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Kim promises to shutter nuclear site

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea's leader promised to invite international observers to monitor the shuttering of his country's nuclear testing facility next month and expressed optimism about his upcoming meeting with President Donald Trump, a spokesman said Sunday.

The comments offered a new glimpse into Friday's historic summit between Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

In a dramatic reversal of past threats, Kim said he hoped for frequent meetings and trust-building measures with the U.S., Moon's spokesman, Yoon Young-chan, told reporters.

"Once we start talking, the

United States will know that I am not a person to launch nuclear weapons at South Korea, the Pacific or the United States," Yoon quoted Kim as saying.

"If we maintain frequent meetings and build trust with the United States and receive promises for an end to the war and a nonaggression treaty, then why would we need to live in difficulty by keeping our nuclear weapons?" he said.

The North Korean leader also said jokingly during the summit that he would no longer interrupt Moon's sleep with missile tests, apparently referring to the fact that most of the launches occurred about dawn.

"President Moon, I heard you didn't sleep very well because you had to take part in a National Security Council meeting, and you have habitually been

waking up very early," he was quoted as saying last week. "I will make sure I won't interrupt your morning sleep anymore."

Following a day of historic handshakes and smiles, the two leaders signed a declaration promising to work toward the "complete denuclearization" of the divided peninsula and to try to forge a permanent peace by the end of the year to replace the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

Both leaders acknowledged agreements in past decades had failed and promised not to let that happen again.

The final summit statement made no reference to verification or timetables for the North to dismantle its nuclear weapons program but was seen as setting the stage for Trump to

try to close the deal.

North Korea announced earlier this month that it was freezing nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests and that it plans to close its underground northern nuclear testing facility.

Experts played down the significance, noting the North could resume tests at any time and did not mention short- to mid-range missile tests.

Reports have also suggested the mountainous nuclear test site at Punggye-ri has already been rendered unusable after six underground detonations since 2006, the most recent and powerful in September.

Kim said the facility will be closed in May and "offered to invite South Korean and U.S. experts and journalists" to witness the event," Yoon said.

Envoy pick 'imagines unimaginable' with N. Korea

BY WYATT OLSON

Stars and Stripes

Earlier this year, U.S. Pacific Command head Adm. Harry Harris told a gathering in Hawaii that diplomacy is America's preferred means to end North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions.

But his job as top Pacific commander is to ensure such diplomacy is backed by "credible military power," he told the Chamber of Commerce group.

"Many people have talked about military options being unimaginable regarding North Korea," said Harris, who is set to retire in May and until last week had been nominated to become ambassador to Australia.

"Folks, I must imagine the unimaginable. And what is unimaginable to me are North Korean nuclear-tipped missiles delivered here in Honolulu, or in Los Angeles, or in New York or Washington, D.C.," he said.

In the recent surprise revelation the White House had switched Harris' nomination in-

stead to ambassadorship to South Korea, the Trump administration is availing itself of a nominee who has made peace with the possibility of war with North Korea.

That move comports with the hawkish outlook of Mike Pompeo, who was confirmed as secretary of state Friday and reportedly instigated the nomination swap. In a secretive trip to North Korea earlier this month, Pompeo met with Kim Jong Un, presumably to discuss a possible summit between the North Korean leader and President Donald Trump.

In January, the Trump administration dropped Victor Cha — a former foreign policy adviser to President George W. Bush — as its choice for South Korea ambassador. Cha has said he was dumped because he disagreed with the White House on the possible use of a pre-emptive military strike against North Korea.

"I think it's fair to say it's significant that they chose someone with a military background," said Denny Roy, an Asia security expert at the East-West Center, Honolulu.

"That would seem to support the idea that if need be they are willing to resort to a military solution."

The choice could be an attempt at "orchestrated psychological warfare" aimed at North Korea, he said. "Behind closed doors they might be just as opposed to a pre-emptive strike as anyone else."

"Harris is a politically astute foreign policy hawk and has been at the center of U.S. Asia strategy for years now as commander of PACOM," said Van Jackson, a senior lecturer in international relations at Victoria University in New Zealand who is writing a book about Trump's standoff with Kim.

Some sources Jackson interviewed for the book "have mentioned Harris' preference not only for maximum pressure on North Korea, but for preventive strikes — the so-called 'bloody nose option,'" he said. "I think that makes him very much simpatico with Pompeo, Trump and (National Security Adviser John) Bolton, which should, perversely, add to his credibility should he be named ambassador to South Korea."

Little-known Seabee unit protects embassies

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

A military unit that helped secure U.S. diplomatic compounds for decades has seen its mission grow as security threats have escalated from bugs buried in embassy walls to car bombs driven up to embassy gates. Perhaps the most widely known military defenders of U.S. embassies are Marines.

But a small group of Navy Seabees, known as the Naval Support Unit-State Department, has played a largely behind-the-scenes role implementing technical measures to combat threats abroad since the 1960s.

The unit's exploits are largely unsung outside the Navy's Construction Battalions — the "C.B." from which the name Seabee comes.

"You see the AFN commercials of the Marine with the rifle and he's handsome, clean-shaved and protecting the embassy," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Eric Millisor, a Seabee at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel. "You never really know what the Seabees do."

In short: Marines do physical security; Seabees do technical security.

In April 1966, in the heat of Cold War spy games, the Navy first formally committed Seabees to help the State Department combat Soviet spy technology. Before the end of the decade, they'd take part in a major transformation to combat terrorist attacks.

As embassies became more fortresslike, the Seabees' focus expanded from interior walls out to compound perimeters and from watching construction projects for bug-planting to maintaining systems that monitor for signs of potential violence.

The Navy's construction battalions were founded during World War II to build bases and clear airstrips, mainly in the Pacific theater. They were eventually tasked with building schools and hospitals as "good-will ambassadors."

Their embassy duty didn't start until the early 1960s.

Marine guards overseeing embassy construction projects in Moscow and Warsaw lacked the expertise to spot fishy behavior as local workers installed networks of listening devices in the buildings. After the Seabees dug out the bugs and repaired the walls in 1964 and 1965, they were assigned to supervise sev-

eral construction projects.

Meanwhile, anti-American protests and terrorist attacks were forcing embassy security to expand from anti-crime and anti-espionage to defense.

A spate of violence in the Middle East, Latin America and Europe in the 1960s and '70s prompted the State Department to beef up walls and fences and install heavy vault doors and window grates, closed-circuit TV and alarms.

Beginning in 1968, after John Gordon Mein was forced from his limousine and assassinated in Guatemala City — the first U.S. ambassador killed in the line of duty — Seabees helped armor embassy vehicles, including the secretary of state's 1971 Cadillac.

The program proved its worth when three people in an armored embassy car walked away unharmed after a 1972 bombing in Cambodia.

Today, about 120 Seabees belong to the security unit, with about 70 posted to more than 40 embassies to support the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service. Other Navy construction specialists staff regional centers and travel where the service needs them.

Attracted to the unit by the

prospect of technical training and travel, Millisor spent more than a year at the Baghdad embassy, one of three high-threat diplomatic missions where the Seabees maintain a small but constant presence. Now in Tel Aviv, he's helping with the U.S. Embassy's move to Jerusalem.

In Kabul, Afghanistan, the site of another high-threat embassy, State Department personnel rarely leave the compound. It was a more difficult post than any other for Chief Petty Officer Will Lathan, a Seabee who had previously lived in a tent in Cameroon during a mission there.

"You're living inside a maximum-security prison," Lathan said of the compound in which he served in 2016. One difference, he said, is that all that security is meant to keep people out, not in.

As U.S. forces withdraw from places like Iraq and Afghanistan, diplomatic security officials have said they may need to rely even more on the Seabees.

Though small and obscure, the unit is capable and ready, several Seabees said.

"They kind of call upon us to adapt and overcome anything," Millisor said. "We're very adaptable."

Super Bowl champ leads camps for kids at bases in Japan

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Just months after donning his third Super Bowl ring, running back LeGarrette Blount traveled to Japan to teach some of his championship-winning skills to about 200 children from Yokosuka, Camp Zama and Yokota Air Base.

Blount — who won Super Bowl LII in February with the Philadelphia Eagles but now plays for the Detroit Lions — said the two-day, USO-hosted football camp aimed to provide an opportunity that usually isn't available to the first- through

eighth-graders.

"[Overseas children] are not as exposed to this as most kids, especially kids in the States," he said. "Military kids are extra special. They can't just wake up in the morning and be like, 'Oh snap, football is on. Dad, can we go to a game?' They have to get up at 3 or 8 in the morning just to watch a game."

The camp started Saturday morning at Yokosuka's Sullivans Elementary School field. Blount and volunteer coaches helped the children learn and practice exercises that focused on passing, catching and footwork. The clinics wrapped up

with short games, free pizza and special interactions with Blount.

Blount said it's important to let kids see that NFL players are people, too.

"Just being able to come out here and let them see firsthand that we're actual people — we're not superheroes," he said. "We like to do a lot of the same things they do. We're normal."

Blount said it's important that children participate in active, outdoor events.

"Aside from the fact that it's healthy, this is how you make friends," he said. "This is how you make connections; this is

how you develop relationships with people."

Blount — who also spent time at Yokosuka signing autographs at the commissary and visiting various commands — said it was especially touching to be at the home of the Navy's 7th Fleet after separate collisions involving two Yokosuka-based destroyers killed 17 sailors last year.

"I know that there were some things that happened here recently — losing some lives," he said. "I just wanted to come here, boost morale and do everything I can to see people just smile."

GAO report outlines plan to disperse F-35s if Pacific war breaks out

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — If war breaks out in the Pacific, U.S. military commanders may disperse F-35 Lightning II stealth fighters in small detachments to outmaneuver the enemy, according to a recent report by the Government Accountability Office.

“The Department of Defense ... is increasing focus on the Pacific where potential adversaries including China and North Korea have made provocations,” said the report released Wednesday.

Sixteen F-35Bs that have been flying out of Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, since January 2017, represent the first overseas stationing of America’s most advanced stealth fighter since its development.

“DOD expects to use the F-35’s air combat capabilities along with a basing strategy known as distributed operations — where, for example, aircraft disperse into smaller detachments to outmaneuver the enemy — to counter any regional threats,” the re-

port says.

Experts believe a North Korean missile launch in March 2017 was designed to simulate a nuclear attack on MCAS Iwakuni, where the F-35Bs are based.

Also last year, it was revealed that the Chinese military had built missile-test ranges that appeared to model U.S. military bases in Japan.

The F-35B’s ability to take off and land without a long runway would appear to give commanders more flexibility in dispersing their forces. However, the GAO report noted some challenges the Marines have faced supporting distributed operations with the jets to date.

The GAO recommended in unclassified findings from a classified March report that the military test sustaining and operating the F-35 while disconnected from its automatic logistics information system for extended periods.

The system collects and analyzes data about such things as mission planning, training, maintenance and parts orders to keep aircraft ready to fly, Wednesday’s report said.

China says its advanced DF-26 missile has been deployed

Associated Press

BEIJING — China’s advanced DF-26 intermediate-range ballistic missile has been incorporated into its rocket force, boosting its ability to counter opponents on land and at sea, a Defense Ministry spokesman said Thursday.

The missile is capable of lofting both conventional and nuclear warheads, the latter to carry out a rapid retaliatory strike, ministry spokesman Wu Qian told reporters at a monthly news briefing.

The missile is believed to

have a range of up to 2,500 miles, leaving vulnerable the crucial U.S. military installations on the island of Guam, along with other bases in the region.

Despite that, Wu said China remained firm in its defensive military posture, including a policy of never launching a nuclear first strike against an opponent.

China’s missile force is largely designed to degrade Taiwan’s defenses in a move to conquer the self-governing island while holding off U.S. military support.

2 B-52s fly over South China Sea during training

BY TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

A pair of Air Force bombers flew over the South China Sea last week, just days after Beijing showcased its military might in the region.

Two B-52H Stratofortresses from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, conducted the mission Tuesday while training in the area, Pacific Air Forces spokeswoman Lt. Col. Megan Schafer told Stars and Stripes in an email Friday.

The aircraft then flew to Okinawa, where they exercised with Air Force F-15C Strike Eagles before returning to Guam, she said. The bombers arrived there in January from Barksdale Air Force Base, La.

Aircraft Spots, a Twitter account that tracks military movements, reported that two bombers left Guam on Tuesday headed for the South China Sea along with two KC-135R refueling aircraft. Taiwanese news outlets said they flew east of the disputed Pratas Islands and came within 150 miles of Guangdong Province’s coastline in southern China.

Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Senior Col. Wu Qian told reporters Thursday that “the situation is under the control of the Chinese military. The [People’s Liberation Army] will, as always, firmly safeguard its national sovereignty and territorial integrity.”

Qian added that the Chinese air force had recently conducted combat drills near Taiwan to safeguard “China’s national sovereignty” and warned of future exercises.

“The Taiwan independence secessionist activities pose the largest realistic threat to the peace and stability of the cross-strait relations and cause dam-

age to the fundamental interests of the Taiwan compatriots,” he said. “The series of actions we have taken are targeting the Taiwan independence forces and their activities, and are to protect the well-being of the people in Taiwan from being undermined by the Taiwan independence conspiracy.”

An editorial in China’s state-run Global Times responded to reports of the B-52 drills, saying that “the Taiwan independence forces had better abandon their dream that the U.S. can protect them. Military competition between the mainland and the U.S. in the West Pacific is not all about Taiwan. The only way for Taiwan separatists to preserve their safety is to mind their words and deeds.”

Schafer said U.S. Pacific Command’s bomber missions, which have been happening routinely since March 2004, are “intended to maintain the readiness of U.S. forces” and are “in accordance with international law.”

On April 22, a Chinese carrier group conducted a series of live-fire drills in the East China Sea, and last month a flotilla of nearly 40 Chinese ships was spotted in the South China Sea.

Beijing has laid claim to a huge swatch of the sea and has spent the past several years building up islets and constructing military facilities, including airstrips, on them.

The Navy occasionally sails ships near the islands, which are also claimed by several neighboring countries, to reassert its right to transit freely through the region. China deems the so-called freedom-of-navigation operations illegal and provocative.

Calif. Guard heading to border

Los Angeles Times

The National Guard is heading to the California-Mexico border this week in what marks the first deployment under California Gov. Jerry Brown's deal with the Trump administration to beef up border security.

About 200 Guard members were expected to arrive at Camp Roberts in Central California on Saturday for training before deploying to El Centro and San Diego in the middle of this week, Lt. Col. Thomas W. Keegan said in a statement.

"This mission will focus on combating transnational criminal gangs, human traffickers and illegal firearm and drug smugglers," Keegan said, adding that personnel will provide counter-drug surveillance, gather intelligence, monitor

cameras and install and operate equipment.

Guard members will not enforce immigration laws, nor will they help construct a border wall during the deployment, which will run through September. Brown and federal officials agreed to those terms this month after President Donald Trump requested that the nation's border governors increase security along the border.

"This will not be a mission to build a new wall," Brown wrote in a letter to Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. "It will not be a mission to round up women and children or detain people escaping violence and seeking a better life. And the California National Guard will not be enforcing

federal immigration laws."

About 55 Guard members are already helping fight illegal drug trafficking, manufacturing and distribution along the border in California.

Trump is the third consecutive president to ask for National Guard assistance along the U.S.-Mexico border. President George W. Bush used assistance from the states to deploy 6,400 troops for a two-year period beginning in 2006, and President Barack Obama authorized 1,200 troops in 2010. Former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger approved the use of Guard troops in both instances, though he rejected one request from Bush in 2006, citing the need to keep servicemembers available for potential wildfires or earthquakes.

Pompeo, in Saudi Arabia, focuses on Iran, Qatar

Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is using the Middle East leg of his first trip abroad as America's top diplomat to call for concerted international action to punish Iran for its missile programs.

He's also urging Saudi Arabia and its neighbors to resolve a long-festering dispute with Qatar that U.S. officials say Iran is exploiting to boost its influence in the region, including in Yemen and Syria.

Pompeo met Sunday with Saudi King Salman, whose country, along with Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, is embroiled in a row with Qatar that had hobbled Gulf Arab unity and frustrated the U.S. as it seeks to blunt growing Iranian assertiveness.

The ex-CIA chief had arrived in Riyadh a day earlier, shortly after Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen fired missiles at Saudi Arabia's southern city of Jizan, killing one person and underscoring what U.S. officials said is a growing threat emanating from Iran.

Senior U.S. officials traveling with Pompeo blamed Iran for smuggling the missiles into Yemen. They said the incident highlighted the importance of the Trump administration's push to counter Iran in the region. Iran has also provided crucial support to Syrian President Bashar Assad.

"Iran destabilizes this entire region," Pompeo said in remarks to journalists with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, taking no questions. While not mentioning Qatar by name, Pompeo also stressed that Gulf unity was "essential."

Al-Jubeir said the kingdom "supports the policy of the Trump administration against Iran and to improve the terms of the nuclear agreement with Iran."

Trump blasts Democrats at rally

Associated Press

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP, Mich. — President Donald Trump took aim at familiar political targets and added a few fresh ones during a rally in Michigan, a Midwest state crucial in sending him to the White House.

Trump has been urging voters to support Republicans for Congress as a way of advancing his agenda. At the rally in Washington Township, he repeatedly cited Michigan Sen. Debbie Stabenow as one of the Democrats who needed to be voted out.

After saying Stabenow was standing in the way of protecting U.S. borders and had voted against tax cuts, Trump said: "And you people just keep putting her back again and again and again. It's your fault."

Earlier Saturday, Trump tweeted criticism of Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., over his role in the failed nomination of White House doctor Ronny Jackson to run the Department of Veterans Affairs, calling for Tester to resign or at least not be re-

elected this fall.

In Michigan, Trump railed against the allegations Tester aired against Jackson and suggested he could take a similar tack against the senator.

Trump promoted top agenda items that energize conservatives: appointing conservative judges, building a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, ending "sanctuary cities" and protecting tax cuts approved by the Republican-led Congress. He also took credit for the warming relations between North and South Korea.

Trump chose a friendly venue for his rally, which not coincidentally came the same night as the annual White House Correspondents' Dinner. He skipped the dinner last year.

"While Washington, Michigan, was a big success, Washington, D.C., just didn't work. Everyone is talking about the fact that the White House Correspondents Dinner was a very big, boring bust ... the so-called comedian really 'bombed,'" Trump asserted on Twitter.

That barb was directed at Michelle Wolf, who provided

the after-dinner entertainment and whose performance was surprisingly racy. After one crass joke drew groans from the audience, Wolf laughed and said, "Yeah, shoulda done more research before you got me to do this."

Before the Michigan rally, Trump had said in a fundraising pitch that he had come up with something better than being stuck in a room "with a bunch of fake news liberals who hate me." He said he would rather spend the evening "with my favorite deplorables."

Trump, in his remarks at the rally, repeatedly weaved back into immigration and his support for a border wall. He accused Democrats of not wanting to secure the border and keep violent criminals out of the country.

"Debbie Stabenow is one of the leaders for weak borders and letting people in. I don't know how she gets away with it," Trump said. "A vote for a Democrat in November is a vote for open borders and crime. It's very simple. It's also a vote for much higher taxes."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Firefighter rescues 3 girls from rip current

NC EMERALD ISLE — A vacationing firefighter from New York state is being credited with saving three girls who were caught in a rip current off the North Carolina coast.

The Charlotte Observer reported firefighter Sean O’Gorman, of the Oswego Fire Department, was with his family at Emerald Isle on Thursday when he saw two young girls on boogie boards struggling to get back onshore and a third girl who became stuck trying to save them.

O’Gorman, 50, said the girls’ mother called 911, but he decided not to wait. O’Gorman used a special technique to reach the girls, and said by the time rescue personnel arrived, all four were back on shore.

Giant inflatable duck blows down city street

IA DES MOINES — Motorists encounter all sorts of obstacles on the road, but a giant, bouncing inflatable rubber duck might be a first.

Drivers and pedestrians in a two-block stretch near Des Moines’ East Village got a glimpse of just that Thursday evening when a 20-foot inflatable duck bounded along a street.

The duck, dubbed Quacky, is owned by the Youth Emergency Shelter and Services and is part of a promotional for the 92-bed youth shelter’s annual Duck Derby fundraiser, set for May 5.

Shelter Director Stephen Quirk said Quacky “went a-fowl” after one of its tethers broke in high winds. Quirk said the giant inflatable duck “is back in his nest” getting some repairs, so it can be ready to display for the derby.

Pro-Hitler message appears in road sign

AZ QUEEN CREEK — Drivers in Queen Creek were taken by surprise by an electronic road sign that appeared to be endorsing Hitler.

The Pinal County Sheriff’s Office said it began receiving calls around 2:30 a.m. Friday about a sign along a highway displaying the message “Hail Hitler.”

KNXV-TV in Phoenix reported sheriff’s officials were unable to reach the private company that owns the sign or the Pinal County’s public works department.

Crews later covered up the sign, and the message has been removed.

Officials: Lamborghini split in half in crash

VA TYSONS CORNER — Officials said a Lamborghini struck a concrete light pole in northern Virginia and was cut in half.

News outlets reported Friday that the driver of the car was treated for minor injuries.

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department said in a tweet that the car’s back end was on fire but was quickly extinguished.

Woman charged with stealing butterfly

OH CINCINNATI — A woman was charged with stealing a butterfly from an exhibit at a Cincinnati botanical garden.

The Cincinnati Enquirer reported that Springfield Township police on Friday arrested Jamie Revis, 36. She’s charged with theft of a blue morpho butterfly from Krohn Conservatory earlier this month.

The theft was recorded by a surveillance camera, prompt-

ing police to seek the public’s help in finding the butterfly thief. Court documents said police used information from an Instagram account to arrest Revis.

Historic locomotive slated to be restored

MI PORT HURON — A 140-year-old locomotive is getting a face-lift at a community college in Port Huron.

The Daniel B. Harrington had been housed in a greenhouse behind a museum for 25 years. The locomotive is being restored at St. Clair County Community College and will be moved to a location that is more accessible.

The Port Huron Times Herald said the steam engine was built in 1878 in Pittsburgh by Porter, Bell & Co. In Michigan, it was used in lumber camps in the Thumb region before riding the rails in the northern Lower Peninsula.

Man caught flying after losing license

VT BURLINGTON — Officials said a convicted drug smuggler who landed late at night at an airport in Vermont has been charged with flying without a license.

Federal drug agents were watching this month when Angelo Efthimiatis, 48, of Sudbury, landed at the closed Rutland-Southern Vermont Regional Airport.

The Rutland Herald reported that the Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force found no drugs or large amounts of currency in the single-engine plane.

The Federal Aviation Administration said Efthimiatis’ license was permanently revoked in July 2014 following two drug convictions in Iowa.

Lost city open for limited tours

KS ARKANSAS CITY — Limited tours of a lost city are being offered in south-central Kansas.

The Wichita Eagle reported that Donald Blakeslee, an anthropologist and archaeologist at Wichita State University, announced last year he had discovered the lost city of Etzana about 50 miles southeast of Wichita.

It will take years for the preservation and development of Etzana to be made ready for visitors year-round. For now, Arkansas City historians and leaders are letting the public see glimpses of the mysterious city.

The tours are of the remnants of Etzana, located on the bluffs near the confluence of the Walnut and Arkansas rivers.

Mayor backs gondola to Dodger Stadium

CA LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles baseball fans would avoid freeway traffic and be whisked by air to Dodger Stadium via gondola if a plan backed by the mayor moves forward.

Supporters of the privately-funded project say the aerial trip from downtown’s Union Station would take about five minutes.

Mayor Eric Garcetti announced the proposed gondola Thursday at a Metropolitan Transportation Authority meeting.

A company founded by former Dodgers owner Frank McCourt would pay a portion of the estimated \$125 million cost. The firm would seek private financing for the remainder.

From wire reports

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LB Griffin finally gets the call

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Shaquem Griffin came back. The crowd loved it.

Players in attendance not selected in the first two days of the NFL Draft usually head out of town before the fourth through seventh rounds.

Griffin, who sat through 100 names being called in the first three rounds, wasn't in AT&T Stadium on Saturday.

Then he was after Seattle spent the 141st overall selection on the Central Florida linebacker who has no left hand.

That fifth-round choice, announced in Seattle, drew loud cheers from fans at Jerry's World.

Griffin, whose left hand was amputated when he was young, has become the feel-good story this year and one of the most popular players in this draft because of his perseverance, outgoing personality and, of course, his talent.

"I mean that was amazing," Griffin said. "To even have an opportunity to come back, I didn't think I was going to be able to come back and do it ... I don't remember seeing too many people who have left and came back.

"That was the most amazing experience of my entire life. Me thinking about it, that moment, to be up on that stage and having the crowd go crazy, it was like we had won the Peach Bowl all over again. It was nuts."

Griffin helped UCF go undefeated last season, then blew through the NFL combine with a 4.38 in the 40, sensational lifting work with his prosthetic, and a can-do attitude.

Exactly the sort of player the Seahawks seem to find; they drafted his twin brother, Shaquill, out of UCF last year.

"It's been a really good experience," Shaquem said. "I would have been crazy to turn an experience down like this. I'm just glad I was one of the selected few to be here."

Griffin had one of the more unusual ways of finding out he was chosen.

"I was using the restroom and my brother came and tack-

led me with my cellphone, saying 'answer it, answer it,' and I looked, and that's when tears started pouring down," Griffin explained.

"I literally went to use the restroom and that's when my brother busted in and tackled me. I think I was more scared of him tackling me in the bathroom and not knowing what was happening than anything."

Griffin received, by far, the biggest cheers of the day — louder even than when the Cowboys' selections were announced. And he made a promise: "Great things are coming to Seattle."

Griffin's selection early in the fifth round enlivened a day in which most picks are relatively unknown or obscure players. Not all, though.

Michigan defensive tackle Maurice Hurst was taken one spot in front of Griffin by Oakland. The All-American would have gone much earlier, but a heart condition was discovered at the combine, dropping him far down draft boards.

He had 5½ sacks as an interior rusher and led all nose tackles and defensive tackles with 49 total quarterback pressures, according to Pro Football Focus.

"It's tough thinking that you're one of the top players in the draft and having good tape and everything like that, just having to wait," Hurst said. "I'm just happy to be in the right place and a great organization."

As for his health, "I'm ready to go right now."

Another All-American, Iowa linebacker Josey Jewell, was taken by Denver at No. 106. He's not considered quick, but he is active and seemed to be in on every tackle for the Hawkeyes.

"A lot of that is instincts. A lot of film watching for me," he said. "It really helped me because I did not run the fastest time ever, not even close. I had to be able to make up from somewhere else."

Also:

■ Michigan State extended its streak of having at least one player selected to 78 years when Brian Allen went to the Rams

early in the fourth round. Only Michigan and USC have longer streaks, both extended to 80 years during the first two days of the draft.

■ The Giants took the first quarterback of the third day, Richmond's Kyle Lauletta at No. 109. The Giants passed on trying to get their quarterback of the future to replace Eli Manning in the first round, taking running back Saquon Barkley at No. 2 overall. Lauletta doesn't have a big arm, but he showed good athleticism and accuracy playing at the FCS school.

Other quarterbacks chosen: Western Kentucky's Mike White to Dallas; Washington State's Luke Falk to Tennessee; Nebraska's Tanner Lee to Jacksonville; LSU's Danny Etling to New England; Florida International's Alex McGeough to Seattle; and Toledo's Logan Woodside to Cincinnati.

■ Dallas acquired wideout Tavon Austin from the Rams in a trade Saturday.

■ Cleveland used a fourth-round pick, No. 105 overall, to take one of the draft's most talented but troubled wide receivers: Florida's Antonio Callaway. He had multiple suspensions while playing with the Gators, missing all of last season because of his part in a credit card fraud scheme.

■ Wisconsin tight end Troy Fumagalli, who is missing the index finger on his left hand, went to Denver in the fifth round.

■ Three punters were taken in the fifth round.

Michael Dickson, the Australian from the University of Texas, was picked 149th overall by Seattle. Alabama's JK Scott was drafted 172nd overall by Green Bay, a pick before Oakland took Johnny Townsend from Florida. Townsend was the NCAA leader last season with a 47.5-yard average on his 64 punts.

One more punter, Logan Cooke of Mississippi State, was chosen by Jacksonville, and the only placekicker taken was Jason Sanders of New Mexico by the Dolphins.

Last-place Sabres land No. 1 draft pick

The Buffalo Sabres, a franchise that became the NHL's first to finish 31st in the standings following this year's addition of the expansion Vegas Golden Knights, came away a winner in the draft lottery held in Toronto on Saturday night.

The Sabres will pick first for the third time in team history, and first since selecting Pierre Turgeon at No. 1 in 1987.

The Carolina Hurricanes made the biggest jump in the draft order by moving from the 11th spot to 2nd. Montreal moved up one spot and will select third.

Buffalo became just the eighth last-place finishing team to retain the first pick by winning the lottery since it was introduced by the NHL in 1995.

Emelianenko wins by TKO over Mir

ROSEMONT, Ill. — A surprise visit by the FBI didn't distract Fedor Emelianenko.

Emelianenko won by technical knockout over Frank Mir in the opening minute of the first round of the Bellator Heavyweight World Grand Prix on Saturday night.

The Russian fighter was questioned by the FBI in his Chicago hotel room on Tuesday. Emelianenko has had business and other dealings with President Donald Trump, Trump attorney Michael Cohen and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Emelianenko (37-5) connected with a left hand to Mir's face, bringing him to the ground, and then pounded Mir with a series of lefts until the fight was stopped.

Gallagher nabs lead, win on overtime lap

TALLADEGA, Ala. — Spencer Gallagher took the lead on the overtime lap to capture his first NASCAR Xfinity Series race on Saturday.

Gallagher went by Tyler Reddick on the final lap after previous leaders Austin Cindric and Justin Allgaier both ran out of gas during late cautions.

Brandon Jones finished second and Allgaier wound up third after refueling.

From The Associated Press

NBA playoffs roundup

Celtics finish off Bucks to advance

Associated Press

BOSTON — So much of the chatter before Boston's first-round matchup with Milwaukee focused on who wouldn't be on the court for the Celtics.

Injuries forced Kyrie Irving and Marcus Smart to join Gordon Hayward and Daniel Theis as spectators by the end of the regular season. It seemingly left the East's second seed vulnerable against a Bucks team boasting one of the league's most versatile scorers in All-Star Giannis Antetokounmpo.

It took seven games, but the Celtics got just enough from the healthy players left on their roster to hold off Milwaukee with a 112-96 victory on Saturday night.

Now they'll turn their attention to Ben Simmons, Joel Embiid and another youthful team in the Eastern Con-

ference semifinals against Philadelphia.

"It's something we've had to go through all season," said rookie Jayson Tatum, who had 20 points on Saturday, becoming just the second rookie in Celtics' history to score 20 in a Game 7. "Some way, somehow, we figure it out. And I think that's what's unique about our team."

Tatum is just one of the young faces that remain on Boston's bench that have grown up fast over the past three weeks. Because of it, the Celtics that have squeezed out their best basketball despite the multiple subtractions to their roster.

Terry Rozier put up career numbers after stepping into a starting role. Smart injected new life into the team over the last three games following his return to action from thumb

surgery. Then there was rookie Semi Ojeleye, who made things difficult late in the series for Antetokounmpo.

And they still had at least a veteran to lean on.

Al Horford provided not only his voice, but probably his best stretch of games in a Celtics uniform over the last seven games. He matched his playoff career high with 26 points on 13 of 17 shooting in Game 7 and averaged a team-high 18.1 points and 8.7 rebounds for the series.

"It's what I think I've been doing all year," Horford said. "It's what we've been doing as a group. We didn't treat this any differently. ... I felt like our guys, their poise was great. Milwaukee fought hard. They kept giving us shots, our guys stayed with it and eventually we wore them (out)."

Boston improved to 20-4 all-time in Game 7s at home. The Celtics are 23-8 in Game 7 overall.

Warriors 123, Pelicans 101: Kevin Durant had 26 points and 13 rebounds, Draymond Green dazzled all over the floor with his fourth career postseason triple-double, and host Golden State thoroughly overmatched New Orleans in Game 1 of their Western Conference semifinals.

Green finished with 16 points, 15 rebounds, 11 assists, three steals and two blocks and just with his hustle and energy helped the defending champions pull away with a superb, decisive second quarter.

Now, they likely get Stephen Curry back for Game 2 on Tuesday night and all that he brings — even if in a limited role initially.

NHL playoffs roundup

Couture goal in 2OT lifts Sharks over Knights

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Two days after opening the second round with their worst game of the playoffs, the San Jose Sharks responded with a gritty performance.

Logan Couture's second goal of the game, on the power play at 5:13 of the second overtime, lifted the Sharks to a 4-3 victory over the Vegas Golden Knights on Saturday night, tying their Western Conference semifinal series at one game apiece.

Moments after Vegas' Jon Merrill was called for hooking, Couture found the back of the net to give the Sharks their first win inside T Mobile Arena this season.

"I thought we were better everywhere," Sharks coach Peter DeBoer said. "We were tighter, our team game was better, we were better in every situation, and I knew we would be."

San Jose rallied from two goals down in the second period to take the lead, before Vegas tied it in the third.

"We were down by two, but our game was

good," DeBoer said. "Like I said going in, as long as our game is good — even if we lost tonight — I think we've always taken the approach that if we play our game, at the end of the day good things happen. We stuck with it and even when they scored the second goal I really liked how we were playing."

Vegas lost for the first time in the playoffs after winning their first five games by a 14-3 margin, including a 7-0 victory in Game 1.

The Golden Knights thought they won this one in the first overtime when Jonathan Marchessault's backhand sailed past Martin Jones with 3:02 left, but officials ruled there was goaltender interference when Marchessault ran into Jones' blocker and spun him around before his shot.

Per the NHL: "After reviewing all available replays and consulting with the Referee, the Situation Room determined that contact between Vegas' Jonathan Marchessault and Jones prevented him from his job, in accordance with Rule 78.7."

Brent Burns also scored two goals and Jones stopped 26 shots for San Jose, which was playing without suspended forward Evander Kane.

Bruins 6, Lightning 2: Rick Nash and Boston's high-scoring line of Patrice Bergeron, David Pastrnak and Brad Marchand are to a flying start in the second round of the Stanley Cup playoffs.

Nash had two goals and Bergeron, Pastrnak and Marchand combined for 10 points, helping the Bruins pull away in Game 1 of the best-of-seven series.

Bergeron also scored twice, Marchand had a goal and two assists, and Pastrnak finished with four assists in a dominating performance.

Tuukka Rask stopped 34 shots for the Bruins, who finished one point behind Tampa Bay for the Atlantic Division title, as well as the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference.

Dan Girardi and Mikhail Sergachev scored for the Lightning, who trailed 3-2 entering the third period.

Yankees' bats back up Tanaka vs. LA

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Masahiro Tanaka was spotted a five-run lead before he ever took the mound on Saturday. The Yankees sent every batter in the lineup to the plate, so he waited longer than usual to pitch the first inning.

He had a comfortable 10-run lead when he took the mound for the second time as the Yankees batted around. Waiting can be difficult, but for Tanaka, he made it look easy.

Tanaka struck out nine in six strong innings, and the New York Yankees' bats continued to sizzle in an 11-1 victory over the Los Angeles Angels on Saturday night.

"We're getting good starting pitching that's given us a chance to win for the most part every day," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "Our at-bat quality has been outstanding. I feel day in and day out this is a team that takes a lot of pride in making a pitcher work really hard for everything

they get. It doesn't always result in a bunch of runs, but more often than not, we've eventually got to someone."

The Yankees (17-9) have won eight consecutive games and have outscored opponents 62-17 during that streak. They had 14 hits Saturday and still left 10 men on base.

"It's always good to have some run support," Tanaka said through an interpreter. "I don't know if this applies to all pitchers, but sometimes when you're waiting that long to get into the game, that can at times throw you off rhythm, kind of. So that was kind of the challenge. For me, I was able to come through strong. Today was a good day."

The Angels (16-11) after a hot start to the season have lost eight of their last 11 games.

"It's tough. Usually you'll have a couple guys that are in and out of a funk or whatever," Cozart said. "Right now, myself included, we haven't put together a lot of stressful innings. But, we're early in the year. We

know we're not going to continue to hit like this. There's no panic or anything."

Aaron Judge was 3-for-3 by the time the game was just three innings old. Miguel Andujar had three hits as well. Angels starter Garrett Richards allowed four extra-base hits in 1²/₃ innings before he was chased. He gave up nine runs (five earned) on five hits and walked three.

Aaron Hicks tripled off Richards while Judge, Andujar and Gary Sanchez all doubled. Andujar has extra-base hits in 10 of his last 12 games.

Tanaka (4-2) was dominant. He retired the first eight batters he faced and struck out the side in the second inning. He didn't allow a hit until Mike Trout singled to left field to lead off the fourth inning.

The much-anticipated matchup between Tanaka on the mound and fellow countryman Shohei Ohtani didn't happen since Ohtani was out of the lineup with an ankle injury.

MLB roundup

D-backs match 1907 mark with win

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Arizona Diamondbacks extended their impressive start with a little patience at the perfect moment.

Nick Ahmed scored the winning run on a bases-loaded walk in the 10th inning, sending Arizona to a 4-3 victory over the Washington Nationals on Saturday.

The Diamondbacks also got two solo homers from David Peralta in their second straight victory in Washington, making them the first NL team since the 1907 Cubs to win their first nine series in a season.

"Obviously it's great to have a chance to sweep here, but if you can win the series and do that as many times as possible, you're going to have a good team," center fielder A.J. Pollock said.

Ahmed led off the 10th with a double off Sammy Solis (0-1). Peralta walked with one out before Austin Adams replaced Solis and issued consecutive walks to Jarrod Dyson and Pol-

lock, putting the Diamondbacks in front.

Adams had a full count on Pollock before throwing an 89 mph slider in the dirt for the decisive run.

"I've got to go out there and throw strikes," Adams said. "That's what it comes down to. I didn't do my job."

Rays 12, Red Sox 6: Wilson Ramos went deep again and scored on Denard Span's inside-the-park homer, helping host Tampa Bay beat Boston for its eighth consecutive victory.

Astros 11, Athletics 0: Lance McCullers threw seven sharp innings, Jose Altuve had four hits and host Houston beat Oakland.

Dodgers 15, 3; Giants 6, 8: Chase Utley hit three doubles and a single as the visiting Dodgers did damage against every San Francisco pitcher except emergency reliever Pablo Sandoval.

Sandoval was summoned from third base to begin the ninth inning and, in his first major league pitching appear-

ance, retired three straight batters on grounders. The 2012 World Series MVP threw 11 pitches, helping preserve the Giants' bullpen for the second game of the doubleheader.

Mariners 12, Indians 4: Jean Segura hit a two-run homer and matched a career high with four RBIs, powering the visiting Mariners to the victory.

Rangers 7, Blue Jays 4: Bartolo Colon pitched seven efficient innings to earn his first win with visiting Texas.

Cubs 3, Brewers 0: Cubs left-hander Jose Quintana pitched seven sharp innings to continue his dominance of the visiting Brewers.

Twins 3, Reds 1: Jake Odorizzi pitched into the seventh inning, Mitch Garver homered and the host Twins snapped an eight-game losing streak.

Braves 4, Phillies 1: Phillies center fielder Odubel Herrera reached way into the bushes beyond the wall to make a sensational catch that robbed Freddie Freeman of a home run, but

visiting Atlanta went on to the victory.

White Sox 8, 2; Royals 0, 5: Eric Skoglund overcame a leadoff homer by Tim Anderson that led to a bench-clearing incident, pitching host Kansas City past Chicago to end a five-game losing streak in a doubleheader split.

Tigers 9, Tigers 5: Miguel Cabrera homered and drove in five runs and host Detroit ended a three-game skid.

Pirates 6, Cardinals 2: Francisco Cervelli homered in the second inning and delivered a tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the sixth, helping host Pittsburgh top St. Louis.

Marlins 4, Rockies 1: Wei-Yin Chen pitched into the sixth inning in his first start in nearly a year and host Miami beat Colorado.

Padres 12, Mets 2: Franchy Cordero hit a three-run homer estimated at 453 feet, Christian Villanueva had a two-run shot and Austin Hedges drove in a career-high five runs as the host Padres roughed up the Mets.