N. Korea warns it might resume nuke, missile tests over US-S. Korean exercises

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes
SEUL, South Korea — North Korea warned on Tuesday that upcoming U.S.-South Korean military exercises could stall the resumption of nuclear negotiations and suggested it might restart nuclear or missile tests, which were suspended last year. The saber-rattling came a day after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he hoped 

Washington and Pyongyang could “be a little more creative” in the next round of talks.

President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un agreed to resume working-level talks during their meeting at the Korean border on June 30. The leaders didn’t set a date, but Pompeo said at the time it would probably be in mid-July.

The U.S. administration is eager to break the deadlock that followed the collapse of a second summit between Trump and Kim in February in Vietnam.

The sides failed to reach agreement as the North demanded extensive relief from economic sanctions and the U.S. insisted the North denuclearize first.

On Monday, Pompeo said the goal remained “to fully and finally denuclearize North Korea in a way that we can verify,” but he also raised the possibility of compromise.

“I hope the North Koreans will come to the table with ideas that they didn’t have the first time. We hope we can be a little more creative, too,” he said in an interview on “The Sean Hannity Show.”

North Korea also strongly objects to joint drills conducted each year by the U.S. and South Korea, as it considers them rehearsals for an invasion.

SEE TESTS ON PAGE 5
Enlisted women free to apply for sub duty

By Joshua Karsten  
Stars and Stripes

Enlisted women hoping to join the ranks of Navy submariners will no longer have to wait for infrequent opportunities to apply. The Navy will now accept applications continuously from female enlisted sailors to serve in non-nuclear rates, said an administrative message signed by Vice Adm. John Nowell Jr., chief of naval personnel.

Women will be considered to serve on previously integrated crews on four submarines or initial enlisted integration on other boats.

In the past, application windows were determined by the submarine community’s needs and available billets for the integration of individual boats, the service said in a statement Monday.

“Applications will be processed as they are received, and there is no specified due date,” according to the statement, which encouraged interested sailors to submit their applications “as soon as possible.”

Enlisted women first integrated into submarine crews in 2015, five years after the Navy first lifted the prohibition on women serving in the submarine force, when 38 sailors were selected for two crews of the USS Michigan. Female officers first filled the ranks in 2011.

Under the new process, sailors for all communities can apply to be converted into one of 16 open submarine ratings — only four of which are open for chief petty officers or senior chief petty officers.

Sailors of all ranks up to senior chief can apply to be a submarine yeoman, culinary specialist, logistics specialist or information systems technician.

The ratings of sonar technician, fire control technician, electronics technician navigation and electronics technician communications as well as machinist's mate weapons and machinist's mate auxiliary are open to sailors up to petty officer first class.

“Personnel specialists and independent duty corpsmen will also be considered,” the statement said.

Deadline extended for transferring education benefits to family

By Scott Wyland  
Stars and Stripes

Military personnel with more than 16 years of service will have an additional six months to transfer their Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits to family members after they'd served six years. The Pentagon extended the deadline to take effect on July 12, limiting the benefit transfers to troops with at least six years of service but no more than 16 years.

The Pentagon extended the deadline until Jan. 12, 2020, for troops who have more than 16 years of service to give Congress time to discuss the House Armed Services Committee's proposal to change the rule. Troops still must have served at least six years and be able to reenlist for four more years.

“This is a welcome decision by the department to slow down implementation of a policy that will unfairly affect some of our most seasoned servicemembers,” Armed Services Committee member Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., said in a statement.

Courtney proposed repealing the 16-year limit and received the committee’s unanimous support. He sent a letter on June 24 to acting Defense Secretary Mark Esper requesting that the Pentagon delay imposing the restriction.

The Pentagon announced plans for the limit in July 2018. Previously, there were no restrictions on when servicemembers could transfer education benefits to family members after they'd served six years.

Servicemembers wounded in combat who have received Purple Heart medals are exempted from the rule. When veterans advocates criticized the restriction, military officials said the transfers were intended as a retention tool and not as a benefit to career servicemembers.

In his letter to Esper, Courtney said efforts to retain good servicemembers shouldn’t stop at 16 years.

“Ultimately, we hope that you will reconsider implementing this new limitation entirely and look forward to working with you as we consider policies to attract and retain our country’s best and the brightest,” Courtney said.

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ENLISTED women free to apply for sub duty

BY JOSHUA KARSTEN  
Stars and Stripes

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Deadline extended for transferring education benefits to family

BY SCOTT WYLAND  
Stars and Stripes

Military personnel with more than 16 years of service will have an additional six months to transfer their Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits to family members while Congress decides whether to remove the restriction on transfers.

A new Defense Department rule was set to take effect on July 12, limiting the benefit transfers to troops with at least six years of service but no more than 16 years. The Pentagon extended the deadline until Jan. 12, 2020, for troops who have more than 16 years of service to give Congress time to discuss the House Armed Services Committee’s proposal to change the rule. Troops still must have served at least six years and be able to reenlist for four more years.

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Chinese ships reported near disputed islands

By Aya Ichihashi
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A group of Chinese ships entered Japanese territorial waters near the Senkaku Islands, a group of uninhabited islands west of Okinawa in the East China Sea — on Monday, according to the Japanese coast guard.

“Four China Coast Guard vessels entered the territorial waters at about 4 p.m. on Monday and exited by 4:16 p.m.,” a spokesman for Japan’s 11th Regional Coast Guard in Naha told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday morning. The rules of his job do not allow him to be named.

“One China Coast Guard vessel warned the vessels to exit the waters and will continue warning them not to enter,” he said.

China Coast Guard ships also entered Japanese-controlled waters on July 10, the spokesman said. Four vessels spent two hours in Japanese territory before exiting into the contiguous zone.

Chino Coast Guard vessels were spotted in the Japanese contiguous zone for 64 days straight from April 12 to June 14. The contiguous zone extends past a nation’s territorial waters and up to 24 nautical miles.

“Since the Senkaku Islands became Japanese land in 2012, this is the longest record” for Chinese incursions, the spokesman said.

On June 11, a Chinese aircraft carrier sailed between two islands in Okinawa prefecture, according to Japanese officials. The carrier Liaoning was part of a six-ship flotilla that passed between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island as it made its way from the East China Sea to the open ocean, a spokesman for Japan’s Joint Staff told Stars and Stripes last month.

Japanese officials have been increasingly concerned about Chinese encroachment as Beijing modernizes its military and becomes more assertive in the region.

The number of jets Japan scrambled to intercept Chinese aircraft approaching its airspace rose 27.6% to 638 times in fiscal year 2018, according to the nation’s Ministry of Defense.

Proposed law calls on Pentagon to assess capabilities in Baltics

By John Vander
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A defense bill passed by U.S. lawmakers calls on the Pentagon to take steps to counter Russia in the Baltic region, including by potentially reinforcing air defenses and stepping up troop rotations.

The Baltic Reassurance Act is part of the National Defense Authorization Act, which was passed by House lawmakers last week.

The initiative, which still needs Senate backing, calls for the Defense Department to assess the need for more cyber, intelligence and surveillance capabilities, weapons depots and troop deployments in the Baltic region, where the U.S. military and Western security analysts have warned that NATO allies may be outgunned by Russia.

Opportunities to transfer and sell military gear to the Baltic states also should be considered, the bill says.

The Baltic region has long been an area of concern for the U.S. military in Europe.

In 2016, NATO sent multinational battlegroups to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — all of which were annexed by the Soviet Union from the end of World War II until 1991 — and northern Poland to boost security amid a military buildup in Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania depend on NATO’s Baltic Air Policing mission to safeguard their skies. Russian military aircraft regularly encroach into Estonian airspace, and those violations have increased since 2014 when Russia annexed Ukraine’s Crimea peninsula.

Parts of the Baltic region, such as the Suwalki Gap corridor that runs along the Polish and Lithuanian borders, are also vulnerable to Russian aggression, analysts and military officials have warned.

“If Russian forces ever established control over the Suwalki region or even threatened the free movement of NATO personnel and equipment through it, they would effectively cut the Baltic States off from the rest of the Alliance,” retired U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges warned in a 2018 report for the Washington-based Center for European Policy Analysis.

It is uncertain how the House version of the NDAA will fare in the Senate, given the partisan divide over the defense budget in the two houses and the fact that the Republican-controlled Senate passed its own NDAA last month.

But the Baltic Reassurance Act provision was based on a bill authored by Texas Republican Rep. Michael Conway, suggesting bipartisan interest in doing more in the region.

The House version of the NDAA calls on the Pentagon to consider “the feasibility of providing additional air and missile defense systems in the Baltic region.”


It also calls for the U.S. military to analyze what the Baltic states need to “deter and resist aggression by Russia,” and to study how to “enhance the posture and response readiness” of U.S. and allied forces in the region, potentially by increasing troop rotations and numbers of forward-based troops.

The U.S. “should lead a multilateral effort to develop a strategy to deepen joint capabilities with Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, NATO allies, and other regional partners, to deter against aggression from Russia in the Baltic region,” says the House NDAA, which was drafted as the Pentagon deepens ties with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Lithuania and the U.S. signed a defense agreement in April under which the U.S. pledged to help the Baltic state develop anti-tank and missile systems and said it would continue to send forces “to strengthen deterrence and to catalyze the efforts of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to develop their national defense further.”

A similar agreement was struck last year with Poland, where the U.S. plans to increase the number of American troops.

Air Force sends F-35s, F-15s to Europe in combat readiness test

By John Vander
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The U.S. Air Force sent a collection of fighters and transport aircraft to Poland, Lithuania and Estonia Tuesday in a test of the service’s ability to quickly deploy air power overseas, the military said.

The deployment of F-35A Lightning IIIs, F-15E Strike Eagles and C-130s arrived at Powidz air base in Poland as part of Operation Rapid Forge, a drill designed to boost Air Force combat readiness, U.S. Air Forces in Europe said in a statement.

“The ability to operate at forward locations enables collective defense capabilities and provides the U.S. with a strategic and operational breadth needed to deter adversaries and assure our allies and partners,” USAFE said.

The aircraft conducted refueling and rearming operations using inert munitions.

The deployment was connected to the Pentagon’s new Dynamic Force Employment strategy, which is focused on using more unpredictable deployments to demonstrate military agility to possible adversaries.

The Dynamic Force Employment concept, pushed by former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, is altering how the services train and operate overseas.

For the Navy, it has meant a shift away from traditional six-month deployment to a flexible system that can involve shorter but more frequent stints at sea.

And in March, the Army dispatched 1,500 soldiers from Fort Bliss, Texas, to Germany and on-ward NATO via one of the service’s largest snap mobilizations to Europe in years.

The F-35s taking part in Rapid Forge are from the 388th and 419th Fighter Wings at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. The F-15E Strike Eagles are deployed from the 4th Fighter Wing, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C.

While in Europe, the squadrons of fighter jets are operating out of Spangdahlem Air Base in Germany.

The exercise also involves MC-130J aircraft from the 352nd Special Operations Wing at RAF Mildenhall, England, and C-130J aircraft from the 317th Airlift Wing at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas.
NATO nuke sites accidentally ID’d
‘Worst-kept secret’ revealed in Canadian official’s report

**BY ADAM TAYLOR**
The Washington Post

A recently released — and subsequently deleted — document published by a NATO-affiliated body has sparked headlines in Europe with an apparent confirmation of a long-held open secret: U.S. nuclear weapons are being stored in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey.

A version of the document, titled “A new era for nuclear deterrence? Modernisation, arms control and ally cooperation issues,” was published in April. Written by a Canadian senator for the Defense and Security Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the report assessed the future of the organization’s nuclear arsenal.

But what would make news months later is a passing reference that appeared to reveal the location of the country’s U.S. nuclear weapons being stored in Europe.

According to a copy of the document published Tuesday by Belgian newspaper De Morgen, a section on the nuclear arsenal read: “These bombs are stored fairly open knowledge.”

De Morgen newspaper

A diplomatic cable from a U.S. ambassador to Germany suggested that there were concerns about how long the weapons could be kept in these countries.

“The withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Germany and perhaps from Belgium and the Netherlands could make it very difficult politically for Turkey to maintain its own stockpile,” read the memo, written by then-U.S. Ambassador Philip Murphy in November 2009.

The presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe was indeed “no surprise,” Kingston Reif, director for disarmament and non-proliferation of the Arms Control Association, said in an email. “This has long been fairly open knowledge.”

There had been a number of clear indications of the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons before. A diplomatic cable from a U.S. ambassador to Germany suggested that it was “the wrong one, and it’s disappointing.”

“I agree we do not want war with Iran,” he said. “We are not seeking war with Iran. We need to get back on the diplomatic channel.”

Esper said the administration plans to brief lawmakers soon on a plan for working with other countries to more closely monitor commercial shipping in and around the Persian Gulf. He said this plan, which he called Operation Sentinel, is intended to deter Iran from altering navigation in the Gulf and avoid Iranian miscalculations.

Testifying a day after Trump submitted his nomination to the Senate, Esper faced a mostly friendly series of questions from members of the Armed Services Committee. One clear exception was Sen. Elizabeth Warren, the Massachusetts Democrat who is running for the Democratic presidential nomination. She indicated she does not intend to vote for Esper’s confirmation, citing what she called his unwillingness to commit to avoiding potential conflicts of interest with his former employer, Raytheon Co., which is a major defense contractor.

“You should not be confirmed as secretary of defense,” Warren said.

The Republican-led Senate is expected to attempt to get Esper confirmed as early as Thursday, ending seven months of leadership uncertainty at the Pentagon. There has been no Senate-confirmed defense secretary since Jim Mattis left last New Year’s Eve.

Mattis quit after a series of policy disputes with Trump, including the president’s announcement in December that he would withdraw all U.S. troops from Syria — a move that was never executed.

Several members of the Armed Services Committee raised with Esper their concern that the Pentagon has suffered from a shortage of Senate-confirmed senior officials.

“I am concerned that the Defense Department is adrift in a way I have not seen in my whole time on Capitol Hill,” said Sen. Jack Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat who has served in the Congress since 1991. Esper, a former Army officer, said he met with White House officials on Monday to discuss plans to fill open positions, which include the civilian leader of the Air Force. The Air Force has had an acting secretary since Heather Wilson departed in May.

Esper is one of three people who have served as acting defense secretary this year, following Mattis’ departure. The first was Patrick Shanahan, who was never nominated for the position and quit abruptly in June. Esper then took over as the acting secretary.

The moment Esper’s nomination was received by the Senate on Monday, he was required by law to step out of his role as acting defense secretary until he is confirmed as the permanent secretary. He reverted to his previous position of Army secretary.

Army activates combat adviser unit

**BY ROSE L. THAYER**
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — A third brigade tasked with training forces in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan to provide better security was activated Tuesday at Fort Hood, Texas.

It is the third unit activated of five Security Force Assistance Brigades that the Army announced last year it would create. Though it is a little more than a year old, service officials have credited the new brigades as offering better advisers to partner nations and allowing traditional brigade combat teams to concentrate on readiness.

The 3rd SFAB has about 820 soldiers who have been specially selected, trained and equipped as professional combat advisers to work with foreign security forces, according to a statement from the unit. The brigades are training foreign forces to fight common enemies, not specifically terrorists, though the deployments of the first two SFABs have been to help forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“The brigade represents a permanent solution to our force structure to provide a professional advising force to improve the effectiveness of our partners and achieve regional stability,” according to the statement.

Gen. Charles J. Maasarachi is the 3rd SFAB commander. He previously commanded the 1st Armored Division’s 2nd Brigade Combat Team at Fort Bliss, Texas.

The Fort Hood unit falls under the Security Force Assistance Command within U.S. Army Forces Command. It joins the 1st SFAB, activated at Fort Benning, Ga., in February 2018, and the 2nd SFAB at Fort Bragg, N.C. It activated in November 2018 and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan in February. The 1st SFAB completed its first deployment to the same region in November 2018.

The next two assistance brigades are scheduled to be activated at Fort Carson, Colo., and Fort Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. The 3rd SFAB is to activate at Fort Carson by April 2020 and the 5th SFAB by December 2020, according to a letter from the Security Force Assistance Command.

No deployments are scheduled for 3rd SFAB, but soldiers will travel to Fort Polk, La., in the summer for a training rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center.

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US fears Iran seized UAE-based oil tanker

By Jon Gambrell

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — A small oil tanker from the United Arab Emirates traveling through the Strait of Hormuz entered Iranian waters and turned off its tracker two days ago, leading the U.S. to suspect Iran seized the vessel amid heightened tensions in the region, an American defense official said Tuesday.

Iran offered no immediate comment when questioned about the Panamanian-flagged oil tanker Riah late Saturday night, though an Emirati official acknowledged the vessel sent out no distress call.

Oil tankers previously have been targeted in the wider region amid tensions between the U.S. and Iran over its unrelenting nuclear deal with world powers.

The concern about the Riah comes as Iran continues its own high-pressure campaign over its nuclear program after President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord more than a year ago.

Recently, Iran has inked its uranium production at a nuclear site over the limits of its 2015 nuclear deal, trying to put more pressure on Europe to offer it better terms and allow it to sell its crude oil abroad.

However, those tensions also have seen the U.S. send thousands of additional troops, nuclear-capable B-52 bombers and advanced fighter jets into the Mideast. Mysterious attacks on oil tankers and Iran shooting down a U.S. military surveillance drone have added to the fears of an armed conflict breaking out.

The Riah, a 190-foot oil tanker, typically made trips from Dubai and Sharjah on the UAE’s east coast before going through the strait and heading to Fujairah on the UAE’s west coast. Heightened tensions something happened to the vessel after 11 p.m. Saturday, according to tracking data.

Capt. Ranjith Raja, of the data firm Refinitiv, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that the tanker hadn’t switched off its tracking in three months of trips around the UAE.

“That is a red flag,” Raja said. A U.S. defense official later told the AP that the Riah was in Iranian territorial waters near Qeshm Island, which has a Revolutionary Guard base on it.

“We certainly have suspicions that it was taken,” the official said. “Could it have broken down or been towed for assistance? That’s a possibility. But the longer there is a period of no contact, it’s going to be a concern.”

The official spoke on condition of anonymity as the matter did not directly involve U.S. interests.

An Emirati official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing security matter, said the vessel “did not emit a distress call.”

We are monitoring the situation with our international partners,” the official said.

The ship’s registered owner, Dubai-based Prime Tankers LLC, told the AP it had sold the ship to another company called Moz Al-Bahar. A man who answered a telephone number registered to the firm told the AP it didn’t own any ships. An Emirati official said the ship was “neither UAE owned nor operated” and carried no Emirati personnel, without elaborating.

Separately Tuesday, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said his country will retaliate over the seizure of an Iranian supertanker carrying 2.1 million barrels of light crude oil. The vessel was seized with the help of British Royal Marines earlier this month off Gibraltar over suspicion it was heading to Syria in violation of European Union sanctions, an operation Khamenei called “piracy” in a televised speech.

“God willing, the Islamic Republic and its committed forces will not leave this evil without a response,” he said. He did not elaborate.

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said Saturday that Britain will facilitate the release of the ship if Iran can provide guarantees the antees the vessel will not breach European sanctions on oil shipments to Syria.

Iran previously has threatened to stop oil tankers passing through the strait, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of all crude oil passes, if it cannot sell its own oil abroad.

Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif suggested Thursday in a televised interview that the Islamic Republic’s ballistic missile program could be up for negotiations with the U.S., a possible opening for talks as tensions remain high between Tehran and Washington. Zarif suggested an initially high price for such negotiations — the halt of American arms sales to both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, two key U.S. allies in the Persian Gulf.

Iran’s ballistic missile program remains under the control of the Iranian paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which answers only to Khamenei.

Zarif brought up the ballistic missile suggestion during an interview with NBC News that aired Monday on MSNBC while he is in New York for meetings at the United Nations. He mentioned the U.S. spending $22 billion and Saudi Arabia spending $67 billion on weapons last year, many of them American-made, while Iran spent only $16 billion in comparison.

“These are American weapons that is going into our region, making our region ready to explode,” Zarif said. “If they want to talk about missiles, they need first to stop selling all these weapons, including missiles, to our region.”

Iran’s missile program is a major reason the United Nations later called Zarif’s suggestion “hypothetical.”

“Iran’s missiles ... are absolutely and under no condition negotiable with anyone or any country, period,” the mission said.

Trump during his time in the White House has pointed to arms sales to the Mideast as important to the American economy so it remains unclear how he’d react to cutting into those purchases.

Tests: next training exercise with S. Korea expected in August

FROM FRONT PAGE

The Trump administration announced this year that it was canceling the exercise that occurred each spring and fall, known as Key Resolve/Foal Eagle and Ulchi Freedom Guardian.

The North was not mollified by the offer to preserve space for diplomacy and its nuclear commitments, we are gradually losing our justification to continue through on the commitments we made with the U.S.,” the Foreign Ministry said in a separate statement carried on KCNA.

It noted that “our decision to suspend nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests” as well as the U.S. decision to suspend joint military drills were aimed at improving bilateral relations and weren’t legal documents.

U.S. Forces Korea, the main command for some 28,500 American troops stationed in South Korea, said “readiness remains the number one priority.”

“As a matter of standard operating procedure, and in order to preserve space for diplomacy to work, we do not discuss any planned training or exercises publicly,” USFK said in a statement.

“We continue to train in a combined manner at echelon while harmonizing our training program with diplomatic efforts by adjusting four dials: size, scope, volume and timing,” it said.

Meanwhile, David Stilwell, the new top U.S. diplomat for East Asia and Pacific affairs, arrived in Seoul for a meeting with senior officials on the alliance and regional issues.

The discussions were expected to include North Korea as well as a trade dispute between South Korea and Japan.

Contact: @kimgamel
US and Russia set for talks on arms control

By Deb Riechmann
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Delegations from the U.S. and Russia are expected to meet this week to discuss arms control and the possibility of coaxing China into negotiating a new, three-way nuclear weapons pact, two senior administration officials said Monday.

The New START treaty, the last major arms control treaty remaining between the U.S. and Russia, expires in 2021. There has been talk of negotiating an extension to the existing treaty, but the White House thinks the next generation of arms control might include China.

China has nuclear weapons, ballistic missile capabilities and the know-how to make chemical and biological weapons — and it is updating its nuclear arsenal. China has signed various international arms agreements but none limiting nuclear weapons.

New START restricts both the U.S. and Russia to 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads on a maximum of 700 deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles and strategic submarines.

Daryl Kimball, director of the Arms Control Association, has advocated for a new exten-

sion of New START, saying there is no chance a new agreement adding China can be negotiated before the treaty expires in 2021.

“I would be malpractice to dis-
card New START in the hopes of negotia-
ting a more comprehensive, ambitious nuclear arms control agreement with Russia and China and getting it ratified and into force,” said Kimball, who acc-
cuses the Trump administration of dithering for more than a year before beginning talks.

Before the Group of 20 sum-
mit last month in Japan, Russian
President Vladimir Putin said he planned to push President Donald Trump for an extension to New START. Putin said his nation was ready to agree to an extension, but Russia had not seen any initiative from the Americans even though the treaty expires in 2021.

At the same time, Russia also has expressed an interest in multilateral arms control deals, according to one of the admin-
istration officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to dis-
cuss the issue ahead of the talks Wednesday in Geneva.

The senior administration of-

ficials said any comprehensive dialogue about the thorny issues New START has been made difficult by a series of actions by Moscow: interfering in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, poison-
ing a former spy and his daughter in Britain, capped the size of the U.S. Embassy in Russia and seiz-

ing a U.S. diplomat’s laptop.

John Sullivan, deputy secretary of state, will lead the American delegation comprising officials from the State Department, National Security Council, Defense Department, Joint Chiefs of Staff and the National Security Agency. The eight or nine members of the U.S. team will meet with a similar delegation from Russia led by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov.

The latest talks are being held just months after the Trump admin-

istration pulled the plug on a new arms agreement with Russia. Washington accused Moscow of violating the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty with “impunity” by deploying banned missiles. Mos-
cow denied it was in violation and has accused the United States of resisting its efforts to resolve the disputes.

Anti-abortion advocates like these gathered outside the Planned Parenthood clinic in St. Louis last month are hailing a Trump administration decision to enforce a ban on abortion referrals at taxpayer-funded family planning clinics.

By Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Taxpayer-funded family planning clinics must stop referring women for abor-
tions immediately, the Trump administration says, declaring it will begin enforcing a new regulation hailed by religious conservatives and denounced by medical organizations and women’s rights groups.

The head of a national umbrella group representing the clinics said the Republican administration is following “an ideological agenda” that could disrupt basic health care for many low-income women.

Ahead of a planned conference Tuesday with the clinics, the Department of Health and Human Ser-
vices formally notified them that it will begin en-
forcing the ban on abortion referrals, along with a requirement that clinics maintain separate finances from facilities that provide abortions. Another re-
quirement that both kinds of facilities cannot be under the same roof would take effect next year.

The rule is widely seen as a blow against Planned Parenthood, which provides taxpayer-funded fami-
ily planning and basic health care to low-income women as well as abortions that must be paid for separately. The organization is a mainstay of the federally funded family planning program and has threatened to quit over the issue.

Planned Parenthood President Leana Wen said in a statement that “our doors are still open” as her organization and other groups seek to overturn the regulations in federal court.

“We will not stop fighting for all those across the country in need of essential care,” Wen said.

HHS said no judicial orders currently pre-
vent it from enforcing the rule while the litigation proceeds.

Clare Coleman, president of the umbrella group National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association, said “the administration’s actions show its intent is to further an ideological agenda.”

Abortion opponents welcomed the administra-
tion’s move on Monday.

“Ending the connection between abortion and family planning is a victory for common-sense health care,” Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life, said in a statement.

Known as Title X, the family planning program serves about 4 million women annually through independent clinics, many operated by Planned Parenthood affiliates, which serve about 40% of all clients. The program provides about $260 million a year in grants to clinics.

The family planning rule is part of a series of Trump administration efforts to remake govern-
ment policy on reproductive health. Other regula-
tions tangled up in court would allow employers to opt out of offering free birth control to women workers on the basis of religious or moral objections and grant health care professionals wider leeway to opt out of procedures that offend their religious or moral scruples.

Border employees under internal investigation for social media posts

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials said Monday that 62 current and eight former Border Patrol employees are under internal inves-
tigation following revelations of a secret Facebook group that mocked lawmakers and immigrants.

Most are under investigation for posts that surfaced in a secret group called “I’m 10-15,” where messages questioned the auth-
enticity of images of migrant father and child dead on the banks of the Rio Grande River and depicted crude, doctored images of U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-
N.Y., purporting to perform a sex act on President Donald Trump.

“Messages posted on a private page that are discriminatory or harassing are not protected and violate standards of conduct,” said Matthew Klein, assistant commissioner of the agency’s Office of Professional Responsibility.

The group is at least one other closed group under investigation, he said.

Klein said his agency referred the case to the Homeland Security Department’s weather and environment agency, which declined to investi-
gate and sent the case back to Customs and Border Protection. He said they are now focused on fact-finding and would identify criminal behavior if there was any but it was not considered a criminal probe.

ProPublica first posted details of the Facebook group, which boasts 9,500 mem-
bers, just as Ocasio-Cortez and other Democrats were headed to tour border facilities.

In addition to the doctored images of Ocasio-Cortez, comments referred to Oca-
asio-Cortez and fellow Democratic Rep. Ve-
ronica Escobar, of Texas, as “hoes,” and one member encouraged agents to throw a “burrito at these bitches,” according to screenshots obtained by ProPublica.

A news story about a 16-year-old Guate-
malan migrant who died in Border Patrol custody in May elicited a response from one member that read, “If he dies, he dies.”

The posts threatened to tarnish the Bor-
der Patrol’s image at one of the most chal-
fencing times in its 95-year history.

Border Patrol Chief Carla Provost said the posts were unacceptable.

“These posts are completely inappropriate and contrary to the honor and integrity I see — and expect — from our agents day in and day out,” Provost said in an earlier statement. “Any employees found to have violated our standards of conduct will be held accountable.”

News reports have since surfaced that she may have also been a member at one point, though there is no indication she knew about the inflammatory posts.

Officials on Monday would not say whether those under investigation includ-
ed Provost or other top brass.
Mnuchin says budget deal is ‘very close’

By Andrew Taylor
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It’s House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell’s hardliners in the White House as lawmakers pursue a deal on federal spending and the debt. The hardliners, wary of further increases to federal spending, appear to be losing.

The talks between Pelosi and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin appear to be progressing. Mnuchin on Monday told reporters, “I think we’re very close to a deal,” though he cautioned that “these deals are complicated.”

Mnuchin says increasing the $2 trillion debt limit needs to be done this month to avert any risk of a U.S. default on obligations like bond payments. He said he doesn’t think there will be a government shutdown when the budget year ends Sept. 30, nor does he think “either party or anybody wants to put the credit of the United States government at risk.”

Previous negotiations toward a budget deal had included White House conservatives like acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney. But Mnuchin is taking the lead for the administration in the talks with Pelosi as the speaker doesn’t have a productive relationship with Mulvaney.

Mnuchin and Pelosi spoke again Monday evening.

The talks increasingly hinge on a durable, powerful and familiar political coalition: GOP defense hawks and his pragmatic-minded power base on the Appropriations Committee. He also knows that the path to a successful deal goes through Pelosi and is likely to include more money than Mulvaney, a former tea party lawmaker, would like.

The alternatives to a deal are distasteful to both sides, and include freezing spending at current levels and operating most of the government essentially on autopilot under a measure known as a continuing resolution. That prospect, talked up behind the scenes by Mulvaney and his allies, is alarming to GOP lawmakers focused on Pentagon policy, who say it would harm military readiness, hurt efforts to relieve procurement shortfalls and scramble long-term Pentagon budget strategies.

The negotiations are closely held but a key concern for Pelosi is getting $22 billion over the next two years to cover the rapidly growing cost of privately provided veterans health care. She sent a letter to Mnuchin on Saturday night agreeing with his request to increase the debt limit but pushing for relief for the Veterans Administration’s private health care program, which threatens to squeeze other domestic priorities.

“I wanted to put in writing what our concern was,” Pelosi said Monday. “We have an additional initiative that was added, but you can’t just take it out of other veterans programs or other programs.”

Republicans say those VA costs should be absorbed inside the $600 billion set aside for nondefense agencies.
Trump digs in on incendiary tweets, says ‘many agree’

BY ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and JONATHAN LEMIRE

WASHINGTON — Defiant in the face of widespread criticism, President Donald Trump renewed his belligerent call for four Democratic congresswomen of color to get out of the U.S. “right now,” cementing his position as the most willing U.S. leader in generations to stoke the discord that helped send him to the White House.

Content to gamble that a sizable chunk of the electorate embraces his tweets that have been widely denounced as racist, the president made clear that he has no qualms about exploiting racial divisions once again.

“It doesn’t concern me because many people agree with me,” Trump said Monday at the White House. “A lot of people love it, by the way.”

The episode served notice that Trump is willing to again rely on incendiary rhetoric on issues of race and immigration to preserve his political base in the lead-up to the 2020 election.

There was near unanimous condemnation from Democrats for Trump’s comments and a rumble of discontent from a subset of Republicans — but notably not from the party’s congressional leaders.

Republican Sen. Mitt Romney, of Utah, the party’s White House nominee in 2012 and now one of the president’s most vocal GOP critics, said Trump’s comments were “destructive, demeaning and disunifying.”

Far from backing down, Trump on Monday dug in on comments he had initially made a day earlier on Twitter that if lawmakers “hate our country,” they can go back to their “broken and crime-infested” countries. His remarks were directed at four congresswomen: Rep. Ilhan Omar, of Minnesota; Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, of New York; Ayanna Pressley, of Massachusetts; and Rashida Tlaib, of Michigan.

All are American citizens and three of the four were born in the U.S. “You don’t want to hear me leave, you can leave right now,” he said.

The president’s words, which evoked the trope of telling black people to go back to Africa, may have been partly meant to widen the divide within the House Democratic caucus, which has been riven by internal debate over how best to oppose his policies.

While Trump’s attacks brought Democrats together in defense of their colleagues, his allies noted he was also having some success in making the controversial progressive lawmakers the face of their party.

The president questioned whether Democrats should “want to wrap” themselves around this group of four people as he recited a list of the quartet’s most controversial statements.

“Have you heard Nancy Pelosi, who said Trump’s campaign slogan truly means he wants to ‘make America white again,’” announced Monday that the House would vote on a resolution denouncing his new comments.

The resolution “strongly condemns President Donald Trump’s racist comments” and says they “have legitimized and increased fear and hatred of new Americans and people of color.”

The Senate’s top Democrat, Chuck Schumer, of New York, said his party would also try to force a vote in the GOP-controlled chamber.

Rising are the few GOP lawmakers commenting Monday, Rep. Pete Olson of Texas said Trump’s tweets were “not reflective of the values of the 1,000,000 people” in his district. “I urge our President immediately disavow his comments,” he wrote.

Trump, however, had earlier deflected when asked about the new resolution. “Many agree,” he said.

Some of the president’s stances have been riven by internal debate over those aspects of America’s identity.

In an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll from February 2017, half of Americans said the mixing of culture and values from around the world is an important part of America’s identity as a nation. About a third said the same of a culture established by early European immigrants.

But partisans in that poll were divided over those aspects of America’s identity.

Trump requires more US components in federal purchases

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Apollo 11 astronaut returns to launch pad

Collins marks moment of blastoff 50 years later

BY MARCIA DUNN
Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Apollo 11 astronaut Michael Collins returned Tuesday to the exact spot where he flew to the moon 50 years ago with Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin.

Collins had the spotlight to himself this time — Armstrong has been gone for seven years and Aldrin canceled. Collins said he wished his two moonwalking colleagues could have shared the moment at Kennedy Space Center’s Launch Complex 39A, the departure point for humanity’s first moon landing.

“Wonderful feeling to be back,” the 88-year-old command module pilot said on NASA TV. “There’s a difference this time. I want to turn and ask Neil a question and maybe tell Buzz Aldrin something, and of course, I’m here by myself.”

At NASA’s invitation, Collins marked the precise moment — 9:32 a.m. on July 16, 1969 — that the Saturn V rocket blasted off. He was seated at the base of the pad alongside Kennedy’s director, Robert Cabana, a former space shuttle commander.

Collins recalled the tension surrounding the crew that day. “Apollo 11 ... was serious business,” he said. “We, crew, felt the weight of the world on our shoulders. We knew that everyone would be looking at us, friend or foe, and we wanted to do the best we possibly could.”

Collins remained in lunar orbit, tending to Columbia, the mother ship, while Armstrong and Aldrin landed in the Eagle on July 20, 1969, and spent 2½ hours walking the gray, dusty lunar surface.

A reunion Tuesday at the Kennedy firing room by past and present launch controllers — and Collins’ return to the pad, now leased to SpaceX — kicked off a week of precise moments marking each day of Apollo 11’s eight-day voyage.

At the Air and Space Museum in Washington, the spacecraft that Armstrong wore went back on display in mint condition, at least for a few moments, in the sky.

Back at Kennedy, NASA televised original launch video of Apollo 11, timed down to the second. Then Cabana turned the conversation to NASA’s next moonshot program, Artemis, named after the twin sister of Greek mythology’s Apollo. It seeks to put the first woman and next man on the lunar surface — the moon’s south pole — by 2024.

President John F. Kennedy’s challenge to put a man on the moon by the end of 1969 took eight years to achieve.

Collins said he likes the name Artemis and, even more, likes the concept behind Artemis.

“But I don’t want to go back to the moon,” Collins told Cabana. “I want to go direct to Mars. I call it the JFK Mars Express.”

Collins noted that the moon-first crowd has merit to its argument and he pointed out Armstrong himself was among those who believed returning to the moon “would assist us mightily in our attempt to go to Mars.”

Cabana assured Collins, “We believe the faster we get to the moon, the faster we get to Mars as we develop those systems that we need to make that happen.”

About 100 of the original 500 launch controllers and managers on July 16, 1969, reunited in the firing room Tuesday.

The lone female launch controller for Apollo 11, JoAnn Morgan, enjoyed seeing the much updated firing room. One thing was notably missing, though: stacks of paper. “We could have walked to the moon on the paper,” Morgan said.

Collins was to be reunited later in the day with two other Apollo astronauts at an evening gala at Kennedy, including Apollo 16 moonwalker Charlie Duke, who was the capsule communicator in Mission Control for the Apollo 11 moon landing. The U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville also had a special anniversary dinner on tap, with Aldrin and other retired Apollo astronauts and rocket scientists.

Only four of the 12 moonwalkers from 1969 through 1972 are still alive: Aldrin, Duke, Apollo 15’s David Scott and Apollo 17’s Harrison Schmitt.

NASA spokesman Bob Jacobs said Aldrin, 89, bowed out of the launch pad visit, citing his intense schedule of appearances. Aldrin hosted a gala in Southern California on Saturday and planned to head directly to the Huntsville dinner. Aldrin and Collins may reunite in Washington this Friday or Saturday, the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11’s moon landing.

Astronaut Michael Collins, right, speaks to Kennedy Space Center Director Bob Cabana at Launch Complex 39A on Tuesday about the moments leading up to the launch of Apollo 11 at 9:32 a.m. on July 16, 1969.

Collins was seated at the base of the pad alongside Kennedy’s director, Robert Cabana, a former space shuttle commander.

Neil Armstrong’s Apollo 11 spacesuit is displayed at the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum in Washington on Tuesday.

Gustavo, 6, bottom, takes a selfie as some of the first visitors to view Armstrong’s Apollo 11 spacesuit.

Collins marks moment of blastoff 50 years later

NATION
Immigration arrest can require hours of surveillance

BY ELLIOT SPAGAT
Associated Press

ESCONDIDO, Calif. — Two immigration officers had been parked outside a home well before dawn when their target — a Mexican man convicted of driving under the influence in 2015 — appeared to emerge as the sun illuminated a gray sky.

“I’m going to do a vehicle stop,” an officer radioed. “I’m right behind you,” said another, lights flashing as they ordered the driver into a liquor store parking lot.

As it turned out, the man they pulled over was not the one they were looking for. But he happened to be in the country illegally too and was taken into custody.

The arrest last week near San Diego illustrates how President Donald Trump’s pledge to deport millions of immigrants who are in the U.S. without legal permission would be highly impractical to carry out, maybe impossible. For U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, picking up people is a time-consuming, labor-intensive and not always successful task.

An arrest of just one immigrant often requires days of surveillance.

At the same time, ICE has a limited budget and a shortage of detention space. Also, more and more law enforcement agencies, especially those in big cities, are refusing to help ICE as part of the growing “sanctuary” movement, slowing down the arrests of immigrants even more.

ICE tactics are in the spotlight after warnings from the Trump administration that it planned to begin a sweep Sunday in 10 cities against families who are in the country illegally and have been ordered to leave. Trump claimed Monday that the operation had a successful start, even though there was no sign of a large-scale operation in those cities.

In the recent San Diego operation, officers made 20 arrests over five days. They wore bullet-proof vests emblazoned with “ICE” on the back and used several unmarked SUVs, immediately ordering those in custody to turn off their phones to prevent family and friends from tracking their movements.

Gregory Archambeault, ICE director of field operations in San Diego, said staking out targets can be like watching paint dry.

“Today it happened pretty quickly, but other times it can take several hours. We have to go back different days,” Archambeault said in the parking lot of a bus and train station where immigrants waited in a bus to be processed.

An estimated 11 million people are in the U.S. illegally, including $25,000 who have deportation orders against them and are considered fugitives. Those fugitives include 2,000 people who recently came as families and are targets of the operation that was expected to begin Sunday.

ICE operations that zero in on people with criminal convictions in the U.S. result in about 30% of targets being arrested, plus an unknown number of nontargets, or “collaterals,” who are also swept up, ICE officials said.

Archambeault said ICE officers transfer a man in hand and ankle cuffs into a van during the operation in Escondido.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers detain a man during an operation in Escondido, Calif., on July 8. The carefully orchestrated arrest illustrated the difficulty of enforcing President Donald Trump’s pledge to deport millions of people in the country illegally.

Churches offer sanctuary amid threat of immigration raids

BY SOPHIA TAREEN
Associated Press

CHICAGO — As a nationwide immigration crackdown loomed, religious leaders across the country used their pulpits Sunday to quell concerns in immigrant communities and spring into action to help those threatened by the operation.

A Chicago priest talked during his homily about the compassion of a border activist accused of harboring illegal immigrants, while another city church advertised a “departure defense workshop.”

Dozens of churches in Houston and Los Angeles offered sanctuary to anyone afraid of being arrested. In Miami, activists hand out flyers outside churches to help immigrants know their rights in case of an arrest.

“We’re living in a time where the law may permit the government to do certain things but that doesn’t necessarily make it right,” said the Rev. John Celichowski, of St. Clare de Montefalco Parish in Chicago, where the nearly 1,000-member congregation is 90 percent Hispanic and mostly immigrant.

Agents had been expected to start a coordinated action Sunday targeting roughly 2,000 people, including families, with final deportation orders in 10 major cities, including Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Miami.

Activists and city officials reported some U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity in New York and Houston a day earlier, but it was unclear if it was part of the same operation.

The Houston advocacy group FIEL said two people were taken there Saturday.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio confirmed there were three incidents involving ICE on Saturday, but agents didn’t succeed in rounding up residents.

The renewed threat of mass deportations has put immigrant communities even more on edge since Trump took office on a pledge to deport millions living in the country illegally.

While such enforcement operations have been routine since 2003, Trump’s publicizing its start, and the politics surrounding it, are unusual. Trump first announced the sweeps last month then delayed to give lawmakers a chance to address the southern border.

Cardinal Blase Cupich, the archbishop of Chicago, wrote a letter to Archdiocese priests this month saying, “Threats of broad enforcement actions by ICE are meant to terrorize communities.” He urged priests in the Archdiocese — which serves more than 2 million Catholics — not to let any immigration officials into churches without identification or a warrant.

The Rev. Robert Stearns, of Living Water Church, said in the parking lot of a landscaping company, “It’s not the target, but it’s still a good arrest,” Archambeault said.

Publicized in encouraging people not to open their doors. For safety reasons, officers in San Diego have employed “Knock and Talk” — knocking on the door and hoping someone opens up — and instead wait for targets to leave the house, Archambeault said.

“You just don’t know what’s going on, who’s behind that door,” he said.

It is far less costly and more effective for ICE to pick up people at local jails when they are arrested for nonimmigration offenses. But a spate of sanctuary laws has sharply limited local authorities’ cooperation in California and elsewhere.

The man taken into custody in Escondido was a Mexican man who happened to borrow the target’s red pickup to get to work at a landscaping company. Immigration activists decry such collateral arrests, which were sharply curtailed during President Barack Obama’s second term. Trump administration officials are unapologetic.

“It’s not the target, but it’s still a good arrest,” Archambeault said.

Churches offer sanctuary amid threat of immigration raids
**NATION**

**O’Rourke raises $3.6M in big drop from last quarter**

By Brian Slodycko  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Beto O’Rourke raised just $3.6 million in the second quarter, a dramatic drop that places him among a growing group of Democratic presidential hopefuls who are struggling to raise the cash needed for a credible White House run.

The former Texas congressman entered the race with a glowing cover story in Vanity Fair and the expectation that he would be a formidable contender. But the total his campaign announced Monday night was far less than the $9.3 million he raised last quarter and placed him toward the back of the pack.

It’s the latest sign that two distinct tiers are emerging in the primary — one that will have ample resources to build a national operation and get its message out and another forced to make difficult financial decisions and triage limited cash.

“Top-tier candidates will need to pull in eight-figure quarters to stay competitive and run effective campaigns on a national scale,” said Dennis Cheng, who was the finance director for Hillary Clinton’s 2016 campaign. “The second quarter was about raising the bar and exceeding expectations.”

The top five Democratic fundraisers collectively raised $96 million this quarter, putting them within striking distance of the $105 million raised by Donald Trump and the Republican National Committee for the president’s reelection. That has eased worries that lackluster totals last quarter were a sign the party would struggle to stockpile cash for the general election fight.

Pete Buttigieg led the second quarter field with $24.6 million, a jaw-dropping sum to be raised by a candidate who entered the race months ago as the little-known mayor of South Bend, Ind. He was followed by former Vice President Joe Biden, who raised $21.5 million. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, of Massachusetts, rebounded from a mediocre first quarter and came in third with $19.1 million. Sen. Bernie Sanders, of Vermont, posted $18 million, while Sen. Kamala Harris, of California, reported raising about $12 million.

The outlook is grim for many others. Some candidates, like O’Rourke, took in less than they did last quarter. Others were essentially treading water.

O’Rourke has struggled to re-claim the magic of his losing 2018 bid against Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, which brought him closer to winning statewide than any Demo- crat had in years. He set records in that race, raising more than $80 million.

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**Harris blasts, takes money from firm that represented Epstein**

By Brian Slodycko  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Kamala Harris be- moaned the influence of the powerful and connected elite last Tuesday when she called on top Justice Department officials to recuse themselves from any matter related to Jeffrey Epstein. She said work done by their former law firm, which repre- sented the financier accused of sexual abuse, “calls into question the integrity of our legal system.”

Yet the same day, Harris’ husband headlined a Chicago fundraiser for her presi- dential campaign that was hosted by six partners of that firm — Kirkland and Ellis — according to an invitation obtained by The Associated Press.

Harris, a California senator and Demo- cratic presidential candidate, was one of several White House hopefuls to blast the handling of Epstein’s case in Florida a decade ago, when his lawyers negoti- ated a deal with federal prosecutors that allowed him to avoid the possibility of years in prison. But her decision to move ahead with the fundraiser hosted by Kirkland and Ellis partners while criticizing the firm underscores the tension that can arise when a politician’s rhetoric collides with their need to raise money to sustain a presidential campaign.

“If any connection with Kirkland and Ellis is a stain on [senior Justice Depart- ment officials], why isn’t a connection with the law firm for the receipt of cam- paign contributions a stain on her own campaign?” said Paul S. Ryan, an attorney for the good government group Common Cause.

I am Sams, a Harris spokesman, said there wasn’t a problem with accepting the campaign contributions because the firm is big and the partners who hosted the fundraiser didn’t work on Epstein’s plea campaign.”

“The people involved in that case have not supported her campaign, and she wouldn’t want that support anyway,” Sams said. The firm and the six partners named on the event invitation did not respond to re- quests for comment.

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**DeVos says movement to boycott Israel has become ‘pernicious threat’**

Associated Press

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said Monday that a movement to boycott Israel has become a “pernicious threat” to college campuses and is fueled by bias against Jews.

Speaking at a Justice Department sum- mit on anti-Semitism, DeVos issued a scathing rebuke of the BDS movement, a campaign led by pro-Palestine activ- ists calling for a boycott, divestment and sanctions of Israel over its treatment of Palestinians.

The movement has inspired activism at many U.S. universities but is often a source of tension, especially among stu- dents and professors who support Israel. DeVos said Monday that Israel has friends in the Education Department and that the BDS campaign is “one of the most perni- cious threats” of anti-Semitism on college campuses.

“These bullies claim they stand for human rights,” she said. “But we all know that BDS stands for anti-Semitism.”

DeVos, who is Christian, warned of an “alarming rise” in anti-Semitism but said President Donald Trump’s administration is committed to stopping discrimination. She spent much of her speech defending Israel, and she drew applause when she referenced Trump’s 2017 decision to rec- ognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, a move that drew condemnation from the United Nations.

“Peace in the Middle East begins with recognizing Israel’s right to exist,” DeVos said. “Israel is a light to the region, but we all know it’s surrounded by jihadists who embrace evil.”

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**Democratic presidential candidate and former U.S. Rep. Beto O’Rourke, shown at a Democrats Potluck Picnic in Manchester, N.H., on Saturday, has seen a steep decline in his fundraising.**

By Cheryl Senter  
AP

Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., shown at a house party campaign event in Gilford, N.H., on Sunday, is being criticized for accepting campaign contributions because the firm that represented financier Jeffrey Epstein didn’t work on Epstein’s plea agreement.

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**The Epstein case has rocked Washing- ton this month after federal prosecutors announced fresh charges against the fi- nancier, who is accused of paying under- age girls for massages and then molesting them at his homes in Palm Beach, Fla., and New York during the 2000s.**

President Donald Trump’s labor secre- tary, Alex Acosta, resigned on Friday over his handling of the case. As a U.S. attorney in Miami, Acosta met with Kirkland and Ellis lawyers and agreed to a deal that allowed Epstein to avoid federal trial by pleading guilty to state charges and serv- ing 13 months in jail.

The new attention being paid to the case has also drawn attention to Attorney Gen- eral William Barr and Deputy Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen, who both worked for Kirkland and Ellis. Harris, who is a member of the Senate Judiciary Com- mittee, said it’s necessary that they rec- use themselves from involvement in the matter to avoid even the “appearance of impropriety.”

“In our democracy, no one — no matter how powerful or well-connected — is above the law. Yet Epstein’s deal, secured by his lawyers at Kirkland and Ellis, calls into question the integrity of our legal system and undermines the public’s confidence that justice will be served,” Harris said in a statement released hours after the Chi- cago fundraiser.

Barr is recused from any review of a 2008 plea deal, but has said that he doesn’t need to do so with the current case.
Driver in Va. car attack sentenced to 2nd life term

By Denise Lavoie
Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — An avowed white supremacist was sentenced to life in prison plus 419 years Monday for deliberately driving his car into a crowd of anti-racism protesters during a rally in Virginia, killing one woman and injuring dozens.

James Alex Fields Jr., 22, remained stoic as Circuit Court Judge Wise Moore formally imposed the recommendation of a state jury that convicted him in December of murder and malicious wounding charges for his actions in Charlottesville on Aug. 12, 2017.

Fields showed no visible emotion as victims of the car attack described severe physical and psychological injuries — broken bones, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression — inflicted by Fields when he plowed his car into them.

“Hello, sum,” said Jeanne “Star” Peterson, as she addressed Fields, seated about 20 feet from her at a table with his lawyers.

Peterson, who suffered a broken spine and a shattered right leg in the attack, told Fields he needs to stop “verbally abusing” his mother, referring to a recorded jail conversation in which Fields can be heard disparaging his mother.

Marcus Martin, who was captured in a dramatic photo as Fields’ car struck him, said anger over what Fields did has permeated his life and affected his marriage.

“I blow up at the smallest things,” Martin said, before ordering Fields to look at him.

“I want to talk to you, dude. I need you to look at me, buddy — look at me,” he said. It was unclear whether Fields made eye contact with Martin.

He said closure will only come when he finds out “James Alex Fields is no longer on this Earth.”

Martin was with several friends, including paralegal and civil rights activist Heather Heyer, 32, when Fields rammed the crowd.

A photo of the car tossing Martin and other counterprotesters into the air won a Pulitzer Prize.

Heyer’s mother, Susan Bro, said in brief remarks to the judge that she hopes Fields finds “reclamation” but also hopes “he never sees the light of day outside of prison.”

Last month, Fields received a life sentence on 29 federal hate crime charges.

In his remarks before sentencing, Moore acknowledged Fields’ long history of mental health issues, beginning when he was institutionalized several times as a child. But he said Fields had received psychological treatment throughout his life and his mental health issues do not excuse his crimes.

The judge also said there was no evidence that Fields was being threatened or attacked when he drove into the counterprotesters.

“The facts are very clear. We all have choices. We all have choices,” Moore said. “You made the wrong ones and you caused great harm. ... You caused harm around the globe when people saw what you did.”

Fields, an avowed white supremacist who kept a photo of Adolf Hitler on his bedside table, drove into a crowd of anti-racism protesters during a rally in Virginia, killing one woman and injuring dozens.

He was wearing a bulletproof vest but the bullet struck his left leg. He also was injured and expected to know his left leg in a few months.

“Mr. Fields, you had choices,” he said. “I need you to look at me, buddy.”

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No charges for officer in ‘I can’t breathe’ case

By Michael Balsamo, Michael S. Kranish and Tom Hays
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Federal prosecutors won’t bring civil rights charges against a New York City police officer in the 2014 chokehold death of Eric Garner, a decision made by Attorney General William Barr and announced one day before the five-year anniversary of his death, officials said.

The announcement Thursday not to bring charges against Officer Daniel Pantaleo comes a day after the grand jury hearing that had limited its term to expire in the case that produced the words “I can’t breathe” — among Garner’s final words — was railed against by protesters of the police treatment of black suspects.

“The evidence here does not support Officer Daniel Pantaleo or any other officer with a federal civil rights violation,” said Richard Donoghue, the U.S. attorney for eastern New York. “Even if we could prove that Officer Pantaleo’s hold of Mr. Garner constituted unreasonable force, we would still have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Officer Pantaleo acted willfully in violation of law.”

Gwen Carr, Garner’s mother, and the Rev. Al Sharpton said they were outraged and heartbroken. Sharpton called for Pantaleo’s dismissal from the NYPD.

“We are here with heavy hearts, because the DOJ has failed us,” said Carr, who has become a vocal advocate of police reform in the years since her son’s death.

“Five years ago, my son said ‘I can’t breathe’ 11 times. Today, we can’t breathe.”

A senior Justice Department official told The Associated Press that prosecutors watched video of the confrontation “countless times” but weren’t convinced Pantaleo acted willfully in the seconds after the chokehold was applied.

There were two sets of recommendations. The Eastern District of New York recommended no charges, but Justice Department civil rights prosecutors in Washington recommended charging the officer. Barr made the ultimate decision, the official said.

The official said Barr watched the video himself and got several briefings.

Prosecutors had to examine Pantaleo’s state of mind, and it would be a “high standard” to prove the case to a jury, the official said. Prosecutors also considered whether he violated NYPD’s policy on chokeholds.

Officers were attempting to arrest Garner on charges he stole, unlocked cigarettes outside a Staten Island convenience store. He refused to be handcuffed, and officers took him down.

Garner is heard on bystander video crying out “I can’t breathe” at least 11 times before he falls unconscious. He later died. “I can’t breathe” became a rallying cry for police reform activists, coming amid a stretch of other deaths of black men at the hands of white officers. Garner was black; Pantaleo is white. Protests erupted around the country, and the case became a national discussion.

A state grand jury had also refused to indict the officer on criminal charges.

In the years since Garner’s death, the New York Police Department has been fighting charges on how it relates to the communities it serves, ditching a policy of putting rookie cops in higher crime precincts and replacing a neighborhood policing model that revolves around community officers tasked with getting to know New Yorkers.

In the years since Garner’s death, Pantaleo has remained on the job but not in the field, and as he has received his paycheck that included union-negotiated raises.

Trial eyes gerrymandering after justices declined

By Gary D. Robertson
Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — A partisan gerrymandering trial began Monday in North Carolina, where election advocacy groups and Democrats hope state courts will favor them in the kind of political mapmaking dispute that the U.S. Supreme Court just declared is not the business of the federal courts.

Lawyers for Common Cause, the state Democratic Party and more than 30 registered Democratic voters who sued contend Republican lawmakers so etched political boundaries into the state House and Senate districts that the constitutional rights of Democratic voters were violated.

Republican counter that the Democrats are simply asking courts to use “raw political power” to take redistricting responsibilities from the legislature.

The trial commenced less than three weeks after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a separate case involving North Carolina’s congressional map that it’s not the job of federal courts to decide if boundaries are politically unfair.

But Chief Justice John Roberts also wrote in the majority opinion that state courts could “play a role in applying standards set in state laws and constituutions.”

The plaintiffs in the North Carolina case are seeking just that, saying 95 out of the 170 House and Senate districts drawn in 2017 violate the state constitution’s free speech and association protections for them. They also say the boundaries violate a constitutional provision stating “all elections shall be free,” because the maps were so gerrymandered to predetermine electoral outcomes and guarantee Republican control of the legislature.

A partisan gerrymandering lawsuit in Pennsylvania citing a similar provision in that state’s constitution was successful.

“State courts do not sit to adjudicate conflicts of people whose constitutional rights are being violated just because the U.S. Supreme Court refused to act,” plaintiffs’ attorney Stanton Jones told a three-judge panel in Raleigh. His clients want new maps drawn for the 2020 elections.

Despite a large party fund-raising advantage during the 2016 cycle and candidates in nearly every legislative race, Democrats could not obtain a majority in either the House or Senate. Even if the courts determine which districts are skewed.

But the Republicans’ chief attorney, Phil Strach, said in his opening statement that the Democratic Party’s own scoring system shows the party could win majorities under the challenged plans — a contention that one Democratic lawmaker rejected in testimony last Monday. Democrats currently hold every House seat in Wake and Mecklenburg counties — the state’s two largest counties by population — but they are still challenging every district in those counties.

Democrats did pick up state legislative seats in 2018 under House and Senate maps that had been drawn before the 2017 plans. Republicans lost their veto-proof control last year but still hold majorities.

New Gov. Roy Cooper now has more leverage at the General Assembly, but by law he cannot veto redistricting plans.

Strach says state courts and the constitution already have put limits on redistricting that discourage egregious partisan gerrymandering, allowing for some consideration of partisan advantage and protecting incumbents.

“There is no way to know what a fair map looks like,” Strach said.

“That would require the court to decide essentially how many Republicans and Democrats should be in the legislature.”

Jones said his clients plan to use files from Tom Hofeller, a now-deceased GOP redistricting consultant who helped draw the 2017 maps, to “prove beyond a doubt that partisan gain was his singular objective.”

Hofeller’s estranged daughter alert

 Sanctuary, a woman from Texas, who was arrested and charged with killing her mother.

Tribal officials had yet to provide positions on legislation, while the Interior only provided “partial comment.” Udall, D-N.M., is a co-chairman of the committee with Hoeven.

An Indian Affairs committee spokeswoman said in response to inquiries from The Associated Press that the Interior’s guidance on bills had been submitted late, though she did not say which day. She and Interior officials would not release the documents that had been sent to the committee.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Justice Department told the AP late Monday that the department is working as quickly as possible to provide positions on the bills and had given a status update to the committee chairmen.

In May, U.S. Attorney General William Barr visited Alaska, where tribal representatives told him about the lack of law enforcement in villages and slow response times to calls.

— S T A R S  A N D  S T R I P E S —

Wedneday, July 17, 2019
Report: Most attackers made prior threats

WASHINGTON — One-third of the attackers who terrorized schools, houses of worship or businesses nationwide last year had a history of serious domestic violence, two-thirds had mental health issues and nearly all had made threatening or concerning communications that worried others before they struck, according to a U.S. Secret Service report on mass attacks.

The Secret Service studied 27 incidents in which a total of 91 people were killed and 107 more injured in public spaces in 2018. Among them were the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., where 17 people were killed and 17 others injured and the fatal attack at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

The report analyzed the timing, weapons, locations and stressors of the attacker, plus events that led up to the incident, in an effort to better understand how such attacks unfold and how to prevent them. Members of the Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, which did the study, briefed police, public safety and school officials at a seminar Tuesday.

"We want the community to know prevention is everyone’s responsibility," said Lina Alathari, the center’s chief. "Not just law enforcement."

Other incidents examined included a man who drove a truck into a Planned Parenthood clinic in New Jersey, injuring three, and a man who killed two at a law firm and then one at a psychologist’s office in June. Criteria for the study included an incident in which three or more people were injured in a public place.

Most attackers were male, ranging in age from 15 to 64. The domestic violence history often included serious violence. While 67% had mental health issues, only 44% had a diagnosis or known treatment for the issue.

Most of the attacks occurred midweek. Only one was on a Saturday.

As for motive, more than half of the attackers had a grievance against a spouse or family member or a personal or workplace dispute. Also, 22% had no known motive. In nearly half the cases, the attacker apparently selected the target in advance.

Alathari and her colleagues want communities to be aware of concerning behavior and these trends so officials have something to look out for.

The Secret Service center is tasked with researching, training and sharing information on the prevention of targeted violence, using the agency’s knowledge gleaned from years of watching possible targets that may or may not be out to assassinate the president.

Alathari said her team is working on a new report on school shootings and how to prevent them, and investigating avowed attacks to try to figure out why someone didn’t follow through.

"There is not a single solution," Alathari said. "The more that we’re out there, training, the more we’re out there with the community ... the more we share information ... I think it will help reduce the violence, at least, and hopefully, prevent even one incident from happening. One is too many."

New playhouses a pleasant surprise for military kids

June 28 by amateur builders from local businesses who constructed the playhouses. Joseph S. Townsend, development director of Habitat for Humanity MetroWest-Greater Worcester, said the project involves dozens of work teams led by craftsmen experienced in building for Habitat for Humanity.

The walls and other sections of the houses were precut, and the volunteers pieced them together, painted them and added solar panels and lights.

Later in the day, families showed up and were presented with their finished playhouses. Adrienne was delighted, and her parents were thrilled. "This is amazing," said her father, Matt Casaubon, as he and his wife, Maryellen, watched their daughter inspect every part of the house. "She had no idea," he said.

"The houses were kept secret from the children, but the parents were clued in ahead of time," said Townsend. "Still, when they stepped inside, it was like a revelation."

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Colin Crawford and Patrick Sweeney, with Re/Max, help build a playhouse as part of the Habitat for Humanity project.

PHOTOS BY ASHLEY GREEN, THE WORCESTER (MASS.) TELEGRAM & GAZETTE
Report finds government restrictions on religion increasing worldwide

NEW YORK — Government restrictions on religion have increased markedly in many places around the world, not only in authoritarian countries but also in many of Europe’s democracies, according to a report surveying 198 countries that was released Monday.

The report released by the Pew Research Center, covering developments through 2017, also seeks to document the scope of religion-based harassment and violence. Regarding the world’s two largest religions, it said Christians were harassed in 143 countries and Muslims in 140.

This was Pew’s 10th annual Report on Global Restrictions on Religion. It said 52 governments, including those in Russia and China, impose high levels of restrictions on religion, up from 40 governments in 2007.

It said 56 countries in 2017 were experiencing social hostilities involving religion, up from 39 in 2007. Pew said the Middle East and North Africa, of the five major regions it studied, had the highest level of government restrictions on religion, followed by the Asia-Pacific region.

However, it said the biggest increase during the 2007-17 period was in Europe, where the number of countries placing restrictions on religious dress — including burqas and face veils worn by some Muslim women — rose from five to 20.

South Asia flooding wreaks havoc

GAUHATI, India — Monsoon flooding and landslides continued to cause havoc in South Asia on Tuesday, with the death toll rising to 78 in Nepal and authorities in neighboring northeastern India battling to provide relief to more than 4 million people in Assam state, officials said.

Nepal’s National Emergency Operation Center said more than 40,000 soldiers and police officers were using helicopters and land means to rush food, tents and medicine to thousands of people hit by annual flooding. Rescuers also were searching for 32 missing people.

In Assam, officials said floodwaters have killed at least 19 people and brought misery to some 4.5 million. More than 85,000 people have been rescued from floodwaters and landslides in Nepal, three weeks after they were flooding in India, in what has been described as one of the most severe monsoon floods in recent memory.

The floods have affected more than 6 million people in the northeastern Indian state of Assam, including an estimated 2.3 million people in the state’s 33 districts, the state disaster management authority said in a statement.

Atiqua Sultana, a district magistrate, said a flooded river washed away a 490-foot stretch of Assam’s border road with Bangladesh, flooding 70 villages on the Indian side. Around 50% of Assam’s Kaziranga National Park, home to the endangered one-horn rhinoceros, has been flooded by the Brahmaputra river, which flows along the sanctuary, forest officer Jatika Borah said.

After causing flooding and landslides in Nepal, three weeks after they were flooding in India, in what has been described as one of the most severe monsoon floods in recent memory.

Villagers travel on boats near a submerged house in Burha Burhi village east of Gauhati, India, on Monday after flooding and landslides that are affecting the lives of millions in the region.

ANUPAM NATH/AP

Protests challenge China’s Hong Kong role

BY YANAN WANG AND ALICE FUNG

Associated Press

HONG KONG — Colin Wong has come to the top parliament job. France’s president and the Socialists won early this month.

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AMERICAN ROUNDPUP

County has high hopes for marine sanctuary

MD
LA PLATA — Officials in a Maryland county where a historic ship graveyard was recently designated a national marine sanctuary hope the recognition will also bring economic benefits.

Kellie Hinkle, chief of the tourism division for the Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism, told The Daily Record the newly dubbed Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary could see about a 20 percent increase in tourism visitors. She said hotel occupancy and restaurant traffic will also likely increase.

The marine sanctuary designation was announced last week. The site about 40 miles south of Washington contains more than 100 abandoned steamships.

Man breaks state spearfishing record

UT
TOOELE — A Utah man has set a state spearfishing record.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources announced Jacob Hansen, 39, of Tooele, broke the state record for spearfishing a tiger muskie fish on June 13 at Fish Lake in southern Utah. His record-breaking fish is 51 inches long and weighs 32 pounds.

Hansen said he spotted the record-breaking fish while teaching his daughter how to spearfish at a family reunion on Fish Lake.

Faith Jolley, with the DWR, said the previous record was set in 2013 at Fish Lake when someone caught a 46-inch, 28-pound tiger muskie.

Bordering states fired up over hot peppers

NM
ALBUQUERQUE — The long-simmering battle between New Mexico and Colorado over which state grows the best chili is heating up.

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Thursday called out Colorado Gov. Jared Polis on Twitter after hot peppers from Colorado were featured in a chili festival where the best and would be stocked across a four-state region by a well-known grocery store chain.

Lujan Grisham said the animals included Missouri sheep and Painted Desert sheep. She said the animals included Mouflon sheep hybrids, Texas Dall sheep and Painted Desert sheep.

Underwater music event has songs in right Keys

BIG PINE KEY — Divers and snorkelers gathered underwater to listen to music and coral reef protection messages in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

The Lower Keys Underwater Music Festival was staged Saturday at Looe Key Reef, about 6 miles south of Big Pine Key. The event encourages environmental responsibility by divers and preservation of the world's coral reefs.

Music and public service announcements were featured in the four-hour broadcast by a local radio station that was delivered underwater via speakers suspended beneath boats above the reef. Divers and snorkelers enjoyed songs including the Beatles' "Yellow Submarine," Jimmy Buffett's "Fins" and the theme from "The Little Mermaid."

Where all the cool kids go

Mavis Carillo, right, enjoys playing in the cool water on a hot southern Texas day at Zinna Splash Park in McAllen on Sunday.

THE CENSUS

$10K

The amount of money a utility company has given a husband and wife, contingent on the couple moving to Rutland, Vt. Britt and Matt Britt were among the finalists for Green Mountain Power’s house giveaway last year. They are now the first to take advantage of the utility’s cash consolation prize offer to relocate to Rutland.

The Rutland Herald reported Britt is from North Carolina but lived in Rutland from 2015 to 2017. She said she sought “the small-town feel” and now she has it.

Anglers happy, experts puzzled over walleye

PORT CLINTON — Experts are puzzled over the explosion of the walleye population in Lake Erie, but anglers pursuing Ohio’s most popular fish couldn’t be happier.

Fisheries experts at the Ohio Division of Wildlife said the bountiful supply of walleye in recent years is difficult to explain, but the $800 million state sport fishing industry has benefited.

The Plain Dealer reported that after a decades-old roller coaster ride with the walleye population, the number caught in the U.S. waters of Lake Erie increased from 417,000 in 2011 to almost 2 million in 2018.

Ohio banned commercial wall-eye fishing in the late 1960s to allow the Lake Erie population to recover.

With the popularity and economic value of sport fishing for walleye, it is unlikely that will change.

Thief steals 12K lottery tickets valued at $360K

STAFFORD — Authorities in Virginia said a suspect stole more than 12,000 lottery tickets valued at up to $360,000 from a convenience store.

The Stafford County Sheriff’s Office said the suspect broke into a Fas-Mart convenience store Saturday morning and stole the scratch-off lottery tickets and 170 cartons of cigarettes.

The suspect was caught on security cameras covering up with a dark hoodie.

Police said deputy Samantha Whitt responded to an alarm after the suspect smashed through a window, but when she arrived the suspect was gone.

From wire reports
"Game of Thrones" shatters Emmys record with 32 nominations for final season; HBO racks in 137 overall

By Lynn Elber
Associated Press

HBO’s “Game of Thrones” slashed its way to a record-setting 32 Emmy nominations Tuesday for its eighth and final season, leading HBO back to dominance over Netflix, the streaming service that bumped it from atop the increasingly crowded television heap.

The bloodthirsty saga’s total eclipsed the all-time series record of 27 nods earned by “NYPD Blue” in 1994.

If “Game of Thrones” successfully defends its best drama series title and claims a fourth trophy, it will join the quartet of most-honored dramas that includes “Hill Street Blues,” “L. A. Law,” “The West Wing” and “Mad Men.”

A wealth of acting nominations for the cast and guest stars, including the show’s sole previous winner, Peter Dinklage, helped boost “Game of Thrones” to a new record of 160 overall total nominations — breaking its own previous record of 128.

Series star Emilia Clarke’s decision to seek a best actress nomination after a series of supporting actress bids paid off. She’s competing in a category that’s notable for its diversity, including past winner Viola Davis for “How to Get Away with Murder” and repeat nominee Sandra Oh for “Killing Eve,” who also features in a category that’s notable for its diversity.

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**OPINION**

**Only US can resolve rift between Japan, S. Korea**

BY EVAN S. MEDIEROS

Special to The Washington Post

T here is a crisis unfolding in Asia, and no one seems to be talking about it. Not least the U.S. government, which is probably the only actor that can fix it.

Two of the United States’ core allies — Japan and South Korea — have become deeply estranged. Earlier this month, the bickering broke out into a nasty trade war. The conflict threatens not only the U.S. alliance network but also regional prosperity and supply chains. Last Wednesday, South Korean President Moon Jae-in called relations with Japan an “unprecedented emergency.”

Despite Asia’s phenomenal economic, social and technological progress, history looms over the region like a dark shadow. Unresolved grievances related to invasion, occupation and colonization continue to influence perceptions and behavior across the region. And the constant threat of expansionist neighbors hampers deep resentment about Japan’s colonialization of the country from 1910 to 1945 and fear for their future. Japan has also been adequately compensated. Japan harbors deep frustration about its multiple and substantial efforts to make reparation payments. The current Japan-South Korea conflict does not stem from current events. It is a direct result of diplomatic relations in 1965 — to amend for its past crimes.

Japan stepped up efforts when South Korea’s Supreme Court last year ordered Japanese companies to pay compensation for forced labor during colonization. Tokyo’s position is that it has already done enough. It is a misperception to view the current Japan-South Korea conflict as a result of a new dispute. It is the result of diplomatic relations in 1965 — to amend for its past crimes.

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Ryanair cuts flights due to Boeing jet troubles

**By Gregory Katz**

Associated Press

LONDON — Europe’s biggest airline, budget carrier Ryanair, will cut flights and close some of its bases beginning this winter because of the delay to deliveries of Boeing’s 737 Max plane, which has been grounded globally after two fatal crashes.

The airline also warned Tuesday that its growth in European summer traffic for 2020 will be lower than expected because of the slowdown deliveries.

Ryanair chief Michael O’Leary said the airline “remains committed” to the Boeing 737 Max and expects it to be back in service before the end of the year but that the date is uncertain.

Ryanair, which is Europe’s top airline by passengers, says some delays are expected and doubts about when the plane can return to the skies means it will take delivery of only 30 Max jets a year from now rather than the previously scheduled 58.

He says the airline will close some of its bases as a result with a hope to return to “normal” growth levels in 2021. No details about the planned base cuts were provided.

Boeing’s 737 Max has been grounded after the Lion Air crash off the coast of Indonesia in October and the Ethiopian Airlines crash in March that killed a total of 346 people.

Preliminary reports indicate that flight control software called MCAS pushed the nose of the plane down in both crashes. Chicago-based Boeing did not tell pilots about MCAS until after the first crash. The company is working on changes to make the software more reliable and easier to control.

Concerns about viability of the new aircraft remain, however. The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration is due to review Boeing’s fixes and has said it is following a thorough process but has no timetable for when the re-certification will be completed. European regulators have to then also approve the jets before they can be used in the region.
Eugene Sheffer Crossword

ACROSS
1 Mahal precurser
4 Actress Dawber
7 Audio equipment brand
8 Head lights?
10 Ulan —
11 Sports venues
13 1991 Robin Williams movie
16 Constitution letters
17 Seaboard
18 Fib
19 Ergo
20 Univ. division
21 Ocean bottom
23 Poets of yore
25 Landed
26 Debtor’s notes
27 — Paulo, Brazil
28 Identified
30 Cushion
33 Pennsylvania city
36 Soup legume
37 Chicago NFL team
38 Bird or King
39 Paris airport
40 Teeny
41 “Platoon” locale
14 Tart
15 Retrieve
19 Youngster
20 ER workers
21 Thrash about
22 Toy train maker
23 Dutch word that means “farmer”
24 Birders’ society
25 Request
26 Mint at
27 Scooge’s cries
28 — Dame
29 Blazing
30 Song of praise
31 Ethereal
32 “— Kapital”
34 Squirrels do it
35 Antitoxins

DOWN
1 Carries
2 Dating from
3 City near the Dead Sea
4 Whittles (down)
5 Warning
6 Monastery man
7 Scooge’s cries
8 Laugh track
9 Went by windjammer
10 A/C stat
11 Salon sounds
12 Salon sounds
13 Anitoxins
14 Tart
15 Retrieve
19 Youngster
20 ER workers
21 Thrash about
22 Toy train maker
23 Dutch word that means “farmer”
24 Birders’ society
25 Request
26 Mint at
27 Scooge’s cries
28 — Dame
29 Blazing
30 Song of praise
31 Ethereal
32 “— Kapital”
34 Squirrels do it
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Answer to Previous Puzzle
GAME BLIZE RAGS
ELAN CRE ULEE
TANG SINGS TONG
SINIOUS OSTE FO
LAN POI
STAFF SITNATRA
IAN TUG KEN
SINGERE EBYON
AGE FIE
APING SINKERS
SINISTER ISEE
ASSNETS NADA
PATE EST DUOS

CRYPTOQUIP
MYVT T PVZGJJQ MOSRZWRZJ
EWJ ZRVPWRM WAM YJMG
S JERZ HOT HJZY A Q GWR
HVTT M RVMJQ: VOGOYQ VQG. Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: THAT GUY HAS AN EMOTIONAL CHARACTER ODDLY SIMILAR TO A YOUNG MALE HORSE. HE’S SO COLT-HEARTED.
Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: M equals S
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  2. People posing as DOD representatives for adoption.

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Deals

Monday’s transactions

**BASEBALL**

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Re-signed LHP Olden Shedrick Jr. to a non-roster invite assignment.

Cleveland Indians — Re-signed RHP Austin McPeak to a minor league contract. Furthered RHP Zach Plesac to the 60-day IL with a ucl strain.

OAKLAND A’S — Re-signed RHP Yoshihisa Hirano to a minor league contract. Recalled RHP Dereck Rodriguez from the 60-day IL.

TULSA DRASTIC — Signed RHP Ben Lucia to a minor league contract.

OHIO STATE — Named Jackie Allard as the head coach.

**FOOTBALL**

IDLE=r

**Tennis**

Winners, Losses, Draws

**AP spotlight**

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**Cycling**

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Djokovic now seems poised to catch up to Federer, Nadal

By Howard Fendrich
Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Novak Djokovic, left, and Roger Federer hold their trophies after the Wimbledon singles final on Sunday. Djokovic defeated Federer 6-4, 13-12 (3) to win his fourth Wimbledon title in his fifth final at the tournament.

For years, in part because he moved past Pete Sampras’ old mark of 14 Grand Slam titles, Federer was considered by many to be the greatest male tennis player in history. Then Nadal earned his supporters and created a debate, not so much by accumulating his own impressive collection of trophies, but by repeatedly getting the better of Federer, including beating him in the epic 2008 Wimbledon final.

Djokovic has strengthened his case for being part of the conversation. Younger than both men — Nadal is 33, Federer turns 38 on Aug. 8 — he is gaining on them in Slams, is the only member of the trio to have won four consecutive majors and holds an edge in the head-to-head series with each. Against Nadal, he is 28-26.

Against Federer, he is 26-22 overall, 10-6 at majors and 3-1 at Wimbledon, including 3-0 in finals at the grass-court tournament.

Those, though, aren’t the numbers people generally look at when trying to decide which of the Big Three deserves to be listed first. Djokovic, No. 1 in the ATP rankings at the moment, knows what category matters the most to many.

The key: Djokovic won all three tiebreakers, the sort of can’t-take-a-point-off segment of a match that is as much about unsteadiness as anything else. Djokovic won 18 of the 22 points in the tiebreaks, which are won by the player who first wins seven points.

As Sunday’s match stretched into the evening, one element of their respective past performances at Wimbledon seemed particularly relevant: Djokovic is now 8-1 in five-setters there; Federer 7-7. Against each other? Djokovic is 4-0.

Turned out the words spoken by eight-time Wimbledon champion Federer two days before the final were rather prescient: “It comes very much down to who’s better on the day, who’s in a better mental place, who’s got more energy left, who’s tougher when it really comes to the crunch.”

Federer lost despite winning more total points, 218-204, and dominating just about every other significant statistic, too: aces (25-10), service breaks (7-3), winners (94-54) and so on.

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Former players have high hopes for Nets

John Johnson, Williams believe Irving, Durant can do what they couldn’t

BY BRIAN MAHONEY
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving gave the Brooklyn Nets two big victories in one night.

“They hit the Mega Millions and the Powerball,” former NBA star Charles Oakley said.

In the first hours of free agency, the Nets added two of the best players available to a young roster that made the playoffs, giving them hope of not only contention for an NBA title, but to be the biggest basketball team in New York.

The Nets have gone after both before and gotten neither.

There was the 2012 acquisition of Joe Johnson to play with point guard Deron Williams, a pairing that was touted as “Brooklyn’s Backcourt.”

Then there was the trade the next year for Paul Pierce and Kevin Garnett, a megadeal that landed the Nets the cover of “Sports Illustrated.”

It didn’t get them anywhere close to a title, though.

So it would be easy toaknowledgen in with optimism, but former Nets who were back at Barclays Center on Sunday to play in the BIG3 think things can be different this time.

“I think they’re going to be good,” Johnson said. “I think it’s a lot different now.”

In his mind, the key change is the Nets’ practice facility in Brooklyn that the team was just starting to move into when he accepted a buyout during the 2015-16 season.

Before then, the Nets were still practicing in East Rutherford, N.J., even though they had been playing their games in Brooklyn since 2012.

“A lot of guys were staying in Jersey so the commute over here was tough, man,” Johnson said. “Riding in a car for two, 2½ hours and then get out and have to warm up and play. That was tough.”

Johnson said he would leave his home in Cresskill, N.J., on game days a little before 3 p.m. to arrive at Barclays Center by 5:30.

The current practice home, rising high above the Brooklyn streets and with a fancy view looking over the river toward Manhattan, will allow Durant and Irving a life he never lived as a Net.

“Oh, they’ll have it made in the shade,” Johnson said.

Johnson and Williams, along with Brook Lopez, led the Nets to a 49-33 record in the first season in Brooklyn, before the Nets lost to Chicago in seven games in the first round of the playoffs.

The trade with Boston came a couple of months later and brought out-sized expectations, but the Nets actually had a tougher season the following season, going 44-38, though they did reach the second round.

Reggie Evans, who played on both teams, thought the less-heralded team was the better one. While he praised Pierce, Garnett and Jason Terry, who also came in the trade, for their professionalism and work ethic, they were near the end of their careers by the time they donned their Brooklyn black jerseys.

Garnett was 37 at the time of the trade, and Pierce and Terry turned 36 before the 2013-14 season started.

Durant is 30 and Irving 27.

“So what we got was smart, wise guys who know the game. Very smart, you know what I’m saying?” Evans said. “So it’s two different scenarios, but I like what they’ve got going on.”

He added that both players should be at ease in New York, whereas Williams, acquired from Utah to be the first franchise star in Brooklyn, never quite seemed comfortable.

“I love D-Will. I just think it’s a lot of pressure being up under these lights in New York,” Evans said. “It takes a real, real soldier to play here.”

What about Durant and Irving?

“KD and Kyrie ain’t going to have no trouble playing in front of these bright lights. Period,” former Nets power forward Reggie Evans said.

The Nets’ haul so thoroughly dwarfed the Knicks’ that Knicks President Steve Mills put out a statement hours after free agency opened acknowledging his fans’ disappointment. New York went on to sign some solid veterans who should help it improve, but no marquee names.

“They have an ‘A’ player on their team? I don’t think so,” said Oakley, a former Knick who has feuded with Knicks owner James Dolan. “They got maybe one ‘B’ and a lot of ‘Cs’.”

So the Nets could dominate the local rivalry, which they did for a time when Jason Kidd and Ken-yon Martin were leading them to consecutive NBA Finals in the early 2000s.

That couldn’t do much to shrink the shadow they play under — they were calling New Jersey home then — but maybe that could change with both teams in the same city now.

“I think it’s a different day and age because they’re in New York. Like, nobody has to cross the river to come see them play,” said Martin, who like Oakley is now a coach in the 3-on-3 league of former NBA players co-founded by Ice Cube.

“What we were doing and no matter how much we were winning, we’re still in the Meadowlands. So I think that was a deterrent to people, and then the Knicks’ historical brand, it’s always going to be that. No matter what the Nets do, the Knicks’ staple, that’s always going to be there. But I think if they come in and win a championship, that will change. That will change the dynamic of the area, I believe.”

FRANK FRANKLIN II, ABOVE, AND MICHAEL Dwyer, BELOW
MLB Scoreboard

American League

East Division

New York 45 33 .484 16
Toronto 43 35 .533 9
Baltimore 45 35 .533 9
Boston 42 36 .524 11
Philadelphia 41 37 .524 11

Central Division

Minneapolis 58 34 .630 —
Chicago 52 37 .541 4
Cleveland 47 41 .526 17
Detroit 51 40 .559 6
Kansas City 49 50 .490 15

West Division

Houston 63 33 .650 5
Oakland 53 41 .564 5
Los Angeles 49 46 .516 10
Seattle 56 42 .500 2

National League

East Division

Atlanta 49 43 .533 7
Philadelphia 47 46 .511 6
Washington 34 57 .374 22
Miami 48 49 .473 5
New York 55 44 .541 5

Central Division

St. Louis 50 44 .532 —
Chicago 48 48 .510 5
Cincinnati 44 49 .497 3
Los Angeles 63 33 .650 5
Arizona 47 46 .489 16
San Diego 49 47 .506 4

West Division

Los Angeles 59 36 .621 —
St. Louis 57 45 .549 5
Cincinnati 52 40 .565 6
San Francisco 49 47 .510 7

Wednesday’s games

N.Y. Yankees at Texas (6-9) at Seattle (20-4) at Minnesota (7-8) at Seattle (7-5)

N.Y. Yankees at Oakland (8-3) at San Diego (7-6) at Arizona (7-9)

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Monday

Angels 9, Astros 6

Los Angeles 2, Houston 1

Giants 2, Rockies 1

Second game

Atlanta 1, Milwaukee 0

Braves 4, Brewers 2

Chicago 4, Rockies 1

Second game

Los Angeles 4, Colorado 1

Monarchs 3, Rays 2

Tuesday

Mets 6, Phillies 5

Chadwick 3, Hoskins 2

Williams 3, Coyle 1

Monarchs 4, Rays 3

Wednesday

Mets 5, Nationals 4

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Roundup

D’Arnaud rallies Rays past Yanks

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Travis d’Arnaud hit three home runs, including a three-run shot with two outs in the ninth inning off Arodis Chapman, and the Tampa Bay Rays beat the New York Yankees 5-4 Monday night.

D’Arnaud tied a Tampa Ray record for homers in a game. It has been done five times, most recently by Evan Longoria in 2012.

The Yankees had been 49-0 this season when leading after eight innings. The Rays won for just the second time in seven games in the Bronx this year and cut the Yankees’ lead in the AL East to five games.

Andrew Ktitredge (1-0) got the win despite allowing Edwin Encarnacion’s second homer of the game, a two-run shot in the eighth that put the Yankees up 4-2. Oliver Drake got one out for his first save.

Dodgers 16, Phillies 2: Cody Bellinger hit his 52nd and 53rd homers, Clayton Kershaw (9-2) struck out seven in six innings and major league-leading Los Angeles routed host Philadelphia.

Bellinger passed reigning NL MVP Christian Yelich for the MLB lead in homers. He clubbed his 53rd to lead off the ninth inning off Victor Alcantara (3-2) to break a 5-5 tie. Mercado also hit a solo home run off Detroit starter Daniel Norris in the fifth.

Reds 6, Cubs 3: Eugenio Suarez and Yasiel Puig each hit his 22nd home run of the season, and visiting Cincinnati rallied past Chicago.

Jesse Winker raced home with an unearned go-ahead run to cap a two-run seventh inning that made a winner of All-Star Luis Castillo (9-3).

Royals 5, White Sox 4: Jakob Junis (5-8) struck out a career-high 10 and Sticky Lopez drove in two runs, host Kansas City beat Chicago.

The Royals beat Lucas Giolito for the first time and thwarted his bid for a 12th victory. The right-hander entered the game 6-0 with a 2.13 ERA in 10 previous career starts against Kansas City.

Cardinals 7, Pirates 0: Miles Mikolas (6-9) pitched a complete-game, eight-hitter and Tyler O’Neill hit a pair of two-run homers, leading host St. Louis over Pittsburgh.

It was the first complete game this season and second overall for Mikolas. He struck out three and walked none while throwing 100 pitches.

Angels 9, Astros 6: Albert Pujols got three hits and drove in three runs, and host Los Angeles remained unbeaten since the All-Star break with a victory over AL West-leading Houston.

Andrelton Simmons also homered as the Angels rallied from an early three-run deficit.

Freeze is now 2-0 with 11 shutout innings pitched against Milwaukee this year.

The Atlanta Braves’ Freddie Freeman, right, is congratulated by Ronald Acuna Jr., second from right, and Dansby Swanson after hitting a three-run home run during the fourth inning of Monday’s game against the Brewers in Milwaukee. At left is Brewers catcher Yasmani Grandal.

Braves starter Max Fried pitched five scoreless innings, giving up three hits and striking out five with 78 pitches.

Braves powers Braves to fifth straight victory

By KEITH JENKINS

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — One pitch was all Freddie Freeman needed to power the Atlanta Braves to their fifth straight victory.

The left-handed slugger sent an offering from Milwaukee Brewers starter Adrian Houser deep to center field to bring home three of the Braves’ four runs in a 4-2 win Monday night.

“We’ve been clicking for two months now,” Freeman said. “None of this surprises anyone in this clubhouse. We are playing really good baseball.”

The homer marked Freeman’s 25th of the season and helped the first-place Braves improve to a season-best 21 games over .500.

Freeman is the fastest player in Braves franchise history to reach 25 homers since Andruw Jones in 2005. Freeman reached the mark in 95 games. It took Jones 78 games.

Max Fried (10-4) pitched five scoreless innings to secure the win. The left-hander surrendered three hits and struck out five in just 78 pitches. Braves manager Brian Snitker said he pulled Fried early after a blister had formed on his left index finger.

“I thought it was smart not trying to pitch through it,” Snitker said. “It was pretty significant. If he hadn’t have said anything and kept pitching, it probably would have torn open.”

Fried is now 2-0 with 11 shutout innings pitched against Milwaukee this year.

Freeman’s home run put Atlanta on the board first in the fourth. The blast scored Ronald Acuna Jr. and Dansby Swanson, who each reached on a base hit.

The Braves improved to a major-league best 40-17 since Snitker moved Acuna Jr. to the top of the order on May 10.

Houser (2-4) fell to 0-4 as a starter this season after allowing four earned runs on eight hits in six innings.

Milwaukee, which stranded seven baserunners, has now dropped five of its last six and eight of its last 10 games.

“We just gotta make more plays,” Brewers manager Craig Counsell said. “That’s what it comes down to. Whether it be better at-bats and stuff or just making a play defensively (or) making a big pitch when it counts. We gotta find a way to make plays. That’s how we kind of break through this. Just make more plays. That’s the only way to do that.”

Ryan Braun hit his 13th home run of the season in the sixth and Keaton Hiura brought home the Brewers’ other run on a deep drive to center that fell just beyond the outstretched glove of Acuna Jr. The RBI triple pulled Milwaukee to within 3-2.

Austen Riley singled on a fly ball off Braun’s glove in the seventh. The base hit scored Ozzie Albies.

Christian Yelich had two hits on the night and added a stolen base, his 22nd of the season.
The Chicago Cubs acquired catcher Martin Maldonado from the Kansas City Royals.

"Our medical staff feels like if he were to try to play on it, that he'd be risking exacerbating the injury and turning it into something long term," Epstein said. "So we have to get ahead of it, take it out of Willie's hands and get him off his feet."

The Cubs, holding a slim lead in their crowded division, weren't sure if Maldonado would arrive at Wrigley Field in time for Tuesday night's game against the Reds. He was pulled by the Royals from Monday night's home game against the Chicago White Sox for a pinch-hitter, backup catcher Cam Gallagher, in the sixth inning.

"Our pitching staff feels like if he were to try to play on it, that he’d be risking exacerbating the injury and turning it into something long term," Epstein said. "So we have to get ahead of it, take it out of Willie’s hands and get him off his feet."

Maldonado is a .220 career hitter with 57 homers and 210 RBIs in 668 games.

Montgomery, 30, is 1-2 with a 5.67 ERA in 20 relief appearances for the Cubs this year, and was 14-17 with three saves in 119 games for Chicago over four seasons.

Montgomery got the final out in Game 7 of the 2016 World Series at Cleveland, ending the Cubs’ 108-year championship drought.

"You can't talk about his contributions without talking about him getting the last out in that World Series that changed everybody's lives," Epstein said. "Beyond that, I thought he started coming into his own."

Montgomery is expected to get a chance to start with the Royals, who drafted him in 2008. He was traded to Tampa Bay four years later with Wil Myers and Jake Odorizzi, and made his big league debut with Seattle in 2015.

The deal with the Rays involving Montgomery was one of the most significant in Royals history because it netted pitchers James Shields and Wade Davis.

Shields won 27 games over two strong seasons with the Royals and helped them capture the World Series in 2015. Davis blossomed into a lights-out reliever in Kansas City and was a critical member of the 2015 World Series championship team.

Royals general manager Dayton Moore said the club intends to use Montgomery in the rotation as a replacement for Homer Bailey, who was dealt to Oakland on Sunday.
Healthy: Woods hopes extended break pays off

From Back Page

There were not many options. Woods has not played the week after the U.S. Open since 2003. Instead of having the Quicken Loans National, which his foundation runs, the tour offered two new events in Detroit and Minnesota. The only time Woods has played a week before the British Open was in 1995, when he was still in college. He played the Scottish Open at Carnoustie ahead of the British Open on the South Course.

His only public activity since Pebble Beach was a social media post for Nike on Monday in which he said he is getting up at 1 a.m. because that would be 6 a.m. at Royal Portrush, and he wanted "to be prepared for the time change."

"If you want to succeed, if you want to get better, if you want to win, if you want to accomplish your goals, well, it starts with getting up early in the morning," he said.

The inactivity is another reminder that Woods is managing his health as much as his game. Most telling was what he said at Bethpage Black: "There are more days I feel older than my age than I do younger than my age," he said.

What to expect at the final major of the year?

Anything.

No one was more perplexed about his lack of competition going into the British Open than Padraig Harrington. "If you're serious about winning The Open, you've got to be playing tournament golf at least before it," Harrington said. "You'd rather be playing links golf and being in a tournament than just on your own going into it."

That was never the case with Woods.

As his younger days, Woods came over to Ireland with Mark O'Meara for a mix of links golf and fishing, either at Portmarnock or Royal County Down, and sometimes to the south in Water ville. In a 10-year stretch since he first went to Ireland, Woods won the Open three times and co-
tended in three others.

"I think it has been instrumental in preparing for the British Open, not only for getting adjusted for the time, but also getting used to playing links golf," he said in 2002 in Ireland, where he won a World Golf Championship. "We play in all different types of weather, which certainly makes it interesting. And I think it's instrumental in my preparation for The Open Championship."

Harrington wasn't as critical of Woods as the headlines suggested. There is simply a different way to play golf, and one can argue with Woods' results.

"I was always mighty impressed when Tiger Woods would play in a major without playing the week before," Harrington said. "I'd be a basket case if I didn't play the week before. Different personalities. Completely different."

Woods finished last year with a victory in the Tour Championship, and he had been building toward that. He inched closer to contention two weeks before the British Open, and then had the lead briefly on Sunday at Carnoustie and tied for eight. He pushed Koepka all the way to the end in a runner-up finish at the PGA Championship.

And then he won at East Lake.

Since then, he has started the year at the Ryder Cup, where he didn't win a match, and after two months away from the game, he finished 17th at the Honda Classic in the Bahamas. He played three tournaments in a five-week stretch to earn a little bit more difficult. "I'm well aware of the challenges ahead," Molinari said Monday on the first day of official practice at Royal Portrush. "There's a lot of guys capable this week of winning the trophy. All I can do is try my best, try to put up a good defense and be in contention on Sunday. It's a long week ahead, so I'll try to take it step-by-step." The first time he was getting to know the links.

Molinari was among the 21 players who played the Irish Open in 2012 at Royal Portrush. The sharp elevation, sensation al views of the limestone cliffs known as White Rocks and the Dunluce Castle in the distance, it all looked familiar. But it's not quite the same course.

The Royal & Ancient wanted two new holes — Nos. 7 and 8 — to weave into the century-old links so that the final two holes could be used for concessions and promotional displays for more than 200,000 spectators expected.

The elevation is rare for links golf, especially courses in the British Open rotation, and there are fewer pot bunkers.

"We play a lot in England where it's quite flat," Tommy Fleetwood said. "And in front of you there's a lot more bunkers on those links courses. These have a few more undulations and a few more blind shots. Sure, in general if you hit a good shot there's always a bit of unpredictability on links golf. And you're going to get good breaks and bad breaks. But definitely, such poor shots are going to get punished."

Tiger Woods was again out early this time playing 18 holes with Rickie Fowler and Dustin Johnson. Just as much attention — if not more — figures to be on Rory McIlroy, playing before a home crowd in Northern Ireland on a course which he ended off his potential as a 16-year-old who set the course record at Royal Portrush with a 61 in the North of Ireland Amateur.

Walking onto the course, fans stopped to watch large video monitors of McIlroy swinging as a lad, the curly locks and boyish looks of the teenager who shot his last major at Royal Portrush five years ago at Hoylake.

He played the Scottish Open last week, finishing in the middle of the pack, and stayed away from Royal Portrush on Monday.

The honor of opening tee shot Thursday goes to Darren Clarke, who was raised in Dun gannon but spent his formative years at Portrush, which he now calls home. The R&A chief executive asked Clarke if he would mind starting the 148th Open — and first at Royal Portrush since 1951 — and it was an easy answer.

This will be a nervous moment, and a proud one.

"As soon as he asked me, it was always going to be a yes," Clarke said. "Will there be tears? No. I'll just be very, very proud that we have it back here in Northern Ireland. It's going to be an amazing tournament. If you see how many people are watching, and again today, and all the practice tickets are all sold out. The atmosphere is going to be amazing."

Clarke had the jug for a year after his victory at Royal St. George's in 2011, and he brought it with him to Royal Portrush for the Irish Open in 2012.

Molinari, who gets penned for being a flatliner and loves it, didn't do anything too wild with golf's oldest trophy. He poured a few drinks from it but mostly kept it out of reach of his children to keep anything from happening to it.

"I was very, very careful with it, especially the first few weeks," Molinari said. "So much so that I forgot my trackman on the plane not to forget the claret jug. That, obviously, had the priority."

And now it's back with the R&A for seven days until a new name is carved into the silver base. Not since Padraig Harrington in 2007 and 2008 has a player turned in the jug on Monday and reclaimed it six days later.

Six of them finished 11 shots or more out of the lead. One missed the cut. McIlroy was unable to play because of injury. The only one who came remotely close to defending was Jordan Spieth last year. He had a share of the 54-hole lead and then played the final round without a birdie and finished fourth behind.

Molinari set out Monday to get reacquainted with Royal Portrush, though one aspect remains vivid — the noise. He played the opening round of the Irish Open with Clarke. Fans lined the sides of both fairways, even in the rain.

"It was just an incredible atmosphere," Molinari said. "I think that's a taste of what we're going to get this week. Everyone else in the field is looking forward to that."
Healthy choices
Woods heading into Royal Portrush with more rest than reps

BY DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

That was Tiger Woods in his red shirt on Sunday at the Masters. That was Tiger Woods slipping on the green jacket.

But it’s not the same Tiger Woods.

The evidence has less to do with how he plays — still plenty good to beat the best in the world on the biggest stage — and more to do with how often he plays.

The chanting and cheering Sunday afternoon at Augusta National sounded as though it would go on forever. Woods, 11 years and four back surgeries removed from his last major, methodically worked his way around the back nine and beat a cast of contenders that included the past two major champions (Brooks Koepka and Francesco Molinari) and the No. 1 player in the world (Dustin Johnson).

It was his 15th major, and it started anew the countdown in his pursuit of Jack Nicklaus and his record 18 majors.

That now seems a lot longer than three months ago. Woods has played just three tournaments — 10 rounds — since he won the Masters. For only the seventh time in his career, he went from one major to the next without having played in between, and then he missed the cut at Bethpage Black in the PGA Championship.

Unusual? Not anymore.

He goes into the British Open, which starts Thursday on a Royal Portrush links, having not played since he shot 69 in the final round at Pebble Beach on June 16. A good back nine allowed him to tie for 21st. He finished 11 shots behind Gary Woodland.

SEE HEALTHY ON PAGE 31