and girlfriend Cerissa Riley. The decision came after a preliminary hearing before Superior Court Judge Michael Leversen, who determined there was not sufficient evidence on the sex charges to proceed to trial, The Orange County Register reported.

The pair also faces drug charges. Robicheaux is also charged with possession of an assault weapon. They previously pleaded not guilty.

The case drew international attention in 2018 when Robicheaux and Riley were charged in connection with up to seven victims who authorities said were plied with drugs and sexually assaulted at the pair's home in Newport Beach when they were incapable of resisting.

## Police chief convicted of taking seized money

**LA** BATON ROUGE — A small-town police chief in Louisiana was convicted after tak-

ing money seized in narcotics investigations and stealing a family's COVID-19 stimulus money, leaving them homeless, officials said Monday.

A jury last week found Mitch Bratton guilty of malfeasance in office, felony theft and possession of controlled dangerous substances, the state Attorney General's office said in a news release. Bratton was recently reelected as chief of police in Grayson, a village of just more than 500 people in Caldwell Parish.

It is unclear if Bratton is currently serving as chief of police. Officials for Grayson or the village's police department could not immediately be reached for comment.

While serving as chief of police, Bratton was personally responsible for more than \$10,000 in narcotics funds that went missing between 2016 and 2019, the release said.

Additionally, Bratton was convicted on one count of felony theft related to monies taken from a mother and son during the course of an arrest.

"That money was their COVID stimulus and had been set aside for home expenses. As a result of this theft, that family was unable to pay

their bills, lost their home, and are still homeless to this day," the news release stated.

## City seeks more time to clear encampment

**AZ** PHOENIX — Phoenix is making progress in complying with a court order to close a large homeless encampment known as "The Zone," but it will take more time to clear, clean and keep people from setting up tents again in the area, a lawyer representing the city said at a trial Monday.

Attorney Justin Pierce said during opening statements that portions of the encampment on the edge of downtown Phoenix have been cleared since a judge declared the area to be a public nuisance, but other blocks still need to be addressed. He said the process takes time, including making sure those who live there have somewhere else to go.

The city is developing a space nearby with tents and temporary restroom facilities as an alternative, has increased the number of police officers working in the area and has nearly tripled its funding on confronting issues of homelessness, Pierce said.

The purpose of the trial is to examine the city's efforts to comply with a March 27 order that concluded the city had stopped enforcing certain laws in the area and required the city to lessen the public nuisance.

## Mayor resigns over posts in police Facebook group

**OR** NEWPORT — The mayor of a city on the Oregon coast has apologized and resigned over offensive content he posted in a private Facebook group for current and retired police officers.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reported that Newport Mayor Dean Sawyer apologized and resigned Monday, three days after the media outlet revealed that since 2016, Sawyer had been sharing memes and posts denigrating women, immigrants, non-English speakers and the LGBTQ+ community in the Facebook group with 39,000 members.

A local LGBTQ+ pride group held a demonstration over the weekend at City Hall, with more than 100 people demanding that Sawyer leave office.

Sawyer told OPB on Friday that the Facebook group called LEO Only is a private group and posts are not meant for the public. On Monday, he told The Oregonian/OregonLive that his online persona had become too polarizing for him to continue.

"I now realize that some of my actions and my words have hurt people I love and care about," Sawyer said.

Sawyer was a Newport police officer for three decades before he was elected mayor in 2018.

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OPINION

US debt tsunami meets with a bipartisan shrug

By GEORGE F. WILL The Washington Post

Everett Dirksen, R-Ill., the Senate minority leader for nearly 11 years until his death in September 1969, had a famously foghorn voice with which he supposedly intoned, "A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking about real money."

A million seconds ago was about 11 days and 14 hours ago. Someone who is now 31 1/2 years old was born a billion seconds ago.

Speaking of the distant past, you might remember the May drama surrounding raising the debt ceiling from \$31.4 trillion. The ceiling was not raised; it was suspended until after the next election, which was prudent, considering the velocity of the red ink torrent.

The pace probably will accelerate as the growth of borrowing puts upward pressure on

interest rates, and as debt service becomes an ever-larger portion of the federal budget — around 2029, larger than the defense budget. By 2051, interest will be the largest item in the budget.

The budget was last balanced in fiscal 2001 and probably will not be again in this century. Federal spending was 17.7% of GDP in 2020 and is 24.2% today.

Social Security and Medicare drive the growth of debt but will not drive the 2024 political debate. The debt tsunami is the nation's most important domestic problem, and it threatens national security via pressure to curtail defense spending.

Reestablishing congressional "regular order" might help: passing a budget resolution

by mid-April, with a dozen appropriations bills voted on separately before the fiscal year begins Oct. 1. This was last accomplished in 1996, after the 1994 midterm elections ended 40 years of Democratic control of the House of Representatives.

The Economist reports that the U.S. deficit has exceeded 6% of GDP only three times — during World War II, the 2008 financial crisis and the pandemic lockdowns.

In February, the Congressional Budget Office projected that under current law, interest costs would amount to \$10.5 trillion from 2024 through 2033. Alan J. Auerbach and William Gale, authors of the Brookings Institution's federal budget outlook, report that, assuming certain probable adjustments of current law

The Peter G. Peterson Foundation, a splendid nest of deficit hawks, notes that debt service is projected to be the federal government's largest "program" when it becomes larger than Medicare in 2044 and Social Security in 2050.

What Everett Dirksen did or didn't say needs updating. A trillion here, a trillion there, and pretty soon ...

How's everyone enjoying their politicized heat waves?

By RACHEL MARSDEN Tribune Content Agency

Paris fresh off the latest French riots, the country didn't even have time to catch its breath before being bombarded with nanny state heat-wave alerts.

In addition to panic over pretty typical summer heat, the season has also become a time to dredge up tales of heat-related mass casualties like the "deadly summer of 2003" when the French had all taken off for their usual paid vacations, leaving the elderly in non-air-conditioned care homes vulnerable to an intense heat wave.

Given that incident occurred 20 years ago, you'd think that we'd have stopped talking about heat waves by now — if only because a hallmark of human evolution has always been the ability to adapt to our environment.

Personally, that means two portable air conditioners for my Paris apartment which have sparked a revolt among the elderly residents in my building who can see the air evacuation tubes in windows.

Indeed, even in France, where energy costs have skyrocketed ever since Europe cut itself off from its cheap Russian energy supply, it's still possible to run a couple of air conditioners for about the price of a daily trip to Starbucks.

Indeed, even in France, where energy costs

Anything else is a gamble. You can control the temperature of your home — sort of. But there's just no way that anyone can possibly control the temperature of the earth's atmosphere.

Former President Barack Obama said in a recent interview that his 24-year-old daughter, Malia, said to him that there's "just no way that we're going to solve this."

Rachel Marsden is a columnist, political strategist and host of independently produced talk shows in French and English.

rant narcissists who figure that humans are in total control of the Earth's heating and cooling cycles are either delusional, or have another agenda that involves using the planet as a pretext for taxing and controlling other people?

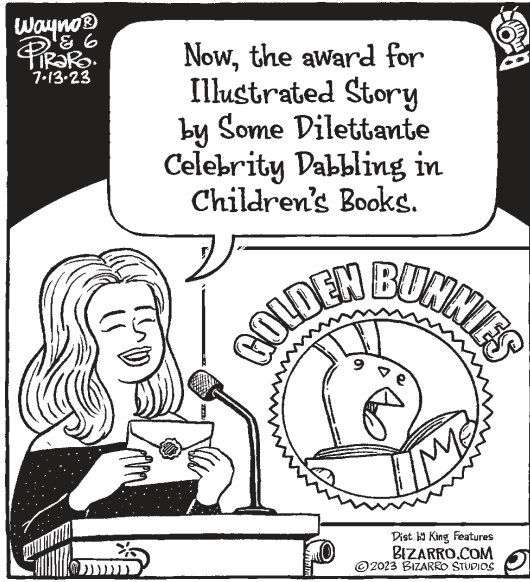
Instead, Barack Obama doubled down on the globalist narrative. "Look, we may not be able to cap temperature rise to two degrees centigrade," he said. Why not? If you're following "the science," then why isn't it working?

These folks seem to be making it up as they go along. And why not, as long as citizens are still willing to accept the climate-related guilt trip imposed on them as an excuse to be robbed blind.

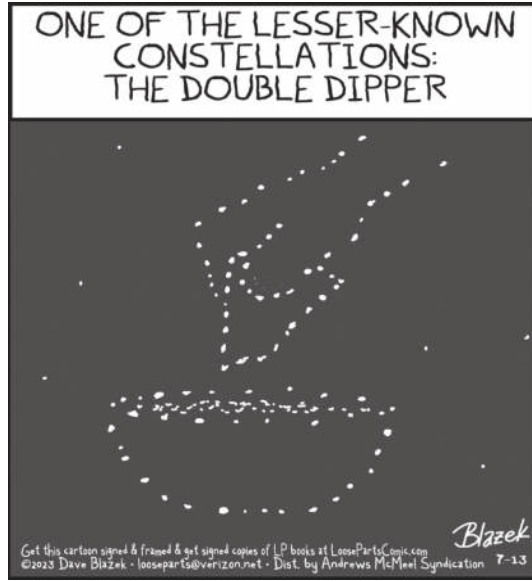
The average Western citizen is so brainwashed that they'll now sit around sweltering in their own apartment, martyring themselves so that Bangladesh doesn't end up underwater someday like Obama said.



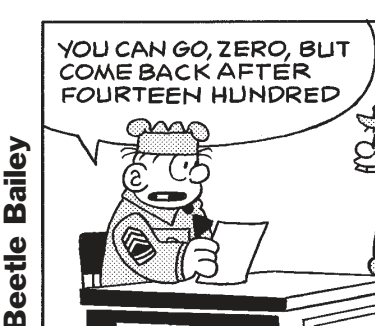
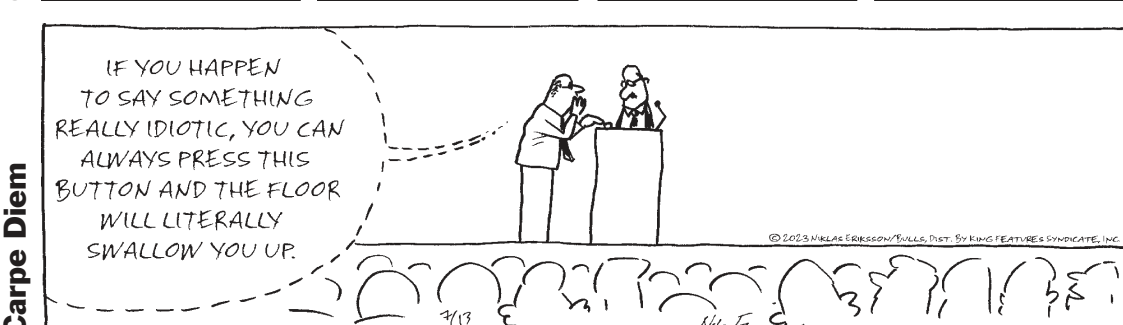
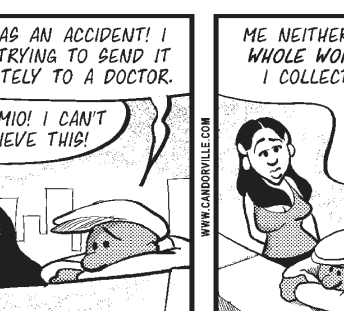
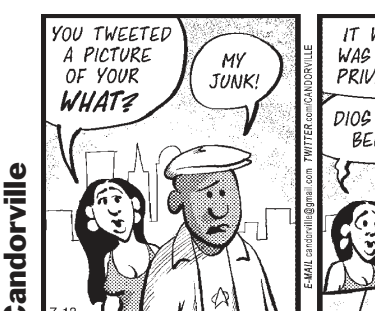
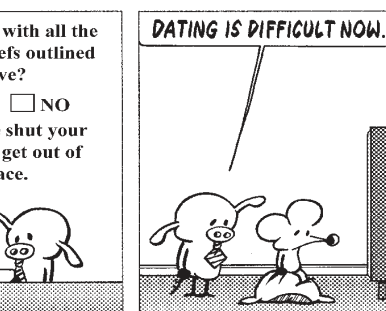
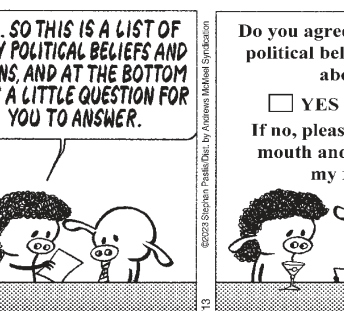
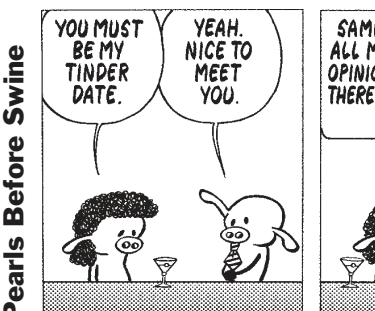
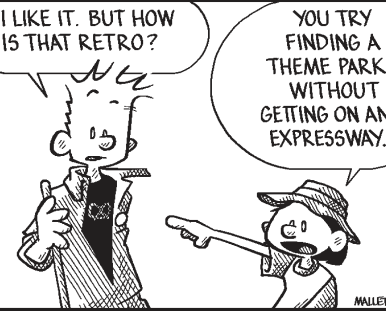
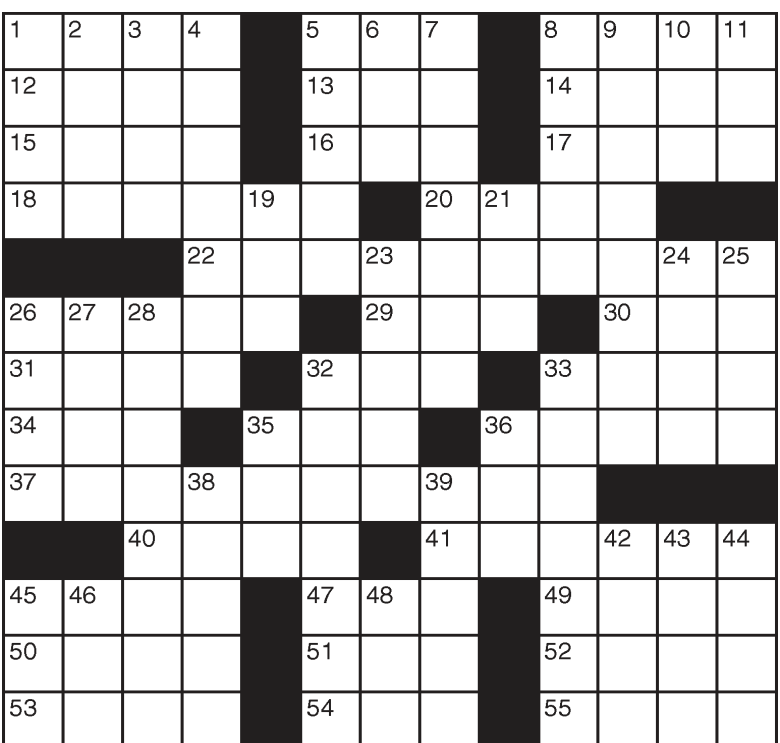
**Bizarro**



**Loose Parts**



**Eugene Sheffer Crossword**



**ACROSS**

- 1 Ties the knot
- 5 Speck
- 8 Bookkeepers (Abbr.)
- 12 Idle or Bana
- 13 Opposite of peace
- 14 Top-of-the-line
- 15 DVR brand
- 16 Bordeaux summer
- 17 Women's links org.
- 18 Date with a medium
- 20 Stead
- 22 Color akin to ultramarine
- 26 Plus
- 29 Insult
- 30 Notre Dame coach
- 31 Oodles
- 32 Overhead trains
- 33 Cicatrix
- 34 "So that's it!"
- 35 — tai
- 36 Compete in a bee
- 37 Pastel shade
- 40 Future tulip
- 41 Region of Spain
- 45 Gratis
- 47 Last (Abbr.)
- 49 Vegas game
- 50 Barbie, e.g.

- 51 Summer hrs.
- 52 Golden Rule preposition
- 53 Breaks down
- 54 WNBA star
- Bird
- 55 Drudge

- 21 "— a miracle!"
- 23 Extemporize
- 24 Russian river
- 25 British noble
- 26 On
- 27 London district
- 28 Buffalo's region
- 32 iPod accessories
- 33 "Say something!"
- 35 Actor Gibson
- 36 California's Big —
- 38 One-on-one battles
- 39 Coffee bar order
- 42 Hereditary unit
- 43 Aware of
- 44 Lunch hour
- 45 Dime portrait
- 46 Kanga's kid
- 48 Baton Rouge sch.

**DOWN**

- 1 Saturates
- 2 Toledo's lake
- 3 Prima donna
- 4 Candle holders
- 5 Nerd
- 6 Muffin type
- 7 Vine-supporting frame
- 8 Novelist Carr
- 9 Citizenry
- 10 Director Lee
- 11 Salty expanse
- 19 Camp bed

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**



**7-13**

**CRYPTOQUIP**

K'W XZKLA FA CLRKJ LSRL OBC  
 GKFLBCD KJ LAJJKI WRLFSAI,  
 QBGA TAOKJKLAQD TBAI JBL  
 FB JXZAC RQQ.

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** DESK PLATE IN THE OFFICE OF THE PREMIER OF CANADA'S SMALLEST TERRITORY: "YUKON COUNT ON ME!"  
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals Q

## FACES

# Emmys success for ‘Succession’

## HBO drama leads all TV awards nominees with 27; ‘Ted Lasso’ top comedy contender

BY ANDREW DALTON  
Associated Press

HBO dominated Wednesday morning’s Emmy nominations, with the elite trio of “Succession,” “The White Lotus” and “The Last of Us” combining for a whopping 74, but the dominant theme darkening the scene is the ongoing writers strike and the looming possibility that actors could join them in as little as a day.

“Succession” and its deeply dysfunctional dynasty of one-percenters led all Emmy nominees in its fourth and final season with 27, including best drama, which it has won two of the past three years. It got three nominations for best actor in a drama, with Brian Cox, Jeremy Strong and Kieran Culkin all getting nods for playing men of the Roy clan, and Sarah Snook getting a best actress nomination. It also got four nominations for best supporting actor in a drama.

The cursed vacationers at a Sicilian resort from the second season of “The White Lotus” truly dominated the supporting categories, however, landing five nominations for best supporting actress in a drama — including nods for Jennifer Coolidge and Aubrey Plaza — and four more for best supporting actor.

Bella Ramsey and Pedro Pascal, the duo on a fungus-filled quest in “The Last of Us,” each got lead acting nominations. The show, an adaptation of the popular Playstation video game, was second behind “Succession” with 24 nominations. “The White Lotus” had 23.

“Ted Lasso” was tops among comedies with 21 nominations, including best comedy series and best actor for Jason Sudeikis.

The nominations suggested that HBO can still dominate even as streaming-only outlets have taken

over so much of elite TV — though the distinction is increasingly blurred, with a huge segment of viewers watching “Succession” and the cable channel’s other offerings on the streaming service now known as Max.

Cox, 77, got his best actor in a drama nod despite appearing in fewer than half of this season’s “Succession” episodes, although as the Roy family patriarch he loomed just as large over the episodes he didn’t appear in. A win would be his first in three nominations for the role, though he won an Emmy for best supporting actor in a TV movie in 2001.

Strong won in 2020 for playing “eldest boy” Kendall Roy. Culkin got his first nomination for best actor after two previous nominations in the supporting category.

Actors joining movie and television writers on strike would further shut down the industry and be the first time since 1960 that two Hollywood unions are on strike. While show and film releases will continue, work on upcoming projects would cease.

The possibility of an industry debilitated by two strikes could dampen any joy for those nominated, and could put the damper on the ceremony scheduled for September 18 on the Fox network.

The nominations were announced by “Community” star Yvette Nicole Brown and Television Academy CEO Frank Scherma, who referenced the labor disputes at the top of Wednesday’s livestream.

“We hope the ongoing guild negotiations can come to an equitable and swift resolution. We are committed to supporting a television industry that stands strong in equity and where we can continue to honor all the incredible work you do,” Scherma said.



Kieran Culkin, left, and Sarah Snook, center, were among those nominated from “Succession.” HBO’s hit racked up 27 Emmy nods.



“Ted Lasso” dominated the comedy categories with 21 nominations, including best comedy series and best actor for Jason Sudeikis (right).



Jeremy Allen White is nominated for best actor for “The Bear.”



Pedro Pascal and Bella Ramsey each got a lead acting nomination for “The Last of Us.”

### Top Emmy nominations

**Best drama series:** “Succession”; “The White Lotus”; “The Last of Us”; “Better Call Saul”; “The Crown”; “Yellowjackets”; “House of the Dragon”; “Andor”

**Best comedy series:** “Abbott Elementary”; “Barry”; “The Bear”; “Jury Duty”; “Ted Lasso”; “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”; “Only Murders in the Building”; “Wednesday”

**Best limited or anthology series:** “Beef”; “Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story”; “Daisy Jones & The Six”; “Fleishman Is in Trouble”; “Obi-Wan Kenobi”

**Best actor in a drama series:** Jeremy Strong, “Succession”; Bob Odenkirk, “Better Call Saul”; Kieran Culkin, “Succession”; Pedro Pascal, “The Last of Us”; Brian Cox, “Succession”; Jeff Bridges, “The Old Man”

**Best actress in a drama series:** Melanie Lynskey, “Yellowjackets”; Sarah Snook, “Succession”; Bella Ramsey, “The Last of Us”; Sharon Horgan, “Bad Sisters”; Elisabeth Moss, “The Handmaid’s Tale”; Keri Russell, “The Diplomat”

**Best actor in a comedy series:** Jeremy Allen White, “The Bear”; Jason Sudeikis, “Ted Lasso”; Bill Hader, “Barry”; Martin Short, “Only Murders in the Building”; Jason Segel, “Shrinking”

**Best actress in a comedy series:** Quinta Brunson, “Abbott Elementary”; Rachel Brosnahan, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”; Christina Applegate, “Dead to Me”; Jenna Ortega, “Wednesday”; Natasha Lyonne, “Poker Face”

**Best supporting actor in a comedy series:** Anthony Carrigan, “Barry”; Brett Goldstein, “Ted Lasso”; Phil Dunster, “Ted Lasso”; Henry Winkler, “Barry”; James Marsden, “Jury Duty”

**Best supporting actress in a comedy series:** Sheryl Lee Ralph, “Abbott Elementary”; Ayo Edebiri, “The Bear”; Janelle James, “Abbott Elementary”; Hannah Waddingham, “Ted Lasso”; Juno Temple, “Ted Lasso”; Jessica Williams, “Shrinking”

**Best supporting actor in a drama series:** F. Murray Abraham, “The White Lotus”; Nicholas Braun, “Succession”; Michael Imperioli, “The White Lotus”; Theo James, “The White Lotus”; Matthew Macfadyen, “Succession”; Alan Ruck, “Succession”; Will Sharpe, “The White Lotus”; Alexander Skarsgård, “Succession”

**Best reality competition program:** “The Amazing Race”; “RuPaul’s Drag Race”; “Survivor”; “Top Chef”; “The Voice”

**Best animated program:** “Bob’s Burgers”; “Entergalactic”; “Genndy Tartakovsky’s Primal”; “Rick and Morty”; “The Simpsons”

Associated Press

## Latin, K-pop artists help music streams hit 1 trillion in 2023 in record time

From wire reports

Is non-English language music the future of the music business? Perhaps.

The global music industry surpassed 1 trillion streams at the fastest pace ever in a calendar year, Luminate’s 2023 Midyear Report has found. The number was reached in three months, a full month faster than 2022.

Global streams are also up 30.8% from last year, reflective of an increasingly international music marketplace.

Additionally, Luminate found that two in

five — or 40% — of U.S. music listeners enjoy music in a non-English language. And a whopping 69% of U.S. music listeners enjoy music from artists originating outside of the U.S.

According to the report, Spanish, French, Japanese, Korean, Italian, German and Arabic are the most popular languages for non-Anglophonic music among U.S. music listeners, with Latin genres and K-pop leading the charge.

“Specifically, our streaming data shows that Spanish and Korean language music

are the most popular when taking a look at the top 10,000 most streamed songs (audio and video combined) during the first half of 2023,” says Jaime Marconette, Luminate’s senior director of music insights and industry relations. “Furthermore, Spanish-language music’s share of that top 10,000 has grown 3.6% since 2021, while English-language music’s share has dropped 4.2% in that same time.”

That is reflected in Luminate’s 2023 Midyear Top Albums chart, where Bad Bunny’s spring 2022 album “Un Verano Sin Ti” still

breaks the top 10 a year later (the chart factors in a combination of album sales, on-demand audio/visual sales and digital track sales).

Bad Bunny’s “Un Verano Sin Ti” has also become the most-streamed album of all time on Spotify, the streaming platform confirmed to the L.A. Times. The title was previously held by Ed Sheeran’s 2017 album “Divide.”

When “top albums” are defined by physical and digital sales exclusively, K-pop dominates, taking up six of the top 10 spots.



## GOLF/WIMBLEDON

## Saudi investment in PGA Tour will top \$1B

By BEN NUCKOLS  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund has agreed to invest more than \$1 billion in a new commercial entity controlled by the PGA Tour, and Greg Norman will be ousted as the CEO of LIV Golf if the business deal between the Saudis and the tour is finalized, a tour executive told Congress on Tuesday.

The agreement between the Saudi Public Investment Fund, the primary funder of LIV Golf, and the PGA Tour shocked the golf world when it was announced last month and led to probes by the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which summoned tour officials to the Capitol to testify under oath, and the Justice Department, which is looking into potential antitrust violations.

Among the subcommittee's findings were that representatives of the tour and the Saudis discussed giving Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy their own LIV Golf teams, a proposal that apparently never reached either player. There was no indication during Tuesday's hearing that Congress would block the tour from going into business with the Saudis.

The subcommittee chairman, Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said he was troubled by the geopolitical implications of Saudi investment in American sports and efforts by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi leader, to whitewash the king-



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

PGA Tour COO Ron Price, left, and PGA Tour board member Jimmy Dunne are sworn in before testifying before a U.S. Senate hearing on the proposed PGA-LIV Golf merger Tuesday on Capitol Hill in Washington.

dom's human rights abuses. Republicans on the committee, however, were more sympathetic to the PGA Tour and the existential threat it faced from the PIF, which controls \$600 billion in assets — roughly 500 times what the tour is worth.

"We're here because we're concerned about what it means for an authoritarian government to use its wealth to capture an American institution," Blumenthal said.

The PGA Tour and the Saudis announced on June 6 that they

agreed to drop all lawsuits against each other and combine their commercial interests into a new for-profit company while maintaining the tour's nonprofit status. Asked by Blumenthal how much money the Saudis have committed to the new venture, Ron Price, the PGA Tour's chief operating officer, testified the amount was "north of \$1 billion."

Blumenthal repeatedly pressed Price and Jimmy Dunne, a PGA Tour board member and a key negotiator of the Saudi deal, on why

the tour did not seek alternative sources of funding to compete with the PIF. Price and Dunne said going into business with outside investors would not prevent LIV Golf and the PIF from continuing to compete with the tour and use its vast resources to sign top players.

"My entire concern here is to put this divisive period behind us, and for the sake of players, fans, sponsors and charities, unite the game of golf again," said Dunne, a New York investment banker who is well connected with the sport's

leaders.

Critics of the Saudi investment in golf have pointed to the kingdom's poor human rights record and the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, which U.S. intelligence concluded was likely approved by the crown prince, an allegation he has denied. The PIF has bought its way into other sports including soccer — it owns Newcastle United of the English Premier League — and Formula One racing.

"There is something that stinks about this path that you're on right now because it is a surrender, and it is all about the money, and that is the reason for the backlash that you're seeing, Mr. Price," Blumenthal said. "The equity ownership interest that the Saudis will have ... gives them financial dominance. They control the purse strings."

But Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., a harsh critic of the Saudi regime, said Congress should not interfere with a private enterprise doing business with the Saudis. He proposed instead that the United States reduce arms sales to Saudi Arabia. And the committee's ranking member, Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., suggested that Saudi involvement in sports could ultimately improve human rights in the kingdom.

"If the kingdom's involvement in golf and other sports helps it to modernize or offer rights to women, wouldn't that be a good thing?" Johnson said.

## Sabalenka, Medvedev reach semifinals after ban last year

By CHRIS LEHOURITES  
Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England — Aryna Sabalenka reached the semifinals at Wimbledon for the second straight time, with a one-year break in between because she was banned from the tournament in 2022.

Sabalenka, a Belarusian who is seeded second at the All England Club, had to sit out last year's competition along with other players from her country and from Russia because of the war in Ukraine. She advanced Wednesday by beating Madison Keys 6-2, 6-4 on No. 1 Court.

"It really feels amazing to be back in the semifinals. I can't wait to play in my second semifinal at Wimbledon," said Sabalenka, who lost to runner-up Karolina Pliskova in 2021. "Hopefully I can do better than I did last time."

Another player who was banned last year, Daniil Medvedev, reached the semifinals in the men's tournament. The second-seeded Russian beat American player Chris Eubanks 6-4, 1-6, 4-6, 7-6 (4) 6-1 on the same court.

## Scoreboard

## Wednesday

At All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club  
London  
Purse: £16,077,000  
Surface: Grass  
Men's Singles  
Quarterfinals

Daniil Medvedev (3), Russia, def. Christopher Eubanks, United States, 6-4, 1-6, 4-6, 7-6 (4), 6-1.

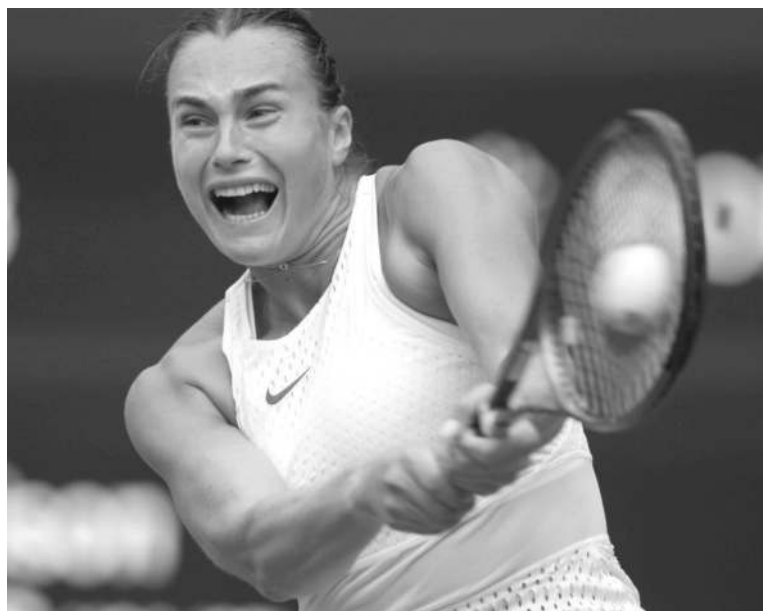
Women's Singles  
Quarterfinals

Aryna Sabalenka (2), Belarus, def. Madison Keys (25), United States, 6-2, 6-4.  
Ons Jabeur (6), Tunisia, def. Elena Rybakina (3), Kazakhstan, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-1.

Sabalenka's victory improved her record to 17-1 at major tournaments this year. She won the Australian Open and reached the semifinals at the French Open before her five wins so far on the grass at Wimbledon.

Sabalenka, the only former major champion remaining in the women's tournament, also improved her record to 6-0 in Grand Slam quarterfinal matches, and she did so despite much of the cheering going toward Keys on Wednesday.

"Thank you so much for the at-



ALASTAIR GRANT/AP

Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus returns against Madison Keys of the U.S. during their women's singles match Wednesday at Wimbledon in London. Sabalenka advanced to the semifinals in straight sets.

mosphere, even though you supported her more," Sabalenka said on court. "I still enjoyed playing in front of you guys."

Sabalenka will next face Ons Jabeur, a sixth-seeded Tunisian who

beat defending champion Elena Rybakina 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-1 on Centre Court in a rematch of last year's final.

"I wish we can exchange this match from finals last year," said

Jabeur, who lost to Rybakina in three sets in 2022.

Jabeur won eight of the last nine games to reach the semifinals at a major tournament for the third time. She is 2-0 in the previous two, also reaching the final at last year's U.S. Open.

"I'm going to keep the spirit on the court and hopefully the crowd will be with me," Jabeur said of the match against Sabalenka.

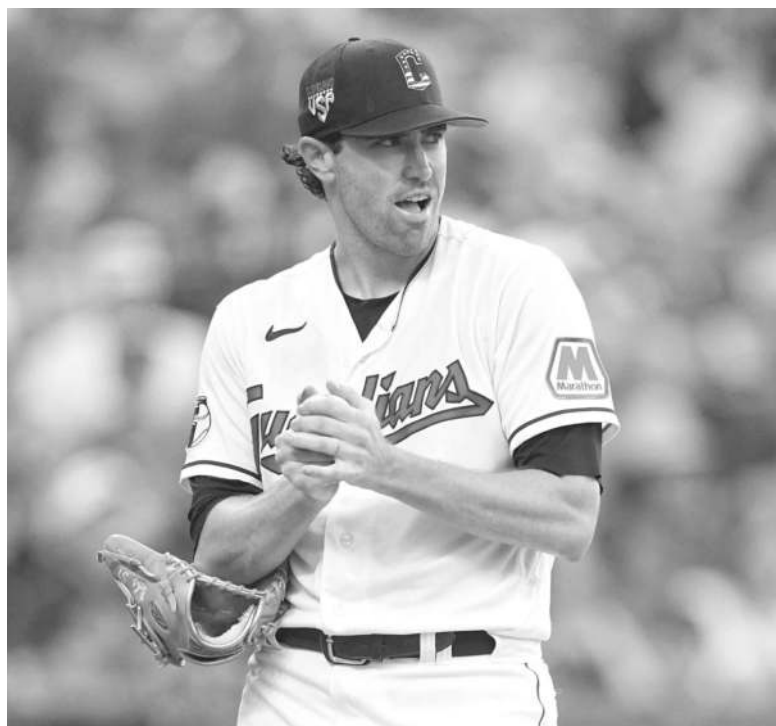
Jabeur will play Sabalenka in the second match on Centre Court on Thursday for a spot in Saturday's final. Elina Svitolina will face Marketa Vondrousova in the early match.

Medvedev won the U.S. Open in 2021 and will be playing in the semifinals of a Grand Slam tournament for the sixth time — and first time at Wimbledon.

Later Wednesday in the other men's quarterfinal match, top-seeded Carlos Alcaraz was playing Holger Rune on Centre Court.

Queen Camilla was in attendance on Day 10 of the tournament, about a week after Kate, the Princess of Wales, sat in the Royal Box.

## MLB



SUE OGRICK/AP

Cleveland Guardians starting pitcher Shane Bieber rubs a baseball after the Atlanta Braves' Ozzie Albies homered July 4 in Cleveland.

## New baseballs could rid sticky stuff issue

By RONALD BLUM  
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Pristine white baseballs that would not require rubbing are under consideration by Major League Baseball as a way to solve the issue of pitchers using sticky substances for better grip.

"We continue to work with the people at Dow Chemical on developing a tacky ball," Commissioner Ron Manfred told the Baseball Writers' Association of America on Tuesday. "It would literally eliminate all — well, not all — but many of the variables in the current process. It would come out of a sealed foil pouch at the ballpark. No individual mudding."

MLB executive vice president Morgan Sword said the balls were tested in the first half of this season in the Double-A Southern League. The balls would retain colored stitches.

"Like everything in baseball, when you inch toward a solution, you figure out another problem," Manfred said. "The baseball, if we get there with the Dow people, would be a pearl, right? A pure white baseball. I think if you take hitters and pitchers out front here and ask 'em what they think of a pure white baseball, you're going to find out that it's a pretty controversial topic. So not only do we have the science that we're continuing to work on but we're going to have to get over that sort of policy issue of: Is a pure white baseball a good thing?"

A minimum 13 dozen baseballs are prepared for each game. Humidors have been used for storage by all teams since 2022.

"The only issue guys are having now is that whatever park you go to, every stadium is different,"

Minnesota All-Star pitcher Sonny Gray said. "The elements are different everywhere. Like when you're pitching in Minnesota when it's 30 degrees outside for the first month of the season, the balls are going to be hard, cold and dry, rather than when you're pitching in Cincinnati in the middle of the summer it's sticky and humid."

Tampa Bay pitcher Shane McClanahan prefers a pre-tacked ball, such as Nippon Professional Baseball uses.

"We've seen that it's had success in Japan with consistent balls," he said. "Once we agree upon it as players and whatnot, I'm excited to see what happens."

Five pitchers have been suspended for 10 games each since MLB began its crackdown on banned grip substances in June 2021 by instituting regular inspections by umpires.

Seattle's Hector Santiago and Arizona's Caleb Smith served suspensions in 2021 and three were disciplined this season: the Mets' Max Scherzer, the Yankees' Domingo Germán on May 17 and the Mets' Drew Smith on June 14.

"The suspensions that we have had would fall into the category of clear-to-egregious violations," Manfred said. "I understand that feeling someone's hand is inherently subjective. I think this is an area where umpires, again, with a difficult topic, have shown great judgment and discretion. I think gray areas, players have definitely been given the benefit of the doubt."

Baseballs are currently rubbed with mud to make them less slick. MLB standardized rubbing procedures among the 30 teams last year.

# 'Come to Seattle!': Fans make their pitch to Ohtani

By TIM BOOTH  
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Shohei Ohtani had an entire stadium asking him in unison to come to Seattle during free agency.

"Never experienced anything like that, but I definitely heard it," the two-position star said through his interpreter. "But I was trying to focus on my at-bat."

Ohtani was the biggest star of the All-Star Game on Tuesday night, even if his appearance was rather uneventful. Ohtani struck out and walked in his two at-bats as the American League's nine-game winning streak ended with a 3-2 loss to the National League.

It was what happened while Ohtani was in the batters' box that became notable.

With the Seattle crowd aware of Ohtani's pending free agency this offseason, the stadium broke out into loud chants of "Come to Seattle! Come to Seattle!"

"Every time I come here the fans are passionate, they're really into the game. So it's very impressive," Ohtani said. "I actually spent a couple offseasons in Seattle. So I like the city. It's beautiful."

They were impossible to miss and a little different than the loud pop he received during pregame introductions that was only topped by Seattle's three rep-

resentatives in the game.

"I did talk to him a little bit but nothing specific about him coming to Seattle, just asked him a couple questions," Seattle star Julio Rodríguez said. "But that was cool. That was a pretty interesting thing to see how the whole city came (together)."

Ohtani's free agency this offseason was the buzz of the All-Star Game, with some pondering whether a deal in the \$600 million range could be possible for the two-way star.

"I think a lot of people are lobbying for Shohei, to tell you the truth. And that was a sign of affection and that they wanted him," AL manager Dusty Baker said.

His future could become a topic sooner than later if the Angels continue to fade with Mike Trout sidelined by injury. The Angels entered the All-Star break losers of five straight and nine of 10 to drop below .500. The Angels said

they have no intention of dealing Ohtani prior to the trade deadline, but that could change over the next few weeks.

"I'm not really going to change anything personally, just keep it the same," Ohtani said. "I know we have a lot of injuries right now and we're in a tough spot, but we need to hang in there because we got guys coming back soon. So try to hang in there and get as many wins until all the guys come back."

**"Every time I come here the fans are passionate, they're really into the game. So it's very impressive."**

Shohei Ohtani  
Angels pitcher/designated hitter



LINDSEY WASSON/AP

The American League's Shohei Ohtani, of the Los Angeles Angels, acknowledges the crowd after receiving the trophy for leading vote-getter during the All-Star Game in Seattle on Tuesday.

## MLB

# Díaz earns unlikely MVP award

## First-time All-Star at age 32 enjoys surreal moment

BY RONALD BLUM  
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Elias Díaz may be the most unlikely All-Star MVP.

Just 3½ years after Pittsburgh failed to offer a contract and allowed him to become a free agent, Díaz hit a go-ahead, two-run homer off Félix Bautista in the eighth inning to lift the National League over the American 3-2 on Tuesday night.

A first-time All-Star at age 32, the Colorado catcher put his name on an award won by Willie Mays, Joe Morgan, Frank and Brooks Robinson, both Ken Griffey and Mike Trout.

“I honestly can’t believe that my name is going to be next to some of those names,” Díaz said through a translator, clutching the crystal bat awarded the MVP. “Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would be in this position.”

After five years with the Pirates, Díaz found out from his agent in December 2019 he had been non-tendered.

“When they let me go, I didn’t allow myself to feel defeated,” Díaz said. “I maintained my confidence and stayed positive.”

He got a minor league deal with the Rockies a month later, made the big league roster at the start of the pandemic-delayed 2020 season and earned a \$1.2 million big league contract for 2021. He hit .246 with 18 homers and 44 RBIs, and Colorado rewarded him with a \$14.5 million, three-year agreement.

Díaz batted .228 with nine homers and 51 RBIs last year, then



LINDSEY WASSON/AP

**The National League’s Elias Díaz, of the Colorado Rockies, holds up the crystal bat presented to the MVP after Tuesday’s All-Star Game in Seattle. Díaz hit a pinch-hit home run in the eighth inning.**

earned his first All-Star trip by batting .277 with nine homers and 45 RBIs heading into this year’s break.

“He’s really improved in every phase of his game,” said NL manager Rob Thomson of the Philadelphia Phillies.

Thomson had called Rockies manager Bud Black to learn about Díaz.

“He said, ‘This is one of the finest people you’ll ever meet. He’s a complete team player,’” Thomson related. “‘Do anything you want. If he doesn’t play, that’s fine. If he does play, that would be great.

He’s just happy to be there.”

With the AL leading 2-1, Nick Castellanos worked a nine-pitch walk against Bautista leading off the eighth. Díaz batted for Jorge Soler and with a 2-2 count drove a splitter 360 feet, where it landed under the manual scoreboard behind the left-field wall. The 20th pinch-hit homer in All-Star history was a no-doubter. Díaz took three small steps and watched before starting his trot.

“A splitter that stayed up in the zone,” said Bautista, who had given up one homer in 56 at-bats this season ending with that pitch.

Díaz jumped as he approached the dugout and exchanged slaps with teammates. Geraldo Perdomo doused him with water. A short while later, he became the first Venezuelan to earn All-Star MVP since Dave Concepción in 1972. Díaz’s jersey is going to the Hall of Fame.

“Maybe the third or fourth inning, Orlando Arcia, he was telling me that ‘Hey, you’re going to go up to bat you’re going to hit a home run, and you’re going to win the MVP,’” Díaz recalled. “I didn’t think it was going to turn into all this.”

## Scoreboard

### American League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	58	35	.624	—
Baltimore	54	35	.607	2
Toronto	50	41	.549	7
New York	49	42	.538	8
Boston	48	43	.527	9

### Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	45	45	.500	—
Minnesota	45	46	.495	½
Detroit	39	50	.438	5½
Chicago	38	54	.413	8
Kansas City	26	65	.286	19½

### West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	52	39	.571	—
Houston	50	41	.549	2
Seattle	45	44	.506	6
Los Angeles	45	46	.495	7
Oakland	25	67	.272	27½

### National League

#### East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	60	29	.674	—
Miami	53	39	.576	8½
Philadelphia	48	41	.539	12
New York	42	48	.467	18½
Washington	36	54	.400	24½

#### Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cincinnati	50	41	.549	—
Milwaukee	49	42	.538	1
Chicago	42	47	.472	7
Pittsburgh	41	49	.456	8½
St. Louis	38	52	.422	11½

#### West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	51	38	.573	—
Arizona	52	39	.571	—
San Francisco	49	41	.544	2½
San Diego	43	47	.478	8½
Colorado	34	57	.374	18

#### Tuesday’s games

All-Star Game: NL 3, AL 2

#### Wednesday’s games

No games scheduled

#### Thursday’s games

No games scheduled

#### Friday’s games

San Diego at Philadelphia  
Miami at Baltimore  
San Francisco at Pittsburgh  
Arizona at Toronto  
L.A. Dodgers at N.Y. Mets  
Milwaukee at Cincinnati  
Chicago White Sox at Atlanta  
Cleveland at Texas  
Boston at Chicago Cubs  
Tampa Bay at Kansas City  
Washington at St. Louis  
N.Y. Yankees at Colorado  
Houston at L.A. Angels  
Minnesota at Oakland  
Detroit at Seattle

## Late: For most of evening, All-Star Game was pitchers’ duel

FROM PAGE 24

“I threw way more pitches than I wanted to on an off day,” Kimbrel joked.

Wander Franco led off with a fly ball to the warning track, and Kimbrel issued two-out walks to Kyle Tucker and Seattle star Julio Rodríguez.

The 22-year-old Rodríguez was in position to close it out in front of his home crowd.

“I was definitely trying to win it. But it was a situation where I had to pass the baton,” he said.

Kimbrel recovered to strike out José Ramírez to end it. Kimbrel also pitched in the previous NL win, recording two outs in 2012.

“The ninth inning in the dugout was just a lot of fun to experience,” said San Diego’s Josh Hader, who pitched the eighth for the NL.

Yandy Díaz hit a solo homer in the second

and Bo Bichette’s sacrifice fly in the sixth gave the AL a 2-1 lead.

J.D. Martinez doubled and scored on Luis Arraez’s single in the fourth against Seattle’s George Kirby, tying it at 1. Lourdes Gurriel Jr. appeared to tie the game again in the seventh when his shot down the left-field line was originally ruled a homer but was overturned as a foul ball on replay.

The All-Star Game returned to Seattle for the first time since 2001 when the Mariners were in the middle of their magical 116-win regular season, Cal Ripken Jr. said goodbye to the All-Star stage and Tommy Lasorda took a tumble.

Gerrit Cole became the first New York Yankees pitcher to start the All-Star Game since Roger Clemens in that 2001 game. He needed a pair of spectacular leaping catches from Adolis García and Randy Arozarena near the wall to escape the first inning unscathed.

Pitching was the story of the night. Only nine balls were hit over 100 mph. There were 20 combined strikeouts, including Camilo Doval silencing the home crowd with a strikeout of Rodríguez in the seventh inning when four of the five pitches topped 100 mph.

### Six pack

The Rangers made All-Star history when Nathan Eovaldi took the mound in the second. That marked the third time in an All-Star Game when there were six players from the same team on the field at the same time. It also occurred with the 1939 Yankees and 1951 Dodgers.

The Baseball Hall of Fame said a ball signed by all six players in the game would be headed to Cooperstown.

“That’s got to be one of the cooler moments in sports when you’ve got half the team on the field is your team, especially

under these circumstances,” catcher Jonah Heim said. “It’s really special and I was glad I got to share it with these guys today.”

### Skipped over

The Tampa Bay duo of Shane Bieber and Wander Franco were inadvertently skipped over during pregame introductions. The pair jogged in on their own and left it to the Rays’ social media staff to give them a proper announcement.

### Up next

The post-All-Star break portion of the schedule starts Friday with every team in the league in action. San Diego at Philadelphia is the first game scheduled for Friday. The second half begins with Atlanta having the best record in baseball at 60-29 and an 8½-game lead in the NL East. Tampa Bay has the best record in the American League at 58-35, two games better than Baltimore.

# WOMEN'S WORLD CUP



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Trinity Rodman speaks with reporters during Women's World Cup media day for the United States Women's National Team in Carson, Calif., on June 27. Rodman is making her World Cup debut this year.

## Rodman could be poised for breakout in US debut

By NOAH TRISTER  
*Associated Press*

**T**rinity Rodman collected the ball just outside the penalty area and needed just one more touch to send it into the lower left corner of the net.

About a month shy of her 20th birthday, she'd scored her first goal for the U.S. women's national team.

That was April 2022, in a blowout victory over Uzbekistan. Now, a far greater stage awaits at the Women's World Cup beginning this month. On a U.S. team that will soon have to embrace a new generation of standouts, Rodman belongs on any list of possible breakout stars in Australia and New Zealand.

But with those expectations comes a new kind of pressure. She's dealt with that in various forms throughout her short career, and now she's ready for this next challenge.

"I'm so honored, proud and just excited for this opportunity," she said. "At this age, there's so much time to accomplish things, but to experience it this early has been so amazing, and I'm just so excited."

The daughter of basketball Hall of Famer Dennis Rodman, Trinity has become a force for the Washington Spirit of the NWSL. Her confidence and deft footwork make her a highlight waiting to happen, and it feels like only a matter of time before Rodman follows in the footsteps of great American attacking players like Abby Wam-

bach, Carli Lloyd and Alex Morgan.

The question is whether she's ready for that kind of responsibility now, at age 21. On a team that may need her to play a major role, no less.

"Ever since she came in the league, we could see the energy and the creativity and the intensity that she brings," said Vlatko Andonovski, the coach of the national team. "I feel like every time when she gets the ball, it's almost like there is a little expectation of, something will happen, something will transpire off of it."

Born in 2002—three years after Mia Hamm led the United States to a World Cup title at home—Rodman was 13 when the Americans next won. Lloyd had a hat trick in the final that year. One goal in particular stood out.

"The final against Japan, when she scored from half-field," Rodman said. "Obviously, that was one of the biggest moments in soccer, but obviously that will always be in my head. I mean, that was just inhuman."

You can imagine Rodman pulling off something similar, given her fearlessness on the field, and her talent has been obvious from the moment she entered the NWSL as the No. 2 pick in the 2021 draft. She scored in her pro debut that April and went on to win Rookie of the Year honors—and the Spirit won a championship. In 2022, Rodman signed a contract making her the league's highest-paid player.

After accomplishing all that

while still a teenager—and with a famous last name to boot—it's fair to say she's no stranger to a certain level of hype.

"I think for me, trying to block the outside noise has been difficult, but also doable," she said. "Obviously, coming off of the rookie year that I had, it was more than I ever expected it to be, but that obviously opened up the doors for a lot of attention and a lot of expectations moving into the second season and so on."

Mark Parsons, Rodman's coach with the Spirit, has tried to keep the pressure from becoming too burdensome.

"Trin has had a lot of expectation. I also disagree with that, and I think that's unfair," Parsons said. "I think that this is a 21-year-old that things are coming thick and fast. She's taken everything in her stride. I think she's doing a wonderful job at trying to stay focused on what is most important, which is being a good person, being a good teammate and developing as a soccer player."

As quickly as she's become a household name in the sport, Rodman has admitted to some trepidation about the upcoming World Cup—regarding whether she'd be picked and how she'd perform.

"I think both," Rodman said. "I think obviously, there's the initial, 'Am I going to get that call?' But also just, like, if I do get that call, I've never experienced anything even close to that, so I think the fear of the unknown is definitely in my head."

## Tournament shows inequity within game

By ANNE M. PETERSON  
*Associated Press*

As the Women's World Cup approached, Jamaican players started to panic.

They were uncertain about training camps, accommodations and even pay heading into what for many would be the biggest tournament of their careers.

So they took to social media.

A number of the Reggae Girlz, as they are affectionately known, went public with their concerns, pleading with the Jamaican Football Federation to address "sub-par" conditions.

The mother of one player took it a step further: She started a GoFundMe page to raise money to make sure the team and the support staff are provided what they need to be successful—such as adequate hotels and compensation.

"These girls deserve better. They have proven themselves on an international platform that they belong. And they need support, whether it's from parents, friends or fans, to let them know that we see what they've accomplished, and we're proud of them," said organizer Sandra Phillips-Brower, the mother of midfielder Havana Solaun.

The World Cup always draws attention to the inequities between men's and women's soccer. But it also highlights the inequity within the women's game itself.

Teams like the United States and England, with greater support from their federations, enjoy the best that money can buy: Things like sports psychologists, massage therapists and team chefs.

Other teams, like Jamaica and South Africa, are uncertain they'll even get paid. So they're using social media and collective action to draw attention to their plight.

"All the teams are using their voices a lot more. We know these things because players are talking

about it," U.S. forward Megan Rapinoe said. "Even when they're subjected to the discrimination and unequal treatment, they're still speaking out. They're still using their voice. That's really important."

The Reggae Girlz felt compelled to speak out at a time when their attention should be solely focused on competing in the World Cup.

"On multiple occasions, we have sat down with the federation to respectfully express concerns resulting from subpar planning, transportation, accommodations, training conditions, compensation communication, nutrition and accessibility to proper resources," players said in a post on social media. "We have also showed up repeatedly without receiving contractually agreed upon compensation. We were told that all our requests and concerns would be resolved in a timely manner."

The GoFundMe site has raised more than \$45,000, and Phillips-Brower was figuring out how to distribute the funds to best serve the players and staff. The Jamaican Football Federation did not respond to emails seeking comment.

Jamaica hasn't gone as far as South Africa's women, who boycotted a preparation match against Botswana near Johannesburg. Thulaganyo Gaoshubelwe, the president of the South African Football Players Union, said the incident was partly caused by poor pay for the players.

"They are fighting for their rights," Gaoshubelwe said in a video posted on his union's Twitter account. "SAFA doesn't want to include money in their contracts. We must fight for the rights of these players."

A foundation set up by African soccer president and billionaire businessman Patrice Motsepe responded by creating a fund to be shared by the players.



FERNANDO LLANO/AP

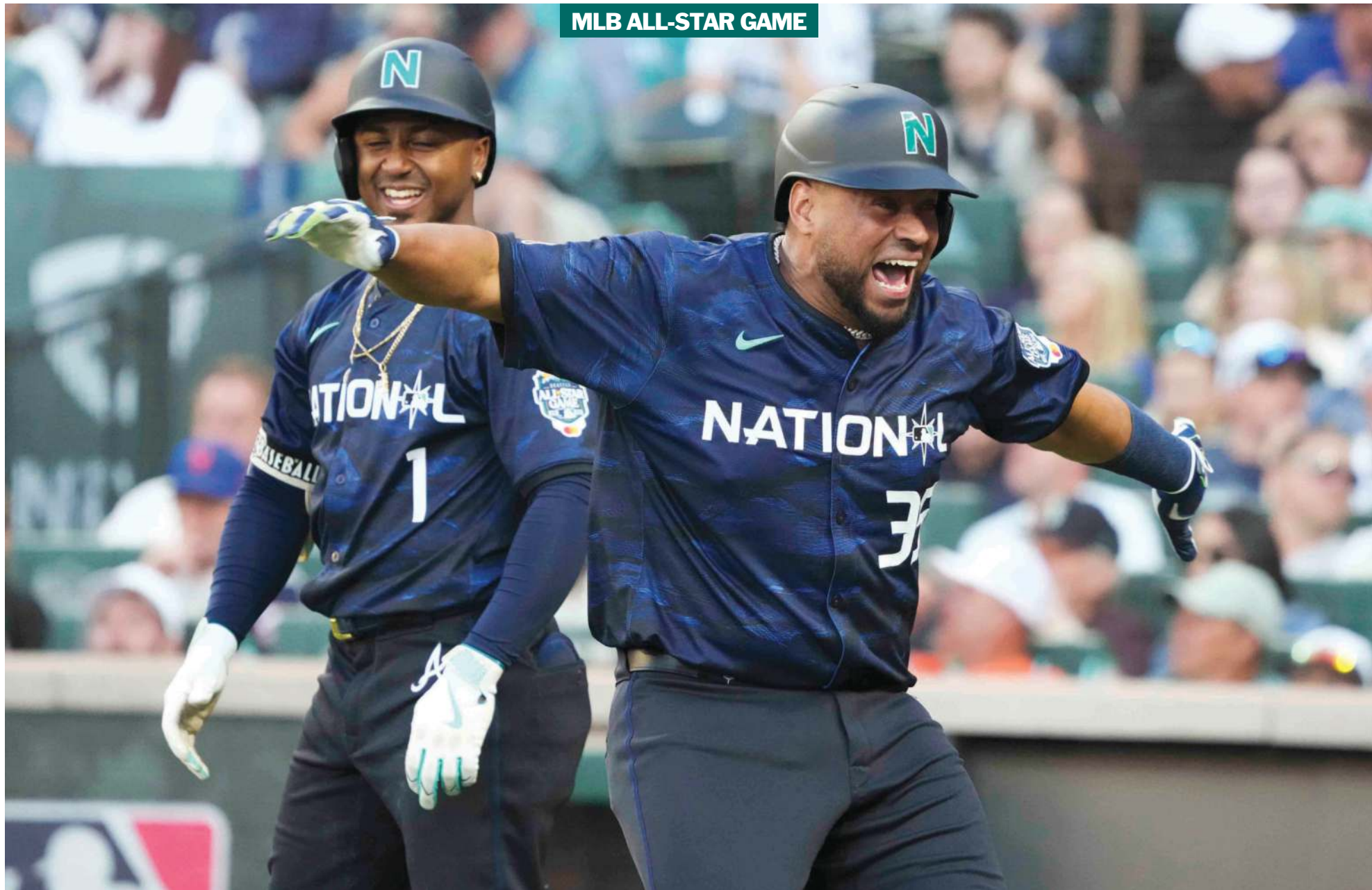
Costa Rica's Raquel Rodriguez, center, is congratulated by teammates after scoring a goal against Panama during a CONCACAF Women's Championship match in Monterrey, Mexico, on July 5, 2022.

# SPORTS



## Poised to break out

Rodman another young player ready to star for US » **Women's World Cup, Page 23**



MLB ALL-STAR GAME

TED S. WARREN/AP

The National League's Elias Díaz, of the Colorado Rockies, celebrates his two-run home run with Ozzie Albies, of the Atlanta Braves, during the eighth inning Tuesday in Seattle.

# NL slips past AL late

## Díaz's homer helps National League snap nine-game skid

By **TIM BOOTH**  
*Associated Press*

SEATTLE — Shining brightly in the Emerald City, the National League snapped a losing streak that lasted more than a decade.

An unheralded catcher from Colorado delivered the big blow.

Elias Díaz hit a two-run homer off Félix Bautista in the eighth inning, and the NL snapped a nine-game losing streak in the All-Star Game with a 3-2 win over the American League on Tuesday night.

The NL won for the first time since an 8-0 victory in 2012 in Kansas City, and Díaz became the first Rockies player to win the All-Star MVP award.

### INSIDE

### New baseballs may get rid of sticky substances

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“It feels incredible. When we all got here, we all talked about how we were going to bring home the win,” said Díaz, who was non-tendered by the Pirates at the end of 2019. “I just didn’t realize it was going to be me to bring home the win.”

Díaz drove a 2-2 pitch from Baltimore’s hard-throwing closer deep to left to put the NL in front. Díaz was the lone representative for Colorado in his first All-Star Game.

“It does matter. We wanted to win, the American League we wanted to win,” Bautista said through an interpreter. “But overall I think that it’s an experience I’ll never forget and just wish that would have been a little bit different.”

Díaz has nine homers this season, but hadn’t hit a long ball since June 23 against the Los Angeles Angels.

For most of the night, the All-Star Game was a pitchers’ duel highlighted by a couple of big hits and some excellent defense.

It got nervous for the NL with Philadelphia closer Craig Kimbrel on the mound in the ninth.

SEE LATE ON PAGE 22



LINDSEY WASSON/AP

American League pitcher Félix Bautista, of the Baltimore Orioles, looks up as he walks off the mound after being pulled. Bautista gave up Díaz’s homer.

# Sabalenka, Medvedev move to semifinals » Wimbledon, Page 20

